From London Jamaican to British youth language: The transformation of a Caribbean post-creole repertoire into a new Multicultural London English
1. The London multiethnolect and early linguistic inputs to it
2. Brief migration and post-migration history
3. Research questions: Caribbean input and changing post-migration repertoires
4. What was the input and what is the outcome 50 years on? Jamaican and London vowels then and now
5. Multicultural London English
1. The London multiethnolect and early linguistic inputs to it

- We investigate whether London youth language contains *traces* of Caribbean creoles
  - Slang
  - Phonology

- The *multiethnolect* construct
  - Northern Europe
  - In London, we argue it has emerged from a *feature pool* (Mufwene) with many sources
The input varieties in London’s inner city include:

- Creole-influenced varieties
- Ex-colonial Englishes
- Learner varieties: 300+ languages spoken in primary schools
- The local London vernacular

Monolingual English speakers have also been exposed to all these varieties

These are the inputs to the feature pool
2. Research questions: Caribbean input and changing post-migration repertoires

- **RQ1**: What is the Caribbean, specifically Jamaican, input to London’s multiethnolecct?
  - Koineisation and/or founder effect?
  - Fashion for Caribbean language and styles?

- **RQ2**: From the vantage point of the African-Caribbeans themselves, how have their own linguistic repertoires changed across the three or more generations who have grown up in London?
  - Accommodation or expansion of stylistic repertoires?
  - Code-switching?
Corpora

- Recordings of late-teenage Londoners of various ethnic backgrounds, made by Sue Fox as part of projects led by Paul Kerswill, in 2005 and 2008.
Migration from the Caribbean colonies to UK
*Empire Windrush* 1948
English-lexicon Creoles of the Caribbean
Creole in England: the first and second generations

1st Generation:

People born in… spoke…

GUYANA: GUYANESE Creole
JAMAICA: JAMAICAN Creole
DOMINICA: DOMINICAN Creole
BARBADOS: BARBADIAN Creole
TRINIDAD: TRINIDAD Creole
Social processes (Gilroy’s interpretation)

1st Generation:

GUYANESE TRINIDADIAN JAMAICAN DOMINICAN BARBADIAN ............... experiences of race and class

.............

(see Gilroy 1987): ‘There ain't no black in the Union Jack’.

2nd Generation:

==========BLACK BRITISH IDENTITY ==========
Linguistic outcome:

1st Generation:
GUYANESE TRINIDADIAN JAMAICAN DOMINICAN BARBADIAN ...
Creole Creole Creole Creole Creole Creole
(Mesolectal varieties)

2nd Generation:
‘London Jamaican’
2nd Generation (1975 on):

People of Caribbean heritage born in…

LONDON

Spoke …

LONDON ENGLISH + ‘LONDON JAMAICAN’
Spoken by –
- British Caribbean adolescents in London 
  *whether or not* they had Jamaican ancestry.
- Some adolescents not of Caribbean ancestry, e.g. White, Asian, African
Why London *Jamaican*?

Why not *koineisation* or *levelling*, when there were several similar language varieties coming into contact among Caribbeans in London?

Four reasons (from Sebba 1993; Cheshire, Kerswill et al. 2011):

1. Jamaicans were the largest single group, in the majority in some areas (but not all)
2. Jamaicans belonged to the founding groups for post-war youth language in London (Mufwene)
3. The popularity among Caribbean youth of reggae music, which had its origins in Jamaica and whose single most influential exponent, Bob Marley, was a Jamaican;
4. The popularity of the Rastafarian religious and cultural movement (closely linked to reggae music), which was also largely Jamaican.
Male, Born 1944, from Kingston, Jamaica
(mesolectal speaker; courtesy of Peter Patrick; recorded in 1989)

NOTE: He shows a typical Jamaican vowel configuration, with ingliding /e/ and /o/. His stressed syllabic /r/ is usually r-ful; otherwise he is mostly r-less.
(conversation; NCSU)
Diphthong system of elderly male speaker from Hackney born 1918
Young Hackney speakers, aged 17

Issah & Grace: shorter trajectories than Laura & Jack. In GOAT, they go their own way – divergence from south-eastern fronting change.
Diphthong system of young male from Hackney, Afro-Caribbean origin, born 1989
Adolescent speakers (aged 16–19) of Afro-Caribbean origin, born c 1989. (For diphthongs, only onsets are shown.)
Multicultural London English: 
the emergence, acquisition and diffusion of a 
new variety (2007–10)

Investigators:
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Research Associates:
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- Paul Kerswill and Mark Sebba, 2011
- Funded by Lancaster University
Group second language acquisition (Winford (2003) or shift-induced interference (Thomason and Kaufman 1988; Thomason 2001), where minority groups form part of a larger host community and acquire the target language through unguided second language acquisition in friendship groups

- Catalyst for change
- Native speaking descendants of original population take up changes too
London inner city vowels: Multicultural London English project adolescent speakers (aged 16–19). (a) Short monophthongs plus GOOSE and START, (b) diphthongs plus GOOSE and START

The target variety? – Multicultural London English

Key:
- = Anglo female (N=5)
- = Anglo male (N=3)
= Non-Anglo female (N=10)
= Non-Anglo male (N=8)

Note extreme GOOSE-fronting

GOAT: back onset, esp. Non-Anglo boys (arrow)

Raised FACE onset, some ethnic difference

PRICE and MOUTH onsets overlap
Courtney and Aimee: Afro-Caribbean girls aged 18

- Courtney’s GOAT vowel at the beginning of the interview

- Sue: alright so. so yeah er tell me a little bit about what you're doing at college then..
- Courtney: we're both [ɔɹ] studying forensic science we're in the same class erm. that's it really. come in. go [əʊ] to our lessons
- Aimee: and then go [ɔɹ] home [ɔʊ]
- Courtney: use the library then go [ɔɹ] home [əʊ].
Courtney’s GOAT vowel in banter style

- Aimee: I’d be more allowed to bring home a woman than a [inaudible]
- Dexter: yeah.
- Courtney: I don't [ɔ] know [ɔɾ] about. no [ɔ].

Multicultural London English is clearly a style, used for in-group communication
Everton, aged 20, recorded 1984
Composite vowel systems of 11 adolescent London Jamaicans recorded in 1984. ‘Patois’ style (left), interview with white fieldworker (right). (For diphthongs, only onsets are shown.)
Conclusions – 1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd} generations

- 1\textsuperscript{st} generation (immigrants, 1960s)
  - Different island creoles + Caribbean English + speech accommodated to London English

- 2\textsuperscript{nd} generation (1980s)
  - Expanded repertoire with London Jamaican and Cockney (London vernacular)
  - Code-switching
Conclusions – 3rd generation

- 3rd generation (2000s)
  - Multicultural London English
  - Based on a feature pool
  - To a large extent shared across ethnicities
  - Some Caribbean components, but many of these could also be from elsewhere
  - But Caribbeans remain somewhat distinct
    - More extreme vowel qualities
    - Heavier use of Caribbean-origin slang than Anglo and other ethnic groups
References

- Sharma, D. under review. Style repertoire, network diversity, and social change. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*.