

2007

## Local norms and innovations within the system of locative prepositions in Cajun French

Sibylle Maria Noetzel

*Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool\\_dissertations](https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_dissertations)



Part of the [French and Francophone Language and Literature Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Noetzel, Sibylle Maria, "Local norms and innovations within the system of locative prepositions in Cajun French" (2007). *LSU Doctoral Dissertations*. 945.

[https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool\\_dissertations/945](https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_dissertations/945)

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at LSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in LSU Doctoral Dissertations by an authorized graduate school editor of LSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [gradetd@lsu.edu](mailto:gradetd@lsu.edu).

LOCAL NORMS AND INNOVATIONS  
WITHIN THE SYSTEM OF LOCATIVE PREPOSITIONS  
IN CAJUN FRENCH

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of French Studies

by  
Sibylle Noetzel  
B.A., University of Tübingen, Germany, 1991, 1995  
M.A., Louisiana State University, 2000  
May, 2007



© Copyright 2007

Sibylle Noetzel

All rights reserved

## FRONTISPIECE

Dancing couple at Red's Cajun Club, Kaplan, 1978. Photo taken from *Les Cadiens d'Asteur/Today's Cajuns*. Photographs by Philip Gould, Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, London, 133.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my family for their encouragement and steady support of this project. I want to thank my parents, Inge and Erich Ilg. Their acceptance of my plans was a valuable help in this project. I would also like to thank my husband Holger Nötzel for his motivation and patience.

My warm thanks go to my dissertation advisor, Dr. Sylvie Dubois, who was a constant source of inspiration and support in this project. Without her, this dissertation would not have been written. I want to include my committee members, Dr. Hugh Buckingham, Dr. Bernard Cerquiglini, and Dr. Caroline Nash, who had an important part in bringing this project to a good end. I also wish to extend my thanks to former professors at LSU, especially Dr. Beatrice Dupuy and Dr. Michael Hegarty. My thanks include the directors of the Curriculum Enhancement project of the French Department, Dr. Adelaide Russo, Dr. Frank Anselmo, and Dr. Jeff Humphries. The motivation and support I received generously from all these people have allowed me to continue on my way.

Writing a dissertation is a process that includes more than just writing a text. I want to thank all the people who have helped and encouraged me in this endeavor. My thanks go to my academic institution, Louisiana State University, and to my department, the Department of French Studies. Its faculty, staff, and graduate students helped make this journey an enjoyable one. I would also like to include my friends in my thanks, and especially Connelita Foy, who has volunteered her time to proofread my manuscript.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
LIST OF TABLES.....	vii
ABSTRACT.....	viii
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER	
1 THE LINGUISTIC DATA.....	9
1.1 Corpus of Cajun French.....	9
1.2 Gold Corpus.....	12
1.3 Transcription Method.....	14
1.4 Five Generations of Cajun French Speakers.....	15
1.5 Linguistic Ability.....	20
1.6 Locality.....	23
1.7 The Subsample.....	25
1.8 Other Studies of North American French Varieties.....	28
2 LOCATIVE PREPOSITIONS IN CAJUN FRENCH.....	37
2.1 Historical Overview of Important Prepositions.....	38
2.2 Location of Persons.....	39
2.3 Location of Buildings.....	45
2.4 Location of Land Surfaces.....	48
2.5 Location of Countries.....	52
2.6 Location of Cities.....	59
2.7 Location of Ville.....	62
2.8 Location of Chemin/Rue.....	64
2.9 Location of Water Surfaces.....	66
2.10 Summary.....	69
3 DISTRIBUTION OF LOCATIVE PREPOSITIONS.....	72
3.1 Overall Frequency of the Data.....	73
3.2 Distribution for Persons.....	74
3.3 Distribution for Buildings.....	76
3.4 Distribution for Land Surfaces.....	78
3.5 Distribution for Countries.....	79
3.6 Distribution for Cities.....	81
3.7 Distribution for Ville.....	83

3.8 Distribution for Chemin/Rue.....	83
3.9 Distribution for Water Surfaces.....	84
3.10 Local or Innovative Forms?.....	85
4 LINGUISTIC FACTORS AND THEIR EFFECTS ON THE LOCAL NORMS AND THE INNOVATIVE NORMS.....	88
4.1 The Effects of Lexical Conditioning.....	89
4.2 The Effects of Determination.....	94
4.3 The Effects of Static and Motion Verbs.....	95
4.4 Summary.....	100
5 SOCIAL FACTORS AND THEIR EFFECTS ON THE LOCAL AND INNOVATIVE NORMS.....	103
5.1 Maintenance of Local Norms.....	104
5.2 The Emergence of Innovative Norms.....	109
5.3 Determining the Source of the Innovations.....	114
5.4 Language Restriction as a Generational Pattern.....	119
5.5 Who are the Innovators and Adopters?.....	120
5.6 Geographical Variation of Local Norms.....	122
5.7 Summary.....	125
CONCLUSION.....	128
REFERENCES.....	138
APPENDIX	
A EXAMPLES OF OTHER LOCATIVE CONTEXTS.....	147
B PERMISSION LETTERS.....	152
VITA.....	154

## LIST OF TABLES

1. Measures for MDI.....	21
2. Overview of selected interviews in the subsample.....	26
3. Overall distribution of the locative prepositions in their respective categories.....	73
4. Local versus innovative forms.....	86
5. Effects of lexical conditioning on local and innovative norms.....	90
6. Effects of determination on local and innovative norms.....	95
7. Effects of static/motion verbs on local and innovative norms.....	98
8. Synopsis of the linguistic effects found for both the local and innovative locative prepositions.....	101
9. Maintenance of local norms through the generations.....	105
10. Innovative forms and age within the Cajun speech community.....	110
11. Innovative forms and age for persons, buildings, land surfaces, and water surfaces.....	111
12. Innovative forms and age for À (country) and EN/SUR/ DANS (city).....	112
13. Systemic and extralinguistic evidence for interference-induced and internally-motivated innovations in the locative system.....	116
14. Attritional changes across generations.....	121
15. Geographical effects on local norms.....	123



## ABSTRACT

Cajun French presents variable use of linguistic features, as any other variety of French does. Many features of Cajun French are considered to deviate from the French norm or triggered by attrition although fluent speakers of Cajun French have always used them. In this sociolinguistic study, we analyze the use of locative prepositions. We add two important dimensions to existing studies: real-time evidence for a diachronic descriptive perspective, and a methodological tool, measuring the degree of exposure to French (MDI). This approach allows us to establish the local prepositional norm of Cajun French and phenomena due to attrition. Large amounts of data for the study of eight categories of locative prepositions are taken from the Cajun French corpus constructed by Dubois in 1997, and also a few interviews conducted by Gold, Louder and Waddell in 1975 are integrated. Our first goal is to determine the overall distribution of prepositions in Cajun French. We discuss their usage in different varieties of French. We show which prepositions are part of the local prepositional norm and which ones are infrequent, sporadic usages that belong to the innovative norm in Cajun French. As a second goal, we present the complex linguistic conditioning system for prepositions in Cajun French, which the fluent and almost all restricted speakers respect. The third goal is to study the effects of the social conditioning. We demonstrate that the local norms are well-maintained usages, while the innovative ones are due to language change. We found that some innovations originate in the combined effect of linguistic attrition and change over time, while others have been introduced early as localized usages. Although the young generation shows the highest usage of these forms, they are not responsible for their

introduction, but adopt them. Using systemic and extralinguistic criteria, we determined the direct interference from English and internal motivation as sources of the innovations. While geographic variation overall is weak, we notice a more pronounced usage of a few long-standing forms in Avoyelles parish as compared to St. Landry and Lafourche, the two other regions under study.



## INTRODUCTION

Over the last decades, the study of minority languages has come to the attention of researchers. One of the pioneers, Nancy Dorian argues that “with only something over two hundred nations presently in existence, however, and with most of them intent on maintaining the territorial and political status quo, it seems clear that most of the world’s 6,000 or so languages, insofar as they survive at all, will remain the languages of peoples who are minorities within a relatively small number of nation-states” (Dorian 2005, 438). French-speaking Cajun communities figure into this minority language setting. Cajun French is still spoken by multigenerational rural communities in southern Louisiana. However, unstable bilingualism and a language shift towards English, the dominant language of the majority, also characterize them. These Cajun communities provide a perfect opportunity to study several issues with regard to bilingualism and language loss. Researchers studying minority language communities, especially those in rural settings, have shown “the existence of distinct norms of speaking within the same speech community” (Romaine 1982, 22, see also Dorian 1981; Gal 1984; King 1989; King and Nadasdi 1994; Mougeon and Nadasdi 1998; Silva-Corvalán 1994). Moreover, they argue that speakers with different kinds of linguistic abilities demonstrate variable linguistic behaviors.

Cajun French derives from the variety of French spoken in the Acadian colonies in the 18th and 19th century, which is closely related to French dialects spoken in the Southwest of France. Cajun French is intelligible to French native speakers and is similar to other varieties of nonstandard French spoken in North America. Cajun French can be

described as a homogenous system that is “expressed as a sociohistorically determined set of heterogeneous behaviors. The variation it manifests is structured, coherent and linked to community sociodemographics” (Dubois 1995, 8). Cajun French is different from other varieties of French because it developed its own phonological, morphological, and syntactic features, due to geographic isolation from Acadia (Nova Scotia, Canada) and contact with other varieties of French spoken in Louisiana, although no one has yet shown to what extent.

The most voluminous literature on Cajun French to date has been on the lexicon (glossaries from a number of Cajun towns and parishes dating from 1894 to 1969, dictionaries, grammar books, phrasebooks, CDs or online databases: Bruce and Gipson 2002; Daigle 1984; LaFleur 2005, 1999; Klingler and LaFleur 2002-; Landreneau 1989; Lavaud-Grassin 1988; Faulk 1977; Rojas et al. 2003; Whatley and Jannise 1978).

Given the bilingual situation, many studies have focused on language shift (code switching, borrowing, etc.: Blyth 1997; Picone 1997; Valdman 1994) and language planning and standardization (Ancelet 1988; Ancelet and LaFleur 2005; Brown 2005, 1993; Dubois 2002; Guidry 1981, 1982; Henry 1990). Since the 30s, there have been several descriptive studies, mostly treating phonology or morphology (Brandon 1955; Conwell and Juilland 1963; Phillips 1936; Guilbeau 1950). Many of them are M.A. or Ph.D. theses, which present a fragmentary picture of the Cajun French linguistic system. The linguistic studies are either prescriptive or descriptive, but there is no real linguistic analysis. Scientific methodology is rudimentary at best, selecting a few informants from several Cajun regions. None of them have tackled the phenomenon of linguistic attrition,

with the notable exception of Rottet (2005, 2001, 1995) who studied the French spoken by Cajuns and Houma Indians in Terrebonne Parish, Louisiana.

The quasi absence of systematic and empirical studies on Cajun French can be attributed to the lack of diachronic data. Since such data is difficult to obtain, researchers tend to adopt a synchronic perspective, which does not allow them to determine language changes over time. This sociolinguistic study is inspired by Dubois' ongoing project on Cajun French and is based on her extensive fieldwork (Dubois 1995, 1997a, 2001, 2005). Her database allows for an apparent time analysis of three generations of speakers. In addition, materials obtained by Gold, Louder, and Waddell in the 70s give us access to older generations. Based on such comprehensive data, we will investigate one important morphosyntactic feature of Cajun French. Our focus is the variable locative prepositional system, which we will analyze in a quantitative way following the Labovian approach. The variants under study have been identified respecting Labov's principle of 'accountable reporting' according to which all possible contexts of variable usage have to be located. One important goal here, absent in earlier linguistic studies, is the establishment of an endonorm or local norm that can coincide or not with the standard norm (exonorm). We believe that knowing the endonorm is necessary since Cajun French is an orally transmitted language that over centuries developed away from direct pressures of the standard variety. Another crucial point is determining the overall frequency of the variants and the linguistic conditioning that regulates their usage. The latter is all the more significant in a setting of unstable bilingualism where not every community member might follow the rules (King and Nadasdi 1994). Uncovering the social conditioning is a prerequisite in determining important aspects of the language.

The variationist framework allows the researcher to distinguish the linguistic productions of speakers representative of several social categories. In this study they include age, command of the language, and locality.

As mentioned, we will use material drawn from the Cajun French/Cajun English Corpus (Dubois 1997b) and the Gold, Louder, and Waddell interviews (1975). This material encompasses five generations of Cajun French speakers spanning a period of one hundred years, adding a dimension of real time to existing studies. The Dubois corpus was also constructed to address the important role of language attrition, an issue rarely conceptualized and often confused with language change. We used a methodological procedure designed by Dubois (Dubois 1999, 2001): the market dialect index (afterwards MDI). This index takes into account exposure to Cajun French and is the ultimate measure of linguistic ability.

Our sample of Cajun French from the large Dubois corpus derives from the linguistic material obtained in hour-long recording sessions of 79 individuals. French-native community members lead the interviews with open questions in order to warrant an informal speech style. The speakers can be divided by generation (ancestors, elders, old, middle-aged, and young speakers), linguistic ability (the achievers, the core members, and the restricted speakers), and parish residency (Avoyelles, St. Landry, Lafourche). To determine the variable use of locative prepositions in Cajun French, we selected eight locative contexts which correspond to different grammatical aspects of location in French. We will demonstrate that variation between all forms was very frequent before the 20th century, that there was a lot of free variation and no strict rule existed. Since these prepositional forms belong to the closed set of words such as articles

and determiners, they are typically short and frequently used. They also have a very broad meaning and are multifunctional. Only locative prepositions expressing ‘movement to’ or ‘location at/in’ were considered.

The eight locative categories include prepositional forms with persons (either a person’s dwelling or someone’s place of work, e.g., *CHEZ ma mère*, *AU docteur*), buildings (e.g., *À L’école*, *DANS l’école*), land surfaces (e.g., *AU/DANS le clos*), countries (e.g., *DANS la France*, *À LA France*), cities (e.g., *À Eunice*, *AU Lac Charles*), the word *ville* (e.g., *EN ville*, *À LA ville*), the expressions *chemin/rue* (e.g., *SUR la rue*, *DANS la rue*), and water surfaces (e.g., *AU lac*, *SUR le lac*). Examining the grammatical rules that prevail in these categories is an important aspect of this study. We want to know if the prepositional usage in a locative category is regulated, if so, how, and if particular rules would apply to more than one single category.

We will show the distribution of all the forms possible in these contexts in Cajun French (*À*, *AU*, *À LA*, *DANS*, *EN*, *SUR*, and *CHEZ*). Rather than compare these variants to the standard variety, the latter having no functional role in Louisiana, we will focus on their historical usage. We will also present their usage in several varieties of French spoken in North America. This comparison will help us to establish the status of the locative prepositions. Once the community norms are established, we will distinguish between the local norms and innovative forms, the latter being sporadic usages not shared by all community members.

In chapter 1, we present the two corpora in detail. We explain how the sample was chosen in order to integrate the social categories, which are then minutely described. We will add here an overview of related studies on North American French varieties with

a focus on the sociolinguistic framework. This background knowledge is helpful in evaluating the linguistic production in these vernaculars (chapter 3). We will learn, for example, that language restriction in general is more widespread in Ontarian French than in Acadian or Québec French.

In chapter 2, we present the locative categories. We will explain the usage of the prepositions in standard French and in the historical varieties of French. To get a better understanding of the locative prepositional system in Cajun French, we also give here a short description of all the expressions we found. At the end of this chapter, we will briefly present several locative categories that were initially considered, but could not be further analyzed, because they either show invariant usage or are very small. One of these is the media category, which demonstrates invariant usage of *SUR* (*SUR la télé*).

The quantitative analysis begins with the next chapters. The statistical software Statview for Macintosh has been used for the manipulation of the data. Chapter 3 concentrates on the distribution of the variants in Cajun French and in the bigger context of historical and North American varieties of French, which allows us to establish the local and innovative forms in Cajun French. For example, *SUR ma mère* (to/at my mother's) in the person category has proven to be a historical variant of French whose usage is still very much alive in Canadian French varieties but the expression *À ma mère* (to/at my mother's) is an innovative Cajun form that is rarely attested in other varieties. Altogether, we have found twenty local and thirteen innovative usages.

In chapter 4, we will illustrate the highly complex system of the linguistic conditioning, which regulates the usage of the forms. We take into consideration three important linguistic factors to determine the source of the variable use of locative

prepositions: lexical constraints, determiners, and motion/static verbs. Many but not all of these constraints are based on the grammatical rules that govern the prepositional usage of each category in standard French. Since lexical categories are numerous and arbitrary, the lexical constraint is specific to each category. The two other constraints, however, especially the verbal one, apply systematically to several categories. As an example, we show that the motion verb constraint conditions the usage of *À* or *AU* with persons, buildings, land surfaces, the words *chemin/rue*, and water surfaces (e.g., *aller AU docteur*).

Chapter 5 focuses on the social description of the multiple forces influencing the behavior of the speech community. As expected in a setting of unstable bilingualism, linguistic restriction and age play an important role. Two social groups, the restricted speakers and the young speakers, are responsible for the introduction of innovations in Cajun French. ‘What are the new forms?’, ‘who is responsible for their introduction?’, and ‘where do they come from?’ are important questions that are discussed here. With regard to the local forms, we found that neither age nor the MDI conditions their linguistic production. They are maintained across all generations regardless of linguistic ability. What we found is that locality plays a role in their preservation: Avoyelles parish for instance is a stronghold of some conservative forms (e.g., *DANS la Louisiane*, *SUR ma mère*).

This study is not a simple description of the locative prepositions in Cajun French. It concentrates on the linguistic and social forces at work in the community. Two results are especially noteworthy: the behavior of the restricted speakers and the influence of English with regard to new formations. Restriction manifests itself not as a simplification

of the system, as is widely assumed (Andersen 1982; King and Nadasdi 1994), but as an expansion of it, involving the creation of new forms and new linguistic constraints while maintaining the local forms. The systematic maintenance of local forms and the creation of innovative forms are completely new results with regard to linguistic attrition. We will also show that not every innovation in Cajun French is directly attributable to the interference from English, as often claimed. Some innovative forms are introduced early and are due to a linguistic transfer from other locative contexts in Cajun French. Their origin is within the system (internal motivation), and English, in the setting of subtractive bilingualism, is only indirectly responsible for these changes. In future studies, researchers might want to determine whether the tendencies we found prevail in a more exhaustive analysis of all locative systems (including for example parts of body, objects, measurements, locomotion, etc.) or in an analysis of another prepositional subsystem such as temporal prepositions.



# **CHAPTER 1**

## **THE LINGUISTIC DATA**

This chapter begins with the description of two big corpora: the Cajun French Corpus and the Gold corpus. Their interviews make up the source for the subsample, which is the basis of the sociolinguistic analysis of this thesis. Then, the transcription method of these interviews is briefly shown. The following sections concentrate on important aspects for the selection of the subsample. First, in order to study language change, it is important to distinguish carefully all generations of Cajun French speakers. Second, for the study of language attrition, it is imperative to include speakers representing different levels of linguistic ability in the study. Three types of speakers are identified: the achievers, the community core members, and the restricted speakers. Third, we decided to include several localities in our study of language change. One parish could show a particular usage, which could indicate the origin or spread of a new or old form. Avoyelles, Lafourche, and St. Landry have been selected as representatives of the prairie and coastal parishes. The actual subsample with its 86 speakers is then presented, followed by a description of comparable corpora and studies on French varieties in the North American context. It is important to give the background information for these studies since their variable prepositional usage will help us to interpret the use of locative prepositions in Cajun French.

### **1.1 CORPUS OF CAJUN FRENCH**

Before establishing the Cajun French corpus, the project director, Sylvie Dubois, did a number of preliminary studies on the Cajun community, such as an evaluation of

the 1990 U.S. Census data, a pilot questionnaire, and a comprehensive social survey. The results are discussed in different articles (see e.g., Dubois 1995, 1997a, 1998; Dubois and Melançon 1997; Dubois and Horvath 1998). These preliminary studies allow this researcher to select several important social factors in the Cajun community.

To yield more information about the community, Dubois and her research team administered an elaborate questionnaire to approximately 1,440 people, containing 54 open and multiple-choice questions. The end result was the establishment of a so-called social survey, which, among other things, permitted to distinguish the significant age groups for the community (young: 20-40, middle-aged: 40-60, old: 60 and older). Also, the survey established the more popular interview topics for the Cajun community, which served as the basis for the interview questions of the Cajun French corpus. Before the social survey was administered, a pilot questionnaire consisting of eight open-ended questions was distributed to 80 persons across the Cajun triangle (that is the Cajun French speaking region of Louisiana, located in the southern part of the state). Based on the answers received, a more elaborate questionnaire was developed, using some of the original formulations of the pilot questionnaire. The questions and formulations used for the Cajun French corpus interviews thus have been amply researched. Due to familiarity with the community, Dubois was able to determine its core members, who are the informants of choice for the Cajun French corpus.

The census proved useful in determining communities and cities with a high density of French-speaking people, for finding a high number of people with Acadian ancestry, and in locating places showing diversity in their geographical, social, economical, and urban structure. Dubois chose the socially and vernacularly distinct

parishes of Avoyelles, Lafourche, St. Landry, and Vermillion for her study. Locality, that is the selection of the places to be investigated, is therefore one important factor in Dubois' research.

Another advantage of these preliminary studies was the acquisition of knowledge of the social organization of the Cajun community, such as the role of women and men at home and in public, social networks, occupation, levels of education, language profiles, locality, etc., all of them leading to a better understanding of the community and, finally, to an effective organization of the entire Cajun French database.

The Cajun French corpus is based on approximately 300 hours of recorded speech from four different parishes, resulting in a database containing over 3 million words. The interviews consist of three different recording sessions conducted by three different interviewers. Speech production is made up of approximately 40 minutes of English and 110 minutes of Cajun French. The first session consisted in the solicitation of English speech production and was conducted by a native interviewer of Louisiana, speaking Southern American English. The interviewer of the second session was a Cajun French speaker from the local community with whom the interviewees were expected to use the Cajun French vernacular. The last session was conducted by an interviewer speaking standard French, which in turn was thought to be conducive to the production of a more formal style of French used by Cajun French speakers. The first session in English was basically intended to create a relaxed atmosphere between the interviewer and the interviewee, since their language choice in dealing with outsiders is English. It also helped the interviewers to obtain more information about the interviewee. The second session of interviews serves as the basis for this study. It consists of open-ended

questions, encouraging the interviewee to produce a lot of speech in an informal, vernacular style. Questions of a sociodemographic nature were asked about family topics (residence, parents' origins, education) and various themes such as cooking, music, games, leisure, festivals, economy, health issues, and violence.

For each of the four Cajun French communities, 30 speakers were interviewed, for a total of 120 interviewees. The speakers were chosen according to different factors: community (four parishes), gender (male and female), and age (old, middle-old, and young). To include one speaker of each parish, gender group, and age group, 24 speakers are needed, each one filling what is called a basic cell. Since the Cajun French Corpus encompasses 120 interviews (sampled according to the stratifying criteria), this means that five speakers fill each basic cell. Given these numbers, the interviews produce sufficient data to secure statistical validity. In addition to the interviews, information sheets were created, giving additional background information and comments on the informants and the atmosphere, success, or flow of the interview. The information sheets combined with the information from the interviews constitute an independent means of control (e.g., status as core members of the Cajun French community, linguistic fluency) and they can also provide help for the interpretation of the linguistic data.

## **1.2 GOLD CORPUS**

The Gold corpus interviews are part of a larger household survey on the social structures of the Cajun community. This database is an invaluable tool since it allows for the study of language material produced as far back as 1892, adding a real time dimension to the study. This research project (Projet Louisiane) began in 1975 in South Louisiana, sponsored at that time and consecutively by different institutions (Université

Laval, Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and Ford Foundation). The researchers involved in this project besides Gerald Gold from York University were Eric Waddell and Dean Louder from Laval University. “The overall objective of these interviews was to serve as a pilot study on the organization of Cajun households, their relative integration into American society and their mobilization into Louisiana’s French Movement, and hence to guide work which continued (1977-1978) in two rural ‘hearths’ of Cajun culture, and in three urban areas” (Gold 1980, 64). In the Mamou area (neighboring St. Landry parish), for example, ten neighborhoods were selected, encompassing 205 homes. They included whites (83%), blacks (15%), and Creoles (2%). Household heads of every third house in the neighborhood were studied since pretests had confirmed that in this way, the relevant age groups and occupations were uncovered. Having a social orientation, these interviews are roughly comparable to Dubois’ Cajun French Corpus, although they are not constructed to study language usage in the first place.

The interviewers are Canadian French speakers who set up a relaxed atmosphere and relatively informal interview style. The interviews were conducted in the home of the interviewees and the interviewers accommodated the informants by giving them enough time to answer the questions, not interrupting them, and allowing for breaks when needed.

The interviews last for approximately two hours and are conducted following a relatively detailed question catalog. Although allowing for free speech and conversational parts, the interviewer always goes back to his catalog, some of his

questions yielding only yes or no answers. However, the selected topics are a good match with those from the Cajun French Corpus, including important aspects of the Cajun community such as questions about nuclear and extended family members, places of residence, occupational patterns, language use, financial status, places of business, other social groups (*gens de couleur*, people of color), contacts with neighbors, hobbies, cultural issues and traditions (*boucherie*, butchering, *coup de main*, helping hand, *bal*, Cajun music, etc.), and changes in lifestyle over time.

### 1.3 TRANSCRIPTION METHOD

Although the data analysis is based on the listening of the recorded speech, the transcriptions are an important mnemotechnical vehicle for an efficient manipulation of the data. All interviews are transcribed in their entirety. The interviews contain utterances of the interviewee and the interviewer that are for the most part produced in French, but also include English borrowings and stretches of speech in English. Given the abundance of the material, it proved practical to use a word for word transcription method as opposed to either a phonemic or a phonetic transcription. While the transcripts follow mostly standard French orthography, Dubois adopted less formal orthographic conventions when necessary (such as *l'autre* for *leur*, their, *nous-autres* for *nous*, we, *asteur* for *à cette heure*, today, literal meaning: at this hour). Our reference for local lexical usages is Daigle's dictionary (e.g., *factrie*, factory or *grocerie*, grocery). It is an advantage of the orthographical transcription method that it cuts down significantly on the time used for this process. The time spent on this task is still considerable, since on average, one minute of recorded speech translates to about ten minutes of transcribing time.

#### **1.4 FIVE GENERATIONS OF CAJUN FRENCH SPEAKERS IN THE SUBSAMPLE**

The following generations of Cajun French speakers have been identified: 1) the monolingual ancestors (1890-1901); 2) the French-dominant elders (1905-1915) and the bilingual elders (1909-1914); 3) the old generation (1916-1933); 4) the middle-aged generation (1934-1951); and 5) the young generation (1953-1978). The following description of these generations is based on Dubois and Noetzel (2005, 132-133).

The ancestors are born between 1890 and 1901 and have basically no knowledge of English. Three speakers represent this generation, they are all women from St. Landry parish. Gold's research team conducted these interviews, with the exception of Marie's interview, which was conducted by a family member (all speakers are referred to by pseudonyms). These women had either no schooling or only very little (only one of them briefly attending elementary school). Some of them learned to write in French with the help of their mother or other members of their family. Their husbands knew some English, which was only used outside the house for very limited purposes (business dealings). Following the footsteps of their parents, the ancestors worked all of their lives in the fields. All the members of their family, their children, and their friends spoke Cajun French. Their variety of Cajun French represents the oldest oral representation of the language that we have. It gives us access to the local norms that were vigorous in the Cajun community during a time when the vitality of Cajun French was still at its zenith.

The elders with French as the dominant language are born between 1905 and 1915. Three women and four men represent this generation in the subsample. All four parishes are included. Almost equal parts of the interviews are drawn from the Cajun French Corpus and the Gold corpus. The elders learned English relatively late in life and

preferred to speak French. They did not attend school for a very long period of time (two to five years maximum) and their attendance was often sporadic, especially for the male speakers, who at a very young age had to help their fathers during the harvest. Although some speakers have a higher educational background (Liliane from Avoyelles parish even finished school and knows English well), others such as Léonie from Vermillion are more representative of this group. She never went to school and claims to have learned English “when somebody come...and you have to talk”. One speaker from this generation, Abel, was practically monolingual and cannot even write his own name. Those individuals that did not become farmers worked in either the fishing industry or for one of the oil companies. Their spouses and all of their children spoke French. The bilingual elders are speakers born around the same time (1909-1914). Five women from three parishes (Avoyelles, Lafourche, Vermillion) represent this group in the subsample. Four of these interviews are from the Cajun French Corpus and only one is from the Gold corpus. The mother tongue of the bilingual elders is French. In general, they spent a considerable time in school learning English (from five years minimum up to the completion of high school). These speakers have a more profound knowledge of English, all of them know how to read and write in it. In spite of their abilities in English, several of these speakers use exclusively French in their daily life. They speak French with all of the members of their family and the majority of them have raised their children speaking Cajun French. However, in contrast with the oldest children of this generation, the younger children do not speak the language as well. The generation of the bilingual elders constitutes the first group of Cajuns who speak English fluently in our corpus.



Some of these speakers often use English loan words when speaking French, contrary to the elders for whom French is the dominant language.

The old generation of Dubois' corpus was born between 1916 and 1933. Our sample includes 23 men and women from three parishes (Avoyelles, St. Landry, and Lafourche). They, more than the preceding generation, were intensively subjected to the economic and social pressures of English. Without exception, these individuals learned English while very young and mastered it perfectly. During the 1930s, Louisiana's economic and linguistic politics had a considerable impact on Cajun communities. Notably, the start of compulsory education began in 1916 and the abolishment of French instruction occurred in 1921. The Cajuns quickly learned the new linguistic rule imposed by the Anglophone majority: only the English language will lead to work and to a better salary. Contrary to their predecessors in the Cajun community, the old speakers use English in all the situations of daily life outside the family network. For those Cajuns who married Anglophones, the language of family life became English rather than French. Almost all of the old speakers raised their children using both languages but the youngest children generally responded in English. The old generation, more than earlier generations, was profoundly subjected to the consequences of linguistic imperialism. Their first language became devalued and their variety of English was ridiculed.

After World War II, several changes (e.g., the expansion of education, the decline in agriculture, the development of the oil industry, etc.) transformed South Louisiana, particularly the economic situation on which the Cajun community depended. Twenty-four men and women from three parishes (Avoyelles, St. Landry, and Lafourche) represent the generation of the middle-aged Cajuns (born between 1934 and 1951). They

grew up during the postwar period, cultivating the financial and social benefits of the changes taking place. They were conscious very early of the discredit attributed to Cajun French and the stigma attached to the Cajun culture. Very logically, they quickly assimilated into the Anglophone American culture. The majority of these speakers were raised using both languages. They preferred to speak English with their brothers and sisters and used both languages with their parents. As adults, they chose to speak English at home and to raise their children only in English. Much more educated than their parents, some speakers are college graduates and their variety of English resembles the English spoken in non-Cajun communities in Louisiana. Their linguistic behavior reflects the many pressures directed at the Cajun community to conform to the behavior and the attitudes of the dominant group. This generation promptly rejected the usage of French in favor of English.

During the 1960s, the number of Cajun French speakers rapidly declined and the cultural assimilation was well underway. Ironically, it is at this time that the Cajun culture began to be celebrated, even going so far as to greatly influence the political agenda of Louisiana. The state adopted a series of laws aimed at encouraging the usage and preservation of the French language. Louisiana declared itself bilingual (although French is not mentioned in the constitution), the instruction of French as a second language expanded, and an international network was built with the goal of developing relations with other Francophone countries. The political elite in charge of promoting the renaissance of French was composed of white Francophiles who were monolingual English speakers. This elite chose standard French as the language of instruction rather

than one of the local varieties, wrongly thinking that only the knowledge of the standard model would permit interaction with Francophone countries (Ancelet 1988; Henry 1990).

This renaissance strongly inspired the youngest speakers of our corpus (born between 1953 and 1978). In the subsample, 24 men and women from Avoyelles, St. Landry, and Lafourche represent this generation. They are proud of being Cajun now that the Cajun identity has become not only positive but also desirable. They also benefit from the economic development of industries in Louisiana (oil, manufacturing, and tourism). However, this cultural renaissance did not help to impede the decline of Cajun French, since its usage is no longer considered necessary from an economic or identifying point of view (Dubois and Melançon 1997, 86). Ultimately, the Cajuns born at the end of the 1950s no longer speak French. Moreover, the knowledge of standard French by a minority of young people in immersion programs is too weak to qualify them as speakers. It is important to realize that the young Cajun French speakers that make up our sample represent the exception that confirms the norm. The majority of them learned Cajun French because their grandparents raised them or because they grew up in the middle of a compact social network very isolated from the large population centers of New Orleans or Baton Rouge. Although they may be bilingual, these young speakers interact almost entirely in English with their parents and members of their immediate family. They are conscious of being the last native speakers in their community and they realize that their variety of French shows, more than the French of earlier generations, important signs of linguistic attrition (Dubois 2001).

## 1.5 LINGUISTIC ABILITY

The methodological tool called the MDI (market dialect index, created by Dubois 1999, 2001) allows us to distinguish three different levels of linguistic ability in Cajun French: 1) the achievers with an elevated MDI index; 2) the core members of the community with a medium MDI; and 3) the restricted speakers with a low MDI. This distinction applies only to the old, middle-aged, and young generations of Dubois' corpus; the ancestors and elders are all very fluent speakers.

Sankoff and Laberge (1978) adapted the concept of the market dialect index (a sociolinguistic notion first used by Bourdieu and Boltanski and called *le marché linguistique*, see Chambers 1995, 177-185) and defined it as “an index which measures specifically how speakers' economic activity, taken in its widest sense, requires or is necessarily associated with, competence in the legitimized language (or standard, elite, educated, etc., language)” (Sankoff and Laberge 1978, 239). Dubois is the only researcher who has designed a methodological procedure to distinguish Cajun speakers who have an excellent ability in French from those who have suffered from a lack of exposure to Cajun French. In her studies, the MDI represents a social factor, which predicts a speaker's linguistic behavior, independently from linguistic judgment of his speech. Since the Cajun French language is perceived as a symbolic capital, a high or low exposure to French will influence a speaker's linguistic production.

The following description of Cajun French speakers with varying degrees of linguistic ability is based on Dubois and Noetzel (2005, 133-134). In this study, values of the market dialect index range from 1 to 8. The value assigned to each speaker in Dubois' Cajun French Corpus has been established independently of the speaker's speech

(contrary to Rottet) and is based on several factors resulting in placement in different subdivisions. The criteria considered for establishing the MDI groups are shown in the table 1. Based on this information, the speakers can be matched to eight different

Table 1. Measures for MDI (market dialect index, cited in Dubois and Noetzel 2005, 134).

<p>1) Reported initial language learning experience. Speakers grew up in a home where French was spoken either exclusively or most of the time (high score), one in which both French and English were spoken (medium score), or one in which English was spoken exclusively or most of the time (low score);</p> <p>2) Reported language used more frequently with members of the nuclear family, i.e., at home with spouses and children, if applicable;</p> <p>3) Reported language used more frequently with members of the extended family, i.e., parents and grandparents as well as older relatives (aunts and uncles);</p> <p>4) Reported language used most frequently in routine interactions such as at work or with members of the community (friends);</p> <p>5) Reported history of French background with respect to an individual's education, e.g., French and English as the medium of instruction versus English only for the older generation, French learned or not learned at school for the younger generation;</p> <p>6) Reported language histories of the spouses and parents: e.g., they were raised in English and never learned French, they grew up mostly speaking English but learned French, they have spoken French all their life, they learned the school-taught variety of French or they are non-Cajun but native French speakers;</p> <p>7) Professional usage of French, e.g., radio announcer, French teacher, Cajun French musician or singer, reporter for local newspaper, or Cajun French advocate for local or wider organizations.</p>
---

subdivisions, which are finally divided into three groups (high, medium, and low MDI value). The degree of exposure was calculated on the basis of the cumulative scores of these criteria.

For each language and education measure, French only was given the highest score, whereas English only was attributed the lowest one. The use of both languages fell in between. Regarding the linguistic histories of spouses and parents as well as the professional usage of French, Dubois used a measuring system ranging from 0.1 (the weakest) to 0.15 (the strongest). Thus, a detailed number of eight subdivisions reflecting the degree of exposure naturally emerged from the statistical analyses. They can be roughly divided into three levels of exposure for statistical purposes, labeled ‘high’, ‘medium’, and ‘low’. Subsequently, this index was added to the database as an independent factor.

The MDI allows us to distinguish fluent speakers who are the inherent members of the Cajun French community from other speakers situated at the two extreme ends of the exposition scale. The medium exposure (MDI value 3-6) symbolizes the fluent speakers: they learned Cajun French from their parents who spoke this variety as their first language and they converse in French on a regular basis with members of their family and sometimes use French at work or with their friends. Their way of speaking reflects the community norm. The fluent Cajun French speakers who were also exposed to standard French through classes at school or who make professional usage of French (e.g., teachers or radio hosts) received the highest MDI value (1-2) and are called the achievers. Those with a low MDI (7-8) are considered restricted speakers rather than semi-speakers. They, like the other speakers, use Cajun French in various social and

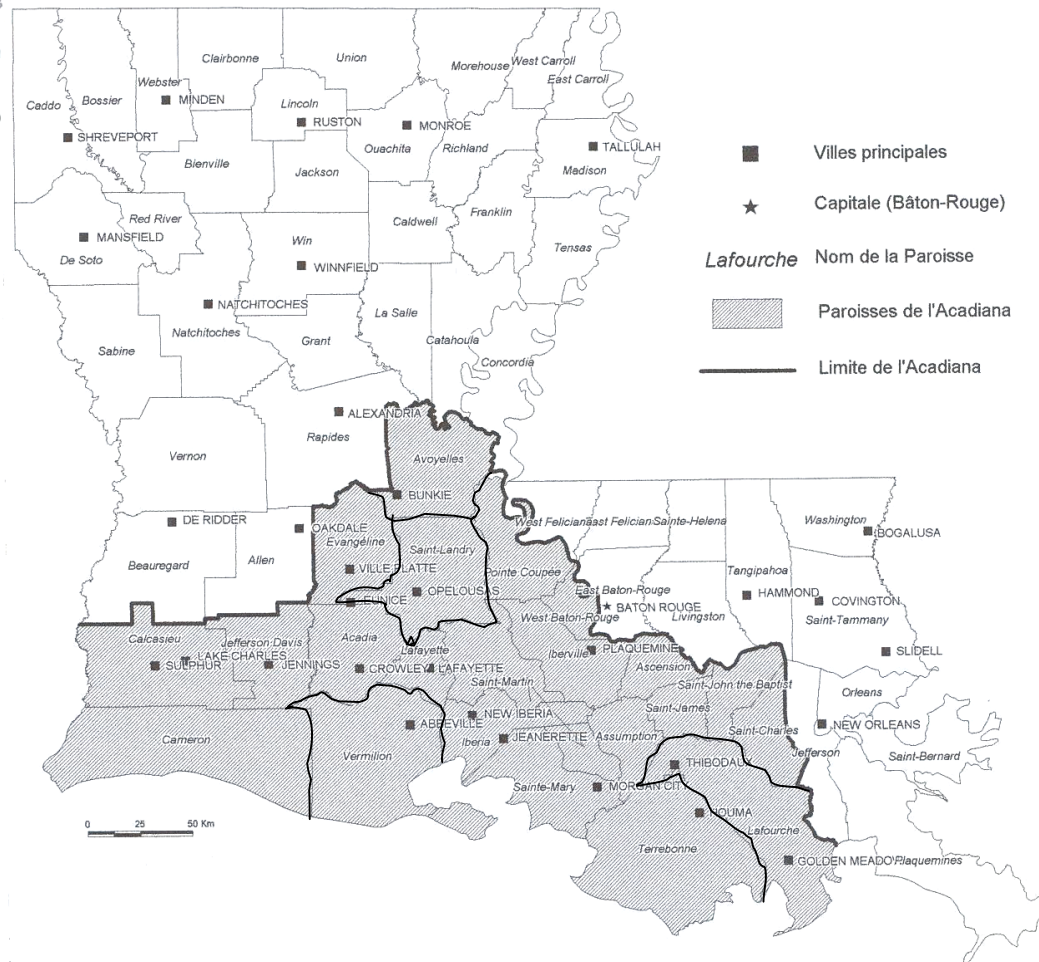
cultural interactions with the appropriate vocabulary and they are linguistically capable of talking about hobbies, their future, and abstract themes. The restricted speakers in the sample are fluent. They may have lost some linguistic features because of their low degree of exposure, but what they display linguistically conforms to the local norms at a base level. As such, their speech does not present “gaps in their ability to communicate” (such as being unable to talk about hypothetical events), nor is it “overtly characterized as strange by the [fluent] community itself”, these being linguistic attributes that characterized the semi-speakers in Rottet's study (1995, 72). Being ‘out of practice’ was the common claim of restricted speakers to the interviewer. What being ‘out of practice’ means is not speaking French at home, at work, in routine daily interactions with people outside of one’s extended family, or having no one else to talk to, except for older relatives.

## **1.6 LOCALITY**

As mentioned before, four parishes were identified for the collection of the data for the Cajun French Corpus (Avoyelles, St. Landry, Lafourche, and Vermillion); they all differ from each other sociohistorically. The map (Rousseau 2001, 32) shows their location in Louisiana. Avoyelles is a relatively poor and isolated prairie parish with a small population concentration of Cajuns, as compared to Americans and the descendants of white Creoles. According to Brasseaux (1992, 110), the Acadians in the 19th century were in close contact with many other Francophone settlers from Québec or France, who were often farmers. St. Landry on the other hand is a prosperous prairie parish. It was settled by the first wave of Acadians who had moved further west. The Acadians there were surrounded by large numbers of Francophone settlers with European origins, some

with a distinct socio-economical class, considered the upper class. Yet these settlers had been in contact with the French elite, a contact probably initiated by the Genteel Acadians (wealthy Acadians, social aspirers). Lafourche is a swamp area along Bayou Lafourche, which flows into the Gulf of Mexico. The Acadians who came to live in this parish were part of the second settlement wave of 1785. Dubois' corpus represents Cajun speakers mainly from the lower Lafourche area. According to Guilbeau (1950), this region was sparsely populated and inaccessible at times (rain season) during the 19th century.

Map of Louisiana. The grey-shaded area shows the Cajun French triangle. Taken from Rousseau (2001, 32). The bordered lines indicate the parishes under study.





However, conditions in the 20th century changed (population increase, road improvements) and the development of the oil industry (in addition to the traditional fishing industry) led to relative prosperity of the inhabitants over the last few decades.

Vermillion has both prairies and marshland; many of the interviews were conducted north of the Intracoastal Waterway, including the capital Abbeville. Its historical situation is most similar to St. Landry (first wave of immigrants, moving further south; mitigating class of Genteel Acadians).

## **1.7 THE SUBSAMPLE**

Our subsample consists of 79 interviews taken from the Cajun French Corpus and 7 from the Gold corpus. Table 2 shows the interviews that were chosen. It is the second session of the Cajun French interviews that are used for analysis here; the Gold interviews are taken in their entire length. Speakers from every generation are included. However, it does not reflect language ability groups to similar proportions. Since the MDI value has not been set up as a sampling criterion for the interview collection, but added later, we did not find two high MDI speakers, three medium, and three low MDI speakers for each of the three parishes and for all three age groups, which would have added up to 72 speakers. Two major adjustments had to be made: First, among all young speakers, it proved impossible to find extremely high MDI speakers. The problem is not their educational level (the main criterion that sets apart high and medium MDI speakers): most younger speakers were exposed to standard French in school or college. Since the number of French speakers has been decreasing significantly over the last decades (U.S. census data), MDI ranking criteria such as initial language experience, or use of French at work with colleagues (leading to a high MDI value), are almost

impossible to satisfy. Therefore, this cell of young high MDI speakers could not be filled and young speakers are divided in even parts (four and four) in the medium and low MDI groups. Second, because the educational level in Lafourche is rather low in general, no speakers with a high MDI value were located. We have therefore only two levels of linguistic ability in this group (medium and low MDI index, four speakers each). This fact is representative of the extreme social homogeneity of our speakers in the Lower Bayou area, which is most pronounced for the oldest generation<sup>1</sup>.

Three of the four Cajun French communities are selected for this study: Avoyelles, Lafourche, and St. Landry. Together, they cover the area from the north (Avoyelles) to the south (Lafourche) of the Cajun triangle, including the center (represented by St. Landry parish). These three Cajun French communities are representative of different kinds of historic settlement movements, different economic and geographical structures, and varying degrees of interaction with the different French groups in the area.

Table 2. Overview of selected interviews in the subsample.

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Generation</b>	<b>Date of birth</b>	<b>MDI</b>	<b>Parish</b>	<b>Corpus</b>
Eugénie	Ancestors	1890	N/A	St. Landry	Gold
Marie	Ancestors	1892	N/A	Vermillion	Gold
Martha	Ancestors	1901	N/A	St. Landry	Gold
Liliane	French-dominant elders	1901	N/A	Avoyelles	Gold
Louis	French-dominant elders	1905	N/A	Vermillion	Dubois
Oscar	French-dominant elders	1905	N/A	St. Landry	Gold
Léonie	French-dominant elders	1909	N/A	Vermillion	Dubois

(table con'd.)

<sup>1</sup> Another minor adjustment was made, since for the old generation, MDI values tend to be high in general: only two speakers with low MDI values are selected in this generation for Lafourche and a third old speaker with a high MDI value was added in Avoyelles.

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Generation</b>	<b>Date of birth</b>	<b>MDI</b>	<b>Parish</b>	<b>Corpus</b>
Armand	French-dominant elders	1911	N/A	Lafourche	Dubois
Abel	French-dominant elders	1915	N/A	Lafourche	Dubois
Edna	French-dominant elders	1915	N/A	St. Landry	Gold
Viviane	Bilingual elders	1909	N/A	Vermillion	Dubois
Félicianne	Bilingual elders	1910	N/A	Lafourche	Dubois
Annette	Bilingual elders	1911	N/A	Avoyelles	Gold
Carmen	Bilingual elders	1912	N/A	Lafourche	Dubois
Éliza	Bilingual elders	1914	N/A	Lafourche	Dubois
Marguerite	Old	1916	High	Avoyelles	Dubois
Georgette	Old	1932	High	Avoyelles	Dubois
Valentine	Old	1918	High	Avoyelles	Dubois
Eugène	Old	1929	Medium	Avoyelles	Dubois
Joseph	Old	1931	Medium	Avoyelles	Dubois
Anne	Old	1919	Medium	Avoyelles	Dubois
Constance	Old	1932	Low	Avoyelles	Dubois
Joachim	Old	1912	Low	Avoyelles	Dubois
Omer	Old	1923	Low	Avoyelles	Dubois
Alban	Old	1913	High	St. Landry	Dubois
Ruth	Old	1930	High	St. Landry	Dubois
Octave	Old	1931	Medium	St. Landry	Dubois
Madeleine	Old	1937	Medium	St. Landry	Dubois
Gérard	Old	1928	Medium	St. Landry	Dubois
Bella	Old	1918	Low	St. Landry	Dubois
Léa	Old	1930	Low	St. Landry	Dubois
Fabius	Old	1918	Low	St. Landry	Dubois
Pierre	Old	1921	Medium	Lafourche	Dubois
Théodore	Old	1926	Medium	Lafourche	Dubois
Nicolas	Old	1927	Medium	Lafourche	Dubois
Joséphine	Old	1928	Medium	Lafourche	Dubois
Emma	Old	1908	Low	Lafourche	Dubois
André	Old	1933	Low	Lafourche	Dubois
Vincent	Middle-aged	1951	High	Avoyelles	Dubois
Antoine	Middle-aged	1938	High	Avoyelles	Dubois
Lucie	Middle-aged	1951	Medium	Avoyelles	Dubois
Daphnée	Middle-aged	1950	Medium	Avoyelles	Dubois
Francine	Middle-aged	1950	Medium	Avoyelles	Dubois
Samuel	Middle-aged	1945	Low	Avoyelles	Dubois
Jacqueline	Middle-aged	1949	Low	Avoyelles	Dubois
Colette	Middle-aged	1944	Low	Avoyelles	Dubois
Rébecca	Middle-aged	1940	High	St. Landry	Dubois
Rose	Middle-aged	1940	High	St. Landry	Dubois
Valentin	Middle-aged	1937	Medium	St. Landry	Dubois
Arthur	Middle-aged	1937	Medium	St. Landry	Dubois
Myriam	Middle-aged	1940	Medium	St. Landry	Dubois
Élizabeth	Middle-aged	1947	Low	St. Landry	Dubois
Placido	Middle-aged	1950	Low	St. Landry	Dubois
Marcel	Middle-aged	1940	Low	St. Landry	Dubois
David	Middle-aged	1933	Medium	Lafourche	Dubois
Évelyne	Middle-aged	1938	Medium	Lafourche	Dubois

(table con'd.)

Pseudonym	Generation	Date of birth	MDI	Parish	Corpus
Noël	Middle-aged	1940	Medium	Lafourche	Dubois
Chantal	Middle-aged	1936	Medium	Lafourche	Dubois
Jeanne	Middle-aged	1938	Low	Lafourche	Dubois
Odile	Middle-aged	1942	Low	Lafourche	Dubois
Alexandre	Middle-aged	1939	Low	Lafourche	Dubois
Christophe	Middle-aged	1935	Low	Lafourche	Dubois
Étienne	Young	1954	Medium	Avoyelles	Dubois
Roger	Young	1955	Medium	Avoyelles	Dubois
Jacques	Young	1956	Medium	Avoyelles	Dubois
Nicole	Young	1956	Medium	Avoyelles	Dubois
Berthe	Young	1962	Low	Avoyelles	Dubois
Sylvain	Young	1974	Low	Avoyelles	Dubois
Justine	Young	1974	Low	Avoyelles	Dubois
Claire	Young	1963	Low	Avoyelles	Dubois
Tina	Young	1969	Medium	St. Landry	Dubois
René	Young	1956	Medium	St. Landry	Dubois
Normand	Young	1956	Medium	St. Landry	Dubois
Jonathan	Young	1978	Medium	St. Landry	Dubois
Rachelle	Young	1957	Low	St. Landry	Dubois
Cédric	Young	1974	Low	St. Landry	Dubois
Charles	Young	1962	Low	St. Landry	Dubois
Michelle	Young	1966	Low	St. Landry	Dubois
Guillaume	Young	1961	Medium	Lafourche	Dubois
Élodie	Young	1953	Medium	Lafourche	Dubois
Paulette	Young	1959	Medium	Lafourche	Dubois
Raoul	Young	1974	Medium	Lafourche	Dubois
Anaïs	Young	1954	Low	Lafourche	Dubois
Philippe	Young	1970	Low	Lafourche	Dubois
Thomas	Young	1967	Low	Lafourche	Dubois
Clarisse	Young	1953	Low	Lafourche	Dubois

## 1.8 OTHER STUDIES OF NORTH AMERICAN FRENCH VARIETIES

This section presents the methodological framework of several studies done by Geddes (1908), Peronnet (1989, 1982), and Gesner (1979) for Acadian French. Québec French is documented by La Follette (1969), Juneau (1976), and Seutin (1975). In addition, two dictionaries have been consulted: *Le parler populaire des Canadiens français* by Dionne (1909) and the *Glossaire du Parler Français au Canada* directed by La Société du Parler Français (1930). For Ontarian French, we used Mougeon et al.

(1977), Mougeon and Beniak (1991), Mougeon, Beniak, and Valois (1985), and Starets (1994).

Geddes' description of Acadian French (1908) is one of the first studies of this variety of French. It focuses on the North shore region of the Baie des Chaleurs in the province of Québec. This area has been mainly settled by Acadians who came here after their expulsion from Canada, increasing the small number of Acadian settlers who had already arrived as early as 1639. The French spoken in the city of Carleton, originally named Tracadiegash and established in 1740, is the object of this study. Geddes has collected most of his linguistic material during the summer of 1890. According to Peronnet (1989, 9), he relied heavily on an Acadian woman for his data collection. Although Geddes never explicitly mentions this fact, this person seems to be the local schoolteacher, Elmina Allard, who is a native of Carleton. Geddes frequently acknowledges her help in the pronunciation of words or sentences and in explaining the grammar of this French variety. He also mentions a few other people he consulted<sup>2</sup>. Overall, he appears to describe the usage of a middle-aged, educated woman, a fact that is contrary to his declared goal which is "... to record faithfully the sounds heard in the popular speech, - as far as possible, of those persons who have had nothing whatever to do with letters" (Geddes 1908, 4).

Peronnet's two studies of Acadian French spoken in the southeast of New Brunswick (1982, 1989) are both based on a corpus of seven elderly speakers (six men, one woman) from seven different French majority localities: Kouchibouguac, Acadieville, Richibouctouvillage, Ste. Marie de Kent, Shédiac, Cap Pelé, and St. Joseph.

---

<sup>2</sup> E.g., he cites Miss Soames on page 13 and he illustrates a difference in pronunciation between old and young people, without more detailed references, on page 14.

Peronnet chose to study this part of the province because it is more representative of the Acadian vernacular than the north, which is geographically closer to Québec and its linguistic influence. In addition, Peronnet selected only elderly speakers for study since young speakers make use of ‘chiac’, a variety of French heavily influenced by English. The corpus consists of recorded stories of approximately 30 minutes each for a total of 75,000 words. Peronnet’s typical speaker lives in a predominantly French-speaking, small rural community in the southeast of New Brunswick. He is an older man with a relatively low level of education whose linguistic production reflects vernacular usage<sup>3</sup>. He engages in traditional professional activities (farming, fishing, timber cutting, construction) and belongs to the lower Acadian middle class.

Gesner’s study (1979) focuses on the Baie Sainte Marie area of New Scotland. According to Flikeid (1989), this area is one among few regions that has preserved French relatively well. This is due to factors such as the numerical importance of the Acadian community, the homogeneous settlement pattern, and a tradition of French schooling. Acadians expelled by le Grand Dérangement began to settle in this area from 1768 on. The first families who arrived after a stay in Massachusetts founded la Ville Française (1771-1775) in the city district of Clare, which is part of Digby County. La Ville Française encompasses actually a stretch with different cities along the shore of the bay, from north to south: Weymouth, St. Bernard, la Pointe de l’Église, Comeauville, Saulnierville, Meteghan River, Meteghan, Mavillette, la Rivière aux Saumons, and Beaver River, all situated very close to each other and connected by le chemin du roi. The corpus consists of eight speakers representing two age groups (30-60, first

---

<sup>3</sup> Only exceptions: one woman and one speaker influenced by standard French.

generation; 60+, second generation). The interviews aiming at the production of spontaneous discourse were collected between 1975 and 1976 in the interviewee's house and in the presence of relatives and friends. The topics typically include childhood experiences, family and professional life, traveling, hobbies and reflections about the past, and the French language. While the educational level of the speakers is relatively elevated (mostly between six and twelve years of schooling), all have a similar, modest socio-economical background (retirees, workers, employees, or housewives). Most of the speakers (the only exception being the oldest one, a monolingual speaker) have traveled, some of them even outside the country.

La Follette (1969) uses two orally transmitted stories (*Merlin et la Bête-à-Sept-Têtes* and *Le chasseur et la petite fille*) for his study on vernacular Québec French spoken in the county of Charlevoix (North shore of St. Lawrence River). Each story lasts approximately 30 minutes and is completely transcribed. Told by very popular storytellers and recorded between 1948 and 1949, this database named the Luc Lacourcière and Félix-Antoine Savard collection is stored in the Archives de Folklore at Laval University. Pierre Pilote (born in 1898) told *Merlin et la Bête-à-Sept-Têtes*. He was a 51-year-old farmer living in the region of les Éboulements. Joseph-Palémon Gauthier, who was born in 1873, told *Le chasseur et la petite fille*. He had lived almost his whole life on a farm next to the village of St. Irénée.

Juneau's study, *La jument qui crotte de l'argent* (1976), includes another fairy tale from the Lacourcière collection that lasts 13 minutes and was recorded in 1954. Mme Flavine Ernest Bouchard, born in 1876, was an experienced storyteller who had inherited her material from her parents. At the time of the recording, she resided in Les

Grandes Bergeronnes (Saguenay). She lived there all of her life, except for seasonal stays in the timber cutting forest regions in the little Côte Nord, between Tadoussac and Mille Vaches, where she went with her husband.

Seutin's *Description grammaticale du parler de l'Ile-aux-Coudres* (1975) contains a corpus with more than 200 hours of recorded speech, collected in the county of Charlevoix. The settlement of the island began around 1720. Most people came from the nearby North coast of the St. Lawrence River and the population grew to 1,676 people in 1950. The main industries on the island are farming (potatoes, apples), fishing (e.g., *marsouins*, porpoises, which are dolphin-like animals), and hunting. In the summer time, the men often leave the island to work in ports on the St. Lawrence River. Seutin received most of his material from the filmmaker Pierre Perrault (courts-métrages of series *Au pays de Neufve France* and the trilogy: *Pour la suite du monde*, *Le règne du jour*, and *Les voitures d'eau*). All films feature local people who speak without following a script. From the transcription of 500,000 words, one fourth (130,000) has been randomly chosen and processed by computer at Montreal University. Another source of material is a tape-recorded survey administered by dialectology students from Québec on a variety of topics including professions, activities, stories, and customs. Altogether, over 100 informants have been studied, all but one of them are natives of the island. The same local speaker, called M.A., comes from the surrounding area and has been married to an islander for a long time. Most of the speakers are middle-aged or older men, aged 50 and older. Only two women have been included, albeit the researchers had originally planned for the study of several women. The educational level on average encompasses six to seven years of schooling.



Two major dictionaries are also considered for Québec French. One is Dionne's dictionary published in 1909 whose very title is a description of its purpose: *Le parler populaire des Canadiens français ou lexique des Canadianismes, Acadianismes, Anglicismes, Américanismes, mots anglais les plus en usage au sein des familles canadiennes et acadiennes françaises. Comprenant environ 15 000 mots et expressions avec de nombreux exemples pour mieux faire comprendre la portée de chaque mot ou expression par N.-E. Dionne*. This work was initiated by La Société du Parler Français, a society founded in 1902 with the following mission: "*l'étude, la défense et l'illustration du français écrit ou parlé dans la province de Québec*" (the study, the defense, and the illustration of written and spoken French in the province of Québec). The author's goal was to 'purify' the language ("*épurer notre langage en le débarrassant des trop nombreuses scories qui le déparent ou le défigurent*") and is thus prescriptive in nature. It concentrates on the Québec variety and Acadianisms are considered only when they are also present in the Québec speech. Anglicisms and English words are included as part of the language, but considered in poor taste and seen as a cultural intrusion. On the other hand, being true to the first part of its title (*le parler populaire*), it also contains elements reflecting regional usage and the variety of spoken French ("*c'est avec raison qu'après s'être longtemps livré uniquement à l'étude des langues, on a enfin abordé celle des divers parlers d'un même langage, des argots, des patois, du langage populaire...*"), it is for a reason that after having dedicated ourselves for a long time only to the study of languages, we finally took up the study of different oral varieties belonging to the same language, of the argots, of the patois, of the popular language...).

This dictionary is followed by the *Glossaire du parler français au Canada* contenant: 1- *Les mots et locutions en usage dans le parler de la province de Québec et qui ne sont pas admis dans le français d'école*; 2- *La définition de leurs différents sens, avec des exemples*; 3- *Des notes sur leur provenance*; 4- *La prononciation figurée des mots étudiés*; et préparé par *La Société du parler français au Canada* avec le concours de ses membres, de ses correspondants et de ses comités d'étude (1930), sponsored by the Québec government. The organization of the Glossaire is very similar to Dionne's work and contains additional word meanings and lexical entries. The Franco-Canadian section is a result of the combined effort of approximately 200 members of the society who investigated the language use in and around their hometowns since 1902, the date of the society's foundation.

All studies on Ontarian French concentrate on the language used by bilingual school children in a language minority setting. The study done by Mougeon et al. (1977) focuses on students (9th - 12th graders) who were enrolled in a secondary French language school system (either a four or five year program). The material for the spoken French is based on data that has already been collected. First, the study uses one hundred semi-directed interviews from the Rayside/Azilda region (project of Lamérand and Ross in 1974, see Mougeon et al. 1977, 98). In addition, the researchers collected 213 one-page-long compositions for the usage of written French. Second, the study integrates data from the communities of Sudbury and Welland that have been part of a large-scale sociolinguistic survey carried out in 1973 by the Center for Franco-Ontarian Studies (CFOS). The researchers used 27 semi-directed interviews and collected data of written French from 110 compositions in these two communities.

The study on Ontarian French by Mougeon and Beniak (1991) is based on the continuation of the Sudbury/Welland project by the CFOS. In 1976, a survey of Hawkesbury was done. In the late 70s, the CFOS (under a contract with the Ontario Ministry of Education) added several Ontarian communities to this project: Cornwall, North Bay, Ottawa, Pembroke, Toronto, Welland, and Windsor. Mougeon and Beniak selected four out of all the communities for study: Hawkesbury, because it is a predominantly French-speaking community, and the French minority localities of Cornwall, Pembroke, and North Bay. The data from Hawkesbury consists of 20 interviews of students (grades 10 and 12). Forty speakers were selected from each of the three other communities, based on a questionnaire survey administered to 1,177 students. For all four communities, 117 semi-directed interviews, lasting between 30 and 60 minutes, were analyzed. They are stratified according to gender, class (middle, lower-middle, and working class), and use of French (unrestricted, semi-restricted, and restricted speakers). The interview questions are open-ended and include topics such as leisure activities, life at home and in school, and personal experiences. Mougeon, Beniak, and Valois (1985) use the same database in their study, which focuses on the French of high school students in the four localities.

Starets' study of Ontarian French in 1994 focuses on relatively young students (grades four and five) in the community of Windsor. His study might therefore include a certain amount of language acquisition errors. Starets analyzed the free speech of 15 students from three elementary schools, adding up to approximately 15 hours of recording.

We will use these studies of the North American French varieties in chapter 3, when we discuss the distribution of the variants in Cajun French. Their repertoire of locative prepositions is one of the criteria we will use to establish the status of all locative prepositions within the Cajun French community.

## CHAPTER 2

### LOCATIVE PREPOSITIONS IN CAJUN FRENCH

Prepositional forms such as EN, À, AU, DANS, SUR, and CHEZ introduce different locative prepositional expressions. Prepositions are, according to grammarians, invariable words that commonly connect and subordinate other elements of the sentence (Grevisse 1980, 1097; Grevisse and Goosse 1980, 299). In some locative contexts, the grammarians accept many variants because they argue that only the nature of the prepositional expression plays a role in the selection of a specific form (Spang-Hanssen 1963, 164). Eight categories of locative usages where variation between prepositions occurs mostly will be considered in this chapter<sup>4</sup>: persons, buildings, land surfaces, countries, cities, *ville*, *chemin/rue*, and water surfaces: 1) the variation between CHEZ, SUR, AU/À LA, À, and also EN/DANS for the category of persons; 2) the alternation mainly between AU/À LA, DANS, À, À LE, EN, and SUR found for buildings and land surfaces; 3) the prepositions AU/À LA, À, EN, and DANS with countries; 4) the usage of À, AU, DANS, EN, and SUR with cities; 5) the variation between EN, DANS, and À LA for the word *ville*; 6) the alternation between AU, DANS, and SUR with *chemin/rue*; and 7) the prepositions AU, SUR, À, and DANS with water surfaces<sup>5</sup>. In connection with each category, we will show the language material found in the prepositional expression. We will draw on this inventory of the lexical material in chapter 4 when we discuss the role of the linguistic factors. At the end of this chapter, we will briefly present the locative categories that we

---

<sup>4</sup> Not considered in this study are usages such as À/DANS (usually DANS) with nouns indicating the location of an object (*AU/DANS le four*, *AUX/DANS les poches*), À/DANS/EN before nouns indicating body parts (*À/DANS la main*, *À/EN/DANS la tête*, *AUX/DANS les yeux*), AU/DANS with military services (*À/DANS l'armée*, *À/DANS le service*), and AU/DANS with measurements (*AU/DANS le milieu des deux planches*).

<sup>5</sup> In addition, the forms DEDANS and DESSUS are also found and are grouped with DANS and SUR, respectively.

located, but cannot use for the quantitative analysis, either because they show no variation, or they are very small.

We identified the prepositional variants in all locative contexts under study according to Labov's principle of accountable reporting. We located each occurrence by listening to the interview in its entire length and used the interviewees' production as the basis for the analysis. We also took into account all possible slots for the presence of the variants and carefully separated the forms under study from other forms that belong to a different locative category.

## **2.1 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF IMPORTANT PREPOSITIONS**

Before we introduce each category of locative prepositions, we will briefly discuss the history of the most frequent prepositions in French (EN, À, DANS, and SUR). All these locative prepositions originate from Latin. The forms *IN* and *AD* (EN, À) started out as adverbs that could be used to reinforce the locative function of nominal expressions, a function normally expressed by the case of the noun (e.g., directional accusative and locative case). With countries for example, *IN* was used with both motion and static verbs, and during the postclassical period, *AD* became the normal preposition with motion verbs in this context. With cities, *IN* was also used, both with motion and static verbs. When the case system finally collapsed (Vulgar Latin period), the prepositional system was already established. The most common preposition in Old French was *EN*, while *À* was produced in many contexts, especially with motion verbs (e.g., *EN bois*, *EN mer*, *EN château*, *EN vile*, *EN sainte église*, *À maison*, *À escole*, *À vile*). With the introduction of the definite article in Old French, the prepositional form *AU* was added (contraction of the definite article and *À*).

The form DANS is derived from the Latin adverb INTUS, which became ENZ, then DENZ (with DE, first indicating origin, then location) and then DEDENZ (with DE, first indicating origin, then location). It is at the end of the 13th century that DEDENZ became more frequent. In the 14th and 15th centuries, it was used in competition with EN. Its form changed to DANS during that time. It was increasingly used in the 16th century, because it often replaced forms with AU, which were thought to have been old usages of EN (some actually were, some were not). In the 17th and 18th centuries, DANS reached the height of its popularity and decreased in usage thereafter.

SUR was another important preposition, also derived from Latin (*SUPER/SUPRA*) and often used to express superposition. SUR in Old French and Middle French was employed alternatively with EN carrying the same meaning, and with DANS or even À later in the 17th and 18th centuries (Waldmann 1906, 4).

## **2.2 LOCATION OF PERSONS**

The variants within this category are mostly used to express movement to or location at in two linguistic contexts with persons: 1) a dwelling or 2) a place of work. The form CHEZ, derived from Old French CHIÉS, originated from the popular Latin word *casa*, meaning house (*maison*). Its first usage (in connection with a dwelling) is closely related to the word's origin (*in casa*), such as in the examples below.

*Mais un seul temps je parle en français c'est quand je vas voir ma maman ou je vas CHEZ mes voisins* (Roger – 9: A).

But the one time I speak French, that's when I go see my mother or I go to my neighbors'.

*Alors, vraiment, j'ai eu une année de, de vivre CHEZ moi toute seule* (Marguerite – 3: A).

Now, really, I had a year of, of living at home all by myself.

*Nous-autres prennent les écrivisses tous les jours et nous-autres [l'] emmenent icitte dans Marksville, CHEZ Bernard* (Roger – 16: A).  
We get crawfish every day and we bring [it] here to Marksville, to Bernard's.

The second usage seems to be an extension of the first one, still referring to a place, but here in the specific context of a work place. As in the first type of usage, CHEZ can only be used together with a noun referring to persons (being engaged in their professional activity), although actually designating the place of the professional activity.

*Nous irons CHEZ le médecin* (Grevisse 1980, 1125).  
We will go to the doctor.

Other extensions of the usage of CHEZ, not directly relating to a place, are nevertheless accepted in a limited number of cases, having underlying constructions such as *dans le pays de* (in the country of, “*porter la guerre CHEZ l'ennemi*”, to bring war to the enemy), *au temps de* (at the time of, “*CHEZ les Grecs*”, at the time of the Greeks), *dans l'œuvre de* (in the work of, “*cela se trouve CHEZ Corneille*”, this is found in Corneille) or *dans la personne de* (in the person of, “*c'est CHEZ lui une habitude*”, that is a habit of his, Grevisse 1980, 1180). CHEZ can also be used in connection with persons (but not places), although the grammarians condemn this usage, preferring other variants such as *près de*, *auprès de* or *avec*.

*Viens, chéri, viens CHEZ ta maman!* (Grevisse 1980, 1180, footnote)  
Come, sweetheart, come to your mom!



The form SUR appears to be the long-standing vernacular variant of CHEZ<sup>6</sup>. Corroborating evidence of this very old variation pattern can be found by looking at the historical use of the variants. SUR is present as a morphosyntactical variant to CHEZ in the 14th, 15th, and 16th century in France, but by the 17th century, SUR is rejected in favor of CHEZ in standard French. However, SUR as an alternative to CHEZ managed to survive in French vernaculars spoken in France as well as in the former French colonies in North America. It is, for example, encountered as SU in Québec French (Dionne 1909, 617): “*je vais aller SU le voisin*” (I am going to the neighbor’s) or in La Société du Parler Français (1930): “*aller SUR quelqu’un = CHEZ quelqu’un*” (647). Mougeon, Beniak, and Valois (1985) also find the form SUR as a vernacular variant in Ontarian French.

Well, *on va SUR ma sœur, euh, qui reste à, à Tickfaw, à reste en haut de Cameron là euh, Louisiana, et on va SUR son frère* (Eugène – 5: A).

Well, we go to my sister’s, uh, who stays in, in Tickfaw, she stays north of Cameron uh, Louisiana, and we go to her brother’s.

*Il fallait quelqu’un qu’achète du whiskey, la liqueur, et l’apportait à eux-autres, il fallait eusse va boire ça SUR eux-autres là, sur le reservation* (Eugène – 18: A).

Somebody had to buy whiskey, liquor, and to bring it to them, they had to drink it at their place there, on the reservation.

Along with SUR, the forms AU/À LA/À L’ or À are attested at a very early time (as AD in Classic Latin) and are sporadically found in Old French.

---

<sup>6</sup> One problem encountered during the analysis was the differentiation between CHEZ and SUR. Its phonetic realization frequently varied between [se], [sə], or [sy], which could be interpreted either as CHEZ based on the realization of the vowel as [e] or [ə] or SUR based on the realization of the consonant as [s]. We decided to use the vowel as the deciding criterion, reducing significantly the number of times SUR was found.

*Le chevalier ala a la messe, laquelle estre oye s'en ala AU barbier* (Rom. Des Sept Sages, 12th century, attested in Grevisse 1980, 1124, footnote).  
The knight went to mass and then, after having listened to it, went to the barber's.

Although the forms with *À* (AU, resulting from contraction of *À* and LE, when used before consonant-initial masculine nouns, *À* LA with consonant-initial feminine nouns, *À* L' with vowel-initial nouns, and *À* before determiners with nouns) were discarded at a later point in time, they are still used today in vernacular French as an alternative form to CHEZ. They can also be used in this way in other contexts where DANS or SUR are the normally used prepositions<sup>7</sup>. According to Grevisse (1980, 1125), the forms with *À* can be found more frequently in the work place context with certain expressions (*aller AU ministre, aller À L'évêque*, to go to the minister, to go to the bishop). He attributes this usage to an underlying form such as *s'adresser AU ministre* or *s'adrsser À L'évêque*.

*On a voulu le ramasser, aller le ramener AU docteur* (Anne – 7: A).  
We wanted to pick him up, bring him to the doctor.

*Ça fait, j'ai été AU docteur, chez le docteur Bordelon* (Anne – 8: A).  
So I went to the doctor, to Doctor Bordelon.

Usage of the forms with *À* to designate a person's home is not found in standard French, yet demonstrated in Cajun French. According to Mougeon, Beniak, and Valois

---

<sup>7</sup> Frei (1929, 149) calls *À* a multifunctional locative preposition capable of substituting others: a) "*j'irai AU coiffeur*" (Frei 1929, 150, I'll go to the hairdresser's) versus *j'irai CHEZ le coiffeur*, b) "*des repos À LA chaise longue*" (ibid., 149, pauses in the chaise lounge) versus *des repos SUR la chaise longue*, c) "*les accidents À LA rue*" (ibid., accidents on the street) versus *les accidents DANS la rue*.

(1985), the forms with *À* are found in the speech of restricted speakers in Ontarian French, but almost never used by unrestricted speakers<sup>8</sup>.

*Ils vont pas aller À leurs amis pour des envies, ils vont euh rester avec leurs familles* (Constance – 11: A).

They will not go to their friend's place to seek pleasure, they will uh stay with their families.

*Pauvre bête, î pouvait pas voir, il va là-bas À, À mon grand-mère, il visitait, il pouvait pas voir si c'était : c'était noir le soir* (Jonathan – 18: S).

Poor thing, he couldn't see, he goes there to, to my grandmother's, he visited, he couldn't see if it was : it was dark in the evening.

The prepositional forms *EN* and *DANS* can also be used in Cajun French to express location in connection with persons. Their usage has not been attested in standard French.

*Eusse pourraient pas dire qu'est-ce qui était wrong et â l'a amené EN traiteur* (Guillaume – 29: L).

They could not say what was wrong, and she brought him to the healer.

*Ça trouve quelque chose pour pas aller EN docteur parce que ça : ça avait pas d'argent pour ça* (Nicole – 20: L).

They find something so they don't have to go to the doctor, because they : they didn't have money for that.

*On a été pour Mardi gras l'année passée, on était seize qu'a été et euh on a écouté DANS Fred's, î jouent, c'est un cajun band* (Colette – 14: A).

We went for Mardi Gras last year, we were sixteen who went and uh we listened at Fred's, they play, it's a Cajun band.

---

<sup>8</sup> Interestingly, this usage is also found for 17th century French. Haase (1898) claims that constructions in which the names of persons could be used to express the names of places were common. He cites the following example: “*Madame de V. est À nos soeurs de Sainte-Marie*” (Haase 1898, 331, Madame de V. is at our sisters' of Saint Mary).

*Î y a un place j'aime aller, mais je vais pas souvent. Ça c'est au Landry's :: Seafood et Steakhouse, à Lafayette DANS DANS Landry's (Fabius – 3: S). There is a place I like to go to, but I don't go often. This is to Landry's :: Seafood and Steakhouse, in Lafayette to to Landry's.*

The database of location of people contains approximately 500 tokens<sup>9</sup>. They represent the home or working place of persons, and they are proper names, common names, and pronouns. Altogether, five different subgroups can be distinguished, three for the home location of a person, and two for a professional place. Most tokens belong to the subgroup that refers to the home of a person (approximately 300). Many of them are common names designating family members or friends, such as in *CHEZ ma grand-mère* (121 tokens). Typical representatives are *mère* (*maman*, mom), *père* (*popa*, *pop*, dad), and *monde* (people). The subgroup of proper names referring to family or friends contains 77 tokens. It consists mostly of first names, but we found last names and full names, with or without courtesy titles (e.g., *Madame Gustave Guidry*)<sup>10</sup>. Pronouns referring to a person's home, such as in *CHEZ moi*, are another important group, represented by approximately 100 tokens. The majority of these pronouns are personal pronouns, covering all persons in the singular and plural (e.g., *eux/eusse/eux-autres*) and there are also a few indefinite pronouns (e.g., *autre/autres*, *quelqu'un*).

For professional places, a big subgroup is composed of person's names, such as *CHEZ D.I.* (name of a bar) with 117 tokens. They can be first names (Betty as for local vendors or service providers), last names for small businesses (Lagneaux, the name of a

---

<sup>9</sup> Certain expressions have not been considered here, such as paraphrases of CHEZ like *à la maison de*, *à la place de*, and extensions of it (with reference to persons, such as in *ils ont travaillé CHEZ des fermiers*, they worked at some farmers'). Yet CHEZ as part of a composite prepositional expression has been counted (a few tokens were found such as *au ras [à côté] de CHEZ*, *en arrière de CHEZ*, *loin de CHEZ*, *en haut de CHEZ*).

<sup>10</sup> Courtesy titles and full names are not considered forms of determination.

restaurant), or big chain names (Mc Donald's or Sears). The subgroup of common names with reference to an occupation consists of roughly 80 tokens. By far the biggest number of tokens is found for *docteur* (57 tokens), followed by *traiteur* (healer, 12 tokens)<sup>11</sup>.

The database contains mostly words that are singular; some of the pronouns and a few common names (e.g., *docteurs*, *parents*) are plural. The majority of the tokens are undetermined words, most of the determiners are possessive pronouns, and there are a few adjectives (e.g., *défunct* or *vieux*).

### 2.3 LOCATION OF BUILDINGS

This category of locative prepositions contains expressions with movement to or location in a building (*À/DANS l'hôpital*, *À/DANS l'école*, *À/DANS la maison*, *AU/DANS le cinéma*) or a place in a building (*À/DANS la cuisine*, *AU/DANS le salon*). This is a context where *À*/*À LA/AU* and *DANS* are in variation (Spang-Hanssen 1963, 165-166).

Grammarians indicate that both *À*/*À LA/AU* and *DANS* can introduce undetermined nouns, although many expressions are almost exclusively used with *À*/*À LA/AU* such as *AU café* or *AU cinéma*. The grammarians mention only tendencies with regard to the alternation between *À*/*À LA/AU* and *DANS*. In the case of a place within a location, the forms with *À* tend to be used with a more abstract sense, that is, the destination of a place rather than the concrete place itself (*À/DANS la chambre*). Moreover, the grammarians point out that the '*mise en relief*' triggers the use of *DANS* in neutral expressions (*AU jardin/DANS le jardin*). Also, *À* seems to be used more often for buildings, whereas *DANS* is used for rooms.

---

<sup>11</sup> In addition, a very small number of combinations of representatives of different groups are found with an occupation and a person's name (e.g., *docteur Bordelon*).

*Je connaissais pas l'anglais du tout quand j'ai été À L'école* (Marguerite – 1: A).  
I didn't know English at all when I went to school.

*Son père parlait en français tout le temps À LA maison, mais il l'a juste appris dans les dernières années pa'ce qu'il a réalisé que c'était important* (Tina – 3: S).  
His father talked in French all the time at home, but he just learned it in the last years because he realized that it is important.

*En Marksville, j'ai commencé DANS l'elementary school en Marksville, là j'étais DANS l'high school en Marksville* (Eugène – 8: A).  
In Marksville, I started in the elementary school in Marksville, then, I was in high school in Marksville.

*Of course on parlait DANS la maison, on parlait pas en français except un 'tit brin icitte et là-bas entre moi et mon mari* (Élizabeth – 2: S).  
Of course we talked at home, we didn't talk in French except a little bit here and there between me and my husband.

*Plus ou moins DANS les restaurants, ils ont un special* (Eugène - 2: A).  
More or less in the restaurants, they have a special.

In addition to the variation described for standard French, the forms À without article, À LE, EN, and SUR are found in Cajun French. Only Frei (1929, 198) mentions À LE in popular French in Algeria, although in different contexts (with prepositions of time and dative function): “*jusqu'À LE temps qu'il meure...*” (until the time he dies...), “*...je suis été jusqu'A LE 24 aout sans en avoir [une lettre]*” (...I was until August 24th without [a letter]), “*donne-le voir À LES types qui sont là*” (show it to the guys who are here), “*...une demande A LES Messieur du Comité...*” (...a request for the gentlemen of the committee...), “*et bon courage a vous tous et A LES enfants*” (and good luck to you and to the children).

*J'ai gradué à l'école, j'ai pas été À collège* (Élizabeth – 20: S).  
I graduated from school, I didn't go to college.

*Je vas jamais oublier quand nous-autres a été À magasin icitte, asteur c'est Grand Isle Value Supermarket (Anaïs – 19: L).*

I'll never forget when we went to the shop here, today it's Grand Isle Value Supermarket.

*Euh, j'aime aller AU : opéra (Marguerite –14: A).*

Uh, I like going to the : opera.

*Quand moi j'allais là-bas, mon grand-mère parlait tout le temps en français:*

*“Euh, tu vas aller au, euh :: au le, AU boutique pour moi?” (Normand – 2: S).*

When I went there, my grandmother spoke the whole time in French: “Uh, will you go to, uh :: to the, to the shop for me?”

*Tu achètes un nouveau char aujourd'hui, t'as un téléphone pour pour arien et là il faut que tu vas À LE compagnie, faut que tu paies un an sur un contract, tu vois (Philippe – 15: L).*

You buy a new car today, you have a phone for, for nothing and then, you have to go to the company, you have to pay for a year on a contract, you see.

1. *Tu te rappelles à quel âge que t'as été libre pour prendre le bus? 2. Eh ben dès que j'ai été EN high school, eum j'avais treize ans (Jeanne – 12: L).*

1. Do you remember at what age you were allowed to take the bus? 2. Uh, well, since I went to high school, um, I was thirteen.

*Tu vois : j'ai pris deux classes EN collège, o.k., mais : euh : j'appris le langue écrit et un petit peu lire (Thomas – 5: L).*

You see : I took two classes in college, o.k., but: uh : I learned the written language and to read a little.

*Elle a des, elle a des catins, je vas te montrer SUR la chambre, il n'a pas rien qui manque (Claire – 21: A).*

She has, she has dolls, I will show [them] to you in her room, there is nothing missing.

*Î y a le week-end de le French Food Festival, moi, je travaille dans un de les bars parce que mon parrain, mon oncle, Red Whitney Reed, î a tout le temps été le, il travaillait SUR le, SUR le bar pour le fair (Philippe – 20/21: L).*

There is the weekend of the French Food Festival, I work in one of the bars because my godfather, my uncle, Red Whitney Reed, he has always been the, he worked at the, at the bar for the fair.

The database of buildings contains approximately 2,275 entries of common names, describing different types of buildings and parts of buildings. We identified the

following groups: caretaking facilities (e.g., *hôpital de charité*), commercial buildings (e.g., *factrie*, *moulin*), entertainment places (e.g., bar, *hôtel*), instructional facilities (e.g., *lycée*, *université*), public institutions (e.g., *maison de cour*, community center), religious buildings (e.g., church, *église catholique*), residential buildings (e.g., *appartement*, dorm), and rooms in a building (e.g., *bains*, *chambre à manger*).

Because of the very high usage of the word *école* (approximately 600 times) and *collège* (roughly 100 times used), instructional facilities make up the biggest group (785 tokens). Residential buildings with the frequent usage of the word *maison* (520 times) come next (588 tokens). Another important group are commercial buildings (280 tokens) with *magasin* or *boutique* (Cajun French variant for *magasin*) as frequently used words (roughly 110 times). The other groups have similar proportions: religious buildings (155 tokens, with *église* as its most frequent word), caretaking facilities (130 tokens, with *hôpital* or nursing home), entertainment buildings (130 tokens, with *restaurant* or casino), and rooms in buildings (approximately 120 tokens, among them *chambre* and *cuisine*). Public buildings constitute the smallest group (87 tokens).

Most of the entries are French words. Compound words make up a considerable portion of the data. Most are noun-noun combinations, e.g., English words such as funeral home or trade school, or French words connected by prepositions such as *hôpital de charité* or *moulin à coton*. With *école* and *église*, we found several noun-adjective combinations such as *école en français*, *école plus haut*, or *église catholique*.

## **2.4 LOCATION OF LAND SURFACES**

We refer in this category to movement to or location at with settlements (e.g., *village*), administrative surfaces (e.g., *paroisse*), and rural and urban surfaces. Rural



surfaces include more or less delimited physical entities typically found in the countryside such as forests, fields, etc., and urban surfaces relate to places in an inhabited area, such as yards, cemeteries, and others. Prepositional usage for land surfaces is similar to that of buildings:

*“La plupart des substantifs non-composés qui marquent un lieu servant naturellement de séjour aux hommes ou aux animaux... peuvent se faire introduire par à ou dans... Il s’agit... des endroits publics (bar, bistro, café, cinéma, théâtre, restaurant)... des étendues grandes ou petites (bois, champ, ciel, département, hameau, jardin, monde, parc, pays, pré, village, ville)...”* (Spang-Hanssen 1963, 192-193).

(Most of the single-word nouns that designate a place, which naturally serves as an abode for men or animals... can call for their introduction by à or dans... This applies to...public places (bar, bistro, coffee shop, movie theater, theater, restaurant)... large or small surfaces (forest, field, sky, département, hamlet, garden, world, park, country, meadow, village, city...).

Usage of À and DANS is frequently found in Cajun French.

*Mais là les dernières années î sont venus AU village, ils étiont trop vieux pour faire récolte* (Eugénie – 17: S).

But then, the last years they came to the village, they were too old to farm.

*Ça veut de l’eau à eux même, c’est de l’argent de taxe qui va À LA paroisse pour eux* (Pierre – 15: L).

They want their own water, it’s the tax money that goes to the parish for them.

*Et juste il met sa main comme ça et il baisse les yeux. Ben là je connais il a passé AU cimetière, je le laisse faire* (Anne – 15: A).

And he just puts his hand like this and he looks down. Well, then I know he went to the cemetery, I let him do as he likes.

Well, *des fois* fallait :: aller AU bois, scier du bois pour le stove pour nous-autres (Oscar – 42: S).

Well, sometimes we had to :: go into the woods, cut wood for the stove for us.

*Le monde arrête ici dans notre office et î nous demandent: “Qui c’est on a pour voir DANS la paroisse des Avoyelles?”* (Jacques – 2: A).

People stop by here in our office and they ask us: “What do we have to see in Avoyelles parish?”

*Le Folk Life Festival, c’est un festival qu’est euh, qui va à différentes places DANS l’État et on a eu ça icitte, là on a ça on appelle un cook off d’écrevisses* (Myriam – 20: S).

The Folk Life Festival, it’s a festival that uh, that goes to different places in the state, and we had it here, that’s when we had that what you call a crawfish cook off.

*Et là tu marches DANS la prairie, et là tu vois un trou de rats* (Théodore – 12: L).

And then you walk in the prairie, and then you see a rat hole.

*Je travaillais DANS le clos d’huile, tous les années, on avait des gros Christmas parties à Lafayette* (Valentin – 7: S).

I worked in the oilfield, every year we had big Christmas parties in Lafayette.

The form À without article is also found.

*Tu trouves ça là-bas À, À paroisse Avoyelles, mais tu vas pas trouver une autre famille Jeansonne à la France* (Christophe – 17: L).

You find this there in, in Avoyelles parish, but you will not find another Jeansonne family in France.

*Mom nous laissait aller se baigner À Audubon Park, mais â nous laissait pas aller se baigner À City Park* (Jeanne – 15: L).

Mom let us go swim at Audubon Park, but she didn’t let us go swim at City Park.

*C’est, c’est là on allait piéger, À Mud Point, À Hackberry. Mais, mais pas À Hackberry, euh au Bois Connie, on appelle* (Louis – 7: V).

It’s, it’s there we went hunting, in Mud Point, in Hackberry. But, but not in Hackberry, uh in Bois Connie, it is called.

*Et euh l’autre affaire c’est comme j’ai dit, euh j’: aime ‘ler À bois, tu connais, et la pêche et à la chasse et cuire* (Placido – 11: S).

And uh the other thing, it’s like I said, uh I: like going into the forest, you know, and fishing and hunting and cooking.

SUR and EN are also found in Cajun French. The form SUR is a nonstandard usage, which has been mentioned nearly a hundred years ago by Plattner (1907, 263):

*“Als unstatthaft wird der Gebrauch von sur bei Bezeichnungen von administrativen Verbänden betrachtet: demeurer SUR le neuvième arrondissement, mourir SUR la paroisse (de) Saint-Séverin, il possède 60 hectares de bois SUR la commune d’Arquian”*

(it is inappropriate to use sur when designating administrative units: to live in the 9th city district, to die in the parish (of) Saint Severin, he owns 60 hectares of forest in the municipality of Arquian). In Old French, however, this was a regular usage, as attested in *SUS le pays*, which could be used alternatively for *DANS le pays* (Chroniques de Froissart, cited in Raithel 1888, 10).

*Lui il a tout le temps resté SUR la paroisse Lafourche, nous-autres ont resté à, à la paroisse Terrebonne, a été élevé, mais dans 1926, on a déménagé SUR la paroisse Lafourche* (Éliza – 9: L).

He has always lived in Lafourche parish, we lived in, in Terrebonne parish, we grew up there, but in 1926, we moved to Lafourche parish.

*En ces entourages icitte euh à Alexandrie, î y a pas de ça [du riz et de la sauce], euh EN des d’aut’es états, î y a pas de ça* (Élizabeth – 4: S).

Around here uh in Alexandria, it doesn’t exist [rice and gravey], uh in other states, it doesn’t exist.

*Et là quand on a commencé l’école, on pourrait pas parler français SUR les euh la cour d’école because on aurait été :: puni* (Fabius – 1: S).

And then when we started school, we couldn’t speak French on the uh the school yard because we would have been :: punished.

*Et là en dix-neuf-cent : dans dix-neuf-cent-trente-cinq : on allait EN cimetière dans les bateaux là* (Abel – 18: L).

And then in nineteen-hundred : in nineteen-hundred-thirty-five : we went to the cemetery in the boats there.

The group of land surfaces encompasses 565 tokens. For settlements and administrative surfaces, we found mostly common names (110 and 90, respectively), because proper names fall into other categories such as countries, cities, or parishes. For rural and urban surfaces, we found 236 tokens for common names and 129 for proper names.

The word *village* is by far the most frequent settlement place (70 tokens); another important word is *voisinage* (31 tokens). The nouns *paroisse*, *pays*, and *état* make up almost all administrative surface places, and their distribution is similar (roughly 30 tokens each). Very few proper names are found (e.g., Laurel Valley Village, the name of a museum complex in Cameron parish). In the subgroup of rural places, *clos* is the most frequently used word (81 tokens), followed by *campagne* (62 tokens), and *bois* (approximately 30 tokens). Also, different types of land (such as *pays bas* or *prairie*) are found as well as *parc* (meaning *enclos*) and names of local outdoor areas (e.g., Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge or Bois Connie). Together, they add up to roughly 60 tokens. The following tokens make up most of the urban surface places: *cour* (72 tokens), *jardin* (16 tokens), names of city parks (13 tokens), and *parc* (meaning *jardin public*, 7 tokens). Finally, we have *cimetière* and *marché* with roughly 10 tokens each.

## **2.5 LOCATION OF COUNTRIES**

The system of locative prepositions designating movement to or location in a country is rather complex in French. Grevisse (1980, 342) states: “*C’est l’usage qui apprendra dans quels cas les noms propres de pays doivent être précédés de en, de, sans l’article, et dans quels cas il faut dire, au, du, de la, dans le, dans la, avec l’article*” (it is the usage that will teach us in which cases the country proper names have to be preceded

by en, de, without the article, and in which cases we have to say, au, du, de la, dans le, dans la, with the article)<sup>12</sup>. In short, variation in Modern French is strongly linked to gender and is complementary in nature. The form AU is used with masculine (and consonant-initial) singular country names and the form EN with feminine (and vowel-initial) singular names. AUX is used with plural names<sup>13</sup>.

- 1) AU before masculine and consonant-initial country names;

*J'ai fait des études à LSU et AU Canada et Belgium.* (Marguerite – 1: A).  
I studied at LSU and in Canada and Belgium.

- 2) EN before feminine (*EN Suisse, EN Provence, EN Louisiane*) or vowel-initial (*EN Inde, EN Espagne*) names of countries or regions;

*Ils demeuraient, les grands-parents sont demeurés EN France. Ils sont venus de la France EN Amérique* (Marguerite – 2: A).  
They stayed, the grandparents stayed in France. They came from France to America.

- 3) AUX (which replaced ES in the 16th century) before plural country names. No occurrence of AUX was found in our corpus.

These major subcategories, which have been maintained in standard French, reflect a long-standing variation occurring between these forms. Historically, EN was used to introduce almost all country designations (*EN France, EN Canada*) as a continuation of Latin usage. As mentioned, À could also fill in with motion verbs in

---

<sup>12</sup> The preposition DE (indicating origin of or movement away from) is not considered in this study.

<sup>13</sup> Still, there are many exceptions to this rule. One of them is that modified country names are always introduced by the preposition DANS, as in *DANS toute la France*. There are also several irregular and historical usages such as *DANS les Indes, EN Danemark*, etc.

postclassical Latin, yet it became a rare variant in Old French. A few examples of *à* are found in Old French texts and in Anglo-Norman texts such as “*li otria li rois Bretaigne, ki marcissoit A Normendie*” (attested in Fahlin 1942, 122, the king gave him Brittany which had a border with Normandy), or “*vindrent A Dannemarche*” (ibid., [they] came to Denmark)<sup>14</sup>.

When the definite article was used more often in the 12th century, the country system became even more complex. Therefore, some authors formulated rules (which were not always respected), such as the mandatory usage of the article with static verbs or its absence with motion verbs. One example is Meigret’s verbal rule: “*je suys EN la Çhampañe, EN la France, EN l’Italie, EN l’Hespañe...nous otterons plus elegamment les articles: comme je m’en voes EN France, EN Çhampañe, EN Italie, EN Hespañe*” (Fahlin 1942, 128, I am in the Champagne, in the France, in the Italy, in the Spain...we remove more elegantly the articles: like I go to France, to Champagne, to Italy, to Spain). The most important consequence of the usage of the definite article, however, is the development of the variants *AU* and *À LA* in the 14th century. When the definite article (*L’/LE/LA/LES*) became more and more popular in French in the 15th and 16th centuries, these forms became also more frequent<sup>15</sup>. While *AU* was commonly used and still is today, the form *À LA* was mainly used from the 16th to the 18th century to designate distant or unknown countries (*À LA Chine, À L’Amérique*). According to le Père Bouhours (cited in Fahlin 1942, 215), it is normal to say “...*aller À LA Chine, AU Japon; comme*

<sup>14</sup> Other than that, *à* is only sporadically attested in French, such as at the end 14th century in *À Catay* (old word for China, Fahlin 1942, 124). Meigret however condemns this usage (cited in Fahlin 1942, 128): “*car nou’ ne diron’ pas je suys A Çhampañe, France, Italie ou Hespañe*”, because we do not say I am in Champagne, France, Italy or Spain.

<sup>15</sup> However, many usages with *EN* have remained (*EN Australie, EN Martinique*) although they seem to adhere to the rules of the modern usage. According to Spang-Hanssen, these archaic usages are due to the fact that people did not distinguish colonies (which should be used with a form of *à*) from the motherland where the colonists were from.

*aller AUX Indes, AU Mogol, AUX Philippines, AUX Moluques, AU Tunquin, AU Pérou, AU Mexique, AU Brasil, AU Paraquay, À LA Floride, À LA Guadeloupe, À LA Domingue, À LA Virginie, À LA Martinique, À LA Cayenne, AU Biledulgerid, À LA Guynée, AU Congo, AU Mozambique, etc.*” Fahlin mentions that *À LA Chine* is recommended by Le Dictionnaire de Trévoux and used by Voltaire and Chateaubriand (ibid., 216). He points out that *À L’Amérique* is also found (ibid., 217): “*je jurerais bien qu’arrivant À L’Amérique ...*” (I would really swear that arriving in America...), “*...allant À L’Amérique*” (... going to America), “*...un voyage que j’ay fait À L’Amérique...*” (...a journey that I made to America...) “*...des ordres qui vont jusqu’ À LA Chine et À L’Amérique*” (...orders that go all the way to China and America). Fahlin also gives examples such as *À LA Caroline* and *À LA Louisiane*: “*Son père... ayant voulu faire un établissement À LA Caroline*” (his father...who had wanted to build an establishment in Carolina), “*arriva À LA Louisiane*” (arrived in Louisiana), or “*le massacre des Français et des Natchez À LA Louisiane*” (the massacre of the French and the Natchez in Louisiana).

DANS as a third form was an accepted alternative to EN and À before country nouns, regardless of gender (Fahlin 1942, 210). It became more frequent in the 14th and 15th centuries, and even more so in the following century. As a result, the 16th century was marked by a diversity of prepositional usages regardless of gender (*EN France, EN la Grèce, AU Peru, DANS l’Italie, AUX Espagnes*). The usage of DANS continued to increase in the 17th century: “*ils fichèrent leurs demeures DANS la Germanie*” (ibid., 207, they took residence in Germania), “*...un certain animal qu’on ne voit que DANS la Laponie, Boranday, Samojessie et Siberie*” (ibid., 209, ...a certain animal that we see only in Lapland, Boranday, Samojessie, and Siberia). DANS is extremely popular in the 18th

century according to Fahlin (ibid., 210): “*Au cours du siècle suivant [18ème], la préposition dans jouit d’une grande faveur devant les noms de pays...*” (in the course of the following [18th] century, the preposition *dans* is very popular before country names...). He gives numerous examples of this usage: “*avant l’âge de Tiphys et des Argonautes tant vantés DANS la Grèce*” (before the age of Tiphys and the Argonauts who were so much praised in Greece), “*ainsi, on ne voit guère... de monarchies DANS l’Italie, l’Espagne, les Gaules*” (this way, we hardly see... monarchies in Italy, Spain, the Galliae), “*Mazarin... laissait languir DANS la France la justice, le commerce...*” (Mazarin... let the justice, the commerce languish in France...). *DANS* is used with many country names, such as *DANS la Syrie*, *DANS l’Europe*, *DANS l’Afrique*, *DANS la Finlande*, and *DANS l’Angleterre*. Also, *DANS l’Inde* is attested as a common expression, based on its historic variant *DANS les Indes* (Spang-Hanssen 1963, 201).

The popularity of *DANS* ended in the 19th century when *EN* (with feminine names) regained its former significance. Its usage was continued, however, before old regions and departments in France (*DANS le Poitou*, *DANS le Limousin*) or regions in Europe (*DANS le Hainaut*, *DANS le Brabant*, *DANS le Luxembourg*, Grevisse 1980, 344, Spang-Hanssen 1963, 201). In the case of provinces and foreign regions, Spang-Hanssen even says that the usage of *DANS* is as common as that of *AU*, backing up this claim by citing several examples taken from the French literature (*AU Tyrol* and *DANS le Salzkammergut* in Aragon, Aurélien). Although grammarians accept *DANS* as the standard usage only in a few cases with the meaning “within”, it is a very frequent variant in vernacular French.

Interestingly, Spang-Hanssen mentions the tendency to use *DANS* before many regions in North America. As corroborating evidence, the author cites two examples



from *Le Monde*, a renowned French newspaper: *DANS le Maryland* (September 17, 1959) and *DANS le Wisconsin* (April 7, 1960). In Modern French teaching manuals, it is admitted with masculine U.S. state names (e.g., *DANS le Vermont*, Amon, Muyskens, and Hadley 2004, 221). In Cajun French, *DANS* is also attested as an alternative to *AU/EN* before U.S. states as well as before country names.

*Moi j'aime à cuire, j'aime à rôder DANS la Louisiane* (Marguerite – 4: A).  
I like to cook, I like to stroll in Louisiana.

*Ses filles qui demeurent DANS le Texas l'a téléphoné* (Marguerite – 19: A).  
His daughters who stayed in Texas gave him a phone call.

*Quand j'ai été drafted, ils m'ont envoyé DANS l'Texas* (Joachim – 4: A).  
When I was drafted, they sent me to Texas.

*Là j'ai été...DANS le Maryland* (Joachim – 4: A).  
Then I went...to Maryland.

*Si tu restes: restes DANS la France* (Joachim – 27: A).  
If you stay: stay in France.

*Ouais j'ai arrivé DANS Angleterre dans mars* (Omer – 3: A).  
Yes, I arrived in England in March.

The historical form *À LA* is also found in Cajun French as a fourth variant. It is used in a context where *EN* would be the regular standard French preposition.

*On les ramenait À LA France* (Omer – 3: A).  
We brought them back to France.

*Si tu fais quelque chose de mal dans les États-Unis, viens À LA Louisiane* (Étienne – 28: A).  
If you do something bad in the United States, come to Louisiana.

Moreover, the use of *à* without article before countries as well as U.S. states is found in Cajun French<sup>16</sup>.

*Et là ils m'ont envoyé à Colorado* (Joachim – 4: A).  
And then they sent me to Colorado.

*Ouais, j'ai été à overseas, j'ai été à euh Sweden, à Finland, et Stockholm, j'ai été là pour trente jours dessus un, un cruise de bateau. J'ai joué la musique en français là-bas et j'ai été à New York, j'ai été à Germany, et j'ai été à Californie, et j'ai été à euh Washington* (Normand – 19: S).  
Yes, I went overseas, I went to to, uh, Sweden, to Finland, and Stockholm, I was there for thirty days on, on a boat cruise. I played music in French there and I went to New York, I went to Germany, and I went to California, and I went to uh Washington.

The country category includes country names, U.S. states, Canadian provinces, continents, and regions, altogether encompassing over 500 tokens. The biggest subgroup contains names of U.S. states and Canadian provinces (approximately 260 tokens). The most frequent among them are Texas (62), followed by Louisiane or Louisiana with 40 tokens. Other frequently used state names are Floride or Florida (23), Mississippi (21), Californie or California (19), and Nouvelle Écosse or Nova Scotia (17).

The next biggest subgroup encompasses country names (210 tokens). Most refer to European places (130 tokens, 18 different country names), France being the most frequent one with 70 tokens. Other commonly used country names are Allemagne or Germany (15), Belgique (7), Italie or Italy (7), and Switzerland (4). American country

---

<sup>16</sup> Examples of *à* with the wrong article or a non-contracted preposition are also found in the subsample. They are almost all attributable to the production of only two individuals and have therefore been discarded. Examples are: “*Ils l'ont envoyé à LE Maryland, là-bas*” (Joachim – 6: A). They sent him to Maryland over there. “*Yeah, tu vois, il y a le tax pour les télévisions, tous les radio, le téléphone et tout ça AU Belgique*” (Vincent – 3: A). Yeah, you see, there is the tax for televisions, all the radios, the telephone and all that in Belgium. “*Le langue est le même langue, même le monde qui parle anglais AU England c'est pas le même anglais qui nous-autres parlent*” (Thomas – 3: L). The language is the same language, even the people who speak English in England, it's not the same English we speak.

names are represented by approximately 50 tokens, Canada is used frequently (23 times), followed by États-Unis or United States (13 times), and Mexique or Mexico (13 times). A few names refer to non-European locations, especially Asian countries (Chine/China, Vietnam, Japon/Japan, Korea), and a few Middle Eastern and African countries, together adding up to approximately 30 tokens.

## 2.6 LOCATION OF CITIES

The locative preposition *À* is the standard form with cities. It is extremely rare to have other forms such as *DANS*, *AU/À LA*, and *EN* before cities. *DANS* is found in literary examples with a sense of interiority or with determination as in *DANS le Paris d'aujourd'hui* (in today's Paris) or to underline a certain aspect of the city, such as interiority as opposed to periphery (*ce grand cinéma DANS Paris*, this big movie theater in Paris). The others are found only with certain (rare) city names such as *AU Havre/À LA Nouvelle Orléans* or archaic *EN Avignon* (employed for phonetic reasons to avoid a hiatus). The form *SUR* is absent in this context.

In Old French, the form *EN* was mostly employed, which was a continued usage from Latin *IN* with cities. According to Fahlin (1942, 137-145), *EN* was used with foreign cities (e.g., *EN Sarraguce*), biblical cities (*EN Jerusalem*), and cities that form a state (*EN Avignon*, *EN Arles*). *EN* was also employed as a literary usage (*EN Paris*), with static verbs (“*aeit EN Rome un eglise mult bele*”, there was a very pretty church in Rome), or the verb *entrer* (“*entra EN Napples*”, he went into Naples). Contrary to country names, the definite article played no role in the historical development of prepositional forms used with cities. The form *À* was first evidenced in the 9th century and continued to gain in popularity. It was employed to express movement to or location

in a city (*À Paris, À Londres*). By the 12th and 13th centuries, *À* appeared more frequently than *EN* in most contexts and became the standardized form in the 17th century.

The other variant, *DANS*, was used alternatively from the 15th/16th centuries until the 19th century (*DANS Paris, DANS Nice*), with or without a sense of interiority (Fahlin 1942, 219, “*je vous vois dans Aix, accablé de tristesse*”, I see you in Aix, overwhelmed with sadness, or “*Condé revint dans Paris*”, Condé came back to Paris). All three forms, *À*, *EN*, and *DANS*, are found in Cajun French.

*Elle reste devant l’hôpital, là devant l’hôpital À Marksville* (Eugène - 6: A).  
She stays in front of the hospital, there in front of the hospital in Marksville.

*À reste à : elle est restée dans l’Mississippi mais elle a juste déménagé À Baton Rouge un p’tit bout de temps* (Annette - 30: A).  
She stays in : she stayed in Mississippi, but she just moved to Baton Rouge a little while [ago].

*Ça nous, nous amenait À Basile, ou à, à : À Crowley pour les bals, et ça nous espérait* (Ruth - 9: S).  
They brought us, us to Basile, or to, to : to Crowley for the balls, and they were waiting for us.  
*Les sauvages voulaient pas [aller à l’école] DANS Marksville* (Eugène - 17: A).  
The savages didn’t want [to go to school] in Marksville.

*Tu vois, quand ça brûlait DANS Marksville, ç’a changé et l’école est DANS Fifthward, c’est toujours Marksville Middle, mais c’est DANS Fifthward* (Berthe - 12: A).  
You see, when it burnt in Marksville, they changed and the school is in Fifthward, it is still Marksville Middle, but it’s in Fifthward.

*J’étais née DANS le, euh, Nouvelle Orléans, mais ma grand-mère et ma grand-père m’a : m’a élevée, et mon papa, mais mon papa, tu vois, mon papa était après travailler tout le temps* (Anaïs - 19: L).  
I was born in, uh, New Orleans, but my grandmother and my grandfather have : have raised me, and my dad, but my dad, you see, my dad has been working all the time.

*On celebrate le quatre de juillette icitte dans EN Marksville* (Jack - 9: A).  
We celebrate the fourth of July here in in Marksville.

*Il n'a le cochon de lait. EN Mansura* (Francine – 14: A).  
There is the piglet [festival]. In Mansura.

The forms À LA and AU represent a fourth usage in Cajun French. The variant À with article is somewhat limited to cities with determination (e.g., *LA Nouvelle Orléans*, *LE vieux Paris*) or due to a common name origin (e.g., *LE Havre*) in contemporary French (Grevisse 1980, 342; Togeby 1982, 148). These forms are reserved for only a handful of well-known cases (À *LA Haye*, À *LA Rochelle*, etc.). Even historically, they were an exception to the rule<sup>17</sup>.

In Cajun French, there seems to be a long-standing variation between À and AU/À LA before city places. These forms are found before names that can be analyzed as common names (À *LA Ville Platte*, *AU Baton Rouge*, *AU Canal Yankee*, *AU Lac Charles*), and before proper names (*AU Jean Lafitte*, *AU Pierre Part*, *AU Galliane*). One explanation is that since most of these places started as small localities they were considered surface places, therefore requiring the usage of the definite article (assuming an underlying construction such as ‘*AU port de cotton*’ for *AU Cottonport* and ‘*AU village/AU hameau de Galliane*’ for *AU Galliane*). A similar example is *AUX Opelousas*, which is based on the historical expression ‘*AU poste des Opelousas*’.

*J'ai commencé dans l'école, teach AU Simmesport. Et elle donne le cours AU Simmesport, au Sacred Heart et AU Plaucheville* (Vincent – 2: A).  
I started in school, teach in Simmesport. And she teaches the class in Simmesport, at Sacred Heart, and in Plaucheville.

---

<sup>17</sup> Fahlin makes a strong argument against the usage of the definite article with cities, which, according to him, is used as an exception for Turkish and Greek cities in Villehardouin's work (12th/13th centuries): “une cité qu'on apele LA Panphile”, “la cité de LA Quipesale” (1942, 120-122). According to Plattner, city names with the article were somewhat more frequent before the 20th century: “AU Valparais (Buffon), LE Callao, LE Port Arthur” (1907, 149).

*C'est son frère, Marvin euh, c'est son frère, il est À LA Pointe à la Hache. On a été là euh à près deux fois, depuis là, on y avait été, il a déménagé, et on a retourné après ça, À LA Pointe à la Hache* (Eugène – 5: A).

That's his brother, Marvin uh, that's his brother, he stays in Pointe à la Hache.

We went there, uh, two times or so, since then, we had gone there, he moved, and we went back after that, to Pointe à la Hache.

In addition, we also found usage of SUR in Cajun French.

*Et mom restait sur Old Mansura Road. SUR Cocoville* (Constance – 8: A).

And mom stayed on Old Mansura Road. In Cocoville.

*Mais euh le father là, il a un travail SUR le Bordelonville* (Sylvain – 27: A).

But uh the father here, he works in Bordelonville.

For cities, a total of approximately 1,900 tokens are found. The majority of the occurrences appear before cities and settlements situated within the Cajun speaking triangle of southern Louisiana (approximately 90%). The three city names most frequently used are Lafayette (over 100 tokens), Eunice (almost 100 tokens), and Marksville (84 tokens).

## **2.7 LOCATION OF VILLE**

Movement to and location of the word ville in standard French is categorically expressed by EN. According to Fahlin (1942, 38), the oldest prepositional usage of ville was probably with À, which was used with movement verbs (Latin usage) and static verbs. The first example that attests this usage is found during the 12th and 13th centuries: “*O fust a bois o fust A vile*” (either he was in the forest or in town). Until the 16th century, the use of À, À LA, EN, EN LA, and DANS appears before ville in many writers' works (Fahlin 1942, 49, 34, 71, 191, 192; Littré 1956-1958, 7:1747): “*Gautiers*

*est demorez tout droit A une vile*” (Gautiers stayed straight ahead in a town), “*n’EN vile ne en voie*” (neither in town nor on the way), “*soit a chan, soit A vilhe*” (either in the field or in town), “*...les affaires que j’ay A LA bonne ville*” (...the things that I have in the good city), “*le procureur... envoya EN ville*” (the prosecutor...sent to town) , “*leur demeure EN LA ville*” (their residence in town); “*homme ou femme DEDENS la ville et banlieue[de Tournay]*” (man or woman in town and the surrounding area [of Tournay]). In the 17th century, À LA was the popular form, often used in opposition to À LA cour or À LA campagne, and the expression EN ville referred to the notion of entertainment, according to Robert’s dictionary (2003, 2778, “*en allant dîner tous les jours EN ville*”, to be invited to the city for dinner every day). This expression also meant that the person who used EN ville was not living there, whereas with À LA ville, this could be the case or not. No special meaning is mentioned for DANS la ville, which according to Fahlin (1942, 228) could be used interchangeably with À LA ville. Although the French Academy’s dictionary of 1935 still makes this semantic differentiation, actual usage since the 19th century is to employ EN ville regardless of semantic conditioning (ibid., 227-228).

In Cajun French, DANS and À LA are used as alternative variants to EN, none of them carrying a reference to a person’s place of living. This category by definition is restricted to the word ville, which is found approximately 220 times here.

*Mon mari a été [au Mardi gras] quand il était jeune : parce que ses parents avaient euh : resté EN ville quand : ils s’etiont en premier mariés* (Nicole – 23: A).

My husband went [to Mardi Gras] when he was young : because his parents had uh: stayed in town when : they had first married.

*Et ça qu’il aime, î dit que c’est au milieu ici, s’î faut que tu vas EN ville ou s’î faut que tu vas à Houma, tu-connaiss, c’est comme au milieu* (Élodie – 18: L).

And the thing he likes, he says, that it is in the middle here, if you have to go to town or if you have to go to Houma, you know, it's like in the middle.

*Et plus les enfants allaient comme DANS la ville, jusqu'à Raceland et Thibodaux, eusse avaient honte de dire qu'eusse parlaient français* (Élodie – 5: L).

And the more the children went like to town, up to to Raceland and Thibodaux, they were ashamed to say that they spoke French.

*Moi j'ai envie de croire sans avoir vi [=vécu] exactement dans le temps de la dépression que le monde DANS les grosses villes a souffert beaucoup plus que le monde de campagne* (Valentin – 21: S).

I like to believe without having exactly lived in the time of the depression that the people in the big cities suffered a lot more than the people in the country.

1. *Ils [les coureurs du Mardi gras] allont plus à les grands villages.* 2. *Yeah, les grands villages, à Lafayette, ou, ou À LA ville* (Henry – 23: V).

1. They [the Mardi Gras runners] didn't go anymore to the big villages. 2. Yeah, the big villages, to Lafayette, or, or to the city.

*Elle [maman] vasait à À LA ville :: sur le char* (Francine – 1: A).

She [mom] went to to the city :: by bus.

## 2.8 LOCATION OF CHEMIN/RUE

The forms AU/À LA, DANS, and SUR can express movement to or along and location on or along a way or a street. SUR (from Latin SUPER/SUPRA) is a frequent variant in this context. Historically, EN appeared often with the word chemin (Littré 1956-1958, 2:222, “*tant chevauchèrent ES veies e chemins*”, so many rode on the roads and ways) but DANS quickly replaced this preposition. By the 17th century, À and SUR, already established in the French language, became more widespread (Haase 1898).

*Si je trouvois le diable À mon chemin... je lui passerois sur le ventre* (Haase 1898, 329-330).

If I found the devil on my way...I would walk on his belly.

*DANS un chemin montant, sablonneux, malaisé et de tous les côtés au soleil exposé, six forts chevaux tiraient un coche* (Gougenheim 1949, 42).

On a climbing, sandy, difficult way, and on all sides exposed to the sun, six strong horses pulled a coach.



*Il a conduit jadis, SUR le chemin qui mène à la prairie en fleurs...les grands boeufs indolents...* (Gougenheim 1949, 43).

He once guided, on the way that leads to the blooming prairie...the big indolent oxen...

Normative French grammars point out that in connection with *rue*, only *DANS* represents correct usage. They also attribute different semantic meanings to *À LA* and *SUR*: *À LA rue* often means to be homeless or to lose one's home (*être, jeter, mettre À LA rue*) and *SUR la rue* is typically used in expressions such as "*la chambre donne SUR la rue*", room with a view of the street)<sup>18</sup>. Historically however, all forms were in accordance with the general tendencies shown so far (*EN* in Old French, followed by *À LA* and *DANS*)<sup>19</sup>.

*ES rues de Seissuns se sont entreveü* (Littré 1956-1958, 6:1764).

In the streets of Seissuns they met.

*N'est permis de faire fumier AUX rues publiques...* (Littré 1956-1958, 6:1765).

It is not allowed to make a dunghill in the public streets...

*Pour dormir DANS la rue on n'offense personne* (Littré 1956-1958, 6:1764).

For sleeping in the street one offends nobody.

In Cajun French, the three variants *DANS*, *À LA/AU*, and *SUR* are used with *chemin* and *rue*.

*Et là î y a un bougre qu'a venu, il était arrêté AU chemin de Gheens pour prendre le highway* (Nicolas – 31: L).

And there is a guy who came, he stopped at the way to Ghees to take the highway.

---

<sup>18</sup> Grevisse 1980, 1187-1188.

<sup>19</sup> We have no examples for usage of *SUR* but we believe that it existed. We also know that it is the most frequent variant in the North American French varieties, a fact that suggests its historical existence.

*Mais là, tu prendais le ferry qui :: qu'allait, euh, À LA Rue Canal. Et là eusse te débarquaient À LA Rue Canal, et là tu pouvais marcher* (Chantal – 19: L).

But then, you took the ferry that :: that went, uh, to Canal Street. And then they dropped you off at Canal Street, and then you could walk.

*Et ils dansaient DANS le chemin et ils boivaient la bière* (Lucie – 13: A).

And they danced in the streets and they drank beer.

*Mmh, î [les jeunes] sont DANS les rues, ç'après boire et tout qualité de choses* (Homère – 10: A).

Mmh, they [the young people] are in the streets, drinking and doing all sorts of things.

*C'est l'autre gros chemin là, pas loin, elle [la tante] est [= habite] pas SUR l'chemin* (Oscar – 27: S).

It's the other big road there, not far away, she [the aunt] is [= lives] not on the road.

*J'avais un band, ils s'appelaient les Prairie Cajuns. Ils jouent à trois SUR la rue là* (Octave – 6: S).

I had a band, they called themselves the Prairie Cajuns. They are three to play on the street there.

This database is made up of 158 prepositional expressions: we find 75 tokens for *chemin* as a single word or composite, and 66 tokens for *rue* as a single word or composite, many of which are English. In addition, we found a few more travel ways (e.g., *manche*, meaning small street, and driveway, corresponding to *voie de garage/allée*, in French, with 17 tokens together).

## 2.9 LOCATION OF WATER SURFACES

This category refers to location on or along and movement to or along a water surface. Both AU and SUR are attested in Old French (Raithel 1888), 17th century French (Haase 1898), and in some traditional mariners' songs (*chansons de marins*).

*Notre capitaine, des plus ignorans qui fût À LA mer, eut cinquante fois envie de se laisser échouer* (Haase 1898, 330).

Our captain, one of the least skilled [persons] who were on the sea, wanted to let himself sink fifty times.

*Matelot navigue sur les flots*

*Il entreprit un long voyage*

*SUR la mer mé, mé, Méditerranée* (traditional French song text: *Il était un petit navire*).

Seaman sails on the waves

He embarked upon a long journey

On the me, me, Mediterranean Sea.

*Le voilier, passé le cercle du tropique*

*A stoppé SUR l'eau tranquille où meurt le vent* (traditional French song text: *La belle escale*).

The sailboat passed the tropical circle

Stopped on the quiet water where the wind dies.

The 17th century French grammarians proposed constructions of the type *AU/SUR le bord de* but the use of *AU/SUR* (without *bord de*) persists until today<sup>20</sup>. Togeby (1984, 117) mentions *À* in contemporary French in his grammar ("*nous allons À LA mer*", we go to the seaside), but *SUR* is restricted to cities located along water surfaces (Gougenheim 1938, 311): "*Paris est situé SUR la Seine, Genève SUR le lac de Genève; Boulogne-SUR - Mer; Bar-SUR-Aube*" (Paris is situated on the Seine, Genève on the Lake of Genève)<sup>21</sup>. Examples of *SUR* in Old French are numerous and include many variants of it (*SEUR*, *SUS*, etc.).

---

<sup>20</sup>According to Brunot (1966, 6:1871), the following 18th century usages are criticized by the French Academy: "*Ce ne fut qu'avec la moindre partie de nos forces, que nous combatîmes AU Granique*" (it was only with the smallest part of our forces that we combatted at the Granique) or "*enfin il se rendit AU fleuve d'Oxe*" (at last, he went to the river Ox).

<sup>21</sup>Only Plattner (1907, 262) describes this usage of *SUR* outside the city context: "*faire une excursion SUR l'Adriatique*", "*le castor habite SUR les eaux, SUR les cours d'eaux*" (to go on a trip to the Adria, the beaver lives along the water, along the currents of the water).

... *SOR Gironde à Blevies a fait sa gent harbargier* (Raithel 1888, 16).  
... he had his people quartered on the Gironde at Blevies.

*S'est logie SEUR Saine* (Octavian, cited in Raithel 1888, 16).  
He found accomodation on the Seine.

*SUS la riviere de Clarence s'esteit retraiz en une arbreie sus l'erbre fresche*  
*Hector* (Benoit de Sainte-More et le Roman de Troie, cited in Raithel 1888, 17).  
Along the river Clarence Hector had retreated on the fresh grass into a small forest.

In Cajun French, AU, SUR, and À are used with the meaning 'on' or 'along the water'.

*Les autres fois, j'me rappelle euh défunte mom et eux-autres allaient coucher, allaient AU bayou, mais î y avait pas de tentes* (Rose – 18: S).  
The other times, I remember, uh, late mom and the others went to sleep, went to the bayou, but there were no tents.

*Il avait un river landing, il avait euh : un magasin que il a acheté, il faisait commerce SUR la rivière par :: par berge et par les steam-boats* (Antoine – 2: S).  
He had a river landing, he had uh: a shop that he bought, he traded on the river by :: by boat and by steam-boats.

*Le monde dit ça c'est un de les plus gros party que ç'a jamais vu DESSUS le bayou* (Philippe – 20: L).  
People say that this is one of the biggest parties they have ever seen on the bayou.

*Là que lui veut [pêcher], va À Toledo Bend, euh mon beau-père puis mon belle-mère, euh belle-mère a un camp À Toledo Bend* (Michelle – 14: S).  
The place where he wants to go [fishing], he goes to Toledo Bend, uh my father-in-law, then my mother-in-law, uh mother-in-law has a camp at Toledo Bend.

DANS is an alternative form used in the context of water surfaces to designate land next to or along the bayou<sup>22</sup>.

*J'étais à l'école ... eusse s'a mis à parler, comme DANS les bayoux, il y avait du monde que qui traitait et fait ça après des traiteurs et tout (Jeanne – 5: L).*

I went to school ..., they started talking, like on the bayous, there were people that who healed and do that like the healers and all that.

*J'ai des portraits de lui [Father Bill] et î chassait DANS le lac où je pêche. Moi et nous-autres chassaient DANS le même lac, et î passait devant, î faut il passe devant ma maison pour lui aller DANS ce lac (Roger – 20: A).*

I have pictures of him [Father Bill] and he hunted on the lake where I go fishing. I and the others hunted on the same lake, and he passed in front, he has to pass in front of my house to go to this lake.

This database contains approximately 150 lexical entries. We have considered both common names such as *bayou*, *canal*, *lac*, *rivière*, *fleuve*, *mer*, and *eau* as well as proper names such as Bayou Lafourche, Lac Cocodrie, or Rivière Rouge.

## 2.10 SUMMARY

We have shown that in Cajun French, numerous locative forms are used: CHEZ, AU/À LA, À, DANS, EN, and SUR. We also have found several locative contexts, which encompass location at/in or along and movement to or along a person's place, buildings, land surfaces, countries, cities, ville, chemin/rue, and water surfaces. Many prepositions are used in several contexts. This is especially true for the forms AU/À LA and DANS, which are used in every context. The forms EN, SUR, and À are also produced in almost all contexts with a few contextual exceptions for each form. Only CHEZ is found exclusively in the person's context. The robust number of occurrences in each locative

---

<sup>22</sup> It is also important to know that if the preposition DANS is used in connection with water, this often entails an interpretation of actual physical location 'in' the water and we therefore had to eliminate it. If DANS is used meaning the area along the water, it was kept.

category allows for subdivisions (such as U.S. state names and country names) and the location of the most frequent locative expressions (such as *maison*). All the locative prepositions described in this chapter will be analyzed quantitatively in chapter 3.

Before we do so, we will give a short description of several locative contexts that have been determined but will not be included in this study. We give examples for each category in appendix A. Many categories show an invariant usage of prepositions. Proper name buildings of the type “St. Joseph” are usually employed with *À*, when the underlying expression is a feminine noun, as for example *école, hôpital, église*, etc. In Cajun French, we located approximately 135 such tokens<sup>23</sup>. For islands, grammarians describe variation between *À, À LA, AUX, EN, and DANS* (Grevisse 1980, 343; Spang-Hanssen 1963, 204). We found only 15 tokens in Cajun French, all with the form *À* (*À New Guinea, À Bahamas*). For territorial surfaces (approximately 70 tokens), we found two sets of invariant usages in Cajun French: one invariant usage with *DANS* (*DANS le champ*) and one with *SUR* (*SUR la réservation*). Border surfaces, which refer to usage of ‘*bord de*’ (usually along water surfaces and travel ways), are always introduced by *SUR* in Cajun French (26 tokens). With media devices, there is a sharp distinction in standard French between nouns where only usage of *AU/À LA* is admitted (*À LA télé*) and names of television stations where *SUR* is used (*SUR la 3, SUR CNN*). This usage shows more variability in Québec French (*À* and *SUR* with names: *À/SUR SuperEcran, À/SUR TéléQuébec*) and in Ontarian French (*À/SUR* with both names and nouns, e.g., *À LA/SUR la télé*, Mougeon and Beniak 1991). In Cajun French, *SUR* (124 tokens) is systematically used in both contexts (*SUR television, SUR Nickelodeon*).

---

<sup>23</sup> We have also studied the variable use of proper name buildings with masculine underlying expressions (type “*AU Magic*”, including restaurants, entertainment, commercial, and military facilities). However, this analysis is not presented here because the variation is restricted to forms with *À* (*À* and *AU*).

Other locative contexts contain only a small number of tokens, a fact that impedes a quantitative analysis. One of them is the context of proper names of the type “Fred’s Lounge”, which contains both a building designation and a personal element in the name. With these proper names (20 tokens), we find AU (all names have masculine underlying expressions), CHEZ, and À. The second context includes parish names (based on the underlying expression *À LA paroisse de*) with 17 tokens for which we find À, DANS (e.g., *DANS les Avoyelles*), and À with an article (e.g., *À LA Cameron, AU Evangeline*). Third, in the category *prison* (21 tokens), À LA and EN are used in Cajun French and DANS is a third variant. Finally, in the category formed by *route* (which includes highways and roads), we located 42 tokens, and found mostly usage of SUR, but also À (e.g., *À Bluetown Jonathan Road*) and DANS (e.g., *DANS la route*).

### **CHAPTER 3**

## **DISTRIBUTION OF LOCATIVE PREPOSITIONS**

In the previous chapter, we demonstrated that there are well-established prepositional usages in the Cajun French community as well as in other vernacular French-speaking populations. All members of the Cajun community across all generations produce these usages, albeit not to the same extent. We consider these prepositions ‘local norms’.

There are also infrequent, sporadic locative forms that are more often produced by speakers with a restricted ability in French. They are neither part of the local norms, nor of the exonorms. They are the innovative forms in Cajun French. Our first goal is to determine the distributional tendencies of all locative variants in Cajun French. As a second goal, we will discuss their usage in different French varieties in Canada. To do this comparative analysis, we have selected Acadian French as the most closely related variety; Québec French as a well-maintained variety, and Ontarian French as a variety that is similar to Québec French, yet suffers from the contact situation with English (Geddes 1908; Peronnet 1982, 1989; Arrighi 2004, 2005; Dionne 1909; La Société du Parler Français 1930; La Follette 1969; Juneau 1976; Seutin 1975; Gesner 1979; Mougeon and Beniak 1991; Mougeon et al. 1977; Starets 1994). We will show that many nonstandard prepositions, which are ignored or proscribed by French grammarians, are very common forms in other varieties, especially in Cajun French. We will give a table that summarizes all local and innovative forms found in Cajun French at the end of this chapter.



### 3.1 OVERALL FREQUENCY OF THE DATA

Table 3 shows the distribution of all prepositions for the eight locative categories under study. In the next paragraph, we discuss the frequency of usage per category. For each one, we present the preposition followed by the lexical entry to facilitate the reader's comprehension (e.g., *CHEZ ma mère*, *DANS l'école*, *À Baton Rouge*). However, it must be understood that the frequency presented is not that of "*CHEZ ma mère*", but all occurrences of CHEZ with nouns, names, and pronouns, or not that of "*À Baton Rouge*", but of À with city names. All prepositions reported are to be found in table 3.

Table 3. Overall distribution of the locative prepositions in their respective categories.

<b>PERSONS (#498)</b>		<b>BUILDINGS (#2269)</b>	
CHEZ ma mère	66% (330)	À L'école	59% (1342)
AU docteur	15% (74)	DANS l'école	34% (766)
À ma mère	13% (64)	AU école	3% (68)
SUR ma mère	5% (23)	À école	3% (58)
EN/DANS ma mère	1% (7)	EN école	1% (27)
		SUR/CHEZ l'école	0% (8)
<b>LAND SURFACES (#569)</b>		<b>COUNTRIES (#474)</b>	
DANS le clos	80% (456)	DANS la Louisiane	37% (174)
AU clos	14% (80)	À Louisiane	35% (166)
À clos	3% (18)	À LA Louisiane	24% (112)
EN clos	1% (6)	EN Louisiane	5% (22)
SUR le clos	1% (4)		
À LE clos	1% (4)		
<b>CITIES (#1891)</b>		<b>VILLE (#217)</b>	
À Eunice	77% (1448)	EN ville	84% (183)
AU Simmesport	12% (233)	DANS la ville	12% (27)
DANS Eunice	7% (138)	À LA ville	3% (7)
EN Eunice	2% (44)		
SUR Eunice	1% (28)		
<b>CHEMIN/RUE (#157)</b>		<b>WATER SURFACES (#149)</b>	
SUR le chemin	69% (109)	SUR le bayou	54% (81)
DANS le chemin	22% (34)	AU bayou	30% (44)
AU chemin	9% (14)	À bayou	7% (11)
		DANS le bayou	5% (7)
		À LE bayou	4% (6)

### 3.2 DISTRIBUTION FOR PERSONS

Within the person category in Cajun French, CHEZ (330 tokens or 66%) is the major variant. It is used together with nouns as well as with personal pronouns, and no preference is found for its usage in combination with either one. CHEZ is also a very frequent variant in other varieties of French, attested numerous times in the studies of Acadian<sup>24</sup> and Québec French (15 times each). It is well preserved in Ontarian French (Mougeon and Beniak 1991, 166 tokens). Interestingly, CHEZ is used exclusively with personal pronouns in Acadian French examples (*CHEZ eux*, *CHEZ nous*), which could mean that CHEZ is in complementary distribution with SUR (with nouns), as suggested by King (cited as a personal communication in Mougeon and Beniak 1991, 162). For Québec and Ontarian French, CHEZ is used both with personal pronouns and nouns, as it is in Cajun French. CHEZ is considered a local variant.

Usage of *AU docteur*, a variant of CHEZ in popular French, is a local norm in Cajun French. Its frequency is much lower than that of CHEZ, yet its presence is well established with 74 tokens (15%). It also is a variant in Acadian French (Gesner 1979, 86, “*allez plus AU docteur*”, “*elle a été AU dentiste*”, don’t go to the doctor anymore, she went to the dentist) and Québec French (Dionne 1909, “*aller AU médecin*”, “*aller AU prêtre*”, to go to the doctor, to go to the priest). Its existence is also mentioned in the Ontarian study.

Surprisingly, *À ma mère*, which has never been attested in standard French, is found almost as often in Cajun French as *AU docteur* (64 tokens, used to 13%). According to Mougeon and Beniak (1991), this variant is more present in Ontarian

---

<sup>24</sup> *CHEZ eux* in Peronnet (1989) is always realized as *CHUZ eux*; also found in Ryan (1989): *CHUZ vous*.

French than in other Canadian French varieties. Its usage is not very frequent (8 tokens). There is also sporadic evidence for its usage in other Canadian French varieties, as in Acadian French (Arrighi 2005, 240, “*j’allions souvent... À mon oncle*”, I went often...to my uncle’s house) and Québec French (La Follette 1969, 28, “*demain on partira, m’as aller te mener À ton père*”, tomorrow, we will leave, I will bring you to your father’s house). Since *À ma mère* is not very frequent in the French varieties under study, we temporarily consider it an innovative form in Cajun French.

The overall frequency of SUR, a historical variant of French that is present in Cajun French, is relatively low: 23 tokens or 5%<sup>25</sup>. Yet SUR, also realized as SUS, is well attested in all other varieties of French. A very intriguing fact with regard to SUR in Cajun French is that it is employed both with personal pronouns and nouns. This appears to be an expanded usage of SUR because we only find it with nouns in North American varieties.

SUR (realized as SUS or SU) is found several times in Acadian French (10 times), with nouns in both the home and professional contexts, such as in Peronnet (1982, 63), “*i allait SUS son père*”, “*pour l’amener SUS le barbier*” (he went to his father’s, to bring him to the barber’s), in Geddes (1908, 172), “*[Ni]colas a venu hier soir SU mon oncle*” ([Ni]colas came last evening to my uncle’s), or in Arrighi (2005, 241), “*je travaillais SUS docteur Johnson dans l’hiver*” (I worked at Doctor Johnson’s in the winter). In Québec French, the presence of SUR is also well attested (16 examples) and always used with nouns in both linguistic contexts (home and place of work). We find examples in Juneau (1976, 27), “*il arrive SUS l’habitant tout en pleurant*” (he arrives at the farmer’s in tears),

---

<sup>25</sup> It is realized as DESSUS one time, a form not found in other French varieties: “*Mais un seul temps, je parle en français, c’est quand je vas voir ma maman ou je vas dessus mes voisins*” (Roger – 10: A). But on one occasion, I speak French, that’s when I visit my mother or when I go to my neighbors’.

in La Follette (1969, 27, 152), “*i’ a été s’ réfugier SU’ in seigneur*”, “*... i’ s’en va SU’ in cordonnier...*” (he sought refuge in the home of a lord, ...he goes to a shoemaker...), and in Seutin (1975, 357), “*au lieu de les [outils] prendre soit à Québec ou SUS Benjamin Simard*” (instead of taking them [tools] either in Québec City or at Benjamin Simard’s). In Ontarian French, SUR is also part of the prepositional repertoire. It is produced a few times in Mougéon and Beniak’s study (1991, 162; 8 tokens), but only with nouns, and always in the context of the home: “*on été SUR heu ... ma tante*”, “*moi j’étais SU(R) ma cousine*”, we were at uh ... my aunt’s, I stayed at my cousin’s).

Usage of *DANS ma mère* and *EN ma mère* is infrequent (7 tokens), accounting together for only 1% of all prepositions. The variants *DANS* and *EN* with persons seem to be unique to Cajun French, they are not mentioned in other studies. However, both variants are frequently used in other locative contexts (for buildings). It is possible that they result from a grammatical transfer. Seutin (1975, 346) makes a similar argument for the frequent appearances of *DANS* in Acadian French: “*La fréquence élevée de dans tient à ce qu’il reprend un certain nombre d’emplois de en, à, parmi, au cours de, de, chez, etc.*” (the elevated frequency of *dans* is due to the fact that it takes over a certain number of usages from *en*, *à*, *parmi*, *au cours de*, *de*, *chez*, etc.).

### 3.3 DISTRIBUTION FOR BUILDINGS

The forms *À LA* and *AU* are the most important prepositions with buildings (1,342 tokens, 59%), followed by *DANS* (766 tokens, 34%). This tendency found in Cajun French coincides more or less with other French varieties. According to Spang-Hanssen (1963, 187-188), forms with *À* are very frequent before certain nouns (e.g., *cinéma*, *école*), and used in variation with *DANS* before others (e.g., *cuisine*, *jardin*). The forms *À*

LA and AU are also frequently found in the Canadian French varieties, followed by DANS. In the Acadian and Québec French studies, both prepositions are discovered several times (Acadian: À with article 18 times, DANS 9 times; Québec: À with article 11 times, DANS 7 times). For Ontarian French, À LA is frequently found with 77 tokens<sup>26</sup>.

In this context, DANS is realized as DEDANS several times (22 tokens). DEDANS is a well-attested historical variant, and is still found in Canadian French varieties. It is also mentioned mostly for Québec French in normative studies of language use. Dionne (1909, 220) lists it among his examples (“*Va DEDANS ma chambre!*” Go to my room!), and La Société du Parler Français (1930, 264) gives one example: “*être DEDANS la maison*” (to be in the house). This variant is missing from the Acadian French studies, but found in other locative contexts. We find examples of it in Peronnet (1982, 73), “*al avait son portrait DEDANS le fond de ses souilliers*”, “*j’ai lu ça DEDANS les livres*” (she had his/her portrait at the bottom of her shoes, I read this in the books) and in Starets (1994, 137), “*DEDANS la photo*”, “*DEDANS le truck*”.

Several prepositions for buildings not found in standard French appear in Cajun French with a low frequency: *AU école* (68 tokens or 3%), *À école* (58 tokens or 3%), and *EN école* (27 tokens or 1%). *SUR l’école* and *CHEZ l’école* are very rare (8 tokens or 0%). These usages are sporadically attested in other French varieties. The form AU (which is often comprised of À with a non-contracted article, as in *À LES restaurants*) has been found in one example of Acadian French (Arrighi 2005, 240), “*pas ce que tu achètes À LES pharmacies*” (not what you buy in the pharmacies), and in Algerian French (Frei 1929, 198), “*je vais à le môle; À LE restaurant; à le bout du doigt*” (I am going to the

---

<sup>26</sup> In Mougeon and Beniak (1991), only the expression *À LA maison* is studied as a variant of *CHEZ*.

mole; to the restaurant; at the finger tip). The variant EN is found one time in Acadian French (Arrighi 2004): “*J’ai halé ma part de bois EN l’église...*” (I hauled my part of the wood into the church...). SUR is attested one time in Québec French (Seutin 1975, 357, “*aller SUR l’hôtel de ville*”, to go to the town hall). CHEZ is found for popular Parisian French in the 18th century (Nisard 1872, 303): “*voyons s’il est CHEUX sa maison*”, “*j’allois CHEUX ta boutique*” (let’s see if he is at home, I went to your shop). Both SUR and CHEZ in Cajun French could be grammatical transfers from the persons category. We believe that all four forms are innovative prepositions in Cajun French.

### 3.4 DISTRIBUTION FOR LAND SURFACES

Variation between À and DANS characterizes this category. *DANS le clos*<sup>27</sup> is the most frequently used preposition (456 tokens, 80%) and *AU clos* (18 tokens, 14%) comes in second. Canadian French varieties also make frequent usage of DANS. In Acadian French, DANS is found almost as often as À (8 occurrences of À and 11 of DANS) but in Québec French, DANS (11 tokens) is more frequent than À (3 tokens).

The form in *À clos* is also attested in Cajun French (18 tokens, 3%), it is mostly used with proper names. In addition, *À LE clos*, *EN clos*, and *SUR le clos* are found sporadically in Cajun French (between four and six tokens each, 1% respectively). SUR, which is also realized as DESSUS in Cajun French, is the only variant present in other French varieties. Exceptionally, Plattner mentions this variant (*SUR la paroisse*, 1907, 263). Gesner (1979, 87) also notices this usage for Acadian French (“*on s’a rendu...SUR l’outskirt de Mons*”, we went...to the suburb of Mons) and La Société du Parler Français (1930, 647) shows its usage for Québec French (“*aller SUR le parc*”, to go to the park).

---

<sup>27</sup> DEDANS is also realized 11 times.

### 3.5 DISTRIBUTION FOR COUNTRIES

Prepositional usage with countries in Cajun French differs considerably from standard French. Forms that are less common or even absent in standard French (DANS, À LA, À) are frequent in Cajun French, whereas common standard prepositions (AU, EN) play a much smaller role in Cajun French. The form DANS for countries (174 tokens, 37%) is the most frequently used variant for country names<sup>28</sup>. DANS exists in standard French but is restricted to U.S. state names. This variant is also well attested in the Canadian French varieties (Acadian French, Gesner 1979, 84: “*Il s’en allait DANS Maine*”, he went to Maine; Québec French, Seutin 1975, 347, La Follette 1969, 27-28: “*DANS le Canada*”, “*DANS la France*”). We also know that DANS was a very popular variant in French spoken in previous centuries and used in many contexts, among them country names: *DANS la Syrie*, *DANS la Grèce*, *DANS la France*, *DANS l’Europe*, *DANS l’Afrique*, *DANS la Finlande*, *DANS l’Italie*. We suggest that DANS with countries in Cajun French is a true local norm derived from 18th century French.

The form À (166 tokens, 35%) is used almost as often as DANS. Its high frequency in Cajun French is very surprising. Although it is attested in Anglo-Norman texts (12th/13th century), and found accidentally a few times throughout the history of French, the majority of studies on Canadian varieties do not mention this variant. It is only found a few times in Gesner’s Acadian French study (1979, 84-85, 104) where it is often used with English names (“*ils ont été À Cape Cod trois mois*”, they went to Cape Cod for three months, “[*un fils*]...*qui est dans les mines À Ontario*”, [a son]...who is in the mines of Ontario, “*j’avais été À Japan*”, I went to Japan, “*j’irons À Portugal*”, I will

---

<sup>28</sup> Nine tokens for DANS are realized as DEDANS.

go to Portugal). It is also found one time in the Ontarian French of Windsor, which is a community with restricted speakers (Starets 1994, 144, “*ben...il [son père] est parti À Floride maintenant...*”, well...he [his father] has now gone to Florida). Since À with countries is not attested in historical French, its presence in several French-speaking communities may be considered as a new development.

The historical variants À LA/AU (112 tokens, 24%) form another important prepositional group in Cajun French<sup>29</sup>. However, only AU is frequently used in other varieties of French. The form À LA is a rare usage in the Canadian varieties, it is only found one time in Acadian French (Gesner 1979, 84): “*Je le vendions à des grosses compagnies – À L’Amérique, en Europe, à Montréal, partout*”, I sold it to big companies – in America, in Europa, in Montreal, everywhere. According to Fahlin (1942, 215-217), there was a tendency during the 16th and 17th centuries in France to express physical distance or absence of knowledge about newly discovered countries by using À with the article. Consequently, both AU and À LA in Cajun French seem to be continued usages from earlier periods of French.

What distinguishes Cajun French from the Canadian varieties and from standard French is the use of the preposition EN, which is extremely rare in Cajun French with 22 tokens or 5%, but frequent in other varieties (*EN Amérique, EN Angleterre, EN France, EN Europe*, Gesner 1979, 84-85). However, despite its low frequency in Cajun French, we consider EN to be a local norm, produced mainly by the old speakers<sup>30</sup>.

---

<sup>29</sup> Both forms are grouped together because gender in Cajun French only determines if À with article is realized as À LA or AU and does not result in the usage of different prepositions as it does in Modern French (AU with masculine nouns and EN with feminine).

<sup>30</sup> The young speakers who produce EN do so mostly in the wrong context (with masculine names). Also, the form AU with feminine/vowel-initial country names (e.g., *AU Norway, AU England*) was found, but we had to discard it because only two speakers produced almost all of the tokens (20 out of 21).



### 3.6 DISTRIBUTION FOR CITIES

As in other varieties of French, the form *À* is the most frequent variant with cities in Cajun French (1448 tokens, 77%). Historically, it is well attested and has been continuously used since the 9th century; it is also frequently found in Acadian and Québec French (such as in Peronnet 1989, 69, “*pendant ce temps-là, i preniont le char À Shédiac...*”, during this time, they took the bus to Shédiac..., or in La Société du Parler Français 1930, 1, “*il est parti À Montréal*”, he went to Montreal).

The forms *AU/À LA* represent the second most frequent usage (233 tokens, 12%). We know that this usage is limited to a few cases in standard French: with *Nouvelle Orléans* (where the article is part of the name) and with names that have a common name origin justifying the addition of the article (*Le Havre, La Haye*). Both usages exist in Cajun French (e.g., *La Ville Platte, L’Anse Maigre*). We also find *AU* and *À LA* in an example of Acadian French (Gesner 1979, 84: “*il a resté trente ans À LA Saumon*”, he stayed for thirty years in Saumon), in which the city name is based on the underlying word “*rivière*”: “[*où êtes-vous née?*] – *À LA Rivière aux Saumons*” ([where are you born?] – in Rivière aux Saumons). As in Acadian French, *AU* and *À LA* are also used in Cajun French before names with an underlying construction (such as ‘*AU [village/hameau de] Galliane*’). Since they are attested in the French of the Maritime Provinces and other varieties<sup>31</sup>, the forms *AU* and *À LA* are considered local norms in Cajun French.

---

<sup>31</sup> Fahlin (1942, 120, 124) mentions that the use of the article is historically evidenced for example in the work of Villehardouin (13th century) with Greek and Turkish cities (“*une cité qu’on appelle LA Serre*”), or in le Viel Pelerin (14th century): “*passerent la mer maior et entrerent en L’Athene*”.

The preposition DANS is another locative usage with cities in Cajun French (138 tokens, 7%)<sup>32</sup>. While it has been verified in French, its usage was discontinued in the 19th century. Only Gesner mentions the use of DANS in Acadian French. DANS seems to be restricted to cities with a common name origin (Gesner 1979, 84, “*y avait un forgeron DANS l’Anse des Blancs*”, there was a smith in l’Anse des Blancs, “*y a pas une paire de boeufs...DANS Belliveau’s Cove*”, there is no couple of oxen...in Belliveau’s Cove) and English names (ibidl, 84, 105, “*d’abord qu’elle [l’électricité] a passé icitte, on était la première DANS Pipetown, oui...*”, first when it [the electricity] came here, we were the first ones in Pipetown, yes..., “*DANS...oui, New Orleans ou Oregon ou par là quelque part*”, in...yes, New Orleans or Oregon or somewhere there). It is important to mention here that DANS is not used by the ancestors, our oldest generation of speakers. Although the evidence is mixed, we think that DANS with cities represents a new development instead of a continued usage.

The forms EN and SUR with cities are infrequent usages in Cajun French (44 tokens, 2% and 28 tokens, 1%)<sup>33</sup>, none of them is attested in the varieties of French we examined. EN is a well-known historical usage that was discontinued in the 17th century. Interestingly, EN is often produced in Cajun French in connection with the city of Marksville (underlying ‘*EN ville*’), and SUR with Grande Isle<sup>34</sup>. Both EN and SUR are considered innovative usages.

---

<sup>32</sup> DANS is realized as DEDANS only one time.

<sup>33</sup> SUR is realized as DESSUS six times.

<sup>34</sup> Curiously, one usage of CHEZ is found in Cajun French (CHEZ Holly Beach).

### 3.7 DISTRIBUTION FOR VILLE

EN before ville is a very frequent preposition in Cajun French (183 tokens, 84%), as it is in other varieties of French. It is considered a local norm in Cajun French. *EN ville* is categorically used in standard French<sup>35</sup>.

In addition, DANS is the second variant in Cajun French (27 tokens, 12%). It has always existed in French and we find several examples of it in Acadian and Québec French: Peronnet (1989, 51), “*DANS tous les villes que je vas...*”, in all the towns that I go..., La Follette (1969, 26, 38), “*in cri sec, là, i’ a cassé trois cents vit’ DANS la ville*”, one shriek, there, it shattered three hundred windows in town, “*bin surpris quand i’ arrive DANS ‘a ville*”, very surprised when he arrived in the town”. This usage is possibly the result of the spread of the preposition DANS in the 17th and 18th centuries in France. We regard it as a local norm.

The expression *À LA ville* shows the usage of a historical variant that is rarely used in Cajun French (7 tokens). It is common in Acadian and Québec French: Peronnet (1989, 168), “*si y avait des couturières À LA ville, a dit, j’irais avec z’eux [elles]*” (if there were dressmakers in town, she says, I would go with them), La Follette (1969, 38), “*î arrive À n’grand’ ville*” (he arrives in a big city). *À LA ville* is considered a local norm.

### 3.8 DISTRIBUTION FOR CHEMIN/RUE

Before chemin and rue, we find the prepositions SUR, DANS, and AU/À LA in Cajun French, as well as in other varieties of French<sup>36</sup>. SUR is the most frequent

---

<sup>35</sup> It is also attested in Acadian and Québec French, often with the old meaning (according to which the city is not the place of residence): Peronnet 1989, 74, “*vous êtes invités à une telle place, EN ville*”, you are invited to such a place, in the city”; La Société du Parler Français 1930, “*...quand j’irai EN ville, je vous en apporterai ben*”, ...when I am going to go to town, I will bring you some.

<sup>36</sup> *SUR la rue* and *À LA rue* are used with semantic restrictions in standard French as mentioned.

preposition in Cajun French (109 tokens, 69%)<sup>37</sup>. SUR is also common in Acadian French and Québec French: it is discovered for example in Peronnet (1989, 69), “...*la vieille sorcière se ‘travelait’ SU les rues*” (...the old witch traveled on the streets), or in La Société du Parler Français (1930, 647), “*marcher, fumer SUR la rue*” (to walk, to smoke on the street). In Ontarian French, *SUR la rue* is also very common. It is frequently found in Mougeon et al. (1977, 106), “*j’marchais SUR la rue*”, I walked on the street, or Starets (1994, 143), “...*c’est SU le rue Edgard*”, ...it is on Edgard Street.

DANS is the second most frequent variant in Cajun French (34 tokens, 22%). It is also attested in the French Canadian varieties (La Follette 1969, 47, “*DANS son chemin rencont’ sa voisine*”, on his way, [he] meets his neighbor), and in Mougeon et al. (1977). DANS is thus regularly used in the varieties of French and therefore considered a local norm.

In addition, *À LA rue* and *AU chemin* (14 tokens, 9%) are used in Cajun French. They are not found in the North American French varieties. Frei mentions the usage of a generic *À* in popular French in this context: “*les accidents À LA rue*” and “*demeurer À une rue*” (1929, 149). Still, *À LA rue* and *AU chemin* are a regular usage in French and part of the local norm in Cajun French.

### 3.9 DISTRIBUTION FOR WATER SURFACES

SUR and AU/À LA are important variants in Cajun French: *SUR le bayou* (81 tokens, 54%) is used more frequently than *AU bayou* (30%, 44 tokens)<sup>38</sup>. Both variants

<sup>37</sup> With rue/chemin, the form DESSUS is found several times (21 tokens). It also exists in Ontario French (*DESSUS Drouillard [nom d’une rue à Windsor]*, *DESSUS la rue*, *DESSUS ce rue*, Starets 1994, 141). In Acadian and Québec French, we find it in other locative contexts: in Peronnet (1989, 50), “*DESSUS toutes les planchers*”, on all the floors, and in Dionne (1909, 242), “*DESSUS la chaise, DESSUR le cheval*”, on the chair, on the horse.

<sup>38</sup> SUR is realized 16 times as DESSUS, it is also attested in historical French.

are found in the Canadian varieties, they are mentioned for Acadian and Québec French: Seutin (1975, 354), “...nos bateaux, tu les vois passer *SUR* le chenail [canal]”, ...our boats, you see them pass by on the canal; Peronnet (1989, 54), “*i prend toute une (grand) journée pour aller À LA Mer Rouge*”, he takes all day (long) to go to the Red Sea. This evidence suggests that *SUR* and *AU/À LA* are local variants.

Nonstandard forms together account for 16% of the prepositions produced, *À* is the most frequently used one (11 tokens, 7%, all with proper names), followed by *DANS* (meaning ‘along the water’, 7 tokens, 5%) and *À LE* (6 tokens, 4%). We find only *DANS* attested in Québec French (La Follette 1969, 39): “*j’trouverais aussi bin ma soeur DANS c’tte rivière-là comme j’ la trouverais ailleurs. Ej’ l’ai laissée l’ long d’ la rivière*” (I would find my sister just as well on this river here as I would find her somewhere else. And I left her along the river). Due to their infrequency, we consider *À*, *DANS*, and *À LE* as innovative forms.

### **3.10 LOCAL OR INNOVATIVE FORMS?**

Table 4 illustrates the distinction between local norms and innovative norms in Cajun French. As mentioned earlier, local norms usually are well attested not only in Cajun French but also in other varieties of French. Sometimes, they are usages inherited from the 17th and 18th centuries of French. These local norms are also present in the speech of all Cajun speakers. Innovative forms are locative prepositions used sporadically or produced at a high frequency by a specific group of Cajun speakers. Overall, local forms represent 80% of the occurrences. Although the innovative forms appear less frequently, they account for 17 different prepositions in six locative categories. It is their usage ‘out of context’ that mostly distinguishes the innovative

Table 4. Local versus innovative forms.

	LOCAL FORMS	INNOVATIVE FORMS
PERSONS	CHEZ ma mère AU docteur SUR ma mère	À ma mère EN/DANS ma mère
BUILDINGS	À L'école DANS l'école	AU école À école EN école SUR/CHEZ l'école
LAND SURFACES	DANS le clos AU clos	À clos EN clos SUR le clos À LE clos
COUNTRIES	DANS la Louisiane À LA Louisiane EN Louisiane	À Louisiane
CITIES	À Eunice AU Simmesport	DANS Eunice EN Eunice SUR Eunice
VILLE	EN ville DANS la ville À LA ville	
CHEMIN/RUE	SUR le chemin DANS le chemin AU chemin	
WATER SURFACES	SUR le bayou AU bayou	À bayou DANS le bayou À LE bayou

forms from the local forms. For example, the preposition DANS is frequently used as a local norm (five times), and also as an innovative one (three times). One of the central questions in the following chapters will be to determine where exactly the forms originate. There are two likely sources of origin: another context in French, where the form would be rightfully used and which is somehow similar, or the English language

that furnishes the prepositions used in this context to French through the process of interference.

Both the linguistic conditioning and the social factors and their possible interrelation represent important aspects of Cajun French because “...in different speech communities social and linguistic factors are linked not only in different ways, but to different degrees, so that the imbrication of social and linguistic structure in a given speech community is a matter for investigation and cannot be taken as given” (Romaine 1982, 13). We will study the linguistic conditioning for the locative prepositions in chapter 4. This conditioning refers to the impact the grammatical system can have on the prepositional choice, and we will show that especially the nature of the verb (movement and static status) and the influence of certain lexical entries affect many prepositions.

In chapter 5, we will discuss the social factors, which can influence the production of the local and innovative norms. We will demonstrate that while these factors are all important for the preservation of the local forms, the factors age and linguistic ability strongly influence the usage of the innovative ones.

## CHAPTER 4

### LINGUISTIC FACTORS AND THEIR EFFECTS ON THE LOCAL NORMS AND THE INNOVATIVE NORMS

The analysis of linguistic constraints can uncover important aspects of the grammatical system of a language. Linguistic factors govern the variable usage of forms and reveal grammatical tendencies rather than categorical rules. As an example, King and Nadasdi (1994) have shown that subject clitics and subject relatives in Acadian French are the relevant linguistic factors that condition the presence or absence of subject-verb agreement. In our study, linguistic constraints affect both the local norms and the innovative forms. The effects of three important linguistic factors are examined in this chapter: lexical conditioning, determination, and the nature of the verb (movement or static status)<sup>39</sup>.

The linguistic factor called lexical conditioning represents the constraints at work in some word categories (or group of words), which condition the use of one variant rather than another. This factor affects several local norms in Cajun French. As an example, the location of professionals is more frequently introduced by *À* with article (as in *AU docteur*) but *CHEZ* usually appears before persons (as in *CHEZ ma mère*). This lexical factor also governs the use of innovative forms. One of these constraints is the presence of the English language in the category of land surface names, which favors the innovative form *À* rather than *À LE* or *EN*, as in *À Hackberry*. Next, we will analyze the influence of determiners (such as adjectives) and show their effect on one local norm

---

<sup>39</sup> Another linguistic factor concerning the verb type (a possible influence of very frequently used verbs on innovative forms or a correlation with restriction or young age) has been discarded, since no results were found.



(DANS). The third linguistic factor, the static/motion verb constraint, strongly conditions several local norms. The tendency is to find static verbs with DANS (*rester DANS l'école*) and motion verbs with À (*aller À L'école*). This constraint is also operational with À without article and DANS as innovative forms. The nature of the verb also constrains the usage of SUR, both as a local and innovative form.

#### 4.1 THE EFFECTS OF LEXICAL CONDITIONING

Lexical categories are numerous and arbitrary. Since we study many prepositional forms, we created lexical categories for each locative context. For example, we made a distinction between rooms or units within a building (*chambre, cuisine*) and the type of buildings to determine the lexical effect on prepositional forms in the building category. We discover that DANS more often introduces rooms whereas AU/À LA precede buildings, a tendency also true in standard French. In our study, we include other lexical factors, which can play an important role in the selection of locative prepositions: the grammatical gender, English language names, and the geographical location of cities. Table 5 shows that the lexical constraints condition several locative categories. We even observe many tendencies for the location of buildings. In total, there are six lexical effects on local norms and eight on the innovative norms, for which we have a low number of occurrences.

Let us start with the category of persons. Grevisse states that a tendency for AU/À LA to appear before professions exists in popular French, but CHEZ is the usual preposition, especially in a literary style (Grevisse 1980, 1124, 1180): “*il vaut mieux aller AU boulanger qu’AU médecin*” (it is better to go to the baker’s than to the doctor), “*j’ai été CHEZ mon père*” (I was at my father’s). Since Cajun French is a vernacular variety of

Table 5. Effects of lexical conditioning on local and innovative norms.

LOCAL NORM	Lexical constraint	
Persons	“mère”	“docteur”
CHEZ	<b>CHEZ</b> ma mère 98% (326)	CHEZ le docteur 2% (6)
AU	-	<b>AU</b> docteur 100% (72)
Buildings	Building	Room
AU/À LA	<b>À L'</b> école 99% (1334)	À LA chambre 1% (9)
DANS	DANS l'école 83% (646)	<b>DANS</b> la chambre 17% (129)
Cities	French common name origin, including Nouvelle Orléans	no common name origin
AU/À LA	<b>AU</b> Baton Rouge 47% (108)	AU Mansura 53% (124)
À	À Baton Rouge 7% (115)	À Mansura 93% (1566)
Countries	Masculine gender	Feminine gender
AU/À LA	AU Texas 24% (26)	<b>À LA</b> France 76% (83)
DANS	DANS le Texas 50% (79)	DANS la France 50% (79)
INNOVATIVE NORM		
Buildings	“restaurant”	“collège”
À LE	<b>À LE</b> restaurant 89% (59)	À LE collège 11% (7)
À	À restaurant 26% (7)	À collège/école 74% (43)
EN	EN restaurant 30% (8)	<b>EN</b> collège/école 70% (19)
Cities	“île”	other
SUR	<b>SUR</b> la Grande Isle 68% (19)	SUR New Orleans 32% (9)
DANS	prairie cities <b>DANS</b> Hessmer 82% (113)	coastal cities DANS Golden Meadow 18% (25)
Countries	English language	French language
À	<b>À</b> Germany 80% (63)	À Chine 20% (15)
Land surfaces	English language	French language
À	<b>À</b> Hackberry 89% (16)	À Bois Connie 11% (2)
Water surfaces	English language	French language
À	<b>À</b> Toledo Bend 91% (10)	À Rivière Rouge 9% (1)

French, we expect that the forms AU/À LA will be restricted to professions and CHEZ will be used in all other contexts. We found that the lexical conditioning in Cajun French indeed is almost categorical and very similar to what we observe in standard French. The local norm AU goes in hand with professions of the type *docteur* (92%) and CHEZ (93%) is produced with personal common names, proper names, and pronouns. An additional check of a few very frequent words, such as *mère* and *fille*, reveals no unusual prepositional distribution. No lexical conditioning is found for the innovative forms before persons.

Grammarians (Spang-Hanssen 1963, 185-188; Togeby 1984, 109-113) have described the frequent usage of AU/À LA with buildings and DANS with parts of buildings. We notice that the local norm AU/À LA (99%) in Cajun French is categorically produced before buildings. DANS frequently appears before buildings and can also occur before rooms in buildings (17%). This lexical distinction between buildings and rooms is not relevant for the innovative forms since they are only produced with buildings. However, we observe another lexical effect for this type of forms. With the exception of *collège* and *école*, the non-contracted variant À LE is frequently used for all building types. Non-contracted prepositions are considered errors in standard French. Frei (1929) only mentions these forms for Algerian French and identifies language contact (with Arabic) as their source. Interestingly, the innovative forms À (without an article) and EN tend to be produced with *collège* (47% and 52%, respectively), followed by *école* (28% and 19%). We strongly suspect language interference to be the source of these two innovative forms (“À *collège/école*” corresponding to “to college/school”; “EN *collège/école*” corresponding to “in college/school”).

For city names, the local norm *à* (93%) is more often produced with non-transparent city names and *AU* usually appears with French names that have a common name origin (47%), which caused the use of the definite article with certain city names (Grevisse 1980, 342)<sup>40</sup>. This is a considerable percentage since *à* with city names is used almost categorically. It is important to mention that most transparent city names appear as compounds. In accordance with the principles of the French grammar (which nowhere mentions the presence of compounds as a factor), we think that the frequent appearance of these names is only due to the nature of the data (more compounded transparent city names than single transparent ones in the Cajun triangle, where many single names are ‘real’ proper names often originating from the name of a person, such as Eunice, Lafayette, or Larose). For the innovative forms, we find a lexical effect for *SUR* (*SUR la Grande Isle* or *SUR Holly Beach*). *SUR* appears more often before city names with the words *île* or *plage* (68%) and most of them are compounded words (79%, 22 tokens). Again, we think that this lexical factor (type of name) rather than the compound factor conditions the usage of *SUR* as an innovation with cities. In this context, we also notice a lexical effect for *DANS*, which is produced with prairie cities (82%, e.g., *DANS Eunice*, *DANS Plaquemine*, *DANS Carencro*, *DANS Arnaudville*), as compared to coastal or U.S. cities.

Let us now describe the results for countries. Spang-Hanssen (1963, 203) has mentioned the lexical conditioning for *DANS* with masculine nouns for the North American states (examples: *DANS le Massachusetts*, *DANS le Maine*, *DANS le Nevada*). Gender indeed conditions the local prepositions in Cajun French but in a rather different

---

<sup>40</sup> The city name Nouvelle Orléans is also included here, since according to the literature, this is also one of the few cases where *à LA* is used.

way. What we found is a strong usage of the form *À LA* with feminine names (EN being rarely used in this context in Cajun French)<sup>41</sup>. This result shows that what is a categorical rule in standard French for feminine names (requiring usage of EN) manifests itself as a tendency in Cajun French, which favors the local norm *À LA* (76%). Its usage thus conforms to the French rule, which states that *À LA* should be used with feminine nouns. For the innovative forms before country names, we codified the data according to the language type because of the relatively high number of English words in this context. We only considered country names that have a distinct counterpart in the other language (e.g., *États-Unis* and *United States*), thus reducing the database to 79 tokens (compared to 166 for all innovative forms)<sup>42</sup>. In theory, the presence of English loanwords should not play a role for the choice of the preposition, because according to Poplack, the grammatical rules of the recipient language apply (1993, 256). However, the innovative form *À* more frequently co-occurs with English names (80%) in Cajun French.

For the next two locative categories of land and water surfaces, we have only results for the innovative forms<sup>43</sup>. With land surfaces, *À* introduces a higher number of English proper names (89%), especially with urban and rural surface places, but the count of tokens is low (16 tokens). The same tendency is found for water surfaces: the

---

<sup>41</sup> In addition, there is a tendency to use *DANS* (56%) if state names are analyzed separately from countries. Therefore, we have uncovered a second but weak lexical tendency for masculine state names (not shown in the table).

<sup>42</sup> Many European countries are analyzed; some names are U.S. states (e.g., *Californie*, *Floride*, and *Louisiane*) and some American countries (e.g., *Mexico* and *Nova Scotia*). No phonological criteria have been applied with the exception of *France* (which is a frequent country name).

<sup>43</sup> For the local norms with land surfaces, we discovered in our analysis that the usage of *DANS* is so strong that no effects of lexical conditioning can be found. It is used categorically for most words (98%, with *clos*, *cour*, *bois*, *voisinage*, *paroisse*, *pays*, *jardin*) and very pronounced in a few cases (*village*, *campagne*, *état*, 77%). What is described as a tendency in most grammars for some of the most frequent words of our database (*cour*, *village*, *campagne*, *bois*, *paroisse*, and *pays*, Togeby 1984, 114, 145-147; Bescherelle 1997, 92; Gougenheim 1938, 301; Grevisse 1980, 1193; Guillaume 1919; Littré 1956-1958, vol. 1, 5; Plattner 1907) is a categorical trend in Cajun French. Only Spang-Hanssen mentions a preference for *À* (1963, 192).

innovative form *à* appears with 91% of English proper names (11 tokens), which for the most part are compound names (Bayou des Oies, Canal à Levée, Lac Cochon).

## 4.2 THE EFFECTS OF DETERMINATION

Grammatical elements often condition the selection of one preposition rather than another. This effect, called determination, frequently triggers the usage of *DANS*, but also sometimes *SUR*: e.g., *DANS un bar*, *SUR un mur*<sup>44</sup>. Spang-Hanssen (1963, 176-177, 190-193) mentions several grammatical factors: 1) definite articles in the plural (*DANS les hôtels*); 2) indefinite and partitive articles (*DANS un théâtre*); 3) possessive and demonstrative determiners (*DANS notre hôtel*, *DANS son bureau*); and 4) adjectives (*DANS le petit salon*, *DANS la petite école*)<sup>45</sup>. Other grammatical factors are less likely to be produced with *DANS*, such as prepositional complements (*AU bar de Ti-Paul*, *À L'école de Thibodeaux*) and adjectives that are part of the nominal expression (*AU musée préhistorique*, *AU jardin zoologique*)<sup>46</sup>. Based on these criteria, it proved practical in this study to consider adjectives occurring after and before the noun, possessive pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, indefinite singular articles, definite plural articles, and multiple

---

<sup>44</sup> Also Grevisse (1980, 1180) describes this tendency for *DANS*: “*D’une manière générale, dans s’emploie surtout devant un nom déterminé*” (in a general way, *dans* is mostly used before a determined noun).

<sup>45</sup> *SUR* is less likely to be used with possessive adjectives and the definite article plural according to Spang-Hanssen (1963, 176-177).

<sup>46</sup> We consider this last example a case of compound formation. Ultimately, the distinction between determination and compounds is based on the semantic and/or syntactic criteria described by Ayres-Bennett, Carruthers, and Temple (2001). In semantic terms, we speak of a compound when two elements form a unit and refer to a single object or concept (e.g., *maison de cour*, court house). The two elements can form a unique expression (e.g., *mauvaise herbe*, “bad herb”, weed, *\*bonne herbe*), have a very specific meaning (*belle-mère*, mother-in-law), or express an entirely different idea (*casse-tête*, “hit-head”, bat). The syntactic criterion postulates that the order of the elements cannot be broken (*eau de vie*, “life water”, liquor, *\*eau froide de vie*) or elements cannot be freely substituted (*école publique*, *école privée*, *\*école non privée*).

occurrences of the above, such as *une petite maison* or *une autre petite église*<sup>47</sup>. We also added indefinite pronouns (e.g., *même*, *autre*) and numbers as determiners.

The effects of determination in Cajun French are summarized in table 6, which shows the influence of this factor on the building category<sup>48</sup>. Only the prepositions DANS and À as local norms are affected by determination<sup>49</sup>. As described in the literature, we do find a higher usage of the local norm DANS with determiners (33%).

Table 6. Effects of determination on local and innovative norms.

DETERMINATION	NON-DETERMINATION
Buildings (local norms)	
DANS mon école (determiners) 33% (251)	DANS l'école (no determiners) 67% (512)
À mon école 10% (140)	À L'école 90% (1199)

### 4.3 THE EFFECTS OF STATIC AND MOTION VERBS

The distinction between “location at” and “movement to” is a very old grammatical classification. It has its roots in Indo-Germanic and was expressed in Latin by using the ablative/genitive cases for location and the accusative for movement. Eventually, prepositions replaced the grammatical function of the cases. AD (À) was

<sup>47</sup> In the end, we decided to analyze the multiple determiners together with the other determiners, since they are a small group and do not show categorical usage of DANS/SUR. Other types of determination that were found in very small numbers were relative sentences and appositions, which are unlikely to result in the usage of DANS (e.g., “*AU petit restaurant où Antoine et lui prenaient leurs repas*”, Spang-Hanssen 1963, 190).

<sup>48</sup> The alternation À-DANS/SUR could be analyzed only for buildings, land surfaces, chemin/rue, and water surfaces.

<sup>49</sup> We located approximately 450 determiners here (about 100 each for possessive pronouns, definite articles plural, adjectives/indefinite pronouns, and indefinite articles).

usually employed in connection with movement (*aller À L'église*) and IN (EN, later replaced by DANS) with location (*rester DANS le jardin*). SUR expressing superposition as a possible variant of EN was also often used with static verbs<sup>50</sup>.

In Modern French, the relationship between static and motion verbs and some locative prepositions, especially DANS and À, has not been analyzed in a systematic way. In most French grammars or studies, the question is not even raised<sup>51</sup>. Some grammarians deny the existence of this correlation since it is only a tendency in French and not a rule, as in English<sup>52</sup>. Other grammarians mention the existence of this tendency, but their description is not very clear. As an example, George and Robert Le Bidois (1938, 2:675, 677-678) describe À expressing both movement and location: “*terme d'un mouvement, destination*” - “*la situation*”. Others declare these tendencies to be too weak to be important (Spang-Hanssen 1963, 184). In our study, we took into account all verbs expressing ‘movement to’ (including ‘arrival at’ or ‘in’) as motion verbs (e.g., *aller, venir, arriver, descendre*) and those expressing ‘location at’ or ‘in’ as static verbs (e.g., *être, rester*), including action verbs such as *faire, aider, travailler*<sup>53</sup>.

Before we discuss the results of our analysis, we will first describe the tendencies found in French grammars for persons, buildings, land surfaces, countries, and water surfaces. For persons, Grevisse (1980, 1124, footnote) states that À LA/AU with

---

<sup>50</sup> We distinguish this usage of SUR from the specific context where SUR is in variation with VERS and is used to express rapid movement, as with military actions.

<sup>51</sup> See for example: Arrivé 1986; Chevalier et al. 1977; De Boer 1926; Galichet 1973; Hedberg 1957; Martinet 1984; Ruwet 1982.

<sup>52</sup> See for example Bergh 1948, 11; Meyer-Lübke 1899, 3:467-468.

<sup>53</sup> List of most important motion verbs: *aller (or avoir été), s'en aller, amener, ramener, s'amener, apporter, arriver, conduire (or drive or ride), courir, déménager (or grouiller), descendre, entrer, envoyer, haler, marcher, mettre, monter, partir, passer, porter, quitter (=partir), rentrer, retourner, venir, revenir, voyager*. List of most important static verbs: *acheter, aider, apprendre, avoir, bâtir, chercher, commencer, coucher, cuire, demeurer, devenir, enseigner, être, il y a (or n'a), faire, finir, joindre, jouer, laisser (or quitter), manger, montrer, prendre, rester, travailler, vivre, voir*.



professions, especially in a literary context, are often used with motion verbs, following the historic usage: “*le chevalier...s’en ala AU barbier*”. More recent authors (17th and 18th centuries, *ibid.*, 1124) use À LA or AU in a similar way: “*Dieux! Adaste est blessé, courez AU médecin*”, “*je cours AU notaire*” (God! Adaste is hurt, run to the doctor, I am running to the notary). With buildings and land surfaces, Spang-Hanssen (1963, 153, 185) mentions the tendency for À to appear with motion verbs and gives examples for buildings and rooms: “*conduire quelqu’un À L’hôtel, À un hôtel*”, “*le garçon monta À sa chambre*” (to lead somebody to the hotel, to a hotel, the boy went up to his room). Land surfaces are vaguely described as part of this conditioning (*ibid.*, 192-193). Fahlin (1942, 210) argues that DANS, which was very frequent with country names in the 17th and 18th centuries, was often used with static verbs (“*...des fruits de toutes les espèces qui sont...inconnues DANS la Syrie*”, ...fruits of all kinds that are...unknown in Syria, “*Mazarin...laissait languir DANS la France la justice, le commerce*”, Mazarin...let the justice, the commerce languish in France). For water surfaces, Spang-Hanssen (1963, 187) gives one example of À with motion verbs (“*ce sentier...qui ne menait à rien? – excepté À LA mer*”, this way...that didn’t lead to anything? – except to the ocean). We also have numerous examples in Old French of SUR with static verbs (Raithel 1888, 16): “*Luiserne, qui SOR mer est bastie*”, “*s’est logie SEUR Saine*”, “*Vivien vit gesir SOR un estanc*” (Lucerne, which is built on the ocean, he found accomodation on the Seine, Vivien saw resting on a lake).

Table 7 illustrates the influence of the motion/static verb constraint on several locative categories in Cajun French. Categories with an insufficient number of occurrences are not described. This grammatical constraint conditions many local norms

Table 7. Effects of static/motion verbs on local and innovative norms.

LOCAL FORMS		INNOVATIVE FORMS	
static verbs	motion verbs	static verbs	motion verbs
Buildings			
À L'école 37% (489)	À L'école 63% (829)	À école 28% (16)	À école 72% (42)
DANS l'école 73% (540)	DANS l'école 27% (200)	AU école 49% (33)	AU école 51% (34)
Water surfaces			
AU bayou 40% (17)	AU bayou 60% (25)		
SUR le bayou 79% (64)	SUR le bayou 21% (17)		
Cities			
		DANS Eunice 82% (111)	DANS Eunice 18% (24)
		SUR Eunice 86% (24)	SUR Eunice 14% (4)
		EN Eunice 68% (27)	EN Eunice 33% (13)
Chemin/rue			
AU chemin 29% (4)	AU chemin 71% (10)		
DANS le chemin 82% (28)	DANS le chemin 18% (6)		
SUR le chemin 69% (72)	SUR le chemin 31% (33)		
Persons			
AU docteur 15% (11)	AU docteur 85% (63)		
CHEZ ma mère 57% (181)	CHEZ ma mère 43% (137)		
Land surfaces			
AU village 53% (41)	AU village 47% (37)		
DANS le village 76% (336)	DANS le village 24% (106)		
Ville			
DANS la ville 80% (20)	DANS la ville 20% (5)		
EN ville 54% (92)	EN ville 46% (79)		

appearing before buildings, water surfaces, chemin/rue, persons, land surfaces, and ville. In general, the forms À LA/AU tend to precede motion verbs (*À L'école*, 63%; *AU bayou*, 60%; *AU chemin*, 71%; *AU docteur*, 85%; and *AU clos*, 47%)<sup>54</sup>. DANS is found more often before static verbs (*DANS l'école*, 73%; *DANS le chemin*, 82%; *DANS le clos*, 76%; *DANS la ville*, 80%). The verb constraint weakly conditions the local norm CHEZ produced with static verbs (57%).

Interestingly, we also notice these tendencies for the innovative forms, albeit to a lesser degree. The innovative form À before buildings is used with motion verbs (*À école*, 72%) whereas innovative DANS with city names appears more often with static verbs (*DANS Eunice*, 82%).

One unexpected result is that the verbal constraint conditions the preposition SUR, both as a local norm and an innovative form. With water surfaces and cities, SUR is used more frequently with static verbs (*SUR le bayou*, 79%; *SUR Eunice*, 86%). Although French grammars do not mention the link between SUR and the type of movement, many historical examples show this co-occurrence. It is more difficult to interpret the static constraint for the innovative SUR with cities (*SUR Eunice*, 86%). One possible explanation is that the speakers use the constraint associated with the local norm SUR when they use it in other contexts. Thus, the 'regular' static verb constraint for local SUR with water surfaces would also apply to the innovative form with cities.

Another surprise is the conditioning of EN (table 7). The innovative EN is used with static verbs for cities (68%). EN has been used with location in the history of French

---

<sup>54</sup> We also found a secondary verbal effect (lexical factor): the presence of the verb *aller* before buildings, persons, and water surfaces strongly conditions usage of the local form À: 73%, 67%, and 68%, respectively, of all motion verbs in these categories. It also conditions the usage of the innovative form À with buildings (95%).

and it is important to recall that EN has always been a variant of SUR, going back to Latin. In Old French we find examples such as *EN pied* or *SUR pied*, *EN le cheval* or *SUR un cheval* and frozen expressions in Modern French such as *mort EN croix*, *casque EN tête*. One would expect that EN follows the static constraint, and our results show that it does so with cities.

#### **4.4 SUMMARY**

In this chapter, we have uncovered the highly complex system of linguistic constraints for both local and innovative prepositions with a locative function. In Cajun French, the locative prepositional system is strongly conditioned by three linguistic factors, which govern the use of several local norms as well as innovative usages. All the effects of these constraints are summarized in table 8. The case of the building category is most noteworthy in that the linguistic factors regulate almost all prepositional forms. The verbal constraint and lexical conditioning preside over many locative prepositions: 15 for the verbal constraint and 14 for the lexical conditioning. Interestingly, they do not govern the same forms. The lexical constraint restricts a higher number of innovative forms whereas the verbal factor conditions most of the local norms. The lexical constraint affects a few local norms (persons, buildings, and countries) but the verbal constraint regulates all the other norms with the exception of countries and cities. Among the lexical effects, we find that specific groups of words (home places versus professions, feminine versus masculine names, and English versus French words) condition the use of locative prepositions. The factor determination plays a secondary role: it applies only to buildings (one preposition).

Table 8. Synopsis of the linguistic effects found for both the local and innovative locative prepositions.

LOCAL ●	Lexical constraint	Determination	Verbal constraint	INNOVATIVE ○
<b>Persons</b>				
CHEZ ma mère	●		● (static)	
AU docteur	●		●	
SUR ma mère				
<b>Buildings</b>				
À L'école	●	○	●	À LE restaurant
DANS l'école	●	○	●	○
		○		À collège
				EN collège
<b>Land surfaces</b>				
AU clos		○	●	À Hackberry
DANS le clos			●	
<b>Countries</b>				
À LA Louisiane	●			
DANS la Louis.		○		À Louisiana
<b>Cities</b>				
AU Baton Rouge	●	○		○
		○		○
			(static)	DANS Hessmer
			○	SUR la Grande Ile
			(static)	EN Eunice
<b>Ville</b>				
DANS la ville			●	
EN ville				
<b>Chemin/rue</b>				
AU chemin			●	
DANS le chemin			●	
<b>Water surfaces</b>				
SUR le bayou		○	● (static)	À Toledo Bend
AU bayou			●	

In the following chapter, we will propose a full analysis of the social factors that condition (or not) the production of the locative prepositions. We will also analyze their use over time and the conditioning effect of locality and language ability. Before we do so, it is important to mention the correlation we observed between some linguistic (verbal and lexical) and social constraints (linguistic ability and age). We will do so at this juncture, because our results are very limited in number. With regard to the verbal constraints, the restricted speakers, especially the young ones, sometimes behave differently. The tendency is for the older and middle-aged restricted speakers to follow the rule established by the fluent speakers. They use *À* more often with motion verbs for buildings and persons and innovative *À* for buildings (e.g., *il a été À magasin*). They also employ local *DANS* with static verbs for land surfaces and innovative *DANS* with cities. The young restricted speakers are more inconsistent, for example, they barely abide by the rule for *AU/À LA* with buildings. All restricted speakers though, the old as well as the young ones, use *À LA* with countries in connection with static verbs (77%, 75%, and 63%) rather than with motion verbs, as the old fluent Cajun speakers do (57%). We can summarize that the restricted speakers mostly obey the rules and when producing innovative forms, they transfer the conditioning. Moreover, they create new constraints. This can be seen with regard to the lexicon, for example in the case of the language constraint, that is the use of English proper names (e.g., *À Hackberry*, *À Germany*, and *À Toledo Bend*) and the geographical situation (prairie cities with *DANS*).

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **SOCIAL FACTORS AND THEIR EFFECTS ON THE LOCAL AND INNOVATIVE NORMS\***

In this chapter, we will describe the multiple social forces that influence the linguistic behavior of the community. We will try to uncover the different dimensions responsible for the change or maintenance of the Cajun French prepositional system. We identified three social factors: age, exposure to French (MDI), and locality. We will show that the generational factor plays only a small role in the production of local norms and that all of them are extremely well preserved. However, age strongly influences the use of the innovative forms: a high number of new productions are found in the speech of the young generation, which has a lower level of linguistic ability. An important question here concerns the origin of the innovations and the role of language contact with English. One unexpected finding is that the young speakers play the role of the adopters rather than innovators of the change: they adopt changes introduced by restricted speakers from preceding generations.

At the end of this chapter, we will present a geolinguistic analysis of the three communities. Interestingly, the social forces in Avoyelles parish are distinct from those at work in other parishes, especially Lafourche. They are responsible for the tendency to favor some local prepositions in certain contexts, despite the fact that, in most cases, all parishes show similar distributional frequencies. While addressing the issue of

---

\* Part of chapter reprinted from Dubois and Noetzel (2005) by permission of Cambridge University Press.

maintenance, we will argue that the lack of interactional changes within the Cajun community made the preservation of dialectal forms possible.

## **5.1 MAINTENANCE OF LOCAL NORMS**

Earlier, we showed that the variation of prepositional forms is regulated by internal constraints in Cajun French. Table 9 illustrates the overall maintenance of local variants according to age. One striking fact is that the local prepositional norms in all locative categories are maintained across generations. We find language persistence rather than language change. We see no gradual movement in the Cajun communities: all generations show a similar usage of local prepositions. Moreover, all speakers, regardless of their exposure to French, use these forms.

Buildings and land surfaces show the maintenance of local variants in an exemplary way: the local norms are preserved in every generation studied, without a single exception. For buildings, even the percentages of distribution are almost the same in each age group. The categories of *ville*, *chemin/rue*, and water surfaces also show a regular usage of variants across generations. Here, our data allows us to demonstrate the stable usage only over a shorter period of time, beginning with the elders and, for water surfaces, starting with the old speakers. The maintenance of local forms is valid within the categories of persons and cities for all but one generation. Yet this distributional difference is due to the effect of linguistic factors and does not entail generational change. The frequent usage of *AU docteur* by young speakers (31%) and of *À LA* and *AU* before city names by the ancestors (36%) is due to lexical factors, which translates to a strong presence of professional names and transparent city names. For the country context, it appears that the bilingual elders introduce EN as a new form but a closer look



Table 9. Maintenance of local norms through the generations.

	Ancestors	French Elders	Bilingual Elders	Old	Middle-aged	Young
<b>Buildings</b>						
À L'école (1346)	63%	66%	65%	65%	64%	62%
DANS l'école (766)	34%	34%	35%	35%	36%	38%
<b>Land surfaces</b>						
AU pays (80)	23%	29%	21%	12%	14%	11%
DANS le pays (456)	77%	71%	79%	88%	86%	89%
<b>Ville*</b>						
EN ville (183)		82%	95%	93%	77%	93%
DANS la ville (26)		14%	5%	5%	19%	4%
<b>Chemin/rue*</b>						
SUR le chemin (109)		57%	43%	74%	71%	73%
DANS le chemin (34)		29%	36%	23%	17%	23%
AU chemin (14)		14%	21%	3%	11%	4%
<b>Water surfaces*</b>						
SUR le bayou (95)				73%	78%	62%
AU bayou (49)				27%	22%	38%
<b>Persons</b>						
CHEZ ma mère (330)	91%	83%	77%	85%	71%	61%
AU docteur (74)	6%	17%	10%	11%	24%	31%
SUR ma mère (23)	3%	0%	13%	4%	5%	8%
<b>Cities</b>						
À Eunice (1448)	64%	81%	91%	88%	85%	89%
AU Simmesport (233)	36%	19%	9%	12%	15%	11%
<b>Countries</b>						
EN Louisiane (22)	0%	0%	9%	9%	2%	13%
DANS la Louisiane (174)	17%	72%	74%	62%	47%	51%
À LA Louisiane (112)	83%	28%	17%	29%	51%	36%

\* We do not have a sufficient number of tokens to illustrate the intergenerational presence of À LA ville (not shown in table), as well as ville, chemin/rue, and water surfaces for the oldest generations (see empty spaces in table).

at the data suggests otherwise. The overall numbers of tokens are very small for the generation of the ancestors and French dominant elders (six and thirty-two, respectively). This leads us to suspect that EN, which gained in popularity in standard French only from the 19th century on, has always been present in Cajun French, but as a very infrequent form – so infrequent that its usage is not attested in our study for these two generations<sup>55</sup>. The forms DANS and À LA are the major variants in all generations. Their variable usage follows the overall pattern of maintenance of local forms, starting with the French dominant elders. The fact that the ancestors seem to favor the use of À LA (whereas the following generations more often use DANS) is in our opinion a reversal in tendency that is only due to the lack of data for this generation.

In order to explain the preservation of local norms over time, let us first examine the historical background of the Cajun French language. Cajun French was only one among the dialectal varieties spoken in nineteenth century Louisiana and it shared several features with other vernaculars. Our data shows no prepositional form that is unique to Cajun French, neither historically nor contemporarily. The language situation in Louisiana can be divided into four important periods according to Dubois 2005. At the inception of the colony, there were many colonists, some coming from the Northwest and the Loire region in France, who spoke different varieties of French, among them a small elite that used a more standardized form of French. When the Acadians arrived, they added another variety of French. Between 1789 and 1830, new waves of colonists came from France. Some spoke a more standardized variety of French since the normalization of the language had already begun, but the many immigrants from rural regions used

---

<sup>55</sup> There are only 20 tokens of EN with countries in our study. We observed that it is the young generation that starts using it in the wrong context (e.g., *EN Kansas*, *EN Rhode Island*).

dialectal varieties very similar to those already in place. Around the time of the Civil War, English slowly replaced French as the dominant language and bilingualism was no longer considered a necessary attribute.

Over time Acadian French evolved into Cajun French, a variety that was influenced by all other dialectal varieties of French spoken in Louisiana. We know that the alternation between À LA/AU and DANS is a very strong pattern in France in the 16th century, which created the determination constraint and replaced the previous variation between À and EN in Old French (dating even back to Latin from where the motion/static constraint stems). Prepositional expressions such as À *L'école*/DANS *l'école*, À *LA Louisiane*/DANS *la Louisiane*, AU *pays*/DANS *le pays*, and À *LA ville*/DANS *la ville* are therefore a continuation of a usage in place since at least the 16th century. SUR (Latin SUPER or SUPRA) has been continuously used in French, in variation with EN in Old and Middle French, and later alternating with À and/or DANS (e.g., *SUR/AU/DANS le chemin*, *SUR le/AU bayou*)<sup>56</sup>. CHEZ has also its origins in Latin and has been used in alternation with its phonetic variant SUR over long periods in French<sup>57</sup>. In addition, we have further evidence that the same dialectal features (such as *SUR ma mère* for *CHEZ ma mère*) were preserved in other contemporary varieties of French in North America.

In summary, these frequent prepositional usages in Cajun French as well as in several vernacular varieties of French were extremely stable over time. It does not come as a surprise that they have also been maintained over the last hundred years. The fact

---

<sup>56</sup> We already showed examples for SUR with water surfaces in Old French in chapter 2 (e.g., “*s’est logie SEUR Saine*” (Raithel 1888, 16).

<sup>57</sup> These are some examples for SUR with persons from the 14th through the 16th century (Littré 1956-1958, 7:595): “*je descendis à l’hostel de la Lune SUR un escuyer du comte*” (I stopped by the *hostel de la Lune* at a nobleman’s of the count), “*le bon chevalier...la mena...coucher SUR une gentil-femme*” (Huguet 1967, 7:135, the good knight...took her...to sleep at a noblewoman’s home), “*...la saulce des poires qu’on vend SUR les patissiers à Paris*” (ibid., ...the pear sauce that is sold at the pastrycooks’ in Paris).

that they still exist today means that the presence of many dialectal varieties of French in the rural areas of South Louisiana in the 18th and early 19th century was strong enough for their preservation (Dubois 2005; Thomason and Kaufman 1988). But it also means that the Cajun communities since the turn of the twentieth century have become enclaves, with little influence from a more standardized variety of French used in academic or religious institutions.

According to Dubois and Horvath 2003 (203-204), enclaves are usually described as places that have lengthy settlement histories, minimal in-migration, and communities with a strong sense of their own continuity as a population. In the usual case, enclaves are rural and often geographically isolated. Persistence or change in language reflects persistence or change in the community. Dialect enclaves are expected to be stable over time and show linguistic persistence or very slow change, while urban communities are expected to be in flux and to show ‘observable’ language change in progress. Following the decades after the Civil War and until the economic situation improved after WWII, there was a long period of economic decline and Cajun communities became much more isolated. People moved away in great numbers and they stayed poor, barely able to sustain a living by working in the fields; most of them were illiterate. However, with the onset of industrialization, agricultural mechanization, and the oil and gas developments in the 1950s, these communities emerged from their ‘enclave’ status.

Geographical concepts like enclave communities, insularity, or geographical remoteness as well as sociological concepts like social networks have allowed sociolinguists to begin to see what effect these kinds of places and communal structures might have on language change. However, Dubois and Horvath (2003) argue that these

concepts need first of all to be translated into the language of sociolinguistics. They suggest that it is important for closed networks or insular communities to determine how people use language. According to these scholars, one important question that requires an answer by researchers working on minority languages is: do people talk to people who talk like them? In our case, the answer is positive. Cajun speakers are not confronted in their everyday lives with other French speakers who do not speak the same dialect, who misunderstand them, or who socially evaluate the way they speak. The linguistic consequence is that no linguistic accommodation to another person is needed; there is no social motivation for change and linguistic persistence results rather than change. Dubois and Horvath argue that language change happens when people begin to talk to people who do not talk like them. In the situation of the Cajuns, when they took advantage of the economic upturn and began working and going to college, they engaged with English-speaking people rather than French-speaking people.

## **5.2 THE EMERGENCE OF INNOVATIVE NORMS**

Table 10 shows all the innovative forms found in all locative categories. Most of these forms have a low frequency with the noticeable exception of *À* before countries (166 tokens) and *DANS* before cities (138 tokens). The young speakers are responsible for almost half of all these new forms (48%), followed by the middle-aged speakers (28%). But some innovative usages with more than 25 occurrences are also found in the speech of older generations. This is the case of *À* before persons, *À/AU/EN* with buildings, *À* before countries, and both *EN* and *DANS* before cities. What role does the MDI play in the production of these forms? Are they all directly due to language restriction, do fluent speakers use them? Does the factor age condition their usage?

Table 10. Innovative forms and age within the Cajun speech community.

	Ancestor	French Elder	Bilingual Elder	Old	Middle-aged	Young
<b>Persons</b>						
À ma mère (63)	3%	0%	8%	16%	21%	52%
EN/DANS ma mère (7)	0	0%	0%	14%	14%	71%
<b>Buildings</b>						
AU école (68)	0%	1%	6%	16%	25%	51%
À école (58)	0%	0%	0%	7%	43%	50%
EN école (27)	0%	0%	4%	4%	41%	52%
SUR l'école (7)	0%	0%	0%	0%	29%	71%
<b>Land surfaces</b>						
À clos (18)	0%	28%	6%	0%	56%	11%
À LE/EN clos (11)	20%	10%	0%	10%	50%	10%
<b>Countries</b>						
À Louisiane (166)	0%	4%	8%	33%	34%	21%
<b>Cities</b>						
DANS Eunice (138)	0%	2%	3%	19%	25%	51%
EN Eunice (44)	0%	2%	5%	30%	16%	48%
SUR Eunice (28)	0%	0%	0%	61%	14%	25%
<b>Water</b>						
À bayou (11)	0%	0%	0%	18%	36%	45%
À LE bayou (6)	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%
DANS le bayou (7)	0%	0%	0%	14%	14%	71%
<b>Total without country (493)</b>	<b>1% (4)</b>	<b>2% (912)</b>	<b>3% (17)</b>	<b>18% (87)</b>	<b>28% (138)</b>	<b>48% (235)</b>

Table 11 summarizes the distribution of innovative forms across three generations of speakers divided by the type of language exposure. Two tendencies can be found.

Table 11. Innovative forms and age for persons, buildings, land surfaces, and water surfaces, divided by the MDI factor.

	<b>Persons</b>	<b>Buildings</b>	<b>Land surfaces</b>	<b>Water surfaces</b>
<b>OLD</b>				
Fluent	22%	33%	33%	0%
Restricted	78%	67%	67%	100%
<b>MIDDLE-AGED</b>				
Fluent	31%	49%	36%	75%
Restricted	69%	51%	64%	25%
<b>YOUNG</b>				
Fluent	47%	40%	50%	54%
Restricted	53%	60%	50%	46%

The first is that fluent and restricted speakers within the young generation have a similar behavior; no influence of language exposure is observable for the youth regardless of the locative categories. Second, we notice a clear distinction within the categories of persons, buildings, land surfaces, and water surfaces between the usage of fluent speakers and restricted speakers from older generations, the latter having a higher rate of innovative forms. This gap is very significant within the older generation, which has a lower rate of innovative forms, but promptly diminishes within the middle-aged generation.

Table 12 illustrates the use of À before countries and EN/SUR and DANS before cities by the old, middle-aged, and young speakers, divided by the market dialect index. The innovative forms À with countries and EN/SUR with cities show no language conditioning in any generation. They are introduced early by preceding generations of speakers and used by both fluent and restricted speakers in the following generations.

Table 12. Innovative forms and age for À (country) and EN/SUR/DANS (city), divided by the MDI factor.

	À Country	EN/SUR City	DANS City
OLD			
Fluent	50%	56%	47%
Restricted	50%	44%	53%
MIDDLE-AGED			
Fluent	44%	—*	69%
Restricted	56%	—*	31%
YOUNG			
Fluent	54%	46%	13%
Restricted	46%	54%	87%

\* We do not have sufficient data to show the tendency for the middle-aged generation for city.

For example, we find nineteen occurrences of À before countries and three occurrences of EN before cities in the speech of the elders, albeit no occurrences are produced by the ancestors.

When we examine in detail the distribution of À with countries, for which we have more tokens, we observe that the elders and old speakers usually restrict its use to U.S. state names (*À Texas*, *À Mississippi*), whereas in standard French, the country rule is applied (*AU Texas*, *AU Mississippi*). The innovative form EN with cities seems to be a localized usage in Avoyelles (*EN Marksville*) and SUR goes in hand with compound names such as *SUR la Grande Isle*.

The case of DANS with city names is more complex. It is also introduced by the generation of the elders who used it in contexts where the underlying forms *pré*, *prairie*, *poste*, *parc* (meadow, prairie, post, parc) can be reconstructed (e.g., *le pré de Golden Meadow*, *la prairie de Mamou*, *le poste des Opelousas*, *le parc de Estes*). The fluent and



restricted old speakers produce the form DANS but there is no clear tendency with regards to language exposure in the following generations. For the middle-aged generation, the fluent speakers take the lead (69%), and for the young, it is the restricted speakers who use DANS the most (87% - a result that is strongly influenced by the behavior of two speakers who are responsible for more than 50% of its production). One important fact is that these last three generations no longer restrict the use of DANS before cities with underlying forms.

Our results indicate two sets of innovations. The first one is comprised of forms such as those used with persons (À/EN/DANS), buildings (AU/À/EN/SUR), land surfaces (À/À LE/DANS), and water surfaces (À/À LE/DANS), which are interference-induced innovations. Restricted speakers are responsible for their use and no linguistic conditioning can be detected. The second set involves the innovative forms, À before countries and EN/SUR/DANS before cities, which seem to be internally-motivated by the system. Their production is conditioned by some linguistic constraints (e.g., À before state names); speakers create new contextual distinctions and, as a consequence, their grammatical system of locative prepositions is reorganized. It is a change happening over time but not one directly conditioned by language restriction or interference such as the one we observe in the first set. We do not suggest that language contact has nothing to do with the emergence of innovative forms such as À before countries and EN/SUR/DANS before cities. We propose that this influence is indirect: it perhaps triggers the reorganization of the locative system but the new constraints put into place are routed in the French grammar rather than the English grammar. In the next section, we will analyze in detail the two types of innovations.

### 5.3 DETERMINING THE SOURCE OF THE INNOVATIONS

Our restricted speakers' lesser ability in Cajun French is not pronounced enough to cut them off from the vernacular. They master the local norms of the locative system. They are not left with a reduced system. In fact they exhibit a larger repertoire of forms. What the locative system of the restricted speakers suffers from is a loss of structural integrity (Mougeon and Beniak 1991). They depart from the conservative norm in two different ways. First, they do not always respect the normative relationship between forms and categories of location. For example, *DANS* should only co-occur with countries and buildings in Cajun French, never with cities or persons. Second, restricted speakers do not always follow the linguistic constraints, which rule the usage of local norms (King and Nadasdi 1994). While fluent speakers limit the usage of some forms to specific linguistic environments (e.g., type of verbs), restricted ones show greater variability between environments or simply do not obey the internal rules.

According to Mougeon, Nadasdi, and Rehner (2005), who studied locative prepositions in Ontario French, Canada, one has to determine the source of innovations produced by restricted speakers. These innovations can be a result of interference from English or they can be internally-motivated developments stimulated in an indirect way by language contact. Two distinct sets of evidence allow the researcher to assess the degree of contact with English (direct influence or reinforcement) on the emergence of innovations. The first one is the systemic procedure, which comprises the complexification process (a general form is replaced by a more specific one, e.g., *DANS* is replaced by *AU* or *EN*) and the violation of a basic rule of the French morphosyntax (Mougeon, Nadasdi, and Rehner 2005). We added the noncompliance of the verbal

conditioning tendency for local norms (*À* after motion verbs and *DANS* after static verbs) and the respect of the verbal conditioning rule in English (*À* always after motion verbs and *DANS* always after static verbs), which militate for interference-induced innovations. The second set of evidence is to be found in the distribution of the forms from a sociolinguistic viewpoint. We selected the following methodological guidelines: 1) the historical continuity; 2) the usage of monolingual speakers (are these innovations produced by monolingual or French-dominant speakers?); 3) the usage by restricted speakers (are these innovations mostly created by the restricted speakers?); 4) the usage by young speakers regardless of linguistic ability (are these speakers responsible for approximately half of the occurrences?).

Table 13 shows seven innovations used often in Cajun French. We evaluated the systemic and extralinguistic criteria for each one. The shaded columns indicate interference-induced innovations. Before we discuss the results, let us mention that the source of all these innovations appears not to be the result of a direct transfer from English.

The case of *AU* and *EN* before buildings is straightforward: the cumulative evidence points to interference-induced innovations. They can be analyzed as some form of complexification (we also find many plural forms such as *À LES restaurants*) and represent major departures from the morphosyntax of French. Moreover, they do not obey the internal constraints ruling their usage: *AU* is used with both motion and static verbs and *EN* is used as a locative community norm only appearing within the expression *EN ville*. No occurrences can be found in the speech of monolinguals; restricted speakers favor their usage and young speakers are responsible for more than half of the tokens.

Table 13. Systemic and extralinguistic evidence for interference-induced innovations and internally-motivated innovations in the locative system. Gray-shaded areas highlight potential interference-induced criteria.

SYSTEMIC EVIDENCE								
	Complexification		Violation of basic rule in French		Respect of verbal conditioning (motion vs static) in Cajun French		Respect of verbal constraint (motion vs static) in English	
	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
AU ÉCOLE	X		X			X		X
EN ÉCOLE	X		X			X		X
À ÉCOLE		X	X		X			X
À MA MÈRE		X		X	X			X
<u>EN/SUR EUNICE*</u>	X		X		X			X
<u>DANS EUNICE</u>		X		X	X			X
<u>À LOUISIANE</u>		X	X			X		X
EXTRALINGUISTIC DISTRIBUTIONAL EVIDENCE								
	Historical continuity		Used by monolinguals		Mostly used by restricted speakers		More than 45% used by younger speakers	
	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
AU ÉCOLE		X		X	X		X	
EN ÉCOLE		X		X	X		X	
À ÉCOLE		X		X	X		X	
À MA MÈRE		X		X	X		X	
<u>EN/SUR EUNICE</u>		X		X		X		X
<u>DANS EUNICE</u>	X		X			X		X
<u>À LOUISIANE</u>		X	X			X		X

\* Changes due to internal motivation are underlined. We evaluated only the innovative forms based on a minimal number of 20 tokens.

Since AU and EN are produced more often in contexts where no article is needed in English, they appear to be interference-induced innovations. However, the usage of both forms does not follow the verbal rule in English (“to school” with motion verb): half of the occurrences with *AU école* occur after static verbs. Their production is therefore

constrained by the French variable system even though the source is language restriction. It is important to remember that AU is also used before cities in Cajun French and therefore is available as a lexical resource (*AU village de Pierre Part* and *AU port de Simmes* become *AU Pierre Part* and *AU Simmesport*). *À école* is also, most likely, interference-induced. Other than AU and EN with buildings, *À école* shows counter-evidence for interference-induced innovations (complexification and respect of the French verbal conditioning). The overall evidence, especially the extralinguistic, still suggests interference as its source.

The use of DANS and À before cities and countries, respectively, could be attributed to a process of morphological regularization operating between these two locative contexts, reinforced by the overall restriction in the use of French. The distinction between countries and cities became blurred over time (*À Eunice/À Louisiane*, *DANS la Louisiane/DANS Eunice*) but no (or only minor) basic rules are violated. All generations of restricted speakers follow the verbal conditioning trend for innovative DANS (82% static verbs) with cities, but they still produce 18% of DANS with motion verbs, a usage prohibited in English. The case of innovative À is noteworthy. It is more often employed with static verbs (69%), a usage which goes against both the verbal tendency in French and in English. In addition, the extralinguistic evidence strongly suggests that À with cities and DANS with countries are internally-motivated innovations.

The innovation À before persons is more difficult to interpret. Extralinguistic evidence strengthens the assumption that its usage is due to interference whereas systemic evidence advocates an internally-motivated development. Its frequency is low (likewise with other features that are due to interference) but there is no complexification,

no violation of a basic morphosyntactic French rule, and it follows the verbal conditioning tendency in French. *À* before persons appears with static verbs (53%) as much as with motion verbs (47%) following the variable verbal system in French rather than the verbal constraint in English, which restricts its usage with motion verbs (English “to” for *À*). When we look more closely at the data, we notice that most of the tokens produced by the bilingual elders and two older speakers precede names of people that correspond to business establishments (*aller À Cabrini*, which is similar to *aller À Albertson’s*) contrary to most of those occurrences in the speech of middle-aged and young speakers. This finding suggests that the innovative *À* started as an internally-motivated development but its recent expansion is indirectly correlated to a higher level of contact with English.

The analysis of *EN/SUR Eunice* points in two different directions. There is evidence that suggests it is due to interference, such as the fact that it is a case of complexification, the violation of a basic rule in French, historical discontinuity, and non-usage by monolinguals. On the other hand, we know that both *EN* and *SUR* are a sort of localized usage (*EN* with Marksville, *SUR* with transparent names allowing for it, e.g., *SUR la Grande Isle*). *EN* with cities is also admitted in standard French (as a trace of its historical usage) in a very limited number of cases (*EN Avignon*). Also, *EN/SUR Eunice* is rarely used by the groups most indicative of innovative usage (young and restricted speakers) and the verbal conditioning in Cajun French is respected or not violated. We therefore think that it is internally-motivated, not disputing the strong (indirect) influence of English.

#### 5.4 LANGUAGE RESTRICTION AS A GENERATIONAL PATTERN

How do we explain the similar linguistic behavior of the fluent and restricted young speakers for both sets of innovative forms (with the exception of *DANS Eunice*)? Because language shift in Cajun communities in Louisiana was not sudden but happened over time, the younger generations have been more influenced by its effects than the older ones. Elderly restricted speakers generally had more contact with or exposure to Cajun French than young restricted speakers because French was spoken more extensively in the 1930s than in the 1970s. English was the language at school but the language on the playground was French, as one of our speakers mentions (Dubois and Horvath 2004, 407). Fluency within the young generation does not match the fluency held by the older generation, with the middle-aged generation falling in between. In other words, fluent speakers from younger generations have a very different linguistic background compared to previous generations (because of a lack of speakers and opportunities to use French as well as the variable linguistic ability of their parents in comparison with that of their grandparents). As a result, the locative system of the older restricted speakers is more aligned with the one established by the linguistic community in contrast with the middle-aged restricted speakers whose system is more fine-tuned than the one presented by the young restricted speakers.

We also notice that both fluent and restricted young speakers adopt attritional changes introduced by previous generations of restricted speakers or by imperfectly following the conditioning rules. For example, once the old restricted speakers introduce the form *à* with persons (*à ma mère*), its use increases among fluent speakers from the middle-aged generation (33%) and even more among young fluent speakers (42%) whose

usage only slightly differs from that of restricted speakers. The use of *à* without an article before buildings (*à école*), an item absent in the speech of older fluent speakers, goes up to 24% for the middle-aged fluent speakers and then to 34% for the young fluent speakers. Therefore, once an attritional form is introduced within a new locative category, its usage is usually passed on to the next generation of speakers as a language change.

In addition, the earlier the form is introduced, the less of a difference in frequency there is between fluent and restricted speakers in the following generations. The use of *à* without an article before U.S. state names and country names as initiated by the first real bilingual speakers exemplifies this pattern. The bilingual elders adopted the preposition *à* here perhaps because *à* is a very common local norm with buildings (with an article), cities, and countries (with an article) in Cajun French. This attritional change was later endorsed as a local norm by all fluent and restricted speakers of the following generations who present no significant difference in their use of *à* with U.S. state names or country names (old fluent 50%, restricted 50%; middle-aged fluent 44%, restricted 56%; young fluent 54%, restricted 46%).

## **5.5 WHO ARE THE INNOVATORS AND ADOPTERS?**

We know that the restricted young speakers produce a higher number of innovative forms and loosely follow the conditioning rule, and that this generation as a whole is marked by a lower degree of exposure to French in comparison with the previous generations. However, are they truly responsible for the erosion of the locative system of prepositions, or do they only follow the footsteps of the older speakers? To distinguish between the innovators and the adopters, we use two arbitrary criteria: a



percentage higher than 10% and the presence of a form in the speech of at least four speakers. Table 14 illustrates the results.

Table 14. Attritional changes across generations.

Category	Bilingual Elders	Old	Middle-aged	Young
Country	À Texas			
City		DANS Eunice		
City		EN Eunice		
City		SUR Eunice		
Building		AU école	À école	
Building			EN école	
Building				SUR l'école
Person	À ma mère			DANS/EN ma mère
Land surface			À clos	
Land surface			À LE/EN clos	
Water surface			À bayou	
Total Changes	2	4	5	2

None of these attritional changes are introduced by the ancestors or the elders who have French as their dominant language. The bilingual elders initiate two changes and extend the use of the preposition À across the system. The old speakers introduce four forms, that is three prepositions with cities and one with buildings. The middle-aged speakers bring up five new changes, especially with buildings and land surfaces, contexts where the previous generations exhibit a very stable behavior. The young restricted speakers are accountable for only two innovations, but their entire generation ratifies the eleven changes introduced by the previous generations. These instances of attritional changes can also be ordered according to a scale of “agrammaticality”. The structures À école without article and AU instead of À LA are not correct usages but they are less of a

challenge to the comprehension than *EN ma mère* for *CHEZ ma mère* or *SUR l'école* for *À L'école* or *DANS l'école*. This scale of agrammaticality seems related to age: the younger the innovators, the more agrammatical the innovations. The bilingual elders extend the use of the local norm *À* across the system, the older restricted speakers start to produce forms that are local norms in some contexts within new locative categories, and the middle-aged speakers embrace all these new changes and further push the variability between each locative category.

The young Cajun speakers are clearly more the adopters than the innovators. In fact, each previous generation of speakers plays the role of innovator. Because ability in French decreases over time, each generation adds its own attritional changes to the locative system, while embracing those introduced by the preceding generation. It is the combined effect of language shift from French to English and language restriction within each generation that leads to the structural erosion of the prepositional system of young Cajun speakers.

## **5.6 GEOGRAPHICAL VARIATION OF LOCAL NORMS**

A comparative analysis of different communities sharing the same dialect allows the researcher to determine the effects of one locality on the production of linguistic forms. For the variables under study, the diatopic variation is very weak. There are no categorical isoglosses: all forms are used in all parishes, and what are the local norms in one parish are also the same ones in another parish (e.g., *CHEZ ma mère*, *À L'école*, *DANS le pays*, *À Eunice*, *EN ville*, and *SUR le chemin*). Yet, there are three variants, which are not homogeneously distributed across localities. As illustrated in table 15, this is the case for *DANS la Louisiane*, *SUR le bayou*, and *SUR ma mère* in Avoyelles parish.

Table 15. Geographical effects on local norms (tendencies based on comparison of all local norms).

	Avoyelles
<b>Geographical effect (major variants)</b>	DANS la Louisiane 79% (55) SUR le bayou 84% (32)
<b>Geographical effect (minor variants)</b>	SUR ma mère 17% (18)

What we observe in Avoyelles is a higher frequency of usage for DANS rather than À LA before countries, SUR rather than AU before water surface, and SUR rather than CHEZ before persons. This geographical effect for *DANS la Louisiane* and *SUR le bayou* is found for every generation.

Avoyelles is indeed one of the parishes that are most renowned for topographical effects. Dubois (2005) has shown the pronounced presence of phonetic features in this parish (e.g., production of 62% of [ə] if followed by the nasal [n], as in *donne*, give, or *tu-connaïs?*, you know?) as well as a remarkable low frequency of the morphosyntactic feature *ça* (plural subject pronoun, only 17% in Avoyelles) compared to *ils sont* used in other parishes (70% both in St. Landry and Lafourche).

We have mentioned in chapter 3 that both locative forms (*DANS la Louisiane* and *SUR ma mère*) are historical usages still found in several North American varieties of French (Ontarian French, Québec French, and Acadian French). How can we account for their stronger presence in Avoyelles compared to the other parishes? Brasseaux (1998, 28-29) mentions that there was a relatively small presence of Acadians in Avoyelles parish (220, or 1.6% of the population according to the 1870 U.S. census). Most of them

had moved there from neighboring areas after the Civil War. Since these Acadians were probably in closer contact with the settlers from France and Canada (living there since the early 19th century) than with the white Creole plantation owners (Brasseaux 1992, 110), it is probable that the Acadians reinforced the usage of old vernacular forms that existed in the region (*DANS la Louisiane* but standard French *EN Louisiane*, *SUR ma mère* but standard French *CHEZ ma mère*, and *SUR le bayou* in competition with *AU bayou* since the 17th century).

It may also be that isolation and the small size of the Francophone working class compared to the stronger planter Creole class resulted in the maintenance of dialectal usages. We will try to illustrate the unique sociolinguistic situation of Avoyelles by contrasting it with the two other parishes (St. Landry and Lafourche). Acadian speakers in St. Landry parish, which is in the heart of the Acadian triangle, were more numerous (1,653 or 6.5% of the total population according to the 1870 census) and more exposed to the influence of standardized varieties or later versions of French spoken by a population of relatively wealthy Acadian farmers, called the “Genteel Acadians”, who were in close contact with the white Creole elite. The situation in the coastal parish of Lafourche was very different. First, there was a relatively high percentage of Acadians (2,314 or 15.8% according to the census cited) but they were more isolated than those in St. Landry. Second, contrary to the linguistic findings for Avoyelles, we notice in Lafourche a slightly elevated percentage of the form *À* such as in *À LA Louisiane*, *AU Simmesport*, *AU pays*, and *AU chemin*, which was a common usage in France up until the 15th and 16th centuries in written French (confusion of *À* and *EN*), and also has been and still is a favored form in popular French, an informal style of spoken French.

We believe that there probably was a factor other than the size of the Acadian community and the geographical isolation that influenced the use of *DANS* and *SUR* in Avoyelles. We suggest that what distinguishes the two localities (St. Landry and Lafourche, heavily settled by the second wave of colonists from France who came much later) from Avoyelles is the close contact with other Francophone settlers at a time when spoken French was undergoing rapid changes. These speakers with a different repertoire (in terms of frequency of forms rather than absence or presence of forms) provoked a different kind of linguistic uniformization. Lafourche and St. Landry had to deal with language integration (in French) more than Avoyelles did. This social force allows Avoyelles to stand out from other parishes.

## **5.7 SUMMARY**

We have seen that all local forms are well preserved in Cajun French. Not only does this suggest the presence of many varieties with dialectal features in Louisiana in the 18th and 19th centuries, but also the existence of social constraints, such as economical depression and enclave status of the area over an extended period of time, which did not create the social motivation necessary for change.

In sharp contrast with these findings, we have discovered change over time for the innovative forms, most of which are employed by the young speakers. We have uncovered two sets of innovations with regard to language exposure. The first one concerns the categories of persons, buildings, land surfaces, and water surfaces. Once the new forms are introduced by restricted speakers, the fluent speakers of the following generations integrate them so that, in the end, all young speakers use the innovative forms, regardless of their linguistic competence. The second one applies to country *À*

and city EN/SUR and DANS, which are introduced very early according to a linguistic conditioning (À with U.S. state names, *EN Marksville*, *SUR la Grande Isle*). Both fluent and restricted speakers in the old generation adopted these forms.

We took a closer look at these innovations to determine their origins with the help of several systemic and extralinguistic criteria such as the respect of the French conditioning tendency or their overwhelming usage by young or restricted speakers. We find that the two sets of innovations roughly originate in the two kinds of sources we identified (internal motivation or the influence of English). Many innovative forms with persons, buildings, land surfaces, and water surfaces are interference-induced (*AU école*, *EN école*, and *À école*). Some innovative forms with cities and countries coincide with internal motivation (*EN/SUR Eunice*, *DANS Eunice*, and *À Louisiane*). In some cases, the evaluation of the forms is more complicated. Thus, *À ma mère* might have started out as an internally-motivated innovation, but transferred more recently to an interference-induced change. For *EN/SUR Eunice*, where the evidence gives equal weight to both sources, we think that internal-motivation is most likely the origin of the form.

It is only logical that the linguistic system of the young (restricted) speakers differs so much from previous generations since their exposure to French in the 1970s is very different from the experience of the old generation in the 1930s because of the decline in general of the usage of Cajun French. Although this generation as a whole ratified and integrated all thirteen changes, they are not responsible for their great numbers. They only introduced two more innovative and very attritional forms (*SUR l'école* and *DANS/EN ma mère*) after each generation, starting with the bilingual elders,

had added their share of innovative usages. We might call them the adopters rather than the innovators of change.

A geographical analysis only furthered results with regard to the local norms, it is therefore excluded as the source of innovation for the ‘new’ forms. We observed a preference for some local usages in Avoyelles parish (*DANS la Louisiane, SUR ma mère, and SUR le bayou*), a parish noted otherwise for variable isoglosses (Dubois 2005). This topographic effect is most likely due to the particular composition of the Francophone working class population marked by its relatively small size and isolation with respect to other classes and other localities.

## CONCLUSION

Our analysis of the locative system of prepositions has uncovered many important aspects of Cajun French. First of all, our material, drawn mainly from the large collection of interviews in the Dubois' Corpus of Cajun French and the use of several interviews conducted under the direction of Gold, Louder, and Waddell, covers multiple social aspects of the community. It is well adapted to the study of change over different generations, the study of linguistic attrition (MDI), and the study of the locality effect, which are important aspects of the minority setting of Cajun French. In our subsample, we have included five generations of Cajun French speakers, ranging from the ancestors who were born before the turn of the 20th century to the young generations, born as late as the 70s. Among them, we find the achievers, the community core members, and the restricted speakers. They together represent the different levels of linguistic abilities in the community. In addition, our second-oldest generation, the elders, have a different linguistic background. While our oldest generations, the ancestors, are all monolingual French speakers, this generation includes both French-dominant and bilingual speakers. All three parishes, Avoyelles, St. Landry, and Lafourche, reflect considerable differences as to their settlement histories and geographical locations. Avoyelles is a less affluent, prairie community with historically a low number of settlers from Acadia who socialized with other vernacular French settlers from France or Québec. St. Landry as another prairie parish has a higher percentage of Acadians, who were socially more differentiated (Genteel Acadians) and interacted not only with vernacular speakers but also the French elite. Lafourche on the other hand is a coastal parish and is populated by the second



wave of Acadians who had spent a considerable amount of time in France before settling in Louisiana. Once an isolated community of fishermen, today, it is a relatively prosperous parish due to the change of social conditions, such as the improvement of roads and the booming of the oil industry. We have chosen for our subsample a total of 86 speakers, whose linguistic production of approximately 130 hours of Cajun French was abundant and is thus an ideal basis for a variationist study using the software tool Statview.

We have considered many locative categories with location in/at or movement to. Several of them had to be discarded from this study because they show invariant prepositional usage in some cases (five categories altogether, e.g., proper name buildings of the type “*À St. Joseph*”, border surfaces with *SUR le bord*, and media devices such as *SUR la télé*). Other categories could not be filled with a sufficient number of tokens (four altogether, e.g., personal proper name buildings of the type “*CHEZ À Fred’s Lounge*”, and travel ways such as *SUR/DANS la route*). Ultimately, we retained eight different contexts of location for study: persons, buildings, land surfaces, countries, cities, ville, chemin/rue, and water surfaces. We have shown that most of the prepositions, which are very frequent locative forms (EN, À, DANS, and SUR), have their origin in Latin, and that when the case system finally collapsed, the prepositional system was firmly established. In Old French, EN was the most common preposition, while À was also used in many contexts, especially with motion verbs. SUR was also used in alternation with EN. This system began to change with the introduction of the definite article, the phonetic development of EN LE to AU, and the introduction of DANS (first as DEDANS). We have demonstrated the presence of many historical and non-historical prepositions in Cajun French. Altogether,

the forms AU/À LA and DANS are used in every locative context; the forms EN, SUR, and À are also produced in almost all contexts with a few contextual exceptions for each form. Only CHEZ is found exclusively in the persons' context. We have also shown that the robust number of occurrences in each locative category allows for lexical subdivisions (such as U.S. state names and country names) and permits to uncover the most frequent locative expressions (such as *maison*).

Since the beginning of our analysis, our objective has been to determine how the locative forms are used in Cajun French and which variants are frequently employed. Our distributional analysis of the locative variants in Cajun French has shown the high frequency of AU/À LA, À, and DANS. The forms CHEZ, EN, and SUR are also frequent in a few locative contexts. We have proposed a methodological distinction between local and innovative prepositions in chapter 3. As we know, it is perfectly possible to find the presence of more than one norm in a community, especially in a language minority setting (Mougeon and Nadasdi 1998, 43). The norms that represent the normal way of speaking are the local norms, which are well-established prepositional usages in the Cajun French community as well as in other vernacular French-speaking populations and are produced by all members of the Cajun community across all generations. They can coincide or not with the exonorm. Innovative forms are infrequent and they are sporadic locative forms more often produced by Cajun speakers with a restricted ability in French. After having demonstrated the historical continuity of some forms, we discussed the status of locative forms, showing their usage in a comparative analysis with Acadian French, Québec French, and Ontarian French. Their frequent usage in other French varieties, as well as in Cajun French, is an indication of their status as local norms in

Cajun French. Also, the fact that certain forms are mostly used by restricted speakers in the Ontarian French studies suggests that they originate from language contact (e.g., *À maison*). Overall, local forms represent 80% of the occurrences. Although the innovative forms appear less frequently, they correspond to 17 different prepositions in six locative categories. It is their ‘out of context’ usage that mostly distinguishes the innovative norms from the local norms. For example, the preposition *DANS* is frequently used as a local norm (five times) and it is also employed as an innovative one (three times). What we have demonstrated is that the new variants in Cajun French are not irregular, ungrammatical prepositions, but very frequent French prepositions whose usage is extended to other locative contexts in Cajun French.

In chapter 4 and 5, we analyzed the linguistic and social conditioning in Cajun French. How far and to what extent do these factors have an impact on Cajun French? Moreover, are they also interrelated, as for example found in King and Nadasdi’s study (1994), in which only the unrestricted speakers follow the linguistic constraints? This is an important question because we know that “... in different speech communities social and linguistic factors are linked not only in different ways, but to different degrees, so that the imbrication of social and linguistic structure in a given speech community is a matter for investigation and cannot be taken as given” (Romaine 1982, 13).

First, we would like to summarize the effects of the linguistic conditioning in Cajun French. Linguistic conditioning refers to the impact the grammatical system can have on the prepositional choice. Three linguistic factors are responsible for the linguistic conditioning in Cajun French: the lexical conditioning, determination, and motion/static verbs. We find lexical effects in Cajun French for *AU/À LA* (with persons’

professions, buildings, and feminine countries) and for DANS (with rooms and masculine state names). With determination, the usage of DANS is triggered in Cajun French in the category of buildings. With regard to the nature of the verb, the usage of À with motion verbs and DANS with static verbs is common. In addition, we have discovered new lexical and verbal constraints. These new lexical effects include the influence of the grammatical gender, the linguistic transparency of names, the English language, certain words, and also the geographical location. They result in the use of some local norms (*À LA France, AU Simmesport*) and many innovative ones (such as *À Toledo Bend, À collège*, or *DANS Hessmer*). For the verbal constraint, we have also noticed in some cases a conditioning effect with static verbs on local norms (SUR, CHEZ) and even more so on all innovative norms with cities (DANS, SUR, EN). Motion verbs are also responsible for innovative À with buildings. Overall, the locative prepositional system in Cajun French is strongly conditioned by the linguistic factors, which govern the use of several local norms as well as innovative usages. The case of the building category is most noteworthy in that the linguistic factors regulate almost all its prepositional forms. The verbal constraint and lexical conditioning preside over many locative prepositions: 15 for the verbal constraint and 14 for the lexical conditioning, with the factor determination playing only a secondary role (one preposition with buildings). Interestingly, these two important linguistic constraints (lexical and verbal) do not govern the same forms. The former factor restricts a higher number of innovative forms whereas the latter conditions most of the local norms. The lexical constraint affects several innovative forms with buildings and cities as well as the innovative forms with countries, land surfaces, and

water surfaces, while the verbal constraint regulates the usage of local norms in six locative categories.

Second, as to the social embedding of the linguistic conditioning, we have found that the linguistic factors affect locative prepositions independently from the social factors. Almost all speakers in the community abide by the linguistic rules. The exceptions are restricted speakers, especially young ones. The older and middle-aged restricted speakers follow the rule established by the fluent speakers. They obey the motion verb constraint with *À* for persons (*AU docteur*) and buildings (*À L'école*, *À magasin*). They also employ local *DANS* with static verbs for land surfaces and innovative *DANS* with cities. The young restricted speakers are more inconsistent. For example, they barely abide by the rule for *AU/À LA* with buildings. All restricted speakers, from the old generation to the young one, use *À LA* with countries in connection with static verbs (77%, 75%, and 63%) rather than with motion verbs, as the old fluent Cajun speakers do (57%). In sum, the restricted speakers mostly obey the rules; when they use locative prepositions as innovative forms, they transfer the conditioning of the prepositions. Moreover, they create new constraints. This is the case of lexical constraints, for example the use of English proper names (e.g., *À Hackberry*, *À Germany*, and *À Toledo Bend*) and the geographical constraint (prairie cities with *DANS*).

Finally, one of the most interesting findings and the heart of the analysis is the social conditioning in Cajun French. In the contact situation with English, age, language ability, and locality are all significant factors. It is noteworthy to recall that these factors have an effect on innovative forms, but play almost no role in connection with the local norm. Furthermore, for the local norm, we have seen that the forms are well preserved in

Cajun French over several generations. Not only does this suggest the presence of many varieties with dialectal features in Louisiana in the 18th and 19th centuries, but also that they have been preserved because of the economical depression and their enclave status over a long period of time. In other words, there seems to be no social motivation necessary for change. In sharp contrast with these findings, we have discovered change over time for the innovative forms, most of which are employed by young speakers. We have uncovered two sets of innovations with regard to language exposure. The first one concerns the categories of persons (À/EN/DANS), buildings (AU/À/EN/SUR), land surfaces (À/À LE/DANS), and water surfaces (À/À LE/DANS). Once the new forms are introduced by restricted speakers, the fluent speakers of the following generations integrate them so that in the end, all young speakers use the innovative forms, regardless of their linguistic competence. The second one applies to À with countries and EN/SUR and DANS with cities, which are attritional forms introduced very early following a linguistic conditioning and already adopted by the fluent and restricted speakers of the old generation (e.g., À with U.S. state names, SUR with certain city names).

We took a closer look at these innovations to determine their origins with the help of several systemic and extralinguistic criteria such as the respect of the French conditioning tendency or their overwhelming usage by young or restricted speakers. We find that in most cases, each type of innovation originates from either internal motivation or the influence of English. Many innovative forms with persons, buildings, land surfaces, and water surfaces are interference-induced (*AU école*, *EN école*, and *À école*). The innovative forms with country À and city EN/SUR and DANS coincide with internal motivation (*EN/SUR Eunice*, *DANS Eunice*, and *À Louisiane*). In some cases, the

evaluation of the forms has proven to be more complicated. Thus, *À ma mère* might have started out as an internally-motivated innovation, but transferred more recently to an interference-induced change. For EN/SUR with cities, for which the evidence gives equal weight to both sources, we think that internal-motivation most likely triggered the use of the innovative form.

What is the role of the generation of young speakers with regard to the linguistic changes? It is only logical that the linguistic system of the young speakers is so different from previous generations since the use of Cajun French has declined over time and their exposure to French in the 1970s is very different from the experience of the old generation in the 1930s. Although this generation as a whole ratified and integrated all thirteen changes, they are not responsible for the creation of a great number of them. They only introduce two innovative and very attritional forms (*SUR l'école* and *DANS/EN ma mère*), compared to previous generations who initiated many innovative usages. We might call them the adopters rather than innovators of change.

Locality does not condition the introduction of locative prepositions. We have observed a minor preference for some local usages in Avoyelles parish (*DANS la Louisiane*, *SUR ma mère*, and *SUR le bayou*), a parish noted otherwise for variable isoglosses (Dubois 2005). This topographic effect is most likely due to the particular composition of the Francophone working class population marked by its relatively small size and isolation with respect to other classes and other localities. Overall, the preservation of all locative prepositions, local and innovative ones, is the most important result with regard to geographical differences in usage.

We have demonstrated that in Cajun French, more than one norm exists: we have found the existence of both local and innovative norms. They, however, do not correspond to different communities of speakers, as is often the case (e.g., Black Vernacular English). Another example that suggests a pronounced difference in linguistic behavior is Mougeon and Beniak's study (1991) in which certain forms are ascribed to certain speakers (e.g., only unrestricted speakers use SUR for CHEZ, and only restricted use À maison). In Cajun French, all forms are shared by all speakers, with the exception of the very oldest, monolingual speakers who, basically, make no use of the innovative forms. The only differences in the linguistic behavior manifest themselves with regard to the degree to which the forms are used (older, unrestricted speakers use more local prepositions, and younger, restricted ones use more innovative prepositions). It would be interesting to know in the framework of a larger study if another speech style would reveal the existence of other norms. A more formal style, for example, could result in the production of only local forms, or innovative forms. In our study of locative prepositions in Cajun French, it is the presence of English that is in a direct and indirect way responsible for the changes that have gradually found their way into the system of Cajun French. This process of change started early on and affected the speech of the following generations, almost regardless of linguistic ability. This is not to say that the young speakers' speech has become very attritional. Some of them are extremely fluent in French, however, those speakers are the exceptions. All members of the Cajun French community more or less master the local norm together with the linguistic conditioning rules, but it is the young generation that shows the most pronounced usage of the innovative forms. This generation is more influenced by the effects of language shift



than the older generations because the shift to English in the Cajun communities in Louisiana was not sudden but happened over time.

## REFERENCES

Amon, Evelyne, Judith A. Muyskens, and Alice C. Omaggio Hadley. (2004). *Vis-à-vis: beginning French*. 3rd edition, New York: McGraw-Hill.

Ancelet, Barry Jean. (1988). A perspective on teaching the “problem language” in Louisiana. *French Review* 61: 345-356.

Ancelet, Barry Jean and Amanda LaFleur. (2005). La revitalisation endogène du cadien en Louisiane. In Albert Valdman, Julie Auger, and Deborah Piston-Hatlen (eds.), *Le français en Amérique du Nord. État présent*. Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval. 411-454.

Andersen, Roger W. (1982). Determining the linguistic attributes of language attrition. In Richard D. Lambert and Barbara F. Freed (eds.), *The loss of language skills*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House Publishers. 83-118.

Arrighi, Laurence. (2004). Des prépositions dans un corpus acadien. Évolution du système linguistique français, archaïsmes et/ou calques de l'anglais? Paper presented at the “Colloque international de Grammaire comparée des variétés de français d'Amérique”, 17-20 Mai 2004, Avignon.

Arrighi, Laurence. (2005). Des prépositions dans un corpus acadien: Évolution du système linguistique français, archaïsmes et/ou calques de l'anglais? In Patrice Brasseur and Anika Falkert (eds.), *Français d'Amérique: approches morphosyntaxiques*. Paris: L'Harmattan. 239-245.

Arrivé, Michel, Françoise Gadet, and Michel Galmiche. (1986). *La grammaire d'aujourd'hui: guide alphabétique de linguistique française*. Paris: Flammarion.

Ayres-Bennett, Wendy, Janice Carruthers, and Rosalind Temple. (2001). *Problems and perspectives. Studies in the modern French language*. Harlow, England and New York: Longman.

Bergh, Lars. (1948). *Moyens d'exprimer en français l'idée de direction, étude fondée sur une comparaison avec les langues germaniques, en particulier le suédois*. Göteborg: Rundqvists Boktryckeri.

Bescherelle, Louis Nicolas. (1997). *La grammaire pour tous. Dictionnaire de la grammaire en 27 chapitres*. Paris: Hatier. (Orig. pub. 1866).

Blyth, Carl. (1997). The sociolinguistic situation of Cajun French: the effects of language shift and language loss. In Albert Valdman (ed.), *French and Creole in Louisiana*. New York: Plenum Press. 25-46.

Brandon, Elizabeth. (1955). *Moeurs et langue de la paroisse Vermillon en Louisiane*. 4 vols., Ph.D. diss., Université Laval.

Brasseaux, Carl A. (1992). *Acadian to Cajun: transformation of a people, 1803-1877*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.

Brasseaux, Carl A. (1998). Acadian settlement patterns, 1765-1900. In Wolfgang Binder (ed.), *Creoles and Cajuns: French Louisiana – La Louisiane française*. Frankfurt, Germany: Peter Lang. 33-51.

Brown, Becky. (1993). The social consequences of writing Louisiana French. *Language in Society* 22 (1): 67-101.

Brown, Becky. (2005). L'élaboration d'une norme endogène en Louisiane francophone. In Albert Valdman, Julie Auger, and Deborah Piston-Hatlen (eds.), *Le français en Amérique du Nord. État présent*. Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval. 389-409.

Bruce, Clint and Jennifer Gipson. (2002). *Cajun French-English, English-Cajun French dictionary and phrasebook*. New York: Hippocrene Books.

Brunot, Ferdinand. (1966). *Histoire de la langue française des origines à nos jours*. Vol. 6. Paris: A. Colin. (Orig. pub. 1930-1932, orig. title: *Histoire de la langue française des origines à 1900*).

Chambers, Jack K. (1995). *Sociolinguistic theory: linguistic variation and its social significance*. Cambridge, Oxford: Blackwell.

Chevalier, Jean-Claude, Claire Blanche-Benveniste, Michel Arrivé, and Jean Peytard. (1977). *Grammaire Larousse du français contemporain*. Paris: Larousse. (Orig. pub. 1964).

Conwell, Marilyn J. and Alphonse G. Juilland. (1963). *Louisiana French grammar*. The Hague: Mouton.

Daigle, Jules O. (1984). *A dictionary of the Cajun language*, Ann Arbor, MI: Edwards Brothers.

De Boer, Cornelis. (1926). *Essai sur la syntaxe moderne de la préposition en français et en italien*. Paris: H. Champion.

Dionne, Narcisse-Eutrope. (1909). *Le parler populaire des Canadiens français*. Québec: J. P. Garneau.

Dorian, Nancy. (2005). Minority and endangered languages. In Tej Bhatia and William C. Ritchie (eds.), *The handbook of bilingualism*. Malden MA: Blackwell. 437-459.

Dorian, Nancy. (1981). *Language death. The life cycle of a Scottish Gaelic dialect*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Dubois, Sylvie. (1995). Sociolinguistic survey of Cajun French. Proposal for NSF, unpublished manuscript, 15 pages.

Dubois, Sylvie. (1997a). Field Method in Cajun Communities in Louisiana. In Albert Valdman (ed.), *French and Creole in Louisiana*. New York, 47-70.

Dubois, Sylvie (dir.). (1997b). Cajun French/Cajun English corpus. Sponsored by NSF grant (BSR-0091823), deposited at Louisiana State University.

Dubois, Sylvie. (1998). La configuration dynamique des communautés cadiennes en Louisiane. In Patrice Brasseur (ed.), *Français d'Amérique, variation, créolisation, normalisation*. Avignon: Université d'Avignon. 325-348.

Dubois, Sylvie. (1999). Sociohistorical forces and language changes in English-speaking Creole and Cajun communities in Southern Louisiana. Proposal for NSF, unpublished manuscript, 15 pages.

Dubois, Sylvie. (2001). Je parle français, moi j'parle français, moi parle français: Le rôle de l'attrition linguistique dans le système de pronoms sujets en français cadien. In Anaïd Donabédian (ed.), *Langues de diaspora, langues en contact*. Paris: Ophrys. 149-165.

Dubois, Sylvie. (2002). Le statut du français et les politiques linguistiques dans les provinces maritimes canadiennes et en Louisiane aux États-Unis. In Fritz Peter Kirsch and Waldemar Zacharasiewicz (eds.), *Kanada und die USA – interkulturelle Perspektiven: internationale Symposium, Wien, 12. –14. April 2000. Aspects of interculturality – Canada and the United States*. Wien: Zentrum für Kanada-Studien, Universität Wien. 123-137.

Dubois, Sylvie. (2005). Un siècle de français cadien parlé en Louisiane. In Albert Valdman, Julie Auger, and Deborah Piston-Hatlen (eds.), *Le français en Amérique du Nord. État présent*. Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval. 287-305.

Dubois, Sylvie and Megan Melançon. (1997). Cajun is dead, long live Cajun: Shifting from a linguistic to a cultural community. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 1 (1): 63-93.

Dubois, Sylvie and Barbara Horvath. (1998). Let's tink about dat: Interdental fricatives in Cajun English. *Language Variation and Change* 10 (3): 245-261.

Dubois, Sylvie and Barbara Horvath. (2003). Creoles and Cajuns: A portrait in black and white. *American Speech* 78 (2): 192-207.

Dubois, Sylvie and Barbara Horvath. (2004). Cajun vernacular English: phonology. In Edgar W. Schneider, Kate Burridge, Bernd Kortmann, Rajend Mesthrie, and Clive Upton (eds.), *A handbook of varieties of English*. Vol. 1, *Phonology*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter. 407-416.

Dubois, Sylvie and Sibylle Noetzel. (2005). Intergenerational pattern of interference and internally-motivated changes in Cajun French. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition* 8 (2). Cambridge University Press: 131-143.

Fahlin, Carin. (1942). *Étude sur l'emploi des prépositions en, à, dans au sens local*. Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksell.

Faulk, James Donald. (1977). *Cajun French I: the first written record and definitive study of the Cajun language as spoken by the people in Vermilion and surrounding parishes*. Crowley, LA: Cajun Press.

Flikeid, Karin. (1989). Moitié anglais, moitié français? *Revue Québécoise de linguistique théorique et appliquée* 8: 177-228.

Frei, Henri. (1929). *La grammaire des fautes*. Paris: P. Geuthner.

Gal, Susan. (1984). Phonological style in bilingualism: The interaction of structure and use. In Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics (GURT), Deborah Schiffrin (ed.), *Meaning, form and use in context: Linguistic applications*. Washington: Georgetown University Press. 290-302.

Galichet, Georges. (1973). *Grammaire structurale du français moderne*. 5th edition. Paris: Hatier. (Orig. pub. 1967).

Geddes, James. (1908). *Study of an Acadian-French dialect spoken on the North Shore of the Baie-des-Chaleurs*. Halle, Germany: M. Niemeyer.

Gesner, Edward B. (1979). *Étude morphosyntaxique du parler acadien de la Baie Sainte-Marie, Nouvelle Ecosse (Canada)*. Québec: Centre international de recherche sur le bilinguisme, Laval University.

Gold, Gerald, Dean Louder, and Eric Waddell (dirs.). (1975). Gold corpus interviews. Part of the Projet Louisiane sponsored by Université Laval, the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and the Ford Foundation. Interviews deposited at Louisiana State University.

Gold, Gerald. (1980). The changing criteria of social networks in a Cajun community. *Ethnos* 45: 60-81.

Gougenheim, Georges. (1938). *Système grammatical de la langue française*. Paris: Éditions d'Artrey.

Gougenheim, Georges. (1949). L'espace à deux dimensions et l'espace à trois dimensions en français moderne. *Journal de Psychologie normale et pathologique* 42 (1): 35-52.

Gould, Philip. (1980). Les Cadiens d'asteur. Today's Cajuns. Lafayette, LA: Galerie Press.

Grevisse, Maurice. (1980). *Le Bon Usage. Grammaire française avec des remarques sur la langue française d'aujourd'hui*. 11th edition. Gembloux: Duculot. (Orig. pub. 1936).

Grevisse, Maurice and André Goosse. (1980). *Nouvelle grammaire française*. Paris: Duculot.

Guidry, Richard. (1981). *Les jeunes Louisianais*. Baton Rouge. Also accessible on <http://www.frenchimmersionusa.org/activites/documents/contes.LES.JEUNES.LOUISIANAIS.original.doc> (accessed November 7, 2006).

Guidry, Richard. (1982). *C'est p'us pareil*. Lafayette, LA: Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Southwestern Louisiana.

Guilbeau, John. (1950). The French Spoken in Lafourche Parish, Louisiana. Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina.

Guillaume, Gustave. (1919). *Le problème de l'article et sa solution dans la langue française*. Paris: Hachette.

Haase, Albert. (1898). *Syntaxe française du 17e siècle*. Translated by M. Obert. Paris: A. Picard et fils.

Hedberg, Johannes. (1957). A Rouen, en Normandie, en France. *Moderne Språk* 51: 440-442.

Henry, Jacques. (1990). Le français nouveau arrivé? *Gazette de Louisiane* 1 (1): 1, 4-5.

Huguet, Edmond. (1967). *Dictionnaire de la langue française du seizième siècle*. Vol. 7. Paris: M. Didier.

Juneau, Marcel. (1976). *La jument qui crotte de l'argent: conte populaire recueilli aux Grandes-Bergeronnes (Québec)*. Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval.

King, Ruth. (1989). On the social meaning of linguistic variability in language death situations: Variation in Newfoundland French. In Nancy C. Dorian (ed.), *Investigating obsolescence: Studies in language contraction and death*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 139-148.

King, Ruth and Terry Nadasdi. (1994). Sorting out morphosyntactic variation in Acadian French: the importance of the linguistic marketplace. In J. Arnold, R. Blake, B. Davidson, S. Schwenter, and J. Solomon (eds.), *Sociolinguistic variation, data, theory and analysis*. Stanford: Center for the Study of Language and Information, Stanford University. 113-128.

Klingler, Thomas and Amanda LaFleur (dirs.). (2002-). BDLP-Louisiane (base de données lexicographiques panfrancophone). Based on material from the Project LADICO (director Albert Valdman, co-directors Barry Jean Ancelet, Thomas Klingler, Amanda LaFleur, Michael Picone, Kevin Rottet, and D. Ryon). Integrated in the BDLP-International under the direction of Claude Poirier, <http://www.tlfq.ulaval.ca/bdlp/louisiane.asp> (accessed November 7, 2006).

LaFleur, Amanda. (1999). *Tonnerre mes chiens!: A glossary of Louisiana French figures of speech*. Ville Platte, LA: Renouveau Publishing.

LaFleur, Amanda (dir.). (2005). Un glossaire cadien-anglais. A Cajun French-English glossary. Online glossary presented by the Department of French Studies, LSU, [http://appl003.lsu.edu/artsci/frenchweb.nsf/\\$Content/Cajun+French?OpenDocument](http://appl003.lsu.edu/artsci/frenchweb.nsf/$Content/Cajun+French?OpenDocument) (accessed November 7, 2006).

Landreneau, Raymond Lee. (1989). *The Cajun French language*. Atlanta: Chicot Press.

Lavaud-Grassin, Maguy. (1988). Particularités lexicales du parler cadien en Louisiane (États-Unis). 4 vols. Ph.D. diss., Université de Paris Sorbonne Nouvelle (Paris III).

La Follette, James E. (1969). *Étude linguistique de quatre contes folkloriques du Canada français*. Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval.

La Société du parler français au Canada. (1930). *Glossaire du parler français au Canada*. Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval.

Le Bidois, Georges and Robert Le Bidois. (1938). *Syntaxe du français moderne. Ses fondements historiques et psychologiques*. Vol. 2. Paris: A. Picard.

Littré, Emile. (1956-1958). *Dictionnaire de la langue française*. 7 vols. Paris: J.-J. Pauvert. (Orig. pub. 1877. 4 vols. Paris: Hachette)

Martinet, André. (1984). *Grammaire fonctionnelle du français*. 2nd edition. Paris: Didier. (Orig. pub. 1979).

Meyer-Lübke, Wilhelm. (1899). *Grammatik der romanischen Sprachen*. Vol. 3. Leipzig: Fues.

Mougeon, Raymond, Monique Bélanger, Michael Canale, and Steven Ituen. (1977). L'Usage de la préposition "sur" en franco-ontarien. *Canadian Journal of Linguistics* 22: 95-124.

Mougeon, Raymond, Édouard Beniak, and Daniel Valois. (1985). A sociolinguistic study of language contact, shift and change. *Linguistics* 23: 455-487.

Mougeon, Raymond and Édouard Beniak. (1991). *Linguistic consequences of language contact and restriction. The case of French in Ontario, Canada*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mougeon, Raymond and Terry Nadasdi. (1998). Sociolinguistic discontinuity in minority language communities. *Language* 74 (1): 40-55.

Mougeon, Raymond, Terry Nadasdi, and Katherine Rehner. (2005). Contact-induced linguistic innovations on the continuum of language use: The case of French in Ontario. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition* 8 (2): 99-115.

Nisard, Charles. (1872). *Étude sur le langage populaire ou patois de Paris et de sa banlieue*. Paris: A. Franck.

Peronnet, Louise. (1982). Les prépositions dans le parler acadien du Sud-Est du Nouveau Brunswick. *Si que* 5: 57-81.

Peronnet, Louise. (1989). *Le parler acadien du Sud-Est du Nouveau-Brunswick*. New York: P. Lang.

Picone, Michael D. (1997). Code-switching and loss of inflection in Louisiana French. In Cynthia Bernstein, Thomas Nunally and Robin Sabino (eds.), *Language variety in the South revisited*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press. 152-162.

Phillips, Hosea. (1936). *Étude du parler de la paroisse Evangéline (Louisiane)*. Paris: E. Droz.

Plattner, Phillip. (1907). *Ausführliche Grammatik der französischen Sprache*. Vols. 3, 4. Karlsruhe, Germany: Bielefelds Verlag.



Poplack, Shana. (1993). Variation theory and language contact. In Dennis R. Preston (ed.), *American Dialect Research*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: J. Benjamins. 251-286.

Raithel, Georg. (1888). *Über den Gebrauch und die begriffliche Entwicklung der altfranzösischen Präpositionen sor, desor (dedesor), ensor; sus, dessus (dedessus), ensus*. Metz: Lang.

Robert, Paul. (2003). *Le nouveau petit Robert 1. Dictionnaire alphabétique et analogique de la langue française*. Paris: Dictionnaires Le Robert. (Orig. pub. 1967).

Rojas, David, Deborah Piston-Hatlen, Kathryn Propst, Madeleine Gonin, Meei-Yun Tyan, and Tamara Lindner (eds.). (2003). CD-ROM: *À la découverte du français cadien à travers la parole. Discovering Cajun French through the spoken word*. Part of the Louisiana French Dictionary Project directed by Albert Valdman in collaboration with Barry Jean Ancelet, Amanda LaFleur, Michael Picone, Kevin Rottet and Dominique Ryon. Indiana University Creole Institute, Bloomington.

Romaine, Suzanne. (1982). What is a speech community? In Suzanne Romaine (ed.), *Sociolinguistic variation in speech communities*. London: E. Arnold. 13-24.

Rottet, Kevin J. (1995). Language shift and language death in the Cajun French-speaking communities of Terrebonne and Lafourche parishes, Louisiana. Ph.D. diss., Indiana University.

Rottet, Kevin J. (2001). *Language shift in the coastal marshes of Louisiana*. New York: P. Lang.

Rottet, K. (2005). Variation et étiollement en français cadien: perspectives comparées. In Albert Valdman, Julie Auger, and Deborah Piston-Hatlen (eds.), *Le français en Amérique du Nord. État présent*. Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval. 243-260.

Rousseau, Arnaud. (2001). Les Cadjins de la Louisiane, destin d'une communauté francophone des États-Unis. Ph.D. diss., Université de Paris-Sorbonne (Paris IV).

Ruwet, Nicolas. (1982). *Grammaire des insultes et autres études*, 317-340. Paris: Seuil.

Ryan, Robert. (1989). Economie, régularité et différenciation formelles: cas de pronoms personnels sujets acadiens. In Raymond Mugeon and Édouard Beniak (eds.), *Le français canadien parlé hors Québec. Aperçu sociolinguistique*. Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval. 201-212.

Sankoff, David and Suzanne Laberge. (1978). The linguistic market and the statistical explanation of variability. In David Sankoff (ed.) *Linguistic variation. Models and methods*. New York: Academic Press. 239-250.

Silva-Corvalán, Carmen. (1994). *Language contact and change: Spanish in Los Angeles*. Oxford: Clarendon.

Seutin, Émile. (1975). *Description grammaticale du parler de l'Île-aux-Coudres, Québec*. Montréal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal. 201-212.

Spang-Hanssen, Ebbe. (1963). *Les prépositions incolores du français moderne*. Copenhagen: Gad.

Starets, Moshé. (1994). Les prépositions dans, dedans, sur et dessus dans le parler d'élèves franco-ontariens de Windsor, Ontario, Canada. *Langues et Linguistique* 20: 129-151.

Thomason, Sarah Grey and Terrence Kaufman. (1988). *Language contact, creolization, and genetic linguistics*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Togeb, Knud. (1982). *Grammaire française*. Vol. 1. Published by Magnus Berg, Ghani Merad, and Ebbe Spang-Hanssen, Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag.

Togeb, Knud. (1984). *Grammaire française*. Vol. 4. Published by Magnus Berg, Ghani Merad, and Ebbe Spang-Hanssen, Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag.

Valdman, Albert. (1994). Restructuration, fonds dialectal commun et étiolement linguistique dans les parlers vernaculaires français d'Amérique du Nord. In Claude Poirier (ed.), *Langue, espace, société. Les variétés du français en Amérique du Nord*. Sainte-Foy: Presses de l'Université Laval. 3-21.

Waldmann, Alfred. (1906). *Die begriffliche Entwicklung des lateinischen "Super" ("Supra") and "Sursum" im Französischen*. Borna-Leipzig: R. Noske.

Whatley, Randall P. and Harry Jannise. (1978). *Conversational Cajun French*. Baton Rouge: Chicot Press.

Traditional French songtexts, also children's songs, or fishermen's songs:  
Il était un petit navire, accessible for example:  
<http://www.frenchteachers.org/projects/posterguide/chanson.htm>  
[http://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Il\\_%C3%A9tait\\_un\\_petit\\_navire](http://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Il_%C3%A9tait_un_petit_navire) (accessed November 9, 2006).

La belle escale, accessible for example:  
<http://bmarcore.club.fr/marins/M256.html>  
<http://bmarcore.club.fr/marins/index-02.html> (accessed November 9, 2006).

## APPENDIX A: EXAMPLES OF OTHER LOCATIVE CONTEXTS

### INVARIANT LOCATIVE CONTEXTS

Buildings of the type “À St. Joseph”:

*Anyway, il a quand il a changé À LSU, et là, il allait euh je connais pas, c’est en engineering mais je connais pas, c’est pas pétroleum, c’est soit chemical ou mechanical, j’suis pas sûre que engineering qu’il vadait pour, et eum il a changé À LSU (Évelyne – 8: L).*

Anyway, he, when he changed to LSU, and then, he went uh I don’t know, it’s in engineering but I don’t know, it’s not petroluem, it’s either chemical or mechanical, I am not sure that it was engineering he went for, and uhm he changed to LSU.

*Dans décembre, on a euh seize femmes qui est venue un vendredi, on les euh on les a amenées à à Belle Oak, une de les mansions icitte dans Marksville et on les a servi dîner là (Jacques – 22: S).*

In December, we had uh sixteen women who came on a Friday, we uh we brought them to to to Belle Oak, one of the mansions here in Marksville and we served them dinner there.

Islands:

*Un cargo plane, ouais j’va jamais oublier, jusqu’à Hawaï, on a été jusqu’à Hawaï (Joseph – 5: A).*

A cargo plane, yes I’ll never forget, to Hawaii, we went all the way to Hawaii.

*Mais le soir î y a surtout à New Guinea, î y avait ce qu’ils appellent le Cockatoo Bird, des jolis z’oiseaux avec de bec croche qu’a la la crête blanche sur la tête là ça a un cris perçant (Pierre – 11: L).*

But in the evening, there is especially in, in New Guinea, there is what they call the Cockatoo Bird, pretty birds with a hook beak that has the, the white ridge on the head there, it has a piercing cry.

*Et des chemises qu’a pas de manches. Et euh, euh je dis à les enfants, “mais, il croit qu’il est À Bahamas là-bas” (Clarisse – 13: L).*

And shirts that have no sleeves. And uh, uh I say to the children, “but, he believes that he is over there on the Bahamas.”

Territorial surfaces:

*Eh ben, on se levait le matin, on partait euh, euh, lui il partait DANS le champs et moi, moi j’faisais mon ouvrage de maison... et quand le dîner était paré, et ben j’partais avec mes enfants, j’allais DANS les champs ‘mener le dîner, et là j’travaillais tout l’après-midi DANS le champs (Éliza – 3: L).*

Uh well, we got up in the morning, we left uh, uh he went to the field and I, I did the housework... and when dinner was ready, well uh I left with my children, I went to the field to bring dinner, and then I worked all afternoon in the field.

*Il fallait quelqu’un qu’achète du whiskey, la liqueur, et l’apportait à eux-autres, il fallait eusse va boire ça sur eux-autres là, SUR le reservation (Eugène – 18: A).*  
Somebody had to buy whiskey, liquor, and to bring it to them, they had to drink it at their place there, on the reservation.

Borders:

*Ça fait il a descendu SUR le bord du chemin où il a été, il était mort (Anne – 7: A).*

So he went down on the side of the road where he was, he was dead.

*On a donné le nom de Shafty Acres parce que î y avait un bois sur les quarante [arpents; nom d’un canal], droit SUR le bord du canal que le lightning avait tapé (Élodie – 15: L).*

The name Shafty Acres was used because there was a tree along the Forty [Arpent Canal], right on the side of the canal that the lightning had struck.

*Dans ce temps là, on allait là-bas à la Grande Ile, tu pouvais aller te baigner SUR le bord de la mer (Armand – 28: L).*

In those times, we went down there to Grand Isle, you could go swim [sunbathe] on the shore.

Media devices:

*Un chinois qu'était capitaine sur le bateau qu'a monté à terre, là a parlé SUR television (Eugène – 26: A).*

A Chinese who was captain on the boat, who stepped on land, then spoke on television.

*On peut pas dire ça SUR le phone (Anne – 13: A).*

One cannot say that on the phone.

*Alle va guetter les cartoons SUR le Disney Channel ou Nickelodeon ou quelque chose comme ça (Claire – 26: A).*

She will watch the cartoons on the Disney Channel or on Nickelodeon or something like that.

## SMALL LOCATIVE CONTEXTS

Proper name buildings of the type Fred's Lounge:

*On a été au jouer au, euh CHEZ Pat's Lounge <1. Oh ouais>. On a été là, là quand il avait leur Cattle euh Cattle Association j'crois que c'est, euh l'autre bord de, des Opelousas (Ruth – 20: S).*

We went to play at, uh, at Pat's Lounge <1. Oh yes>. We went there, there when they had their Cattle uh Cattle Association I believe that it is, uh on the other side of, of Opelousas.

*Oh non, euh mon mon père avait différents places, tu vois. Il avait aux îles on appelle et et il avait à AU Don's Landing, tu vois. Il avait de la terre là (Louis – 9: V).*

Oh no, uh my my father had several places, you see. He had on the islands, you call it, and and he had at at Don's Landing, you see. He had land there.

*Et là les, les vendredis, on va: euh: À Bourque's Lounge (Ruth – 12: S).*

And then on, on Fridays, we go to: uh: to Bourque's Lounge.

Parishes:

*Oh ouais, j'aime aller où la musique est, et ma femme aime ça aussi, ... elle va à Lafayette, à Breaux Bridge, et euh à, à D.I.'s euh, à Evangeline (Normand – 8: S).*

Oh yes, I like to go where the music is, and my wife likes that too, ...she goes to Lafayette, to Breaux Bridge, and uh to, to D.I.'s uh, in Evangeline.

*Ah ouais, il y en a en masse de ça [gens qui parlent français]. Presque tout chacun <1.Ouais> qu'est DANS les Avoyelles (Étienne – 32: A).*

Oh yeah, there is a lot of them [people who speak French]. Almost everybody <1. Yes> who is in Avoyelles.

Prison:

*Tu devrais voir les, les chèques et tout ça on on voit euh: : À LA prison (Francine – 11: A).*

You should see the, the checks and all that one one sees uh: : in prison.

*Là ils sont venu avec [lui] à la maison, voir si cette cuve était pour lui. I dit “oui c'est pour moi”. Ça fait ils l'ont amené EN prison (Marie – 5: V).*

Then they came with [him] home, to see if this barrel was his. He said “yes, it's mine”. So they took him to prison.

*Et ça qui est triste dans le système aujourd'hui, t'as des prisonniers qui est DANS des plus belles prisons dans le monde (Noël – 24: L).*

And what is sad in this system today, you have prisoners who are in the most beautiful prisons in the world.

Route:

*Mais je crois maman voulait m'mettre SUR le highway là [=que je conduise]. J'aurais mieux marché (Constance – 10: A).*

But I think mother wanted to put me on the highway there [=to drive]. I would have preferred to walk.

*Et mom restait, et notre maison c'était comme un mile de là. SUR l'Old Mansura Road (Constance – 8: A).*

And mom stayed, and our house was like a mile from there. On Old Mansura Road.

*Eusse va faire un chemin, un, un pont! Il va traverser le bayou... Et eusse va, et le chemin va continuer SUR 308. Il va pas continu SUR La 1 (Noël – 19: L).*

They will build a road, a, a bridge! It will cross the bayou... And they will, and the road will continue on 308. It will not continue on La 1.

*Ça fait euh: et là moi, quand moi je m'ai marié, on a été rester À Bluetown Jonathan Road (Georgette – 4: A).*

So uh: and then, when I got married, we stayed on Bluetown Jonathan Road.

*Elle a pas voulu entrer dans le magasin: : elle dit “je lui ai laissé un crack: pour avoir: l'air”: et là DANS la route en revenant: elle dit à sa fille: elle dit “this is an abuse” (Emma – 2: L).*

She didn't want to walk into the store: : she says “I left him a crack: to have: air”, and then on the road on the way back: she says to her daughter: she says “this is an abuse.”

## APPENDIX B: PERMISSION LETTERS

Sibylle Noetzel  
4422 Sweetbriar St.  
Baton Rouge, LA 70808  
Fax Number: (1) (225) 578-6628  
Phone Number: (1) (225) 267-4904

November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006

doi: 10.1017/S136672890500218X

TO:  
Permissions Controller, Cambridge University Press  
The Edinburgh Building, Shaftesbury Road  
Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK  
Fax: +44(0) 1223 315052

I am writing in order to know if permission is needed to reprint a part of the following article, and if so, to request such permission:

Sylvie Dubois, Sibylle Noetzel, Intergenerational pattern of interference and internally-motivated changes in Cajun French, in *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition* 8(2), 2005, 131-143.

I wish to use a substantial part of this article in the following electronic Ph.D. dissertation that I am presently preparing at Louisiana State University, USA:

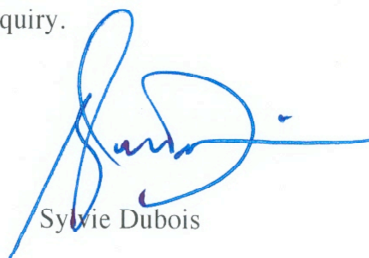
Sibylle Noetzel, Local norms and innovations within the system of locative prepositions in Cajun French, approximately 155 pages.  
Proposed date of publication: May 2007

The first author of the article is my thesis advisor and she has no objections to my use of this material for the Ph.D. thesis.

Thank you for your consideration of this inquiry.

Sincerely,

  
Sibylle Noetzel

  
Sylvie Dubois





CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Sibylle Noetzel  
4422 Sweetbriar Street  
Baton Rouge  
LA 70808  
USA

The Edinburgh Building  
Shaftesbury Road  
Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Telephone +44 (0)1223 312393

Fax +44 (0)1223 315052

Email [information@cambridge.org](mailto:information@cambridge.org)

November 29, 2006

Dear Sibylle Noetzel

Sylvie Dubois, Sibylle Noetzel, Intergenerational pattern of interference and internally-motivated changes in Cajun French, in Bilingualism: Language and Cognition 8(2), 2005, 131-143

Thank you for your recent permission request to include the above extract(s) in:

*Your PH.D dissertation*

Non-exclusive permission is granted free of charge for this specific use on the understanding that you have checked that we do not acknowledge another source for this material.

Please ensure full acknowledgement (author, title, publication date, name of journal and Cambridge University Press).

Yours sincerely

*Sara Payne*

pp Lin Hart  
Senior Publishing Assistant  
email [lhart@cambridge.org](mailto:lhart@cambridge.org)

## VITA

Sibylle Noetzel was born on January 5, 1969, in Geislingen an der Steige, Germany. She went to the local high school and enrolled at the University of Tübingen (Eberhard-Karls-Universität), Germany, in 1989 with a major in French, history, and Italian. In 1991 and 1995, she received the equivalent degree of a Bachelor of Arts (*Zwischenprüfung*) in these areas. During this time, she was awarded a scholarship by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) for a stay at the University of Toulouse (Le Mirail), France.

In 1998, she transferred her graduate studies to Louisiana State University to research the still existing local variety of French. In 2000, she earned a master's degree in French, and continued to study Cajun French in the doctoral program of French studies. Her work as a Research Assistant focused on the creation of a large database of typical oral Cajun French features. She has given several scholarly presentations at national and international conferences on this topic since as part of a research team. One among them was *L'usage des pratiques bilingues dans la communauté cadienne* given at the University of Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada, for which she had received the Alexandre Hoguet Travel Award in 2006. Together with her research team members, she has published several articles on diverse aspects of Cajun French focusing on borrowing, code-switching, phonetic, grammar, and orthography.