**Week One assignment and tasks**

**Hi all, we are going to end up choosing one of the titles below to write a 1500 word essay on which will be a little mini language investigation. You have to do a language investigation for coursework at the end of Y12 so this is the perfect little project to get you into that A level mind set!**

**Project titles (just choose one):**

1. **An investigation into the use of MLE in Stormzy’s language and how this influences teen slang.**
2. **An investigation into why British Standard English is being replaced by less standard forms.**
3. **An investigation into the origins of language and ethnicity and why non-standard forms are spreading today.**

Each week you will be thinking about three key questions. I will provide you with some suggested resources but of course you can google to your heart’s content too as there is so much out there! I have suggested how you might want to record your findings but you don’t have to do it the way I describe. Please make your own choices about how you want to record the information.

If you have any questions or issues, please email me (Miss Lee): [Llee@toothillschool.co.uk](mailto:Llee@toothillschool.co.uk)

**Week one: The history of language variation and ethnicity.**

* What is meant by the terms creole and patois?
* How has slavery impacted language and ethnicity?
* Why is Hackney central to language and ethnicity?

**Useful websites/ links**

* TED talk the origins of English <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YEaSxhcns7Y> (create an A4 mind map of the ideas discussed)
* <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2002/mar/22/tefl> (Read and highlight the attached article)
* Paul Kerswill on MLE and Hackney <https://www.york.ac.uk/language/research/projects/mle/> (go through the following lecture and make notes on anything about ethnicity and Hackney)
* <https://www.mustgo.com/worldlanguages/> Browse and make notes from the website.

**Week two** – Thinking about ethnicity and the English Language in the UK today

This week we are going to start thinking about how patois has become Multi-cultural London English. There are some articles to read and some clips to listen to.

Don’t spend longer than two hours on this – it’s meant to be fun and interesting not long and boring!

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**Week two: The language features associated with ethnicity and the impacts on the English language today.**

* What types of words and phrases do MLE users use? How is that similar and/or different to patois?
* How is MLE (multi-cultural London English) used across the country?
* What is ‘Jafaican’?

**Useful websites/ links:**

* Listening to Jamaican Patois <https://jamaicans.com/sound/> (Listen to some sounds – write down any patterns you can hear)
* <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2006/apr/12/research.highereducation> (Read and highlight the article, write down features of MLE)
* Listen to the clips here of people using features of MLE <http://www.englishlanguageresources.org/teaching-units/2-angela-street-trouble/>
* Read and highlight this article thinking about the attitudes to Jafaican <https://www.theguardian.com/media/mind-your-language/2013/aug/30/mind-your-language-jafaican>
* <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/with-london-boy-the-english-delight-in-some-fine-mockery-of-taylor-swift> (Read and highlight the article)

**Week three: The rise of Multi-Cultural London English and its presence in popular culture**.

* Why is slang being banned in schools? Please answer this in your own words.
* How do you think technology helps MLE to spread? Please answer this question in your own words.
* Grime music – close analysis of Stormzy/ Dave lyrics (please use the ‘clean’, radio versions). Select a song from a grime rapper and highlight/label all of the MLE features you see. You will need this for your essay/presentation!
* Finally, why do you think MLE is seen as ‘cool’?

Useful websites/links:

* <http://www.teachrealenglish.org/teaching-units/spoken-london-english/> If you didn’t check this out please listen to some examples of spoken London English
* <https://www.redbull.com/gb-en/multicultural-london-english-language> Please read and highlight
* <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/01/09/schools-ban-slang-words-stigmatising-pupils-academic-claims/> Please read and highlight
* Learn English with Stormzy <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1MQdEVo6YcI> have a listen – this will help you find features in the song lyrics that you pick!

If you have any questions or issues, please email me (Miss Lee): [llee@toothillschool.co.uk](mailto:llee@toothillschool.co.uk)

What I would like you to produce for September is EITHER a PowerPoint presentation, which you will present to the class, or an essay detailing what you have learnt on one of the project titles below.

On the pages below there are some ideas and examples about how to structure an investigation essay, which could be used for the PPT too. The Stormzy question is my favourite because there is more to analyse as you can look at his song lyrics!

**Some final thoughts on code switching and how to structure a successful investigation (see below for structure).**

* What is code switching? Examples from Barack Obama/Kanye West/Rihanna/Eminem

**Useful websites/links:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sncGGjaYJ5I> (TED talk on whether to code switch or not - this could be interesting if you are looking at Stormzy’s language)

**THC Project titles (students choose one):**

1. An investigation into the use of MLE in Stormzy’s language and how this influences teen slang.
2. An investigation into why British Standard English is being replaced by less standard forms.
3. An investigation into the origins of language and ethnicity and why non-standard forms are spreading today.

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How to structure the essay (spread over manageable slides if you are doing a PPT)

**Introduction**

In the introduction you will want to introduce the topic and include some of the references from the reading and researching that you have been doing. In this section I would talk about how MLE has come about and why it is gaining popularity. If you are linking specifically to Stormzy you may want to introduce who he is/what he does/why he is popular. If you are choosing Stormzy here you would also want to talk about why you have selected the songs you have. I have given some examples in italics, these are just the beginning of what you could be saying. You could really tell me the full history as to why MLE has come about.

***Example***

*Multi-cultural London English is a patois which originated in the 1940s onwards after a large number of Caribbean people were encouraged and asked to come to the UK as a post-war drive which needed healthy workers for the UK’s growing public services. Then in the 1960s and the 1970s, Jamaican English was influencing the sociolect of white working-class people through work and school. The increased relationships across ethnicities led to exposure to the new variety of English. ‘Communication Accommodation Theory suggests that individuals use communication, in part, in order to indicate their attitudes toward each other and, as such, is a barometer of the level of social distance between them’ (Giles & Ogay, 2007:194). This form of English was then used more amongst white people who wanted to fit in with black friends. Although predominantly the increased use of MLE is due to the increasing influence of different ethnicities, in modern society a lot of white youths without a black peer group accommodate features of MLE in their language. ‘Creole was widely seen as cool, tough, and good to use. It was associated with assertiveness and verbal resourcefulness, competence in heterosexual relationships and opposition to authority’ (Ben Rampton, 2010:167). Recently the use of MLE has spread and is used in youth culture as more of a style.*

**Methodology**

In this section, you simply outline which texts or data you chose and why these examples would be helpful to help you answer your question.

***Example***

*I got the lyrics from three of Stormzy’s songs, each two years apart. Firstly, I looked at the song ‘Shut up’, which was produced in 2015, then ‘Big for your Boots’ (2017) and finally, ‘Vossi Bop’ (2019) so I could look at whether or not Stormzy has converged to soften his MLE or used it to retain his identity as he became more established in the industry over time.*

**Analysis**

Here you want to either analyse the lyrics or analyse the words you know to be associated with MLE from the research you have done. Perhaps you could look at other sources of data and look at Twitter users or Facebook users who use MLE? I have included references in my work – to do this you use the last name of the author and the year the research was written. If you use something like a TED talk you could simplify it and put (TED talk) for example. Think about the work you did on the features of MLE – eg. plural markers.

***Example***

*A common feature of MLE is the use of portmanteaux, blending of words and contractions, demonstrated in my research. In Shut up, a semantic pattern of colloquialisms and word blending are used in the rap. For example, the tag question ‘innit’ is repeated throughout the chorus which is a blend of the contraction ‘isn’t’ and the pronoun ‘it’. This portmanteau is particularly important in immediately highlighting Stormzy’s multi-cultural London background as it is one of the most well-known and widely spread colloquialisms which is referenced in articles such as ‘Slang shouldn’t be banned … it should be celebrated, innit’ (Drummond, 2016). Therefore, it could be used to highlight the artist’s identity, suggesting Stormzy is proud of his multiethnolect (Clyde 2000). The use of slang in songs such as this plays a big role in the influence of MLE on youth culture. ‘Shut Up’ is an example of how grime music can introduce slang such as ‘innit’ into white youth sociolect as well as MLE speakers. Whilst Stormzy brings R&B and gospel sounds into his music, the frequent pattern of colloquialisms could be used to reinforce the grime genre as Lynksey said ‘if you soften and hybridise grime then it’s no longer grime’ (Lynksey, 2018). On one hand, the integration of other genres help make it more suitable for a mainstream market but they are also a danger to the traditional grime roots preserved by Skepta in the past. The emphasis on slang in the song is perhaps used to try and preserve the grime genre.*

**Conclusion**

Summarise what you have found in relation to the question, why do you think MLE is becoming more popular? Here you could apply some of your own opinion.

***Example***

*I think MLE is a catalyst for language change as, whilst Chen and Wang proposed the S Curve as a model of how neologisms are introduced, the development of technology and rise of the grime genre (through Stormzy) has led this process to be faster. Slang is constantly being lost and replaced through the influence of Stormzy as there is always a need for new words that help youth diverge and create their identity as part of a youth social group.*