

que la dimension interactive de la construction détachée soit quelque peu occultée dans l'ouvrage en question. En effet, il n'y a pas d'analyse des contextes. La raison est probablement d'ordre méthodologique, les corpus ne semblaient être utilisés que pour fournir des exemples illustrant le fonctionnement de cette construction au niveau de la phrase et non pour véritablement explorer les conditions de son apparition dans le discours. Toutefois, ce choix méthodologique me semble étonnant dans la mesure où l'identification du topique de l'énoncé repose nécessairement sur le contexte.

Ces quelques remarques ne remettent nullement en cause les qualités évidentes du travail de Cécile de Cat. Ceux qui s'intéressent à la syntaxe du français oral et aux mécanismes de l'acquisition de la grammaire par l'enfant y trouveront certainement de la matière à réflexion.

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(Received 14 September 2011)

Debov, Valery, *Верлан – код французского рэпа (О девиантном словотворчестве в молодёжном социолекте)* 'Code verlanique du rap français (sur la créativité déviante en sociolecte des jeunes des cités)', Ivanovo: Ivanovo State University Press, 2008, 224pp. 978-5-7807-0720-2 and Debov, Valery, *Словарь верлан-рифм французского рэпа (Инновационные элементы молодёжного стихотворчества)* 'Dictionary of verlan rhymes in French rap (innovative elements in youth poetics)', Ivanovo: Ivanovo State University Press, 2010, 252 pp. 978-5-7807-0856-8
doi:10.1017/S0959269512000087

Non-Russianists should not be put off by the titles of these two volumes on *verlan* in French rap, both of which – apart from a short (and largely uninformative) publisher's blurb in Russian – are written entirely in French. Of greater interest is the 2008 work which, as can be inferred from the author's own translation of the title above, stresses the socio-political significance of *verlan* in rap music, seeing the variety as a sociolect

through which marginalized youth finds expression. *Verlan* becomes ‘la symbolique d’une contestation juvénile permanente’ while French rap itself is seen as a ‘contre pouvoir culturel adapté à la société hexagonale post-industrielle’, transforming French society and culture. Drawing on an impressive range of late 20th and early 21st century rap lyrics, Debov sets out to describe the ‘normes culturelles bien spécifiques’ of the genre. For each entry a definition and some example quotations are given, followed by a commentary on derivation and use, a short list of attestations and a general indication of frequency of use. Some entries carry helpful additional remarks, and/or ‘synonymes/antonymes intra-verlaniques’ (or occasionally – as in the case of *keur/ beurre* – ‘homonymes extra-verlaniques’), and some collocations. Thus for the entry *gogol* we learn that the term derives from apocope of the *verlan* term *golmon* (<*mongol*) and reduplication of the first syllable, and that the word is used by Sefyu.

While the entries are detailed and painstakingly researched, presentation is a little cumbersome. A very large number of items are listed as ‘verlan simple, régulier’, but the very short introduction (three pages) offers no guide to the basic syllable reversal rules of *verlan* derivation, so the reader is left to infer what this actually means. Most of the listed verbs carry the same four-line observation concerning their invariability and use as present tense, past participle and infinitive forms (see for example *témon*, *gerbou*, *quéma*). This information could have been presented much more economically in an introductory section on *verlan* derivation and grammar, the absence of which renders unclear the criteria for inclusion. The term *merco* for *commère*, for example, seems to follow the syllable transposition rule associated with this *verlan* but the second listed meaning, as an abbreviation of ‘Mercedes’, does not. There are some other disappointing omissions and inconsistencies. For *peclo* the reader is referred to *peuclo*, only to discover that this item is not listed; *neujeu* likewise is listed among the collocations of *gogol*, but does not get an entry of its own. In some cases, one presumes that omission has been motivated by non-attestation in rap lyrics, leaving the item in question in a rather awkward lexicological no-man’s land. Thus the ‘reverlanised’ *feukeu* (< *keur* < *flic*) is restricted to the list of synonyms for *keur* in the 2008 volume, but secures an entry of its own in the later work by virtue of a 2009 appearance in lyrics by La Fouine.

An important shortcoming is the very limited background to *verlan* as a variety, presented here as a relatively recent phenomenon and a ‘langage original inventé par les jeunes des cités en galère’ (p. 3). This is a little simplistic: while it is certainly true that rap has given *verlan* a new lease of life, its pedigree is in fact much older, and a broader historical perspective would have been welcome. A second, obvious, problem besets any attempt to pin down youth speak in book form. While all dictionaries are, in a sense, obsolete from the moment of publication, the non-standard codes of the young are almost by definition more creative, ephemeral, and rapidly changing than any other, and any dictionary of *verlan* will struggle to keep pace with online rivals, of which *Le Dictionnaire de la Zone* – cited by Debov, though the URL he gives is no longer valid – is probably the best known. Comparing these two works, it is not difficult to find examples of changes in the three years since publication of Debov’s work, or of *verlan* terms which are richer or more polysemous than their attestation in rap suggests. Thus, Debov offers three meanings for *pouilledé*, all of which derive from *dépouiller* in the sense of ‘to rob, steal’, whereas the first, adjectival, meaning given by the *Dictionnaire de la Zone* (‘drunk, stoned’) is not listed.

In the 2010 ‘Dictionary of Verlan Rhymes in French Rap’, Debov further extols the creativity of rap artists, citing Hagège who called them ‘vaillants défenseurs de la

langue française', and stresses the blending of endogenous and exogenous elements in rap poetry. Like its predecessor it is well researched and covers an even wider range of sources – 161 rap artists are cited as opposed to 113 in the earlier work. For each entry here a simple derivation is given, followed by rhymes attested in rap lyrics and a list of sources. For *tromé* (<*mé*tro), for example, the reader learns from six sub-entries that it is rhymed with *chromé*, and *remé* then *gommer*, *fêlé-accompagné*, *vu des- qu'des-tromper*, and finally with *remé-gommer-jamais-se paumer*. As an illustration of the fact that *verlan* provides an array of new possibilities for rhyming in [e], this seems a little laboured. For all its detail and meticulous referencing, the one-page introduction is too short to make the fundamental premise of the work clear. Debov's point that *verlan* in rap affords new poetic potential outside the straitjacket of traditional French versification is worth making, but one wonders whether 247 pages of examples of rap *verlan* rhymes is really the best way of doing so.

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(Received 2 September 2011)

Fagyal, Zsuzsanna, *Accents de banlieue. Aspects prosodiques du français populaire en contact avec les langues de l'immigration*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2010, 214 pp. 978 2 296 12516 2
doi:10.1017/S0959269512000099

Not another work about the French of young people living on the estates? Françoise Gadet opens her preface to the present volume with this rhetorical question. It is true that the accents (there are more than one) of the young inhabitants of the *cités* obsess French intellectuals and journalists considerably, so that the spate of observations, more or less uninformed, shows little sign of lessening. This is largely because the *banlieues*, the unwise post-war housing estates where many French people of immigrant origin find themselves marooned, are emblematic of the social and ethnic divisions that sit uneasily with the French republican conception. The irony is that the estates reinforce these divisions and promote the *communautarisme* that in France is officially ruled out.

But amid the torrent of apocalyptic commentary can be discerned a trickle of sober description and analysis. Fagyal's book is concerned, as its subtitle states, with the influence of what the author calls their *langues d'héritage* upon the French of a sample of adolescents living in La Courneuve, an estate to the north-east of Paris. This book goes into more phonetic and supra-segmental detail than is usual in works on the subject. Chapter 1 stresses, in the context of immigration, the important role that language contact has played and continues to play in the evolution of French, a point worth making in view of the halo of purity that still surrounds the language, and then considers how *banlieue* French has been represented in the press. This account includes, among the misinformation that one expects from journalists, a few rash pronouncements by some quite eminent linguists who should really have known better. Chapter 2 looks in some detail at the *banlieues* in general, as regards their sociology and their role in