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A CURRENT STUDY OF BANLIEUE LANGUAGE IN
THE PARISIAN SUBURBS

presented by

Teresa L. Kent

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Doctoral

degree in

French Language and
Literature

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**A CURRENT STUDY OF BANLIEUE LANGUAGE
IN THE PARISIAN SUBURBS**

By

Teresa L. Kent

A DISSERTATION

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

French, Language and Literature

2009

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ABSTRACT

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By

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This study discusses the banlieue language in an innovative and multi-fronted manner. It seeks to challenge many theories in research on banlieue language, especially stereotypes regarding its speaker base. By expanding current research may be expanded to include more sociolinguistic factors than ever before, we can begin to see that banlieue language is changing not just in form but also in number of speakers.

More specifically, this study examines current stereotypes of gender, age, education level, and ethnicity of speakers of the variety as well and also proposes new categories of sociolinguistic factors that may affect use of banlieue language. The main ideas include these hypotheses:

- 1. Banlieue language is spoken by people older than any other previous research has indicated.**
- 2. Gender is not as male-oriented as previous studies may have suggested.**
- 3. Regardless of stereotypes and research that relegate the deepest vernaculars to those speakers of the lowest levels of education, that banlieue language, because of the function of identity, may also be spoken by those with much higher levels of education than previously expected.**

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This study wishes to discuss banlieue language in an innovative manner, and therefore approaches the problem at hand—that of banlieue language—in a multi-fronted manner. Many theories in research on banlieue language, regarding its speaker base, have not been challenged, and this study wishes to investigate several existing stereotypes. I believe that current research may be expanded to include more sociolinguistic factors than ever before, and that we, as researchers, must be open to the idea that banlieue language is changing not just in form but also in number of speakers.

Therefore, this study wishes to investigate some of the current stereotypes of gender, age, education level and ethnicity of speakers of the variety as well as to propose new categories of sociolinguistic factors that may affect use of banlieue language. Specifically, I hypothesize:

1. Banlieue language is spoken by people older than any other previous research has indicated.
2. Gender is not as male-oriented as previous studies may have suggested.
3. Regardless of stereotypes and research that relegate the deepest vernaculars to those speakers of the lowest levels of education, banlieue language, because of the function of identity, may also be spoken by those with much higher levels of education than previously expected.

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In addition, I would like to investigate two never-before-investigated areas: the speakers' own views on who uses banlieue language and the effect of religion on speaking banlieue language.

1.1. Historical Background to French language variation

In order to understand why a phenomenon that started out as a language game could be so important today, France's long linguistic history must be taken into consideration. Starting as early as 842, *les Serments de Strasbourg*, 'the Strasbourg oaths,' become the first text 'in French,' though the French language at the time was more pseudo-Latin than French (Walter 1988). The oaths were taken between Charles the Bald and his brother Louis the German, along with both of their troops, the two promising to defend each other against their brother Lothair (Battye and Hintze 1994). The *Serments* are important not just as the first text in what is recognized as French, but for the choice of the fledgling French language over Latin for such an important purpose.

From its auspicious beginning, the French language gained in popularity; and of the many dialects, several fought for recognition. A few centuries later, the poets of the twelfth century were already lamenting their lack of prowess (or lauding their proficiency, depending on whether or not the poet came from the region) in Francien, the precursor to standard French spoken in the *L'île de France* region (Battye and Hintze 1992). Already a variety of French had started to garner favor.

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Four centuries of linguistic evolution later, the trend had solidified. The sixteenth century brought François I, who represented a more formal move away from traditional Latin and towards not just French but the variety spoken in *L'île de France*. Under his rule, the *Collège de France* was built, which taught in French instead of the traditional Latin (Battye and Hintze 1992). His *Edit de Villers-Cotterêts*, in 1539, proclaimed that French should be used in all legal or official documents (Battye and Hintze 1992). The first grammar book by John Palsgrave was printed in 1530 (Battye and Hintze 1992) and Du Bellay published his *Deffense et illustration de la langue françoise* in 1549 (Ayres-Bennett 1996). This century was marked by a perceived need among the scholars to reform French. Indeed 'concerted efforts are made not only to codify but also to "enrich" the language, in particular by attempting to give it the lexical resources necessary to compete with its classical forebearer' (Ayres-Bennett 1996: 140).

The 17th century ushered in the *Académie Française*, which fought for linguistic unanimity and a standardization of the only acceptable French: *le bon usage* (Ayres-Bennet 1996, Walter 1988). Malherbe and many other grammarians worked with the court, championing and upholding the linguistic variety of the elite, that is to say the French of *l'Île de France*, condemning that of anywhere outside of the Parisian region (Battye and Hintze 1992).

The 18th century was a period of more reforms. The quest for knowledge was both linguistic and cultural. France was setting out to define itself physically and politically as well as linguistically. In the late 18th century, before the

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revolution, cartographers defined France using geometry and rulers to find both the Meridian and to attempt to map their country (Robb 2007).

Meanwhile, in 1790, Abbey Grégoire conducted what may be considered one of the first linguistic studies (Walter 1988). Wanting to arrive at an idea of the number of French speakers in the country, he sent surveys to priests. The results showed a large number of people speaking regional languages. In fact, the results showed that a mere three million French people were fluent in French (Walter 1988). To put this in perspective, twelve million people could not speak French fluently or take part in a simple conversation. Of those, over six million people did not know French at all.

Shocked at the number of regional languages spoken, and the consequent dearth of French speakers outside the Paris area, he helped promote the crusade that led to the subsequent squelching of regional tongues in France in an effort to promote linguistic unity as a tangible symbol of equality and political harmony of the people (Gadet 2003). The very name of his report illustrates both his goals and the extent to which France has a history of linguistic assimilation. The report was entitled *Rapport sur la nécessité et les moyens d'anéantir les patois et d'universaliser l'usage de la langue française* (Walter 1988).¹

The Écoles Normales, or places of instruction for those who wished to teach, were created as a direct result of Abbey Grégoire's study, since the original goal of having a primary school taught in French each community was

¹ 'Report on the necessity and the means to annihilate dialects and to universalize usage of the French language.'

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too ambitious at first due to the lack of instructors (Walter 1988). Indeed, the very idea of primary school education stemmed from a desire to propagate French as not only an official national language of administration and laws, but the only language of the people as well (Walter 1988). From that time on, especially during the period after 1789 – 1815 when regional languages were first targeted, they experienced a steady decline in popularity, and it is not until the latter part of the 20th century that a re-burgeoning interest has developed (Walter 1988). Finally, it is in the 18th century as well where the *Encyclopédie* is created with the goal of purity for the French language (Walter 1988).

The 19th century brings schools—free, secular, and obligatory—with the laws of Jules Ferry in 1880. The patois still survived until World War I, when they were lost by historical coincidence rather than the false imposition of French over patois. The men who were sent to war were placed with soldiers from all parts of France, with French as the only lingua franca (Walter 1988). When the men came home, they kept speaking French out of habit, which made it easier for the children also to speak French in the home, and the patois were dealt an almost fatal blow (Walter 1988).

Throughout the ages, then, from the time that the Roman soldiers help lay a linguistic superstrate on Galois, the French have striven to define themselves and their language. The concepts of 'nation' and 'language' have been intricately intertwined over the centuries, with authors and political figures regulating the French language in order to define the French nation, and conversely using the concept of a French nation to justify the unification and standardization of the

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French language. Thus, since the 12th century poets, French history has intrinsically linked 'being French' with 'speaking good French.'

1.2. Breaking the norm

Speaking a non-standard language or dialect in a country that equates standard speech with citizenship is a form of rejection of the language and the culture. However, among the speakers of the minority dialect or of the marginalized form, there is a certain prestige that comes precisely from being a member of the group on the margins and rejecting mainstream language and ideology. Pierre Bourdieu (1982) calls this '*contre-légitimité linguistique*.' Others call this 'covert prestige' (Labov 1972, Trudgill 1984). Regardless of the moniker used, the covert prestige of defying the linguistic norm through the use of forms such as Verlan and other non-standard linguistic elements effectively distances the speaker from mainstream French culture and all established precepts, whether governmental or familial.

Language games and argots in France, however, have not been lacking, despite (or perhaps because of) this linguistic domination. The functions of these idioms vary; some secret languages are simply games, others serve as a secret code. All serve the function of identity marker to some extent for the speakers (Goudailler 2002). These argots and secret languages have typically been created by segments of society in order to separate themselves from the mainstream.

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Historically, there have been many such phenomena. *Largonji*, from 'jargon,' a language game of the '*Louchébems*,' (among the *bouchers* or 'butchers'), allowed them to talk amongst themselves in a code of syllable manipulation (Walter 1988). In the early stages, argot thrived as a secret language of the underground, revealed by its speakers only under torture (Goudailler 2002, Merle 1997). In the 20th century, the most popular, and the most studied, is banlieue language, which has as one of its key elements the syllable reversal of Verlan. The origin of Verlan itself, and its extension of banlieue language, is much debated.

Verlan, originally a *jeu de langue* of syllable reversal, has evolved. Its definition has broadened, and what was once a simple game is now part of a greater linguistic struggle. The ensemble may now be better termed 'banlieue language' since it now includes so many contact languages as well as argot and the original syllable-reversal of Verlan. Among those contact languages specifically cited are Arabic, Roma or Tzigane, and Creole, in addition to some African languages (Goudailler 2002, Mela 1997).

Therefore, in today's political climate, Verlan and banlieue language should no longer be viewed as a *jeu de société* 'a parlor/board game' among socially marginalized youth but rather a linguistic symbol of a potential *enjeu de société* 'societal stake' if the message intended by its speakers is ignored. Those speakers are making a conscious choice to use a nonstandard variety in a country where the standard is so intrinsically related to nationhood and citizenship. Doran (2002) and Meliani (2000) have both tied Verlan to the

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concept of identity in youth of Maghrebi heritage in France and cite their informants of said origin as claiming the language. Yasir Suleiman (2006) underscored the role of 'language as proxy to tell you about (political) undercurrents. Periods of stress, conflict, and crisis evoke issues of identity.' The riots in the banlieue in 2005 by the suburban youth emphasize their discontent, as interest in Verlan and banlieue language increases.

This dissertation examines banlieue language using empirical data. The informants answered several perceptual questions in a questionnaire about who, in their opinion, would use those words and phrases. The target demographic was people from ages 18 to ages 36. I cannot claim that the group of informants in this study was representative, since the selection was not random. The venues were chosen specifically to target people most likely to be familiar with banlieue language, yet who were older than 18, in order to see if those who had grown up in this area admitted to speaking the variety. This means that while the informants did contribute empirical data, I cannot make any sweeping generalizations; I can only hypothesize by examining the data provided to me by this group of informants.

1.3 Definitions

Many of the terms in this dissertation are used in popular culture in one manner and in another in linguistics. In addition, there is even some variation in terms among linguists. It is therefore necessary to specify what I mean by each term in order to avoid confusion.

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1.3.1 Argot

According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary of Linguistics (online), *argot* is a 'special vocabulary used e.g. by criminals which is designedly unintelligible to outsiders. Thus one form of antilanguage' (Mathews 2008).

In this dissertation, the word *argot* is used in a more general sense to mean the vocabulary in non-standard or non-reference French. It has its origins in the criminal element of the 18th and 19th centuries (Goudailler 2002, Merle 1997), but I am not speaking of the specific variety that enabled thieves to speak among themselves without being understood by the general populace. My informants often used the word *argot* in reference to everything in non-standard French that was not specifically Verlan syllable reversal.

1.3.2 Banlieue

This term designates any network of suburbs surrounding a large city in France, but in this context, I am referring specifically to the Northern suburbs of Paris. While originally there were two terms for suburbs in French, *faubourgs* and *banlieue*, the former, later modified to *banlieue aisée*, has come to refer to the more affluent suburbs. *Banlieue* by itself is becoming the default term to designate those suburbs of more modest means. In many cases, the term has developed to signal not just modest but impoverished areas rife with unemployment and violence.

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1.3.3 Banlieue language

I use the term *banlieue language* to mean the more global sense of the variety some researchers are calling *Verlan*. While Doran's (2002) informants used this term to define not only the simple process of syllable reversal but also to capture lexical items brought in from other languages and the grammatical aspects that are referred to in the media, my informants were loathe to do so. While talking to several informants, they suggested that it would be better termed *langage de banlieue*, which I have just simply translated to 'banlieue language.' Merle (1997: 23) refers to the language of youth in the suburbs as '*la langue des banlieues*,' which also translates to 'banlieue language' in English. My informants' reasoning was that while a person who spoke the deeper vernaculars would most undoubtedly use Verlan (and said syllable reversal linguistic element would be a large component of that person's vocabulary), not everyone who uses Verlan would also fully utilize the variety. They also flatly rejected lexical items from contact languages as being part of Verlan. To them, Verlan was a separate entity, which involves the reversal of syllables, simply stated.

1.3.4 Dialect

According to Crystal (2003: 136), *dialect* refers to 'a regionally or socially distinctive variety of language, identified by a particular set of words and grammatical structures. Spoken dialects are also usually associated with a distinctive pronunciation, or accent.' Usually dialects of the same language can

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be mutually understood by speakers of other dialects, but the case of Italian is a longstanding example to the contrary (Mathews 2008).

1.3.5 Jargon

By *jargon* I mean the set of vocabulary specific to any one profession or peer group, such as the '*Largonji des Louchébems*.' I do not mean any grammatical variation, which is what sets this word apart from *dialect* and *variety*. The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Linguistics (online), defines *jargon* 'in the ordinary sense of technical or pseudo-technical vocabulary (Mathews 2008).

1.3.6 Variety

This term is very similar to *dialect* in that it encompasses the various accent, vocabulary, and grammatical features of an area. The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Linguistics (online), states that a *variety* is 'any form of a language seen as systematically distinct from others: thus the dialect of a specific region (e.g. Cornwall), any more general form distinguished as a whole by speakers (e.g. American English or British English), a social dialect, one of the forms distinguished in diglossia, a dialect used in a specific genre of literature, and so on' (Mathews 2008). Crystal (2003: 489) describes it thus: 'a term used in sociolinguistics . . . to refer to any system of linguistic expression whose use is governed by situational variables . . . For some sociolinguists "variety" is given a more restrictive definition, as one kind of situational distinctive language—a specialized type of language used within a dialect.'

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1.3.7 Verlan

This game of syllable reversal may have stemmed from the cryptic language of the underworld in the 19th century, which was used for communication among thieves (Merle 1997). The term has expanded and for some researchers means not just the syllable reversal oft studied, but the greater set of vernacular variables which include but are not limited to argot, grammatical aspects, and accent (Doran 2002, Melliani 2000). However, when I speak of Verlan, I mean strictly syllable reversal.

1.4 Goals

This dissertation was derived from a need to question some of the accepted stereotypes of banlieue language and compare those stereotypes to both the perceptions the inhabitants of the area have about banlieue language and its speakers and how they perceive themselves with regards to banlieue language.

1.4.1 Age

One of the main goals of this dissertation is to examine the extent to which banlieue language is retained among 'older' speakers, that is to say those older than 25. Most recent studies (Doran 2002, Lepoutre 1997, Melliani 2000) deal primarily with adolescent minority youth, some stating that Verlan, their term for banlieue language, is only used after the age of 16 by '*délinquants*' (Lepoutre 1997). Mid-twenties seems to be the longest estimated point among those who

indicate age as a factor of retention, even among those who admit to prolonged peer usage (Bachmann and Basier 1984, Boyer 2001, Calvet 2006, George 1993, Mela 2000, Zerling 1999). Furthermore, I would like to investigate the hypothesis that the speakers are retaining banlieue language, though it may not be used in public among strangers.

1.4.2 Education

Another goal is to question the established stereotypes pertaining to the education level of those who speak banlieue language. The media presents 'typical' speakers as being those who have a very low level of education. This conception has been reinforced by certain researchers such as Lepoutre (1997) and Doran (2002).

In addition, while some studies have been done with no real regard for age limits (Bachmann and Basier 1984), most investigations were done with banlieue language speakers having a low level of education, either those who have dropped out or those who are in grade school. In France, a country in which having the *baccalauréat* is so very important socially, education and class are closely linked. In fact, students are routed early (*classés* is the term used by banlieue authors such as Amara [2003], Leila [2005], though it may also be referred to as *orientés*) towards a technical degree if their teachers do not feel they have the educational acumen to continue along the route to the *bac* and higher education. Many students born to immigrants complain of being placed in the technical track despite wanting to earn a *bac*, (Amara 2003, Leila 2005), and INSEE (2005) recounts a large disparity between the number of children

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immigrants in the technical tracks and the number of those born to French citizens on both sides. INSEE (2005) also attributes a large number of technical degrees to those areas in economic decline, such as Val d'Oise and Seine-Saint-Denis.

For the purposes of this study, a low level of education will be defined as a participant not having a *baccalauréat* (the *bac*). The *bac* is a degree roughly equivalent to high school, but with a grueling final exam that has to be passed in order to receive the diploma and the degree. Simply having a technical degree such as the *BEP*, which is equivalent to the *bac* only on time spent in school, is still considered a low level of education. It is an alternative to the traditional education route of the *bac* in high school, a type of trade or technical school. Having the *bac* in France is more prestigious than having a simple high school education in the US, though it is an entry-level degree for many jobs.

We will therefore see if speakers of banlieue language are not all from a low level of education. In that case, class distinctions pertaining to speaking banlieue language may be blurring.

1.4.3 Gender

Investigation of both perceived usage among the sexes and admitted usage explained in terms of gender is another goal of this study. Usage of banlieue language has been attested among women (Doran 2002, Lefkowitz 1989, Lepoutre 1997, Meliani 2000), but has never been the direct focus of a study. In addition, though the above studies do mention girls and young women

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using the variety, no study has included empirical data concentrating on self-admission of usage among females.

Sociolinguistic research has shown that, in Western cultures, women lean towards a tendency to use a more 'standard' variety (Labov 1972, Trudgill 1972, for exceptions see Milroy 1980) and would therefore tend to eschew usage of banlieue language while men would tend to embrace it. We will see if women are admitting to using banlieue language vocabulary and will also study their perceptions of whether or not the vocabulary in banlieue language is used equally among the sexes.

1.4.4 Ethnicity

Another major goal of the dissertation includes a study of the different ethnicities of the informants. Many studies done on banlieue language concentrate primarily on speakers of Maghrebi heritage. Some researchers refer to it as a product of a mixed heritage of the speakers of banlieue language and continue by saying that the speakers master neither the language of their parents nor the language of France (Hargreaves 1997). It is important to see if this is indeed the case that those of Maghrebi descent are more likely to use banlieue language than those of other heritages, or if banlieue language is, as Tejedor de Felipe (2004) suggests, a French phenomenon at its base.

1.4.5 Place of residence

In theory, use of banlieue language should be most concentrated in those areas where poverty is the most extreme and education is the lowest. However, place of residence is a factor that has not been investigated empirically. Two areas

with a very high concentration of poverty and immigration as well as a low level of education are Garges-lès-Gonesse, in the *département* ('department' or state-like government entity) Val d'Oise and Sarcelles in the *département* Seine-Saint-Denis (INSEE 2005). For this reason, it must be noted that all research was conducted in these *départements*.

1.4.6 Religion

Since religion is not typically a question presented to informants in sociolinguistic research, some justification may be necessary. No one has questioned religion as it relates to banlieue language prior to this study. In fact, the questions were added due to sociological research in France that indicated that practicing a religion had more impact on voting preferences than the social class of the person (Lijphart 1971). Brulé (1966) discovered that religious devotion was an even stronger influential sociolinguistic factor than typical sociolinguistic factors such as gender, age, and socio-economic status. Therefore some investigation into religion and practicing a religion should be investigated, though both these studies are dated.

1.4.7 Languages

No empirical data has ever been collected on any potential correspondence between languages spoken by banlieue language speakers and promotion or demotion of banlieue language. Not only should the languages in banlieue language be taken into account but also the languages the informants speak. By this I hope to question the precept that banlieue language is primarily a product of those who are truly second generation and non-integrated, and

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propose that it might be more of a French based phenomenon as Tejedor de Felipe (2004) suggests.

1.5 Hypotheses

Based on the goals described above, I have formulated the following hypotheses:

1.5.1 Age

The vernacular extends into the early to mid 30s among friends, whether or not it is used publicly. This opens the possibility for discussion of banlieue language being an in-group vernacular that ages with the group in question.

1.5.2 Education

Formal education will have some bearing on whether or not someone from the banlieue still uses the variety. However, those with higher levels of formal education will still admit to using banlieue language vocabulary. Few associate banlieue language lexical items with those of extremely low levels of education.

1.5.3 Gender

While women do use banlieue language slightly less than men due to a variety of reasons, including sociolinguistic norms (Labov 1972, Trudgill 1972), it is not as male-oriented as the media has led us to believe. For this reason, the vocabulary is perceived as being used equally among the sexes. In addition, empirical data on admitted usage will allow us to compare what the speakers perceive as usage among the sexes and what each sex admits to using personally.

1.5.4 Ethnicity

Banlieue language is not as specific to speakers of Maghrebi heritage as current studies claim. It is more a matter of cultural identity with the banlieue than actual ethnicity of the speaker.

1.5.5 Religion

I hypothesize that religion will have some effect on whether or not a person uses banlieue language.

1.5.6 Languages

The languages spoken by a person will be an important factor in whether or not a person will use banlieue language. The languages a person speaks will help identify him or her more strongly with either the periphery, and thus the banlieue, or mainstream French culture.

1.6 Dissertation Overview

Chapter two provides an overview of previous research on this topic as well as of related research. In particular, several key studies will provide background for the analysis of the results. Calvet's (1994) discusses the urban situation as it relates to language change. Together with Labov's work in Martha's Vineyard (1972), and Milroy's social network (1982), Bourdieu's (1982, 1991) concepts of linguistic marketplace and linguistic capital provide the sociolinguistic framework.

Chapter three outlines the methodologies used in the dissertation. This includes the creation of the data collection instruments as well as an in-depth

discussion of where the research was conducted. Finally, data compilation techniques are outlined as well as the statistical operations used in the data analysis.

Chapter four presents and analyzes the results on the vocabulary used in banlieue language. Calvet (1994) states that language contact creates a new variety, which reflects a blending of many influences and thus, a new identity. With that in mind, this chapter is based on a questionnaire containing lexical items from Roma, Arabic, Creole, old argot, and purely syllable reversal Verlan items to test the degree of integration of each component. To discover which factors were statistically significant, logistic regression tests were run. Additionally, individual social factors were taken into account, such as age, sex, origin, family presence in the banlieue, education, and religion.

Chapter five recapitulates the important findings of the research and analysis and also discusses related studies that may be forthcoming.

CHAPTER 2: PREVIOUS RESEARCH

2.1 Urban languages

2.1.1 *Language contact*

Val d'Oise and Seine-Saint-Denis are some of the most geographically diverse departments in France, with the largest number of immigrants. These immigrants represent various ethnicities, cultures, and languages from Africa and Eastern and Western Europe, as well as the Americas (Carpin, Tavan, and Dugué 2005, Vermes 1988a, Vermes 1988b); therefore a language contact situation has developed. Because of this, it is important to consider what happens in a country to which many immigrant communities have flocked, each bearing their own set of ideologies, as well as cultural and linguistic backgrounds. A second and related question is what effect is observed in a large municipal area in which several immigrant communities have come together, or as in the case of France, have been geographically pushed together?

Urciuoli (1995) takes care to point out that borders, while often thought of as being national, can also be drawn between territories, so let us begin our investigation into the previous research by looking first at languages in contact, especially as it relates to large cities.

One of the most instrumental works on that subject, especially as it applies to France, is Calvet (1994) He underlines the important concept that a country in which multiple languages are spoken is not necessarily a multilingual country; rather, that country is one of monolingual zones that 'convergent, sur la

piste, les marchés, les portes et, de façon plus générale, dans la ville' (Calvet 1994: 11). The result of this convergence can sometimes be what he calls a 'langue *ad hoc*, du type pidgin, en fonction de langue véhiculaire' (Calvet 1994: 11). Calvet (1994) also defines three roles that urban life plays in regards to language, 'la ville comme facteur d'unification linguistique, la ville comme lieu de conflit de langues et la ville comme lieu de coexistence et de métissage linguistique' (Calvet 1994: 11).

2.1.2 City melting pot erodes other languages

According to Calvet (1994), the first function of language in an urban setting is unification. Applying this to Paris, Calvet breaks Parisian urbanization into two separate periods, the first of those an interior migration to Paris during the early 19th century, when speakers of France's regional languages—Breton, Basque, Occitan, etc.—came to Paris. These regional languages were quickly abandoned in this first wave of urbanization, which he calls 'la période de croissance maximale' (Calvet 1994: 64). Those immigrants coming from the outer regions of France quickly abandoned their regional languages in order to assimilate.

In addition, as mentioned earlier, the regional languages in the Hexagon were also deliberately quashed in order to assimilate the population and create a united France (Gadet 2003, Offord 1996, Vermes 1988a, Vermes 1988b, Walter 1988, Walter 1997). While speakers of each language do exist, very few, if any, are monolingual in the regional language. The Jules Ferry laws in 1888 for free, secular, and mandatory education in French constituted one of the final blows

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for regional languages. The vestiges of these languages fight for survival in each of their respective rural regions. While they did contribute to the French language (Walter 1988) the borrowings into French took place during the period when the contact was the greatest, that is to say when the speakers of the regional languages were mostly monolingual (Walter 1988).

The second wave of urbanization, a 'période de stabilisation (Calvet 1994: 64), corresponds to a more modern-day France. French is now well established as the lingua franca; and most of its regional languages, despite recent efforts for revival, have all but disappeared. Their speakers are at best bilingual, and French is deeply established.

2.1.3 A new shift of function

Here French history intervenes to add another layer of superstrate languages to the mix. After the decimation of France's population in the World War II, there were not enough manual laborers in the country. France looked to its former colonies for workers, who, over a long history involving several steps, eventually settled in France and brought their families through the reunification acts of the seventies (Hargreaves 1997). Many of the wives were not only monolingual in their respective languages but also illiterate. The children lived in two worlds, each with its own language. This diglossic situation led to the children of these first immigrants living between two linguistic and cultural realities (Doran 2002, Hargreaves 1997, Lepoutre 1997, Melliani 2000).

At this point, exterior urban migration is the norm, and foreigners who are trying to learn French are able to preserve their language in a diglossic situation

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in which French is the 'official' language and their native language becomes the 'low' language, used only at home. In the larger, poorer, urban areas affected by immigration, Arabic, Berber, Creole, Roma, Turkish and several African languages influence French. It is at this point that the language with a foreign status adopts a function—that of an identity-marker (Calvet 1998).

The second set of languages, those of immigration, are not being abandoned as quickly due to their new function: identity. One does not have to look hard to find commentary about the so-called 'second generation' and its being between two cultures, mastering neither the language of the home nor the language of their adopted country (Amara 2003, Doran 2002, Hargreaves 1997, Lepoutre 1997, Melliani 2000). The media is rife with stereotypes of this second generation and its lack of communicative abilities in 'standard French'.

2.1.4 General emergence of urban languages

Contact among languages and speakers changes the ranking importance of the languages: that of home and family is less conducive to outside contact, which leads to a reversal: the lingua franca (Calvet 1998). He calls this a 'vehicular language' (Calvet 1998: 65), which, he notes, is normally the language of the dominant ethnicity; but if one is not present, that lingua franca instead takes the form of 'une langue neutre' (Calvet 1998: 65).

Whenever language contact happens, the speakers of all languages borrow lexicon from the other language or languages (Weinreich 1953). In the beginning this borrowing is mostly of nouns, and what is borrowed is often borrowed in a specific geographic location (Myers Scotton and Okeju 1973).

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The vocabulary borrowed in the case of language contact is not always foreign to the borrower and may replace existing lexicon in the vehicular language (Myers Scotton and Okeju 1973). This is especially true in banlieue language, where many nouns are borrowed for taboo concepts such as theft, sex, and drugs (Séguin and Teillard 1996, Goudialler 1997). As Guiraud (1963) points out, 'argot', one of the components of banlieue language and debated moniker for it, has its origins in the underworld as a secret language to conceal thefts and other crimes.

2.1.4.1 Examples of emerging language contact varieties

It is not just France that has experienced this phenomenon of contact languages creating a semi-coded language variety among younger generations. Similar linguistic varieties are being noted in recent times, especially in Africa. These varieties are badges of identity for their speakers (Githiora 2002, Ginthinji 2008) and serve as a lingua franca in an area where dominant languages and culture are rejected (Abdulaziz and Osinde 1997). In investigating these language varieties, we may see that banlieue language has some parallels and that the latter is not just a code among a segment of society, but may be becoming a more encompassing variety.

2.1.4.1.1 The case of Sheng and Engsh

One of the more studied mixed-code language varieties in recent years is Sheng. In Kenya, where Swahili and English fight for dominance among several, smaller regional languages, the contact has resulted in certain language mixes (Abdulaziz and Osinde 1997). Sheng, a code-derived moniker for a mixed

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language in Kenya, is a combination of Swahili and English, as well as some other local contact languages (Githiora 2002). This language variety is parallel to banlieue language in many ways. The primary speakers are 'primarily preadolescents through young adults' (Githiora 2002: 159). In addition, Sheng seems to be growing, and the use of this variety is based on solidarity and in-groupness (Githiora 2002, Githinji 2008). Githiora (2002) says that over 50 percent of the males questioned in a university setting still admitted to using the variety, and in fact saw its use as a measure of cultural in-group solidarity. This becomes particularly important when comparing with banlieue language. Indeed research on these newer language varieties has been done on older groups in an educated setting.

Another, similar language variety has evolved in the same area, but with English as its base (Abdulaziz and Osinde 1997). Engsh, the language game in question, is spoken by the wealthier youth who use English as their primary language instead of Swahili (Abdulaziz and Osinde 1997). Both varieties have become more popular and more fixed as the youth continue its use (Abdulaziz and Osinde 1997).

2.1.4.1.2 The case of Camfranglais/Francamglais

This language game is also relatively recent, with most studies having been conducted in the late 1980s. It is spoken by adolescents and those 'older' speakers in their 30s (Keissling 2005) in Cameroon where two ancient colonial languages, French and English, vie for power among the citizens (Keissling 2005). In this Cameroon language contact situation, both French and English

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are official languages. However, due to the colonial situation, most people are exposed to English as a scholastic language, and French as an official and scholastic language, in addition to various African mother tongues (Keissling 2005, Kouega 2003).

There are varying theories as to its origin. Koega (2003) attributes its beginnings to school children. Previous studies by Lobé-Ewan (1989) contribute the formation of this language game to older students in a university setting. Still others relegate its creation to the underground, criminal element (Tiayon-Lekobou 1985). Whatever its origins, it still remains a code-based method of communication with secrecy and identity as its two main functions, using a French-based syntax and code switching from contributing contact languages. (Kouega 2003).

As evidenced even by the variability in its name, this language built of contact languages is rapidly changing. Keissling (2005) cites his informants as using *Franacamglais* instead of *Camfranglais*. Its earlier monikers were *Camtok* and *Camspeak* (Kouega 2003).

Interestingly enough, Verlan vocabulary is found in Camfranglais, as attested by Keissling (2005); *mef*, *rep*, *rem*, *ress* and *refre*, are used. Those lexical items are *meuf* (*femme*, 'woman' or 'girlfriend'), *reup* (from *père* 'father'), *reum* (from *mère* 'mother'), *reus* (from *soeur* 'sister'), and *reuf/ refré* (from *frère*, 'brother') respectively (Keissling 2005). These lexical items are tonalized by the speakers (Keissling 2005).

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2.1.4.1.3 The case of Dutch *straattaal* ('street language')

As part of the outcropping of language mix varieties not located in Africa, Dutch *straattaal* was first started among the Dutch youth in big cities prone to immigration. Again, the official language of the country serves as the language of syntax, and words and phrases from minority languages are interspersed (Vermeij 2004).

2.2 Language and identity

Here I discuss the research defining the ties between language choice and identity to an area.

2.2.1 Language change as it relates to identity

As Guiraud (1963: 117) states '*tout langage est signe.*' Language has long been viewed as a symbol of identity. We choose to speak in a certain manner in order to convey our affiliations. Labov's (1972) Martha's Vineyard study proved the relationship between wanting to stay in an area and adopting the local speech norms because of it. Milroy's (1982) networking study established the usefulness of determining the extent to which an individual is immersed in the area culture in order to explain deviation from or adherence to local norms.

Bourdieu (1991) invokes the idea of a 'linguistic market', in which each register or style of speech has a different perceived value in society. In his theory, the register's perceived value also changes as the group of speakers changes. For instance, while speaking a very formal register is recognized as

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having a high value in formal circles, its perceived value would be lowered among informal circles whose members would view the speaker as too formal, snobby, or self-important. The inverse is also true.

Bourdieu's (1982) idea of 'contre-légitimité linguistique' in many ways is very similar to Labov's (1972) concept of 'covert prestige' in which certain individuals will consciously or unconsciously go against the linguistic norm. By doing this, the speakers set themselves apart from mainstream society, which in turn creates a certain prestige in their own circle. This prestige is 'covert', since it is not shared by the greater population, or by those who share the 'highest' values of linguistic currency, meaning the more prestigious circles of society.

One of the many functions of banlieue language, or any code, is its cryptic nature, which is especially useful when talking about taboo subjects in front of authority figures (Doran 2002, Gadet 2003, Goudailler 1997, Guiraud 1963, Méla 1997, Tejedor de Felipe 2004, Zerling 1998). Goudailler (1997) explains that a shift towards identity as the main function of argot has taken place, in what I am calling banlieue language.

2.2.2 In-group/ out-group behavior

In-group and out-group behavior applies to the banlieue, not just in what has been studied, but often on how it is studied. In fact, some of the researchers, such as Melliani (2000) and Doran (2002) have asked members of the group to gather information for them, following a kind of Labovian tradition (1972) when Labov recommended sending an African American in to collect data among the informants of the same culture.

Lepoutre's (1997) study takes place in a *cité* (government subsidized housing projects), near the *Cité des quatre mille*, his residential choice while teaching at a La Courneuve *collège* 'middle school' in 1990. Though he is French, he is, by virtue of his profession and age, automatically out-group. While this would not keep him from observing Verlan, as Gadet (2003) notes, it would keep him from active participation in a group of older Verlan speakers. His living in the environment as an ethnographer is highly efficient for observation of his target group, but by definition automatically restricts him to that particular socio-economic group. He is viewed as 'rich' by his major informant, banlieue speak for '*bourge*', an upbringing Lepoutre admits to.

Doran (2002) punctuates the in-group/out-group connection when talking about the pre-teen group stating that the students were loathe to use banlieue language with the teachers, who were older and very formal. The students, in other words, were already well aware that such language was not acceptable in front of adults.

2.2.3 Identification with the environment

Identification with the area and culture are also areas that have been widely studied. Urciuoli (1995: 532) talks about 'what pulls linguistic elements into a language' which focuses on identity as a factor. She talks about 'deploy[ing] language forms in "acts of identity"' which reflect 'people's sense of community, group and language' (Urciuoli 1995: 532). Calvet (1994: 62) proposes that speakers of languages in urban situations undergo two opposing forces, that of '*véhicularité*' and '*grégarité/identité*.' In other words, while the

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contact of multiple speakers of multiple languages may suppress individuality (speaking banlieue language instead of another native language), at the same time, that individuality is highlighted (speaking banlieue language instead of French).

It is certainly true that banlieue language, by any name, has been tied with identity and counter establishment by many (Aitsiselmi 1997, Bachmann and Basier 1984, Calvet 1994, Doran 2002). Melliani's (2000) and Doran's (2002) informants claim Verlan and banlieue language as their own. Both of them cite their informants of Maghrebi heritage as vehemently defending 'their' language and defending its use from those who are not in-group. Séguin and Teillard's (1996) students simply stated that if the dictionary project allowed too many older people to understand them, they would just change the language again to make it less comprehensible, to keep it theirs.

Gumperz (1983) calls this the 'we code', a cryptic language used by group participants, that both reinforces the group and isolates it from others. Both Doran (2002) and Tejedor de Felipe (2004) connect the 'we code' to banlieue language (using their own terms for banlieue language). Tejedor de Felipe (2004) studies it as it was illustrated in France by Séguin and Teillard (1996) two teachers/researchers at a local middle school (*collège*) in Pantin les Courtilliers during the school year 1994 - 1995. They observed the students over a long period, and in an effort to both study the language and improve the '*français standard*' of the students, a dictionary project was created in which not

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only did the teachers journal the experience but the students collected and defined many banlieue language lexical items.

Doran's (2002) section on identity in which her informants oppose themselves to *les Français de souche* underlines her attention to the Maghrebi youth, more importantly, she highlights the function of Verlan as 'Affirming Solidarity and Shared Values: "We're not *bourge*"' (Doran 2002: 203).

Calvet (1998) discusses linguistic history in France as well as in other countries. Diglossia is an early focal point of the work and I would like to expand this to the future of banlieue language among well-educated speakers. He emphasizes the importance of family in language choice as well as a normal tendency towards using the vernacular.

2.2.4 Maghrebi connection

As referred to above, identification with the local area promotes use of the language. Thus, many scholars have concentrated on what is assumed to be the most productive subset of speakers, and certainly those who have claimed the language as their own, those of Maghrebi heritage (Doran 2002, Meliani 2000). Doran (2002) emphasizes the dual role of adolescence and minority status of Verlan speakers. Indeed, her study focus is Maghrebi youth to the almost total exclusion of other ethnicities. She recounts the story of a young Maghrebi girl harassed by some obviously privileged Parisian youths, who have adopted a stereotypical *Caillera* ('gangster') persona. The girl refuses to relate to them on a banlieue level because they are not in-group. Doran's (2002) analysis is that Verlan is not a slang belonging to all youth groups equally. Rather, she says that

it is a 'sociolect' generated and controlled by those who associate themselves with the culture of the working class.

Melliani (2000: 16) focuses on *l'identité mixte* 'mixed identity' of the speakers. In fact, she concentrates on second generation Maghrebi culture and first generation 'Maghrebi-Franco' (Melliani 2000: 166) culture in Haute-Normandie. This group claims Verlan as theirs, as in Doran's (2002) study. The city is racially diverse and includes the same main components as the northern banlieues of Paris, though of slightly different proportions.

An interesting counter example to the dual ethnicity idea has been taken up by Bouzini (2000). He refutes the fact that the younger generation is still between two languages. In his thesis, he discovered that in fact, the younger generation was learning the two languages simultaneously as native languages instead of mastering neither of them. Carpin, Tavan, and Dugué (2005: 91) support this claim as well, saying that 98 percent of children of immigrants either born in the country or brought before the age of three admit to a *maîtrise* of the language (speaking it well). Indeed, Tejedor de Felipe (2004) discovered in the dictionary corpus that most innovations were French in nature, rather than more linguistically Maghrebi. Billiez (1990) surnamed banlieue language '*le parler interethnique véhiculaire*', which may give us reason to explore the extent of diffusion of this variety despite ethnicity.

2.3 Factors affecting the use of banlieue language

The following are social factors that may indeed affect whether or not a person will use banlieue language.

2.3.1 Age

When talking about banlieue language, there are many major generalizations about those who speak it. One of the most prevalent of these is age. In the past, research has indicated age as a major factor, and is often reflected in the very name for the linguistic qualities that pertain to banlieue language. Therefore, many scholars used monikers such as 'youth language' (Doran 2002) or 'young people's French' (Boyer 1997), '*l'argot des jeunes*' (Tejedor de Felipe 2004), 'the language of French adolescents' (George 1986), 'the lexis of the very young' (Walter 1997) or the like. For others, it is not the name that they have given banlieue language, but rather the scope of their study, which limits the age of their informants to those who are adolescents and very young adults (Doran 2002, Lepoutre 1997, Meliani 2000). Even among those researchers who do not call it youth language, or one of the derivatives, many of them have still mentioned a cut off that they believe to happen in the late adolescent years.

Lepoutre (1997: 333) specifically indicates a cut off, at age 16 to 25, at which time said youth stops embracing the street culture and adheres more closely to mainstream society. His assessment of those who continue to use the variety into later adolescence and adulthood is defined as '*des sous-cultures déviantes et délinquantes*' (Lepoutre 1997: 334).

Doran (2002) agrees with Lepoutre, accepting the established view that speakers of Verlan are quick to abandon it in their mid to late teens. She does, however, admit that this may vary as the target population ages and that it may eventually be carried on to the university. She analyses Verlan use according to various age groups, starting at the pre-teen group where she identifies them as looking to the older youth in the community. The second group is 'early adolescence' (Doran 2002: 241), which she says was the most prolific. High school is her cut off. The age of 16, when students are legally allowed to quit school, defines a turning point for Doran. She says that those who choose leave school tend to also increase Verlan use. She says the early emphasis on career-path choice in France leads to students evaluating the impact of language use and its effect on a speaker's future and that those who wish to continue their education will eschew less standard language in order to improve their linguistic abilities. The only older speakers were the disruptive older siblings who would occasionally interrupt the sessions, loudly speaking in Verlan for attention purposes.

Not all scholars have completely relegated the use of Verlan or banlieue language to those under the age of 16. Boyer (2001) is based on questionnaires given to students in the humanities and sciences at the DEUG level. His informants, even as early as 1995 to 1997 when the surveys took place, rejected the notion of banlieue language, in his case specifically Verlan, as being a youth language. Zerling (1999) and Calvet (2006) also have both indicated that use of

this sociolect is not relegated uniquely to youth, though no empirical data has been studied to prove this.

In recent years there seems to be a move away from 'youth' as it pertains to banlieue language. Scholars have been more prone to name the variety in question something that pertains to its identity factors, such as 'language of the inner and outer suburbs' (Valdman 2000), 'slang of the inner city' (Nicolas 2005), 'urban verlan' (Zerling 1999), or finally, 'contemporary urban French' (Goudailler 2002).

2.3.2 Gender

Gender is one of the many social factors that can affect the 'social monetary value' of the language (Bourdieu 1991). It is a well-established concept in sociolinguistics that because of covert and overt prestige, women are usually more inclined to defend the language of overt prestige (Labov 1972, Trudgill 1974). Especially during the child-rearing experience, women tend not only to use the standard, or their approximation of the standard, but also to hypercorrect in order to pass on 'correct' language to their children (Labov 1972). Along those same lines, Trudgill's study (1972) shows that women tend to over-report their use of the standard and men tend to under-report the same. Labov (1972) speculates that women, because of a lack of real power in many societies, depend on symbolic power (Bourdieu 1991) derived from language. In addition, traditional sociolinguistic studies show that women are less likely to use a non-prestige dialect and that men will normally be leaders in its change (Labov 1972, Trudgill 1972). Doran's (2002) studies of the dialect support this as it applies to

French.

Applying these theories to France, Lefebvre (1991) found that French women do tend to uphold the sociolinguistic gender norms. Pooley's (2003) study upheld covert-overt rules among regional languages in France, finding that French had become the language of women in the areas where Occitan was still spoken, and the fact that men had preserved the regional language. Since a regional language would have less prestige in a country in which the 'standard' is so important, it seems reasonable that women would use French, the language with the most linguistic capital, and that men would tend to use the regional language. Houdebine-Gravaud (2003) further proves the sociolinguistic truths by underlining the fact that even in this day and age, vulgar vocabulary often is still 'forbidden' to women and girls. Melliani's (2000) study did include some younger female informants who used the variety and Doran (2002) did discuss females using it, though again, less than the males. No one, however, has investigated this quantitatively.

2.3.3 Youth language

Eckert (1999) described language choices among students of different social cliques in a local high school environment. In this study, she found direct ties between the language variety a student chose to use and his or her social position in the high school. Youth is a time of experimentation and construction of identity, and language has been proven to be an expression of a person's identity (Aitsiselmi 1997, Doran 2002, George 1986, Labov 1972, Mela 1997). It is therefore not surprising that during an era of uncertainty and rebellion that the

language choices made by those youth would also follow this trend. Youth tend to be more innovative in their language choice. Banlieue language was first marked as a language created by youth and its use has been linked to identification with the urban environment (Boyer 1997, Boyer 2001, Doran 2002).

2.4 Language attitudes and perceptions of speakers

Baker (1992: 9) states, 'In the life of a language, attitudes to that language appear to be important in language restoration, preservation, decay or death. If a community is grossly unfavourable to bilingual education or the imposition of a "common" national language is attempted, language policy implementation is unlikely to be successful.' In other words, the way that people view a language, and their identification with it will affect whether or not the speakers choose to change. Their attitudes toward a given language (or variety) may affect its longevity. While the bulk of his study concerned Welsh versus English in the UK, the same can apply towards banlieue language, since the ties between identity and banlieue language have already been established.

Preston (2002: 40) has done extensive work on linguistic attitudes and folk linguistics in the United States: 'It is perhaps the least surprising thing imaginable to find that attitudes towards languages and their varieties seem to be tied to attitudes towards groups of people' Language attitudes are inherent in our society, and as Preston (2002) highlights, a speaker of a given variety is often viewed in the same light as his language. Assumptions are made about his or her intelligence level, amicability, work ethic, etc., simply based on the variety

of language a speaker chooses to use. Therefore, '... an understanding of this folk correlation between group stereotypes and linguistic facts appears to be particularly important to the study of the social identities we maintain and respond to' (Preston 2002: 41).

Githingi (2008) applies this area of study to Sheng, which we have mentioned has marked similarities with banlieue language and is itself an urban language. He explores the mixed attitudes towards Sheng in conjunction with the perceptions of its speakers. Other studies on attitudes towards Sheng have been done by Githiora (2002) and Fink (2005).

French, however, is the subject of very few attitudinal studies. Pecheur (1988) studied attitudes of the 1000 French people toward their language, querying literature and 'degrading influences' on French in recent history. However, with that one exception, the few attitudinal studies concerning the French language relate to areas outside the hexagon, where French is not the only official language.

There exists a marked dearth of scholarly articles concerning banlieue language is the speakers' own perceptions. Many scholars have reported that their informants claim 'Verlan' specifically, and banlieue language by extension, is a language they, themselves, created and that they 'own' (Doran 2002, Melliani 2000, Séguin and Teillard 1996) even though Verlan itself dates much further back than this century (Goudaillier 1997, Goudaillier 2002, Merle 1997). The French media is rife with stereotypes concerning the speakers' level of education and their linguistic prowess in French, or lack thereof. And even

among the scholars and educators, many (Calvet 2006, Doran 2002, Lepoutre 1997) have reported that those who speak the deepest vernaculars are often those at the furthest margins of society. However, no one has asked speakers what they think about the speakers' typical education level, age, or gender.

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CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The goal of this study was not simply to test typical Verlan words but also the extent to which the many languages in contact in the banlieue influence banlieue vocabulary. As with any contact language situation, lexical items tend to be borrowed or calqued from one language to another (Weinreich 1953), and this study wishes to examine that phenomenon in French to a fuller extent than previous studies have done (Boyer 2001, Calvet 1981, 1987, Doran 2002, etc.). To that end, a questionnaire with a list of lexical items was developed with the aid of a speaker in the banlieue area.

3.1 Development of the questionnaire

This speaker, age 30, was chosen because of his ties to the banlieue. He identifies strongly with the area. His personal background reflects the diversity found in the banlieue. His father was born in France to Italian parents who immigrated to France from Italy after WWII and his mother can be described as *français de souche*, or native French.

The list he created was refined in several stages. It was first distributed among several French natives from regions other than the banlieues of large, urban areas. Lexical items this test group knew, such as *chouilla*, or 'a little bit' in Arabic, were excluded. This was done to limit the questionnaire to specifically banlieue vocabulary and the number of lexical items in general.

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The second step was to test the list among women from the area. Women are less likely to be leaders of a change in a non-standard variety, as seen in 2.3.2 (Labov 1972, Trudgill 1974). Therefore the list was distributed to two female residents of the banlieue, at that time in their mid 20s, in order to select words that were more mainstream banlieue, and also to control for vocabulary that could be particular of the original speaker's idiolect. Finally, some very mainstream slang lexical items were inserted in order to represent the *français de souche* who are also a part of this environment. Using more mainstream French had a secondary function: to see if these words were used as often as the other lexical items in the list or rejected by the banlieue residents. This also means that someone outside the banlieue area may well recognize the vocabulary.

3.2 Lexical items

The lexical items in the questionnaire included both individual words and phrases that are from some of the many contact languages in the banlieue area, along with some French slang words. Roma is represented by eight words: *marave* 'to beat up someone,' *bédave* 'to smoke marijuana,' and its noun *bédo*, which means 'a marijuana cigarette,' *chourave* 'to steal,' *se (la) natchave* 'to leave,' *les schmidts*, 'police officers,' and *gadjo* and *gadgi*, which mean a 'non-Roma male' and 'non-Roma female' respectively. In the Creole category, there are four lexical items: *goumer* 'to beat up someone,' *makoume*, 'homosexual male,' and *sa ou fe* and *sa ka mache*, which both mean 'how are you.' *Sa ou fe*

is the more formal of the two, the latter being derived from *marcher* 'to walk' (Mondesir and Carrington, 1992). In colloquial French '*Ça marche?*' comes from 'Is it walking?' and has come to mean 'Is it working for you/ how's it going?'

Arabic provides three items: *choucrane* 'thank you,' *kiffer*, 'to really like something,' and *ouaiche* 'how are you?' Verlan contributes two words: *keum* 'guy,' and *sky* 'whiskey.' Finally, in argot there are four: *daron* and *daronne*, which mean 'mother' and 'father' respectively, *binouse* for 'a beer,' and *savater*, which means 'to beat up someone.'

3.3 Questionnaire format

The questionnaire is comprised of two separate parts. The first page concentrates on demographic information of the informant and poses questions such as age and level of education, while the second part of the questionnaire asked direct questions about the vocabulary.

3.3.1 Demographic information

This part of the questionnaire asked a subject's age, gender, employment, languages spoken and other features. Because identity with the banlieue and rejection of mainstream France have been determined as factors in whether or not someone will use standard French or banlieue language (Calvet 1994, Doran 2002, Melliani 2000), the questionnaire asks how long the informant has lived in Garges and if close family members also live or lived in Garges. When an informant did not live in Garges, he or she wrote the name of his or her city of residence and answered the questions accordingly. This was based on Milroy's

(1980) social networking model which realized the importance of ties to an area, such as whether or not informants have family members in the area, if they socialize mainly with people from the surrounding areas, etc. in determining what language variety people will be prone to use.²

The category of profession posed unexpected problems since most of the informants were either actively seeking employment or were currently enrolled in college. Only the private venue category held full time employment. In the first two cases, the profession an informant hoped to practice was asked in order to determine not only current/ future socioeconomic status, but as an indicator of whether the informant would be more likely to want to stay in the banlieue or find a way to leave it. As demonstrated by Labov's Martha's Vineyard study (1972), identification with an area is a strong determinant in whether someone will want to use the dialect of the region. Therefore, if the profession desired is something that cannot be done in the banlieue, such as marine biologist, one would expect that the informant in question would be less likely to use banlieue language.

The questionnaire next queries nationality and birthplace, since many studies indicate that the primary users of banlieue language are of Maghrebi origin, or the studies investigate that particular ethnic group while excluding other nationalities (Doran 2002, Lepoutre 1997, Melliani 2000). The current study wishes to determine if the lexical items do indeed represent banlieue speech, regardless of their ethnic background, or if they are limited to a particular ethnic group. Therefore, informants are asked if they were born in

² It should be noted here that very few informants included information on their family members. It was therefore not used.

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France as well as what their nationalities and ethnic origins are. Also, I ask about an informant's religion and which languages he or she speaks.

Religion was requested in order to see if it had any effect on how much banlieue language informants know or use. To follow up this question, informants were also asked whether or not they practiced the religion they had indicated. Sociological studies have found that for France, religion has a bigger impact than social class (Brulé 1966, Michelat and Simon 1977), so I decided to test that. Finally, the language section asks which languages are spoken by the informant and to what degree, including what his or her maternal language is. As previously mentioned, media representation of the banlieue language speaker is of an immigrant in scholastic failure who is typically caught between two cultures and who masters neither French nor his or her native/heritage language. This stereotype is also held as within certain scholarly circles (Hargreaves 1997). While this may be the case for many speakers of banlieue language, the present study investigates the limits of such an image found in both the media and current scholarship, in addition to opening the question of whether we should be examining banlieue language as a much bigger social phenomenon.

3.3.2 Word list

The second part of the questionnaire was comprised of the word list itself. For each of the 21 lexical items, the informant was asked whether or not he or she knew the lexical item in question. Each word was presented individually, so no context was given to the informant. If the participants did not know the word or phrase, they simply circled 'I do not know this word' without answering other

questions related to that particular item. They did not answer the following questions about who, in their opinion, used the word, since by not knowing the lexical item in question, they would have no basis for judgment.

If the participant claimed to know the word, three possible definitions were given. One was the definition given by the native speaker, and agreed upon by the female residents of the banlieue. This was used as the 'expected answer.' The other two choices I selected by looking in a French dictionary where the lexical item would have been placed alphabetically, in order to find an entry as close as possible to the lexical item. For example, for *goumer*, I used 'a childhood illness' because the word the French word *gourme* means 'impetigo.'

Some definitions were clearly misleading, created by using a translation or something believable for someone not from the area. Here a pertinent example would be the word *sky*. In the banlieue, *sky* means 'whisky,' created by Verlan, *skiwhi* and then apheresis. Therefore, as a misleading response, the direct translation, *ciel*, was given. This is especially important because all informants were informed that I was an American studying banlieue language. They were thus informed that their knowledge of banlieue language and vocabulary was important, not their knowledge of English.

After defining the lexical item, the informant was asked a series of questions about each particular response. The first of those questions pertained to self-reported usage. The informants had to report whether they often used the lexical item in question, rarely used it, or never used it.

The remaining questions about each lexical item asked the participant to describe the type of person that would use the vocabulary item in question. Informants were told that circling more than one answer was acceptable. The first of these questions asked about gender. The informants had to decide if the lexical item was used primarily by males, females, or equally by both genders. The next question was about age. Informants were given the choices 'a younger generation,' 'my generation,' or 'an older generation.' Education level was queried as well, with 'not very educated,' 'somewhat educated,' and 'very educated' as possible responses.

The informant first had to circle the definition of the word or phrase for each of the lexical items. This particular step was pivotal. If the informant provided an expected answer, all other questions following the lexical item were counted in the statistics. The opposite was also true: once an unexpected definition was provided, all following questions pertaining to that particular lexical item were excluded, since the informant's opinions would no longer be relevant. In the example above, if a participant chose *ciel* as the meaning of *sky*, I did not count that person's answers pertaining to whether or not they used it, who used it, what age group used it, etc., since the focus of the study was to ascertain who used banlieue vocabulary. Informants also had the option of 'refining' the definition on the space provided to the right of the choices, or writing their own definitions.

3.4 Venues

I distributed the questionnaire in the Northern banlieues of Paris (93 – Seine-Saint-Denis and 95 - Val d'Oise), from early December 2005 to early January 2006, a mere few weeks after the riots that wracked the surrounding areas. Informants were solicited in three separate venues, including l'Université de Saint Denis in the 93, la Mission Locale in Garges-Lès-Gonesse in the 95, and finally, with a group outside a specific venue; friends and acquaintances were solicited at private holiday gatherings in Val D'oise and Seine-Saint-Denis.

At each venue, I circulated, explaining the project and asking for volunteers, distributing informed consent forms and questionnaires, and then circled back through to answer any questions and collect the finished questionnaires. I did not read the questionnaire to anyone or pronounce any of the words. Informants were told simply that I was an American student doing my doctoral dissertation on banlieue vocabulary.

3.4.1 L'université de Saint Denis

To test the hypothesis of retention, I chose to investigate banlieue language among older, more educated speakers, especially since the speakers investigated in many of the Verlan studies are now well into adulthood. Additionally, it was important to test whether banlieue language really disappears or simply goes underground in a diglossia. Did this variety grow with the speakers in question, and do they use it with their peers?

Therefore, the first major venue was l'Université de Saint Denis. Students' participation was solicited during their lunch hour. In all, 35 vocabulary

questionnaires came from the university, 25 from female informants and 10 from male informants. The locale was chosen for several reasons. Though Lepoutre (1997) and Doran (2002) point out that banlieue language seems to disappear among speakers after their mid-teens, especially if those speakers wish to continue their education, no one has concentrated specifically on retention past the age of 16. Boyer's study (2001) involved a questionnaire that was distributed at colleges in Montpellier, Paris and Lille, but did not focus on age limit of retention.

Additionally, as a university, the venue assured more diversity. Many of the informants in this venue came from places other than the banlieue, though most of them are geographically close, due to a French program called *la carte scolaire* (the scholastic map), in which students are required to go to the university in closest geographical proximity for at least the first year unless the student places into one of the more prestigious schools. Therefore, some of the informants did not know where Garges was, while others live there. This venue allows us to investigate the depths of vocabulary knowledge as well as the linguistic attitudes, since some speakers may very well recognize the words in question but may not use the lexicon in order to be more upwardly mobile.

3.4.2 *La Mission Locale*

The Mission Locale in Garges was the second venue. This organization is the unemployment office for people between the ages of 16 and 26, though no one under the age of 18 was considered for the study. La Mission Locale holds workshops to help increase the employment among this age group while also

performing the duties of an unemployment office. While the education level among this group is lower overall than those at the University, it does provide another age group and a distinct difference in setting from the other venues. Though much of the research has involved people of lower socio-economic status, 18- to 26-year-olds constitute an older group of 'youth.'

There were only 12 informants here, seven males and five females who ranged in age from 18 to 25). As a group, their educational level was lower than the others, though each informant had a degree. Most of them had a BEP (seven informants or 58%). One person had a *bac*, one DEUG and one Maîtrise (8% each). Finally, this group also all lived in Garges and has less of a likelihood of wanting to or being able to get out of the banlieue than the university group. In fact, the professions they were aspiring to were those that could be done locally, several at the local international airport, which according to the director of the Mission Locale, hires quite a few of their youth. The professions they were seeking were those of sales person, security officer, FedEx personnel, mechanic, chauffeur, business person, health aid, and accountant.

3.4.3 Private holiday gatherings

Finally, the last venue is more of a group than an actual venue. Twenty questionnaires were distributed among groups of friends in the area, ten to females and ten to males. The questionnaires were distributed at various social gatherings over the holidays. Most of these informants constitute yet an older group than the two others, and they are informants with whom I am in-group. This group was instrumental because they are all older, in their late twenties and

early thirties, and most of them are quite well educated. The vast majority of this group also holds steady employment. In theory, the last two factors should lead to either the most dropping of Verlan/ banlieue language or the most diglossia. Therefore this group allows me to compare age and employment as factors.

3.5 Informant base

Here I discuss the demographics of the participants in the study.

3.5.1 *Gender*

Overall, there were 67 informants counted in the statistics, 40 women (59.8%) and 27 (40%) men. Of the 35 informants from the university, 25 (71.4%) were female and 10 (28.5%) were male. There were 12 informants from the Mission Locale, five (41.7%) females and seven (58.3%) males. The final 20 informants were part of the 'friends' venue, which was composed of ten female and ten male informants.

3.5.2. *Nationality*

The informants' nationalities were overwhelmingly French. Only 8 people (12%) did not report a nationality. Almost 85% (59) of the informants who reported nationality reported being French, and 84% (58) said that France was their birthplace. An additional 5% claimed dual nationalities with Portugal, Bulgaria and Poland, one informant each. Two informants were Algerian and Portuguese.

Romanian and the Reunion Island had one informant each. In the latter case, the informant chose to list the Island, despite its being a DOM. ³

3.5.3 *Ethnicity*

A study of the informants' ethnicity creates a more accurate picture of the informant base. Thirty-three informants, or 50%, said that French was their ethnicity, *origine familiale*, on the questionnaire. Sixteen informants, or 24%, said that they were from the Maghreb. Four informants, 6.6%, came from other European countries, and two informants said they were from Central or South America. Only 7.5% (five informants) said that they were from the Caribbean and Mayotte. The rest were from African origins, four informants from West Africa (6.6%); one from East Africa, and one that just stated African (1.5% each).

3.5.4 *Religion*

Religion was only counted in the positive; therefore, if an informant answered the question about religion as 'atheist,' it was added to the 'no' answers because it is not a formal, organized religion. Therefore, only 36 informants are counted in the question on religion. Of those, 47% are Muslim (17 informants), followed closely by Catholicism at 36% (13 informants). Four informants, 11%, simply stated that their religion was Christian, and 2.8% (one informant each) said they were Protestant or Kabyle.

3.5.5 *Department of Residency*

Departments of residency vary, and six informants did not indicate their place of residence. Those who did indicate residence came from six different

³ Numbers here, and throughout this dissertation, were rounded, in this case to the nearest tenth. This will account for any discrepancies.

departments: 91 Hauts-de-Seine, 92 Essonne, 93 Seine-Saint-Denis, 77 Marne-et-Seine, 95 Val d'Oise and 75 Paris. The largest group of the informants came from Val d'Oise, at 51% (31 informants), followed by Seine-Saint-Denis at 24.6% (15). The remaining 25% were broken up in Paris at 13.1% (eight), Hauts-de-Seine at just under 4.9% (three), two informants from Val de Marne (3.3%), and then 1.6%, one informant each, in Essonne and Val de Marne.

3.5.6 Age

Age is calculated in terms of groups laid out for a previous study in the Ile de France region. The logarithm computed the likelihood of buying a house, based on age (Baccaini 1998). Since owning housing is arguably a sign of adulthood, I chose this study to define my own age groups: 18 and 19, 20 – 24, 25 – 29, 30 – 36. Three informants were excluded due to their ages of 49, 58 and 59 respectively, because there would be too few results in each of the age groups and the difference between their ages and the rest of the informants in the study is quite important⁴. The largest category was 20 – 24 at 42% (28 informants). 24- to 29-year-olds represent 24% (16) of the informants and 30- to 36-year-olds made up 13.4%, 10 informants.

3.5.7 Education

Sixty-five informants answered the question of education. The informants' education levels ranged from no formal degree to the doctorate level

⁴ In looking over the questionnaires, the 49-year-old knew almost all the words due to his deep attachment to the cité, and the 58-year-old woman used many of the words as a sign of linguistic capital (Bourdieu 1982) with her sons between the ages of 27 and 32. The 59-year-old man knew very few of the words, with the exception of the Creole vocabulary.

(DEA/DESS). The question asked them the highest level of education that they had completed, not what they were doing at the present time. Only one informant did not answer the question. Of those who did, only one informant had no formal education, and he was excluded due to his age. In order from lowest education to highest: 18.5% (12) of informants had completed the *bac* (short for *baccalauréat*, an equivalent to high school but with a grueling exam at the end), 21.5% (14 informants) had a BEP (an alternative, technical school degree), 3.1% (two) had a BTS (a degree that is two years after the high school or technical school experience, geared toward learning in a technical environment. Some engineers take this route.)—15.4% (10) had done the DEUG (a degree that no longer exists in France, equivalent to an associate's degree in the U.S.), 23% (15) had done the *Licence* (a three-year degree equivalent to the U.S. bachelor's degree), 13.9% (nine) had a *Maîtrise* (equivalent to a Master's degree), 1.5% (one) had completed a DEA, and 3% (two) had completed a DESS (both terminal degrees that can be done right before a doctorate). Overall, it was a fairly well educated group.

3.5.8 Languages

Languages were recorded as follows: if an informant wrote down the fluency of the language in question, the languages were put in order of knowledge. For instance, if an informant wrote: 'English: beginner, French: native, German: fluent,' French was recorded as L1, German as L2, and English as L3. If no level was reported, languages were recorded in the order they were

written on the questionnaire, based on the assumption that more solid languages would come to mind first.

3.5.8.1 First language

Sixty-five people answered this question. A high percentage of 78.5% (51) of the informants reported French as their native language. Arabic, Kabyle and Spanish were next, though a long way behind, with 4.6% each (three speakers). Creole, Polish, Portuguese and Soninke, a language of Senegal, had one speaker each (1.5%).

3.5.8.2 Second language

Fifty-seven informants responded to the question of second language. Of those, only 19.4% said that French was their second language (10 informants). The effects of language instruction in school are also shown in the L2 category, since 52.6% (30) of the informants listed English as a second language. Five of the informants (8.8%) reported Arabic as an L2. Spanish and Italian were at 5% (three) each, followed by German at 3.5%, (two informants) and Berber, Creole, Portuguese at one informant each (1.8%).

3.5.8.3 Third language

Forty-two informants had a third language on their questionnaire. English was the biggest group here as well, at 42.9% (18). Spanish followed closely with 38.1% (16 informants), and Portuguese had 7.1% (three). German was reported by almost 5% (two) of the informants. Arabic, French and Italian were reported by one informant each, or 1.8%.

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3.5.9 Professions

It is important to remember here that well over half of the informants were recruited in environments where they were either actively seeking a job or were at the university in order to complete a degree to obtain a certain job. Therefore, for the case of this study we do not distinguish between a profession an informant is currently practicing and a profession an informant would like to practice.

The largest group in this category was those who were or wanted to be teachers (10.2%). Business was next with 8.47%, closely followed by chauffeur/driver at 6.8%. The professions of day-care professional (*animateur*) and engineer were represented at 5% each. The next most popular professions were computer specialist and accountant at 3.4% each. The rest of the professions were chosen by one informant each: Fedex worker, mechanic, health aid, trainer, human resources, supervisor, manager, coordinator of production, film distribution, cinematographer, artist, documents specialist, and ethnographer.

3.6 Statistical analysis methodology

Two statistical programs were used for this dissertation. The following sections describe both programs, their functions, and why they were used.

3.6.1 Systat

One statistical program used to compile results was Systat. It was used to compute all simple, mathematical procedures, such as the raw percentages for

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the descriptive statistics. The program was able to count tokens among the various factors and show them side-by-side to facilitate comparisons. For example, with this program I was able to find out how many people in any given age group said that a particular word was used by people with a low level of education. This program was not used to select statistically significant factors, but to simply compile percentages.

In most cases, factors in this section were treated individually, meaning that those informants who came from Paris and those who came from Seine-Saint-Denis were not grouped together, i.e. the factor of residency. The notable exception to this rule is in the section of age, where I divided the ages (18, 19, 20, 21, etc.) according to the age groups given in the study of Ile de France (Baccaini 1998), as mentioned earlier. Again, this study created age groups based on a logarithm that determined how likely it was that a person of a given age would own a home in France. This is a study on a variety that was once discussed as a 'youth' language. Therefore the likelihood of home ownership—arguably a mark of adulthood—is a good parallel.

3.6.2 *Goldvarb*

Goldvarb is a binomial logistic regression program that is used especially when independent variables are sufficiently complex to include cells of unequal number. In my study, in order to be as thorough as possible, initially, all social factors named above were included. Because of this, it is virtually impossible that in a sample of only 70 original informants, there would be an equal number of males and females in the same age group from Val d'Oise with a licence and

the same ethnicity. This makes most other statistical programs invalid for statistical procedures of this nature.

The study of lexical items was twofold. I decided for the purposes of this study to test actual knowledge of the vocabulary items in question among the demographics first and then test the self-admitted usage of the items, i.e. whether or not informants admitted to these lexical items being part of their vocabulary. Therefore, the first dependant variable was knowledge, and the second variable was self-admitted usage.

Since Golvarb only recognizes binary categories, the information had to be adapted. To compute knowledge, therefore, any non-answer or unexpected answer was counted as not knowing the lexical item, and any expected answer was counted as knowledge of the word. To compute usage, those who did not know the lexical item and those who said they never used it were grouped together. Those informants who admitted to using the vocabulary at either level, sometimes or rarely, were also grouped together.

The original independent factors were gender, age, education level last completed by the informant, which French department they live in, country of origin/birthplace, nationalities, ethnicities, religion, languages they speak, and the origin of the word. A discussion follows on each of the factors.

3.6.2.1 Age

As a reminder, the age groups were broken up into the following groups: 18 and 19, 20 – 24, 25 – 29 and 30 – 36 based on Baccaini's (1998) logarithm. No age groups could be collapsed.

3.6.2.2 Religion

For statistical purposes, religion was divided into two categories—practicing versus non-practicing—since Goldvarb discarded religious affiliation.

3.6.2.3 Ethnicity

Initially ethnicity was divided into two categories: first ethnicity and second ethnicity. After initial testing, the only significant ethnicity group in the first run was the second ethnicity. In the initial run, it was determined, by both similarity of weights and category, that much of the information in the second ethnicity could be combined. The original categories in this section were Italian, Polish, Irish, Portuguese, Algerian, Tunisian, Moroccan, West African, Spanish, German, Bulgarian, Rumanian, Eastern European, Caribbean, Commoran, Mayotte and South/Central American. Italian was eliminated as a 'knock-out,' which means that the one informant of Italian descent knew all of the vocabulary items and therefore his information had to be eliminated in order for the statistical program to run.

The weights for each of the individual countries that make up the Maghreb were close enough to justify their being collapsed, and since they also share similar geography and culture, Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia could be collapsed as the Maghreb. African countries as well provided similar weights, regardless of location within the continent. Finally, when another ethnicity was combined with French, the weights were similar. Therefore, the final categories for second ethnicity were African, Polish, Spanish, Portuguese, Maghrebi, German, and South/Central American.

3.6.2.4 Education

There were informants in each educational level from no official degree to BEP, the bac, BTS, DEUG, License, Maîtrise, and DEA, DESS. In this group, because of weights on the first few runs, very little could be collapsed, which resulted in only a merger of DEA and DESS because their weights were nearly identical and they are of the same level of education (5 years after the *baccalauréat*).

3.6.2.5 Languages

Languages, originally classified as L1, L2 and L3, contained German, English, Spanish, Kabyle, Arabic, Soninke, Berber, Bulgarian, Rumanian, Italian, Creole, Portuguese, Polish, and Irish. In the French system, students usually learn two languages during their school years, often including Spanish, English and German. With the first few runs, it became apparent that these categories could be further simplified, again because of weights, into 'scholastic language' and 'heritage language.'

To determine which category applied to each informant, I cross-referenced his or her ethnicity, nationality, and country of origin. For example, in almost every case, English, Spanish and German are scholastic languages. In the rare event when an informant listed Spanish as an ethnicity, nationality, or origin, the answer was grouped with heritage language. If not, the language was listed as scholastic. Portuguese, Arabic, Kabyle, and less common African languages such as Soninke are not often taught in French schools, but again, the

ethnicities, nationalities, and origins were cross-referenced. No categories were collapsed.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

4.0 Introduction of results

This chapter will present and discuss the results from three different angles. First we will look at the individual lexical items, organized by language. For each word, I will discuss what perceptions the informants have toward these words. Their results are compiled according to what they believe to be the gender, educational level, and age of someone who would use each word. I will then provide some analysis about what these results mean.

After that will come a section that addresses the discrepancy between the perception of who uses such words and the actual usage claimed by the informants for themselves. This section will first focus on gender, then age and education. In addition to this, self-reported usage by the informants is analyzed in terms of venue and the items' original language.

Finally, factors that are significant in both the perception and admitted/self-reported usage will be investigated. These factors include the social factors discussed in section 4.3, including ethnicity, nationality, religion, birthplace, and place of residence.

4.1 Analysis of individual lexical items

In this section, I explore each of the contributing languages separately and the lexical items that fall into those languages.

4.1.1 Roma

This language was included because of the recent increase of Eastern immigration and the nomadic tendencies of the Roma people. As they are not as integrated in the society as other groups, it will be interesting to see the extent of the influence of this language in banlieue language. Tejedor de Felipe (2004) notes their lack of contribution in the Séguin and Teillard (1996) corpus.

At the time of the fieldwork, there were several camps of Roma people in the Garges area. The government sets up areas for these camps in order to give nomadic people access to clean water and the children access to schooling. However, from what my informants said, most French people tend to avoid contact with these areas. There are also many people from the east who have settled permanently in the area and enrolled their children in school.

4.1.1.1 Marave⁵

This verb, meaning 'to fight/ beat up,' belongs to the category of banlieue language that does not show its flexion by changing forms while tensed. This well-documented phenomenon (Goudailler 1997, Séguin and Teillard 1996) has allowed some researchers to compare banlieue language to a Creole (Jablonka 2003). Whether it is used in *passé composé*, future, or present, there is no audible, or overt, flexion to the word itself. *Je l'ai marave. Je vais le marave. Je le marave* 'I beat him up. I'm going to beat him up. I'm beating him up.' As *se battre* or *massacrer* 'to fight,' it is used in the physical, literal sense only. It

⁵ The reader should note that these spellings were given to me by my informant, but as Séguin and Teillard (1996) note, since banlieue language is oral in nature, spellings vary. In fact, in their study, there were as many as 11 different spellings for some lexical items.

cannot be used figuratively to fight *for* something. It is, therefore, a word with inherently violent connotations.⁶

4.1.1.1.1 Gender

Out of a total of 52 expected answers, only one informant (2%) said that primarily women used the word *marave*, while 22 informants (42%) claimed that its users were masculine, and 29 informants (56%) attributed its use to both sexes.

4.1.1.1.2 Education

Forty-eight informants responded to this question. It is interesting that when I tabulate the lowest three responses, 'not very,' 'somewhat,' and the combination of those two, 68.8% (33 informants) believed that *marave* was in those lower categories for education. Of those 33 informants, nine chose 'not very' (18.8%) and 20 chose 'somewhat' educated (41.7%). An additional four informants (8.3%) chose the combination of said lower categories. One could postulate that the violent nature of the word would cause it to be used mainly by people who would physically fight, which is often something left to lesser-educated people. Perhaps most surprising is the fact that five people circled 'very' educated (10.4%) and another 10 said that people of all educations use it, which is 20.8% of the informants. I should at this point like to propose that indicating 'very educated' and indicating all three categories constitutes the same thing. Since we are looking at a non-prestige variety, the covert prestige in use comes from the lower classes and less educated. A non-prestige variety

⁶ Again, numbers in the following statistics may not add up to 100 due to rounding to the nearest tenth.

does not usually start out as change from above. If a non-standard lexical item is used also by the very educated, one would expect that the word is used by education levels below as well, given sociolinguistic tendencies toward change from below (Labov 1972).

4.1.1.1.3 Age

Fifty-one informants chose to answer this question. I will discuss age by age groups, starting with the youngest group and ending with a discussion of the oldest age group. Nine members of the youngest group answered this question. Of those, the largest group selected 'a younger generation,' at 55.6%, or five informants. The second largest category for them was 'my generation' with three informants, or 33.3%. A combination of his or her own generation and a younger generation was chosen by one informant, or 11.1%. This is what we might expect as being part of the stereotypical 'youth language.' However, the results do not follow the expected pattern as well as one might expect as the age groups of the informants get older.

The next group, those from age 20 to 25, had 21 informants participate. Of those, the largest group chose their own generation (10 informants, at 47.7%). Seven informants chose a younger generation (33.3%) and two informants chose a combination of the latter two categories (9.5%). However, for the first time we see an older generation in the statistics. One informant (4.8%) chose an older generation, and one informant chose a combination of his own generation with that of an older generation.

For the 25- to 29-year-olds, there were 13 responses. Of those, the largest category was a younger generation in combination with their own generation—six informants, or 46.15%. Five informants (38.5) chose simply their own generation; one informant (7.7%) chose a younger generation and one chose all generations (77%).

Finally, let us look at the oldest group. There were eight responses. Of those, the largest group, three informants (37.5%) chose a younger generation as the primary users of this word. Two informants chose their own generation (25%) and one informant chose a combination of the two (12.5%). Two (25%) informants chose all three categories of age.

In analyzing this data, it looks as if the word belongs mostly to people under 30. After 30, the 'younger' category increases, and the category of those who claim specifically their own generation decreases. If we consider that the word means 'to fight,' it may be that fighting is an act more associated with youth and less associated with those who are older and who have fulltime jobs.

4.1.1.2 *Chourave*

This verb means 'to steal,' and just like *marave*, does not show overt flexion. While some people knew the word outside of the banlieue area, many sources include this word in examples of banlieue vocabulary (Goudailler 1997, Séguin and Teillard 1996).

4.1.1.2.1 Gender

Out of 52 informants who responded to the question, 17 (32.7%) chose males as the primary users of the word. Only one person (2%) chose females, and 34 respondents (65.3%) stated that both sexes use the word.

4.1.1.2.2 Education

Eleven respondents chose all three categories of education, which corresponds to 23% out of a total of 48 responses on this section. Another three people (6%) chose 'very educated,' and one person chose both 'not very educated' and 'very educated,' skipping the middle category. I will read both the latter responses as 'all,' which, when condensed, amount to 30% of respondents. The category chosen most often was 'somewhat educated' at 15 informants (31%). 'Not very educated' was chosen by 10 informants (20.8%), and an additional seven informants (14.5%) chose a combination of the lower educational levels.

4.1.1.2.3 Age

The youngest generation had eight respondents. Of those, three chose their own generation (37.6%), two chose their own generation in combination with an older generation (25%), and two chose their own generation in combination with a younger generation (25%). Only one informant in the youngest age group chose an older generation.

Of the second group, 20 informants answered the question on age. Of those, the largest category chose their own generation with nine informants (45%). 'A younger generation' at eight informants (40%) was the next most

popular choice among people from 20 – 24 years of age. Two informants (10%) chose their generation in combination with a younger generation, and one informant (5%) chose an older generation.

In the third age group, there were 14 respondents. Of those, the largest group chose their generation in combination with that of a younger generation, six informants, (42.9%). Their own generation by itself was chosen by the next largest group of informants, five, at 35.7%. Two informants said that the word is used by all generations (14.3%), and one informant relegated it to an older generation (7.1%).

Finally, in the oldest group eight people responded. Of those, 50%, or four informants, chose their own generation in combination with a younger generation. One informant each chose a younger generation, an older generation, their generation in combination with an older generation, and their own generation.

Interestingly enough, almost all of the respondents who chose 'a younger generation' under the age of 24, are female (11 females, one male). This may be due to the fact that they are relegating banlieue language to a younger age group in order to distance themselves from the banlieue. Most of the informants in this case who chose the younger generation were in the university setting or had their own job.

4.1.1.3 Se (la) natchave

This lexical item is a verb, which means 'to leave.' The original informant who helped to compile the list omitted the *la* but the two females who helped

revise and modify the list stated that they had only heard it with the particle. This lexical item was not as well known among my informants.

4.1.1.3.1 Gender

Only 16 people answered this question, and of those, seven (43.7%) said that men were the primary users and the rest attributed its youth equally to both sexes.

4.1.1.3.2 Education

Out of a total of 15 answers on this section, six people chose 'somewhat educated,' which, at 40%, constitutes the largest group. Four others (26.6%) chose 'not very educated' and three people (20%) chose a combination of those two factors. Only two people chose all levels of education, corresponding to 13.3%.

4.1.1.3.3 Age

Only 16 informants in total replied to this question. When we look at these by age groups, we see that the answers are mixed. No one in the youngest group even replied to this question. In the second group, eight respondents replied. Of those, five (62.5%) claimed that it belongs to their own generation. Two informants (25%) claimed it belongs to a younger generation, and one claimed that it belongs to an older generation (12.5%).

In the third group, five people answered. Two (40%) said that it belonged to their own generation and two others (40%) said that it belonged to their own generation in combination with a younger generation. A final informant attributed this word to his generation in combination with an older generation (20%).

In the third group, there were three people who answered this question, and each chose a different answer. One chose his own generation, and the other two each combined their own generation with an older and a younger respectively. Ironically, while five informants between the ages of twenty-one and thirty claimed that the principle users of the word are either younger or younger in combination with their own generation, no informant under 21 responded to the question. This seems to support that they may have heard it but did not use it, and assuming it was new banlieue language, attributed it to younger speakers. It also may be that this lexical item has an aging user base, which is supported by Calvet (2006).

4.1.1.4 Schmidts

This plural noun means refers to an officer of the law. Its more literal equivalent would be 'cops,' or another moniker with more derision. Goudailler (1997) explains that the lexical item is descendent from the Roma word for metal, and by extension handcuffs, which by metonymy came to mean police officer. Many informants gave an alternative meaning, 'Germans,' and some even reported using the word as such, but only expected answers were counted in the statistics since I had not been able to verify this meaning elsewhere and rule out the possibility of a guess on the part of an informant.

4.1.1.4.1 Gender

Only 30 informants responded to this question with an expected answer. Of those 30 expected answers, 18 informants (60%) said both sexes use the word equally, and the remaining 12 (40%) stated that men mainly used the word.

4.1.1.4.2 Education

When we look at expected answers, there are 24 for education level of those using the word *schmidts*. Of those, only two informants (8.3%) chose a low level of education. Four others split their choice between the two lower levels of education (16.7%). From there the majority speaks with 'somewhat educated' at 33.3%, or eight informants; and the largest category, 'all levels of education,' at 10 informants, or 41.7%.

4.1.1.4.3 Age

Twenty-seven informants gave information of age groups for users of the word *schmidts*, using the expected answer. Breaking this information down into groups, we see that the youngest group had only four expected responses. Of those, two selected an older generation (50%), and one informant each selected their generation and their generation and all generations. The second age group had 12 respondents. The largest category was 'my generation' at five informants (41.7%), followed by 'an older generation' at three informants (25%). Two chose a younger generation (16.7%), and one informant each chose all generations and a younger generation in combination with their own (8.3%). The third oldest age group had six respondents. Of those, three chose an older generation in combination with their own (50%). The other three each chose different answers, one for all generations, one for a younger generation in combination with their own, and one an older generation by itself, (16.7% each). Finally, the oldest group had five informants reply to this question with an expected answer. Of those, the largest category was 'all,' with three votes (60%). One person chose

their own generation exclusively and one chose their own generation in combination with that of an older generation at 20% each. This seems to support an aging user base.

4.1.1.5 Gadjó

This masculine noun refers to a male person, though some people specify a non-gypsy male, which is the original Roma definition (Goudailler 1997).

4.1.1.5.1 Gender

Forty-five informants answered this section. Of those, 35.5% (16 informants) said that *gadjó* is used primarily by males. Only 8.8% (four informants) said that it is used primarily by females. A majority of 55.5% (25 informants) said that it is used equally by both sexes.

4.1.1.5.2 Education

Overall, 17% of 41 informants answering this question indicated that the word is used by all education groups. Fourteen people (34%) stated that the word is used by the 'somewhat educated.' Eight people (19.5%) said that it is used by those with little education, and an equal number of informants selected a combination of 'not very educated' and 'somewhat educated.'

4.1.1.5.3 Age

In global terms, 44 informants answered this question. The youngest group had six respondents. Of those, three, or 50%, chose their own generation, one (16.7%) chose an older generation and the remaining two informants, one each (16.7% each) chose a combination of their own generation with a younger and an older generation respectively.

The second age group had 19 respondents, but even these were split as to which generation the lexical item belonged to. The largest group was 'my generation' at six informants (31.6%), four people chose a younger generation (21.1%), and another four respondents chose an older generation (21.1%). Two informants (10.5%) chose 'all,' and two others chose their generation in combination with a younger generation. A final participant chose his own generation in combination with an older generation (5.3%).

The 24- to 29-year-olds had 11 respondents. Their largest group was their own generation, at four participants, or 36.4%. Three others chose an older generation (27.3%). Two chose all generations (18.2%). One chose his own generation and an older generation, and another chose his own generation in combination with a younger generation (9.1% each).

The oldest age group had six informants. Two of them (33.3%) picked an older generation, and two picked 'all' (33.3%). One participant (16.7%) chose his own generation, and another (16.7%) chose the his own in combination with a younger generation.

4. 1. 1.6 Gadgi

This lexical item is a feminine noun, meaning 'a woman,' or woman who is not a gypsy (Goudailler 1997). Fewer people knew this word, in spite of the fact that it closely resembles the previous entry.

4.1.1.6.1 Gender

Only 30 people responded to this question. Of those informants, slightly over half (16 informants, or 53%) chose 'both sexes' as the primary users of the

word. What is extremely interesting is that the remaining 14 chose equally between men and women, both at seven informants, or 23.3%. *Gadji* was also one of the few in which women were highly chosen as primary speakers of the lexical item by a relatively large percentage of the informants. It is possible that in this case the informants connect the word's meaning with who would use it.

4.1.1.6.2 Education

Twenty-eight people responded to this question. The largest category was 'somewhat educated' at nine informants, or 32%, followed closely by 'not very educated' at eight people, or 28.5%. Another four people (14%) chose a combination of the latter two categories. Five people chose 'all,' amounting to 18% of those who responded, and a mere two informants (7%) chose 'very educated.'

4.1.1.6.3 Age

Only 26 informants answered the question on age for *gadgi*. The youngest group had three respondents, two (66.7%) of whom chose their own generation and one (33.3%) who chose an older generation.

The 20- to 24-year-olds had 11 respondents. The largest group, five people (45.5%), chose their own generation. One of them (9.1%) chose all generations. Three chose a younger generation (27.3%), and two chose a older generation (18.2%).

The 25- to 29-year-old group had only eight respondents. Of those, three chose their own generation (37.5%), followed by two who chose all generations, (25%). One person chose a younger generation (12.5%), one informant chose

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an older generation (12.5%), and a final informant chose his own generation in combination with that of an older generation.

The oldest set had five respondents, but they were more consistent in their responses. Two (40%) chose all generations, one (20%) chose his own generation and two others (40%) chose an older generation.

With these results, a possible interpretation is that the variety in responses is caused by the fact that the informants hear the word but do not use it, and therefore attribute it either to an older or a younger generation. It seems to have an aging user base, since the oldest group attributes it to their own, all, or older generations, and never to a younger generation.

4.1.1.7 Bédave

Meaning 'to smoke a joint,' this verb, in accordance with the others in the questionnaire that end in -ave, does not carry overt flexion.

4.1.1.7.1 Gender

Fourteen respondents (26%) claimed that men were the primary users of this word, and 40 informants, an overwhelming 74%, said the word was used by both sexes.

4.1.1.7.2 Education

Education level proved difficult for this question. Out of 46 respondents who answered this question, 34% (16 informants) circled all three categories. Interestingly enough, only one person chose 'very well educated.' 'Not very educated' was only chosen by 17.5% of the respondents, while 'moderately educated' was the second largest category with 28% (13 informants). Four

respondents (8.6%) chose a combination of 'not very educated' and 'somewhat educated.' Also allowing us to infer that education may not be as important as previous research would indicate, one informant chose a combination of 'not very educated' and 'very educated.' Since it would be unusual for a word to be used only by the highly educated and the poorly educated, skipping those in the middle completely, I counted this answer under 'all.'

4.1.1.7.3 Age

The youngest group of informants had eight respondents. Of those, six, or 75%, chose their own generation. One person (12.5%) chose all generations, and a final person (12.5%) chose an older generation.

The second youngest group had 19 informants. Eleven of those, or 57.9% chose their own generation. Four chose the their own generation in combination with a younger generation (21.1%), and two relegated the word to a younger generation (10.5%). One person said 'all' (5.3%), and another relegated the word to an older generation (5.3%).

The group of 25- to 29-year-olds has 12 informants. Of those, the largest group was their own generation in combination with a younger generation, with five informants, or 41.7%. Four others chose simply their own generation, at 33.3%. Three people chose all generations, at 33.3%.

The oldest group had seven informants respond to this question. Of those, most (four, or 57.1%) chose their own generation in combination with a younger generation. Two (28.6%) chose all generations, and a final informant (14.3%) chose his own generation.

What this tells us about this word is that it is well ingrained into the vocabulary. Very few people, two in total over all the groups, attribute it to an older generation, and the same number of people attribute it to a younger generation.

4. 1. 1.8 *Bédo*

This noun means 'a cigarette containing marijuana.'

4.1.1.8.1 *Gender*

The overwhelming majority of the informants (50 out of 59, or 84.7%) chose both sexes as using *bédo* equally. Only one person, or 1.7%, chose females as the primary users. The remaining eight respondents (13.5%) chose males as the primary users.

4.1.1.8.2 *Education*

Bédo had the highest level of informants choosing all three categories for the educational levels of all of the lexical items on the questionnaire. Out of a total of 46 responses, a majority of 24 (52%) chose all levels of education. Two additional informants (4.3%) chose 'very educated,' and two others (4.3%) chose 'very educated' in combination with 'somewhat educated.' On the other end of the spectrum, five informants (10.9%) chose 'not very educated,' and another 6.5% (three informants) chose 'not very educated' in combination with 'somewhat educated.' Eleven respondents (23.9%) chose 'somewhat educated' alone.

4.1.1.8.3 Age

When we break down the results by age group, we see that the youngest group had nine informants that replied to this question. Of those, five (55.6%) said that the word belonged to their own generation. Two informants (22.2%) claimed that it belongs to all generations. One person chose a younger generation (1.1%), and another chose his own generation in combination with that of a younger generation (1.1%).

The second group had 23 respondents. Of this group, 12 (52.2%) chose their own generation. Five (21.7%), the next largest group, chose the latter in combination with a younger generation. Three (13%) chose 'all.' Two informants, or 8.7%, chose an older generation. One final informant chose a younger generation (4.4%).

The third group had 14 informants. Of those, only one chose his own generation by itself (7.1%), but six chose their own generation in combination with a younger generation (42.9%). Four others (50%) chose all generations.

For the oldest group, we see that there were eight informants who responded to this question. Of those, 50%, or four informants, chose all generations. One informant (12.5%) chose his own generation, and three (37.5%) chose the latter in combination with a younger generation.

It is clear from this information that *bédo* is fully integrated into banlieue language. The most popular response, for all age groups, included the respondent's own generation as users of the word.

4.1.1.9 Roma analysis

As one of the languages best represented by this study in terms of sheer number of lexical items, the informants were familiar with much of the vocabulary. The vocabulary in this section ranges from *se (la) natchave* or *gadji*, with relatively few informants knowing the lexical item, to *bédave* and *bédo*, where almost everyone knew the word. This would be in direct contrast to Tejedor de Felipe's (2004) analysis, which suggested that Roma was not as large a contributor to banlieue language as other languages.

In most cases throughout the Roma lexical items used in this study,⁷ we see that previous literature partially predicts this study's gender outcome. Women by themselves are *not* considered the *primary* speakers of this variety by any majority of informants. This follows Doran (2002), specifically relating to banlieue language; and in the broader focus of France as a country, the research done by Lefebvre (1991), in which French women upheld sociolinguistic gender norms, and Pooley (2003), in which women spoke the prestige dialect of French instead of the regional variety.

Men were viewed as the primary speakers of the variety at around 40% for most of the lexical items in Roma. Very few (under 4% for most lexical items in Roma) suggested that women are primary users. When we compare the two, we

⁷ A reminder to the reader may be necessary: the vocabulary in this (and all following language sections) was chosen by the original informant from the area and heavily invested in its culture. While some of the vocabulary is found in Séguin and Téillard's (1996) study as well as Goudailler's (1997) study, which at least confirms that it was used in the mid to late 90s, I cannot state that this vocabulary is representative, or that they are the most frequent Roma words in banlieue language.

find that previous literature concerning both the concepts of overt/covert prestige (Labov 1972) and linguistic market (Bourdieu 1991) seem to predict the outcomes of the research.

However, when we include the percentage of informants who feel that the items in question are spoken primarily by *both* genders, the previous literature on gender is not as accurate a predictor. In fact, throughout the category of Roma, around 60% of the informants say that these lexical items are used primarily by *both* genders. This may indicate that, instead of a simple male/female division, other factors transcend gender.

Linguistic capital (Bourdieu 1991) and solidarity among speakers of the variety generated by using the vocabulary may be more important than gender. The results for *bédo* (84% for equal usage among the sexes) and *bédave* (74%) seem to support this. These lexical items refer to an illicit activity (smoking marijuana). By the very nature of its proscription by hegemonic society, which created and upholds the very laws prohibiting this activity, those who choose to partake separate themselves from the society that forbids it. In theory, women, prone to use a standard more than men, should avoid usage of this vocabulary. These words, however, seem to be a large part of banlieue culture. It is possible that the linguistic capital of the lexical items is more important than gender norms.

With regards to education, scholars have indicated that the variety is dropped by those who go on to a formal educational setting (Doran 2002, Lepoutre 1997). Though Boyer's (2001) focus was not to prove or disprove the

stereotypes regarding the education level of someone who uses the variety, he did conduct research at a university setting on the assumption that the students would speak it. In general, since this is a non-prestige dialect, the hypothesis is that it would not be attributed to very high levels of education.

Lexical items for Roma were partially viewed by the informants as we might expect. A range of 25% to 46% of the informants for each of the lexical items choose either low education by itself or low in combination with a mid-level of education. Few informants marked the vocabulary as specifically belonging to the highest levels of education. There are exceptions, though. For *bédo* and *bédave*, the perceived educational level was quite high, with many informants choosing all three categories of education levels. Moreover, informants did choose all levels between 18% and 42% on each of the lexical items. This means that the vocabulary is not viewed as exclusively the variety of poorly educated people, contrary to the stereotypes and research (Lepoutre 1997).

Age is another matter that must be discussed. As I have mentioned, scholars (Doran 2002, George 1986, Lepoutre 1997, Walter 1997) originally overwhelmingly attributed the variety to youth. Boyer (2001) conducted research at a university in which he would, by default, find students older than 16; and Zerling (1999) underscores the fact that banlieue language is not limited to youth. However, as I indicated earlier, no one has specifically studied age of retention with empirical data.

What we find with Roma is that the majority of the lexical items were attributed to an informant's own generation alone or in combination, including

the oldest group. That group, however, also frequently chose all generations. Very few items were attributed to younger generations, regardless of the informant's age group. This is not what we would have expected if this were a youth language, and it allows us to suggest that Zerling (1999) may be correct that age does not matter. The notable exception is *marave*, where it was ironically only the youngest age group that used it with any regularity, at 50% for that lexical item, though the violent nature of the word may have been influential.

4.1.2 Creole

The Creole vocabulary was included since many immigrants in the Garges area are from the Antilles. In addition, many students come from the DOMTOMs to complete their education in the Paris area. Having come from a French *département*, French has been the language of instruction in their schools, and they are French citizens. Thus, though people who speak Créole may come to the same area as immigrants, they do not *need* Creole in order to communicate with others in the area. They are already partially assimilated by virtue of their nationality and academic system. The question remains: is there enough Créole influence in the banlieue for banlieue language to reflect it?

4.1.2.1 Goumer

This lexical item, a verb, means 'to fight,' the same as *savater* and *marave*. It does overtly follow French rules for conjugation and flexion.

4.1.2.1.1 Gender

Almost half the informants knew the lexical item, and 35 informants responded to the question on gender. The majority, 21 informants (60%), chose males as the primary users of this verb. One participant (2.9%) said that females were the primary users, and the remaining 13 (37.1%) chose both males and females as equal users of the word. In comparison to *marave* and *savater*, *goumer* is the only word where 'men' is chosen at a higher rate than 'both.' This reinforces the idea that a lexical item that connotes violence seems to be viewed as one used more frequently by males than females or both sexes.

4.1.2.1.2 Education

Thirty-three participants responded to this question. Of those, 21% (seven) said *goumer* was used by people of all educational levels. Another 6% (two respondents) chose 'very educated.' 24% (eight respondents) chose 'not very educated,' while slightly more, 27% (nine) chose 'somewhat educated.' The remaining 21% (seven) chose a combination of 'somewhat educated' and 'not very educated.' Again, the connotations of violence associated with the word could explain the higher number of people choosing lower levels of education.

4.1.2.1.3 Age

The youngest group had only four respondents for this word. Two, or 50%, chose their own generation, one chose the latter in combination with an older generation (25%), and the final informant chose an older generation (25%).

The second group had 15 informants. Of those, the largest group chose a younger generation, with seven informants (46.8%). Four chose their own

generation (26.7%), and three people chose the latter in combination with a younger generation (20%). Finally, one informant chose an older generation (6.7%).

The third group had eight informants answer the question. Of those, 37.7%, or three informants, chose their generation and a younger generation in combination. Two informants chose solely their own generation (25%). Two more chose all generations (25%). Only one informant chose an older generation (12.5%).

The oldest group had five responses. Of those, three, or 60%, chose their generation in combination with a younger generation, and the remaining two chose all generations (40%).

4.1.2.2 Sa ou fé

This is a phrase meaning 'how are you?' This particular phrase was very rarely identified, since between 12 and 15 informants answered each of the perception questions.

4.1.2.2.1 Gender

Out of 12 respondents, one chose 'males' as the primary users of the word and the remaining 11 (91.6%) chose both sexes as equal users. Since it is a greeting, the lexical item is very neutral, which may be why the informants chose 'both sexes' in one of the highest percentages of any lexical item.

4.1.2.2.2 Education

Out of 14 respondents, eight (57%) chose all three categories of education. Five people (36%) chose 'moderately/somewhat educated' and one

person chose 'very educated.' No one chose a low level of education. I suggest that the low number of informants familiar with the vocabulary in conjunction with the fact that no one chose a low level of education may indicate that the word is not well integrated into banlieue language and may be seen more as a foreign token, since the other lexical items (even those such as *bédo* and *bédave*, which were fairly well viewed) all had informants who chose a low level of education.

4.1.2.2.3 Age

When we look at age by groups, we see that the youngest group only has three responses, and those are evenly split. One person each (33%) attributed the lexical item to the following categories: his own generation, a younger generation, and an older generation.

The second group had four respondents, and again, the answers were quite varied. Two people (50%) chose their own generation, and one person each (25%) chose an older and a younger generation.

The third group had three respondents as well, and here, one person chose 'all,' one person chose his own in combination with a younger generation, and one person chose an older generation, at 33.3% each.

The oldest group had the largest number of informants for this lexical item, despite being one of the smallest groups in terms of number of informants. Five people responded, and three of them (60%) chose all generations. One each (20%) chose his own generation and an older generation.

4.1.2.3 *Sa ka maché*

This is a phrase, a greeting, which means 'How are you?' though it is less formal than *sa ou fé*.

4.1.2.3.1 *Gender*

Twenty-seven informants responded to this question, and the overwhelming majority (24 informants or 88.8%) chose both sexes using the phrase equally. One person chose females using it most (3.7%) and two others (7.4%) chose males as the primary users of the word.

4.1.2.3.2 *Education*

Only 14 informants responded to this question. Of those, eight (57.1%) chose all levels. Five (35.7%) chose 'somewhat educated,' and the remaining informant chose 'very educated.' Of striking importance, not a single informant chose 'not very educated.'

4.1.2.3.3 *Age*

Looking at the results by age group, we see that only four of the youngest group answered this question. Of those, three (75%) reported that the lexical item was used by an older generation, and one (25%) reported that it was used by all generations.

The second group had six respondents, and again, the largest category, at four informants, or 66.7%, was 'an older generation.' One informant attributed it to his own generation (16.7%) and one (16.7%) combined his own generation with that of an older generation.

The third group only had four informants. Of those, they were evenly split, (50% versus. 50%) between 'all' and their own generation.

Finally, the oldest generation had the most responses: seven. Of those, three (42.9%) chose all generations, another three (42.9%) chose an older generation in combination with their own, and one person chose simply his own generation (14.3%).

These responses make clear the fact that this word has an aging user base. Most informants among the age groups say that it belongs to an older generation, and very few people among the younger informants even know the lexical item. An aging user base would be also be supported by the fact that all 'an older generation' choices fall between age 18 and 23.

4.1.2.4 Makoumé

This is the only Creole noun on the list. It refers to a homosexual male. It was relatively unknown by the informants. In fact, out of the eight people who responded to most of the general questions about its use, five were from the Antilles. It was also toward the end of the list, and the lack of response may well indicate participant fatigue.

4.1.2.4.1 Gender

For this category, seven participants responded. Two participants (28.5%) indicated that men were the primary users of the word, and the remaining five (71.5%) indicated that it was used equally by both sexes.

4.1.2.4.2 Education

Out of the seven responses, participants were split almost evenly between 'somewhat educated,' at three informants (43%), and 'all levels' at four informants (57%).

4.1.2.4.3 Age

What is most striking about this lexical item is that only eight people responded to this question. In addition, those responses are very divided. The youngest group had only two responses (50%) for 'all' and 50% for 'my generation.' The second age group had two responses as well, divided 50/50 between 'my generation' and 'an older generation.' The third age group had three responses, at 33.3% each: one for 'all,' one who attributed the lexical item to a younger generation, and one to an older generation. Finally, the oldest group had only two responses, and those were also divided 50/50 between 'all' and 'an older generation.'

4.1.2.5 Creole analysis

In terms of gender for this category, it is important to treat the lexical items differently than for other categories. For *goumer*, with its violent connotations, and having seen the results for other words of that nature from different languages, it is not surprising that the lexical item was viewed as being used primarily by males. *Makoumé* is in the 70th percentile for both genders, which is similar to the average among the lexical items in Roma. However, the informants voted that both genders equally used *sa ka maché* and *sa ou fé* at 88.8% and 91.6% respectively. This high percentage of those who chose equal usage

among the sexes, along with the high estimation of educational level, seems to suggest that these tokens are viewed more as Creole than as banlieue. Of particular reinforcement of this theory is that no one chose 'not very educated' as an educational level of someone who would use these lexical items.

In terms of education, *goumer* is the only item that is treated similarly to the vocabulary in Roma, meaning a spread that is in the 20th percentile for low. For the remaining three items, no informant indicated a low level of educational background for someone who would use the vocabulary. In fact, the informants are split among choices of moderate levels of education and all levels of education. This indicates a distinction for Creole vocabulary, though more research is necessary with a larger amount of tokens.

It becomes apparent when investigating age that the youngest group knew the least vocabulary from Creole. When they did know a lexical item, they attributed it fairly often to other generations, equally to older and younger. I would suggest here that the informants had heard the items enough to be familiar with them, but the lexical items were rare enough that the informants only knew they did not belong to their own generation. To support this, we see that the second age group's answers also varied widely, though there were more respondents who knew the vocabulary. The two older groups knew the vocabulary the most and attributed it more to their own generation, an older generation, or all generations. This may indicate that the lexical items in this category have an aging user base.

It seems as though Creole words are not a large part of banlieue language. I hypothesize that these phrases are mostly considered to be foreign, and therefore are not as integrated into the banlieue language. Additionally, I argue that the oldest group, because of the agreement with the DOMTOM and state workers, may have had more contact with families that had just immigrated. Since French is spoken side by side with Creole in the DOMTOM, and educated speakers are bilingual, it would be easy for a speaker of Creole to assimilate more quickly and therefore use Creole words less. Based on a limited questionnaire, it seems as though the contribution Creole has made to the banlieue is minimal and that those who admit to using most of the lexical items in this category are either from the Antilles or of a particular group that had more contact with those who spoke Creole, which was verified by reviewing the demographic sheets of the informants.

4.1.3 Arabic

Whenever the question of banlieue language arises, Arabic and its influence are tied to it. Most of the recent research concentrates on the Maghrebi community in France (Doran 2002, Melliani 2000).

4.1.3.1 Kiffer

This verb, 'to really like something,' comes from the Arabic noun *kif*, meaning 'marijuana.' It has been adopted into the variety and beyond as a verb and it has overt French morphology: *Il l'a kiffé*. Though now mainstream, it is still included in several lists for banlieue language (Goudailler 1997, Séguin and Teillard 1996) and I wanted to test how well the word has been retained.

4.1.3.1.1 Gender

Though it was placed toward the end of the list, 58 respondents answered this question. Of those, the overwhelming majority, 54 (93%) chose both sexes using the word equally. This may have to do with the mainstreaming of the word in French colloquial language. Two participants each (3.4%) chose males and females respectively.

4.1.3.1.2 Education

Kiffer had a very high number of informants that chose all three categories: 20 respondents (40.8%). At the other end of the spectrum, only two respondents (or 4%) chose 'not very educated.' Another 36.7%, or 18 informants, chose 'somewhat educated.' Four informants, 8.1% each, chose 'very educated' and a combination of 'not very educated' and 'somewhat educated.' A single informant (2%) chose a combination of 'somewhat educated' and 'very educated.'

4.1.3.1.3 Age

It is apparent that all generations '*kiffent*' *kiffer*. When we look at the youngest group, we see that five out of a total of nine respondents (55.6%) claim that the word is part of their generation. An additional two informants (22.2%) claim that it is their generation in combination with a younger generation. One person each (11.1%) chose a younger generation and all generations.

As to the second age group, we see that 24 informants answered the question. Of those, 16 of the informants (66.7%) said that it belonged to their own generation, and an additional four (16.7%) claimed that it was the latter in

combination with a younger generation. Two informants (8.33%) said that it belonged to all generations, and two informants claimed that it belonged to an older generation (another 8.3%).

When we look at the third age group, we find that the trend continues. Four of the informants (28.6%) chose all generations as the primary users of the lexical item. Six of the informants stated that the word was used by their own generation in combination with that of a younger generation (42.9%). Three (21.4%) claimed that it belonged to their own generation alone, and one informant (7.1%) claimed that it belonged to a younger generation.

The oldest group had seven respondents. Of those, two chose their own generation (28.6%) and three chose their own in combination with a younger generation (42.9%). Two more chose all generations (28.6%).

4.1.3.2 *Choucrane*

This lexical item is a phrase, meaning 'thank you' in Arabic. It was chosen more as a test of whether ordinary words had made their way into banlieue language.

4.1.3.2.1 *Gender*

The vast majority of the informants, 30 out of 31 (96.7%), reported equal usage among the sexes. The remaining informant chose males as the primary users of the phrase.

4.1.3.2.2 *Education*

Ten informants (37%), out of 27 responded that all levels of education used *Choucrane* equally. Only one person (3.7%), identified the lexical item as

being used mostly by people of little education. Another eight people (29.6%) chose 'somewhat educated,' and two informants (7.4%) chose a combination of the latter two categories. 14.8%, or four informants, chose 'very educated,' and one person chose a combination of 'very educated' and 'not very educated.'

The education level chosen for this lexical item is relatively high, like that of some of the Creole tokens. In addition, one informant answered '*des Arabes*' (Arabs) to the question 'this word is used primarily by ____.' It may be that this word is viewed as a foreign token. It was also not included in any of the other sources on banlieue language, but rather serves as a test to view the extent of absorption of everyday vocabulary into the banlieue.

4.1.3.2.3 Age

When we break this down by age groups, we see that the youngest group had only five informants. Of those, two chose their own generation (28.6%) three chose their own in combination with a younger generation (42.9%), and two others chose all generations, at 28.6%.

The second group had nine informants. Of those, the largest group chose their own generation, at four informants (44.4%), three (33.3%) chose an older generation, and two (22.2%) chose all groups.

The third group had eight informants. They were more spread out in their opinions. The largest group, four (50%) chose all generations. The rest of the vote was then split, one informant each (12.5%) for the following categories: 'my generation,' 'my generation' with an older generation, 'my generation' with a younger generation, and an older generation.

The final group had four informants. Of those, 100% chose 'all.'

All of this strongly indicates that though this lexical item may be used in the banlieue, it is viewed as a foreign token.

4.1.3.3 *Ouaiche*

This word, also spelled *wesh*, is Arabic meaning 'How are you doing?'

However, since I had personally always understood it as 'Hi,' I put that in as a choice, along with '*oui*,' as a distracter. After consulting a native from the area, it was confirmed that it is sometimes viewed as a simple 'hello,' though the original meaning is 'how are you?' as it comes from Arabic. I will only be analyzing that meaning as the expected meaning. The other definitions are not analyzed.

4.1.3.3.1 *Gender*

When we look at this for the expected meaning, it is divided between 'both sexes' at 17 informants (81%) and 'men alone' at four informants (19%). We see that no one chose females as the primary users of the lexical item. In fact, excluding the women who spoke Arabic, every other woman had analyzed the lexical item as 'hi' instead of 'What's up?/ How are you?'

4.1.3.3.2 *Education*

Out of 19 expected responses, six informants, or 31.6% chose 'all levels of education' as those who would use the lexical item. Eight informants (42.1%), the largest group in this category, chose 'somewhat educated' and five others (26.3%) chose 'not very educated.'

4.1.3.3.3 Age

Thirty-two informants responded to this question. In the youngest age group, there were two informants. Both of them (100%) chose their own generation as those who used this word the most.

In the second age group, 12 respondents replied. Of those, 66.7%, or eight informants, chose their own generation. Two informants selected a younger generation (16.7%) and the remaining two (again at 16.7%) chose all generations.

In the 24- to 29-year-old group, eight people responded to the question of age. Their choice was split between only two categories, both of which contained the younger generation. Five informants, or 63.5% of this group, selected a younger generation. The remaining three chose the younger generation in combination with their own.

The 30- to 36-year-old group had only two respondents, one of whom (50%) chose his own group, and one of whom chose 'all' (50%). This was a rare word in that those in the youngest group claimed the lexical item as their own and those in the older groups agreed with that assessment.

4.1.3.4 Arabic analysis

First of all, it must be underscored that there are not enough tokens in this category for a full analysis. As this dissertation was an initial foray into suggesting a need for further study into these areas, I could not fully study each contact language. Moreover, because of the varied nature of the vocabulary, I believe the discussion should reflect that reality, as it did for Creole.

One generalization can be made is in terms of gender. All items in this linguistic category were viewed, at a very high percentage, as belonging to both sexes equally. *Ouaiche* was the least equal at 81%, the other two being in the 90th percentile.

Education levels also vary widely, but for *choucrane* they are very high and include multiple informants choosing 'very educated' by itself, which is rare among the lexical items as a whole. Only one informant relegated the word to those with low levels of education (3.7%), compared to two informants for *kiffer* (4%), and a much larger percentage for *ouaiche* (five informants, or 26.3%).

Age, too, presents varied results with these three tokens. *Kiffer* is viewed overwhelmingly by each age group as belonging to the informants' own generation. With *ouaiche*, the tendency was toward youth, which differs with many of the lexical items in this study and would fit the pattern of previous research done by Doran (2002) and Lepoutre (1997), among others. *Choucrane* responses are diverse, especially in the youngest three age groups, though the oldest generation chose 'all' generations at 100%.

I would argue therefore that while much more research is needed with a larger lexical base from Arabic, of the tokens represented, only *choucrane* seems to be viewed as a true foreign token. Interestingly enough, many of the women who spoke Arabic did not admit to using *choucrane*. This may be a way to distance themselves from a native language in order to appear more assimilated, and not appear to be code-switching or crutching. More research would be needed on this category for deeper analysis.

In general, the vocabulary in this category was viewed as defying previous research on the subject, with regards to perceived age, gender, and education level of speakers, as established in the discussion on Roma and Creole vocabulary. Results do not show an overwhelming choice of males or younger generations as being the perceived speakers of this variety. Nor is it attributed to those of low formal education. More complete analysis could be conducted with a larger vocabulary base for this language category.

4.1.4 Verlan

Though not an actual language, Verlan has become such an integral part of banlieue language that Doran (2002) refers to the totality of banlieue language as Verlan, citing her informants; and as previously discussed, she is not alone. As I stated, my informants were not willing to call the ensemble 'Verlan,' but they did admit that speakers of Verlan will use banlieue language and vice versa. So, while the link between Verlan and banlieue language is clear and well documented, it still merits its own lexical category.

4.1.4.1 Keum

Keum is the first Verlan word on the list. It means 'guy,' and is derived from *mec*. It was chosen because it was one of the older and most commonly cited examples (Calvet 1996, Doran 2002, Mela 1991, etc).

4.1.4.1.1 Gender

This was the only lexical item on the list for which the informants designated more primary users as female than as male. Seven informants (13.2%) reported females as the primary users, whereas only three (5.66%) informants chose males. The remainder, 43 (81%), chose both sexes as using *keum* equally. Given this information, it would be possible to say that women are indeed viewed as using this lexical item. Again, this word is neutral, with no negative connotations, and is well established in the vocabulary; so perhaps that is affecting the high percentage of perceived female usage.

4.1.4.1.2 Education

Ten people, or 22.2% of the 45 informants who answered this question, made a point of circling all three categories. An additional informant circled both 'somewhat educated' and 'very educated' (2.2%). Only six informants chose 'not very educated' by itself (13.3%). The single largest category was 'somewhat educated,' with 16 informants (35.5%). The second largest category was the combination of 'not very educated' and 'somewhat educated,' with 12 respondents (26.6%).

4.1.4.1.3 Age

The youngest group had eight respondents. Of those, three (37.3%) reported that it was a lexical item of their own generation. Two (25%) said that it was for a younger generation. One informant (12.5%) combined his own generation with that of an older generation, and one informant (12.5%)

combined his own generation with a younger generation. One final informant attributed the lexical item to an older generation (12.5%).

The second group had 18 informants. Of those, 10 (55.6%) stated that it was from their own generation. Four combined the later with a younger generation (22.2%), and two each, at 11.1%, claimed that it was from an older generation and a younger generation.

The third group had 14 informants. Of those, seven (50%) claimed that it was their generation with a younger generation. Four (28.6%) claimed it was from their own generation alone. Two chose all groups (14.3%), and one person chose his own generation in combination with an older generation at 7.1%.

The oldest group had eight informants. Of those, five, or 62.5%, chose their own generation in combination with a younger generation. One (12.5%) chose his own generation, one (12.5%) chose his own generation in combination with an older generation, and one (12.5%) chose all generations,

Keum is one of the more streamlined of the lexical items. The combination of the answer 'my generation' with 'a younger generation' is claimed from age 19 to age 58, when we bring in the outliers as a control group. Our informants report that it is used virtually equally among the sexes. As to education, very few people chose 'not very educated.'

4.1.4.2 Sky

This lexical item is from 'whisky,' verlanized to *skywhi* with apheresis, and it means 'whisky.'

4.1.4.2.1 Gender

From 49 responses, 61.2%, or 30 informants chose both sexes as using it equally. The next largest category chose men with 18 informants, or 36.7%. Women only garnered one vote, or 2%.

4.1.4.2.2 Education

Sky had one of the greatest numbers of informants circling all three categories of education levels: 19 out of 44, (43.2%). Three additional people (6.8%) chose 'very educated.' At the other end of the spectrum, only one person chose 'not very educated,' (2.27%), and only two people (4.5%) chose 'not very educated' in combination with 'somewhat educated.' The remaining 19 informants (43.2%) chose 'somewhat educated.'

4.1.4.2.3 Age

The youngest group had seven respondents with this lexical item, and all of them chose their own generation.

The second group was more complicated, with 22 informants. Of those, the largest number, 11 (50%), chose their own generation, two more (9.1%) chose their own in combination with a younger generation, and two informants chose their own generation in combination with an older generation (at 9.1%). Two informants chose a younger generation by itself, again at 9.1%, and five informants chose an older generation.

The third group had 13 respondents. Five of the informants chose 'all' (38.5%). Four informants, or 30.1%, chose their own generation in combination

with a younger generation. Three, or 23.1%, chose simply their own generation, and one person, or 14.3%, chose his own in combination with an older generation.

The oldest group had seven respondents. The largest group for them was 'all,' which had three informants, or 42.9% of the vote. One person chose his own generation(4.3%), and two chose their own in combination with a younger generation (28.6%). Finally, one person chose a younger generation by itself (14.3%).

4.1.4.3 *Verlan analysis*

First it is important to state that Verlan, like Arabic, does not have enough lexical items in this study to make any sweeping generalizations, only suggestions for further research. However, if we look at the responses to the questions, we do still find patterns similar to those in Roma, Creole, and Arabic. Usage between the genders is predominantly viewed as shared, which follows most of the vocabulary we have seen thus far, and which is unusual in a non-prestige variety. If we separate the responses for those who chose both genders and concentrate only on usage attributed to men alone as the primary users or to women alone as the primary users, *keum* breaks the typical gender traditions for non-prestige dialects. When comparing the informants' views between those who chose men and those who chose women, women were selected as the primary users of the lexical item at a higher percentage than men. It may be because the word does not have any violent or illicit connotations and is

considered mainstream vocabulary. I observed it being used on an RER subway billboard when I was there for my fieldwork.

The education level of the lexical items in Verlan was well above expected. For both tokens, those who chose the lowest level of education were few, 13% for *keum* and only 2.2% for *sky*. In addition, those who chose all levels of education were high as well, especially for *sky*, at 43%. An additional 7% said *sky* was used primarily by those with high levels of education. This is completely contrary to what we would expect in a non-prestige variety, as illustrated by the Roma discussion.

For *keum* and *sky*, most informants in all age groups included their own generation and/ or a younger generation. This seems to support the idea that these two items are very well integrated into banlieue vocabulary. Through the perceptions of the education level of the user, as well as the gender, we see that there seems to be little stigma attached to the use of these items.

4.1.5 Argot

This group contains a myriad of lexical items that belong to banlieue language as well as popular French. Some of the lexical entries in this category, such as *daron* and its gender pair, *daronne*, date from the early 19th century.

4.1.5.1 Binouse

This lexical item is a noun that means ‘beer.’

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4.1.5.1.1 Gender

Thirty-three informants answered this question. Of those, 20 (60.6%) chose males as the primary users. One informant (3%) chose females as the primary users and the remaining 12 (36.3%) chose both sexes.

4.1.5.1.2 Education

Only 27 informants responded to the question of education, and of those, 12 (44%) chose all three categories of education, though no one chose 'very educated' by itself. The second largest category was 'somewhat educated' with nine informants (33.3%), and five informants (18.5%) chose 'not very educated.' One person (3.7%) chose a combination of 'not very educated' and 'somewhat educated.'

4.1.5.1.3 Age

The first age group had only four respondents. Of those, three (75%) claimed that the word was from an older generation. Only one person (25%) claimed that the word was from his own generation.

The second age group had 12 informants. Of those, 50%, or six informants, chose their own generation. Five informants chose an older generation (41.7%). Only one informant (8.3%) chose 'all.'

In the third age group, 10 informants replied to this question. Of those, four chose their generation in combination with an older generation (40%). Two chose their generation in combination with a younger generation (20%). Two (20%) chose only their generation, and one informant each (10%) chose an older generation and 'all.'

Finally, in the oldest group, from six responses, we see that one person chose his own generation, at 16.7%. Two chose their own generation in combination with a younger generation, at 33%. One chose an older generation (16.7%), and two chose 'all' (33%).

This word is very likely to have an aging user base since no one in any of the categories chose a younger generation. In fact, in all of the age groups, there was a choice of an older generation, which is rare. In addition, the youngest group does not seem to recognize it.

4.1.5.2 Daron

This lexical item is a noun, and it is another term for 'father,' though it would be closer in register to 'pop' or 'the 'rents' for parents. It is never used as a form of address, but rather with a possessive adjective or a definite article, and the term dates back to the 1900s (Delvau 1883).

4.1.5.2.1 Gender

Out of 5 total responses, 52 informants (94.5%) chose males and females using *daron* equally. Only one informant (1.8%) chose females as primary users, and the remaining two (3.6%) chose males.

4.1.5.2.2 Education

Eighteen informants (37.5%) chose all three categories of education. An additional four (8.33%) chose 'very educated,' and two informants (4.16%) chose a combination of 'very educated' and 'somewhat educated.' At the other end, only three people (6.2%) chose 'not very educated.' The second largest

group was 'somewhat educated' with 33.3% of the vote (16 informants), and five people (10.4%) chose a combination of the latter two categories.

4.1.5.2.3 Age

The youngest group had nine respondents for this word. Of those, the overwhelming choice was of their own generation, at seven informants or 77.8%. The two remaining informants were split (11.1% each) between a combination of the latter and a younger generation and 'all.'

The second age group had 24 respondents. Almost half of them, 11 (45.8%), claimed that it belonged to their own generation. Another six, or 25%, said that it belonged to their own generation in combination with a younger generation. Two others (8.3%) claimed the opposite, saying that it was their generation and an older generation that shared the word. Two informants (8.3%) chose 'all.' Three informants, or 12.5%, claimed that it belonged to a younger generation by itself.

The third age group had 13 informants. Of those, three informants (23.1%) said that the word was from their own generation, and five others chose their own generation in combination with a younger generation (at 38.5%). Four respondents chose 'all' (30.8%). The remaining informant chose his own generation in combination with an older generation.

The last group had eight informants respond to this question. Of those, only one person, or 12.5%, chose his own generation alone, but four chose the latter with a younger generation (50%). The remaining three (37.5%) chose 'all.'

We see that this word is pretty well integrated into the banlieue language. Of 54 responses, only three informants, a mere 5.5%, chose a younger generation. The rest chose their own generation by itself or in combination with other generations.

4.1.5.3 *Daronne*

This lexical item, a noun, means 'mother.' The same linguistic constraints apply to *daronne* as to its pair, *daron*. It has also existed from the late 19th century (Delvau 1883).

4.1.5.3.1 *Gender*

Again, both sexes were seen at the primary users of the word, with 48 out of 56 respondents (85.7%). Only one informant, (1.78%) chose females as the primary users, identical to that of its pair. However, here seven informants (12.5%) chose males alone as the primary users.

4.1.5.3.2 *Education*

Out of 46 respondents, 17 informants (37%) chose all three levels of education and one (1.78%) informant chose both 'not very educated' and 'very educated.' No one, however, chose 'very educated' alone, in contrast with four people who made that choice with *daron*. The largest category was 'somewhat educated' with 18 informants, or 39%. Five informants chose 'not very educated' (10.86%), and four informants chose a combination of the latter two categories (8.7%).

4.1.5.3.3 Age

The youngest age group had 10 responses. The largest category was 'my own generation' at seven informants (70%). One informant (10%) chose his own in combination with a younger generation, and another (10%) chose simply a younger generation. A final informant (10%) in this group chose 'all.'

The second group had 22 informants. Most of these, 13 informants (59.1%), chose their own generation. Another three (13.6%) chose their own in combination with a younger generation. Three (13.6%) chose a younger generation by itself. Two informants, or 9.1%, chose all generations, and one person chose his own generation in combination with an older generation (13.6%).

The third group had 12 respondents. Of those, the largest group, six or 50% of the informants, chose a younger generation in combination with their own. Three chose their own generation by itself (25%), and two people chose 'all' (16.7%). A final informant chose an older generation (8.3%).

Seven informants in the last group responded. Of those, four chose their generation in combination with a younger generation (57.1%). One informant each (14.3%) chose the following categories: 'all', 'my generation,' and 'my generation and an older generation.'

The reader may notice a disparity between the results on *daron* and *daronne*. In theory, one would expect them to be identical since they belong to the same language, have the same part of speech, and are simply gender pairs. However, the participants are more reticent with *daronne*. It is marked with more

males as being the primary users and a lower education level overall. To interpret this, it is necessary to look at the culture of the banlieue. Women in general may not be very respected in the banlieue, but there is an element of respect that resurfaces when it's a question of motherhood, sometimes taken to extremes.

The theory that talking about one's mother as '*ma daronne*' is less respectful than talking about one's father as '*mon daron*' was confirmed by a native speaker in the area, who said, '*pour daronne effectivement cela s'emploie moins facilement que daron. C'est pas forcément plus vulgaire mais une maman échappe plus aux mots de la banlieue.*'

'For *daronne*, indeed, it's not used as easily as *daron*. It's not so much that it's vulgar, but a mother escapes banlieue words more easily.'

4.1.5.4 *Savater*

Like *marave* and *goumer*, this lexical item is a verb meaning to fight/ beat up. It is simple slang and reflects normal French overt flexion.

4.1.5.4.1 *Gender*

Forty-nine people answered this question. Of those, 29, or 59.2%, say that both sexes use it equally. 40.8%, or 20 informants, report that men are the primary users. This lexical entry seems to follow the masculine-based pattern of the other words and phrases that are used for fighting.

4.1.5.4.2 Education

Of 47 respondents, 12 (25.5%) claim that people from all levels of education are the primary users of this lexical item, though ironically, no one chose 'very educated' alone or in any combination other than all three categories. Instead, 10 people (21.3%) chose 'not very educated,' 11 (23.4%) chose 'somewhat educated,' and the remaining 10 informants (21.3%) chose a combination of the two. This is one of the lower perceived levels of education among the lexical items.

4.1.5.4.3 Age

When we break the results down by age group, we find that the youngest group had seven informants. Of those informants, one chose his own generation (14.3%). Two chose the latter in combination with a younger generation (28.6%). One informant chose simply a younger generation (14.3%), and one other chose the latter in combination with his own generation (14.3%). Two informants chose an older generation (28,6%).

The second group had 20 informants. The largest category was 'my generation' at 40%, or eight responses. Another five responses combined their own generation with a younger generation (25%). Three informants chose a younger generation by itself (15%), and another three informants (15%) chose an older generation. The remaining informant (5%) chose the latter in combination with his own generation.

The third age group had 12 respondents. Five of those chose their generation in combination with a younger generation (41.7%). Four chose the

opposite, their own generation with an older generation (33.3%). One person relegated the lexical item to a younger generation by itself (8.3%), and two informants chose all generations (16.7%).

The oldest age group had eight informants. Three of those informants (37.5%) chose all generations, and another three (37.5%) chose their own generation in combination with a younger generation. Only one person each (12.5%) chose an older generation and their own generation alone.

It is interesting to note how comparatively few people chose their own generation alone, though about 78% of the informants identify the item in some way as being part of their generation.

4.1.5.5 Argot analysis

Daron and *daronne*, gender pairs, are in the 80th and 90th percentile as being used by both genders, 5% and 15% higher than the average for this category, respectively. *Binouse* and *savater*, however, are viewed as exclusively male at 60% and 40% respectively. In both cases, we can say that the same analysis in terms of gender applies to this category as to Roma and the other languages. In what should be a variety spoken primarily by males, we see that is not the case in general.

In terms of why the statistics in this category among the lexical items may differ, it seems to be established that the meaning of the lexical item has an effect on whether or not a lexical item is viewed as being used by males or females. So far, most items pertaining to violence are viewed as male. I would like to propose, based on my observations during fieldwork and residence in

France, that more women tended to drink wine (*kir*) and the men tended to drink beer (*binouse*) or whisky (*sky*). Both of those were viewed as used more by males. This is by no means definitive, but may have an effect. The results of *savater* are very similar to those of *marave*, which also has the same definition of violence.

The results for education show the same split. *Binouse* and *savater* were attributed to those of low education by 18 to 21%, which seems to be a default result among the lexical items.⁸ *Daron* was at 6% and *daronne* at almost 11%. Again I remind the reader that even the lexical item most attributed to a low level of education is only 21%, which would seem to counter claims that banlieue language is used by those who are uneducated, such as with the ideas set out by Lepoutre (1997) that I discussed in the analysis of Roma, and which bears repeating.

For *savater*, *daron* and *daronne*, most informants, regardless of age group, attributed the items to their own generation by itself or in combination with a younger generation. *Binouse* was viewed as an older token, with no choice of 'a younger generation' by itself, and only the oldest group used it in any combination. The fact that these lexical items were well known, much more so than with Creole, for example, may well bear out Tejedor de Felipe's (2004) theory that banlieue language is indeed a French-based phenomenon. More

⁸ I see this as a positive in a non-standard variety that only around 20% say the lexical items are used by those with little formal education. This means that around 80% (depending on the word, the language, etc.) of the informants are saying that the words are used by those with mid or high levels of education, a fact that defies previous research.

research should be conducted on the lexical category of argot in the future to confirm this hypothesis.

4.1.6 Lexical items

When the linguistic items are separated by language, we see that in each linguistic category, some lexical items do not conform to any pattern, but general tendencies can indeed be observed. First of all, the lexical items in Verlan and argot were very well known in general. They had not only the highest percentages of people who were familiar with the items but also the highest percentage of admitted usage. These are both categories that have been noted as contributors to banlieue language, as mentioned by many scholars (Tejedor de Felipe 2004, Goudailler 1997, Séguin and Teillard 1996), which suggests that Tejedor de Felipe (2004) may be correct in his idea that this is indeed a French phenomenon.

Arabic is represented quite well in banlieue language in the present study. The speakers know the lexical items and admit to using them. However, it would be beneficial to continue the study with more tokens from this particular lexical category. Though Arabic was mentioned by other researchers, Roma also is prolific in this study. We see this is not the case, however, with Creole, which seems to be fading out of favor in banlieue language, perhaps because of the rapid and complete assimilation of its bilingual speakers into French society.

In all language categories we notice that the previous literature on gender is somewhat indicative of the reality of banlieue language and somewhat not. Most lexical items are attributed to both sexes equally as the primary users of

the words, which challenges the previous research on non-prestige varieties, in which men would usually be the primary speakers of the variety. Milroy (1980) attested that women used more of the non-prestige variety when their own community's non-prestige dialect had a prestige in its own area. I believe that with the importance of identity as a factor in banlieue language, as attested by Doran (2002), Melliani (2000), and others, that identity may supersede gender variation.

When we investigate only men versus women and the perceived usage between them, women alone are rejected almost categorically as being the primary speakers of the variety, which follows previous research on gender studies (Lavob 1972, Trudgill 1972). Males alone are regarded as using the vocabulary, generally in the area of 40% for most lexical items, and in higher percentages where the definition of the lexical item involved violence.

In general, the informants evaluated the perceived education level of people who would use the lexical items as being somewhere in the middle. They attribute these lexical items neither to those with very little education nor to those with a very high level of formal education. The notable exception to this rule was the category of tokens that seem to have been viewed as foreign to the informants, such as *choucrane*, where the educational level was perceived as very high. The definition of the lexical item seems to have some bearing on the perceived educational level of someone who would use the vocabulary as well, since all three words meaning 'to beat someone up' were attributed to a lower

level by the informants than the other lexical items in the study, which seems to suggest that a thematic investigation is necessary.

Finally, if we take into account the age of the informants, we find that there was a division between the youngest groups and the oldest groups.

Comparatively across the age groups, all groups chose their own generation more than any other choice, whether by itself or in combination with a younger or older generation. If this were a youth language, we would expect to see more choices of a younger generation since the informants were from 18 to 36 years of age. This would support Zerling's (1999) assertion that banlieue language is not limited to the young.

We do see that the youngest group attributed the most lexical items to a younger generation than theirs, effectively distancing themselves from those who would use the vocabulary. This is perhaps due to the younger informants being from either the Mission Locale where they were actively seeking employment, and thus did not want to admit to vocabulary seen as non-professional, or at the university where perhaps they would be rejecting the vocabulary as from another social setting (Doran 2002). It may also be simply that the vocabulary had been heard, but since it was not from their group, they attributed it to those in a younger generation. Especially with the Creole vocabulary in the study, the younger groups did not attribute the lexical items to their own age groups, but rather the other groups in general, with no consistency among the peer group. It was as if they had heard the lexical items, but rarely enough to not be able to pinpoint the actual age group who might use the words.

Usage of Verlan (the syllable reversal language game) was first studied in the late 1980s, which may also help understand the category of age. The oldest group chose their own generation or all generations for the majority of the lexical items and knew the most vocabulary. That oldest group would have been in high school during the late 1980s. Newer generations could be changing the vocabulary, as one student in the Séguin and Teillard (1996) study indicated. Some indication that this may be the case is given by the three Maghrebi males at the Mission Locale who stated that they did not use *bédo* and that it was from an older generation. We will see in 4.2 that these results are also supported when we look at the age group of informants who know a particular lexical item.

4.2 Global Results

After analyzing the results for each lexical item by itself, some general analysis is necessary. I examine the main factors, such as gender, age, and education in two separate manners. The first section in each subsection discussed the informants' collective perceptions about who uses the lexical items. However, in contrast to the section 4.1, we will not be looking at each individual lexical item, but rather the lexical items as a whole. I will then talk about each of the factors in terms of admitted usage, i.e. which gender, age group and education level (by informants) admits to the most usage of the lexical items as a whole. Finally, I compare the results for any discrepancies, i.e. do women say that both sexes use the lexical items equally and do they use the lexical items they say other women use, or is there a difference in their

perceptions and what they admit to using? Do members of one age group attribute usage to their own group and not admit using that same vocabulary? Two categories are only investigated in terms of admitted usage since they have no counter part. Those two factors are venue and language.

It should be noted that in this study women make up almost 60% of the participants. For this reason, in order to 'normalize' the data, results are presented first in an overall format, and then percentages are calculated separately for each gender. All mathematical operations were performed using Systat.

Overall there were 552 unexpected answers and non-answers out of 1407 possible answers. An unexpected answer is defined as any answer other than the definition provided by the original informant who helped create the list. Sometimes the unexpected response may be the result of a language change in progress, and the definition of the word in question may have evolved. Sometimes it may simply be a guess on the part of the informant. Many times it was also due to fatigue on the part of the informant since the questionnaire was quite long. In any case, the total number of the combination of non-answers and unexpected answers represents only 24.16% of the total 1407 possible.

Percentages from this point on are compiled excluding unexpected and non-answers, though these numbers are discussed at the beginning of every section. It should be noted at this point that each category contains a high level of non-answers or unexpected answers and that many of these non-answers or unexpected answers resulted from not knowing the lexical item; or when the

informant knew the lexical items, they chose the expected definition but did not elaborate on the questions that followed due to fatigue.

It should also be noted that if a participant chose more than one answer, the responses were not collapsed, but the selection of multiple responses created a separate category. Thus because of the choices of *both* 'my generation' and 'a younger generation,' a category was created for that dual choice.

4.2.1 Gender

I have already discussed what happens with language in terms of covert and overt prestige. I now examine in detail the perceptions of both sexes about the gender of someone who would use the vocabulary. I follow this by discussing the answers the informants themselves gave and comparing the two sets of data.

4.2.1.1 Perceived gender usage by gender of informant

Examining the non-answers in general terms by gender, we see that women, as might be expected in a non-prestige dialect, know fewer words than men (Eckert 1999, Labov 1972, Trudgill, 1972). However, when tallying the non-answers, (as mentioned above, 552/1407), we find that that difference is marginal. Women are just slightly less likely to know the lexical items, at 40% of no/unexpected answers (563) versus 37% (521) for men. It may also be noted at this time that the word *ouaiche* was counted in these percentages because all three possible answers were correct in some way, as discussed above.

The table below shows the number of tokens for each category, along with the corresponding percentage. Therefore, counting the responses of all informants regarding the gender of the perceived users of the lexical items, 208 tokens were recognized as being used by 'males,' at 24.33%. Only 36 tokens were attributed to females, which corresponds to 3.04% of the tokens. 72.63%, or 621 of the 854 tokens were attributed to both men and women equally.

Table 1: *Perceived gender usage by gender of informant*

	%	N
ALL INFORMANTS		
Male	24.33	208
Female	3.04	26
Both	72.63	621
Total	100	854
FEMALE INFORMANTS		
Male	22.6	113
Female	2.4	12
Both	75	375
Total	100	500
MALE INFORMANTS		
Male	26.76	95
Female	3.94	14
Both	69.38	246
Total	100	355

The expected result is that women would not be the primary users of the lexical items in question. This is borne out quite nicely in the percentages for each gender separately, with men attributing more of the vocabulary to females than females do, but neither sex attributing more than 4% to females. This means that the vocabulary is seen mainly as either a shared vocabulary or a masculine vocabulary. Most importantly, it is not perceived as a feminine vocabulary, which is what we would expect in a non-prestige variety.

Banlieue language is not a variety of overt prestige, but rather one of covert prestige. It should be, then, according to general previous sociolinguistic research on gender and linguistics, a variety where change is led by men rather than women (Labov 1972, Trudgill 1972). Furthermore, since men tend to under-report their use of the standard variety and women tend to over-report their use the same (Labov 1972, Trudgill 1972), we might expect that men would want to claim banlieue language, a non-prestige variety, as a *masculine* variety. We did see that males were slightly more likely than women to claim that the lexical items were indeed used mainly by men. However, the difference is minimal, 22.6% for females and 26.76% for males, but even taking the men's perception.

What is intriguing is that when we separate responses by the gender of the informant, we find that both males and females attribute usage of the lexical items to both sexes by a large degree. Women are especially prone to do so, at almost 75% versus almost 70% for men. It may be that usage between the sexes is less common than usage among the sexes separately. Men may be less likely to attribute the lexical items to both sexes since it may be viewed as a linguistic blending of gender roles.

I would like to propose that Doran's (2002) 'We're not *bourge*' theory may be applicable to explain why over 70% of both sexes attributed the words and phrases to both sexes. It is very possible that this social distinction between classes, the mentality of *les bourgeois* versus *les banlieuesards*, the identity factor underlined by so many scholars (Calvet 1994b, Doran 2002, Goudailler 1997, Melliani 2000), is more important than gender distinctions.

4.2.1.2 Admitted usage by gender of informant

Now that we have seen the perceptions of who uses these words, broken down by gender, we should look at the respondents' own admitted usage. In doing so, I omit the percentage of people who either did not answer or gave an unexpected answer. Table 2 below presents these results.

Table 2: Admitted usage by gender of informant

	%	N
ALL INFORMANTS		
Often	28.8	252
Rarely	36	315
Never	34.97	306
Oftenand rarely	.23	2
Total	100	875
FEMALE INFORMANTS		
Often	22.61	116
Rarely	33.33	171
Never	43.66	224
Oftenand rarely	.39	2
Total	100	513
MALE INFORMANTS		
Often	37.57	136
Rarely	39.78	144
Never	22.65	82
Oftenand rarely	0	0
Total	100	362

Results including all of the informants show that almost 35% of the informants say that they never use the lexical items. This means that 65% of the informants admit to using the lexical items in question to some extent. In fact, 28.8% of the participants say they use the lexical items in question often, and an additional 36% admit to using them rarely.

By gender of the informant, we see that the distribution of male versus female self-reported usage seems to be what we would expect from a non-prestige dialect, since the women do not admit to using it as much as the men do. In fact, 43.66% of the female informants say they never use the lexical items in question, while only 22.61% of the males said they never used the lexical items in question.

It is the direct comparison of admitted usage between the sexes that becomes important. When we examine admitted usage, starting with those who claim to use the words often, we see something we would expect to see in terms of non-prestige dialects. Females admit to using the vocabulary often at 22.6%, while men admit to 37.57%. For those who claim to use the vocabulary rarely, women come in at 33.33% and men at 39.78%. If we create a total admitted usage, women say that to some extent, they use 55.94% of these words. Men show an even higher average at 77.35%. This is partially in accordance to what we would expect with a non-prestige variety. Men admit to speaking it more than women do. However, as I have mentioned before, there is a high percentage of women who admit to using the vocabulary, which leads me to believe that perhaps identity with the banlieue is stronger than gender.

4.2.1.3 Comparative analysis

In the graph below, for perceived usage, the numbers were calculated by separating what was attributed to the opposite gender alone from anything that was attributed to the informant's gender. For example, for men, perceived usage includes both what was attributed solely to men and what was attributed to both

genders, but excludes what was attributed to females only. For women the opposite is true, and therefore numbers were compiled by adding those attributed solely to females along with those attributed to both sexes. Admitted usage includes all admitted usage, and therefore both 'often' and 'rare' usage was combined. Only 'never' was excluded. As a reminder, these figures are only for expected answers.

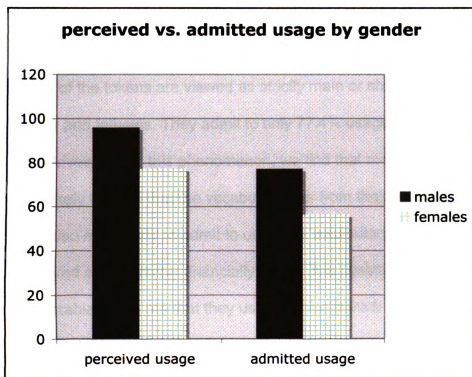


Figure 1: Perceived vs. admitted usage by gender

Comparing perceived usage to admitted usage, women claimed that men use the items exclusively at only 22.6% (113 tokens). That leaves 77.4% of the items as being perceived either strictly women's lexicon or shared. However, adding up all of their admitted usage (both responses of 'rarely' and 'often'), that

number is clearly lower (56.3%). It could be that the women were under-reporting their usage of these terms, which would be explainable by covert and overt prestige. In addition, the women as a group were quite well educated. In fact, there were only four women with a BEP or equivalent, versus 12 men of that educational level.

What is unexpected is that the men admitted to using the lexical items less than they perceived their gender as using the same vocabulary. In theory, men should be underreporting their use of the standard and over-reporting their use of a non-prestige variety. The perception among the male informants is that 96.1% of the tokens are viewed as strictly male or shared between their own gender and females. They admit to only 77.4% usage, however.

Investigating this phenomenon, we find that men in the older groups were most likely to state that the vocabulary was from their own generation, and they were also most likely to admit to using the vocabulary. These men were employed and relatively financially stable. It is possible that this group felt more comfortable telling me that they used the vocabulary since I had already witnessed this when we had socialized in the past, since they were at a private gathering. They knew me and trusted me, and therefore would not expect such an admission to adversely affect them in any way. As for the younger men at the Mission Locale, while I was able to assure them of their anonymity, it is possible that they were hesitant to admit to using banlieue language in the fear that somehow the results might be released to employers or that said vocabulary might somehow affect their job employment prospects. At the university, some

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students may not have wanted to admit to the vocabulary since they were not in an environment in which that vocabulary would be appreciated. Even the younger participants in Doran's (2002) study avoided use of Verlan in an academic setting. These university students may simply not have wanted to admit usage to a stranger. Additionally, it may be that for some students, banlieue language was not an identity they embraced. I did not investigate the cité and its staircases of unemployed youth, but rather places where people were either employed or actively seeking employment or the skills to attain it. My goal was not to confirm the stereotype, but rather to question the stereotype by including rarely studied groups.

Finally, this empirical data allows us to say that these lexical items are indeed used, regardless of gender. There may be difference among the genders, both in perceived usage and admitted usage, but both genders admitted to using the vocabulary. The women in this study admitted to using fewer banlieue language tokens than men, which is what we would expect in a non-prestige variety. Though, again, we see that women did admit to usage rates of over 50%, which may indicate that identity with the banlieue, and solidarity, may be a more important factor than gender variation, a phenomenon witnessed previously in Milroy's (1980) study.

4.2.2 Education

46% of the respondents did not answer this question. The question of the education of the user was toward the end for each lexical item, and fatigue seemed to play a part. There were also several qualitative remarks stating that

education was not a factor, so it may be the case that people did not want to answer that particular question because they did not feel that the question of education was valid, especially given the stereotypes of the banlieue. One of the informants told me directly that education level was irrelevant and questioned the legitimacy of the question. One simply placed an exclamation mark next to each of the questions concerning education level. Another wrote that the education level of the informant, in her opinion, was irrelevant to whether or not that person would use the vocabulary, but rather usage of banlieue language depended on where the person was raised.

It is important to remember that we are discussing perceptions in this section. I avoided actual categories of education such as 'someone who has the *baccalauréat*' or 'someone who has a DEA,' because I felt that I would elicit true language attitudes better by asking questions aimed at more general categories such as 'not very educated', 'somewhat educated' and 'very educated.' Actual degree levels were also rejected due to the changing nature of educational level need in society. Professions that several decades ago required only a high school degree may need higher levels now, and in fact, as we have mentioned, the DEUG is no longer a current degree program. Attitudes toward this particular degree may change over time since it has been eliminated. In addition, including every possible educational level and combinations thereof would have resulted in extreme cell paucity among the factors. Finally, choosing three categories for the educational levels allowed for consistency. All attitude questions for age, gender, and education level had three choices.

This section on education is organized by the educational level of the informants, starting with those who have BEP or a BTS. The scholastic track degrees were kept separately, so though the BTS represents more education than the *Baccalauréat*, it was placed between the BEP and the *Baccalauréat*. The DEUG has been eliminated recently in order to streamline French education with European education, but many of my informants were educated at a time when it was still valid. It was collapsed with the *Licence*, the three-year degree that replaced it, but which has also historically been an option. The final grouping is '*Maîtrise* and up,' any of the multiple degrees after that educational level, including directed studies and the doctorate.

4.2.2.1 Perceived education-level usage by education of informant

Table 3: Perceived education-level usage by education of informant

	%	N
ALL INFORMANTS		
Not very educated	13.74	100
Not very and somewhat	10.71	78
Somewhat educated	33.52	244
Somewhat and very	1.51	11
Very educated	4.81	35
All	33.10	241
Other	1.37	10
Total	100	728
BEP		
Not very educated	6.35	8
Not very and somewhat	16.67	21
Somewhat educated	35.71	45
Somewhat and very	.79	1
Very educated	8.73	11
All	31.75	40
Other	0	0
Total	100	126
BTS		

Table 3 (cont'd)

Not very educated	18.52	5
Not very and somewhat	11.11	3
Somewhat educated	0	0
Somewhat and very	0	0
Very educated	3.7	1
All	66.67	3
Other	0	0
Total	100	27
Bac		
Not very educated	17.99	25
Not very and somewhat	10.07	14
Somewhat educated	25.90	36
Somewhat and very	.72	1
Very educated	5.04	7
All	38.85	58
Other	1.44	2
Total	100	139
DEUG and licence		
Not very educated	16.28	49
Not very and somewhat	4.98	15
Somewhat educated	43.52	131
Somewhat and very	1.99	6
Very educated	5.32	16
All	27.57	83
Other	.33	1
Total	100	301
Master and higher		
Not very educated	10.32	3
Not very and somewhat	19.84	25
Somewhat educated	25.4	32
Somewhat and very	2.38	3
Very educated	0	0
All	36.51	46
Other	5.56	7
Total	100	126

Regardless of their own level of education, we still see that only 13.74% of the informants attributed the lexical items to those who are 'not very educated,'

and only 10.71% of the informants said that it is used by both those who are 'not very educated' in combination with those who are 'somewhat educated.' The vast majority, in fact, chose 'somewhat educated,' at 33.52% or 'all' education groups, at 33.1%. Very few informants chose either 'highly educated' alone or 'highly educated' in combination with 'somewhat educated,' at only 1.51%. This may be explained by the fact that banlieue language is a non-prestige variety, and therefore does not represent change from above. It is, however, notable that in general, they rarely attributed usage solely to those who are 'not very educated'. This goes in direct opposition with Lepoutre (1997: 335) and the idea that those who retain the dialect are part of a '*sous-culture délinquante et déviante*,' 'deviant and delinquent sub-culture.'

Another interesting phenomenon, found when informants are separated according to their own level of education, is that among the educational groups, the perception of 'not very educated' never reached any higher than 18.52%. This percentage was held by the BTS group and was closely followed by the *Baccalauréat* group at 17.99%. The BEP group, that with the lowest education, was the least likely to attribute usage to lower education, at only 6.35%, but interestingly enough, the group with the most formal education was actually *closest* in opinion to those who held a BEP. Even among those with the most education, however, we see that only 10.32% of them attributed the use of this vocabulary to those who are 'not very educated.' If it were truly a case in which only those with little or no formal education use banlieue language, we would expect those numbers to be reflected, with a much higher percentage of each

educational group choosing 'not very educated' as their response and with a slight difference in condemnation according to the education of the informant. This is not the case.

Let us now examine those who responded 'all' educational levels. The DEUG and *Licence* group were at the lower end of the scale with 27.57%. Conversely, the BTS group was at 66.67%. The other groups were between 33 and 38% on this issue, with the most educated group falling toward the higher end.

The group that is the most salient in terms of responses is BTS. They were very polarized in their answers, attributing usage either to all groups (66.67%) or to the lower educational groups, represented by their choice of 18.52% for the lowest educational level and 11.11% for the 'not very educated' in combination with 'somewhat educated.' Some of the differences may be attributed to the fact that they had completed a post secondary education degree, but as we have mentioned, that is not the same as the DEUG because of its technical nature. The BTS group may consider itself fairly educated, as indeed it is, but because it is not on the same scholarly track those who hold the degree may well find themselves in less-formal job environments. The paucity of the cells may also contribute to this effect as this reflects fewer than 30 answers over the entire questionnaire, which means two informants, since there were a total of 21 lexical items per informant.

4.2.2.2 Admitted usage by education of informant

Here we discuss admitted usage of banlieue language among the informants, divided by their own level of education.

Table 4: *Admitted usage by education of informant*

	%	N
ALL INFORMANTS		
Often	29.47	247
Rarely	34.96	293
Never	35.32	296
Often and rarely	.24	2
Total	100	838
BEP		
Often	32.72	54
Rarely	36.36	60
Never	30.91	51
Often and rarely	0	0
Total	100	165
BTS		
Often	41.18	14
Rarely	52.94	18
Never	5.88	2
Often and rarely	0	0
Total	100	34
Bac.		
Often	39.87	63
Rarely	20.89	33
Never	38.61	61
Often and rarely	.63	1
Total	100	158
DEUG and licence		
Often	26.5	93
Rarely	39.89	140
Never	33.33	117
Often and rarely	.28	1
Total	100	351
Masters and higher		
Often	21.74	30
Rarely	34.06	47
Never	44.2	61
Often and rarely	0	0
Total	100	138

Education does indeed seem to matter in terms of self-reported usage. It is, however, worthy of note that according to much of the research, the age and education levels of these informants would inhibit use of banlieue language (Doran 2002, Lepoutre 1997). Additionally, since education is often viewed as one of the determining factors for socio-economic group (Teevan 1985), the higher levels of education should not be admitting to usage by virtue of their educational level, either. We find, however, that this is not the case.

In fact, over all, results including all informants show that only 35% say they never use the vocabulary in question. The group with the highest self-reported non-usage is the '*Maîtrise* and higher' group at 44.2%, followed by the '*Baccalauréat*' group at 38.61%. Most of the other groups are in the 30th percentile for 'never', which means that the majority does admit to using the vocabulary. 65% of informants, in fact, still admit to some form of usage. 'Often' ranges between 21.74% for the highest level of education to over 41% with the 'BTS' group, which is again closely followed by the '*Baccalauréat*' group at 39.87%. The 'DEUG and *Licence*' group is slightly higher than the '*Maîtrise* and up' group at 26.5%. The 'BEP' group admits to using the vocabulary often at only 32.72%, toward the lower end.

4.2.2.3 Comparative analysis

First and foremost, the reader should be reminded that while no study has ever specifically been done on the educational level of those who speak banlieue language, Doran (2002) posited that the variety was dropped once a student decided to go the scholastic track, and Lepoutre (1997) relegated

banlieue language in late teens and older to derelicts. Therefore we might have expected that the informants, all older than 16, and all having at least the *baccalauréat* or equivalent, would not admit to speaking banlieue language at all based on those two studies. This is not the case.

In fact, in the section on individual lexical items, we see that no word was exclusively seen as used by those with low education. In 4.2.2.1 this is highlighted, since even those informants with the most formal education say that the lexical items in this dissertation are used by people of all educational backgrounds.

However, just as with gender, there is a difference between informants' perceptions of what educational level uses the vocabulary most and what they themselves admit using by education level. We see in 4.2.2 that education level of the speaker does play a role in how often one admits to using the lexical items. This would conform to what we would expect in a non-prestige variety. However, while those with higher education admit to using banlieue language less than those with a lower level of education, they still admit to using the lexical items. This allows me to suggest that education may not have as strong an effect as previously thought, and may, like gender, be less important than solidarity and identity with the area. Labov's Martha's Vineyard study (1972) proved that those with strong feelings of identity and who wished to stay in the area adopted a more regional accent than those who wished to leave the area. I propose that this may have an effect in the banlieue and that the covert prestige (Labov 1972) and symbolic power (Bourdieu and Thompson 1991) of using the

variety may play an important role in the high levels of admitted usage among my informants.

4.2.3 Age

Here I examine the perceptions of what age group would use the lexical items and compare those results to what the informants in this group admit to using.

As a reminder, Doran (2002) said that use of the dialect ends around age 16 when students decide whether they will be continuing the educational track or moving to a more technical track, which developed the theory set out by Lepoutre (1997).

For analysis, I innovated a little. Typical sociolinguistic research asks the informant to choose among specific age groups or a system that includes 'young', 'middle aged' and 'old'. I argue that this is in some way more amorphous than my system since judgments on what age is considered 'old' or 'young' already depends on the age of the informant and his or her perceptions of that age. Someone who is 18 may view 'young' very differently than someone who is 36.

Furthermore, I have been very consistent about keeping the labels that informants used to describe themselves throughout this dissertation whenever possible since the factor of identity plays such a strong role in who will or will not use banlieue language. Therefore, allowing subjects to self-identify forced them to look at those who they believe to use the lexical items in relation to themselves. I believe that allowing them to use their own generation as a focal

point permitted the patterning of identity of one group versus another. It focused the issue on the informants instead of imposing upon them my own categories.

In addition, it allowed informants to select multiple categories, yielding more complete results. Therefore, if an informant viewed himself or herself to be on the cusp of two generations, perhaps because his or her cohort or peer group was younger than the informant, that possibility could be expressed by a combination of the categories 'a younger generation and mine' and 'mine and an older generation,' and finally 'all generations.' I believe that this gives us a more accurate picture of what the informants believe to be generational boundaries. It is also important to note that responses were not counted twice. Therefore, if an informant circled all three responses, his or her response fell under 'all' and not under any of the separate responses.

4.2.3.1 Perceived usage by age of informant

Here we examine the perceptions of age in relation to banlieue language. Informants decided if the lexical items belonged to their own generation, an older generation, or a younger generation. This section is analyzed in terms of the informants' age group.

Table 5: *Perceived usage by age of informant*

	%	N
ALL INFORMANTS		
Younger generation	10.26	82
Younger and mine	22.03	176
My generation	37.42	299
Mine and older	4.51	36
Older generation	10.03	80
All	15.64	125

Table 5 (cont'd)		
Total	100	798
18- and 19 year-olds		
Younger generation	11.92	14
Younger and mine	11.02	14
My generation	51.97	66
Mine and older	3.15	4
Older generation	14.96	19
All	7.87	10
Total	100	127
20- to 24-year-olds		
Younger generation	15.62	52
Younger and mine	14.11	47
My generation	49.25	164
Mine and older	2.7	9
Older generation	12.9	43
All	5.41	18
Total	100	333
25- to 29-year-olds		
Younger generation	5.26	11
Younger and mine	33.97	71
My generation	23.44	49
Mine and older	8.61	18
Older generation	4.78	10
All	23.92	50
Total		
30- to 35-year-olds		
Younger generation	3.85	5
Younger and mine	33.85	44
My generation	15.38	20
Mine and older	3.85	5
Older generation	6.15	8
All	36.15	47
Total	100	130

Striking among the responses for age is the paucity of 'a younger generation' responses. The overall responses have just 10% of the informants saying that the vocabulary belongs to a younger generation, even though the informants range in age from 18 to 36. What is even more interesting is that among the oldest group, fewer than 4% said the lexical items belonged to a younger generation. Instead, it was the younger speakers who attributed banlieue language most to people younger than they, and even there it never exceeds 15.62%. This may be in accordance with Doran's (2002) theory that the students who are arriving at the university are loathe to use the lexical items in order to avoid a perceived stigma. However, it may also be due to an aging of the lexical items, since the lexical items were given to me by someone who was 31 years of age at the time of the questionnaire creation.

Also in direct contrast to what one might expect, it is the oldest group that claimed most usage of 'all generations' at 36.15%, (47/130 tokens), which is 12% above the next highest group. The second highest group is, interestingly enough, the second-oldest age group, that of 25-29. They chose 'all' at 23.92% (50/209). The younger two groups are both under 10%.

Again, the overall statistics have almost 40% (37.42%) of the respondents choosing their own generation as speakers of the variety, with ages ranging from 18 to 36. This is unexpected. At the other end of the spectrum, it was more expected that only 4.51% (36/1407) of the informants would say that the lexical items belonged to someone of an older generation in combination with their own generation, since this was originally viewed as a language of youth. We should

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also underscore that only 10.03%, or 80 tokens, were viewed as the lexical items of an older generation. When looking at the overall statistics, 15.64% of the tokens were viewed as belonging to all generations, which leads us to investigate the responses by age group.

I now discuss their responses by age groups, with the oldest age group analyzed first. We see that though they were between 30 and 36 years of age, this group viewed only 3.15% of the vocabulary items as belonging to a younger generation, which is a mere four tokens. They were fairly evenly divided between 'younger and mine' at 33.85% and 'all' at 36.15%. They seemed to view these items as vocabulary they share with younger generations, since only 15.38% claimed the vocabulary as belonging to strictly their generation. This may indeed open the question of retention among older users.

The 25- to 29-year old group is almost identical on the 'younger and mine' combination, but claims 'my generation' by itself more often, at 23.44% and 'all' is slightly reduced at 23.92%. This may be because this group considers itself on the older edge of those who would use banlieue language.

A great age divide becomes apparent between those of the first two age groups and those of the oldest two age groups. Both of the younger groups claimed their own generation at the largest percentage in their category, 20- to 24-year olds at 49.25% and 18- and 19-year olds at 51.97%, while the two older groups said that all generations use it. What may be a factor is the changing nature of the banlieue. The banlieue is changing so quickly that one set of three related informants said that the banlieue had changed between the oldest

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informant's generation and that of the middle informant, only three years younger, and yet again for the youngest informant, another three years younger.

Another unexpected element is that both of the younger groups are higher in saying that the lexical items belong to an older generation. The youngest group at almost 15% and the 20- to 24-year olds at almost 13%, this is more than double that of the highest percentage of the two older groups.

4.2.3.2 Admitted usage by age of informant

I shall next examine at the admitted usage by age. We have seen that in both education and gender, admitted usage has differed from what they perceive as the people who use the lexical items in question.

Table 6: *Admitted usage by age of informant*

	%	N
ALL INFORMANTS		
Often	29.47	247
Rarely	34.96	293
Never	35.32	296
Oftenand rarely	.24	2
Total	100	838
18- and 19-year-olds		
Often	23.48	31
Rarely	22.73	30
Never	53.03	70
Oftenand rarely	.76	1
Total	100	132
20- to 24-year-olds		
Often	29.33	105
Rarely	38.27	137
Never	32.12	115
Oftenand rarely	0.0	0
Total	100	358
25- to 29-year-olds		
Often	31.78	68
Rarely	31.78	68
Never	35.98	77

Table 6 (cont'd)		
Oftenand rarely	.47	1
Total	100	214
30- to 35-year-olds		
Often	31.85	43
Rarely	42.96	58
Never	25.19	34
Oftenand rarely	0.0	0
Total	100	135

In examining the data we notice that informants, even among the age groups that have been signaled as not using banlieue language (Doran 2002, Lepoutre 1997), admitted to using the vocabulary items often. Instead of the youngest group using the vocabulary the most and a sliding scale of downward-progressing percentages among the older informants, which is what we might expect, the opposite is true. In fact, at each age group the admitted usage in terms of the 'often' category rises. The youngest group admitted to using banlieue vocabulary 'often' the least of all four groups (23.48%, or 31/132), with the second group at 29.33% (or 105/358), the third group at 31.78% (68/214), and the oldest group admitting to using it the most (31.85% or 43/135). Admitting to using vocabulary items 'rarely' does not show as progressive a continuation, since though the oldest group still has the highest usage (42.96% or 58/135) and the youngest group still has the lowest usage (22.73% or 30/132), the two inner groups are more to what we would have expected. The 20- to 24-year olds admit to using the vocabulary more under the category of 'rarely' (38.27% or 137/358) and the 25- to 29-year-olds admit to using the vocabulary items at a rate of 31.78% (or 68/214).

When one investigates the responses of those who said that they never use the lexical items, we might expect a sliding scale from the youngest to the oldest, with the latter admitting to the least usage. Again, this is not the case. We have a sliding scale that is the exact opposite of what we would expect. We see that in the category of 'never,' the highest age group to claimed it is actually the youngest age group, at 53.03% or 70/132. The second group is at 32.12% (115/358), the third group at 35.98% (77/214), and the oldest group at a mere 25.19% (34/135). I would like to take this time to remind the reader that if the informant did not know the lexical item, but still answered the questions on perceptions, those answers were not included. Therefore, those who admit to 'never' using the items in question did indeed know the words.

We turn to an examination of admitted usage in general, or more specifically, adding those who admitted to rare usage to those who admitted to using it often. This means that 74.8% of our oldest group admitted to using the vocabulary, while only 45% of the youngest group admitted to using it. Again, the 20- to 24-year-old group performs more to what we would expect (compared to the other age categories and not to what we would expect in terms of previous research), at slightly less in terms of percentage. 67% of the informants admitted to usage compared to 63.6% in the 25- to 29-year-old group. It is extremely interesting that even the group that admitted to using the vocabulary the least still admitted to some kind of active vocabulary usage at 63%.

It is worth mentioning here again that the list was created by a native who was 31 at the time, which would put him in the oldest group. The holiday

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gatherings venue does indeed contain several social groups of the native speaker who created the list, as well as their significant others. Those women did not grow up with the list-creator. So while we may be seeing a generational influence, it is not simply in-group/ out-group with the speaker who helped to create the list. What is important to us, however, is that regardless, empirical data now proves that the vocabulary *is* being used, and by much older speakers than previously thought.

4.2.3.3 *Comparative Analysis*

In the graph below, I counted the number of informants in each group who chose their own generation by itself, or in combination with any other group in order to represent the perceived usage by age group. As to the admitted usage, the numbers were computed as in section 4.1. This means that there was no difference between admitting to using the words rarely or often to create a binary category. An informant either was counted as admitting to using the lexical item in question or not admitting to using the vocabulary in question.

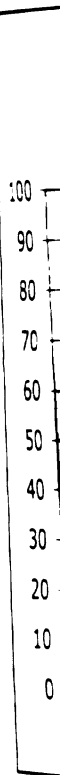


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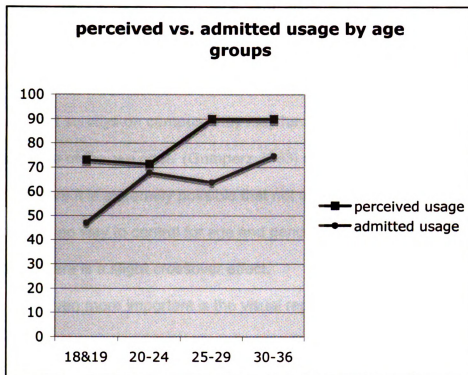


Figure 2: Perceived vs. admitted usage by age groups

As with the other categories there is some discrepancy between what a group perceived as those who would use the vocabulary in question and what they, themselves, admitted to using, though the 24- to 29-year-old group is very close. In each case, however, we see that the perceived usage of a group's generation was higher than that generation admitted to using. The most salient is the youngest group, which attributed the vocabulary to their generation at 74.1%, but only admitted to 46.9% usage. These differences may be due to the women who made up the larger part of the study at the university venue (which was both a younger venue and comprised mostly of women who claimed to use it less overall), where not all informants were from Val d'Oise or Seine-Saint-Denis. It may be that some informants, particularly at the younger venue of the university, did not identify with the area and its language, or Doran's (2002) idea

of separation from the variety at the university level may explain the difference. Additionally, as I have mentioned before, while I told informants that the survey was anonymous and they were relatively familiar with the process due to frequent surveys on campus, they may have underreported usage to a stranger because of the 'we code' (Gumperz 1983) nature of banlieue language. Therefore it is extremely possible that not only is age a factor but that since there is no way to control for age and gender or age and venue at the same time, there is a slight crossover effect.

Even more important is the visual representation of both the usage and the perceived usage. Both increase steadily as the ages of the people within the group increases, not what we would have expected since so many scholars had originally delineated it as a youth phenomenon (Boyer 1985, Doran 2002, George 1986, Lepoutre 1997, Tejedor de Felipe 2004, Walter 1997). In addition, it is necessary to underscore that no group admitted to using less than 46.9%. More importantly, the oldest group admitted to using 74.8%. Therefore we are able to challenge the established idea of an age limit, put forth by Zerling (1999) and Calvet (2006), to banlieue language with quantitative, empirical data.

As to the underreporting, the aforementioned hypotheses apply. It is very possible that the two youngest groups were in environments in which banlieue language is not as appreciated. In particular, those at the Mission Locale may have decided to underreport due to fears that it may adversely affect their job possibilities, despite reassurances of anonymity. Another possibility is that perhaps some of them were indeed not using the vocabulary. Perhaps they did

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not identify with minority struggle. While I fully recognize certain AAVE tokens such as ‘wazzup’ as part of my generation, and would not necessarily categorize someone who used it as having a low level of education, I would not use it.

4.2.4 Language of the lexical item

The original language of the lexical item is another factor that has to be discussed. However, since the informants did not make any correlated judgments, that is, perceived judgments such as those of age, gender, and education, the variable of language will be discussed in terms of self-reported usage alone.

However, to make the results more meaningful and to provide another method of comparison, for each category of language, there are two sets of numbers provided. The percentages of non-answered and unexpected answers are reinvestigated here since they are relevant. Therefore, the first set of numbers is the percent and number of all non-answered/unexpected answers per language. The remaining percentages are based on only those with expected answers, to remain consistent with the rest of the thesis. This distinction was justified due to a statistical significance between Creole and some of the other languages.

4.2.5 Admitted usage by the original language of lexical item

Table 7: Admitted usage by original language of lexical item

	%	N
ALL INFORMANTS		
Non-answers	37.74	531
Often	29.47	247
Rarely	34.96	293

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Table 7 (cont'd)		
Never	35.32	296
Oftenand rarely	.24	2
Total	100	1407
Arabic		
Non-answers	34.33	69/201
Often	37.88	50
Rarely	34.85	46
Never	26.52	35
Oftenand rarely	.76	1
Total	100	132
Argot		
Non-answers	24.25	65/268
Often	34.48	70
Rarely	33	67
Never	32.02	65
Oftenand rarely	.49	1
Total	100	203
Creole		
Non-answers	67.16	180/268
Often	18.18	16
Rarely	42.18	38
Never	38.64	34
Oftenand rarely	0	0
Total	100	88
Roma		
Non-answers	35.45	190/536
Often	21.97	76
Rarely	38.15	132
Never	39.6	137
Oftenand rarely	.29	1
Total	100	346
Verlan		
Non-answers	20.15	27/134
Often	37.38	40
Rarely	29.91	32
Never	32.71	35
Oftenand rarely	0	0
Total	100	107

The first interesting, noticeable difference is among the percentage of unexpected and non-answers given by language. While Roma and Arabic had 35.45% (190/536) and 34.33% (69/201) of non/unexpected answers

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respectively, 67.16% (180/268) of the informants did not know or did not answer the Creole questions. At the other end of the spectrum, there is Argot with only 24.25% (65/268) and Verlan with only 20.15% (27/134) of non/unexpected answers.

All responses were 'normalized' as well in order to analyze simply those who gave an expected answer. This means that once it has been established what percentage of non-answers and unexpected answers existed for each language, those non-answers and unexpected answers were excluded from the rest of the statistics, much as I did for gender. In this manner, we see a true comparison among the languages.

The rest of the statistics in this section should be viewed as 'of those who gave an expected answer, X many vocabulary tokens were admitted to by the informants as a whole.' In this case, numbers represent the percent of responses that were 'often,' 'rarely,' 'never,' or a combination, out of the number of total expected responses. For example, with Creole, there were a total of 88 expected responses out of 67 surveys and four lexical entries per survey. Here again, we find that Creole distances itself from the other languages. Of those who identified the expected answer, a mere 18% (16) admitted to regular use, while 42% (38) said that they rarely used the lexical items. Finally 38.7% (34) said that they never used the lexical items. When we compare this to the other languages, we see that in Arabic, the informants admitted to using 34.3% (50) often, another 37.9% (46) rarely, and only 26.5% (35) never. In Argot, the informants admitted to using 34.5% (70) often, 33% (67) rarely, and only 32%

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(65) never. In Roma these numbers are 22% (76) often, 38.2% (132) rarely, and 39.6% (137) never. Finally, in Verlan the numbers are 37.4% (40) often, 29.9% (32) rarely, and 32.7% (35) never.

In investigating this phenomenon, I am able to suggest that much of this may be generational. In fact, during the 1970s and 1980s, France instituted a program with the DOMTOM, and those who wished to work in France as a *fonctionnaire* (highly envied state jobs) were allowed to participate in a program that occasionally paid for voyages to their former homes. The result was an influx of Caribbean 'immigration' to the Metropole in *fonctionnaire* positions. This slowed down with time. Since they are French departments, French is the language of education in those areas. Therefore, since people who speak Creole would also speak French, it should be reasonable to expect that assimilation would occur more quickly than with other groups. This is especially true since many people who speak Arabic or Roma have at least one parent who does not speak French very well (Carpin, Tavan, and Dugué 2005).

At the other end of the spectrum, there is Verlan, with only 20% of non/unexpected answers and 37% (40) responses of 'often,' 30% (32) of 'rarely,' and only 32% (35) of 'never.' It is the most popular language category in terms of admitted usage.

Argot is almost identical to Verlan for self-reported usage percentages. 34% (70) of informants admitted to using the lexical items frequently, and an additional 33% (67) said they rarely used them. In the 'never' category, there were only 32% (65).

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Many scholars (Calvet 1997, Doran 2002, etc.) have commented on the high percentage of Arabic items in the language spoken in the banlieues, and here we see that this is supported by the empirical data. Much of the statistics in this section are influenced by *kiffer* and *ouaiche*. Of the total of expected answers, 38% (50) admitted to using the vocabulary often. 35% (46) admitted to rare usage. 32% said they never used it.

Again, many speakers are of Maghrebi heritage in the banlieue, and frequently at least one of their parents is not fluent in French (Amara 2002, Doran 2002, Jablonka 2003, Melliani 2000). Arabic is often spoken in the home, though it is not 'classical Arabic.' Melliani (2000) and Doran (2002) have pointed to identity factors as a reason for introducing Arabic lexical items into their speech and the frequency has led to it being absorbed into the local parlance.

Roma is unexpectedly prolific in its contribution to the vocabulary in the banlieue as a language of immigration. Its roots are nomadic, but it is almost identical to Arabic in percentages of those who gave unexpected answers (35.5%). 22% (76) admitted to using it regularly, and 38% (132) admitted to rare usage. Much of the borrowed vocabulary relates to theft, drugs, and police, so it is possible that borrowing from a lesser-known language would promote the cryptic function, originally the idea behind *argot* and the *malfaiteurs*.

However, we must emphasize the fact that Verlan and argot, both French phenomena, are the most widely known. They are also the categories of language for which the informants admitted usage. Tejedor de Felipe's (2004) theory of banlieue language as a mostly French idea seems to bear true.

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4.2.6 Venue

The differences among the venues are such that in each case a very different informant base was solicited. In the university setting all had the *Baccalauréat* or equivalent in order to be enrolled. At the Mission Locale, the education level was lower as a whole by the very nature of that venue. Finally, the last group of people, solicited in private gatherings, were rather well-educated people who had settled into careers and adulthood. Therefore, the hypothesis would be that the Mission Locale would be the group to use the vocabulary the most, given the generally lower education level.

Table 8: *Admitted usage by venue*

	%	N
ALL INFORMANTS		
Often	28.77	252
Rarely	35.96	315
Never	24.93	306
Often and rarely	.34	3
Total	100	876
L'Université de Saint Denis		
Often	28.21	123
Rarely	35.32	154
Never	35.78	156
Often and rarely	.69	3
Total	100	436
La Mission Locale		
Often	27.86	39
Rarely	31.43	44
Never	40.71	57
Often and rarely	0	0
Total	100	140
Friends		
Often	30	90
Rarely	39	117
Never	31	93
Often and rarely	0	0

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Table 8 (cont'd)		
Total	100	300

When examining the results, however, we find that it is not the Mission Locale informants who admitted to using the lexical items the most. I first investigate this data by way of those questions left unanswered or answered with unexpected responses. In terms of percentages, the highest group of non-answers is actually found in the Mission Locale. Their ratio of non-answers to all answers was 112/252, or 44%. The university was the middle group, with 299/735, or 40%. Finally, the lowest percentage of non-answers or unexpected answers was the friends group, at 120/420, or 28.6%.

Additionally, when we look at self-admitted usage, we find that, again, the results from the Mission Locale are not what we would expect. In fact, this group had the highest number of responses in the 'never' category, meaning that even if they did know it, they claimed not to use 40.7% of it (57/140). This is in comparison to 35% of the university setting and only 31% of the private venue. The results are also reversed of what one might expect in terms of general usage. In terms of categories, both 'often' and 'rarely' were admitted to least in the Mission Locale. The category of 'often' is at 27.86% (39/140) and 'rarely' is at 31.43% (44/140) in the university setting. The highest percentages were in the private gatherings venue, at 30% (90/300) for 'often' and 39% (117/300) for 'rarely.'

I suggest that there may be a few factors at work here. First, private gatherings were filled with peers of the list-maker, though it is important to note

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that their significant others were also present and also were informants in this **group**. While the core group of males may have belonged to Garges and the **surrounding** areas, many of the females did not. In addition, these speakers **were** older and tended to be more familiar with the Creole vocabulary, as I have **shown**, which is another contributing factor. Thirdly, I was in-group with these **informants**, and either I was a close, personal friend or was introduced by a **close**, personal friend of theirs. Because of this trust factor, that of either **knowing** me personally or being introduced to be in a group of peers who knew **me** personally and trusted me, these informants may have felt more free to **admit** to using banlieue language. This group was also well-established socially, **with** its members enjoying full-time employment.

A few informants, all male, at the Mission Locale mentioned that the **vocabulary** was of an older generation, which may mean that younger people **are** still using banlieue language, but said language is changing rapidly. **Additionally**, the younger groups may well be innovating as the Séguin and **Teillard** (1996) informant suggests. When referring to the Mission Locale alone, **the** informants there were told that I was a student studying banlieue language, **just** as it was explained in every other venue. However, at the Mission Locale, **the** participants were actively searching employment at the very place where I **was** administering my questionnaire. Banlieue language, like any non-standard **variety**, has a stigma in the job world. It is possible that the Observer's Paradox (**Labov** 1972) would be more strongly felt in this venue and that the informants

may have felt that they must behave differently in the Mission Locale so that **they** could find employment.

At the university, the students were very used to questionnaires since the **social** science students administer surveys and questionnaires for classes **regularly**. They were, however, in an environment where the stigma would be **more** apparent, as Doran (2002) has indicated.

Finally, another important remark about these results is that while one **group** may have a slightly higher percentage than another group, it is important to **note** that they are still all fairly close. When the categories are normalized and **solely** expected answers are analyzed, there is very little difference among the **groups** in terms of how much banlieue language they admitted to using. All of **these** groups admitted to using the lexical items in this dissertation, regardless of **age**, education, and gender.

4.2.7 Overall statistics analysis

In **general**, we find that among the different categories—gender, education, and **age**—the perceptions the informants harbored about who uses the vocabulary **differed** from what the informants themselves admitted to using. While both men **and** women said that both sexes use the lexical items equally, we find that **indeed**, men did admit to using the words more than the women. As previously **mentioned**, this may be due to the sociolinguistic tendencies among the genders in **both** usage of standard language and reporting of their usage of standard language.

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In terms of education, we find that on average, informants preferred to **signal** a middle level of education for those who use the variety. They did not **generally** tend to attribute the variety to those with a low level of education, as **we** might have expected, since banlieue language is a non-prestige variety. **When** the informants are broken down into groups of similar education, the BTS **group** was the most distinct and the most generous in attributing banlieue **language** to all educational levels, though more investigation may be needed **due** to the paucity of informants. The most important element of this category **was** the fact that even among the most educated group, only 10.3% of the **vocabulary** was attributed to those of low levels of education, and over 36% of **the** **vocabulary** was attributed to all educational groups. In general, all groups of **education** had the most responses in the 'all' or 'somewhat educated' **categories**. When we contrast this with their admitted usage, however, we do **see** a slight disconnect. Those with the most education did indeed admit to using **the** **vocabulary** less themselves than the other groups. Again the BTS group's **results** were very salient since those informants overwhelmingly admitted to **speaking** the variety.

As to age, when we investigate the perceived age level of those who use **the** **lexical** items in the variety, we see that there is an inverse proportion of **those** who attributed the variety to a younger generation as the age groups get **older**. In addition, the two youngest groups attributed more items to the older **generations** than either of the two older groups, which leads me to believe that **some** of the lexical items, especially those from the linguistic category of Creole,

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may be vocabulary that only the older generations were exposed to enough to **acquire** and use. Finally, this supposition is also supported by the fact that those **who** chose 'all generations' with the most frequency were those in the oldest **generations**.

This seemingly backwards distribution is not negated by what the age **groups** admitted to using. In fact, the older generation reported the highest **percentage** of admitted usage among the age groups and the lowest **concentration** of 'never,' and the youngest group reported the lowest percentage **of** admitted usage and the highest percentage of 'never.'

Finally in this category I investigate both language and venue. Language **results** are consistent with the earlier section in which informants admit to using **vocabulary** from Roma, Arabic, argot, and Verlan at over 60% in each category. **Only** 20.2% of the Verlan vocabulary received an unexpected answer, and only **slightly** more (24.3%) in argot. In Arabic, that figure increased to 34.3%, very **closely** followed by Roma at 35.4%. Creole, at 67.2% of the responses in the **negative**, indicated that many people were not familiar with the vocabulary. Once **the** results were normalized, however, the percentages of admitted usage were **more** similar, with almost 60% of each category of languages being used by the **informants** who knew the vocabulary.

When contemplating venue, we might have expected at first that those in **the** Mission Locale venue would speak the most banlieue language and that **those** most firmly established in society or in an educational setting would be the **least** likely to utilize the vocabulary. This was disproved. In fact, we see that the

Mission Locale was the least likely to know and to use the vocabulary, and those **of** the friends venue were the most likely to admit usage of the variety.

4.3 Statistically significant factors influencing knowledge of lexical items

Tests of statistical significance for knowledge of the lexical items were run on **Goldvarb**.

4.3.1 Factors tested

The Goldvarb program forces the researcher to make many choices about which **items** are significant. In the first run, all factors were tested separately, even **though** they may have been combined in other sections. This allows us to **examine** the significance of individual factors, regardless of any social prejudice. **A** researcher may find, for example, that arguably socially similar factors such as **the** DEA and the *Maîtrise* had completely opposite weights. Once the program is **run**, as I mentioned before, the researcher combines any factors that are of **similar** social significance as well as similar weights. For example, one could not **combine** the BEP and the DEA even if the weights were identical, since they are **at** such opposite ends of the educational scale.

Each of the factors was tested separately, but I will group them here for **the** sake of facility of discussion. The first factors are gender, age, education, **and** residential history. Therefore, for gender, both males and females were **tested**. For age, each of the four age groups was tested. For education, each **particular** educational level was tested, from BEP, BTS, the *Baccalauréat*, **DEUG**, *License*, *Maîtrise*, DEA, DESS, and the one older informant was used

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who had no education, to see where he lined up with the other groups. In **residential** history, there were Paris (75), Seine-et-Marne (77), Hauts-de-Seine (91), Essonne (92), Seine-Saint-Denis (93), and Val D'oise (95).

Nationality, birthplace, and ethnicities follow. I tested the significance of **whether** or not the informants were born in France. Then I tested their **nationality**. Those reporting two nationalities had a code indicating their two **specific** nationalities. Therefore someone who was French and Bulgarian or French and Portuguese was given separate codes. The original categories were French, French and Bulgarian, French and Portuguese, French and Polish, Algerian, Portuguese, and Romanian. Ethnicities were originally broken down into two categories. For this category, we had France; Africa, which was divided by the Maghreb; West Africa and Eastern Africa; Central and South America; and Eastern Europe.

An informant's ties to religion were also tested for statistical importance. The reader should be reminded here that these categories were self-assigned. The questionnaire simply provided a blank line for religion and then a place to check 'yes' or 'no' if the informant practiced the religion. Therefore, there were many original labels; Catholic, Muslim, Berber, Christian, Protestant, and Kabyl.

The informants were also asked to provide the languages they spoke and **whether** or not that language was spoken fluently. Originally there were three categories for language. The first language included French, Arabic, Kabyle, Spanish, Creole, Polish, Portuguese and Soninke. The second language consisted of French, English, Arabic, Spanish, Italian, German, Berber, Creole,

and Portuguese. The third language contained responses of English, Spanish, Portuguese, German, Arabic, French, and Italian.

Word origin was also tested as a linguistic factor, which included Arabic, argot, Verlan, Creole, and Roma.

4.3.2 Factors eliminated

The following factors were not elected by Goldvarb as significant.⁹ What follows is a discussion of each of those factors.

4.3.2.1 Gender

Gender was eliminated by Goldvarb as not significant in terms of knowledge of the lexical items. Men do not show significantly more knowledge of this vocabulary, which seems somewhat unexpected in a non-prestige variety. This seems to support the perceived opinion by the informants in this study that men and women used most lexical items equally. We will see if this is borne out in terms of admitted usage.

4.3.2.2 Age

Goldvarb eliminated age as insignificant as well. This seems very counter-intuitive since other researchers have strongly stressed its importance, and since we did see that the youngest generation seemed to know the least

⁹ There were interactions, but they were deemed unimportant because they were due simply to cell paucity, since there were no females from Hauts-de-Seine, nor males from Essonne. Some interactions are inherent in the factors themselves, such as age and education. While someone in his 40s could land anywhere along the educational spectrum, someone who is 18 is likely to have only a Baccalauréat or equivalent technical high school degree. For example, it would be extremely difficult to have a DEA at age 18. This appears as an interaction that the researcher must reject.

vocabulary; but this is where percentages are not as important as weights and significance. It is possible that the total number of youth was less than the total number of informants in those of the older generations.

4.3.2.3 Languages spoken

The languages an informant spoke did not have a statistically significant effect on knowledge of the lexical items. Since languages spoken is tied to ethnicity, and those of Maghrebi heritage have been touted as speakers of this variety and indeed have claimed it as their own (Doran 2002, Melliani 2000), it is interesting that the factor is not significant in terms of knowledge.

4.3.2.4 First ethnicity

Also surprisingly not significant was first ethnicity. This is especially important since not only do young people of Maghrebi heritage claim banlieue language as their own (Doran 2002, Melliani 2000) but the major focus of many banlieue studies is Maghrebi youth.

4.3.3 Statistically significant factors kept for knowledge

Before considering the results, further mention must be made of how they were compiled. What is seen in the tables is the information for the people who claimed one of the significant identity factors. Again, an informant had the choice of not answering a question for any reason. Therefore he or she might have filled out most questions with expected responses, but may not have indicated his or her ethnicity or nationality. In the above case, his or her responses would not have been counted in terms of ethnicity or nationality.

Statistical importance is determined by weight. A value of 0.500 is neutral. Anything above 0.500 promotes the knowledge or usage of banlieue language (in this case) and anything below 0.500 demotes the same.

4.3.3.1 Education

The first significant factor in terms of knowledge was education.¹⁰

Table 9: *Weight of education*

	weight	percentage
Education		
DESS/DEA	0.817	76
None	0.652	81
DEUG	0.625	76
Bac	0.519	65
Maîtrise	0.500	80
BTS	0.499	69
License	0.460	63
BEP	0.349	59
Range 0.468		

In education, only the DESS and the DEA could be successfully combined. All other factors were either too disperse in terms of weights or not socially compatible enough in terms of the comparability of their educational level to collapse.

¹⁰ The reader will notice that educational groups are divided differently between this section and the section on education in 4.2. In section 4.2, I am discussing groups which possess a similar level of education. I argue that when people look at educational levels, the levels in 4.2 are those that come to mind in terms of length of time spent in the scholastic sector and scholastic versus trade-related tracking. In this section however, it is significance of factors that becomes important and therefore the levels have been, in effect, chosen by the logistic regression program. The researcher then looks at factors that can be collapsed in terms of both similar weights and similar social significance. It is for this reason that the educational groupings are so different.

Again I am discussing knowledge of the word base, and not admitted usage, but it is interesting that the DEA/DESS was the highest promoter, followed directly by the group with no education. When observing the educational group, one sees that the educational levels are interspersed in what seems to be a random manner. It is not what we would expect according to the French media or prior research, meaning it does not show an inversely proportional relation of knowledge to education level. This hypothetical scenario would be someone with no education, or someone with a BEP knowing the most words and those with a DEA/DESS knowing the fewest.

This is not the case and could lead one to conclude that other factors are at work instead of just educational level. What it also indicates is that someone from the banlieue, familiar with the language, may still be able to master standard French well enough to become quite educated. It says that upward mobility is possible to some extent, but as others have suggested, perhaps it comes at the cost of leaving some banlieue language behind. This can again be a type of age grading in which people who are of the age of building a career will be prone to using more standard language.

4.3.3.2 Residential history

Table 10: *Weight of residential history*

	weight	percentage
Residential history		
Paris	0.590	64
Seine-Saint-Denis and Seine-et-Marne	0.518	69
Val d'Oise	0.480	67
Essonne	0.291	49

Residential history was more complex. If one looks at the area in which these *départements* lie, they are all dispersed around Paris. Using a clock analogy, the 91, or Hauts-de-Seine is at 7:00. The 92, or Essonne, is directly above that at about 9:00 to 11:00. The 93, or Seine-Saint-Denis, is from 11:00 to 3:00. The 77, or Seine-et-Marne, is in the second concentric circle around Paris. It goes from 1:00 to 6:00. The 95, or Val d'Oise, is also in the second concentric circle around Paris, from 10:00 to 1:00. Decisions were based on not only similar weights but also geographical proximity. From the original six categories, we were able to collapse Seine-Saint-Denis and Seine-et-Marne due to their similar weights and their location.

Living in Paris is a promoter for knowledge of the lexical items in question, with Seine-Saint-Denis/Seine-et-Marne being somewhat neutral and Val d'Oise actually being a 'demoter'. Essonne, located in Ile de France toward the south, was the largest demoter.

Looking at the results, some explanation is in order. The Mission Locale's effect may be seen here with Val d'Oise being a slight demoter. As we saw, the Mission Locale was the group that least embraced banlieue language, and all of the informants at that venue are from Val d'Oise. As to Essonne, it may well be the paucity of informants. While Goldvarb does account for differences in cells, a few more informants from this area would have been welcome in order to confirm the statistical significance in a greater population. Paris may be a

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promoter because of the proximity to the banlieue or because the informants from Paris were from ethnically diverse neighborhoods.

4.3.3.3 Birthplace

Table 11: *Weight of Birthplace*

	weight	percentage
Born in France		
Yes	0.518	70
No	0.407	58

Range 0.111

Birthplace is significant in terms of knowledge, and it is indeed those who are born in France who are more likely to know the lexical items. Not being born in France is a fairly strong demoting factor. This follows Tejedor de Felipe's (2004) observation that banlieue language is primarily a French phenomenon, though we see by the range of 0.111 that this factor is relatively weak.

4.3.3.4 Nationality

Table 12: *Weight of nationality*

	weight	percentage
Nationality		
French	0.517	67
French and another European ethnicity	0.458	67
Eastern European	0.339	38
Maghrebi	0.324	55

Range 0.193

Nationality further supports his theory since the only promoter in the category of nationality is a French nationality by itself. Interestingly, once that

nationality is combined with another European nationality, it becomes a demoter, though still fairly weak. This weakness may be caused by the tendency for Western European cultures to quickly assimilate (Carpin, Tavan, and Dugué 2004). However, being Eastern European or Maghrebi is a strong demotor for banlieue language knowledge. These are also two of the slowest to assimilate according to Carpin, Tavan, and Dugué (2004). Therefore, if this is indeed, as Tejedor de Felipe (2004) suggests, a French phenomenon, it would be logical that the more French one is, the more one has been exposed to it. More importantly, with empirical data, we have questioned the fact that the variety is reserved to Maghrebi youth.

4.3.3.5 Second ethnicity

Table 13: *Weight of second ethnicity*

Second Ethnicity	Weight	percentage
African	0.712	74
Polish	0.674	74
Spanish	0.520	71
Portuguese	0.498	76
Maghrebi	0.481	73
German	0.256	67
South/Central American	0.093	62
Range 0.619		

While first ethnicity was not significant in terms of knowledge of the lexical items in the questionnaire, second ethnicity was, and at 0.619, is a fairly strong factor for knowledge. The highest promoter was African, which did not include the Maghreb. At 0.712, it is a strong weight. The next promoter in terms of

knowledge was Polish. Spanish and Portuguese followed closely, though the former was a weak promoter and the latter was relatively neutral. More surprisingly was Maghrebi, as a slight demoter. German was a strong demoter at 0.256, and Central/South American was a very strong demoter at 0.093.

Possible analysis of these results may also be that those of Maghrebi heritage, people from an ethnicity which claims banlieue language (Doran 2002, Melliani 2000), are innovators. Perhaps the reason they are demoters with the current word list is that they have continued to change the language rather than use the vocabulary that is also used by an older generation. Creole vocabulary also may have affected these results. The younger generations are clearly unaffected by Creole's influence and may therefore have chosen other linguistic contributors such as Arabic or Roma as the basis for newer lexicon in banlieue language. Those of Polish heritage, as well as those of Spanish and Portuguese heritage, are more likely to have been quickly assimilated into French mainstream culture, as historically they have done (Carpin, Tavan, and Dugué 2004); and therefore Tejedor de Felipe (2004) may have been correct in his assertion that banlieue language is indeed a French phenomenon. Cell paucity may have been a factor since the Polish heritage is unique to one informant. It does, however, allow us to underscore the need for studies involving more ethnicities.

The African second ethnicity was the highest promoter. I have not seen research specifically on this ethnic group in the banlieue, though many of the recent banlieue language authors are African. It may well be due to cell paucity.

4.3.3.6 Religion

Table 14: *Weight of religion*

	weight	percentage
Religion		
Non- practicing	0.516	72
Practicing	0.458	64

Range 0.058

Religion was very complicated. It was apparent that no matter which religion was claimed, the weight of the factors was similar enough to combine them and simply look at whether a person claimed to practice the religion or not.

Therefore, religious categories were eliminated.

In terms of knowledge, practicing a religion, any religion, was a demoting factor, while atheists and those who did not practice their religion tended to know and use more of the lexical items. One possible explanation for this is that since banlieue language is in-group/out-group, those who practiced their religion were part of another group, that of their church, synagogue, temple, mosque, or other place of worship. Practicing a religion is often group related. It is also possible that the linguistic components of banlieue language that are sexual and illegal in nature would be less attractive to someone who practices his or her religion. It is, however, a small range, so further investigation is needed.

4.3.3.7 Word origin

Table 15: *Weight of word origin*

	weight	percentage
Word Origin		
Verlan	0.769	86
Argot	0.644	78

Table 15 (cont'd)

Arabic	0.568	72
Roma	0.492	66
Creole	0.209	38
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Range 0.560		

The origin of the lexical item was important as seen by the range of 0.560.

Verlan was far and away the highest promoter, with argot following closely.

Arabic is a weaker promoter, although Roma is a weak demoter. As we see with Creole, it is the largest demoter of the group. Much of this follows Tejedor de Felipe's (2004) corpus study analysis, which underlines that this may indeed be a French phenomenon.

This is different from Table 7 in that we would expect Roma to still be a promoter, since non-answers to this category only amount to 35.5%. The rest of the languages in the section on significance in terms of knowledge coincide with what we would expect from the first table. Verlan, argot, Arabic, Roma and Creole are known proportionally in that order by the informants.

4.3.4 Statistically significant factors for admitted usage

In this section, I examine the results for admitted usage. In this case, the informants who admitted to using a lexical item 'rarely' or 'often' were consolidated, and those who either said that they never used the lexical item in question or did not know the vocabulary were counted as not using it.

I would argue that while knowledge is an important factor, admitted usage is much more important. In this section, I am no longer investigating what socioeconomic factors promote or demote knowledge of the lexical items, but rather which of those factors promote or demote usage.

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Both sections are useful because we see that sometimes a large promoter for knowledge is not a promoter for usage, which can be tied to my earlier example of 'wazzup.' Most studies on non-prestige varieties have been conducted using either admitted usage or attested usage.¹¹

4.3.4.1 Factors eliminated

If a socioeconomic factor is not deemed significant in terms of knowledge but is significant in terms of usage, the only logical conclusion is that participants with a certain socioeconomic factor (gender, age group, etc.) have chosen to use or not to use banlieue vocabulary.

Only two factors were not selected as significant with admitted usage. Second ethnicity was eliminated as well as whether or not an informant was born in France.

4.3.4.2 Factors retained

Below is a discussion of each factor significant in terms of usage, particularly those factors that promote or demote admitted usage of banlieue language.

4.3.4.2.1 Gender

Table 16: *Weight of gender*

	weight	percentage
Gender		
Male	0.654	49
Female	0.394	34
Range 0.260		

¹¹ With the exception of Boyer's (2001) study in which students created a word list.

Importantly, while gender was not significant in terms of knowledge, it was indeed significant in terms of admitted (self-reported) usage, with the predictable results of women being demoters and men being promoters of the usage of banlieue language. Since banlieue language is a language of covert prestige, these results are somewhat in accordance with all the previous research and assumptions. However, it is also important to look at the range. At 0.260, gender is not as strong a factor as those that follow.

The results in 4.1 and 4.2 where informants attributed equal usage to men and women at between 60% and 75%, depending upon the language of origin and the meaning of the lexical item, seem to contradict the results presented here. However, if we compared simply usage attributed to men versus usage attributed to women, we saw that, indeed, men were viewed as speaking the variety more than women. Additionally, the results of section 4.2 support these findings, since men and women attributed usage to both genders at 69.38% and 75% respectively, their admitted usage did not match that at 77.35% and 55.94% respectively. It may be, therefore, that gender is not as polarizing a factor in the banlieue and that the importance of identification with the area and its struggle may supersede gender.

4.3.4.2.2 Age

Table 17: *Weight of age*

	weight	percentage
Age		
25-29	0.653	40
30-36	0.567	53
20-24	0.528	41
18and 19	0.194	26

Range 0.459

Age is another factor that was not selected as significant in terms of knowledge but was selected as significant in terms of admitted usage. What is most interesting is that, again, what we would expect—younger people using the lexical items the most and the older people using the vocabulary the least—is not the case.

In fact, the age group that most strongly tends to use banlieue language is the 25- to 29-year-old group. The oldest group, that of the 30- to 36-year-olds, was the second-highest in terms of promoting, followed closely by the 20- to 24-year-old group. Interestingly enough, the 18- and 19-year-old group was a very strong demoter with a weight of 0.194. We saw similar results in section 4.1 and section 4.2. The range is fairly strong at 0.459, which attests to the strength of the factor.

There could be several reasons for this seeming inversion in terms of age and admitted usage of banlieue language. It is possible that the words are indeed that of an older generation and being phased out, and that new generations are recreating the language and using new vocabulary. In fact, the idea of aging vocabulary may be supported by the fact that the only informants who chose 'an older generation' for the lexical item *bédo* were three young, Franco-Maghrebi males. This idea of changing vocabulary would perhaps help explain why there was no statistical difference among the age groups in terms of knowledge, but that the younger groups choose not to use, or at least not to

admit to using the vocabulary. Calvet (1996) and Mela (2000) both discuss the changes in banlieue language that have occurred since their last articles on the subject and emphasize the frequently changing nature of banlieue language, and Séguin and Teillard's (1996) informant was quoted as saying that they would change the language if it became too well known.

Another hypothesis is a type of age grading for non-reference features. The oldest group is the most well established, employed and living on their own. The youngest group is almost all at the university, or at the Mission Locale where they are not well established and do not have employment. I would like to propose that the older group is more relaxed or more secure about admitting to their usage. In the university setting, some of Doran's (2002) theory about the choice to leave behind Verlan or banlieue language during college because they are all on the educational track may also be a possible explanation for the relative lack of usage among the group at the university.

4.3.4.2.3 Education

Table 18: *Weight of education*

	weight	percentage
Education		
BTS	0.894	76
None	0.765	67
DEUG	0.655	49
BEP	0.522	39
DEA/DESS	0.480	35
Bac	0.477	38
License	0.476	35
Maîtrise	0.241	32

Range 0.653

As we see with the fairly large range of 0.653, education is indeed a very important factor. We have seen a difference between what informants say about those who use the lexical items in question and whether or not they admit to using the vocabulary themselves in 4.1 and 4.2. The biggest admitted user of the banlieue language items in question is the BTS group. This group, again, is either that of a technical trade or those who will be going into engineering schools. There is a very strong reclamation of using these lexical items. This group is followed closely by the group with no formal education. However, what is surprising is that the DEUG is also a strong promoter. In fact, as we examine all categories of education, we see that the only strong demoter is the *maîtrise*. The other demoters are not strong, because their weights are too close to 0.5.

In analyzing the information, it is possible that the BTS represents such disparate results for two reasons. The first is cell paucity, since there were only two informants with a BTS. The other reason may be their unique status in the French educational system. The holder of a BTS alone is educated formally in a technical subject, so he or she may be prone to reject the notion of banlieue vocabulary as used by the uneducated. At the same time, his or her job would not have the same status as that of an engineer. The pressure to avoid use at work might be lower than for that of a more formally educated person.

Those with a *Maîtrise* in this study are concentrated at the university and may be geared toward more academic positions in which banlieue language, because of its covert prestige, would not be as welcome. This would not, however, be the case for everyone with a *Maîtrise*; and as we see, people with

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even higher levels of education (DEA/DESS) are admitting to using the lexical items. It is therefore possible that the informants who do not admit to using it themselves are either underreporting their usage or observe it only among their peers. However, since most informants, regardless of education, admit to using banlieue language, there is only one real demoter: the *Maîtrise*. All of this would lead the author to believe that education is not as big a factor as research and the media would have us believe, but that other factors are at work.

4.3.4.2.4 Department of residence

Table 19: *Weight of department of residence*

	weight	percentage
Residential history		
Seine-et-Marne	0.879	55
Hauts-de-Seine	0.633	38
Seine-Saint-Denis	0.527	41
Paris	0.499	30
Val d'Oise	0.455	42
Essonne	0.398	27

Range 0.481

By the range of 0.481, we see that the department of residence is a fairly important factor. A cursory glance gives us Seine-et-Marne as the largest promoter, followed by Hauts-de-Seine. Seine-Saint-Denis is a weak promoter and the Val d'Oise, contrary to all supposed logic, is a demoter, along with Paris, which is really neutral at 0.499. As with knowledge of the vocabulary, it may well be the effect of the Mission Locale, where the many informants did not admit to usage. In addition, it seems that those who admit to using the vocabulary are outside of what one would think of as the 'epicenter.' I suggest that two factors

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are at work. First of all, since the supposed 'epicenter' of the vocabulary would normally be Seine-Saint-Denis and the Val d'Oise, results that indicate that instead it is the surrounding areas that promote suggests that the vocabulary has spread and more segments of society are using it, and at the same time perhaps those who are at the center are innovating and creating new vocabulary to keep themselves from being understood, as is often the case with secret languages.

4.3.4.2.5 Ethnicity

Table 20: *Weight of ethnicity*

	weight	percentage
Ethnicity		
Italian	0.978	71
DOM/TOM	0.863	33
Maghrebi	0.554	38
African	0.478	40
French	0.406	45
Portuguese	0.406	10
Eastern European	0.182	10

Range 0.796

The factor of ethnicity is very important, given its large range of 0.796. It is important to remind the reader, however, that this category is different from second ethnicity, which was selected as significant in terms of knowledge. This category of first ethnicity was *not* selected as significant in terms of knowledge and therefore we can not compare them equally, but rather can only discuss them individually.

We see that Italian was a very strong promoter in terms of admitted usage, and I take the time to remind the reader that it was a knock-out in terms

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of knowledge. This means that while the category has an extremely important range, cell paucity is indeed a factor, and the results are based on one informant. Other promoting ethnicities are those informants from the DOM/TOM, which include the Caribbean and many of the islands. They are extremely well integrated into mainland French society, and, as previously mentioned, are educated in French since they are actual *départements* with equal status of any other—such as Paris—or they are territories. It would seem logical that since they are French, informants from that area would be linguistically similar, by using a linguistic phenomenon that my results show to be primarily French in nature. In addition, many people from the DOM/TOM are black, which still makes them a minority in France, and in such a case, those who live in the banlieue would be likely to cling to the identity of the minority struggle in the banlieue. People from these areas may be French, but they are not descendants of the Gauls. They are therefore French by birth or on paper, but minority due to the color of their skin.

The last promoter is those of Maghrebi heritage, but as we see, it is one of the weaker promoters. With the research focused primarily on those of Maghrebi heritage, we might have expected the weight to be higher. However, as I have indicated before, it is possible that they have innovated and that their current vocabulary is not included in this study.

The African ethnicity is a weak demoter, almost neutral. French and Portuguese are identical in weights and are also weak demoters. The rate of assimilation of those from Portugal is quite high and quite fast (Carpin, Tavan,

and Dugué 2005), and we see that their weight of usage is identical to the French. Eastern European, again, is the group least quick to assimilate because most arrived more recently than others (Carpin, Tavan, and Dugué 2005), and since this is a hypothesized French phenomenon, one could postulate that they have not been able to integrate into the banlieue culture in order to pick up and use banlieue language, or more importantly, perhaps they do not identify with the banlieue. These informants were all from the university and Mission Locale.

4.3.4.2.6 Religion

Table 21: *Weight of religious affiliation*

	weight	percentage
Religion		
Protestant, non-practicing	0.924	81
Atheist	0.583	33
Muslim, non-practicing	0.566	51
Catholic, practicing	0.534	37
Muslim, practicing	0.455	39
Catholic, non-practicing	0.416	51
Christian, non-practicing	0.415	27
Kabyle, non-practicing	0.266	38

Range 0.658

Religion was chosen as significant in both knowledge and usage and indeed, with a range of 0.658, we see religion is an important factor. The results of religion, however, are not as simple with usage as they were with knowledge. Here the highest promoters are indeed non-practicing, but there are also some non-practicing informants who are demoters.

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It is interesting to see that Muslims pattern with the original 'practicing demotes and non-practicing promotes' hypothesis, and the top three promoters are all non-practicing; but I did not have enough informants to see if the rule holds true for practicing protestants, or those practicing the Kabyle faith. It is important to note here again as a reminder that I did not place the labels on the informants. They were all self-applied titles. One could argue that non-practicing Christian is non-practicing Catholic, especially in France, and as we see, they are nearly identical in weights; but I did not want to collapse them, as they were self-selected labels. What these results do say is that more investigation is necessary. Thirty-one of the total number of informants, or 46.6%, chose not to answer the question on religion. Among the informants who did answer the question on religion, there were 17 Muslim informants, 13 Catholic informants, four Christians, and one each of Protestant and Kabyle. Therefore we know that cell paucity was a factor in both the highest promoter and the largest demoter.

4.3.4.2.7 Languages of informants

Table 22: *Weight of informants' language*

	weight	percentage
Languages		
Portuguese	0.733	38
Scholastic	0.557	41
Spanish	0.500	37
Kabyle	0.477	33
Arabic	0.468	39
Polish	0.274	38
Table 22 (cont'd)		
Irish	0.182	43
Creole	0.066	24

Range 0.667

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Portuguese is the highest promoter, perhaps due to the more rapid rate of assimilation. Those who speak a scholastic language are considered promoters, though weak. This would follow the theory that this is a French phenomenon (Tejedor de Felipe 2004), since those speaking scholastic languages and no others would tend to be French citizens. Arabic and Kabyl are very weak demoters. This may be due to the idea of the vocabulary aging and subsequent innovation by younger speakers, which has been raised earlier. As to Creole, Irish, and Polish, cell paucity may very well have had an effect. There was only one informant of each of the last two languages.

4.3.4.2.8 *Language of the lexical item.*

Table 23: *Weight of word origin*

	weight	percentage
Word Origin		
Verlan	0.664	54
Argot	0.636	51
Arabic	0.595	48
Roma	0.490	39
Creole	0.247	20
Range 0.417		

Once again, we see the same frequency ranking as with knowledge. Verlan is most used, though not much of the corpus, followed closely by simple argot. Arabic is also a promoter. Roma, though almost neutral, is on the demoting side, and Creole is by far the strongest demoter. This just confirms Tejedor de Felipe's (2004) claim that banlieue language may, indeed, be a French phenomenon.

4.4 Analysis of statistically significant factors

In sections 4.1 and 4.2, we saw which factors were selected by Goldvarb as statistically significant and their weights in importance in terms of knowledge.

One of the more interesting results is that age and gender are not significant in terms of knowledge of the word, but they are significant in terms of usage. With gender, we can argue that even in terms of usage, it is one of the weaker factors with a narrow range, and that it follows the data from sections 4.1 and 4.2. It may be that identification with the banlieue is more important than gender.

Age is significant, but the pattern is not as we might have expected based on previous research. The older groups are actually promoters, which is contrary to almost everything that has been published. This can be taken to mean that the variety is being retained to some degree (and as we see in the 4.2.3.2, at almost 75%) among older speakers. We see that this also follows the results from 4.1 and 4.2. It may well be that the younger generations did not want to admit to usage due to venue; or it may be that many at the university venue, where most younger informants are not from the banlieue, do not identify with minority struggle. We can say that even the youngest group shows that the variety is retained to a larger extent than has ever been empirically attested. This emphatically contradicts Lepoutre (1997). It may also be simply that the younger generation is inventing new vocabulary and does not want to be associated with this older vocabulary.

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We see that area of residence is a significant factor in both knowledge and usage, as some of the qualitative remarks would suggest. The results in admitted usage seem counter-intuitive, since val d'Oise, a supposed epicenter, is a weak demoter. However, I hypothesize that the word list given may not reflect innovations from the area and that in the Mission Locale, informants may have been loathe to admit to usage—though they were informed that all questionnaires were anonymous—since banlieue language is not appropriate in the professional world of France.

Nationality and birthplace are only significant in terms of knowledge, not in terms of usage. It is interesting that being born in France has a strong influence on whether or not a person will be familiar with the vocabulary of banlieue language but not whether or not an informant is inclined to use it. This would go against Tejedor de Felipe's (2004) hypothesis that banlieue language is a French phenomenon.

Second ethnicity is very important in knowledge, but first ethnicity influences whether or not an informant will actually use the vocabulary, which may have to do with rate of assimilation to French culture, if Tejedor de Felipe's (2004) hypothesis is correct. More investigation is necessary to separate these factors more clearly.

Religion is significant in both knowledge and usage, which is what we might expect from the sociological studies in France—a place where religion is more important than socioeconomic status (Brulé 1966, Michelat and Simon 1977). For usage, we see that internal factors cannot be simplified to whether or

not an informant practices a religion, though the top three promoters are those who do not practice one. This may reflect either an informant who practices a religion being reluctant to embrace a linguistic variety in which so many scatological and illicit references are a focal point, or that those informants identify first and foremost with their religious group.

With languages, we see that word origin is always a factor but that the languages a person speaks only affect the usage of banlieue vocabulary. Creole is such a demoter in both knowledge and usage that in future studies this language should probably be eschewed. We see also that French is the most popular source of banlieue language, which would support Tejedor de Felipe's (2004) hypothesis that banlieue language is a French phenomenon. Both Verlan and old argot were the most popular in terms of knowledge and usage. As to the languages spoken by the informant, we see that the scholastic languages as well as Portuguese and Spanish were the only promoters, which, given the quick rates of assimilation of those two cultures (Carpin, Tavan, and Dugué 2005), may again support the hypothesis that banlieue language is a French-based phenomenon.

To summarize, there are two major categories of important factors. The first category consists of those factors that are not significant in terms of knowledge—meaning that all parties know the vocabulary more or less equally—but that are, however, significant in terms of admitted usage. These factors are gender, age, and languages spoken. This means that women do not have a significantly lower knowledge of the vocabulary but admit to using it less

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than men do at a statistically significant weight. This follows what we might expect from a covert-prestige variety. Age is also only significant in terms of usage, but as we have discussed, it may be due to innovation on the part of the younger generations, who may be choosing to use newer lexicon; or it may be due to the overlap of venue in which those at the university may not identify with banlieue culture. With languages, those that are scholastic or quickly assimilated (Portuguese and Spanish) were the highest promoters, which underscores Felipe de Tejedor's (2004) assertion that banlieue language is a French phenomenon. The second category of important factors includes the factors that were significant for both knowledge and usage. These include place of residence, religion, education, and word origin.

The factors that are the significant in both knowledge and usage are more what we might expect as researchers. It seems to stand to reason that if a factor is significant in terms of knowledge (whether or not a person knows the items), it would also be significant in terms of usage. You cannot use what you do not know.

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CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1 Study synopsis

In this dissertation, I studied 21 lexical items from five different linguistic origins, all of which are reported to be used in the banlieues of Paris. This information was given to me by an informant in the banlieue, who at the time was very immersed in the culture. In order to study the factors influencing the knowledge and usage of these 21 lexical items, 69 informants completed a questionnaire. The questionnaire, which consisted of three sections, asked first for the informant's personal and socioeconomic information. Informants were then asked if they knew each of the 21 lexical items, if they used them, and finally their perceptions of the type of person who would use the lexical items—i.e. the perceived educational level, gender and age of someone who would use the vocabulary.

Results were analyzed in three ways. First, each individual lexical item was investigated in terms of the gender of perceived users, their educational level and their age group or generation. Secondly, the results were analyzed by the major categories of gender, education, and age. In gender, the data was compiled first by the what the informants as a group felt was the gender of someone who would use the vocabulary and then by what the informants in the study admitted to using themselves, analyzing females and males separately. Results were then compared in order to investigate discrepancies between the informants' perceptions of who would use the vocabulary in question and whether or not they themselves admitted to using the vocabulary. The same was

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done for education and age. Finally, the socioeconomic factors were loaded into a logistic regression program to see which factors were statistically significant for both knowledge of the lexical items and admitted usage.

5.2 General commentary

The focus of this study was to open more dialogue on banlieue language. I hypothesized that studies on banlieue language needed to be viewed from different angles than they had been previously, specifically in terms of age, education, and gender.

In terms of age, I believe that the statistics in this dissertation have successfully challenged, with empirical data, the original belief that banlieue language was a youth language (Boyer 1997, Doran 2002, George 1986, Lepoutre 1997), and opened up the matter for further study. As I mentioned, some scholars had already initiated the conversation on age (Calvet 2006, Zerling 1999), but neither had published a study specifically pertaining to age with empirical data. Banlieue language may be at the very least changing from its reported static 'youth' status to something more. As the speakers grow older, some aspects of the language seem to be retained, as Doran (2002) and Calvet (2006) have suggested. Words like *daron*, *keum*, *kiffer*, *schmidts*, and *marave* were indicated in the Séguin and Teillard (1996) study, but they were still known and used by some of the older speakers in this study. It is yet to be determined if those speakers pass anything on to their children, and to what extent.

It is important to remember that the informant who created the list was older, in his early 30s, which may mean that the vocabulary does not reflect what is currently used by younger generations. This is especially true of the youngest students in the study, who frequently signaled that lexical items belonged to an older generation. What this study does underscore, however, is that the older generation is not abandoning this vocabulary completely as it ages.

In terms of gender, we saw that while the results adhere somewhat to what one would expect, women speak the variety less than men do; the results showed that both genders admit to usage at over 50%. In addition, we saw that both genders perceived equal usage at about 70%. This may suggest that identification with the area may be more important to these speakers than gender in a non-prestige variety. More research should be done to see if the younger generations are also showing this solidarity with new banlieue language vocabulary, or even specifically Verlan innovations.

Education results were similar to those of age and gender. The informants did not attribute this variety primarily to those with little formal education. Most vocabulary items were viewed as being used by those who were somewhat educated, with very few exceptions. These exceptions included the lexical items connoting the physically violent act of 'beating someone up.' Other exceptions included those lexical items that may well have been viewed as foreign tokens, such as *ouaiche* and the greetings in Creole. These items were viewed either as being from all levels of education or from the higher levels. Finally, words such

as *bédo* and *bédave* were also viewed overwhelmingly as being used by people of all educational backgrounds.

While the informants viewed the lexical items as not being predominantly the language of those who have little formal education, their admitted usage was indeed somewhat affected by their own level of education. The group that has the highest percentage of 'I never use this lexical item' is the '*Maîtrise* and higher' group; and, inversely, this group also has the lowest admitted usage. Most groups (BEP, BTS, DEUG/*License*) were over 60% for admitted usage. The '*Maîtrise* and higher' group admitted to 56% usage, however. These results should suggest that we should challenge the belief that this variety is for those who are uneducated (Lepoutre 1997). They may even imply that perhaps this variety is coming to be seen as a badge of identity, similar to the situations of Sheng and Camfranglais, and that socioeconomic factors that would usually diminish the number of speakers are less important than the informant's sense of identity with the region. This hypothesis is consistent with Labov's (1972) Martha's Vineyard study.

5.3 Factors explaining knowledge and usage

5.3.1 *Word origin*

We have seen that the origin of the word is very important. The results for Creole stood out from those of the other languages as the least known. Additionally, the lexical items derived from French, whether from old slang/argot or from syllable reversal were not only the most known but the highest

promoters in terms of usage. Arabic and Roma followed quite closely in terms of popularity. Those results would tend to support Tejedor de Felipe's (2004) assertion that banlieue language is a French phenomenon.

5.3.2 Social factors

5.3.2.1 Gender

Gender is a significant factor for usage, with males promoting and females demoting (following the stereotype), but we have seen that women do admit to using the vocabulary—and at a much larger degree than previously thought. While the overwhelming majority of both males and females report that for most lexical items both males and females use them equally, their own admissions for usage contradict this. The women in the study admitted to using the banlieue language items less than men and much less than what they attributed as usage to women or both men and women equally.

5.3.2.2 Age

Age results had only the youngest group as a very strong demoter. The other groups all promoted to some extent, with the 25- to 29-year-olds as the highest promoters, followed by the oldest group. This may indicate that the youngest group is over conscious about using the vocabulary since they are mostly at the university venue, which would be supported by the fact that most of the responses with 'a younger generation' were from the youngest two categories. It may also indicate that some of the lexical items in general are part of the lexicon of the older group and their siblings, and that a new lexicon

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belongs to the younger generation. Regardless, however, the informants admit to using the vocabulary at over 50%.

It is also important to remind the reader that all groups admitted some usage of the lexical items, and even in the lowest group, 23.5% of informants admitted to using lexical items often and 22.7% admitted to using them once in a while (rarely). In addition, though the youngest group members were the least likely to admit to usage, they were very quick to indicate that, indeed, most of the lexical items were part of their generation.

5.3.2.3 Education

Education results were also contrary to the stereotype that allows only for those with very little education to know and use the lexicon. The DEA, one of the highest levels of education, is the largest promoter in terms of knowledge; and at the opposite end of the spectrum, the BEP, the lowest level with 'some education,' is the largest demoter. We see that only the BTS and the license are demoters, since the BTS and *Maîtrise* are neutral. What this means in terms of knowledge is that education does not have any bearing on whether or not an informant will be exposed to banlieue language, and indeed knowing and using this vocabulary is not indicative of scholastic failure.

When we look at the same theme in terms of admitted usage, we see a different story. While there is still a certain perceived randomness in that the BTS, no education, and the DEUG are all strong promoters, we do see that the higher levels of education become slight demoters, with the *Maîtrise* being a very strong demoter. What this shows us is that even though the users have the

knowledge, some of the language is left behind, just as in normal age grading when the speakers reach a level of professionalism that requires a different vocabulary. This has been indicated by scholars, but at a very different age level (Doran 2002, Lepoutre 1997). One of my informants told me that he was not aware of how much he used banlieue language until he was taking advanced math classes in the *Maîtrise* at a local university. It was there that he realized, through peer pressure, that banlieue language was not as appropriate at that venue. When with his friends, however, he does indeed use the vocabulary. It is important to notice, however, the fact that most higher levels of education are still fairly neutral in terms of demotion. And, indeed, if we look at admitted usage, 55% of this group still admitted to using some of the lexical items in question.

5.3.2.4 Residence

Area of residence is a factor that was significant on both knowledge and usage. Obviously only areas that in theory had already been exposed to banlieue language were questioned. Of those areas, in terms of knowledge, we see that Paris is the highest in terms of knowledge, followed closely by Seine-Saint-Denis and Marne. The Val d'Oise is a slight demoter in the group, and Essonne is a very strong demoter. In terms of admitted usage, however, many of these areas could not be collapsed as they were in the first category.

When we look at admitted usage, location of the *département* may affect admitted usage. Those *départements* furthest from Seine-Saint-Denis and Val d'Oise seem to admit to it the least. The factor of identification with the area in which the variety is spoken seems to be extremely important. It may be that

those who live furthest from Seine-Saint-Denis and Val d'Oise do not identify themselves with that area and therefore would be less likely to want to break social norms by using banlieue language. Additionally, since I questioned people who were older than the rest of the participants, it may be that those speakers who lived furthest from where the variety was spoken when they were young picked up the fewest lexical items.

Being born in France is significant in terms of knowing the lexical items, though not significant in terms of usage. Firstly, banlieue language seems to be a French phenomenon as Tejedor de Felipe (2004) suggested, and being born in France would facilitate knowledge of this vocabulary simply because peers and older siblings would be using it. However, it would seem that the factor of identification with the banlieue might also be important. Even if an immigrant came to France as a young child, the peer pressure toward usage of the vocabulary and identification with his or her environment would outweigh being born outside of the Hexagon.

5.3.2.5 Birthplace, nationality, and ethnicity

Tied to being born in France are issues of nationality and ethnicity. We see that for nationality and knowledge, the only promoter is a French nationality. Once French nationality is coupled with another ethnicity, the factor becomes a demoter. Ironically, Eastern European nationalities and Maghrebi nationalities were strong demoters. Much of this can be linked to Tejedor de Felipe's (2004) study and his conclusion that banlieue language is indeed a French

phenomenon. Interestingly, nationality is not significant in terms of actual, admitted usage.

A second ethnicity was significant in terms of knowledge, with Italians being a knockout, explained by the fact that there was only one Italian and he knew all the lexical items. Africans were then the second highest promoters, followed by the Polish. All other second ethnicities were demoters, with Eastern Europeans being the largest demoters. In terms of admitted usage, the Italian is again the largest promoter, followed by those in the DOMTOMs. This may well have to do with the fact that the Italian in question is very well integrated into the banlieue, and while his second ethnicity is Italian, he is French by culture. As we saw in the first place with knowledge, a double ethnicity was a demoter; so it stands to reason that in terms of actual usage, French as a second ethnicity would also be a demoter. The same thing rings true for those Eastern European ethnicity, since they are one of the least integrated minorities (INSEE 2005) in France. The maghrebi ethnicity is a promoter in this category, which may well come from the wealth of Arabic terms in the questionnaire, as well as the Verlan and Argot.

5.3.2.6 Religion

Religion affected both knowledge and usage. In knowledge, those who practiced their religions, regardless of which religion they practiced, were less likely to know the banlieue language lexical items. The opposite was also true—not practicing a religion was a promoting factor. One could argue that a similar effect is shown by admitted usage as well in that the highest promoters are

indeed non-practicing. However, we see that Kabyle, Christians, and Catholics who are non-practicing are demoters, while practicing Catholicism is a promoter. This may well indicate that, again, it is a mostly French phenomenon, as Catholicism is one of the main religions in France. While the results in this category are far from conclusive, they may suggest that further research should be done, targeting religion as a factor. One might, for example, collect informants at several places of worship.

5.3.2.7 Languages

The languages spoken by the informants were not significant in terms of knowledge, but they were significant in terms of usage. We see that the biggest promoter is Portuguese, which is a culture with a very high level of integration and a very quick level of assimilation into French culture (INSEE 2005). Scholastic languages are next, which would indicate someone who is French, so again, a factor that is reinforced throughout the significance tables is Tejedor de Felipe's (2004) suggestion that this is indeed a French phenomenon. Spanish seems to have a discrepancy between knowledge and usage, but this apparent discrepancy is due partly to the fact that Central and South America were very high demoters in the knowledge category. Speaking Arabic is a slight demoter, which may come from being less integrated. Creole speakers are the least likely to use banlieue language.

5.4 Conclusions

The most important conclusion of this dissertation is that we must, as researchers, begin to examine more fully the established stereotypes of the speakers of banlieue language. More empirical research should be done on this group, especially in the domain of age, gender, and educational level of the speaker. We must begin to entertain the intertwined hypotheses that this variety may be gaining momentum, and that banlieue language may indeed be a French phenomenon (Tejedor de Felipe 2004), not just born out of immigrants in the banlieue but rather born out of the diversity of peoples in the banlieue who call themselves French.

Banlieue language does not seem to be tied to one ethnic group or origin, but it seems to be used among those who have assimilated to some extent into French culture, though they may still be very marginalized politically and/ or socially. Peer groups in these areas seem to be taking banlieue language with them as they age, regardless of education level and employment.

5.5 Limitations

The greatest limitation to this study was the paucity of informants. With 67 informants, it would be impossible to fill all the cells relating to personal data, such as sex, religion, languages spoken, age and educational level to make as detailed a comparison as I would have liked. The logistical regression program helps in that respect, but a more comprehensive informant base could be instrumental in backing up these results.

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Other limitations include the use of terms that have aged based on the questionnaire developer, insufficient inclusion on Verlan lexical items, the fairly small number of lexical items included, which may have skewed the representativeness of the list. Finally, though I had three different venues, the study may not be representative due to the overlap in the settings in the venues.

5.6 Areas for further study

It would be interesting to go back to the same generations of informants and do a similar format that tested simply Verlan knowledge and usage with a second portion of the questionnaire asking the informants to elaborate on when they use the lexical items. There is obviously a limit to even this, but it would be interesting to see what qualitative data could be gleaned from this in an older group. It is very hard to witness banlieue language in a public setting since banlieue language is, as established, primarily an in-group form of communication.

It is important to note again that the informants were all residents of the area in which banlieue language is spoken. Since we saw that the further from the geographic epicenter of banlieue language we were, the less the informants admitted to knowing and using, it would be interesting to conduct the study in concentric circles that generate further and further from the 93 and the 95 in order to compare results more clearly.

Another possible area of further study would be to take recordings of spontaneous conversations of a group of employed individuals over the age of

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25 and do a corpus-style study on the transcripts, quantifying the banlieue language items used during the tapings and then statistically analyzing the results. In this manner, one would be able to discern if indeed lexical items were used spontaneously in an older group.

Additionally, I would like to observe couples with small children who have not yet gone to school (so that I can be sure that they have not yet interacted extensively with peers) to see if banlieue language lexicon has been passed on to them by their parents. I would not expect the parents to teach it directly to their children, but even among their own peers, if banlieue language is used, the children are likely to acquire it in some measure. If the parents who know the variety are not using it with their children, that information would also be very interesting because it would mean that said parents were monitoring their language in order that their children would not pick it up. This type of behavior would relegate banlieue language to the same level as scatological language or swearing. It would also be beneficial to study certain language groups in a more in-depth fashion. I would like to redo the questionnaire for Verlan by itself to see at what level it is retained over a large informant base. It would also be interesting to see if the perceptions of banlieue language are changing among older residents.

Finally, a true perceptual study in which a scale is used by informants to indicate their linguistic attitudes—be they positive or negative—toward the variety would be informative. Judging from the responses regarding the educational level of those who would use the vocabulary, in which few

informants labeled the lexical items as belonging to people with a low level of education, it seems as though the perceptions are at least somewhat positive. I believe we have made the case, therefore, for a perceptual study in which informants are asked directly if speaking banlieue language is viewed positively or negatively. Those eventual results could then be compared to what seems to have been indicated here, that the stigma for those who speak it is not that exaggerated.

Appendix

1 Question

Veuillez r

Age

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Appendix A

1 Questionnaire

Veillez répondre aux questions suivantes :

Age _____ Sexe _____

Quel est votre plus haut niveau d'éducation?

CAP/BEP/ diplôme professionnel

Bac

DEUG

Licence

Maîtrise

Doctorat

Aucun

Autre : _____

Depuis combien d'années est-ce que vous habitez Garges ? _____

Est-ce que vos parents habitent Garges aussi ? oui non

Est-ce que vous avez des frères et sœurs qui habitent Garges ? oui non

Est-ce que vous avez des oncles et tantes qui habitent Garges ? oui non

Est-ce que vous avez des grands-parents qui habitent/ont habité Garges ? oui non

Est-ce que vous êtes né(e) en France ? oui non

Quelle(s) est (sont) votre (vos) nationalité(s) ?

Quelle profession cherchez-vous ? _____

Origine(s) familiale(s)(vous pouvez encercler plus d'un choix):

France

Caraïbes

Afrique du nord

Au sud du Sahara/ Afrique noire

Afrique de l'ouest

Espagne

Portugal

Europe de l'est

Asie

Amérique du sud, central

Amérique du nord

Autre _____

Religion ? _____

Etes-vous pratiquant(e) ? oui non

Langues parlée(s) et niveau (débutant, moyen, avancée, langue maternelle)

Entourez la réponse qui convient :

Marave

Je connais ce
mot et je
l'utilise :

a. souvent b. rarement c. jamais

Je ne
connais
pas ce
mot

Ce mot veut
dire :

a. marcher b. massacrer c. discuter

Autre :

Ce mot est
principaleme
nt utilisé par :

a. les hommes b. les femmes c. les deux
a. les gens peu scolarisés b. les gens moyennemen t scolarisés c. les gens très scolarisés
a. une génération plus jeune b. ma génération c. une génération plus vieille
a. entre amis b. en public c. partout

Bédave

Je connais ce
mot et je
l'utilise :

a. souvent b. rarement c. jamais

Je ne
connais
pas ce
mot

Ce mot veut
dire :

a. fumer b. danser c. avoir faim

Autre :

Ce mot est
principaleme
nt utilisé par :

a. les hommes b. les femmes c. les deux
a. les gens peu scolarisés b. les gens moyennemen t scolarisés c. les gens très scolarisés
a. une génération plus jeune b. ma génération c. une génération plus vieille
a. entre amis b. en public c. partout

chourave

Je connais ce
mot et je
l'utilise :

a. souvent b. rarement c. jamais

Je ne
connais

				pas ce mot
Ce mot veut dire :	a. voler	b. courir	c. fumer	Autre :
Ce mot est principalement utilisé par :	a. les hommes	b. les femmes	c. les deux	
	a. les gens peu scolarisés	b. les gens moyennement scolarisés	c. les gens très scolarisés	
	a. une génération plus jeune	b. ma génération	c. une génération plus vieille	
	a. entre amis	b. en public	c. partout	

Gadjo

Je connais ce mot et je l'utilise :	a. souvent	b. rarement	c. jamais	Je ne connais pas ce mot
Ce mot veut dire :	a. un bébé	b. un homme	c. un joint	Autre :
Ce mot est principalement utilisé par :	a. les hommes	b. les femmes	c. les deux	
	a. les gens peu scolarisés	b. les gens moyennement scolarisés	c. les gens très scolarisés	
	a. une génération plus jeune	b. ma génération	c. une génération plus vieille	
	a. entre amis	b. en public	c. partout	

gadi

Je connais ce mot et je l'utilise :	a. souvent	b. rarement	c. jamais	Je ne connais pas ce mot
Ce mot veut dire :	a. une femme	b. l'herbe	c. un enfant	Autre :
Ce mot est principalement utilisé par :	a. les hommes	b. les femmes	c. les deux	

		a. les gens peu scolarisés a. une génération plus jeune a. entre amis	b. les gens moyennemen t scolarisés b. ma génération b. en public	c. les gens très scolarisés c. une génération plus vieille c. partout	
<u>Binouse</u>	Je connais ce mot et je l'utilise :	a. souvent	b. rarement	c. jamais	Je ne connais pas ce mot
	Ce mot veut dire :	a. un gros nez	b. une bière	c. un pince- nez	Autre :
	Ce mot est principaleme nt utilisé par :	a. les hommes a. les gens peu scolarisés a. une génération plus jeune a. entre amis	b. les femmes b. les gens moyenneme nt scolarisés b. ma génération b. en public	c. les deux c. les gens très scolarisés c. une génération plus vieille c. partout	
<u>Sky</u>	Je connais ce mot et je l'utilise :	a. souvent	b. rarement	c. jamais	Je ne connais pas ce mot
	Ce mot veut dire :	a. le ciel	b. le ski	c. un whisky	Autre :
	Ce mot est principaleme nt utilisé par :	a. les hommes a. les gens peu scolarisés a. une génération plus jeune	b. les femmes b. les gens moyennemen t scolarisés b. ma génération	c. les deux c. les gens très scolarisés c. une génération plus vieille	

<u>goumer</u>		a. entre amis	b. en public	c. partout	
	Je connais ce mot et je l'utilise :	a. souvent	b. rarement	c. jamais	Je ne connais pas ce mot
	Ce mot veut dire :	a. une maladie d'enfance	b. massacrer	c. un mégot	Autre :
	Ce mot est principalement utilisé par :	a. les hommes a. les gens peu scolarisés a. une génération plus jeune a. entre amis	b. les femmes b. les gens moyennement scolarisés b. ma génération b. en public	c. les deux c. les gens très scolarisés c. une génération plus vieille c. partout	

<u>Daron</u>					
	Je connais ce mot et je l'utilise :	a. souvent	b. rarement	c. jamais	Je ne connais pas ce mot
	Ce mot veut dire :	a. un poisson	b. un cousin	c. un père	Autre :
	Ce mot est principalement utilisé par :	a. les hommes a. les gens peu scolarisés a. une génération plus jeune a. entre amis	b. les femmes b. les gens moyennement scolarisés b. ma génération b. en public	c. les deux c. les gens très scolarisés c. une génération plus vieille c. partout	

<u>Daronne</u>	Je connais ce mot et je	Je ne
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l'utilise :	a. souvent	b. rarement	c. jamais	connais pas ce mot
Ce mot veut dire :	a. une cousine	b. une mère	c. un poisson	Autre :
Ce mot est principalement utilisé par :	a. les hommes	b. les femmes	c. les deux	
	a. les gens peu scolarisés	b. les gens moyennement scolarisés	c. les gens très scolarisés	
	a. une génération plus jeune	b. ma génération	c. une génération plus vieille	
	a. entre amis	b. en public	c. partout	

Sa ou fé

Je connais ce mot et je l'utilise :	a. souvent	b. rarement	c. jamais	Je ne connais pas ce mot
Ce mot veut dire :	a. Ça va ?	b. en effet	c. mais oui	Autre :
Ce mot est principalement utilisé par :	a. les hommes	b. les femmes	c. les deux	
	a. les gens peu scolarisés	b. les gens moyennement scolarisés	c. les gens très scolarisés	
	a. une génération plus jeune	b. ma génération	c. une génération plus vieille	
	a. entre amis	b. en public	c. partout	

Choucrane

Je connais ce mot et je l'utilise :	a. souvent	b. rarement	c. jamais	Je ne connais pas ce mot
Ce mot veut dire :	a. de rien	b. va-t-en	c. merci	Autre :
Ce mot est principalement utilisé par :	a. les hommes	b. les femmes	c. les deux	
	a. les	b. les gens	c. les gens	

gens peu scolarisés	moyenneme nt scolarisés	très scolarisés
a. une génération plus jeune	b. ma génération	c. une génération plus vieille
a. entre amis	b. en public	c. partout

**Sa ka
maché**

Je connais ce
mot et je
l'utilise :

a. souvent b. rarement c. jamais

Je ne
connais
pas ce
mot

Ce mot veut
dire :

a. une
maison b. Ça va ? c. C'est bon.

Autre :

Ce mot est
principaleme
nt utilisé par :

a. les hommes	b. les femmes	c. les deux
a. les gens peu scolarisés	b. les gens moyennemen t scolarisés	c. les gens très scolarisés
a. une génération plus jeune	b. ma génération	c. une génération plus vieille
a. entre amis	b. en public	c. partout

Keum

Je connais ce
mot et je
l'utilise :

a. souvent b. rarement c. jamais

Je ne
connais
pas ce
mot

Ce mot veut
dire :

a. un
homme b. une voiture c. une fête

Autre :

Ce mot est
principaleme
nt utilisé par :

a. les hommes	b. les femmes	c. les deux
a. les gens peu scolarisés	b. les gens moyennemen t scolarisés	c. les gens très scolarisés
a. une génération plus jeune	b. ma génération	c. une génération plus vieille

Se (la)
natchave

Je connais ce mot et je l'utilise :	a. entre amis	b. en public	c. partout	Je ne connais pas ce mot
	a. souvent	b. rarement	c. jamais	
Ce mot veut dire :	a. voler	b. s'échapper	c. s'habiller bien	Autre :
Ce mot est principalement utilisé par :	a. les hommes	b. les femmes	c. les deux	
	a. les gens peu scolarisés	b. les gens moyennement scolarisés	c. les gens très scolarisés	
	a. une génération plus jeune	b. ma génération	c. une génération plus vieille	
	a. entre amis	b. en public	c. partout	

schmidts

Je connais ce mot et je l'utilise :	a. souvent	b. rarement	c. jamais	Je ne connais pas ce mot
Ce mot veut dire :	a. les Allemands	b. les ballerines	c. les gendarmes	Autre :
Ce mot est principalement utilisé par :	a. les hommes	b. les femmes	c. les deux	
	a. les gens peu scolarisés	b. les gens moyennement scolarisés	c. les gens très scolarisés	
	a. une génération plus jeune	b. ma génération	c. une génération plus vieille	
	a. entre amis	b. en public	c. partout	

kiffer

Je connais ce
mot et je
l'utilise :

- a. souvent b. rarement c. jamais

Je ne
connais
pas ce
mot

Ce mot veut
dire :

- a. aimer b. diviser c. manger

Autre :

Ce mot est
principaleme
nt utilisé par :

- a. les hommes b. les femmes c. les deux
a. les gens peu scolarisés b. les gens moyennemen t scolarisés c. les gens très scolarisés
a. une génération plus jeune b. ma génération c. une génération plus vieille
a. entre amis b. en public c. partout

Ouaiche

Je connais ce
mot et je
l'utilise :

- a. souvent b. rarement c. jamais

Je ne
connais
pas ce
mot

Ce mot veut
dire :

- a. Qu'est-ce qui se passe ? b. Ça va ? c. oui

Autre :

Ce mot est
principaleme
nt utilisé par :

- a. les hommes b. les femmes c. les deux
a. les gens peu scolarisés b. les gens moyenneme nt scolarisés c. les gens très scolarisés
a. une génération plus jeune b. ma génération c. une génération plus vieille
a. entre amis b. en public c. partout

Makoumé

Je connais ce
mot et je
l'utilise :

- a. souvent b. rarement c. jamais

Je ne
connais
pas ce
mot

Ce mot veut
dire :

- a. bien fait b. marcher c. un homosexuel

Autre :

Ce mot est

	principalement utilisé par :	a. les hommes a. les gens peu scolarisés a. une génération plus jeune a. entre amis	b. les femmes b. les gens moyennement scolarisés b. ma génération b. en public	c. les deux c. les gens très scolarisés c. une génération plus vieille c. partout	
<u>Savater</u>	Je connais ce mot et je l'utilise :	a. souvent	b. rarement	c. jamais	Je ne connais pas ce mot
	Ce mot veut dire :	a. massacrer	b. manger	c. aimer	Autre :
	Ce mot est principalement utilisé par :	a. les hommes a. les gens peu scolarisés a. une génération plus jeune a. entre amis	b. les femmes b. les gens moyennement scolarisés b. ma génération b. en public	c. les deux c. les gens très scolarisés c. une génération plus vieille c. partout	
<u>Bédo</u>	Je connais ce mot et je l'utilise :	a. souvent	b. rarement	c. jamais	Je ne connais pas ce mot
	Ce mot veut dire :	a. le bled	b. un joint	c. un saucisson	Autre :
	Ce mot est principalement utilisé par :	a. les hommes a. les gens peu scolarisés a. une génération plus jeune	b. les femmes b. les gens moyennement scolarisés b. ma génération	c. les deux c. les gens très scolarisés c. une génération plus vieille	

a. entre
amis

b. en public

c. partout

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