Privatizing Creativity: Verlan in advertising and politics.

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PRIVATIZING CREATIVITY

Advertising and Mock Urban French
MOCK URBAN FRENCH
Indexical Chains
Selling Savage Illiteracy
Historian Richard Fogarty notes French officers taught pidgin to Senegalese soldiers, which allowed functional integration while policing of the color line.

A similar division between literate/illiterate is reproduced in advertising and mocking invocations of urban language.
Creativity as Comical Delinquency
Ventriloquized Bodies

- African American Voices are dubbed into a mock urban French
- Especially prevalent in comical depictions of drug use, not used in serious drama
- How High - Highlights borders between African-American students shown as academically disinterested, and Harvard Professors
Languages of Academic Disinterest

Following Hill's (2005) methods for intertextual evidence I used google searches to explore how Verlan is sold:

Most commonly referenced Verlan words in Verlan lessons for English speakers

Teuf (party),
Pecho (score)
Meuf (woman)
Political Consequences

- Creativity becomes delinquency.
- In 2009 then Minister for Family and Solidarity called to the “young Muslim” to quit speaking Verlan.
- Bilingualism becomes terrorism.
- By 2015 Intellectuals like Gilles Kepel were declaring the “young Muslim” a terrorist bent on Arabizicing French.
Playing with Advertising

Non, je suis ta banque
THANKS!

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