



The Theoretical and Applied Linguistics Laboratory

Le laboratoire de linguistique théorique et appliquée



Liaison in Ontario French: Contact, Restriction and Second Language

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Objectives

- Compare liaison in three populations of French speakers in Ontario
 - Franco-Ontarians living in a local majority situation (Hearst)
 - Franco-Ontarians living in a local minority situation (Windsor)
 - Anglophone learners of French as a second language (University students in London)
- Contribute to a rich and growing body of empirical research on liaison in French

Projet PFC

- *Phonologie du Français Contemporain*: International corpus phonology project (Durand, Laks, Lyche 2002, 2005, 2009)
- Document variation in multiple varieties from all areas of the French-speaking world, to present French "in its unity and its diversity"
- Common protocol:
 - Interview
 - Free conversation
 - Reading passage
 - Word list

French Liaison

- What it is
 - A consonant between two words that is only pronounced when the following word starts with a vowel, and under certain conditions:
 - Les idées (le z) de)
 - Les disques (le disk)
- Categorical
 - Liaison always (or almost always) made by native speakers: *les idées* (DET_N)
- Variable
 - Liaison made more in formal than informal speech: *c'est intéressant* (following c+s)
- Erratic
 - Apparent liaison context where native speakers would not make a liaison: *les homards* (following "aspirated" h)

Categorical Liaison

Task	Liaisons made	N	% made	Weight
Reading	211	289	72.7%	n.s.
Interview	300	310	96.8%	n.s.
Conversation	120	132	90.9%	n.s.
TOTAL	742	731	98.8%	

Task	Liaisons made	N	% made	Weight
Reading	253	283	89.2%	0.573
Interview	303	340	89.4%	0.525
Conversation	127	142	89.4%	0.511
Range				46
TOTAL	713	764	94.6%	

Task	Liaisons made	N	% made	Weight
Reading	260	297	87.5%	0.530
Interview	300	318	94.3%	0.560
Conversation	136	154	88.3%	0.308
Range				27
TOTAL	696	776	89.6%	

Two Franco-Ontarian Communities

- Hearst
 - French sole mother tongue population: 89.0%
 - French home language: 88.1%
 - Language shift (Francophones not using French as home language): 1.0%
- Windsor
 - French sole mother tongue population: 3.5%
 - French home language: 0.9%
 - Language shift (Francophones not using French as home language): 73.4%

Projet IPFC

- *InterPhonologie du Français Contemporain*: Extension of PFC to learners of French as a second/foreign language
- Different first languages
 - German, English, Arabic, Korean, Danish, Spanish, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Dutch, Norwegian, Portuguese, Russian, Swedish, Turkish
- Common protocol
 - Interview
 - Discussion between learners
 - Reading passage (same as PFC)
 - Word repetition
 - Word reading

Method

- Excerpts of three styles of speech (interview, conversation, reading passage) transcribed orthographically in Praat TextGrids
- Liaison contexts coded according to PFC/IPFC conventions
- Codes extracted using Dolmen (Eychenne 2014) to Excel file in which further coding done
- Multivariate analysis using *GoldVarb*

Variable Liaison

Task	Liaisons made	N	% made	Weight
Reading	73	278	26.2%	0.638
Interview	55	460	12.0%	0.485
Conversation	97	625	15.5%	0.484
Range				18
TOTAL	265	1216	22%	

Task	Liaisons made	N	% made	Weight
Reading	67	220	30.5%	0.653
Interview	80	492	16.3%	0.484
Conversation	86	538	16.0%	0.460
Range				20
TOTAL	241	1251	19%	

Task	Liaisons made	N	% made	Weight
Lecture	38	204	18.6%	n.s.
Conversation	80	332	24.1%	n.s.
Entrevue	36	252	14.3%	n.s.
TOTAL	154	788	19%	

French as Second Language in Ontario

- Majority Anglophone province in an officially bilingual country
- Learners of French exposed to (at least) two L1 French phonological models
 - Reference French
 - Laurentian French
- Somewhere between second language and foreign language?
- A continuum for certain linguistic variables?: Francophones in majority setting → Francophones in minority situation → Anglophones

Speaker Groups

- PFC Hearst
 - 6 women, 6 men; 3 generations
- PFC Windsor
 - 6 women, 6 men; 3 generations
- IPFC Canadian English
 - 9 female and 3 male university students
 - 6 first year (4 of them from immersion background)
 - 6 fourth year (3 spent third year in France; 3 spent third year in Ontario)

Overall Liaison Results

Type of liaison	Liaisons made	N	% made
Calographique	2000	2153	92.9%
Variable	630	3255	19.4%
Erratique	12	293	4.1%
Task			
Reading	1136	2460	46.2%
Interview	950	2050	46.3%
Conversation	556	1191	46.7%
Corpus			
Hearst	1008	2048	49.2%
Windsor	956	2155	44.4%
Anglophones	678	1498	45.3%
TOTAL	2642	5701	46.3%

Conclusion

- Franco-Ontarians and minority situation
 - Slight difference between Windsor and Hearst for realization of categorical and variable liaisons
 - Despite French use restriction in minority context, Windsor speakers retain stylistic competence in the use of variable liaisons
 - English influence on non-resyllabification of liaison consonant in Windsor
 - Liaison errors rare among Franco-Ontarians
- Anglophone learners
 - High level of categorical liaison realization (intermediate-advanced learners), but lower than Franco-Ontarians
 - Learners do not master stylistic dimension of variable liaison
 - Errors: erratic liaisons and consonant substitutions
 - English influence on non-resyllabification of liaison consonant
 - Immersion experience appears to favour liaison acquisition