**Chapter 3**

**Additional activity**

**Youth language in Manchester**

In Chapter 3 we discussed Rob Drummond’s work, which explored youth language in Manchester, UK. The project’s two main research sites were inner-city learning centres, which catered for students who have been permanently excluded from mainstream education.

The example below comes from an interview the researcher had with two students, Abdou and Jake. Abdu is black but he could not decide if he identified as Black African or Black British. He was part of a dominant group of boys of mixed ethnicities, and he was a heavy user of [Multicultural Urban British English](https://www.robdrummond.co.uk/multicultural-british-english/). In fact, Abdu was one of the two heaviest users of word initial *th*-stopping. During the interview, the researcher brought up the point about saying ‘tree’ instead of ‘three’.

Read the interview below and discuss Abdul’s attitudes towards his own language use. How does he describe it? Does his reaction surprise you? How can you explain his reaction?

1 Res: I heard you saying downstairs about whether you say [t]ree or not. Do you

say [t]ree? You say [t]ree sometimes.

2 Abdou: No I don’t

3 Res: Don’t you?

4 Jake: Yeah you do yo, you say [t]ree bro.

5 Abdou: No I don’t.

6 Jake: Yeah you do.

7 Abdou: Yeah it’s f- okay

8 Res: Why what’s wrong with saying [t]ree?

9 Abdou: I don’- I jus- cos it’s not [f]ree[[1]](#footnote-1)

10 Jake: You always say [t]ree I don’t know what you’re on about.

11 Abdou: But it’s not but I don’t though.

12 Jake: You do.

13 Res: But why is it wrong to say- it’s not wrong, it’s not wrong to say…

14 Abdou: It’s not wrong but obviously I don’t say it, cos it’s not [f]ree.

**Reference**

Drummond, R. (2017). (Mis)interpreting urban youth language: White kids sounding black?, *Journal of Youth Studies*, 20(5), 640-660.

1. It should be pointed out that ‘f’ for ‘th’ (known as th-fronting) is by far the most frequent pronunciation

   of words such as three, think, mouth, etc. So in this excerpt, ‘free’ should be seen as Abdou’s personal ‘standard’ pronunciation. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)