РОЗДІЛ 1
МОВОЗНАВСТВО

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THE LINGUISTIC FRAMEWORK OF MULTICULTURAL LONDON ENGLISH

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The article focuses on the linguistic framework of Multicultural London English (MLE) – an evolving variety of English that has emerged in the multicultural context of London and other British urban communities, particularly among young people from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Its appearance, spread, and development reflect the complex social and cultural mosaic of London and some other cities, determined by the processes of immigration and globalization. MLE is viewed as a blending of linguistic features loaned from some British dialects (London's Cockney and Estuary) and different ethnic communities, including Caribbean, African, South Asian, and European influences. There is an attempt to identify the true origin of MLE and connect it with the general tendencies of the English language transformations in the modern world. We managed to trace the roots of MLE to the post-World War II period when massive waves of immigration from former British colonies brought together speakers from a variety of linguistic backgrounds. The immigrants interacted with each other and with the local English-speaking population, inducing the creation of a new form of speech.

Our special attention in the research is paid to the fact that MLE is not simply a hybrid language but a dynamic dialect, or even a sociolect, that continues to evolve. Its influence is spreading across the city and some urban communities, with some features becoming generally accepted in Standard British English, while it is most commonly spoken by young Londoners in working-class areas. MLE is not only the manifestation of the linguistic diversity of its speakers, but it also expresses their identity in a multicultural speaking environment. The rise of MLE has aroused numerous debates about linguistic and social integration in the context of its coexistence with Standard British English. However, its continued evolution demonstrates the dynamic nature of language in urban communities, illustrating how they assimilate and adapt linguistic practices to reflect their diverse social realities.

Key words: *Multicultural London English, Received Pronunciation, dialect, sociolect, ethnolect, ethnic diversity, ethnic identity, Cockney, Estuary English, urban communities, linguistic framework, linguistic background.*

Бондаренко Віктор, Соколова Ірина, Капранов Ян. Лінгвістичний характер мультикультурного лондонського соціолекту

У центрі дослідницької уваги – лінгвістична основа мультикультурного лондонського соціолекту (MLE) – різновиду англійської мови, що виник у мультикультурному контексті Лондона та деяких інших британських міських спільнот, особливо серед молоді з різним етнічним походженням. Його поява, поширення та розвиток відображають складну соціальну та культурну мозаїку Лондона та деяких інших міст, що визначається процесами імміграції та глобалізації. MLE розглядається як поєднання лінгвістичних особливостей, запозичених із деяких британських діалектів (лондонського кокні та ест'юері) та різних етнічних спільнот, включаючи карибські, африканські, південноазійські та європейські впливи. Нами здійснено спробу визначити справжнє походження MLE та пов'язати його із загальними тенденціями модифікацій англійської мови в сучасному світі. У результаті проведеної наукової розвідки вдалося простежити походження MLE, зокрема до післявоєнного періоду, коли масові хвилі імміграції з колишніх британських колоній об'єднали людей з різним мовним походженням. Іммігранти взаємодіяли один з одним та з місцевим англомовним населенням, що стало причиною створення нової форми мовлення.

Особливу увагу в дослідженні ми приділяємо тому факту, що, незважаючи на достеменні джерела походження мультикультурного лондонського соціолекту в мультикультуралізмі, він не є просто гібридною мовою, яка продовжує розвиватися. Його вплив поширюється по всьому місту і навіть за його межі, деякі риси стають загальноприйнятими в стандартній

британській англійській мові, тоді як найчастіше цим соціолектом розмовляють молоді лондонці в робітничих районах. MLE є не лише проявом лінгвістичної різноманітності його носіїв, але він також виражає їхню ідентичність у мультикультурному суспільстві. Поява та поширення MLE викликала численні дебати щодо лінгвістичної та соціальної інтеграції в контексті його співіснування зі стандартною британською англійською. Однак його подальша еволюція доводить динамічну природу мови в міському середовищі, ілюструючи, як спільноти засвоюють та модифікують лінгвістичні практики, щоб відобразити свої різноманітні соціальні реалії.

Ключові слова: *мультикультурний лондонський соціолект, вимовний стандарт, діалект, соціолект, етнолект, етнічна різноманітність, етнічна ідентичність, кокні, ест'юері англійська, міські спільноти, лінгвістична основа, лінгвістичний фон.*

Introduction. During the recent decades, the sociolinguistic aspect of the English language has been a global concern, as well as within English-speaking countries. It has been the focus of leading linguistic studies. Increasing attention is being given by scholars to the varieties and accents, multilingualism, and processes of coexistence and co-influence between languages that neighbor within a particular territory, country, or community. This tendency is inescapable in the modern world as there are several profound reasons why languages interact so actively: 1) cross-cultural communication (digital technologies and the Internet itself enable and simplify international communication in various spheres); 2) intensive development of business relations (multilingual individuals participate in international business through negotiation, marketing, and customer service); 3) social cohesion: language can both unite and divide, multilingual policies in many countries are being introduced to balance national unity with diversity as well as to manifest the equality of the national minorities and ethnic groups.

Materials and methods. The central issue of the present research is the dialectical variability within London, UK, with the thorough analysis of the newest dialect, or sociolect – Multicultural London English (MLE). We aim to study the overall grammatical, lexical, and phonetic peculiarities of this variety of speech, with some slight typological reference to other London-influenced dialects, including Cockney and Estuary. Our intention is nothing else than an attempt to interpret the linguistic nature of MLE through its isomorphic and allomorphic comparison with the standard of pronunciation – RP. It is common knowledge that London's dialects are in a state of constant transition, influenced by factors such as social class, ethnicity, migration, and the media. While traditional Cockney is on its way out in its original form, its features persist in modern accents, such as Estuary English and Multicultural London English (MLE). The city's incredible linguistic diversity demonstrates that London remains one of the most dynamic speech communities in the world, and a thorough study of all the processes occurring within it is one of the primary tasks for modern linguists.

Discussion. MLE is a dialect or, as stated by many, a *sociolect* (a social dialect) of English spoken primarily by young people, the Brits, but mainly by the representatives of other nationalities and cultures in London and increasingly in other urban parts of the UK. Alongside two other London-influenced dialects, Cockney and Estuary, MLE established itself as a separate social dialect due to its unique features and borrowed forms. It emerged around 2000, particularly in working-class, multilingual, and multicultural neighborhoods and communities; however, official linguistic sources began mentioning it as early as 2003. Although MLE is considered to have originated in London, some ethnically and linguistically diverse inner-city areas are also affected by it. The actual reason for such an extensive spread can be explained by the linguistic nature of this sociolect – Caribbean English, South Asian languages, West African languages, Cockney, Estuary English, and standard British English heavily influence it.

Scholars, linguists as well as sociolinguists, among them J. Cheshire [1; 2], P. Kerswill [6], S. Fox [2], E. Torgersen [2; 4], R. Kircher [7], and others, are trying to track the basic prerequisites for the appearance of MLE, unanimously conclude the following:

1) ***Historical and social.*** After World War II, the UK underwent large-scale immigration from the Caribbean countries (especially Jamaica), South Asia (India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh), West Africa, and several countries of Eastern Europe (especially after 2004). Immigrants often settled in working-class areas of London (like Hackney, Tottenham, Peckham, or Putney), which became multilingual communities. In these areas, children and young individuals from many different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds grew up together, often attending the same schools and socializing in the same public spaces. As a result, a typical urban youth dialect began to emerge, absorbing the features of Cockney English, Caribbean Creoles, West African Pidgins, South Asian English, and Standard British English.

2) ***Linguistic evolution***. Gradually, the language of speakers within these areas was evolving from Cockney to MLE. Traditionally, working-class London English was associated with Cockney and later Estuary English; however, over time, Multicultural London English (MLE) has become the predominant dialect among many young people in inner-city areas. This shift was not just linguistic but also cultural – younger generations found MLE more relevant to their identities, moral values, and cultural perspectives. It came into existence not just as a simple blend of languages – it was a new dialect with its own consistent grammar, specific vocabulary, and phonology. It draws on and continues to draw vocabulary from Jamaican Patois, Arabic, Punjabi, Yoruba, and other languages, adopting some of their pronunciation features and grammatical peculiarities. The linguists Paul Kerswill, Sue Fox, and Jenny Cheshire first formally described and analyzed Multilingual English (MLE) in 2003. Their linguistic research in areas such as Hackney and Lambeth demonstrated that MLE had distinct linguistic features and was widely used by teenagers across various ethnic communities. According to them, MLE was not just "ethnic English" but a new way of speaking shared

by diverse youth, functioning as a marker of urban identity more than of ethnicity [2, p. 177].

3) ***Impact of Media and Music.*** Alongside the two aforementioned preconditions for the establishment of MLE, the British media and music industry also made considerable contributions. The media has transformed MLE from a local, community-based dialect into a nationwide linguistic and cultural phenomenon. YouTube, TikTok, and Snapchat helped spread MLE slang and pronunciation beyond London to other cities in the UK. Some films, like *Kidulthood* and *Blue Story*, feature characters who speak MLE. It reflects how language evolves in conjunction with culture, identity, and technology – and how media can amplify these changes. At the same time, the media has both supported and criticized MLE. Some tabloid newspapers have referred to it as "broken English" or a threat to standard grammar. At the same time, linguists and cultural representatives have viewed it as a valid form of English with rich expressive power [4, p. 221].

Moreover, MLE gained significant acceptance and recognition through the UK music genres, such as Grime and Drill. Grime developed as a uniquely British sound, influenced by dancehall, jungle, garage, hip-hop music, and speech, and their lyrical themes range within street life, identity, pride, and resilience, featuring artists like *Wiley, Skepta, Stormzy* (bridges grime and mainstream UK rap), *Dizzee Rascal, Jme* and *Kano*. Drill emerged as a subgenre of UK rap, drawing inspiration from Chicago drill music. It portrays street violence, gang culture, urban survival, and ethnic identity, featuring performers such as *67, Headie One, Digga D, Central Cee,* and *Abra Cadabra.* Both genres significantly facilitate the promotion of MLE among the young population of British urban communities.

Meanwhile, entering the communication space of one of the most multicultural cities in the world, MLE is in the spotlight of contemporary British researchers, who are making numerous attempts to establish its linguistic legitimacy as a social dialect. Consequently, there are several linguistic debates surrounding MLE, reflecting broader tensions in language, identity, and society itself. These debates encompass both linguistic theories and public discourse yet exhibit a tremendous diversity of approaches to the subject, many of which are highly controversial.

First of all, scientific circles are trying to determine the genuine linguistic nature of MLE and recognize it as a dialect, sociolect, or even an ethnolect. According to Sue Fox, MLE is a sociolect because, despite some features of Cockney persisting in MLE, it changes and evolves in its way as a separate dialect, possessing its systemic phonology, grammar, and lexis. At the same time, the researcher does not deny that it is a sociolect, as MLE is defined by social class and is spread through urban youth culture [4, p. 232]. In the early 2000s, the British media labeled MLE an ethnolect (the variety of speech based on usage within certain ethnic groups or minorities). However, most scholars have firmly rejected this viewpoint, arguing that people speak MLE from diverse ethnic backgrounds (Black, White, South Asian, Arab, etc.) [3, p. 18]. The researcher Paul Kerswill suggests a new term for MLE and calls it a multiethnolect (a variety of speech emerging in multiethnic environments, used across ethnic groups), as in his view, the term "multicultural" reflects its mixed origins and broad usage more accurately [6, p. 435].

Alongside these approaches, some scholars consider MLE a serious threat to traditional London-based dialects, Cockney and Estuary. They believe that MLE can replace the existing dialects as its nature reflects the innovative tendencies of British society, and it is used by the most flexible and dynamic social group – the youth. Moreover, they accept the appearance and rapid spread of MLE as dialect leveling (a process where differences between regional or social dialects become reduced or eliminated over time, which leads to the emergence of more homogenized or standardized forms of speech across a population) [2; 5; 8; 9]. By the way, Cockney, as well as Scouse and Geordie, have already undergone leveling due to the interaction with Estuary English. The researcher, Sue Fox, nevertheless, does not share the idea of dialect leveling, arguing that it is a natural change in dialects, especially in contemporary, diverse cities. She calls it "the evolution of the dialects" since several features of Cockney are still being preserved in Modern London English (MLE). The scholar regards this debate as often overlapping with xenophobic or nostalgic concerns about "losing tradition" [4, pp. 238–239].

There is another debate among media reporters, commentators, and presenters concerning the true nature of MLE, with many still questioning whether this form of speech represents innovation or imitation. Some of them argue MLE is "fake Jamaican" or cultural appropriation, calling it "Jafaican"; others claim it is an authentic dialect used to express urban youth identity, regardless of ethnicity. Sociolinguists Jenny Cheshire and Paul Kerswill declare that MLE is not imitation – it is an authentic, evolving dialect shaped by contact and convergence. Youth use MLE to express belonging, toughness, coolness, and local identity [1, p. 612; 6, pp. 445–446]. Quite often, they oppose the media, which describes MLE as "bad English," demonstrating a lack of respect for authority and a communication breakdown. The British press about MLE sometimes uses big words like "Street slang killing Queen's English" or "Youth slang having no respect for real language," etc. Sociolinguists treat such declarations as groundless and expressing not linguistic but moral concerns.

In light of the controversial issues surrounding the linguistic status of MLE in contemporary British society, the question of coexistence between Standard English and MLE inevitably arises in the educational sphere. As modern schools are extremely multicultural, not only in London but also in other major cities, there are speculations about the possibility of introducing MLE in speech and writing, and many are wondering about the potential consequences. On the one hand, prescriptivists are sure that students need and must master Standard English for social mobility and to address language concerns as well. They claim that if MLE is introduced into the system of schooling, Standard English will eventually die. Still, facing the increasing multiculturalism in schools and society in general, descriptivists, alongside sociolin-

guists, welcome the idea that students should be bidialectal – learn to use both Standard English and their home varieties.

Meanwhile, having described the paramount preconditions for the appearance and establishment of MLE within British urbanized communities, we proceed to describe its linguistic framework and functional aspects. Since MLE is no longer just a variety of colloquial speech among youth and multicultural speakers, its lexical composition, grammatical structure, and phonological parameters require thorough study and systematization by linguistic laws. The published data on MLE are insufficient, as the sociolect is highly dynamic and changeable, necessitating ongoing studies of its innovative characteristics.

The **lexical composition** of MLE refers to the distinctive vocabulary used by young people in diverse urban communities when speaking this variety of English. Therefore, its lexical composition is shaped mainly by the following units and processes:

1) The vocabulary is composed of slang words and colloquialisms. The speakers are very democratic in their choice of language, preferring to use mainly simplified forms, slang, and the speech of the broad masses.

2) several innovative words and expressions enter the vocabulary of MLE speakers almost every day. Sometimes, new entries are known to a minimal circle of speakers;

3) MLE vocabulary is generously enriched with numerous borrowings from other languages and dialects (not only the British ones);

4) many young speakers resort to semantic shifts – changing the meaning of existing words.

Let us have a close look at these primary ways of forming the vocabulary of MLE and try to analyze their linguistic relevance. Among the slangy words and colloquialisms, the most typical are:

wasteman: (Noun/Adjective) meaning "idiot," "useless person." E.g., ***My neighbor is such a waste man.***

bare: (Adjective/Adverb) meaning "a lot of" or "very." E.g., ***There were bare teenagers in the club. Her BF is bare tall.***

bout: (contraction of "about") Often used where standard English would use "going to" or "intending to ."E.g. ***He was bout to say something.***

bruv: (Noun) short for "brother," used affectionately for close male friends. E.g., ***There is no news for you, bruv.***

mandem: (Noun) refers to a group of male friends. E.g., ***It's a small party, only for my mandem.***

gash: (Adjective) meaning "bad," "poor quality," or "unattractive." E.g., ***That's a gash idea, bruv!***

custy: (Adjective) meaning "excellent," "great," or "nice." E.g., Often thought to derive from Persian "kushti" but adopted into British slang before MLE. E.g., ***The show was really custy.***

rave: (Noun) meaning "party" or "banquet ." E.g.***, Some was at the rave, but not bare.*** (Some were at the party, but not many).

Here is an example of the sentence in MLE: ***Mandem was at the rave, man was bare hyped, ting was peng still.*** (The guys were at the party, I was really excited, the girl was very attractive).

In the lexical system of MLE, there is a significant stock of innovative words and expressions that are uniquely associated with this sociolect and have no similarity with the vocabulary of Cockney or Estuary English. Many of them are very specific and incomprehensible to the standard English speaker. Among such innovative lexical units shortening like ***creps*** (trainers) or ***ting*** (thing/girl) or acronyms and initialisms like ***OT*** (out of town – often about drug dealing), ***WAG*** (what's going on), ***BRB*** (be right back) and others as well as backslang or sound-alike words: ***piff*** (attractive), ***shook*** (scared) can be the most illustrative examples. The initialism ***KMT*** (kiss my teeth), which expresses disapproval or annoyance, is borrowed from Jamaican Patois and has gained popularity among young people, either in oral speech or in texting.

Moreover, Jamaican Patois, as well as African Yoruba and Twi, are sources of numerous lexical borrowings into MLE due to the multicultural groups living in Britain's urban areas. Within this lexical layer of MLE, the following lexemes have established themselves in favor of speakers and been borrowed from Jamaican Patois: ***wagwan*** (what's going on?) – a standard greeting; ***gyal*** – an address to a girl; ***bredrin*** – a brother or a close friend; ***nang*** – cool or posh***.***

Some popular words are borrowed from African lang***uages: Chale*** – a close friend or mate; ***Abi*** – the expression "Right?"; ***Wahala*** – used humorously in the meaning "No problem"; ***Oyinbo*** – used ironically to refer to a white person. Some South Asian languages, such as Hindi, Punjabi, or Urdu, can be viewed as sources of loanwords in MLE. They may be less dominant than Jamaican or African sources, but they are influential, particularly among Asian youth in London or other urban communities. ***Words such as "Desi***" (South Asian) and ***"pind***" (village or rural area) or *"bait*" (caught) are quite frequent among British Asian speakers.

Sociolinguists cannot deny the influence of Arabic languages on MLE, as the number of immigrants from Arabic countries is significantly higher than from other parts of Africa or Asia. The citizens of Arab countries have been migrating to the British Isles for a long time, and their contribution to the UK's demographic composition is relatively significant [8, p. 20]. Consequently, among the representatives of young MLE speech, some words of Arabic origin are popular. For instance, ***mashallah*** – admiration or blessing saying "God's will on all"; ***wallahi*** – common oath expression meaning "I swear to God" or words like ***halal*** and ***haram*** – permitted and forbidden.

To conclude, when discussing MLE borrowings, it would be reasonable to mention one of the most influential and powerful sources – local dialects of British English, such as Cockney, Estuary, and Urban dialects, which blend into MLE and integrate with all its systems. In the vocabulary of MLE***, words such as "cheers"*** (thank you!), ***"mate***" (friend), ***"tea leaf***" (a bosom friend), ***"killer***" (a butcher), ***and "bloomer***" (a florist) are considered to be of British origin but have been adopted into the sociolect as its borrowed elements.

Alongside these traditional ways of extending the vocabulary of MLE, the majority of scholars [1, 4, 6, 7] share the standpoint that the most productive one is semantic shifting – changing the original meaning of some words and giving them some new connotations. This process is often referred to as **relexicalization**, which involves assigning new, culturally loaded meanings to old English words [9, p. 402]. The corpus of semantically shifted lexical units proves to be relatively dynamic as new elements enter the speech regularly. The examples of the most frequent words as semantic shifts are:

Link: (Verb) meaning "meet up" or "connect with." E.g., ***Are you linking with them while they are in town?***

Crazy: intensifier, meaning "very" or "extremely." It is often repeated for emphasis. E.g., ***The cake was crazy crazy yummy.***

Bored: often used where standard English would use the past participle "bored of" or "boring ." E.g., ***I'm bored this.*** (I'm bored of this).

Safe: used as a greeting or approval. E.g., ***Safe, bruv!*** (Hello, brother!)

waste: referring to someone considered useless or good for nothing. E.g.***, I won't deal with this waste man.***

Sick: meaning very good or impressive. E.g.***, The sound is sick, I love it.***

Peak: bad or unfortunate. E.g., ***Though his life was peak, he was cheerful.***

Dead: boring or low quality. E.g.***, His duds was dead, but he was a hunk.***

Heavy: very emotional. E.g., ***The speeches of bare guests was heavy.*** (The speeches of many guests were deep/ moving.)

The next point of our scientific interest in MLE is an overview of its **grammatical structure.** Although many linguists view the sociolect as a considerable variety of British English, its grammatical framework does not substantially differ from the standard. There are a few basic isomorphic features between them, but since MLE is a contemporary dynamic form of speech, its nature is unstable and increasingly variable. Thus, the following grammatical peculiarities of MLE can be traced:

− The use of the generalized noun **man** instead of the pronouns **I, you, someone.**

E.g. ***Man made this decision long ago.*** = I made this decision long ago.

If man was more thoughtful, there would not be a trouble. = If you were more thoughtful, there would not be a trouble.

We need to find a man who fixes phones. = We need to find someone who fixes phones.

− The use of the objective pronoun **them** instead of the demonstrative pronouns **these and those** referring both to living and non-living beings.

E.g., ***Man got them hints.*** = I got those hints.

Them mates know nothing. = These mates know nothing.

− The use of the form **was** for all persons, singular and plural (non-standard past tense): E.g., ***We weas bare surprised. Was you in the club? Why was you late?***

− Omission of the ending **– s** for the third person singular in Present Simple. E.g., ***He drive to work. On Saturdays she go to the rave with them gyal.*** (On Saturdays, she goes to the party with these girls.)

− The use of **Participle II** instead of Past tense verbs for Past Simple: e.g., ***They done it yesterday. If you done the job, she would cheer you.***

− The use of the combination to be like instead of the reporting verbs in the sentences with reported speech: E.g., ***She is like "Why was you away?"*** (She asks: "Why were you away?").

− Instead of the standard-grammar negative forms of the verb **to be** in the present tenses, the use of the negation **ain't** is the only way of expressing the present tense negation in MLE: E.g., ***We ain't gone anywhere now. I ain't going shopping today.***

− In MLE **double** or **multiple negations** are very frequent: E.g., ***We ain't know nothing about the fire. He never did not tell anybody about that matter.***

− In the structure of the sentences, there are numerous cases of inversion. Some of them manifest the intention of speakers to demonstrate their identity of self-expression: E.g., ***Trouble must it be. Late, you done it. Really smart some ideas are.***

− As a conversational element, the adverb **still** is added at the end of the sentence to emphasize its meaning or to close it: E.g.***, The rave was bare fun still. The sales was over still.***

− The tags **You get me** and **Innit** are used in the questions seeking confirmation and expressing checking the information: E.g.**, *You local, innit? The bakery is close her, you get me? He was a serviceman, innit?***

Therefore, the grammatical features of MLE make it a distinct sociolect, but at the same time, prove its linguistic and social closeness to Cockney and Estuary. Undoubtedly, there are common characteristics, but they are nothing but the result of the co-influence between these dialects. Still, some peculiarities make MLE a separate sociolect with its specific grammar.

The final and most flexible system of MLE is its **phonological** form, which is constantly modified under the influence of various modern speech tendencies. Linguists, particularly phoneticians, remain quite active in optimizing their efforts to reflect the genuine phonological image of MLE in their research. Nevertheless, in some aspects, the sociolect remains *terra incognita*, as the dynamics of its phonological processes are so fluent that they require constant study. By today, the following phonological parameters of MLE are being described:

I. In the vocalic system:

− "Bath – trap" split variation, consisting in the process of replacing the British long /a:/ with the broad /æ/ in words like ***bath, trap, past, fast;***

− "Foot – strut" split variation, which affects short /ʊ/ and /ʌ/ in words like ***foot, strut, pool;***

There is a strong tendency for monophthongization of diphthongs: the most distinctive feature is a simplification of diphthongs into monophthongs. For example, the diphthong /əʊ/ like in ***goat*** becomes a monophthong /ɔ:/

(so it sounds more like "goh"). The diphthong [aɪ], like in ***price,*** becomes a monophthong /aː/ (so it sounds like "prahce"). In some positions, there is a *vowel lowering* when a vowel is pronounced with a slightly lower tongue position, resulting in /ʊ/ sounding more like /ʌ/ or /ʊ̈/. For instance, in words like ***goose*** and ***choose.***

II. In the system of consonants:

− *Th-fronting* is one of the most striking features of MLE. The "th" sound /θ/ (as in ***think***) and /ð/ (as in ***this)*** is pronounced as /f/ or /v/, respectively. For example***, think*** might be pronounced /fɪŋk/, and ***that*** might be pronounced /væt/. This tendency comes from Cockney and Estuary, where it has already become a relevant phonetic feature.

− *Glottalization of /t/*: The voiceless plosive sound /t/ is frequently replaced with a glottal stop [ʔ], especially in the middle or at the end of words. For example, ***butter*** becomes /ˈbʌʔə/ or ***better*** becomes /ˈbɛʔə/, as seen in Cockney and Estuary English as well.

− *Velar Nasalization*: In some positions, the **ng** sound [ŋ] may be pronounced more like a velar nasal /ɳ/, as in the word **sing** sounding more like /sɪɳ/ or in the words ***bank*** or ***pang.***

− *Reduction and elision* of consonants in the consonant clusters: In MLE, there is a tendency to reduce consonant clusters, especially in casual communication. Similarly to other urban dialects, there is often a loss of unstressed syllables, especially in rapid speech. For example, ***"comfortable***" might be pronounced as /ˈkʌmfɪtəbəl/ instead of the standard /ˈkʌmfətəbl/; the word ***"postman***" may become /pəʊs.mæn/. Although the word ***friends*** is quite a rare word for MLE, it can be reduced to /frɛnz/ or even /frenz/.

− *L-vocalization* is another fundamental distinctive feature of MLE that is borrowed from Cockney and other South Bank varieties of English. So, the word ***film*** is pronounced as /fɪwm/, and ***milk*** is like /mɪwk/.

Thus, the primary distinctive characteristics of vowels and consonants in MLE are primarily determined by the neighboring dialects, Cockney and Estuary English; nevertheless, the sound form of this sociolect can be easily recognized by a trained ear or locals belonging to these communities.

Regarding the accentuation of English words, it is worth noting that MLE often exhibits a more variable stress pattern compared to RP. For example, speakers may stress different parts of a word than a standard British speaker would, especially in borrowed words. Thus, specific borrowed terms, especially from Caribbean or African communities, may be stressed on the final syllable, which contrasts with the typical penultimate stress found in Standard English. For example, the word ***bada*** (a term for big) may be pronounced with stress on the final syllable (/bɑːˈdɑː/).

As well as the segmental level of MLE speech undergoes some modifications, its intonation and prosodic features differ from those in the Pronunciation Standard. Therefore, it attracted our attention within this study, and we aimed to describe the most phonetically relevant parameters of the MLE pronunciation variant. Therefore, there is a tendency for the prevalence of *rising intonation*, which may be contradictory to the generic intonation patterns of English, particularly British English. As some scholars claim [2; 5], there is often a noticeable use of rising intonation, even in statements, which gives the speech a question-like quality. This is more common in casual speech, where the final syllable may rise in pitch, signaling uncertainty, emphasis, or the non-finality of the sentence. Such a prosodic organization of speech makes any speaker of MLE distinguishable and can serve as a social marker of certain professional and age groups.

There is also a specific change in the rhythm of MLE, as it tends to be more syllable-timed, which contrasts with the stress-timed rhythm of Received Pronunciation. The linguists interpret it as the inevitable influence of Caribbean English and other rhythms from languages such as Yoruba, Punjabi, and Hindi [8, pp. 20–21], and they underscore the Yoruba language's influence – specifically, the tendency for a "higher" or more pitched intonation in particular words.

Results. All in all, the linguistic features of MLE reflect the dynamic nature of urban speech in the modern multicultural society of Britain. It proves that MLE is not a dialect but rather a flexible and evolving form of speech influenced by various linguistic tendencies. As many of these features resonate with other London dialects (such as Cockney or Estuary) or urban varieties across the UK, MLE's influences from Caribbean, African, South Asian, and other immigrant communities make it a distinctive part of London's linguistic mosaic.

While some linguists and non-linguists view MLE as a symbol of modern identity and cultural belonging, others are concerned about its potentially negative impact on "standard" English. Nevertheless, MLE serves as a contemporary form of expression for many young Londoners, allowing them to manifest their identity within the multicultural social and linguistic environment. The intense spread of MLE, especially among the broad masses of British youth, also demonstrates that languages and dialects are constantly evolving under the tremendous influence of demographic changes, social mobility, and global cultural processes.

Thus, MLE is a dynamic and evolving form of British English that appeared as a result of the complex social and cultural transformations in London and some urbanized regions of the UK. It can be undoubtedly characterized as an overwhelming blend of influences from various linguistic, cultural, and ethnic groups, manifesting the multicultural nature of British society today. Including elements from Caribbean English, South Asian languages, Cockney, Estuary, and other linguistic traditions, MLE forms a unique sociolect or ethnolect that is spreading intensively and is on the way to becoming another British dialect.

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