SOCIAL CHANGE IN CLARE ACADIAN FRENCH: REGIONAL VARIANTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY*

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ABSTRACT

Since the creation of the largest sociolinguistic corpora for Nova Scotia Acadian French communities in the 1980s and early 1990s, there have been a number of major social changes affecting the region. One important change was the establishment of a provincial French-language school board in 1996, the *Conseil scolaire acadien provincial* (CSAP). Another major change involved the passing of the French-language Services Act in 2004, establishing policies for provincial government employees to offer services in French. Ultimately, these changes created a context for greater exposure to Standard French.

This paper presents a research project to understand how exposure to standard French, a consequence of these major social changes, may have affected the local varieties spoken in southwest Nova Scotia. The project presents the collection of sociolinguistic interviews gathered in 2016 in Clare (the Baie Sainte-Marie region) which can then be compared with earlier data sets thereby allowing us to measure language change in real-time and to consider the role of the above-mentioned social changes on language use.

Key words: Acadian French, Corpus, Methodology, Language Change, Sociolinguistics.

1. INTRODUCTION

Despite its minority status within Nova Scotia (3% of Nova Scotians report French as a mother tongue in the 2016 Canada Census), French is the dominant language in some communities, as in the case of the Municipality of Clare (also referred to as the Baie Sainte-Marie region), located in southwest Nova Scotia, as shown in Map 1. A majority (63%) of the residents of this community has French as a mother tongue based on the 2016 Canada Census data (Statistics Canada 2017). Along the shores of St. Mary's Bay, the residents of this community mainly speak a variety of Acadian French which has been described in the literature as conservative due to the preservation

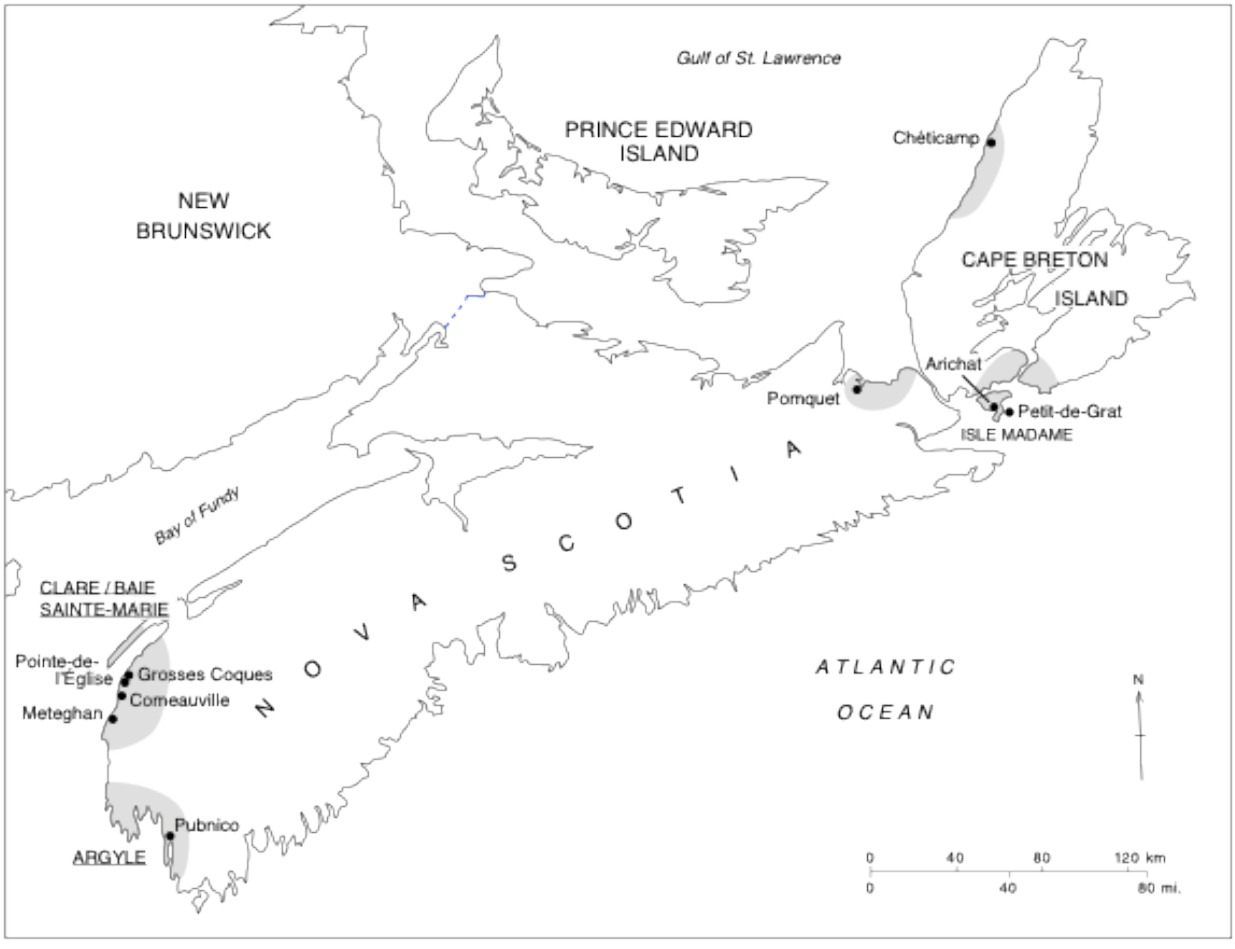
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of a number of linguistic features lost in other spoken varieties of French, including other varieties of Acadian French (King 2013: 42). While there are a number of existing corpora for this variety of Acadian French, as outlined in Section 2, there are nevertheless motivations for gathering new data for this community. Following an overview of the extant corpora for this variety, I present the main objectives of the new research project along with the methodological aspects. I then suggest some linguistic features that could be investigated within the context of the new corpus. I conclude with remarks for future directions.

MAP 1

Acadian regions of Nova Scotia



2. CLARE ACADIAN FRENCH CORPORA

There are a number of existing sociolinguistic corpora for the variety of French spoken in the Municipality of Clare. This variety, sometimes referred to as *acadjonne* (Boudreau & Dubois

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2007), has been the subject of a number of studies since at least the 1970s.[1] Table 1 presents some of the previously collected corpora for the Clare variety of Acadian French.

TABLE 1

Previous corpora for Clare Acadian French

Researcher	*Year(s) of data collection*	*Number of participants*	*Stratification*
B. Edward Gesner	1975–1976	8	Age, Sex
R. Ryan	1970s	3	Sex
K. Flikeid	1984–1987	approx. 30	Age, Sex
G. R. Butler	1989–1990	31	Age, Sex
K. Flikeid	1994	18	Age, Sex
S. Fritzenkötter	2011	44	Sex

As Table 1 shows, some of the larger and diverse corpora are those collected by Flikeid (Flikeid 1989, 1991, 1994) and Butler (Comeau 2011, Comeau, King, & Butler 2012). The largest of these corpora each involve approximately 30 participants of a wide age range and of both sexes. While larger in terms of number of participants, the more recent Fritzenkötter corpus (Fritzenkötter 2013, 2014) involves younger participants, ranging from 14 to 26 years of age at the time of recording. The Gesner (Gesner 1979) and Ryan (Ryan 1981) corpora both involve fewer participants (8 and 3 respectively) who were interviewed in the 1970s and involve mainly older speakers. With regard to the time period, the Flikeid and Butler data sets were collected in the 1980s and early 1990s, thus giving a good representation of the local variety in the twentieth century (based on an apparent time interpretation, Labov 1963, 1966). Furthermore, Table 1 shows that most corpora were based on a stratification of speaker age and speaker sex. Clearly, there are other social factors which could account for variation in this community, but no study has sought to take into account traditional social factors, such as social class (Guy 1988). In fact, King (2000: 55) notes that "such factors [i.e. social class] are often not relevant to the delineation of the social structure of small, nonurban communities". In her 2000 study of Prince Edward Island Acadian French, she relies on a measure of linguistic marketplace (Sankoff & Laberge 1978) to assess the role of the standard language in a speaker's life. This measure has shown to be relevant in explaining patterns of variation, such as the first person plural variable (which includes the *je…–ons* variant) in Prince Edward Island Acadian French (King, Nadasdi & Butler 2004).

[1] While recordings do exist prior to this period (e.g. Massignon 1947), I focus here on some of the larger sociolinguistic corpora.

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Another attempt to understand the social structure of rural Acadian communities is found in Beaulieu and Cichocki's work on the variety spoken in northeast New Brunswick (2002, 2008). In their analyses, they consider the role of social networks on language use. Specifically, they consider whether a speaker's social network involves predominantly ingroup members (a closed social network) or whether their networks extend beyond the community (open social network) as well as whether such ties are strong or weak. In their analyses of a number of linguistic variables, they have likewise found that these measures of social network account for linguistic patterns.

2.1. Tracking language change in progress

One of the main objectives of the research project (and the impetus for the creation of a new corpus) is to conduct longitudinal studies in order to shed light on potential cases of language change in progress. While a corpus from a single time period is an important source of data in the field of language variation and change (cf. Labov 1963, 1966 for the apparent-time interpretation), it nevertheless remains that data from two time periods are ideal in order to examine language change in progress, following the real-time approach (Labov 1994, Sankoff & Blondeau 2007). By having data from (minimally) two time periods, we are then able to reject the possibility of age grading as a potential source of differences based on the age of participants. While the apparent-time interpretation certainly has its uses, it nevertheless may in some cases underestimate the rate of change (Sankoff & Blondeau 2007) or overestimate the rate of change (Wagner & Sankoff 2011). Thus, data from (minimally) two different time periods remain the best method to examine language change in progress and this constitutes one of the major motivations for the collection of new data from the Clare community.

2.2. Measuring the effects of social change

Another major motivation for the collection of new data is to determine the effects of social change on language use. Since the time of the last large-scale sociolinguistic corpora for this variety (i.e. the Flikeid and Butler corpora mentioned in Table 1), there have been a number of social changes which may have had repercussions on the variety spoken in Clare. These social changes involve, in large part, greater exposure to the standard language (i.e. normative French).

Numerous studies of Acadian French posit that the effects of contact can account for the observed heterogeneity across Acadian French varieties. In some cases, the contact involves exposure to speakers of other varieties of French, most notably in cases whereby the contact is a direct result of migration (Comeau, King & LeBlanc 2016). In other cases, exposure to the standard is argued to result in dialectal differences. For instance, Flikeid characterizes the context of New Brunswick varieties as resulting from longstanding contact with other varieties of French and especially the standard (1994: 322). In a 2004 paper on the first person plural variable (which includes the *je…–ons* variant) in Prince Edward Island, King, Nadasdi, and Butler likewise attribute variation in rates of use of the *je…–ons* variant across communities to varying degrees of exposure to external varieties of French, including the standard. Thus, contact (including with the standard) has already been argued to be an important factor to account for variation

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across Acadian communities.

In the context of Clare, a number of recent social changes may have increased exposure to the standard.[2] One such major change involves the establishment of a province-wide French-language school board, the *Conseil scolaire acadien provincial* (CSAP). Prior to the late 1990s, schools in Acadian communities were operating under English school boards. In Clare, the elementary schools were offering a French-only education curriculum, despite operating under the English Tri-Counties Regional School Board. However, when a student arrived in high school (typically around the 8th year of education, although this varies per cohort), the student had a choice with regard to the language of instruction. While all students obligatorily followed a French language and an English language course, the remaining courses could be entirely in French, entirely in English or it could involve a mixture of the two (i.e. some courses in English and some in French). This allowed students greater choice with some students opting for an entire program in French or English and others selecting some classes in French and others in English. With the inauguration in early 1996 of the CSAP, the existing mixed-language education system was under threat since the arrival of the new school board involved a move to a French-only curriculum, the so-called "homogenous" school program. This triggered a mixed-reaction in the broader context of southwest Nova Scotia (that is, the Municipalities of Clare and Argyle).

In her historical overview of language education in Nova Scotia Acadian communities, Ross (2001) outlines multiple factors which may have led some parents and teachers to oppose this new, homogeneous school program. One such factor involves the bilingual identity of Acadian speakers. She cites an example (Dugas-LeBlanc 2000, cited by Ross) whereby an adolescent gives voice to this bilingual identity: "être Acadienne c'est être bilingue…ça c'est la chose la plus importante" (Ross 2001: 136).[3] Thus, by opposing an important dimension of the Acadians' identity (bilingualism), the CSAP was perceived as a threat to this facet of their identity. In fact, a study (Starets 1991) of attitudes in four Nova Scotia Acadian communities (Argyle, Chéticamp, Clare, and Isle Madame) shows that bilingual parents' attitudes towards English were significantly more positive than those of French unilingual parents. The study also revealed that it is in Clare (as opposed to Argyle, Chéticamp, or Isle Madame) that parents are the most comfortable with both languages (i.e. English and French) and cultures, further supporting the bilingual nature of the community. Beyond the issue of a bilingual identity, the homogenous program was likewise perceived as a threat to a language (English) with an important socioeconomic value within the local context. This point is again demonstrated by Starets' (1991) study where he shows that most parents disagree that their children can succeed in life using only the French language. Owing to English's dominant role, Ross suggests that it may not be an effective strategy: "[p]romouvoir le français en luttant contre l'anglais risque d'être une stratégie perdante" (p.

[2] By Standard French, I refer to the constructed variety of French which largely is the result of the ideology of the standard (Gadet 2007). Within the Baie Sainte-Marie context, this refers to a variety which lacks many local vernacular forms, at every level of the grammar (phonological, morphosyntactic, lexical, etc.). To a certain degree, local teachers and university professors, especially those involved in language teaching, could be characterized as proponents of this standard.

[3] "to be Acadian is to be bilingual…that is the most important thing" (my translation).

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136).[4] The homogeneous program was also perceived as a threat to the local Acadian French varieties, as attested by examples given by Ross. She cites the case where a parent expressed a threat to the local variety since she had already been corrected (in the standard) by her daughter.[5] In another example, she cites (2001: 152) the case where an Argyle parent at a public consultation in 1993 questions whether the school board wasn't going to make the Acadian language disappear.[6] As such, the implementation of a uniquely French program was perceived as a threat not only to English and to the bilingual identity of many Acadians, but also to the local variety of French.

These social changes have already been referenced in the literature (Ross 2001). In an analysis of debates involving the use of the local variety in the context of the Clare community radio, Boudreau and Dubois (2007: 106–107) argue that "the school conflict had indeed polarized the community into two major camps: those in favour of linguistically homogeneous schools […] and those in favour of maintaining bilingual schools." They further argue that these changes resulted in what they label as the *ideology of the dialect*, in that the local dialect is then legitimized for use in public contexts, including radio broadcasts. The authors conclude that the 'coming out' can "be labelled as a discourse of resistance against the hegemony of standard French whose defenders once monopolized resources in media and educational realms" (p. 118). Despite widespread opposition by some members of the community, the homogeneous program was gradually implemented and a separate English-language school, St. Mary's Bay Academy, was constructed in the Clare village of St. Bernard, near the border between Clare and neighbouring Weymouth, a predominantly English-speaking village. While the Boudreau and Dubois study focuses on dominant discourses within the community, there are no studies which specifically examine the effects of these social changes on the linguistic system. The project outlined in this paper seeks to address this gap in the literature.

Another important change involves the establishment of the French-language Services Act (2004) which sought to implement policies for government employees who provide services to the public in French. This Act and the French-language Services Regulation, which followed in 2006, are arguably efforts to accord greater rights to the minority French communities, largely Acadian, in Nova Scotia. This change, which may likewise involve greater exposure to the standard, has arguably had a smaller impact on the communities in southwest Nova Scotia in that there were fewer public discourses and debates surrounding its implementations.[7]

Taken together, these social changes have in part polarized communities in two camps: some speakers were opposed to these changes while others advocated for them. Since language

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[4] "promoting French while opposing English may well be a losing strategy" (my translation).

[5] In the example cited by Ross (2001: 152), the mother told her daughter "Va quéri' mes sneakers" to which the daughter responds with "Va chercher mes espadrilles" ("Go get my sneakers", my translation).

[6] In this second example, the parent expresses concern that their child says *le lièvre*, a standard term, and not *le laponne*, an Acadian French variant.

[7] Despite these increases in rights to minority French communities, there have been events counter to this, most notably the elimination of effective electoral representation in the provincial government in 2012 by the Electoral Boundaries Commission. This has direct impacts on both African Nova Scotian and Acadian communities.

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can be an important bearer of culture (though see Dubois & Horvath 2000 for a case where use of the French language is no longer necessary to express Cajun culture), it may be that these social changes have increased exposure to the standard and have, ultimately, brought language issues even more to the forefront. One possible outcome is that, much like varieties in New Brunswick and in Prince Edward Island, Clare Acadian French may be losing traditional linguistic features due to increased contact with other varieties of French. Another possible outcome is that local traditional variants are used even more, in efforts to assert a local identity.[8] A new corpus will shed light on the potential effects these social changes have had on the variety of Acadian French spoken in Clare.

3. THE CLARE 2016 CORPUS

The Clare 2016 corpus was gathered over a period of three weeks in May of 2016 in the Municipality of Clare. Participants were recruited by the author via the 'friend-of-a-friend' method in that some of the initial participants subsequently suggested other people who might be interested in participating. While this recruitment strategy has the disadvantage of limiting the speaker sample to a certain number of social networks, it nevertheless allows for a more informal and natural recording context since the interviewer is already known to the participants. To minimize this limiting effect of a few social networks, a number of 'secondary' participants (i.e. those who were suggested to the interviewer by initial participants) were selected in part based on their lack of connections to other initial participants (other than, of course, the person who suggested them). This allows for the corpus to reflect as many different social networks as possible.

Upon arrival at the participant's home, I first presented the informed consent form which outlined the overall goal of the project: "Le but du projet est de décrire le français acadien et non pas l'évaluer".[9] However, there is ongoing debate within the community as to what specifically constitutes *le français acadien* or *l'acadjonne*, as the variety is sometimes labelled.[10] In their 2007 study, Boudreau and Dubois (2007: 111) note that the use of English-origin items "is what offends the majority of participants […] who oppose the public use of acadjonne, while the use of older archaic forms is more easily accepted." The particular debates surrounding language use entailed that I make certain things explicit. Due to the debated status of English-origin items (i.e. borrowings and codeswitching) as either part of the local variety or not, I wanted to make explicit that I wasn't specifically seeking data which were devoid of these features, in part because I was known by my participants to be a university-affiliated researcher who studies Acadian French. In fact, Boudreau and Dubois note that "defenders of the standard […] are members of the intellectual elite" (p. 109). Thus, for participants who are members of this group, they may

[8] This is not unlike a reversal of language change in the centralization of /ay/ and /aw/ on Martha's Vineyard as a result of social change (Labov 1963).

[9] "The goal of the project is to describe Acadian French and not to evaluate it" (my translation).

[10] This label takes into account the local pronunciation of the word *acadien* (i.e. palatalisation of /d/ and overt realisation of the final nasal consonant).

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believe that a university-affiliated researcher is certainly not seeking to record speakers who use English borrowings and English-French codeswitches. To counter this belief, I explicitly mentioned prior to the recording that the goal of the project was to record 'normal' speech and I asked the participants to speak as they normally would in a context with friends and family. That is, they can feel free to use English words and even taboo words (swearing) if they choose to and if they normally would do so.[11] Thus, I emphasized that I was seeking to record the vernacular, that is, the speech where speakers are the least monitoring their linguistic behaviour. While explicitly mentioning the object of study may seem to be counterproductive, I ultimately sought to eliminate any ambiguity with regards to what constituted the local variety, acadjonne (i.e. is it uniquely traditional linguistic features or does is also include language contact phenomena). Despite my efforts, and because of longstanding debates on language, I ultimately cannot rule out that some participants may use more borrowings and codeswitching in their day-to-day life than they did in the interview context.[12]

The interviews follow no strict questionnaire or protocol (contrary to most sociolinguistic interviews) and are quite similar to the Butler Grosses Coques Sociolinguistic Corpus in that informal conversations and narratives (be they narratives of personal experience or community narratives) are elicited. This allows for maximum comparability between the Grosses Coques data and the Clare 2016 corpus.

3.1. The Clare 2016 speaker sample

Adult speakers were recruited based on my social networks within the Clare community. Speakers were all raised in Clare and spent the majority of their childhoods in the community.[13] The sample was constructed based on both speaker age and speaker sex. The Clare 2016 participants are outlined in Table 2.

[11] To cement the idea that I accepted these features in the interview context, I attempted to speak in my own vernacular and to not refrain from using words of English origin and taboo words, as appropriate to the contexts and as I would use in my own vernacular when not recorded.

[12] The reverse is also possible, in that speakers may have used more borrowings and code-switch when recorded, although this is probably unlikely.

[13] I avoid commenting on where speakers were born since it is increasingly rare for younger speakers to be born in Clare. While many older speakers were born in Clare (home births), younger speaker were born in the nearest hospitals, located in either of the nearby towns of Yarmouth or Digby.

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TABLE 2

The Clare 2016 speaker sample[14]

	Sex	
Age ranges	*Women*	*Men*
20–35	Claire	Brian
	Édesse	
	Josephine	
36–55	Marguerite	
	Véronique	
	Yvelle	
56+	Agathe	Aldric
	Anne-Marie	Victor
	Denise	Wilfred
	Émilie	
	Georgette	
	Nadine	
	Patricia	
	Paulette	
	Yvette	

As Table 2 shows, there is an overrepresentation of older (56+) women in the sample and there are no men in the 36–55 age range. While the initial goal was to recruit a minimum of three participants per age group and sex, this was not possible. To compensate for these lacunae in the speaker sample, earlier recordings conducted in 2005 with two men who would fit in the 36–55 age range and one man who would fit in the 20–35 age range (their ages in 2016) will be added to the 2016 data. Importantly, the 2005 sample was collected after the major social changes outlined in Section 2.2, which still allows us to compare these data with earlier corpora.[15] In addition, two speakers were recorded in both 2005 and 2016 (Édesse and Véronique), thus allowing

[14] Participant names are locally-appropriate pseudonyms.

[15] I will analyze the earlier data separately prior to including them with the 2016 data to ensure that the three men interviewed in 2005 do pattern like their 2016 counterparts.

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us to explore whether these two speakers have changed their linguistic behaviour in the 11-year period between recordings. While certainly not an expansive panel sample in any sense, it nevertheless might shed light on how individuals evolve over their lifespan in relation to their life histories.[16]

3.2. Potential social factors

While the Clare 2016 corpus was gathered based on two recruitment criteria (speaker age and speaker sex), other potential social factors will be considered for analyses of linguistic features. This disconnect, that is, between the social constraints used in the recruitment procedure and those considered in the analysis, has been adopted in other studies. For instance, in their analysis of Cajun English, Dubois and Horvath (2000) rely on participants' social histories in order to explain the linguistic patterns observed in their data in order to go beyond traditional categories such as sex and age. Likewise, King (2000) relies on the participants' social histories to create an index of linguistic marketplace despite the fact that her Prince Edward Island Acadian French sample was initially stratified according to age and sex. Together with the social network approach mentioned in Section 2 (Beaulieu & Cichocki 2002, 2008), factors such as these have important explanatory power in these rural Acadian communities and may better explain linguistic behaviour than more traditional measures of social structure, such as social class.

Since the goal of the project is to evaluate how the local variety may have changed in relation to major social changes, the debates and discourses raised by the social changes may have repercussions on speakers' linguistic behaviour. While the linguistic marketplace considers the relative importance of the standard language in speakers' socioeconomic activities, the social changes outlined in Section 2.2 extend beyond speakers' socioeconomic activities.[17] The debates and controversy brought about by these changes allowed community members to position themselves in a debate which pits the local variety against other varieties of French (including the standard), but also against English. Since the changes have been argued to involve a threat to the bilingual identity of some participants as well as to the local variety, these social changes arguably raised discourses surrounding the current status and future of the local variety, acadjonne. Thus, it may be locally relevant to consider how speakers align themselves in relation to their local variety of Acadian French, rather than focus on whether they align themselves with English or with external varieties of French.

One way to operationalize this would be to create an index which takes into account a number of measures relating speakers to their local variety. This 'orientation to the local variety' factor might include taking into account overt metalinguistic commentary (where available), whether speakers attend church (which takes place in the standard), among other relevant criteria. As was the case in Dubois and Horvath (2000) and King (2000), participants' social histories may be relevant in considering how they align themselves with the local variety. This social factor, if applied to the 2016 sample as well as the older corpora, may allow us to measure whether

[16] Even ten years proved to be adequate to investigate change across the lifespan in the Montreal corpora (Sankoff & Blondeau 2007, Wagner & Sankoff 2011).

[17] Though, the social changes may have arguably increased the importance of the standard for schoolteachers who are now operating in a French-only school system.

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the social changes had repercussions on the local variety of Acadian French.

4. POTENTIAL VARIABLES TO BE ANALYZED

While the Clare 2016 corpus could be used to study variation at any level of the grammar (from phonetics to discourse and pragmatics), computerized transcriptions are currently being prepared with the goal to study morphosyntactic variation. In order to assess the influence of greater exposure to the standard, it may be relevant to first target linguistic features which have already shown to be sensitive to the effects of dialect contact. One possible variable may be the use of the *je…–ons* to express first person plural reference as in (1a), which varies with the *on* pronoun with no overt affix on the lexical verb, as in (1b).

(1) a. **J' allions** à la vitre de sa chambre.[18]
we go.IMP.1PL to the.FEM window of his room
'We used to go to his window.'

(Nadine, CL-007)[19]

b. À ce temps- là **on avait** toute des euh telephone party line.
at that time there we have.IMP all some um telephone party line
'Back then we all had um telephone party lines.'

(Nadine, CL-007)

Another variant occurs in other varieties of French (and in the standard), the use of the pronoun *nous* with the *–ons* suffix, however this variant did not occur in our data.[20] If the social changes did influence speaker's linguistic behaviour, the *je…–ons* variable may be a good feature to consider. As mentioned earlier, the King, Nadasdi and Butler (2004) study of this variable in two communities in Prince Edward Island found it to be sensitive to contact with external varieties of French. In the village of Abram-Village, the community with greater institutional support for French, including the standard, rates of the *je…–ons* variant are much lower (18%) than in Saint-Louis (76%), which has less support and less contact with other varieties of French.

Beyond the Prince Edward Island context, the *je…–ons* variant has all but disappeared in New Brunswick varieties of Acadian French (cf. King 2013). It may be that dialect levelling and greater exposure to the standard have led to its disappearance in the New Brunswick varieties. Taken together, these findings suggest that the first person plural variable might be a good feature to examine how social changes may have impacted the local variety. The debates and discussions following the social changes may have created a greater divide in linguistic behaviour between those with a stronger affiliation to the local variety and those with more ties to external

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[18] Codes in glosses are as follows: IMP: imperfect, PL: plural, SG: singular, FEM: feminine, PRES: present, and NEG: negative.

[19] Codes in parentheses refer to speaker's pseudonym, the corpus (CL=Clare), and the interview number.

[20] While the data are not completely transcribed at the time of writing, no tokens of the *nous* variant have been found.

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varieties, including the standard. By comparing the 2016 sample with the earlier corpora, we may then see the effects of the social changes on the linguistic system. By taking into account speakers' orientation to the local variety across time, we may be able to draw a link between these social changes and the local variety of Acadian French.

In addition to the *je…–ons* variant, other linguistic features will be considered, also based on their uneven distribution across the Acadian diaspora. Other such features could include use of the *point* negative marker (which varies with *pas*), as shown in (2a-b).

(2) a. Ça c' est **point** bad.
that that be.PRES.3SG NEG bad
'That isnt' bad.'

(Édesse, CL-001)

b. Je sais **pas**.
I know.PRES.SG NEG
'I don't know.'

(Marguerite, CL-001)

Unlike most varieties of French on both sides of the Atlantic which had lost *point* by the end of the 19th century (Martineau 2005, 2007, 2014), varieties of Acadian French in southwest Nova Scotia maintain productive use of *point* as a negative marker (2a) along with *pas* (2b) (Flikeid 1994, Comeau 2007, 2019). Other potential linguistic features may be analysed based on their distribution in the data. Quantitative analyses of such linguistic features, when compared with the earlier corpora (e.g. the Butler Grosses Coques Sociolinguistic Corpus and the Flikeid 1994 corpus) using a comparative sociolinguistic approach (Poplack & Tagliamonte 2001, King 2013), may shed light on how the social changes may have impacted the local variety and also may shed light on language change more broadly.

6. CONCLUSION

This paper presented an overview of the existing sociolinguistic corpora for the variety of Acadian French spoken in Clare, Nova Scotia. Following this overview, I outlined the main motivations underlying the collection of new data. Beyond addressing questions of a more general nature relating to language change, the collection of new data will allow us to ascertain how recent social changes may have impacted the local variety. Within the broader context of Acadian French, studies often evoke degrees of contact with other varieties in order to account for the observed heterogeneity. Within the current project, we may be able to examine the effects of such a contact by taking into account a speaker's orientation to their local variety.

The social changes outlined above have not only impacted the Clare community, but the broader southwest Nova Scotia Acadian communities, which include the nearby Par-en-Bas region in the Municipality of Argyle. Much like the Clare region, the Par-en-Bas variety likewise maintains conservative linguistic features such as the traditional *je…–ons* and *point* as a negative marker. A related research project is underway to consider how the Par-en-Bas varieties of Acadian French have likewise changed since the last large-scale data collection (in the case of Par-

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en-Bas, this would be the Flikeid 1994 corpus). Data collection for Par-en-Bas speakers is under way and may also shed light on how the broader social changes may have impacted that variety. Furthermore, the patterns that we may uncover for Clare may be different than those from Par-en-Bas. However, the social changes which impacted the Clare community also elicited a strong reaction from the Par-en-Bas community. These related projects will thus shed light on how these isolated and linguistically conservative communities may have changed in response to major social changes. Together, they will help us answer questions involving the relationship between society and language, the effects of contact, and language change more generally.

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