

Sources of variation in an emerging Parisian French vernacular  
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Youth language, and its ramifications for language variation and change, is of interest to sociolinguists and phoneticians alike (Eckert 1989; Foulkes & Docherty 2006; Tagliamonte & D'Arcy 2009). Many sociophonetic works have focused upon adolescent language as a source of innovation or display of in-group identity (Eckert 1989; Mendoza-Denton 2014) and have determined that adolescent speech is not merely an improper vernacular full of slang and indicative of teenage rebellion. Rather, this is an age group in a constant state of constructing a linguistic identity, rendering them more prone to early adoption of innovative variants. Nowhere is construction of youth identity more apparent than the often-fraught *banlieue*, or suburbs, of Paris, France. Rife with socioeconomic disparity, the *banlieue* are home to many new immigrant arrivals and have become infamous as hotbeds where the working-class manifests against police brutality and social disempowerment (LePoutre 1997). Immigration here has resulted in an influx of new languages. Many works have examined the ensuing contact varieties (Conein & Gadet 1998; Fagyal 2010a; 2010b) and found that French in contact with languages of immigrant communities, especially North African Arabic, has led to innovative prosodic markings, vocalic reduction, and plosive affrication. Yet immigrant populations are not uniform: those of North African origin experience more stigmatization, and less cultural assimilation, than those from Western or sub-Saharan Africa (Khosrokhavar 2016; Valfort 2015).

This study analyzes the highly-proficient speech of ( $N=11$ ) French high school students, aged 16-18, from the *banlieue*. Sociolinguistic interviews were conducted in French with participants speaking in dyads. The French speech of three student groups was juxtaposed: L1 Arabic language speakers, L1 Bantu language speakers (Lingala, Swahili), and monolingual French speakers (control group). Phonetic measurements, F1 and F2 of front round and nasal vowels (7 time points, Bark difference metric normalization,  $N=6854$ ) and duration of word-initial plosives ( $N=1325$ ), were taken. T-tests show significant differences in mean bilabial plosive duration (word-initial) between L1 Bantu students and monolingual French speakers ([p]  $p < .01$ , [b]  $p < .001$ ). Mixed effects linear regression conducted on vowel data indicate the interaction of L1 and gender as a significant predictor of vowel advancement (L1 Arabic:Males:  $\beta = 1.524$ ,  $p < .001$ , L1 Bantu:Males:  $\beta = 1.087$ ,  $p = .006$ ).

Perhaps due to their shared immigrant status, Bantu-speaking students identify with Arabic-speaking students. The affrication and increased duration of word-initial alveolar plosives ( $t > tʃ/f$ ) is a sociolinguistic marker of *banlieue* French in students of diverse immigrant backgrounds (Trimaille et al. 2012). Bantu students have adopted, and modified, this variant. The phonemic status of prenasalized stops in Bantu languages serves as an additional impetus for the innovation: the variation has a social and phonological (L1) source. F2 differences across male students from the three groups suggest that integration into the host society is a determining factor in acquisition of variation and may exemplify a case of covert prestige. French immigration has resulted in an exponential growth of multiculturalism, yet not all incoming immigrant groups elect to adopt the standard variety. This is demonstrated by those most prone to innovation: adolescents.

## References

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