



Youth languages: the age of maturity? Call for Papers

International symposium co-organized by Françoise Gadet, Olivier Baude and Médéric Gasquet-Cyrus

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In the framework of the research project MEITS (“Multilingualism: Empowering Individuals Transforming Societies”, PI Wendy Ayres-Bennett, Cambridge, GB)

Since the end of World War II the linguistic landscapes of European metropolises and big cities have changed as they witnessed an influx of immigrant populations coming from all over the world, speaking different types of languages. Some urban areas are particularly affected by this phenomenon, which is known in multi-ethnic and multilingual neighbourhoods as "multiculturalism" (a term which needs to be scrutinized). Their descendants were brought up, socialized and sent to school in the family's new country and most of them are eager to stay. The second generation (sons and daughters of the immigrants) is perceived as being bi-cultural (or between two cultures) – which is more or less the case; they have different degrees of knowledge of the heritage culture(s) and language(s) and they sometimes face prejudices and difficulties in integrating the host society. Can this situation remain without (socio)linguistic effects?

These effects are studied in the domain of “urban sociolinguistics”. As (at least since the work of Labov) young people are identified as the leaders in linguistic dynamics and innovation, this field is often referred to by lay-expressions such as “youth languages” or similar terms. There are many reasons for being cautious about or even reluctant to use these terms (which all need to be carefully re-evaluated). The same holds for expert terms such as “varieties” and “(multi)ethnolects” (see several papers in the special issue of the *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 2008). But as lay-terms are at present even among specialists the most frequent entries into this field we decided to keep the awkward term “youth languages”.

The linguistic impact of this state of affairs has been studied more or less intensively in several European countries and for different European languages (at first mainly in the North of Europe) and from different points of view, linguistic or sociolinguistic, concerning structures as well as practices (phonetics, morpho-syntax, lexicon, interaction, ethnography, etc.). Many corpora, ethnographic observations and descriptions are now available, on both spoken and written data. It is perhaps therefore an opportune moment to try to “explain” more and to compare perspectives, phenomena and results within and between different European countries and languages, as publications such as Nortier & Svendsen (2015), which compares several syntactic structures and practices in different Germanic languages, have started to do. This type of investigation could be conducted on a larger scale, with a larger scope and on languages of different types.

Among the issues which can be raised, some have potential societal effects beyond language features:

- How should one name this phenomenon and its language products? (see Jaspers 2008, and Rampton 2011 for a term implying a different conception). What status for these ways of speaking?

- Which concepts, linguistic or metalinguistic, could be useful to provide better descriptions and comparisons (like *perception, saliency, frequency...*)?
- What appears to be “new” or “emergent” in the phenomena and resources? What is different from/similar to former stigmatised ways of speaking? (see Kerswill 2016 for cockney, Gadet & Hambye 2014 for français populaire). Can some trends be related to phenomena known in other vernacular varieties of the language (see Wiese 2013)?
- Are there trends which appear to be similar/different between different languages and/or countries? What can they be related to?
- What can the social meaning of the descriptions be outside a kind of reservoir of data?
- Can this potential bi/multilingualism that exists alongside the use of the dominant (most of the time, national) language remain without effects on the language ordinarily spoken in the country?
- And if there are effects, what kind are they and at what levels do they appear? (structures and practices);
- What are the relations between ways of speaking and questions of identity?
- Is it possible to recognize innovators and to show how innovations appear and propagate?
- Can the fact of having several languages in one’s repertory empower individuals (e.g. bidialectalism in education)? What are the outcomes (positive or negative) in education and in all areas where there is societal discrimination?
- What effects of contact phenomena and/or stylisation can be identified?
- What are the impacts of representations of these ways of speaking in society and on media discourse (see Androutsopoulos 2010)?

Contributions related to these questions and concerning all European national languages are welcome. The language of the symposium will be English and contributors are requested to rely explicitly on precise data coming from corpora or from language surveys.

Five keynote presentations are expected: Maria Candea (Paris Sorbonne-Nouvelle, France: “Dealing with ‘accentism’ and standard ideology in a Parisian suburban school”), Philippe Hambye (Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium: “Vernacular French *vs* standard French at school: indeterminate legitimacies”), Paul Kerswill (York, Great Britain: “Demography vs. identity in the formation of new urban youth varieties”), Bente Svendsen (Oslo, Norway, title forthcoming), Heike Wiese (Potsdam, Germany: “Youth in the city: the dynamics of urban diversity”).

Depending on the proposals received, panels, a poster session, and a round table may also be organized.

A selection of the papers will be published.

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Androutsopoulos J. (2010), Ideologizing ethnolectal German. In: Sally Johnson and Tommaso Milani (eds.), *Language ideologies and media discourse*, 162–181. London: Continuum.

Gadet F. & Hambye Ph. (2014), Contact and Ethnicity in ‘Youth Language’ Description: in Search of Specificity, in R. Nicolai (ed.), *Questioning Language Contact. Limits of Contact, Contact at its Limits*, Leiden/ Boston, Brill: 183-216.

International Journal of Multilingualism (2008), n° 1-2. Special Issue Ethnolects ? “The emergence of new varieties among adolescents”.

Jaspers J. (2008), Problematizing ethnolects: Naming linguistic practices in an Antwerp secondary school, *International Journal of Bilingualism*, Vol. 12 n° 1-2.

Kerswill P. (2016), Multiethnolects: vernacular, indexicality and style, Paper given at the 8th Conference on Youth Language 2016, Graz, <https://www.academia.edu/25693859/>

Nortier J. & Svendsen B. (eds., 2015), *Language, Youth and Identity in the 21st Century. Linguistic Practices across Urban Spaces*, Cambridge University Press.

Rampton B. (2011), From ‘Multi-ethnic adolescent heteroglossia’ to ‘Contemporary urban vernaculars’, *Language and Communication* n° 31: 276)294-

Wiese H. (2013), What can new urban dialects tell us about internal language dynamics? The power of language diversity, *Linguistische Berichte* 19: 208-245.

The members of the scientific board are: Jannis Androutsopoulos (D, Hamburg), Gaetano Berruto (I, Torino), Maria Candeia (F, Paris Sorbonne-Nouvelle), Lorenzo Devilla (I, Sassari), Margreet Dorleijn (NL, Amsterdam), Rob Drummond (GB, Manchester Metropolitan), Emmanuelle Guerin (F, Orléans), Philippe Hambye (B, Université Catholique de Louvain-la-Neuve), Jürgen Jaspers (B, Brussels Free University), Paul Kerswill (GB, York), Jacomine Nortier (NL, Utrecht), Elena Pistolesi (I, Modena), Pia Quist (DK, Copenhagen), Ben Rampton (GB, King's College London), Yazgül Simsek (D, Münster), Bente Svendsen (N, Oslo), Cyril Trimaille (F, Grenoble3), Heike Wiese (D, Potsdam).