

Socio and formal views on grammatical innovations: insights from Multicultural London English

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Recent years have seen growing interest in interdisciplinary research at the intersection of sociolinguistics and formal linguistic theory, sometimes called Sociosyntax (see e.g., Cornips and Corrigan 2005; *Lingua* special issue on formalizing syntactic variation (2010), vol 120.5). Recent research into urban multiethnolects in the UK (e.g., Cheshire et al. 2011) has revealed unexpected syntactic properties in emerging varieties of English, particularly Multicultural London English (MLE). Research on MLE has so far mainly been carried out in a variationist sociolinguistic framework (Cheshire et al 2011 a.o.), but here I report on my research into grammatical innovations in MLE in a broadly generative framework, informed by that sociolinguistic research. I focus on three different phenomena (P-D-drop, a new pronoun *man*, and *why...for*-interrogatives) and discuss how each gives us a very different insight into how sociolinguistic and formal linguistic analyses can inform each other.