

Dialogic Discourses of French and English in Acadie

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Résumé de l'article

La question de la qualité du français en Acadie se pose régulièrement dans les médias de cette région du Canada français. À l'automne 2012, un quotidien montréalais a publié un éditorial provocateur qui dénonçait le français des jeunes musiciens acadiens, en le qualifiant de « sous-langue ». Cet éditorial a déclenché un autre épisode du débat récurrent sur la qualité du français en Acadie. S'appuyant sur une douzaine d'entrevues menées auprès d'étudiants universitaires en Acadie quelque temps après cet épisode, cet article s'intéresse à leurs réponses aux discours sur le français qui circulent dans les médias. Les participants à cette étude partagent généralement l'idée que le français obéit à des règles rigides et possède une structure fixe, tandis que l'anglais est perçu comme moins régi par des règles de grammaire, voire décontracté. Je soutiens que cet avis a été alimenté par les débats récurrents sur la qualité du français en Acadie et que tout effort pour améliorer la « mauvaise » qualité du français en Acadie ne peut ignorer la façon dont le français est représenté dans les médias. En effet, ces représentations deviennent intégrées dans les idéologies linguistiques des jeunes francophones en Acadie et peuvent ainsi contribuer à la situation même que déplorent les personnes à l'origine du débat.

Dialogic Discourses of French and English in Acadie

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Abstract

Debate in the Acadian media over the quality of the French language is a recurrent aspect of socio-linguistic life in this region of French Canada. In the fall of 2012, this debate was relaunched by an incendiary newspaper column, written by a Quebec-based journalist, questioning whether the French spoken by young Acadian musicians was really a language at all. Based on twelve interviews conducted shortly after this debate, this article examines how university students in Acadie take up these media discourses about the quality of the French language. In general, the students interviewed regarded the French language as inherently rule-bound and structured, in contrast to English, which many held to be comparatively without rules, even easygoing. The author suggests that this particular view has developed in part because of exposure to discussion over the quality of French in Acadie, and that any attempt to improve what is perceived as the poor quality of French in Acadie cannot ignore the very terms in which it portrays the French language. These figurations become part of the linguistic ideologies of young French speakers in Acadie and potentially feed into the very state of affairs that commentators lament.

Résumé

La question de la qualité du français en Acadie se pose régulièrement dans les médias de cette région du Canada français. À l'automne 2012, un quotidien montréalais a publié un éditorial provocateur qui dénonçait le français des jeunes musiciens acadiens, en le qualifiant de « sous-langue ». Cet éditorial a déclenché un autre épisode du débat récurrent sur la qualité du français en Acadie. S'appuyant sur une douzaine d'entrevues menées auprès d'étudiants universitaires en Acadie quelque temps après cet épisode, cet article s'intéresse à leurs réponses aux discours sur le français qui circulent dans les médias. Les participants à cette étude partagent généralement l'idée que le français obéit à des règles rigides et possède une structure fixe, tandis que l'anglais est perçu comme moins régi par des règles de grammaire, voire décontracté. Je soutiens que cet avis a été alimenté par les débats récurrents sur la qualité du français en Acadie et que tout effort pour améliorer la « mauvaise » qualité du français en Acadie ne peut ignorer la façon dont le français est représenté dans les médias. En effet, ces représentations deviennent intégrées dans les idéologies linguistiques des jeunes francophones en Acadie et peuvent ainsi contribuer à la situation même que déplorent les personnes à l'origine du débat.

Since at least the turn of the nineteenth century, discussion in the media over the quality of the French language has been a constant feature of sociolinguistic life in Acadie¹ (cf. Boudreau, 2009 for a historical overview). It is not surprising, therefore, that in 2013 a new wave of concern over the quality of French arose. It emerged on the heels of an open letter in the Acadian newspaper, *Acadie Nouvelle*, expressing anxiety over the kind of French spoken and written by university students (Villard, 2013). This letter was in turn a response to a column written by a Montreal-based journalist denouncing the French used by young Acadian musicians as a “*sous-langue*” (Rioux, 2012). Soon, a number of different actors, including professors, students, education specialists and concerned citizens, entered into the debate through opinion pieces and editorials.

This article focuses on one dimension of this debate: how the views expressed publicly by these commentators are taken up by their targeted audience, young Acadians, and to what effect. Shortly after discussion in the Acadian press began to subside, in the summer of 2013, I conducted just over two months of ethnographic fieldwork in Acadie, during which time I interviewed numerous students about their attitudes towards language use. While many did not explicitly mention this particular debate, their linguistic ideologies about French show a number of “dialogic” resonances (Bakhtin, 1981) with the figuration of French in the Acadian press during this episode of the debate over language quality.

The students I interviewed between August and September 2013 were all undergraduates at a francophone university in Acadie. I conducted a dozen semi-structured interviews in French. The themes included the difference between oral and written French; the nature of French spoken in the classroom and outside the classroom; the lack of services in French outside the university; and the importance of retaining one’s own “dialectal” French, while still learning the kind of French spoken at the university, and finally, the relationship between French and English. This last theme is the focus of this article.

Numerous students saw French as rule-bound, strict and structured, in contrast to English, which appeared to them to be comparatively without rules, even easygoing. This, I contend, is not a result of the formal linguistic structure of French or English. Rather, I suggest that this particular language ideology has developed in part because of exposure to constant discussion over the quality of French in Acadie. In other words, it is one way in which such debates over language quality are dialogically taken up by university-aged youth. As such, any attempt to improve what is perceived as the poor quality of French in Acadie cannot ignore the very terms in which it figures the French language. These figurations become part of the linguistic ideologies of young French speakers in Acadie. Further, such figurations motivate the way they construct relations of similarity between speakers

1. I use Acadie, rather than Acadia, in accordance with norms of referring to this francophone region of Eastern Canada in English language media and scholarly publications. Thanks to the editors for suggesting this usage.

and perceived characteristics of certain kinds of speech, iconically casting speakers as certain “types” of people² (Irvine and Gal, 2000, Gal, 2005, 2013). This potentially feeds into the very situation the commentators lament.

Language Quality and Standard Language Ideologies in Acadie

Anxiety over the quality of the French language in Acadie, and public discussion of it in the media, is both a historically and contemporarily common occurrence. Indeed, as Boudreau (2009) explains, we see already in the 1880s an abiding concern with the quality of French in the Acadian press. This phenomenon, however, is certainly not unique to Acadie. Bouchard (1998) details heightened anxiety over the French language in Quebec, where the *Office québécoise de la langue française* is perhaps even more notoriously prescriptivist than France’s *Académie française*. Anxiety over the quality of French, especially its potential to be corrupted by young people, is an attitude that is particularly common in North America and Europe. Lodge (1993, 2004) traces such attitudes back to the French Revolution, and notes that these attitudes were accompanied by the development of an elaborate institutional apparatus to police and enforce *français normatif*. However, while debate over language quality is not in itself remarkable, the particular form of this most recent iteration of the debate has two noteworthy aspects. Firstly, it suggests a shifting relationship between Quebec and Acadie. Secondly, one particular strand of the debate, the connection between standard language and well-structured thought, seems to be taken up by the students I interviewed in ways unanticipated by concerned commentators.

The anxiety of the Quebec-based journalist (Rioux, 2012) that launched the most recent debate over the quality of the French language in Acadie broadcasts a well-worn refrain: the youth are ruining the language! More specifically, however, this journalist is concerned about the potential for *Acadian* youth to corrupt the French spoken in *Quebec*, since he sees Acadian French as well on the way to becoming English. That Acadie should be a threat to Quebec, the political, cultural, and institutional center of francophone Canada, is remarkable. This reflects a contemporary moment in which Acadie can no longer be perceived as some rural community in the shadow of Quebec, but a region with, for example, a hip music scene³, a burgeoning call-centre industry (Heller, 2011), and established institutions of higher education, growing their reputations as serious academic centres. What this

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2. Drawing on Charles Sanders Peirce’s semiotic theory, Gal (2005, 2013) refers to this process as “rhematization”. In this process, a sign is taken not only to co-occur with its object, but to also bear a similarity to it along some dimension.
 3. The column criticizing Acadian musicians’ French begins with the observation that *Radio Radio*, an Acadian hip-hop group that raps in a combination of French and English, won the 2012 *Association québécoise de l’industrie du disque, du spectacle et de la vidéo* (ADISQ) prize for hip-hop album of the year, and this against competition from Québécois artists.

anxiety points to, it seems, is a shifting relationship between Quebec and Acadie, where the latter is becoming increasingly visible (and audible) on the national francophone scene. At the same time, the pressure of this visibility reverberates in the urban centres of Acadie. If debates over language quality in Acadie in the middle of the twentieth century focused on asserting the right to speak French in public spaces and agitating for services in French in this institution-building period (Boudreau, 2009), these concerns have given way to policing the kind of French spoken in these now well-established institutions.

Soon after discussion in the Acadian media over the quality of French petered out in the spring of 2013, Arrighi and Violette (2013) published a thorough review and analysis of this episode of the language quality debate. Despite an apparent diversity amongst commentators (journalists, students, professors, novelists, concerned members of the public), Arrighi and Violette illustrate that all commentators share an ideology of standard language. Under the logic of this ideology, a particular named denotational code (“French”) is the defining feature of group identity, but also, within the democratic nation-state, a skill supposedly accessible to all. This supposed accessibility, argue Arrighi and Violette, allows for the legitimization and naturalization of a linguistic hierarchy, and also the claim that those who are not proficient in standard language are in some way lacking. This deficiency manifests in a number of dimensions. Most frequently, non-standard speakers are cast as lazy, but Arrighi and Violette also mention that such speakers are cast as potentially incapable of logic, rationality and clear-thinking (87). Although this is only mentioned in passing, it seems that it is this aspect of the debate that has been taken up by the students I interviewed. Before turning to their views, I briefly highlight the way in which the connection between standard language and the ability to think properly or clearly – and subsequently the belief that non-standard language results in unclear thinking – is manifest in the most recent iteration of the language quality debate.

This connection is present in this episode of the debate from the earliest responses to the Quebec journalist. One commentator set out to explain Chiac, the label that the Quebec-based journalist gave to the language spoken by Acadian musicians, in the following terms:

Une langue vivante qui marie avec plus ou moins de bonheur le français et l’anglais, non seulement dans le vocabulaire, mais aussi dans la syntaxe et c’est ce qui surprend l’oreille, ou la choque, c’est selon! (Villard, 2012)

(A lively language that marries, with varying degrees of success, French and English, not only in terms of vocabulary, but also in terms of syntax, and it is this that surprises the ear... or shocks it!)⁴

4. All translations are the author’s own.

Notice the emphasis on the syntax of Chiac, as opposed to its vocabulary, or even its phonology as its more salient quality. That the students are lacking a *français normatif*, as this commentator calls it, provokes further anxiety about their scholastic performance and “même la structure de la pensée de nos étudiants” (even the structure of our students’ thought) (Villard, 2012). Following this reasoning, syntax and thought are isomorphic: ordered, standard language syntax produces well-structured thinking. So, there is a coordination established between the syntax of standard language, and something like logical or well-structured thought in general. The concern over standard language thus embodies concern over something much larger; the “quality” of one’s language reflects the quality of one’s thought.

Another commentator, the director of one of the region’s elementary school districts, explained that language, “[est] la base de tout. L’enfant qui sait lire va mieux comprendre ses mathématiques, ses sciences, etc” (is the foundation of everything. A child who knows how to read will better understand mathematics, science, etc) (Boisvert, 2013). It is telling that math and science, as opposed to geography, history, or art are highlighted here. Language, by which this commentator means standard language, facilitates the understanding of logical thinking that underpins math and science.

Consider, finally, a third commentator: a university professor who notes with consternation that many of the essays she receives are full of grammatical errors. This is a problem for the following reason, according to her:

La langue est bel et bien la condition d’une connaissance claire et bien intégrée. Et à ce titre, les déficiences *syntaxiques* graves que je rencontre régulièrement sont la pire des déficiences, parce qu’elles *relèvent de la logique même de la pensée et de la qualité de la réflexion* (Ryan, 2013; emphasis added).

(Language is well and truly the condition of clear and well-integrated thinking. As such, the serious *syntactic* deficiencies that I regularly encounter are the worst kind of deficiencies, because *they cut to the very logic of thinking and the quality of the reasoning.*)

Here, the connection between correct syntax and clear thinking is explicit, and this commentator reprises almost exactly the first commentator’s concern for “la structure de la pensée de nos étudiants” (Villard, 2013).

These three concerned writers held syntax to be the core of language, and logic and well-structured thought to be the result of mastering a standard language. While they were all writing about French, it is clear that they did not hold these to be qualities of French in particular, but rather of the syntax of a standard language in general. Further, the ideology of the standard that Arrighi and Violette (2013) identify at play in this debate is not, as they themselves note, unique to francophone Canada (cf. Silverstein 1996 for American English examples). However, the very aspects that the professors and others find lacking in

the students' French – correct syntax, which is to say structure and rules – is taken up by the students as an inherent quality of French in particular, rather than any standard language in general. In fact, for many students, the idea of language as an ordered set of rules was more specifically applicable to the French language, whereas English, in their view, seemed to be practically lacking in structure and rules.

Dialogic Responses:

Rule-bound French and Go-with-the-flow English

During the summer of 2013, in the wake of growing concern about the quality of French discussed above, I interviewed about a dozen undergraduate students. All the students I interviewed spoke French as their first language, and came from families in which at least one parent spoke French natively. The students were studying a diverse range of subjects, from Biology, to Engineering, to Translation, and had done most, if not all, of their previous schooling in French, usually within Acadie.

While these students came from many different regions within Acadie, they shared at least one experience in common: that of attending a French-language institution of higher education in Acadie. Attending a francophone university exposes these students to more socially consequential register differentiation of French than of English. The consequences of lacking “good” French at university become apparent immediately. Many of the students I interviewed took a French language placement test at the beginning of their first year to determine the number of French courses they were required to take in order to graduate. In general, most students take a class on writing and a class on oral presentation. Others, who lack adequate knowledge of the tense or agreement system, whose oral French knowledge heavily outweighs their knowledge of written French, or whose language possesses non-standard but regionally-acceptable features must take further foundational classes.

Nearly all of the students I interviewed expressed that French had much more structure and more difficult rules than English did. In fact, most students claimed to be better at speaking and writing in English than in French, even though English was their second language. Boudreau and Dubois (2008) have pointed out that some young French speakers have a tendency to think French is difficult, inaccessible, and that it incorporates complicated words and grammatical structures (157). But the students I interviewed expressed further that English specifically did not. The students had a difficult time pinning down and explaining to me just which aspects of French made it more difficult than English. But, I am less concerned here with comparing the linguistic structures of French and English to adjudicate whether these students are correct. Rather, I am interested in the way that these ideas are mobilized to rationalize numerous aspects of the asymmetric bilingualism in Acadie. Thus, I contend that the sense shared amongst students that French is more difficult

than English has been developed through exposure to debates over the quality of language, like the one I have outlined above, in addition to prior educational experience in Acadie.

In order to illustrate this shared ideology, I will present a number of students' explanations of the French language and its differences with English.

One student, Denis⁵, stated that the French spoken at the university was quite different from anything he had experienced around the city or even in high school before matriculating. The placement test, for example, focused on complex rules with which Denis was unfamiliar, and the professors often spoke in technical, disciplinary-specific jargon that was hard to follow. This however, seems not to be necessarily specific to Acadie; universities are bastions of standard language enforcement and specialist jargon. However, within the university, the connection between French and grammatical rules is strengthened in numerous ways.

Both Denis and another student, Émilie, remarked that the French placement tests that all new students take focused heavily on grammatical rules and terminology. Denis found this complex and completely unfamiliar, but associated it with "good" French. Émilie, along with other students, questioned why there was no writing portion, effectively interrogating why grammatical knowledge outweighed rhetorical style. It seems that for many students, the experience of learning French in Acadie is closely tied to grammatical rules or exercises, whereas English is not.

Take, for instance, Mathieu's explanation of learning French and English. Reflecting on his high school experiences, Mathieu explained that many of his classmates would rank English amongst their favourite classes, and French amongst their least favourite. He linked this difference in preference to the way that the languages are taught. He describes the teaching methods in the following way:

M⁶: ...l'approche à l'anglais tu apprends moins la grammaire et donc tu apprends l'anglais quasiment en pratiquant (.) donc tu lis et en lisant c'est comment tu enrichis ton vocabulaire (.) tu parles des idées (.) mais en français comment ça l'est c'est comme beaucoup plus comme des tests de verbes ou on fait la déconstruction d'une phrase.

(...the approach for English (.) you learn less grammar and so you learn English basically by practicing it (.) so you read and through reading that's how you enrich your vocabulary (.) you talk about ideas (.) but in French how it is is that it's much more like verb tests or we'll deconstruct a sentence.)

5. All student names are pseudonyms.

6. (.) indicates a short, untimed pause;
 — underlining indicates emphasis;
 : indicates an elongated or drawn out syllable.

So, according to Mathieu, learning English involves reading and talking about ideas, in contrast to the grammatical categories, units, and methods of analysis of French. His description points not only to different methods of teaching, but also different modes of understanding a language. French is closely tied to grammatical categories and their structural relations.

From this kind of schooling, in addition to the constantly circulating complaints about the quality of French, a number of students have drawn conclusions about the grammar of the French language. While they recognized that rules and structure were part of any linguistic code, they seem to be especially predominant aspects of a particular named code, French, and almost non-existent in another, English. From this, these students rationalized certain social and cultural aspects of their minority language environment, and also certain elements of the language quality debate. Consider what Geneviève, Lise, and Guillaume had to say.

Geneviève explained to me that it is easier for francophones to learn English than it is for anglophones to learn French:

G: je pense que c'est aussi plus facile d'apprendre l'anglais à partir du français que le contraire (.) parce que je pense (.) de ce que je sais (.) de ce qu'on a appris (.) l'anglais est plus compliqué-euh plus simple dans les règles d'écriture (.) les règles de tout là.

(I think also that its easier to learn English if you already speak French than the reverse (.) because I think (.) from what I know (.) from what we've learned (.) English is more complic-uh more simple in terms of rules for writing (.)rules for everything.)

Geneviève specifically mentions that the rules of French are more difficult than those of English. Further, she also specifies how she knows this: “de ce qu'on a appris” suggests that she came to this conclusion through schooling. In other words, she not only learned French and English at school, but effectively “learned” that French has more complicated rules than English. Further, Geneviève went on to use this belief about the difficulty of French to justify aspects of the minority language situation like a lack of francophone or bilingual store clerks: because French is more difficult, fewer anglophones than francophones are bilingual. She attributes the asymmetrical bilingualism in the region around her university to the inherent difficulty of French and simplicity of English. That is to say, she sees the asymmetrical bilingualism in Acadie as a consequence of the structure of French, rather than of social and historical aspects of the minority language environment.

Lise, another student, echoed these sentiments. I asked Lise what she thought about the obligatory French language courses at the university. In asking this question, I specified that, as an anglophone, I did not have to take any English language courses during my undergraduate degree. Lise offered that one reason for this might be related to what

she termed the “nature” of both French and English. That is to say, the different natures of French and English dictate how they can be learned. She elaborated upon their differences later in our interview:

L: le français a une grammaire riche et compliquée donc il faut que ça s'étudie tout seul (.) mais l'anglais (.) on n'en a pas besoin (.) la plupart des Anglophones ils peuvent écrire correctement même sans prendre des cours de grammaire.

(French has a rich and complicated grammar so it needs to be studied on its own (.) but English (.) you don't have to (.) the majority of Anglophones can write properly without taking grammar classes.)

So, again, we see the sentiment that French is more complicated than English, in terms of its grammar. Lise elaborated that the French classes at the university were necessary because the inherent richness of French makes it more difficult to maintain. Further, like Geneviève, Lise construes the challenges of minority language maintenance as a consequence of the inherent richness of French, rather than as a result of the higher percentage of Anglophones in this community.

Guillaume, another student, focused not on the structure of French and English *per se*, but rather on how and when they can be used. Guillaume treated English and French like two different registers that he commanded. He described English in the following way:

G: ...les gens qui se mettent à parler en anglais (.) ils savent qu'ils peuvent parler à n'importe qui dans n'importe quelle façon (.) c'est sûr que (.) comment je dis (.) il y a une structure (.) mais l'anglais est beaucoup plus (.) ça coule.

(...when people who speak English (.) they know they can talk to anyone in any way (.) there is of course (.) how should I say this (.) a structure (.) but English is much more (.) it flows.)

He represents English as having, essentially, no register variation. He even concedes that English has a structure, suggesting the baseline sense that English seems to lack structure, hence its flowing quality. There is also an irony here. For many who wrote letters to the papers or published opinion pieces upholding the virtues of standard French, a recurring claim for its necessity was the appeal to communication with the francophone world outside Acadie. Standard French, it was held, is necessary because it allows young Acadians to speak to any other francophone; it serves as a kind of cosmopolitan *lingua franca*. But, as Guillaume suggests, with French so heavily policed, it loses this sense of being a *lingua franca* amongst younger speakers. English, which is far less policed in Acadie, emerges as that which can be spoken to “anyone,” “anywhere.”

In contrast to English, French had a much more restricted range of environments for which it is suited. Guillaume told me that:

G: ...le français est beaucoup plus intéressant à utiliser quand c'est formel (.) quand c'est direct (.) quand c'est précis...

(...It's much more appealing to use French when it's formal (.) when it's direct (.) when it's precise...)

Guillaume uttered this with an almost staccato rhythm, enunciating each syllable of the three adjectives, and emphasizing the stress on the last syllable: *formel*, *direct*, *précis*. He contrasted this to English:

G: ...l'anglais a des formulations qui cou:lent beau:coup mieu:x.

(...English has phrases that flo:w s:o much better.)

Here, in contrast to his depiction of French, Guillaume spoke more slowly, drawing out the vowels of *cou:lent beau:coup mieu:x*, lowering his voice and allowing it to trail off. By modulating his voice as he describes French and English, Guillaume presences two different kinds of potentially inhabitable characterological figures: the easygoing anglophone and the meticulous francophone. In other words, he iconically (Irvine and Gal, 2000, Gal, 2005, 2013) maps perceived qualities of these different languages to characteristics speakers might want to adopt in different social contexts. When speaking English, one can project an attitude of “going with the flow”, but when speaking French, one is more punctilious.

I propose that the difference students have constructed between French and English results in part from the recurrent language quality debate. It is significant, however, that the students' perception of these language quality debates is selective. Many students felt that their French was not “standard” or “correct,” but not one of them attributed this to his or her own laziness or felt incapable of logical or clear thought on account of this. The students recognized that a certain kind of French was supposed to be spoken at the university, but they did not associate this with clarity or rationality. This suggests that, for these students, this ideology of the standard is at best only partially internalized. In fact, they reanalyzed the problems identified by commentators in the language quality debate as inherent to the French language itself. That is to say, they have come to associate structure and rigor with the French language and from there have come to associate a range of qualities, like difficulty, complexity, or formality with French, which can then be mapped onto its speakers as well.

Moreover, Guillaume perspicaciously suggested that the constant policing of French through these language quality debates has given English more appeal for younger Acadians precisely because it seems less rule-bound and rigid, qualities which Guillaume surmised some young francophones may value and wish to project.⁷ For those concerned about students adopting a nonchalant attitude towards “proper” French, it seems that attending

7. This is not to say, of course, that English is not policed in other communities (cf. Cameron, 1995).

to the way in which this concern is voiced is necessary. In constantly emphasizing the lack of mastery of grammatical rules and syntax, those concerned with language quality are perhaps laying the very groundwork that makes English, for some young Acadians, more appealing than French.

Conclusion:

Circulation of Discourses of French and English in Acadie

Much of the current literature about linguistic ideologies in Acadie has focused on those that develop from the perceived distance between the French spoken in Acadie and an exogenous norm, whether located in Quebec or in France. As Boudreau (2009) has noted, this results in the devalorization of Acadian French, or, inversely, valorization of its regional characteristics (442). Boudreau (2009) traces both of these reactions to the same root cause: linguistic insecurity (442). Linguistic insecurity has become an influential analytic through which to understand sociolinguistic life in Acadie (cf. Boudreau & Dubois, 1991, 1992, 1993, 2008; Boudreau, 1994, 1997, 2001). This may be partly the result of the observation that, for certain Acadians, it is not the contact with Anglophones that presents a problem, since indeed the vast majority of Acadians are bilingual, but, rather it is contact with other francophones who speak a “more standardized” version of French that provokes anxiety (Boudreau, 2011, p. 114). Mirroring this, the majority of the literature on language ideologies in Acadie has focused on language ideologies about the confrontation of different registers of French.

In this article, I have focused primarily on the contrast of French and English rather than on standard and non-standard French. This seems to be an important, yet under-explored, aspect of sociolinguistic life in Acadie. Further, the analytic of linguistic insecurity seems to be less useful for capturing students’ uptake and reaction to the language quality debate. Attending, as I have done in this article, to intertextual connections and iconization (or rhematization) may reveal further dimensions of sociolinguistic life in Acadie beyond linguistic insecurity and anxiety about standard language.

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