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2016

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Kelle L. Marshall

Pepperdine University, kelle.marshall@pepperdine.edu

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Recommended Citation

Marshall, K. K. (2016). On a la liberté de parler comme on veut: Acadian Discourses of Francophone Authenticity. *The French Review*, 89(3), 67-82. <https://doi.org/10.1353/tfr.2016.0309>

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Kelle Keating Marshall
Pepperdine University
International Studies and Languages
24255 Pacific Coast Highway
Malibu, CA 90263-7446
kelle.marshall@pepperdine.edu

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**“On a la liberté de parler comme on veut”: Acadian Discourses of
Francophone Authenticity**

by Kelle Keating Marshall

Ben, je sons pas tout à fait des Français, j’pouvons pas dire ça: les Français, c’est les Français de France. Ah! pour ça, j’sons encore moins des Français de France que des Américains. Je sons putôt des Canadjens français, qu’ils nous avont dit. Ça s’peut pas non plus, ça. Les Canadjens français, c’est du monde qui vit à Québec. Ils les appellont des Canayens, ou ben des Québécois. Ben coument c’est que je pouvons être Québécois si je vivons point à Québec? [...] Pour l’amour de Djeu, où c’est que j’vivons, nous autres? (Maillet 154–55)

SINCE THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY, authors, artists, and musicians from Francophone regions in North America have served as ambassadors of their local cultures throughout *la Francophonie*¹. For example, Antonine Maillet, one of the first Acadian authors to distinguish herself internationally, is well-known for her play *La Sagouine* (1971) and her novel *Pélagie-la-Charrette* (1979) (Bolduc). For the latter, she received France’s *Prix Goncourt* and, in turn, sold more than a million copies of the novel in Canada and abroad (Bolduc). In both *La Sagouine* and *Pélagie-la-*

Charrette, Maillet focuses on the Acadians' search for a distinct identity in an era in which they are increasingly connected with other Francophones across the globe. The above quotation, taken from *La Sagouine*, illustrates the depth of uncertainty many Acadians have felt about their place in Canada and in *la Francophonie*. It seems to be because of this uncertainty that Maillet represented her heroine's speech orthographically in a way that reflects Acadian French pronunciation and, in turn, celebrates it.

Today's Acadian artists continue in Maillet's footsteps, taking into careful consideration how best to represent *Acadie* on *la Francophonie*'s global stage. As Acadian artists travel and promote their creations in extra-regional Francophone spaces, they must make calculated choices regarding written and spoken French in artistic production and publicity to demonstrate that they are legitimate participants in the global Francophone community (Boudreau, "Le français;" Boudreau and Dubois, "Mondialisation").

This article will explore Acadian artists' discourses of Francophone authenticity related to the use of oral and written French in extra-regional Francophone spaces, both in their personal experiences and in the creation, publicity, and performance of their art. In what follows, the term *discourse* refers to a group's "socially accepted associations among ways of using language, of thinking, valuing, acting, and interacting in the 'right' places and at the 'right' times with the 'right' objects" (Gee 34). Discourses may be considered as a form of socially-constructed knowledge that has the capacity to influence future thoughts and actions of group members. Before presenting my analysis, I will first situate it theoretically in terms of *linguistic marketplaces*, *Francophone linguistic insecurity*, *authenticity*, and, finally, the role of Acadian artists as social actors.

Theoretical Framework

Linguistic Marketplaces

Pierre Bourdieu proposes that each society is accompanied by a *linguistic marketplace* governed by the distribution of *linguistic capital*, that is, social power related to a person's or group's linguistic competence in a certain language or variety of language called the *legitimate language* (67–98). A society's legitimate language is used in all official communications and in all public spaces (Bourdieu 107). In those societies where linguistic capital is unequally distributed among social groups, members of the majority may exercise *symbolic power* over the minority, often provoking feelings of insecurity in speakers whose competence in the legitimate language is weak or nil (Bourdieu 67–98).

Francophone Linguistic Insecurity

While *la Francophonie* is not a traditionally conceived society, as an international social space it is nonetheless accompanied by a distinct linguistic marketplace where a standardized form of French serves as the legitimate language for a plurality of cultures (Klinkenberg 807). In spite of the celebration of diversity in *la Francophonie*, sociolinguistic research has shown that speakers from various Francophone regions in France, Belgium, Switzerland, attest to feelings of linguistic insecurity regarding, in particular, spoken French (Gueunier et al. 132–44; Francard 64; Singy). Other research has demonstrated that Francophones in Canadian and African regions also manifest feelings of linguistic insecurity toward prestige varieties of French, whether the European standard or local varieties of French (Boudreau and Dubois, “Insécurité”; Moreau).

The above studies indicate that Francophones from various regions feel at times as if they are not authentic speakers of French. The question must thus be posed

as to which variety or varieties of French are perceived to be legitimate in the extra-regional and international linguistic marketplaces of *la Francophonie*, and which speakers qualify as legitimate, or authentic, speakers of French and under which circumstances.

Authenticity

Some linguists have criticized the notion of the *authentic speaker*, proposing that it leads too easily to an essentialized view of such a speaker, since it would be difficult to maintain, for instance, that a speaker of a language from a given age group or socio-economic class was more authentic or less authentic than another speaker from a different age group or social class (Bucholtz 400–03). Coupland, though, argues that the notion of authenticity is particularly useful in the era of globalization (427). He describes, for instance, the case of the Welsh diaspora in the United States, where expatriated speakers have actively constructed a Welsh authenticity far from their cultural homeland (427–28):

[W]e have to look much more at ‘authenticity in performance’—how people can do complex self-identification work that ends up being authenticating for them and possibly for audiences. This can be a matter of *quoting* old authenticities in performance talk, even subverting them in parody or in other ways holding back from claiming to own and to inhabit traditionally authentic identities directly. This suggests that, increasingly, authenticity needs to be earned rather than credited. (428)

As Heller points out, however, the performance of linguistic authenticity, whether through speech or cultural artifacts—such as t-shirts or music—can also lead to the commodification of minority languages (“Globalization” 474–75). This commodification may in turn lead to conflicts over legitimacy concerning “who has

the legitimate right to define what counts as competence, as authenticity, as excellence, and over who has the right to produce and distribute the resources of language and identity” (Heller, “Globalization” 474). It seems that such commodification may, in fact, contribute to the delegitimation of a minority language in the global marketplace, as outside groups are led to value these languages as mere artifacts of essentialized minority identities. Thus, linguistic minorities must constantly negotiate the delicate balance between authentic participation in the global marketplace and the banalization of their identity through processes of linguistic commodification.

The situation is all the more complicated for Francophone minorities’ performance of authenticity in *la Francophonie*. Klinkenberg notes that “la France continue à peser d’un poids décisif dans une francophonie où seule une minorité d’usagers a le français comme langue maternelle” (805). In a space where diversity is said to be valued, speakers still feel pressure to adhere to a standardized French norm (Klinkenberg 806–07, 812). Conversely, Boudreau proposes that *la Francophonie* may also be “un espace de liberté linguistique à ceux qui se sentent limités par les contraintes communautaires. [...] Il leur permet de pratiquer une variété stylistique plus formelle sans qu’ils aient à troquer leur identité” (“Le français” 117). Boudreau further proposes that, in *la Francophonie*, a member of a Francophone minority may “rester ‘le même’ en conservant le vernaculaire avec ses proches tout en devenant ‘un autre’ dans les situations qui l’exigent, dans ses contacts avec les francophones d’ailleurs, pour qui, en fait, il redevient ‘le même’, un francophone comme un autre, dans un espace transnational” (“Le français” 120).

But does participation in *la Francophonie*’s global networks actually index “une reconnaissance dans le regard de ‘l’autre’ francophone” (Boudreau, “Le

français” 117)? That is, are all Francophones considered to be authentic speakers of French in the international Francophone linguistic marketplace, or have they received recognition for the most part through the commodification of their regional identity?

Acadian Artists

For the Acadians of Canada’s Atlantic Provinces—New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince-Edward-Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador—social actors’ efforts to be granted authenticity by other Francophones—particularly those from Québec and Europe—have played an important role in the preservation of the Acadian identity (Boudreau, “Construction” 172–73). As mentioned above, it was the work of authors and poets, such as Antonine Maillet and Gérard LeBlanc, that put Acadie on the cultural map of la Francophonie (Labelle et al.). As a unified Acadian civil society has continued to develop, artists of all disciplines have served as social actors, engaging in dialogue in Acadian society and in extra-regional spaces vis-à-vis modern Acadian identities (Boudreau, “Construction”; Heller, Paths).

As an example, in Oct. 2012 the Acadian rap group Radio Radio won a Félix award from l’Association québécoise de l’industrie du disque, du spectacle et de la vidéo for the album of the year in hip-hop. Before the awards ceremony, a columnist from Québec’s newspaper Le Devoir criticized the group for rapping in “la sous-langue d’êtres handicapés en voie d’assimilation” (Rioux). The heart of the controversy, it seems, is that Radio Radio raps in a variety of Acadian French that the columnist did not take to be a legitimate variety of French on Québec’s linguistic marketplace. This incident is representative of the sorts of challenges Acadian artists often face in Canada and abroad as they seek to demonstrate that Acadians are indeed legitimate participants in la Francophonie.

The Present Study

With the aim of eliciting Acadian artists' discourses on linguistic practices in artistic production and diffusion, I conducted a sociolinguistic study at the *Centre culturel Aberdeen*, an Acadian cultural center in Moncton, New Brunswick. Aberdeen is unique among Canadian minority Francophone cultural centers in that, instead of serving as a community resource center and meeting place, it aims to promote artistic production in every discipline (Keating, "Discourses" 521). A majority of the 23 members of Aberdeen are Acadian, while the Centre also serves as a gathering point for Francophone artists of various backgrounds living in the region (Keating, "Discourses" 521).

In the spring of 2010, I conducted the principal fieldwork for a sociolinguistic study framed in the constructed Grounded Theory methodology (Charmaz), interviewing 28 active members of Moncton's francophone arts scene. I posed open-ended questions to elicit their views regarding the role of the Centre and their linguistic practices in artistic creation and diffusion. I also conducted ethnographic observation in the Centre, and I attended 21 artistic events, including concerts, gallery openings, and poetry readings. The present analysis was conducted on the 25 Acadian participants' interviews. In order to avoid the very essentialization described above, I have not altered the interview transcriptions to reflect phonological variations in Acadian French.

This analysis will address the following questions:

- 1.) What are these Acadian artists' dominant discourses of Francophone authenticity in the linguistic marketplaces of *la Francophonie*—specifically in Québec and Europe? Do their discourses vary in terms of spoken and written French?

2.) Do their discourses reveal that other Francophones consider Acadian French to be a legitimate variety outside of *Acadie*?

Below I divide participants' discourses of Francophone authenticity into two main sections, one of which concerns authenticity in spoken French and the other of which concerns authenticity in written French.

Analysis

Spoken French

In this section I will discuss participants' discourses of Francophone authenticity regarding spoken French in extra-regional spaces, including spoken Acadian French in Québec's linguistic marketplace, French spoken in everyday interactions with Parisians, and French used on stage both in Québec and in France.

As the above incident involving Radio Radio illustrates, Acadian artists have rarely received recognition from Québécois critics or the Québécois general public, and this has made it difficult for Acadian artists to succeed at the national level (Keating, "Le Centre culturel" 236). In (1), below, Philippe, a visual artist and author, speaks to the commodification of the Acadian language in the Québécois media outlets, which dominate Canadian Francophone television and radio broadcasting. He references a discourse of imposed exoticism, saying that when Acadians appear on the national Francophone networks, it is often merely to showcase their manner of speaking. His remark suggests that, until the Québécois media focus on Acadians' message rather than the way they speak, Acadians will not be regarded as authentic Francophones in Québec and beyond.

(1) Et c'est la même chose par rapport à l'Acadie moderne: j'ai l'impression que là on est encore dans l'exotisme: on est cute, on est parfaits, on est fins. [...]
Comme par exemple je regarde au niveau des mass média: on n'a pas du tout

le contrôle sur notre identité dans ce sens-là. Je dis toujours que la francophonie canadienne est gérée par le Québec. [...] Si on écoute Radio-Canada, rarement on va entendre un Acadien, rarement on va entendre un autre discours que ce discours-là, et quand on fait parler un Acadien puis on le fait parler chiac, [...] alors c'est sûr qu'à ce moment-là on n'écoute pas ce qu'ils ont à dire mais on écoute la manière qu'ils le disent².

Indeed, since most Canadian Francophone television and radio programming is broadcast from Québec, it is difficult to find Acadian representation on public Francophone channels throughout Canada, even in *Acadie* itself (Boudreau and Dubois, “Le cas” 278).

Noël's remark in (2) suggests that even in interactions with members of the general public in Québec, Acadian varieties of French are not considered authentic and Acadians are often taken to be Anglophones.

(2) Ben, il y a ce phénomène-là est un peu bizarre où quand les gens sentent que tu as un accent qui est pas le leur, donc au Québec l'accent québécois, ils vont aller vers l'anglais, parce qu'ils pensent que t'es pas de langue maternelle francophone. Alors ça, c'est un peu tannant là, c'est irritant parce que, ben, c'est un phénomène que t'es différent que nous donc tu dois être d'une autre langue que le français, mais faut juste que tu insistes.

As the above two excerpts attest, Acadians are denied linguistic capital and thus Francophone authenticity in the Québécois linguistic marketplace, both in day-to-day interactions and in media representations. In particular, Philippe's remark about Acadian French in Québécois media outlets is indexical of the extent to which spoken Acadian French is commodified and essentialized by outsiders—commodified

and essentialized in a way that may directly affect how Acadians themselves are regarded in Canadian society.

Also notable is how they are regarded *outside* Canadian society. In (3), Raoul, a poet, says that more than once Parisians have switched from French to English when they have heard how he speaks:

- (3) Et là, il y a une mode à Paris depuis trois ou quatre ans qui est bizarre. Quand ils entendent quelqu'un parler français avec un accent, ils te parlent en anglais. Moi je me suis fâché dans un restaurant, parce c'était un serveur qui n'était pas...³ j'aime pas le mot 'Français de souche' là, un nouvel arrivant, et qui s'entêtait à me parler en anglais. J'ai fait venir le gérant, le maître d'hôtel. J'ai dit: "Vous me changez le serveur là, moi je suis fran-co-phone. Je viendrai pas à Paris pour parler anglais!" [...] Hé! Puis encore l'an passé avec [nom], je me suis fâché: "Si vous voulez pas nous servir en français, on va aller ailleurs." [...] "Mon français est aussi bon que le vôtre!"

Raoul displays little, if any, linguistic insecurity; he is proud of the way that he speaks, and he believes that in an international space like Paris he should enjoy as much linguistic capital—and authenticity—as all other Francophones. Indeed, he follows the above comments by asserting that: "On a la liberté de parler comme on veut." Raoul's behavior seems to align with Boudreau's proposed schema, where, in *la Francophonie*, Francophone minorities may become *le même* as other Francophones ("Le français" 120)— at the same time, Raoul insists that recognition as an authentic Francophone does not mean that he must adhere to a Parisian pronunciation of French. In fact, not only Raoul but also Philippe and Noël think they should be credited as much linguistic capital in extra-regional spaces as other Francophones have, even though Francophones from outside of *Acadie* often do not

grant them authenticity as equal participants in *la Francophonie*. In that respect, Raoul, Philippe, and Noël differ from Samuel, a musician whose lyrics include some Acadian expressions. When I asked Samuel about his performances outside of *Acadie*, he replied:

(4) La première fois au Québec c'était pas le fun parce que tu te sens minoritaire.

Tu parles pas comme eux, ils te font remarquer que t'as un accent, alors quand tu chantes les premières fois, ils te comprennent pas. Puis en France c'est la même chose. Moi dans mes dix ans j'ai juste appris à... make it work. Ça fait qu'en expliquant mes chansons avant de la chanter, ça aide.

Not only when performing in Québec but also in France, Samuel has felt like *l'autre*. He says that in both places people mention his accent, and his audiences do not immediately grant him authenticity as a Francophone. Samuel also affirmed to me that he had worked with a voice coach to standardize his pronunciation for performances in extra-regional audiences. In doing this, Samuel has chosen to employ convergent accommodation: “a strategy whereby individuals adapt to each other’s communicative behaviors in terms of a wide range of linguistic-prosodic-nonverbal features” (Giles et al. 7). Specifically, he accommodates his speech to a standardized pronunciation of French in order to assure communicative success with his audiences⁴. As Boudreau (“Le français”) suggests, Samuel has indeed become *le même* as his audience. Unlike Raoul and the others, however, who assume that Acadians should be granted a measure of authenticity equal to that of other Francophones, Samuel feels to the contrary that authenticity must be earned through linguistic accommodation.

Written French

While Francophones from outside of *Acadie* do not always recognize these artists' spoken French as authentic, Boudreau ("Le français") and Klinkenberg (806–07, 812) both propose that the written form of *français standard* creates common ground between Francophones the world over. In this section, I will discuss four excerpts regarding participants' use of written language in publicity, books, and poetry destined for extra-regional spaces.

The following excerpt is from an interview with Nicole, the director of an Acadian cultural organization that hosts events attracting an international Francophone audience. In (5), when I ask her about the language used in the promotion of the organization's events, she affirms that these texts are written in *français standard*. She states that she indicates regionalisms typographically, with either quotation marks or italics, in order to affirm to outsiders that Acadians know these are local expressions:

(5) A: Tout est en français.

Q: Et c'est un français standard?

A: Standard, oui, oui, oui. Sauf que...

Q: Il n'y a pas de régionalismes?

A: Ben, oui parfois, par exemple, je sais pas moi, dans mon *Mot de la directrice* l'an dernier j'avais mis "Halez votre frame au [festival]" parce que c'est une expression chiac, "Hale ta frame⁵," puis c'était des circonstances. Mais c'est sûr que comme on communique ici mais aussi vers l'extérieur, c'est des choses si j'emploie des régionalismes ou si on en emploie, on va le faire entre, tu sais, entre guillemets ou en italique, ou, tu sais, on va souligner qu'on est quand même conscient que c'est un régionalisme et que c'est pas du français standard.

Here Nicole describes a performance both of Acadian authenticity (by virtue of some use of local expressions) and of global Francophone authenticity (through the predominant use of *français standard*). Her remarks indicate that she intentionally avoids practices that might lead other Francophones to form an essentialized conception of the Acadian identity.

Similarly, in (6) Jacynthe, an author, speaks of her compositional choices in children's books, stating explicitly that she composes in "un français standard" and not with regionalisms in order to access markets in "tous les milieux francophones."

(6) Moi, j'ai préféré que mes personnages parlent un français plus standard sans être nécessairement avec l'accent de France. J'ai écrit dans un français standard parce que c'est le français que j'écris, que j'ai appris et que j'écris. [...] Ça fait que je voulais pas rester dans un régionalisme, [pour] avoir un marché régional ou provincial. Moi j'ai écrit pour sortir des frontières puis en vendre le plus possible partout dans le milieu, tous les milieux francophones.

Interestingly, Jacynthe's description of *français standard* does not include "l'accent de France," nor is it associated with the Québécois norm. It is not clear which norm she subscribes to, since there is, as of yet, no Standard Acadian French (Boudreau, "Le français").

With the aim of marketing their events and books to the widest audience possible, Nicole and Jacynthe have chosen to use some variant of *français standard*, the variety of French with the greatest amount of linguistic capital in *la Francophonie*'s international linguistic marketplace. Both women affirm that they want to keep regionalisms from interfering with their message; in their writing, they try to achieve global Francophone authenticity.

Here Nicole and Jacynthe differ from Raoul, who says:

(7) Puis on est très bien accueilli. C'est à cause de notre différence. [...] Il y a un éditeur et poète du Luxembourg, quand il a lu [...], il dit: "Moi ce que j'adore de vous les Acadiens là," il dit: "Vous faites tsst au français européen. Parce que quand t'écris 'la terre est sec', tu l'écris 'la terre est sec', parce c'est comme ça que tu le dis chez toi. Elle a pas besoin d'être 'sèche'. Vous dites 'l'eau est sec', ben 'l'eau est sec'. Puis il dit: "J'aime, on aime cette audace-là que nous on n'aurait jamais l'audace de faire ça avec la langue française. Puis vous vous le faites parce c'est comme ça vous la vivez, puis vous la publiez comme ça." Puis à chaque année les gens feuilletent nos livres ils disent: "Ah, mais il y a une erreur ici, non, mais ça c'est pas comme ça, c'est..." "Ben c'est pas comme ça en France, mais c'est comme ça chez nous, madame. C'est notre français à nous. On vous laisse votre français à vous, on le respecte, vous allez respecter le nôtre."

As Raoul sees it, Acadian poetry is received favorably in Europe, even by editors, particularly when Acadian regionalisms are intentionally included. Raoul comments that Europeans often point out grammatical "errors" in the texts, and he counters that these linguistic forms are recognized as legitimate by speakers of Acadian French and, thus, should be respected as such by Francophones outside of Acadie.

However, when I countered that linguistic norms established by the *Académie* are at the heart of such a debate, Raoul surprised me with the following comment:

(8) Ben, il faut, parce qu'avec toutes les variantes du français, il faut une police. Tu sais, sinon ça serait l'anarchie. Il faut des règles, comme un pays, un état de droit, ça lui prend un code civil, ça lui prend un code de lois. C'est ça la grammaire, mais c'est pas Dieu le père, c'est pas le pape infallible. Tu vois,

on peut le critiquer. Moi, j'ai rien contre un français standard policé, mais en création, qu'on me laisse libre.

In spite of his insistence that Acadian French be recognized as an authentic variety in *la Francophonie*, Raoul asserts that a “grammar police” is necessary given the multitude of varieties of French worldwide, or else “anarchy” would rule written French grammar. He does say that he considers the *Académie*'s standard not to be definitive in all circumstances, but simply a norm that an authentic global Francophone can adhere to or flout within artistic creation. Nonetheless, he affirms its vitality.

Raoul's reaction suggests that, just as Boudreau noted, the written form of *français standard* is the lingua franca among a diverse range of peoples, and competence in the standard affords a person a measure of linguistic capital, marking her legitimacy as an authentic participant in *la Francophonie*. For Nicole, Jacynthe, and Raoul, *français standard* serves to facilitate international communication and to access extra-regional markets, allowing them to be *le même* as Francophones worldwide (Boudreau, “Le français”).

Raoul's situation is somewhat unusual given that the written genre of poetry is associated more directly to the spoken language. For this reason, he persists in including traits of Acadian French in his own work and in the work that he publishes, marketed both locally and extra-regionally. In his writing and in his speech, he performs Acadian authenticity on the global Francophone marketplace, “reworking traditional symbolic resources in new ways” (Coupland 428). But there is always a question of how this performance is received. While the Luxembourgish editor he mentions in (7) admires the poetic license Raoul has taken, this very performance of

Acadian authenticity might also serve to validate the commodification of Acadian French in the linguistic marketplace of *la Francophonie*.

Discussion

In response to the first research question regarding these Acadian artists' dominant discourses of Francophone authenticity, the present analysis has shown, first, that these artists expect to be credited as authentic participants in the linguistic marketplace of *la Francophonie*, in relation both to spoken and to written French, just as Boudreau proposes. Yet their discourses related to spoken French indicate that outside of *Acadie* (both in Québec and in Europe), there are features of Acadian French which are considered inauthentic. In fact, Francophones from extra-regional spaces often treat Acadians as *l'autre*, and often as not even fellow Francophones. The artists I interviewed had two sorts of reactions to this phenomenon: indignation and accommodation. On the one hand, Philippe, Noël, and Raoul all express indignation for not being accorded Francophone authenticity that they feel is rightfully theirs in the plural space of *la Francophonie*. On the other hand, Samuel strategically accommodates his pronunciation to an international norm when performing outside of *Acadie*, perhaps because “the greater the speakers' need to gain another's social approval, the greater the degree of convergence there will be” (Giles et al. 21).

This analysis indicates, then, that on the linguistic marketplace of *la Francophonie*, spoken regional varieties of French, including Acadian French, continue to be afforded a lesser amount of linguistic capital than a standardized norm, whether it be Québécois French or a European variant such as Parisian French. While Boudreau proposes that participation in *la Francophonie* might enable Francophone minorities to shed their identity of *l'autre* to become *le même* and take part in a global

Francophone identity (“Le français” 120), these participants’ discourses of authenticity related to spoken French reveal that, even in this space conceived as plural, the performance of a homogenous Francophone identity is expected.

In terms of written French, Nicole, Jacynthe, and Raoul’s comments indicate that one needs a strong competence in a written standard in order to be credited with authenticity in the linguistic marketplace of *la Francophonie*. At the same time, Nicole and Raoul’s discourse indicates that regionalisms may be valued in written French that is destined for international spaces, particularly in literary creation, as a symbol of local authentic Francophone identities. It is not clear, however, whether the use of Acadian expressions might ultimately contribute to the international commodification of Acadian French. Ironically, while orthographic representations of Acadian expressions and pronunciations are valued in extra-regional spaces for their authenticity, it seems that the actual performance of such expressions outside of *Acadie* is often considered to be inauthentic.

Thus, the answer to the second research question (“Do their discourses reveal that other Francophones consider Acadian French to be a legitimate variety outside of *Acadie*?”) is not altogether clear. In the Canadian manifestation of *la Francophonie*, where the Québécois media are dominant and Québécois French is the legitimate language, Acadians are presented as an essentialized *autre*. In Europe, the story is much the same in regard to spoken French: Acadian French is not recognized as authentic. It seems generally that Acadian varieties of French are legitimate languages in extra-regional spaces only in relation to written artistic production, perhaps indicating their commodification and essentialization in *la Francophonie*’s linguistic marketplace (Heller, “Globalization”). Consequently, while in principle Francophones from all corners of *la Francophonie* celebrate the cultural and linguistic diversity of a

global Francophone authenticity, affording equal legitimacy to speakers of every variety of French, it turns out that, even still, “la France continue à peser d’un poids décisif” (Klinkenberg 805)—and in North America, Québec plays a similar role.

The present analysis does affirm Boudreau’s thesis in part: *la Francophonie* has indeed, at least partially, provided Acadian social actors with a way to transcend feelings of otherness to become *le même* as all members of *la Francophonie* through the use of written French (“Le français” 120). Nevertheless, these artists’ discourses of Francophone authenticity, imbued for the most part with linguistic security rather than insecurity, should not be taken as the dominant discourses among all Acadians, but rather as representing the front lines of social struggle. While the lack of recognition as authentic Francophones perturbs this group of social actors, members of the general Acadian public may be more prone to experience feelings of linguistic insecurity, which have long been documented in the Francophone world (Gueunier et al.; Boudreau and Dubois “Insécurité”; etc.), and which are eloquently expressed in this article’s opening quote taken from Maillet’s *La Sagouine*.

This analysis has shown how Acadian artists—and social actors—seek legitimacy as authentic participants in *la Francophonie*, evincing a struggle that is most certainly not unique to this Francophone minority. With globalization, *les petites communautés francophones* (Boudreau, “Le français”) on the periphery of *la Francophonie* face continued challenges related to Francophone authenticity, linguistic insecurity, and the preservation of local identities, all while resisting the commodification and essentialization of their language and culture.

To address challenges of this sort—challenges related to the present and future state of Francophone identity(ies) in the era of globalization—Dominique Wolton and a team of researchers compiled a detailed report for the *Organisation internationale*

de la francophonie. In this document, they emphasize the importance of recognizing and celebrating the cultural and linguistic diversity found within *la Francophonie*'s global community. The following excerpt is taken from their conclusions:

L'identité francophone est complexe à définir. **Sans doute mieux vaut-il parler d'identités francophones, et d'une sorte de fédération d'identités**⁶. Mais il est déjà important qu'existe cette idée d'une identité qui mêle patrimoine et avenir, langue et cultures, valeurs et connaissances. À l'origine de ces questions, cette langue qui ne cesse de s'élargir, de s'enrichir, et dont on ne souligne pas assez la diversité. **Les francophones ont du mal à reconnaître la richesse des langues françaises**, comme si cela menaçait cette identité fragile et réelle, alors que c'est sans doute le contraire. **Là comme ailleurs, il faut assurer [sic] la diversité et les contradictions de l'identité ne sont pas une menace, mais une chance, pour cette forme bien particulière d'identité collective.** (Wolton et al. 65)

In order to reach this objective, Wolton et al. stress that each Francophone educational institution should include a curriculum that emphasizes *la Francophonie*'s cultural diversity (59–60). I would add that such a curriculum should also include teaching on the linguistic diversity found in varieties of French worldwide, as Albert Valdman has long advocated (see “Comment gérer”), particularly in terms of oral comprehension (see Fox). Only through education—whether in Francophone institutions or where French is taught as a foreign language—will members of the Francophone public and learners of French come to understand that “Il en va du français comme de toute autre langue: il n'existe pas. [...] Ce qui existe, ce sont *des* français” (Klinkenberg 805), known not for their exoticism, but rather for their part in the colorful tapestry that makes up *la Francophonie*. It is only when this concept is truly embraced that

linguistic delegitimation among Francophones, and the insecurity it fosters, might eventually be eliminated, so that each Francophone and learner of French may be assured of her own authenticity, recognizing that, as one Acadian poet insisted, “Mon français est aussi bon que le vôtre!”

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY (CA)

Notes

¹I gratefully acknowledge the support of the Centre culturel Aberdeen’s members, associates, and administration, as well as that of Annette Boudreau and my colleagues at CRLA. I would like to thank two anonymous reviewers for their comments on an earlier draft of this article. This research was funded through the Canadian Studies Doctoral Research award, ICCS #625-4-05, the Julia Emerson Walther research scholarship offered by the Department of French and Italian at The University of Texas, and the Seaver Dean’s Research Grant at Pepperdine University.

²The spelling of the transcribed interview excerpts cited in this article is not modified to reflect Acadian pronunciation, for reasons not unlike those Philippe describes in this excerpt. I am following a convention established among Acadian French scholars during a roundtable discussion, *Université de Moncton*, 23 Sept. 2010.

³Perceptible pause.

⁴This may also be because Samuel is unable to negotiate communication with members of the audience as he might in a face-to-face interaction. My thanks to Reviewer 2’s insight.

⁵“Hale ta frame” is an expression from Chiac meaning roughly ‘drag yourself to.’ Chiac is a variety of Acadian French spoken in Southeastern New Brunswick; see Perrot for a detailed description.

⁶Bold letters indicate the author’s emphasis.

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