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ORIENTATIONS TO FRENCH LANGUAGE VARIETIES AMONG WESTERN CANADIAN FRENCH-AS-A-SECOND-LANGUAGE TEACHERS

Abstract:

In Canada, official French-English bilingualism and the long-standing presence of Indigenous and immigrant languages has shaped how these languages and their varieties are learned, taught, and used in educational contexts. To date, there has been little inquiry into French-as-a-second-language (FSL) teachers' orientations to the varieties of French they teach, in particular Canadian French language varieties (Arnott, Masson, and Lapkin 2019), despite studies showing that ideologies associated with different language varieties can impact teachers' instructional choices. This article presents an analysis of the narrated experiences of FSL teachers from Western Canada, drawn from journal and interview accounts, about their encounters with different language varieties while on professional development in France. Thematic and discourse analytic perspectives bring to light complex negotiations of ideological meaning and representation related to language variation in French, as well as the discursive strategies employed by the participants in orientating to these meanings. These discursive actions make evident deeply embedded language ideologies that have significant implications for both French as a first and as a second language education, not only in terms of a prevailing linguistic insecurity among francophones but equally significant for FSL teachers' professional identity construction, especially those who are themselves second language speakers of French. The analysis and discussion highlight the importance of integrating pluralistic perspectives into teacher education programs and ongoing teacher professional development initiatives.

Keywords: French language education ◆ Canadian French ◆ linguistic insecurity ◆ standardized language ◆ language ideology

Introduction

Canada's colonial past and established history of linguistic diversity offers fertile ground for examining how regional and ethnolinguistic variation has constructed social difference and inequality in educational contexts. Representations of Canadian French language varieties in particular have been the focus of research in minority language educational contexts with regard to the legitimacy of local vernaculars in school settings, identity and sense of belonging, and learners' attitudes toward French language varieties (e.g., Dalley and Entremont 2004; Heller 1996). French and English are recognized as Canada's two official languages since the 1970s, and today French language education is offered in both majority (Quebec) and minority language contexts (the rest of Canada). This includes francophone schools and university programs for students who speak French as a first language and French-as-a-second-language (FSL) programs (core French, intensive French and French immersion) geared toward the anglophone majority and speakers of other languages. Core French is the most widely taught government supported L2 program, due to the official status of French in Canada. This program forms part of the provincially-mandated second language curriculum at the elementary level (Grades 5-8), with classes 2-3 times per week, and is optional at the secondary level (Grades 8-12). Intensive French is offered to Grade 5 and 6 students in an immersion setting for a half year, followed by the English curriculum during the second half, with Math delivered in English throughout the entire school year. French immersion is an optional content-based L2 program (i.e., CLIL) in which French is used as a medium of instruction, in kindergarten and primary grades almost exclusively, progressing to 80 percent in intermediate elementary with the introduction of English in Grade 4, and decreasing to 50 and then 25 percent through the high school grades. The increasing popularity of French immersion and francophone school programming has led to a country-wide shortage of French teachers. The majority of FSL teachers in Western Canada are second language speakers of French (many of whom are former FSL program graduates themselves) and also include teachers from Quebec and other francophone regions within and beyond Canada, due to intensified teacher recruitment efforts over the past two decades to address the current French teacher shortage across the country (Masson, Larson, Desgroseilliers, Carr, and Lapkin 2019).

While officially recognized as a majority language only in Quebec, in other regions of Canada French may also spoken by a majority of speakers, despite its status as a minority language (e.g., in New Brunswick). Although there is considerable French language variation across the country's provinces and northern territories, ideologies of language standardization prevail in the French language classroom for both first language (L1) speakers and second language (L2) speakers of French. The term "Canadian French" is used in this article to refer to all regional and social varieties of contemporary French in Canada, standardized as well as localized vernaculars, such as Quebecois varieties including *joual*, Acadian French, *chiac*, Franco-Manitoban, Franco-

Colombien, Michif, and so on. Perceptions and beliefs that question the status and quality of Canadian French varieties in educational contexts tend to be grounded in persisting orientations to a prescriptive European norm, typically associated with the Parisian standard, giving rise to a sense of linguistic insecurity among francophone speakers, especially in regions outside Quebec (Bergeron 2019). In educational settings where French is taught as a second language, French language textbooks used in North America (Chapelle 2009; Coffey 2013) contribute to the idea that a single French variety is spoken across all of metropolitan France, while long-standing concerns about the quality and prestige of Canadian varieties compared to the French in France (Oakes and Warren 2007) further reinforce the notion of a standardized norm.

In response to the call for this special issue, this article offers insights into how FSL teachers in Western Canada attend to the French language varieties they teach. To date, few studies have examined FSL teachers' orientations to Canadian French language varieties (Arnott, Masson, and Lapkin 2019), despite research showing that ideologies associated with different language varieties impact teachers' instructional choices (Lindberg 2019). The following discussion focuses on interview and journal accounts of teachers from the province of British Columbia who participated in a professional sojourn to France as part of a larger cohort of over 80 FSL teachers. As the analyses presented here will show, the orientation to a monocentric French standard as representative of French spoken outside of Canada is also common among FSL teachers. It is also partly the reason this linguistic insecurity is not only a reality among francophones but also among FSL teachers. It manifests itself in particular with regard to their professional identity, often by way of a lack of confidence with regard to their self-perceived language expertise when measured against an idealized French norm (Wernicke 2017). For the FSL teachers in the present study, two thirds of whom were themselves L2 speakers of French and ongoing learners of the language they teach, this linguistic insecurity became evident in different ways as they encountered the stigmatization of Canadian language varieties, varieties they associate with their teacher identities. As the analysis presented here makes visible, prevailing language ideologies continue to prioritize prescriptive (native speaker) norms which impact teachers' sense of linguistic security as speakers of French as well as their professional legitimacy as language educators.

The discussion begins with a historical overview of French in Canada and the way this history has shaped current social and linguistic representations and ideologies of French, particularly in education. Using a discourse analytic approach, the analysis centers on teacher-participants' narrated experiences encountering different language varieties during the two-week sojourn. The analytic focus is on how the teachers position themselves interactionally vis-à-vis others based on their own observations or assessments about language variation in French and the ideological meanings that emerge in their discursive constructions of French language varieties. The discussion is theoretically grounded in a view of French as "a plural concept...a historical,

geographic, and social construct that, in addition, shows situational-stylistic and individual variation" (Fagyal, Kibbee, and Jenkins 2006: 3). However, as these authors remind us, the pluricentric nature of French is typically "expressed in singular form," especially in educational contexts where a monocentric, single variety facilitates teaching to an institutional, prescriptive standard that is viewed as representative of what a speaker of French should be. It is this ideological construction of a monocentric French which has produced a hierarchization of French language varieties, which are the focus of the analysis presented here.

A Historical Overview of French in Canada

In Canada today, the status and role of French in educational contexts, has to be understood in terms of the language's historical significance, its colonial past and present, as well as its monocentric evolution and ideological emancipation alongside and in response to English. The presence of French has been fundamental to the identity of French Canadians since the 17th century. Initially, it served as an ethnic identifier for colonial settlers in New France and Acadian regions of what are now Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, and later during the 20th century, as a means of mobilizing a shift to territorial nationalism to ensure cultural and linguistic survival in an English-dominant environment in Quebec (Heller 1999). Language ideologies of linguistic purism and monolingualism have thus played an important role in nationalist discourse against cultural and social assimilation by the English-speaking majority and the anglicization of the French language (Heller 2011). Interwoven with these protectionist efforts is a long-standing preoccupation with the quality of Canadian French vis-à-vis the French used in France (Levine 2010; Oakes and Warren 2007). Pejorative attitudes towards varieties of Canadian French during the late 18th and 19th century brought fears of losing historically acquired collective rights as well as the prestige associated with the language and its connection with France's glorified past of the 17th century (Bouchard 2002). The desire to be associated with an idealized European standard connected to a venerated historical past, and the necessity to identify with one's own Canadian language variety to reassert its value as a legitimate language, has produced tensions that persist to this day. This "tension between an acceptance of France as the origin of the value of the French language, and a desire to value what is distinctive about the Canadian variety of the language" means that "the source of the value of French in Canada is both its origins and its distinctiveness" (Heller 1999: 151).

Linguistic Insecurity and Pedagogical Hyperstandard

These tensions have led to apprehensions about the potential "contamination" of Canadian French through English, an ideology of linguistic purism that is expressed with reference to the systematic and strategic use of anglicisms and/or syntactic and lexical variants characteristic of Canadian

French language varieties. It is for this reason that in Canada the concept of linguistic insecurity has not only been considered with regard to intralinguistic variation (standardized versus vernacular varieties) but also from an interlinguistic perspective (across different languages, such as English and French) (Calvet 1998). With regard to the latter, the interlinguistic perspective, linguistic insecurity is especially prevalent in French-speaking regions with a high level of bilingual (French-English) language use, where choosing one language over another functions as both a marker of identity and legitimacy (Remysen 2004). On an intralinguistic level, linguistic insecurity manifests itself within francophone communities based on the perception that the local variety of French contrasts with a more prestigious external standard (typically one spoken in France), which has led Canadian francophones to undervalue and question their own legitimacy as speakers of French (Remysen 2004). The power relationship created through this ideology of a monocentric French standard has produced a hierarchization of varieties of spoken French according to established subjective standards such as grammatical accuracy, accent, and the avoidance of anglicisms (Bergeron 2019). According to Desabrais (2010), this linguistic insecurity can be largely attributed to the monitoring of language use by those who speak the dominant variety, leaving the "dominated" to engage in various strategies to counter (consciously or not) exclusion, rejection, or any of the (deficient) linguistic identities ascribed to them. As will be discussed below, this type of negotiation is also visible among FSL teachers who are L2 users of French and faced with mediating native speaker demands as part of their professional identities. In educational settings in particular, both inter- and intralinguistic insecurity translate into questions of legitimacy about linguistic expertise and pedagogical authority, on the one hand leading educators to question if there is a role for the L1 English in teaching French as a second language (Turnbull 2001) or, on the other, asking "[q]uel français enseigner en milieu minoritaire?" (Boudreau and Perrot 2005: 7).

Underlying these tensions of linguistic insecurity for speakers of French in Canada is a centuries-old preoccupation with linguistic norms in France, evolving through Old and Middle French and culminating in *le bon* usage of 17th century French society. Lodge (1993) has discussed this enduring process of standardization in terms of the selection and diffusion of a single "superimposed" norm, Parisian French, which over the centuries has reinforced the notion of French as a homogenous, monocentric language. In language education settings, Train (2003) has traced this process of standardization through the historical construction of a "pedagogical hyperstandard," produced for the purposes of teaching the language to L2 learners of French. This process involves the recontextualization of French speakers' localized discursive practices (i.e. "from their original sites") into a discourse of "Native Speaker French," which is then further rearticulated into a pedagogical discourse of standard French. Train defines this hyperstandard as "a set of pedagogical norms that represents "the language" and "the culture" in ways that are distanced from but related to the learners' existing language-culture practices as well as the actual

language-culture practices of target language speakers" (6). The acquisition of the standardized language variety thus becomes associated with "natural language" while remaining representative of an institutional standard, in this way continuing to privilege the native speaker ideal, "an ideological construct of prestige and (in)equality grounded in language," as the ultimate goal (Train 2003: 6).

This hyperstandard is evident in research investigating the normalizing impact of the classroom context on French language teachers' instructional speech in Canadian francophone schools. A study investigating sociolinguistic variation of teachers' classroom speech in Ontario, for example, showed that while teachers use many of the variants (standard and non-standard) found in the larger French-speaking community, these teachers also showed a marked preference for standard variants in the classroom at a much higher frequency than would be found outside the school setting (Mougeon and Rehner 2019). Research conducted in a francophone community in Western Canada has brought to light evidence of linguistic insecurity among young second generation francophones whose vernacular oral expression is often lamented (by teachers and other adults in the community) as deviating from expected standardized norms in the classroom (Robillard 2019). Overall then, we see vestiges of these historical processes of standardization reinforcing the monocentric idealized standard still evident in French language classrooms today.

Over the years, various studies have examined attitudes toward Canadian French varieties, pointing to persisting monocentric ideologies of standardization in Quebec and the continuing impact of English (Kircher 2016), as well as feelings of linguistic insecurity around stigmatized local French varieties (Boudreau 2009). A recent diachronic examination of linguistic purism in Quebecois newspaper columns shows little reduction of purist attitudes since the late 19th century. However, the study does bring to light a significant shift from a focus on external prescriptive norms (French from France) to a heightened preoccupation with the use of anglicisms and the impact of English on French (Walsh 2016) – a concern that also manifests itself in FSL teachers' pedagogical practices as the analysis below shows.

Few studies in Canada have focused on French language teachers' understandings or approaches to linguistic variation. One exception is a study undertaken in the French language minority context of New Brunswick (Boudreau and Perrot 2005), which investigated Acadian teachers' opinions and approaches to teaching in a secondary school where the majority of students speak the local vernacular *chiac*. The study highlights the dilemma faced by teachers who recognize the important role *chiac* plays in students' identities while also seeing a need for students to acquire forms of academic writing. In educational contexts where French is taught as a second language, studies have centered predominantly on teachers' attitudes towards the place of English in FSL classrooms (Cummins 2007; Turnbull and McMillan 2009), and less on which variety of French should be

taught. Given that the majority of FSL teachers in Canada are themselves ongoing learners of French, it may be that concerns about self-perceived language competence supersede questions around language varieties. At the same time, the analysis presented below seems to suggest that professional development abroad can highlight L2 teachers' orientations to different language varieties and thereby make evident particular forms of linguistic insecurity particularly as they are exposed to ideologies of linguistic purism and differential valuing of language varieties by other language users in the study abroad setting. As I have discussed elsewhere, not only can the notion of French as a single, monocentric language standard associated with France function in teachers' narratives as an authenticating device to construct a more legitimate identity as FSL teacher (Wernicke 2016; 2020), findings from the analysis below show the extent to which identification with a stigmatized local language variety can produce a delegitimating effect for teachers who cannot claim a native speaker status.

Language ideology is thus a key theoretical concept framing this discussion. French language ideologies in Canada have been examined within the domain of francophone sociolinguistics in terms of social representations, prejudices and assumptions that shape prevailing discourses associated with particular linguistic norms (Boudreau 2014). Boudreau (2009) has defined linguistic ideologies as internalized, taken-for-granted beliefs which provide the framing for the various social representations that are inscribed in the institutional dimension of language. In line with research by anglophone researchers in linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics, investigations of language ideologies seek to understand the political and social interests contributing to the production and reproduction of social inequalities in society based on language (Bourdieu 1982). Language ideologies can thus be understood as beliefs about language that mediate the connection between larger social structures and the discursive practices within these structures (Woolard and Schieffelin 1994) "as well as the power relations that result from these" (Bucholtz and Hall 2004: 379). The focus here is on the ways in which language ideologies and their discursive representations are related to notions of linguistic (in)security and pedagogical standardization. I further interpret these representations through the concept of ideological dilemmas, which sees ideology reproduced not as a closed system but as an incomplete set of conflicting themes which can be examined by focusing on the "dilemmatic aspects of discourse" and the discursive strategies employed to express these contrary themes (Billig, Condor, Edwards, Gane, Middleton, and Radley 1988: 22).

Methodology

The analysis reported here draws on data from a multiple case study conducted with a cohort of over eighty FSL teachers from the Canadian province of British Columbia who participated in a professional sojourn in France. In addition to pedagogy workshops and language classes, the two-

week study abroad program centered on familiarizing teachers with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and offered exam proctor training for the *Diplôme d'études en langue française (DELF)*, in light of the CEFR orientation of British Columbia's then proposed language curricula. The program was open to FSL teachers from across the province, and supported by both federal and provincial funding. The research focus of the study, to which (almost all) participants consented once in France, was on teachers' identity construction in relation to their conceptions of authentic language and culture as both teachers and ongoing learners of French. Of the 19 travel journals completed by participants in France, nine made explicit mention of language variation, while four of the seven participants who were interviewed addressed this topic directly. Travel journals included a list of prompts encouraging participants to document unexpected experiences, learning and new knowledge, and the progression and impact of the sojourn. Interviews were conducted inside school settings, usually as follow-up to a classroom observation or outside of school. The interview protocol built on questionnaire and journal data and focused on both the sojourn experiences as well as classroom practices and interactions with students, colleagues and parents in Canada. Findings discussed in this article pertain specifically to an analysis of data from seven teachers, including six travel journal entries and three excerpts from semi-structured post-sojourn interviews.

Participants

As noted earlier, the majority of the 87 participants who travelled to France identified as L2 speakers of French, 72 percent versus 28 percent of L1 French speakers. The teachers who participated in the sojourn were associated with all three FSL programs (core French, intensive French, and French immersion) offered by the British Columbia Ministry of Education.

 Although there was no formal evaluation of teachers' language proficiency, one important finding of the study reported elsewhere (Wernicke 2017) shows an overwhelming orientation to a native speaker standard among all participants. For L2 speaker teachers, identifying as ongoing learners was generally only implicitly done or avoided, given that this would call into question an identity as language teacher, which is premised on a native speaker standard and therefore ideologically conflicts with an identity as learner.

Interestingly, all seven of the teachers whose accounts are analyzed below identified as L2 speakers of French. Two had been teaching for less than five years and the remainder for five years or more. All had learned French in an English-speaking region of Canada and were therefore more familiar with Canadian French varieties – on the one hand as former FSL students who had been taught, to varying degrees, by teachers from Quebec, and on the other, as teachers now working with francophone colleagues or through Quebec student exchanges. While most had not

experienced teacher training in a French-speaking region, all but one had travelled on numerous occasions to French-speaking regions for further study, work or holidays.

Discourse Analytic Framework

Adopting a discourse analytic perspective means approaching interview and journal accounts not in terms of attitudes or beliefs, but rather, as discursive actions, collaboratively produced by both the researcher and the research participants (Talmy 2011) in constructing a particular version or understanding of the world. Drawing on discursive constructionism within a discursive psychology tradition (Potter and Hepburn 2008), I take a participant-relevant perspective and use insights from conversation analysis and a combination of interactional analytic tools to analyze teacher-participants' narrated experiences of encountering different French language varieties. Analyzing data from a participant-relevant point of view privileges the "orientations, meanings, interpretations, understandings, etc., of the participants in some sociocultural event" (Schegloff 1997: 166). In other words, instead of an externally ascribed social identity, the focus is on the interactionally constructed roles and categories oriented to by the participants which make evident various ideologies at play. Specifically, I make use of Goffman's analytic notion of speaker roles (1981) and Bamberg's positioning analysis (1997; 2005) to examine the subject positions teacher-participants display in their accounts.

Goffman's three interactional roles – animator, author, and principal – constitute peoples' participation as speakers in an interaction (whether written or oral). The "animator" role refers to someone who reports what has been said, functioning to some extent like a "sounding box" without committing to the ideas or views being expressed. The "author" role designates someone choses the words being expressed, and therefore shows a higher degree of investment in the words produced. The role of "principal" is a position that is produced "by someone who is committed to what the words say," and which ultimately ascribes a particular social identity or self-identification (Goffman 1981: 103). In this sense, the "principal" role can be seen as indexing a particular stance to what is being said, whereas "author" functions in a more non-committal manner, without an evaluative obligation on the part of the speaker or writer. At the same time, animator, author and principal may be attributed to a single person, demonstrating that speakers' stances are often more complicated. In this sense, participant roles offer a useful analytic tool in identifying the often distinct, fragmented "footings" or stances speakers take on in evaluating their own words, the others' utterances, or the situation as a whole (Jaffe 2009). As noted by Irvine (1996), the primary analytic component is in fact the fragmentation process, rather than the role fragments (134). In my analysis, the objective is therefore not to label participants with particular roles. Rather, in identifying their speaker roles, I aim to draw attention to the discursive moves that are in play in order to highlight participants' "investment in the identity being negotiated" (Coupland 2007:

114), in this case, their professional investment in different French language varieties as teachers of French in Canada.

Positioning analysis involves "constructing a self as a character in the story world and entering this construction as a claim for the self" (Bamberg 2005: 224). This approach to narrative analysis provides a means of examining how participants position themselves in relation to the content of the story they are telling, *and* as narrators of that story. In this way, subject positions can be seen as "a way of describing the force or effect that certain discursive actions have for establishing the identities of the participants" (Korobov 2010: 269). These positions are discursively produced through the organizational features of the talk or text on two levels: (1) in the content of the story, and (2) through the interaction itself. Moreover, subject positions are always located in particular discourses that participants' narrative can be seen to draw on, indexing certain ideologies (Billig, Condor, Edwards, Gane, Middleton, and Radley 1988) – in this case language ideologies pertaining to linguistic variation.

Finally, it is important to note that labels such as "FSL teacher" or "L2 speaker of French" and the use of speaker roles constitute etic categories which I use as analytic terms to demonstrate how participant's accounts function in constructing a particular orientation to prevailing ideological assumptions about French language varieties. Such categories do not necessarily represent the participants' own particular versions of "teacher" or "French language learner" but constitute external analytic categories that are helpful in demonstrating the identity work accomplished by the participants in their narratives.

In keeping with the discursive-constructionist framework, transcribed audio-recorded interview and hand-written journal data accounts in which participants made reference to a particular French language variety were identified using a discourse-based thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006). The journal accounts and interview sequences were initially categorized in terms of both pluralistic/favourable and monocentric/pejorative orientations to French language variation. A second analysis focused the analysis on the actions and subject positionings produced, as well as the type of ideological orientation or thematic characterization indexed in those actions vis-à-vis French language varieties.

Analysis and Findings

The accounts analyzed below present a wide range of themes about language variation in French, including linguistic differences in pronunciation and vocabulary, the role of language varieties in the classroom as well as their impact on students and teachers, the use of anglicisms, and the status of French in France and in Canada. More than half of the teachers' journal entries describe, to varying degrees, pejorative or normative orientations to a Canadian French language variety,

mostly encountered during class time with other teachers and instructors, while other entries make evident more favourable perspectives on French language variation. A salient feature of teachers' narratives is that, in a substantial number of instances, these experiences with language variation in French are formulated in terms of *other peoples'* (often adverse) reactions to encountering a different language variety. Also noteworthy is that, in many cases, a single journal entry or interview sequence makes visible more than one orientation, and either includes (or not) an account of the narrators' own or others' reactions. In other words, participants are seen to adopt an animator role in their accounts which allows them to take a less invested stance towards what is often presented as a contentious issue in the narratives. Common across the entire data set is that the French encountered in France is constructed as a single and only variety in Europe, without taking into account the linguistic variation of French across France or Europe.

Given this thematic and discursive complexity of the teachers' narratives, rather than presenting the findings in terms of a classification of pejorative versus favourable accounts, the analysis and discussion below attend to the way teacher-participants have discursively constructed versions of pluralistic or normative orientations as observers, recipients, or producers themselves and from different stances (animator, author, principal) – while also taking into account the subject positions adopted in negotiating a stake in these orientations. I begin by discussing a set of narratives that make evident an appreciation for a pluricentric approach to French language use and teaching and the valorization of Canadian French varieties. The second section presents an analysis of accounts that show a mix of normative as well as favourable orientations, and which, more importantly, manifest a wider range of discursive actions in negotiating or mediating the narrator's stance vis-à-vis the issue of language variation. Where possible, the presentation of data extracts reproduces writing conventions and formatting from the original handwritten versions as these provide significant interpretative resources. The journal entry date or interview time will be indicated for each excerpt to give a general idea of when the interaction occurred during the interview interaction or the two-week sojourn (which took place July 19-31).

Valorizing Canadian and Pluricentric French

In response to the primary analytic question posed here, "How do the participants talk or write about linguistic variation as French language teachers?" a first subset of narratives was identified as generating a favourable perspective on the issue. A common theme across these accounts includes expressed appreciation for the richness in learning opportunities that multiple language varieties provide, to both students and teachers, demonstrated in the following two extracts. All initials used for participants are pseudonyms.

Extract 1 (July 21st – 2nd journal entry, SE)

Quelle journée incroyable! ...j'ai rencontré des gens de tous les coins du monde.
C'est une expérience enrichissante....Peu importe notre âge, race, pays d'origine,
vous avons une chose en commun - la langue française dans toutes ses nuances.

In Extract 1, the participant offers a general observation about the enriching experience an encounter with teachers from "all corners of the world" provides with regard to the different nuances of the French language, regardless of speakers' age, race, and country of origin.

Extract 2 (July 31st - final journal entry, ZA)

Over all this has been a fantastic experience. I have learned so much French it is crazy...I am looking forward to my 2 weeks in Provence. I will continue to work on my French and I will try to do most of the speaking when we are out and about. Next summer I would like to do the French program in Quebec!

In Extract 2, the focus is on the learning opportunity of an immersive experience in a francophone region, without particular preference for a language variety, French from Quebec or from France. In both instances, the participants adopt a principal role, establishing their positions as user and learner of French respectively with the words that are written (Goffman 1981) and showing full investment in the orientation made relevant here.

A third account, from another participant, makes evident a similar lack of preference for a one or the other variety:

Extract 3 (July 20, 1st journal entry, JW)

- big question: experience + vocab we are learning, how much is specific to our context to share w/our students in relation to Canada/Québec?
        ↓
common things like email vs courriel

The question in Extract 3 comes at the end of a bulleted list of comments and short reflections about the first day of the program. The vocabulary words included here, contrasting the European usage *"email"* with the Canadian term *"courriel"*, demonstrate not only awareness of these variants from a subject position as learner but also as teacher of French. More importantly, it demonstrates a positioning as a teacher from Canada who is wondering how to apply her learning experiences in France to "our context" and "w/our students in relation to Canada/Quebec." A

journal entry written two days later by this same participant elaborates on the merits of encountering both varieties of French:

Extract 4 (July 23, 4th journal entry, JW)

Today something unexpected, there was a Canadian of Quebec origin in my last class. She was very "aggressif"/confrontational with the presenter. What struck me more than anything was the different cadence + accent between Québecois + Français. It makes me realize how important it is to provide opportunities for enrichment in both Quebec + France. While similar, the melodic way of speaking in France + the cadence is definitely easier for beginning level teachers to understand. For those with a more advanced level of French, it's good to hear the contrast and learn different expressions + vocabulary. The enrichment opportunity here is fabulous. I wonder where else in France there exist programs of a similar nature?

The account in Extract 4 relates an event in class that, for JW, highlighted differences in pronunciation between Quebec French versus French from France. The subsequent account again constructs this linguistic variation in favourable terms, as "opportunities for enrichment" specifically for L2 teachers who are ongoing learners of French. The "melodic way of speaking in France" is privileged here as facilitating the learning of French for "beginner level teachers." Meanwhile linguistic variation in "expressions + vocabulary" is viewed as better suited for teachers with "a more advanced level of French." In the final sentence, JW's expressed desire for more professional development programs in France, can also be understood as appreciation for more varied experiences in different French-speaking regions, despite French spoken in France constituting only one variety here.

Notable here is that in Extract 4, we see an author role being adopted with regard to the "confrontational" behaviour of the "Canadian of Quebec origin," as JW offers no further comment on this observation. This is in clear juxtaposition to the principal role adopted in the remainder of the extract, where a shift is immediately evident in the third sentence, "What struck me more than anything...", signaling an evaluative stance towards another issue seemingly unconnected from the confrontation mentioned in the two preceding sentences.

Finally, while the term "melodic" does not index a preferable pronunciation per se, its association with "easier" French as well as JW's interest in pursuing further professional development in France, may be taken as indexing a preference for the European variety. However, it is important to keep in mind the identity category with which the participant has been recruited to this study and which forms the basis of her participation in the sojourn – a French teacher from Canada. This identity was made relevant in Extract 3 above, and is also evident in other research interactions during the study, notably during an interview conducted six months later, which generated the

following account in response to my question as to what had made her apply to the program: "I'd always been looking for something in France or another French-speaking country that wasn't Quebec just to get another perspective on things" (Interview, Feb 11, 26:25). In addition to explaining that she already sought out and participated in the Canadian sojourn program to Quebec, the following justification is offered further on in the interview:

Extract 5 (Interview w/ JW, Feb 11, 27:33-27:52)

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1   J: ...in France like it gives you that whole other perspective,
2      because, it's nice to have the balance. And I'd love to go back to
3      Quebec sometime, but- instead of- I still would value going to
4      another area where it's French-speaking. Cuz it's just different
5      it's- you know I live in Canada, so it's great to see the Quebec
6      culture. But at the same time, I don't live in Europe
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Extract 5 makes relevant an implicit obligation that French teachers from Canada demonstrate a preference for learning experiences associated with Quebec French before another French language variety, in this case, one from France or elsewhere in Europe. The opening line constructs France as providing a "balance" (line 2) by offering "a whole other perspective" (line 1). The implication here is that the participant's existing familiarity with Quebec balances things out by already filling the other side of the scale. The remainder of the account reinforces the idea that those who "live in Canada" are obligated to appreciate "Quebec culture" (lines 5-6). Interestingly, the reference to "another area where it's French-speaking" (line 4) could imply other countries in Europe beyond France, for example Switzerland or Belgium, indexing other French language varieties.

A final interview excerpt with JW demonstrates similar allegiance with Quebec French usage when it comes to the use of anglicisms. This interaction is a response to my question about a comment this participant had written in the post-questionnaire about the quantity of English she had encountered among French speakers in France:

Extract 6 (Interview w/ JW, Feb 11, 52:33)

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 1    J:  I was amazed how many English terms that were used within their
 2         speech
 3    M:  as opposed to what you hear in Quebec
 4    J:  yeah. And Quebec is very much like you have to preserve the
 5         language, you have to do this, and then you're over there and- I was
 6         just surprised- especially the contrast from being in Quebec to
 7         being there
 8    M:  yeah
 9    J:  they used the words- they're used strategically, there are certain
10         words that they will use and they are not concerned that it's like
11         an invasion of the English language into French, it's just they've
12         used it for their convenience, and ironically in a lot of languages
13         with friends of mine who have- who are bilingual in other languages,
14         they often- when you hear them speaking in Tagalog or anything else,
15         they've inserted these English words, and yet in Quebec we're very
16         much, no you cannot do that, so it's just interesting
17    M:  so, that's interesting - you must have in your French immersion
18         school you must have had a lot of Quebecois?
19    J:  most of them were Quebecois yeah
20    M:  so you have, ok, that's interesting yeah, so it was strange to hear
21         all that
22    J:  yeah- and it's not something I would necessarily use in the class
23         either, like I won't use those expressions - I'll use week-end and-
24         but certain ones I won't use just because I know they're out there
25         but I want to try and at least get some more vocabulary into them
26         while I get the chance
```

In this extract, both author and principal roles can be seen in the participant's positioning as a French teacher from Canada. The rhetorical use of mental states, such as being "just surprised" (line 6) and "amazed" by "how many English terms were used [in France]...as opposed to what you hear in Quebec" (lines 1-3), makes evident an author role in demonstrating a lack of familiarity with the linguistic and cultural practices of how French is used in France. This is juxtaposed with an epistemic display that positions her as knowledgeable about and to some extent invested in French language practices and long-standing debates about strict French-only language policies in Quebec, where "you have to preserve the language" (lines 4-5) and avoid "an invasion of the English language into French" (line 11). JW's use of third-person plural pronouns "*their* speech" (line 2) and "*they*" (line 9) with reference to speakers in France offers a clear contrast to the first-person pronoun she uses to reference speakers in Canada, "in Quebec *we*'re..." (line 15). Both the emotion and knowledge display reinforce an identity as a teacher *from Canada*.

The remainder of the account constructs a justification for this identity, likely prompted by the interviewer's question as to whether JW's "surprise" (i.e. lack of familiarity) can be attributed to her experiences as a former French immersion student in Canada and exposure to Quebec French rather than French from France. In responding to this question, we see JW explicitly taking a position on the issue of anglicisms by aligning with the Quebecois teachers she herself had learned

from, "it's not something I would necessarily use in the class *either*" (lines 22-23). Significant here, however, is that this stance-taking action may not necessarily be so much about showing allegiance to Quebec French and the need to protect its integrity in Canada as her francophone teachers might have done.[1] The discursive alignment with Quebecois language practices could be seen as primarily serving to claim a teacher identity, reinforced in the concluding lines with the reference to her students, "get[ting] some more vocabulary into *them*" (line 25), and mention of English as always being "out there" (line 24). The latter draws on French-only discourses among FSL educators and Canadian researchers as to the merits/challenges of a plurilingual approach and the valorization of L1, given that English is a majority language in most regions of Canada and the language of the student majority in FSL programs (e.g., Ballinger, Lyster, Sterzuk, and Genesee 2017). JW's ambivalence vis-à-vis a Quebec identity is also evident in the non-committal framing of the avoidance of anglicisms in Quebec versus France (line 16), which concludes with the tagged-on phrase "it's just interesting" (line 16). Although she demonstrates awareness of prevailing discourses around the use of anglicisms in Canada, she ultimately only commits to this issue as someone in the author role, without self-ascribing a claim to a francophone identity. A possible reason for this is that JW's linguistic identity as ongoing learner of French, made relevant in Extract 4 above, precludes a claim to an identity as francophone.

The identity display in the next and final data excerpt from an interview conducted with another participant, CL, demonstrates a similar stance. Extract 7 extends from a discussion about the teaching workshops this participant had chosen, which included both other Canadian teachers and non-Canadian teachers, as opposed to the DELF training which was offered only to the teachers from Canada. At the time of the sojourn, CL had been a teacher for over 25 years, had herself learned French in Canada through the core French program and opted not to specialize in French during her university studies. She had been offered to teach a primary French immersion class by her principal, given her knowledge of French and in light of the chronic shortage of French teachers in Western Canada.

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[1] As a reviewer of this article pointed out, it is interesting to note that "week-end" is an anglicism she will use in class (line 23), even though it is one of the most cited expressions that a speaker from Quebec will avoid.

Extract 7 (Interview w/ CL, Jan 22, 29:41)

```
 1    C: It was wonderful- it was a really unique experience to be in a
 2       group- quite a large group, where the only common language was
 3       French
 4    M: yeah
 5    C: most places I go the common language is English and you're all
 6       struggling at various levels in French and- they were from all over
 7       the world and I found it absolutely fascinating and there was quite
 8       a discussion in one of the groups we were in- that it was no longer
 9       really appropriate for French from France to impose their particular
10       accent on French because these people came from other places and
11       their French was just as valid and it was very interesting
12    M: What is your um pronunciation do you have a particular one that you
13       try to model after or-?
14    C: probably mildly Quebecois
15    M: mhm
16    C: I don't use the slang because I've never really learned it but I'm
17       pretty sure you would take me more as a Canadian than someone from
18       France but because- because of how I've learned it and how I use it
19       I speak relatively slowly, so yeah, I think you'd probably take it
20       as a Quebecois sort of accent.
```

The sequence opens with CL describing the "unique experience" (line 1) of being part of a large group of French speakers "from all over the world" (lines 6-7). The focus of this account is on this group's discussion about the appropriateness of having a French accent from France imposed on French speakers "from other places" (lines 8-10) and their belief that French outside of France "was just as valid" (line 11). Here again we see the participant stopping short of fully committing to the debate by taking on an author instead of principal role, characterizing it only as "absolutely fascinating" and "very interesting" (lines 7 and 11) as opposed to expressing explicit agreement with the teachers' and thereby positioning herself as aligning with a pluricentric stance. The remaining interaction focuses on the Quebecois pronunciation CL models her own French after, described here tentatively with qualifiers such as "probably mildly" (line 14), "I don't use slang" (line 16), and "I speak relatively slowly" (line 19), ultimately downgrading it to only approximating a "Quebecois *sort of* accent" (line 20). The result of this non-committal stance as only author towards both the group discussion and her pronunciation is that, instead of a claim to an identity as a legitimate speaker of Quebec French, the subject positioning foregrounded in this sequence is as an ongoing L2 speaker of French, worked up with self-ascribed references to "*struggling*...in French" (line 6), to having "*never* really *learned*" slang (line 16). Despite directly acknowledging diversity among speakers of French, here again we see other French language varieties "from other places" juxtaposed against a single French from France.

Negotiating Normative Orientations

Another set of narratives comprises a somewhat wider variety of accounts that bring to light more complex ways of orienting to French language variation. Not only do these accounts touch on a number of different themes, they include observations of others' reactions as well as the narrators' own reactions to encountering a different language variety or being identified as Canadian. What these accounts have in common is that the participants, in recounting a certain interaction or event, are merely taking on animator roles. In other words, the accounts "appear to present the words of someone else" (Holt 2000: 426), typically in a seemingly non-committal manner accomplished through the use of reported speech.

The following journal entry, for example, begins by recounting how Quebec French was negatively characterized during a class. It then describes her classmates' reaction to the incident, and finally the way it was resolved:

Extract 8 (July 23 - 3rd journal entry, cohort participant GI)

** sur site TV 5, il a classifié le français du Québec comme "joual"
qui a bcp insulté des profs ⟶ changements à être envoyés à TV 5

Although not mentioned explicitly in this excerpt, the account appears to make reference to a demonstration of a language learning resource provided by the French television news channel *TV5 Monde* (apprendre.tv5monde.com/fr). Using a minimal quantity of words, at times in abbreviated form (*bcp* for *beaucoup*), the account succinctly relates that someone (*"il"*), presumably the TV5 announcer, wrongly identified Quebec French as the stigmatized sociolect *joual*, which greatly insulted the teachers in the class and led them to propose changes for the resource to be sent to the broadcaster. The absence of first-person pronouns or any contextualizing information about this event produce a story from which the narrator is entirely absent. The conflation of Quebec French or other Canadian varieties of French with *joual*, which originated among Montreal's working class, is a common misconception (Dickinson 1999). Although elevated as a marker of Quebecois identity by the playwright Michel Tremblay, its stigmatization continues to have a devalorizing effect – evident in the account here.

The next two extracts present a similar animator stance. Both accounts are framed as reflections which appear to question the experiences being related, which is accomplished with the concluding phrase "I guess...," prefacing a possible explanation.

Extract 9 (July 23 - 3rd journal entry, cohort participant HN)

 ⌐ de l'état ou "centre"
les relations avec le pouvoir font réfléchir…
Par exemple: Les 2-3 collègues qui ont l'air - les plus angoissés à propos du langage
sont Québecois. Il y a d'autres - aussi Quebecois - qui ne sont pas mais je me
demande pourquoi ces 2-3 en particuliers? On les a marqué/blessé/entraîné…
Il y a quelque chose ~~(un pouvoir autoritaire ou puissant)~~ qui leur a fait peur/inquiet
au niveau du langage.
Une collègue en plein cours d'un atelier a été <u>fâché</u> <u>frustré</u> déçu parce que les
Français ne parlaient pas le français mais le français plein de mots en anglais.

I guess people act out their hurts.

Similar to Extract 8, Extract 9 opens informally with an incomplete sentence, introducing the topic of this entry – the power of the French state (*"les relations avec le pouvoir de l'état)* – and framing this as a cause for reflection (*"font réfléchir"*). The narrative then describes several colleagues from Quebec as most "distressed" (*"angoissés"*), presumably by encounters with European French and French speakers in France, and poses the questions as to why not all Quebec colleagues are reacting this way and what might cause these 2-3 Quebecers fear or worry about their language use. This is followed by another instance of reported indirect speech attributed to a colleague who, in the middle of a workshop, erupted with anger and frustration at the frequent use of English by French speakers in France. The narrative concludes with the following tentative explanation, "I guess people act out their hurts." This last sentence features the only use of English and the first-person pronoun, yet without producing any personal investment in the account. The code-switch to English ultimately distances the narrator from the classroom interaction (which had occurred in French), while the abbreviated writing style and use of indirect reported speech reinforce a speaker role as "animator."

Unlike Extracts 8 and 9 above, Extract 10 features complete sentences and an instance of both reported indirect and direct speech:

Extract 10 (July 27 – 5th journal entry, cohort participant HC)

Last night "la femme" or "the lady" I am staying with said how neat it is to hear
"OLD" French again. I guess that would be a difference between Quebec and
France French.

This story reports the participant's "host" (*"la femme" or "the lady"*) characterizing Canadian French as "'OLD' French," a characterization that portrays this language variety as old-fashioned

or whimsical ("neat"), that is, unfit to be used seriously in teaching French (see Wernicke 2016). The tentative explanation that follows, prefaced with "I guess," interprets this characterization as one "difference between Quebec and French." Although the adjective "neat" suggests an overt complimenting action, the participant's use of capitals and quotation marks in reporting this bit of direct speech ("'OLD'"), clearly shows an interpretation of the host's comment as a back-handed complimenting action, constituting in fact a covert insult (Kasper 1989). The use of reported direct speech accomplishes further distancing in that "OLD" remains the host's speech (as opposed to being attributable to the narrator) (Coulmas 2011), and in this way reinforces the "animator" role since this characterization of French is merely "heard" without explicitly identifying the speaker of this variety.

In both of the last two extracts, the use of "I guess" conveys uncertainty on the part of the narrator as to how to interpret the events described. In Extract 9, the crossed out reference to a "*pouvoir autoritaire*" as a ventured but then deleted possible cause for her colleagues' fear underlines this uncertainty. These "displays of epistemic caution" (Potter and Hepburn 2007: 177) release the writers from a potential obligation to take a stance vis-à-vis the reactions of the characters in the narrative.

Discussion and Concluding Thoughts

Although one might be tempted, at first glance, to classify the participants' narratives above in terms of monocentric or pluralistic orientations, the rhetorical and interactional work evident in the journal and interview accounts demonstrate far more complex negotiations of ideological representations related to language variation in French. This is also evident in the shifting participant roles invoked by the participants in their accounts.

In the narratives presented above, the discursive strategies employed by the participants – localized/abbreviated writing style, hedging, reported speech, code-switching, and claims to particular identities – produce subject positionings that allow participants to project themselves primarily as "animators" or "authors" into the talk (Goffman 1981). A speaker role as principal, someone who demonstrates a full commitment "to what the words say," is rarely and only marginally evident. Such a role would require an explicit stance vis-à-vis the issue, argument or question addressed in the narrative, that is, it would demand self-ascribing not only to discourse identities (narrator/reporter/observer/hearer) but also situational identities, which "deliver pertinent agendas, skills, and relevant knowledge" and display an orientation to and alignment with a particular situation (Zimmerman 1998: 88). For the most part, participants appear confounded by or invulnerable to manifestations of prescriptive language norms and devalorizing characterizations of Canadian French varieties, while favourable assertions to a pluricentric conception of French language variation as *teachers* of French (as opposed to merely learners or

users), remain mostly superficial or non-committal. On the whole, the focus appears to be on negotiating the ideologies associated with French language varieties as these relate to their own professional identities as French teacher.

While research documenting linguistic insecurity among francophones has remained distinct from studies demonstrating issues around (lack of) confidence among L2 speaker teachers of French, the analysis above shows that the two are ultimately the result of similar processes that draw on ideologies of linguistic purism, standardization and Eurocentrism, and monocentric and monolingual conceptions of language and language learning. A major insight of the analysis above is that, for Canadian FSL teachers who claim an identity as L2 speakers of French, questions of language variation present contradictory ideas and moral obligations which are a crucial part of negotiating a legitimate identity as teacher of French. This insight presents another corollary of the often conflictual dual identity language teachers must face.

Previous research (Wernicke 2017) has shown that FSL teachers who are L2 speakers of French (of any variety), face a dilemma between two prevailing social expectations or criteria in their professional contexts in negotiating a dual identity as both learner *and* teacher. Engaging in formal ongoing language development makes relevant a learner identity that invariably calls into question one's authority as language expert, an identity which is premised on native-speakerness and therefore ideologically precludes any sort of language learning. And yet, at the same time, the only way to approximate native-speakerness is through continued language learning. This conflict can be conceptualized as an ideological dilemma (Billig, Condor, Edwards, Gane, Middleton, and Radley 1988) deriving from normative conceptions of monocentric, prescriptive, and purist language use in conjunction with standardized norms of learning and teaching.

In examining FSL teachers' narratives, various forms of this ideological dilemma became evident by attending specifically to the different discursive strategies participants employed to manage the expression of conflicting themes, often manifested in implicit orientations to especially negative characterizations of language varieties (Billig, Condor, Edwards, Gane, Middleton, and Radley 1988). Being faced with disparaging characterizations of Canadian French, a variety with which Canadian FSL teachers are most familiar and which embodies their ideal version of a native speaker standard, complicates the existing dilemmatic tensions of the teacher/learner identity. It places the adverse experiences participants encountered in France in tension with a language variety that serves as a model for these teachers, both in terms of language use and their identity as teachers of French in Canada. Rejecting an identity as teacher of Canadian French would mean acknowledging disaffiliation from the only professional identity available, next to an identity as learner. Negotiating the associated meanings of illegitimacy and devalorization attached to either

one of these two identities therefore manifested itself in the non-committal speaker roles and subject positionings the participants constructed in the narratives analyzed here.

Another important finding of the analysis presented here is the uncritical orientation to French in France as one language variety and little acknowledgement that French is used elsewhere in Europe. At the same time, participants' accounts constructed French in Canada to some extent in a similarly simplistic fashion. This can also be taken as a limitation of the larger study, a notable lack of attention on language variation in the research protocol (questionnaires, interviews, journal prompts, etc.), and hence an oversight on the part of the entire research design. It points to the need to include, in both future research and teacher education programs, an explicit emphasis on different French language varieties within and outside Canada, and with that an increased critical reflection on the ideological basis for how these varieties are valued. Moreover, future research and educational endeavours must take into account the complexity of constructing a professional identity as L2 teacher, taking into consideration intralinguistic variation, the impact of language status (official, colonial, minority, etc.), and the ways in which these contribute to or can counter teachers' linguistic insecurity.

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