The Experiences of and Responses to Linguicism of Quebec English-Speaking and Franco-Ontarian Postsecondary Students

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Abstract

This article explores the experiences of linguicism of Quebec English-speaking and Franco-Ontarian postsecondary students and how they respond to these experiences. Using Goffman's theory of stigma and a qualitative approach, this article presents findings that emerged from interviews conducted between January and June 2014 in Quebec and Ontario. Both Quebec English-speaking and Franco-Ontarian participants report experiences of linguicism, which are fueled by certain stigma theories. Participants in both groups use similar strategies to avoid conflict, but diverge in their attitudes. The findings point to the significance of provincial contexts and the need for further studies about linguicism among official language minorities.

Résumé

Cet article examine les expériences et les réactions des étudiants postsecondaires québécois d'expression anglaise et franco-ontariens face au linguicisme. Cette étude qualitative utilise la théorie de stigmatisation de Goffman pour analyser les données d'un projet de recherche effectué au Québec et en Ontario de janvier à juin 2014. Les participants franco-ontariens et québécois d'expression anglaise ont

rapporté des expériences de linguicisme et leurs propos désignent un certain nombre de théories du stigmate. Les entretiens démontrent que les deux groupes mobilisent des stratégies similaires pour éviter les conflits, mais que leurs attitudes vis-à-vis leur vécu divergent. Les résultats révèlent l'influence du contexte provincial ainsi que la nécessité de compléter des études plus poussées concernant le linguicisme dans les communautés de langue officielle en situation minoritaire.

CANADIAN IDENTITY INCLUDES many important layers: the recognition of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit as the first peoples of this country, official bilingualism including official language minority communities, and multiculturalism with the past and continuing influx of newcomers. The 1969 *Official Languages Act* gave rise to several national transformations and the subsequent 1985 version protects the rights of Canadian official language minorities (Government of Canada 1985). While government initiatives often address policy and institutional concerns, at the microlevel the experiences of linguicism of official language minorities are often overlooked.

The objective of this article is to explore the experiences of linguicism of official language minorities and how they respond to these experiences. The findings illustrate that official language minorities experience linguicism in public spaces despite their official status and that the provincial context shapes these experiences as well as the responses in daily life. This article seeks to build upon literature about official language minorities and linguicism. Linguicism can be defined as "ideologies and structures which are used to legitimate, effectuate and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources (both material and nonmaterial) between groups which are defined on the basis of language" (Skutnabb-Kangas 1988:13).

This article proposes to explore the perspectives of Quebec English-speakers and Franco-Ontarians of their linguistic experiences with a qualitative approach and sociological theoretical concepts. Canadian immigrants' experiences of linguicism have been examined with a sociological lens (Creese 2010; Creese and Kambere 2003). However, official language minorities' intergroup experiences and linguistic behaviors have been examined mostly in psychology and linguistics, with a quantitative approach. For instance, in psychology, previous analyses have focused on the cognitive processes, the loyalties, and the motives of interlocutors (Genesee and Bourhis 1988:229). On the other hand, sociolinguistic analyses have focused on how interlocutors code switch to respect the normative demands of specific settings or cultural contexts (Genesee and Bourhis 1988:229). It is pertinent to acknowledge that several psychological and linguistic quantitative studies over the past four decades have explored the linguistic behaviors of Francophones and Anglophones living in Montreal, and a synthesis of the outcomes can be found for more details (see

Bourhis 2011). This article delves into two provincial contexts that shape English-speaking Quebecer and Franco-Ontarian encounters with linguicism.

PROVINCIAL CONTEXTS

The subjects of this study are official language minorities in Quebec and Ontario, and they correspond to national linguistic minorities, meaning individuals who speak "those languages that are accorded full legal status at the national level" (DeVries 1994:37). The government of Canada designates Francophones outside of Quebec and Quebec English-speakers as "official language communities in minority situation" (Corbeil, Chavez, and Pereira 2010:8; Corbeil and Lafrenière 2010:8). These communities are dispersed in Canada within each province and territory. Quebec English-speakers are mostly concentrated in the Greater Montreal area (80.5 percent; Corbeil et al. 2010), while Franco-Ontarians are more dispersed and can be found in the National Capital Region, in the northeast and southeast of the province, and in the Greater Toronto Area (Office des Affaires Francophones 2012). In this article, Quebec English-speaking and Franco-Ontarian participants' narratives often refer to the current context in Quebec and Ontario. This section briefly highlights key demographic, historical, and judicial developments in both provinces to provide the background of the findings.

To provide portraits of these two communities, here are some key demographic characteristics. The province of Quebec represents 23 percent of the Canadian population, with more than 8 million inhabitants (Institut de la Statistique du Québec 2015:9). Approximately 13.4 percent of the overall Quebec population reported English as their first official language spoken in the 2006 Census (Jedwab 2012:104). Ontario represents 38 percent of the Canadian population with 13 million inhabitants (Ministry of Finance 2015). Francophones have been living in Ontario for over 400 years and, in 2011, 4.3 percent of the Ontario population reported French as their first official language spoken (Corbeil 2012:4). Half of all Francophones living outside of Quebec reside in Ontario (Corbeil 2012:3) and they are dispersed throughout the province (Office des Affaires Francophones 2012). To understand current political and social contexts, a brief overview of the historical origins of these communities is essential.

The French and the English have been referred to as the founding peoples of Canada (Corbeil 2011:32) because they colonized and reproduced their national legal and institutional infrastructure in North America. Nouvelle-France, a colony explored by Jacques Cartier in 1534, was first a trading center between the French and Indigenous peoples and gradually developed into a settlement colony (Frenette 1998). Following England's victory in the Seven Years' War, France ceded its colony of Nouvelle-France in 1763. This turning point marked the beginning of the efforts

of the British to assimilate French Canadians, while French Canadians strove to resist Anglo-conformity (Frenette 1998:45). Tensions and conflicts built over centuries between the two linguistic communities. In 1963, the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism examined the state of bilingualism and biculturalism, and the 1969 *Official Languages Act* established the legal equality of French and English languages, an attempt to reverse the historical inequality between the two linguistic groups (Foucher 2011; Government of Canada 1970).

Due to the dominance of the English in Canada following 1763, Quebec English-speakers and Franco-Ontarians have very different historical trajectories. Anglo-conformity deeply affected the survival of Francophone communities in Ontario, as exemplified in Regulation 17, which restricted instruction in French from 1912 until 1927 (Frenette 1998:44; Mann 2014; Martel 2005:73). Recently, Ontario's prime minister offered an official apology to Franco-Ontarians, recognizing the harms of Regulation 17 that continue to affect today's communities (Office of the Premier 2016). The difference in historical trajectory is also reflected in the extent of institutional completeness of both communities, when communities develop "a more formal structure and contain organizations of various sorts: religious, educational, political, recreational, national and even professional" (Breton 1964:194). While Quebec English-speakers have access to three English-language universities in their province (Bishop's University, Concordia University, and McGill University), Franco-Ontarians have struggled to access university education in French and in bilingual environments. It is only recently, in August 2017, that the provincial government has proposed the creation of the first French-language university in Ontario (Katawazi 2017). The Quiet Revolution (1960 to 1970) did put an end to the control of the economy by an Anglophone elite in Quebec (Zanazanian 2008:112). Combined with the implementation of several language laws in the 1970s to ensure the persistence of French language and culture, the Quebec Anglophone community became a minority (Bourhis and Foucher 2012:14).

While both communities have federal constitutional rights, they evolve within different provincial legislations. The Ontario government introduced the *French Language Services Act* and created the Office of Francophone Affairs in 1986, which defined the rights of Franco-Ontarians to access services in French (Government of Ontario 1990). In July 2017, the Office of Francophone Affairs became the Ministry of Francophone Affairs (Office of the French Language Services Commissioner 2017). The legislation and its infrastructure seek to strengthen Franco-Ontarian communities' linguistic vitality, culture, and development. In contrast, the legislative configuration is very different for Quebec English-speakers, since the provincial government is first and foremost committed to protecting the French language, a minority language in Canada. *The Charter of the French Language*, or Bill 101, increased the status of the French language in Quebec and made French the language of public service delivery,

work, and business (Government of Quebec 1977). Bill 101 established that French is the only official language of the province, and it restricted access to English-language schools to ensure that newcomer children would learn French (Bourhis and Foucher 2012). The contrast between the two judicial contexts relates to the most important difference between the two communities: Quebec Francophones form a "fragile majority" in their province, since they are a majority in their territorial jurisdiction while belonging to a national minority (McAndrew 2010). Quebec English-speakers speak a globalized language, the national majority language, which is the minority language in their province. In contrast, Franco-Ontarians form a minority nationally and provincially. In this context, Quebec English-speakers belong to a majority-minority and Franco-Ontarians to a minority-minority, with very different historical, judicial, and political trajectories.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study adopts a symbolic interactionist approach using the theory of stigma developed by Erving Goffman. While Goffman's approach to stigma has been criticized for overlooking economic, social, and political power (Scambler 2009:450), his theoretical analysis is adequate for the microlevel experiences reported in this study. Goffman (1963) suggested that

> The term stigma, then, will be used to refer to an attribute that is deeply discrediting, but it should be seen that a language of relationships, not attributes, is really needed. An attribute that stigmatizes one type of possessor can confirm the usualness of another, and therefore is neither creditable nor discreditable as a thing in itself. (P. 3)

Following Goffman's (1963) reasoning, it is important to highlight that in this study stigmatization does not originate from an attribute like speaking English or speaking French. Rather, stigmatization stems from the relationship between the linguistic majority and the linguistic minority in each province. The emphasis on the relationship between two social groups in a certain context, rather than a specific attribute, can be juxtaposed with situational stratification (Collins 2000). In his analysis about the macro- and microdimension of inequality, Randall Collins (2000) explains that belonging to a dominant status group in one context does not necessarily translate into power and dominance in every situation encountered. We navigate several social contexts in which power and deference are distributed differently. As the findings will indicate, from one province to another the relationship between the linguistic majority and the linguistic minority shapes the participants' experiences of and responses to linguicism.

Goffman (1963) also discusses how the stigmatization process is made possible with the development of a stigma theory by the members of one

group about members of another group. A stigma theory is an explanation or an ideology that justifies and rationalizes the stigmatization of a social group (Goffman 1963:4). Several stigma theories about official language minorities can be identified in the participants' narratives. While Quebec English-speaking and Franco-Ontarian participants share experiences of stigmatization from the linguistic majority of their respective province, Franco-Ontarian participants experience two additional social processes: in-group stigmatization and linguistic insecurity. There is a wide variety of regional French spoken in Canada (Chevalier 2008) and some forms are considered legitimate because they are characterized as "standard" (Boudreau 2014:180; Leblanc 2010:19; Lozon 2002:63). In-group stigmatization describes situations where Francophones from a majority context (e.g., France, Quebec) deny that some Francophones from a minority context (e.g., Francophones outside of Quebec) speak "proper" French. Linguistic insecurity here refers to the fact that Francophones living in a minority situation can develop a belief that they are not sufficiently competent to speak their mother tongue (or first official language spoken) in comparison to Francophones from a majority context (Fédération de la Jeunesse Franco-Ontarienne 2014; Larouche and Hinch 2012:2; Leblanc 2010:50).

Several coping mechanisms are used by stigmatized individuals to maintain their self-worth. Responses to stigmatization can range from avoidance to confrontation to denial (Lamont and Mizrachi 2012). A stigmatized individual can also resort to "passing" (Goffman 1963:80), a practice that can be found, for example, among some Indigenous Canadians who can pass for white (Denis 2015:232). In this study, Franco-Ontarian and Quebec English-speaking participants who can speak the other official language with a high level of fluency can become inaudible the same way that some racialized individuals can become invisible by passing for a member of the majority. The idea of linguistic passing can be further elaborated with the sociological concepts of code-switching and straddling.

Carter (2006) introduced the idea of "cultural straddling," which refers to the ability of crossing easily between two or more cultural repertoires. In this study, I apply "cultural straddlers" (Carter 2006) to the linguistic realm with the expression "linguistic straddlers." In fact, it was found that in Quebec City many Quebec English-speakers are bicultural and able to navigate different cultural codes (Magnan 2012:20). In *Code of the Street*, Elijah Anderson (1999) applies the concept of code-switching to young African Americans who navigate between the "code of the street" and "decency." Code-switching can take different forms and can be rooted in economic, linguistic, and cultural differences. Canadian studies have examined linguistic code-switching to be common practice among bilingual and multilingual young adults in Montreal (Lamarre 2007:110; Lamarre et al. 2002:50). Linguistic straddlers can engage in code-switching for different purposes. While the focus of code-switching can be studied in relationship to identity, this study explores the code-switching practices of

Franco-Ontarian and Quebec English-speaking linguistic straddlers as a strategy to deflate tense linguistic situations or to avoid linguistic stigmatization altogether. Goffman's (1963) theory of stigma illuminates the centrality of the relationship between two social groups and the stigma theory that emerges to justify stigmatization, while also acknowledging that stigmatized individuals mobilize different strategies to cope and maintain their self-worth.

METHODOLOGY

Although a qualitative research design does not require a representative sample or the ability to generalize the results, in-depth interviewing is suitable for comparisons across contexts (Lamont and Swidler 2014:158) and the study of social mechanisms (Gross 2009). The data are drawn from a comparative exploratory qualitative study of several aspects of the educational experiences of Franco-Ontarian and Quebec English-speaking postsecondary students. Between January and June 2014, semistructured interviews were conducted with 18 Franco-Ontarian and 18 Quebec English-speaking postsecondary students in Montreal, Ottawa, and Toronto. Recruitment was completed using snowball sampling, with participants referring other potential interviewees (Small 2009:14). Montreal, Ottawa, and Toronto were selected as fieldwork locations because of the large proportion of Quebec English-speakers (Corbeil et al. 2010), Franco-Ontarians (Office des Affaires Francophones 2012), and Franco-Ontarian postsecondary students who study in English in these cities, respectively.

To understand the educational pathways of the participants, it is relevant to highlight some characteristics of the Quebec educational system that differ from other provinces. In Quebec, high school ends after secondary 5, the equivalent of grade 11 in other provinces. Following high school, students can attend a Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel, or CEGEP, a postsecondary institution that offers three-year occupational training programs and two-year preuniversity academic programs in Quebec. All the participants were either (1) full-time university, college, or CEGEP students or (2) had graduated within the last 12 months. Table 1 provides a breakdown of some characteristics of the participants: gender, age range, and type of postsecondary education at time of the interview.

As a mode of inquiry, I performed sequential semistructured interviewing, meaning that each interview was treated as a case study and subsequent interviews or case studies were a tentative replica of the previous one (Small 2009:24). The interviews lasted between 40 and 90 minutes in English or in French. I conducted interviews until I reached saturation, meaning until the last case revealed nothing new (Small 2009:25). All the interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded several times, and fictional names are used to maintain the confidentiality of

Table 1

**Breakdown of Participants' Demographic and Educational
Characteristics at Time of Interview**

Characteristics	Franco-Ontarian	Quebec English-speaking
Gender	Women, $N = 9$ Men, $N = 9$	Women, $N = 8$ Men, $N = 10$
Age range	19–26	18–39
Postsecondary level	College, $N = 4$ University, $N = 14$	CEGEP, $N = 8$ University, $N = 10$

participants. Coding and analysis were completed with the qualitative software MAXQDA (VERBI, Berlin, Germany) to organize and categorize the participants' narratives and themes. First, I coded all the transcripts to identify the main themes of the interviews. Second, I recoded the narratives several more times to identify subthemes and conduct an analysis. I translated the interviews of Franco-Ontarian participants from French to English to the best of my abilities. This research project was approved by the McMaster Research Ethics Board.

RESULTS

The findings of this article show that Franco-Ontarian and Quebec English-speaking postsecondary students report experiences of linguicism. A majority of Quebec English-speaking participants reported experiences of linguicism from the Francophone majority in Quebec, and some also witnessed linguicism. Similarly, a majority of Franco-Ontarian participants reported experiences of linguicism, and some reported that they witnessed linguicism. Franco-Ontarian participants experience linguicism in relation to the Anglophone majority in Ontario and Francophones who live in a majority linguistic context like France or Quebec. The analysis indicates the following:

1. Quebec English-speaking and Franco-Ontarian participants' narratives suggest that their experiences of linguicism are associated to specific stigma theories.
2. Participants in both groups are linguistic straddlers who cope with these experiences by code-switching to deflate and avoid tense or conflictual situations. If they are very fluent, they attempt to pass as members of the linguistic majority.

3. Quebec English-speaking participants respond with ambivalence to
    linguicism while Franco-Ontarian participants respond with pride
    in their heritage.

Quebec English-Speaking Participants' Experiences of Linguicism

Quebec English-speaking participants reported that their experiences of
linguicism often convey the message that they are not legitimate mem-
bers of Quebec society. Matilda is a Quebec English-speaking undergrad-
uate student at an English-language university. She attended an English-
language public school outside of the Greater Montreal area with a large
proportion of Francophone students. Her classmates knew that she was not
Francophone. Having English as a first language, even if she spoke French,
she reported that she was treated as an "Anglophone other" (Zanaza-
nian 2014:29). This expression reflects the idea that, due to past unequal
power relations between Anglophones and Francophones, Quebec English-
speakers today are sometimes considered outsiders. A teacher and fellow
students in French classes encouraged her to "go back" to Ontario. This
example illustrates that a stigma theory held by some members of the
Quebec linguistic majority is that individuals who have English as a first
language do not belong in Quebec.

> Our French teacher would actually make fun of us and would pick on us. Kids
> would make fun of us. They would tell us to go back to Ontario. There was
> a sense of, even though we were born here, it was sort of annoying for them
> that we were born here. (Matilda)

Although there is an established historical English-speaking commu-
nity in the province (Gosselin and Pichette 2014; Magnan 2008), several
participants revealed that they are not always perceived as part of the
Quebec "we." This supports findings from another study where Quebec
English-speaking high school students reported that they were regarded
as the "other" (Gérin-Lajoie 2014:478). Conscious that in many social sit-
uations it is evident that he is an English speaker, Edward, a student at
an English-language CEGEP, associates the animosity of some individuals
toward him with the lack of acknowledgment that he is a "true Quebecer."

> Well, I guess the people who are acting this way towards me view me as not
> a true Quebecer or something like that. (Edward)

For some French-speaking Quebecers, a "true Quebecer" speaks
French in public spaces, even when there is no service delivery or work
involved. This stigma theory rationalizes the stigmatization of Quebec
English-speakers even if they are bilingual. For instance, William, an un-
dergraduate student at an English-language university, reports that once,
at a staff party held at his manager's house, a colleague required him to

demonstrate that he was fluent in French. While the restaurant where he was employed serves clients in English and in French, during the staff party, William and his colleague were not working; they were attending a Canada Day party at a private house. Therefore, William spoke English with his colleagues and did not expect any incident.

> One of the waiters I worked with had a conversation with me, saying that I needed to prove to him right now that I can speak French. And he said that he was offended that I speak English and whatever. (William)

To prove that he belongs, William was asked to speak French publically in a somewhat stressful situation, since French is not his mother tongue. William does speak French but he was deeply hurt by this public request. Nagel (1995) suggests that competition for resources can exacerbate prejudice and William's experience demonstrates that the primacy of the French language in public spaces is considered a precious resource in Quebec. Indeed, some Francophones continue to perceive English as a threat to the French language in the province (Bourhis 2012b:28). Yet Quebec English-speakers are increasingly enrolled in bilingual programs to learn French at an early age (Lamarre et al. 2002:52), and 82.5 percent of young Quebec English-speakers under 24 are bilingual (Canadian Heritage 2011:5). Unfortunately, the efforts of Quebec English-speakers to speak French are not always acknowledged or appreciated, as Elizabeth, a student at an English-language CEGEP, reports. The Association pour une solidarité syndicale étudiante (ASSÉ) is a Quebec student association with several CEGEP and university members. Although her CEGEP is not a member of this association, Elizabeth decided to attend a feminist workshop of L'ASSÉ in order to share ideas about women's issues. Her accent was mocked when she introduced herself in French.

> I got upset. I was pretty angry. [...] So we were just in a circle discussing things and we were going to say all our names just to make it easier to discuss things. And when I talked, I spoke in French, obviously with an accent. And after I finished talking, I said everything. I communicated fine and then this person was like, "Oh you know, if you want us to speak in English, we can translate for you." And it was just very belittling. (Elizabeth)

Elizabeth's experience indicates that the stigma theory of belonging in Quebec requires more than speaking French in public settings—it requires a high level of fluency in French. Overall, the stigma theories that emerge from these narratives include: (1) Quebec English-speakers are "Anglophone others"; (2) if they speak French, they ought to display a high level of fluency; and (3) they embody the threat of English to the French language in Quebec. These stigma theories point to the significance of Quebec's history and of the contemporary sociopolitical context in the stigmatization process. The past unequal power relations between Anglophones and

Francophones and the survival of French language and culture in North America can be found in the narratives of the participants.

Franco-Ontarian Participants' Experiences of Linguicism

Franco-Ontarian postsecondary students also reported experiences of linguicism from the linguistic majority of their province. Like Quebec English-speaking participants, some Franco-Ontarian participants reported that they have been teased or mocked because they speak French or have an accent when they speak English in public. Marguerite, an undergraduate student who studies in French at a bilingual university, reported that she continues to be called names by English-speaking Ontarians, particularly in bars when alcohol is served. She also expresses that these experiences can bring about thoughts about the choice of assimilation.

> I am going to be called *the frenchie* and *the frog.* [. . .] To give up, I think that we always have this choice. I think that because I am stubborn, because I learned English late, I think that all this makes me care about my French language even more. (Marguerite)

Robert's story illustrates how some detractors of official bilingualism can react negatively when Francophones speak French in Ontario public spaces. Robert, a recent graduate from a bilingual university, shared a story that illustrates the stigma theory that only English should be spoken in public spaces in Ontario. While Matilda was told to "go back to Ontario," Robert was advised to "move to Quebec" during an incident on public transit.

> We were on the bus. We were speaking in French. There was a guy behind us. This was when they started in OC Transpo buses to orally announce the stops. Obviously, they do it in English and in French. And the guy behind us knew that we were speaking French loud. And then when they announced the stop in French, he started a *rant*, to say how it was a waste of money, how Francophones should just move to Quebec. (Robert)

Robert's experience reflects the stigma theory that, even in conversations between friends, Franco-Ontarians are expected to speak English in public spaces and that bilingual public services constitute a financial burden or a "waste of money." Franco-Ontarians' experiences of linguicism are not limited to Ontario Anglophones, the linguistic majority of their province and an out-group. They also experience in-group linguicism with other members of the Francophone world, or *francophonie*, particularly Francophones from a linguistic majority context such as Quebec or France. In contrast, in this study, Quebec English-speaking participants did not report stigmatization experiences from English speakers from other provinces or countries.

Charles, a student at a bilingual university, reports an experience that reflects how Franco-Ontarians can find themselves torn between in-group (other Francophones) and out-group (from the Ontario English-speaking majority) stigmatization. Charles does not feel that he is fully understood or respected by Ontario English-speakers who want him to assimilate, or by Quebec Francophones and French nationals who sometimes deny that he is a legitimate Francophone.

> There are Anglophones who wish a little to assimilate the French [...] But there is also the other side. I do not find myself accepted by Quebecers or the French (France) because of my accent, and I am not at the same level. (Charles)

On one hand, some English-speaking Ontarians would prefer assimilation to the continued existence of Francophone minority communities. On the other hand, the experience of Charles illustrates the stigma theory that legitimate Francophones are those who conform to the way Francophones from linguistic majority contexts speak. This stigma theory derives from the idea that there is an implicit hierarchy and that some varieties of spoken French are less legitimate than others. A lack of knowledge and understanding of the different historical trajectories of Francophone minorities certainly feeds this stigmatization. This is why Charles's experience also resonates with the fact that French Canadians used to see themselves as one community, until the 1950s when a fragmentation occurred (Dupuis 2013). This *cassure* (Castonguay 2005) has contributed to the emergence of multiple Francophone identities (Juteau 1994) and some distance between these communities.

Emma, an undergraduate student at a French-language university, hypothesizes that some Quebecers do not recognize Francophones outside of Quebec as legitimate Francophones because of their poor knowledge of Francophone communities outside of Quebec. She suggests that the current Quebec education curriculum minimizes or ignores the historical and contemporary experiences of French Canadians and Acadians. Emma visits Quebec regularly and has been told that she is an Anglophone. She prefers to scoff, rather than be upset, when some Quebecers characterize her as an Anglophone who learned French.

> Oh! In Quebec, they think that I am an Anglophone. But what do you want? [Laughs] We know that since the end of the eighties and the beginning of the nineties, the Quebec educational model is closed to the rest of Canada. They don't learn about the different Francophone communities outside of Quebec in Canada. (Emma)

Along with a lack of historical knowledge, participants identified a lack of acknowledgment of the wide variety of French spoken from Acadie to British Columbia (Chevalier 2008) by Francophones from majority

contexts such as Quebec and France. Hugues, a Franco-Ontarian under-graduate student at an English-language university, has experienced first-hand this lack of acknowledgment. Hugues and two friends were irritated by the fact that, during a short trip in Montreal, a Francophone clerk in a store assumed that they were English-speaking because of their accents. According to Hugues, it was clear to him that the store clerk was a Fran-cophone who was not really fluent in English. Yet he and his friends had to insist to be assisted in French.

> So, we said hello in French, she responded in English, and we continued in French, and she said, "No it's okay, I can accommodate you," but I am with my friend who does not speak English. So then my friend is like, "No, it's my accent, it's an accent that I have, you know, I am from Ontario, and I may have an Anglophone accent, but I can still speak in French, I can express myself, especially because I can't speak in English. So please, help me in French." (Hugues)

Eventually, the store clerk spoke in French. Unfortunately, in-group stigmatization within the *francophonie* fuels linguistic insecurity, which in turn can contribute to assimilation (Larouche and Hinch 2012:2). Franco-Ontarian postsecondary student narratives indicate that their experiences of linguicism are rationalized with two stigma theories. The first stigma theory expressed by some Ontario English-speakers suggests that (1) they should speak English in public spaces and (2) that official bilingualism is an economic burden. The second stigma theory espoused by some Franco-phones from a linguistic majority context implies that they are not legit-imate Francophones because of the variation of French that they speak. While Quebec English-speaking and Franco-Ontarian postsecondary stu-dents report experiences of linguicism, they attempt to maintain their self-worth by code-switching. If they are remarkably fluent, they attempt to pass linguistically for members of the majority.

Code-Switching and the Ambivalence of Quebec English-Speaking Participants

Both Quebec English-speaking and Franco-Ontarian postsecondary stu-dents can be characterized as linguistic straddlers who code-switch regu-larly in the public sphere. Avoiding discomfort or overt conflict is a common response to stigmatization (Fleming, Lamont, and Welburn 2012). Code-switching to French is a way to be recognized as a member of Quebec society. This practice of code-switching is prevalent among this study's participants. Young Franco-Ontarian and Quebec English-speaking par-ticipants navigate everyday life as linguistic straddlers. Anne is a student at an English-language CEGEP and she code-switches to avoid confronta-tion, like the vast majority of Quebec English-speaking participants.

> And then I will adjust because I am not a confrontational person so I am not going to argue and say, "Speak to me in English." (Anne)

In order to avoid stigmatization, participants switch from English to French depending on the circumstances. This finding supports the observations of a previous qualitative study that examined identity processes among Quebec City English-speaking youth. It was found that circumstantial code-switching was used as camouflage to avoid conflicts and discomfort (Magnan 2012:26). John is a graduate student at a French-language university who has lived in Montreal and Quebec City. He is familiar with the linguistic environments of different neighborhoods in Montreal and Quebec City. His comments about Montreal illustrate how stigmatization is context-dependent and how differential treatment can take place if someone is believed to not be proficient in French.

> Depends on the neighbourhood. In this area I will speak in French. You listen to the language around you. My default is to speak French. But if I'm around Concordia University or NDG I will sometimes speak both. (John)

It can be challenging for a Quebec English-speaking postsecondary student to achieve such a high degree of fluency in French that they become inaudible and pass as a member of the majority in a crowd. Yet several participants in this study have done so. Gloria, a Vanier College student, speaks French, English, and a third language fluently. Her comment reveals that, despite the fact that a multilingual linguistic straddler like her can speak French and English fluently, some Francophones perceive code-switching negatively because of a zero-sum view of bilingualism in Montreal (Bourhis 2012a:21). Nevertheless, Gloria believes that bilingualism is not only a site of political struggle—it is also a valuable skill.

> But there is some discrimination against bilinguals. Because people who are very strong with the French are like, "Oh you're giving in to the English. You're giving into the Anglophones, why are you changing for them? This is Quebec, we're Francophones." Being bilingual isn't a bad thing, it's actually an ability. (Gloria)

In the media, French-language activists, separatist party militants, and some academics (Bourhis and Landry 2012:28) express fear that French is regressing in the province, especially in Montreal. This fear is presented with a "zero-sum" perspective, meaning that any perceived gain of one linguistic group results in a loss for the other linguistic group, and vice versa (Bourhis 2012a:21). This ideology reinforces an antagonistic "us versus them" relationship between the English and the French (Gosselin and Pichette 2014:14), deeply embedded in Quebec's historical consciousness (Zanazanian 2008:126). For some, a bilingual individual who can speak English can become a symbol of the regression of French in the province or of a slippery slope toward assimilation.

In the face of stigmatization, the majority of Quebec English-speaking postsecondary students code-switch and display an ambivalent attitude. The fact that history teachers in English-language schools tend to present Quebec Francophones' historical experiences empathetically (Zanazanian 2008:124) may partially explain this ambivalence. For example, Henry has experienced stigmatization, but he can still contextualize Quebec's unique situation in North America. Like other Quebec English-speaking participants in this study, Henry is conscious that the French language is fragile in North America (McAndrew 2010). Furthermore, several participants expressed that they love Quebec culture, that they want to continue to improve their French language skills, and that they want to belong. Magnan (2008) also found in her study that some Quebec English-speakers strongly identify with Quebec because of their historical roots in the province. A large proportion of Quebec English-speakers who live in Quebec today understand the relevance of Bill 101 and why it is important to protect the French language. Henry, a McGill University graduate student, expresses this idea clearly.

> I try to see it from the point of view of where the person is coming from. And more often than not, it's coming from a place where maybe they are scared. I really have a lot of empathy for Francophones in Quebec. They are in an island surrounded by an English population surrounded by an even bigger English population to the south and the culture that comes out of the United States and from the English part of Canada, is very very powerful. [. . .] So when you're in Quebec, it's protecting itself from Canada, Canadian English influence, and from American English influence. And so I can empathize a lot with people when they want to protect their heritage and they see people speaking English in what they might think is their home. People are protective of that. (Henry)

In response to stigmatization, Quebec English-speaking participants code-switch from English to French frequently and many aspire to improve their French language skills to become inaudible and pass linguistically. They also display an ambivalent attitude when they are stigmatized because they understand that the negative response is triggered by the fragility of the French language in Canada. Simultaneously, they also aspire to be accepted socially as legitimate Quebecers.

Code-Switching and the Pride of Franco-Ontarian Participants

Franco-Ontarian participants' attitudes diverge greatly from Quebec English-speaking participants. Franco-Ontarian postsecondary students tend to reassert with pride their historical, social, and political Franco-Ontarian heritage, with a few exceptions. Like his Quebec English-speaking counterparts, Raoul, an undergraduate student at a

French-language university, code-switches to pass as an English speaker because of his fluency in English, depending on the circumstances.

> No, because I have always had a good command of English and I haven't felt threatened. Once again, depending on the region, if I was in Ottawa, I would speak in English. (Raoul)

While Franco-Ontarian participants code-switch, they remain proud of their heritage. Béatrice is an undergraduate student at a French-language university. Béatrice states that linguicism increases her desire to be proud of her heritage and that she turns the negative experience into a positive one.

> I think that it gives you even more the desire to be proud and speak both languages and be Francophone in Ontario. So, I think that it adds fuel to the fire and gives me more strength, you know, to be able to do it even if you don't believe in us. Even if we are a minority, we still have a voice, we are still strong and we are still here. So, I take the negative and I turn it into positive. (Béatrice)

There is a contrast here with the attitude of Quebec English-speakers because English in Ontario is not a minority language in Canada or North America. In this context, Thierry, an undergraduate student at a bilingual university, suggests that linguicism strengthens the Franco-Ontarian identity and collective consciousness.

> It is certain that each time there is an event like that: some arrogance from a unilingual Anglophone, which is what it is, it reinforces Franco-Ontarians' conviction. [. . .] It contributes to shape the Franco-Ontarian identity. (Thierry)

Regardless of linguicism and official bilingualism detractors, Constance, a college student at a French-language institution, finds herself strengthened in her desire to continue to mobilize to have her linguistic rights recognized and respected.

> But me, I am a person who struggles. So, it just gave me another reason to continue to fight, I would say. It has not necessarily brought me down. (Constance)

Like Quebec English-speaking participants, Franco-Ontarian participants are linguistic straddlers and code-switch to deflate tense interactions and avoid linguicism. However, contrary to Quebec English-speakers, Franco-Ontarian participants do not feel ambivalent toward their linguistic identity: they display pride in their heritage and are emboldened to further struggle for the recognition of their linguistic rights. To maintain their self-worth and dignity when they experience linguicism or a potential conflict related to language, Quebec English-speaking and Franco-Ontarian

postsecondary students code-switch, but Quebec English-speaking participants are ambivalent linguistic straddlers while Franco-Ontarian participants are generally proud and assertive about their linguistic identity.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that in sociology we can grasp a different aspect of Canadian society by examining the linguicism experiences of official language minorities. Several stigma theories, which reflect certain beliefs and attitudes toward official bilingualism, can be brought to light by examining the microsocial experiences of official language minorities. Yet their linguicism experiences have been given less attention compared to Canadian immigrant and refugee experiences of linguicism (Creese 2010; Creese and Kambere 2003). Will Kymlicka (2012) suggests that Canada can do better to enhance the recognition, the collective rights, and the political autonomy of official language minority communities. The findings of this study support his observation. Participants in both communities reported experiences of linguicism because they spoke in the second official language of their province in public spaces.

Quebec English-speaking participants experience stigma in relationship with Quebec Francophones. Despite the high rate of bilingualism among contemporary young Quebec English-speakers (Canadian Heritage 2011), linguicism conveys the idea that they are not part of the "we" of Quebec society, but that they are "Anglophone others" who do not belong. Quebec Francophones do belong to a national minority with a legitimate concern for the continuity of French language and cultural heritage. Yet, in due time, it could be appropriate to create opportunities for meaningful dialogues between young Quebec English-speakers and young Quebec Francophones, with a central question: Can today's young Quebec English-speakers, who aspire to improve their fluency in French and are attached to Quebec society and the French language, be recognized as legitimate members of Quebec society? There has been a generational change in the attitudes of young Quebec English-speakers, and the majority of them now learn French and embrace Quebec's culture (Magnan 2008). Yet the linguicism experiences reported by Quebec English-speaking participants indicate that some members of the Francophone majority are not aware of this shift, and that the fact that they belong to the national linguistic majority remains salient in the collective memory.

Despite official bilingualism and the *French Language Services Act*, Franco-Ontarian participants experience stigma in relationship to Ontario Anglophones and Francophones from linguistic majority contexts. Stigmatization from other Francophones can affect sentiments of linguistic insecurity from Franco-Ontarian participants. Unfortunately, the lack of confidence in their personal ability to speak French may discourage members of Francophone minority communities from speaking French out

of fear of judgment. Curtailing the use of French further marginalizes this national and provincial minority even if there are overt efforts to maintain and reproduce Franco-Ontarian culture. There is an apparent need to raise awareness about the diversity of French spoken in Canada, and the diversity of French Canadian and Acadian communities, to foster linguistic inclusion and acceptance within the *francophonie*.

This study also highlights how stigmatization is first and foremost a context-dependent relational phenomenon, where an attribute can be discredited in one context and be rewarded in another. The findings support Collins' (2000) theory of situational stratification, which recognizes that dominance varies according to social context and circumstances. It is possible to argue that when Quebec English-speakers emigrate provincially they move away from stigmatization because a different provincial context results in different linguistic relationships. Moreover, Carter (2006) coined the concept of cultural straddlers to characterize participants in her study who had the ability to mobilize different cultural repertoires depending on the situation. In this study, Franco-Ontarian and Quebec English-speaking participants can be described as linguistic straddlers who code-switch from one official language to another. Anderson (1999) uses the concept of code-switching to describe the ability of neighborhood residents to cross from a "decent" mode to a "street" mode. In this study, participants code-switch from English to French and French to English with various degrees of fluency. Participants who are singularly fluent in the language of the provincial majority can even linguistically pass and become inaudible. If, in other studies, code-switching reflects an individual's multilingualism (Lamarre et al. 2002), in this article code-switching is used to avoid or deflect linguistic conflicts and tensions.

The participants' narratives show that, despite having federal constitutional linguistic rights, Franco-Ontarians and Quebec English-speakers are stigmatized and experience linguicism in different provincial contexts. Franco-Ontarians also experience in-group stigmatization, which can engender linguistic insecurity. The stigma theory that affects Quebec English-speaking participants in relationship to some Quebec Francophones involves the idea that a legitimate member of Quebec society speaks French with a high level of fluency in public spaces, even when it is not for service delivery or employment. Otherwise, speaking English in public spaces, even on a casual basis with friends, can be perceived as a threat to the survival of the French language in Quebec. Let us remember that the *Charter of the French Language* does not apply to casual conversations in public spaces with friends, but instead to language in the workplace, service delivery, or business. The stigma theory that underlies Franco-Ontarian participants' experiences of linguicism in relationship to Ontario Anglophones maintains that they should speak English in public and that official bilingualism represents an economic burden. The stigma theory that rationalizes the in-group stigmatization experienced

by Franco-Ontarian participants in relationship with Francophones from linguistic majority contexts has to do with the lack of recognition of the legitimacy of their variety of French.

Most participants in both groups are linguistic straddlers who code-switch according to the circumstances. While participants in both groups code-switch to deflate conflicts and avoid stigmatization, they have developed diverging attitudes. Conscious that Anglophones treated Francophones unfairly in the past and that French is a national minority language, a majority of Quebec English-speaking participants expressed ambivalence about their linguicism experiences. On the other hand, experiences of linguicism reinforce Franco-Ontarian participants' pride and fuel their commitment to struggle for their linguistic rights.

The results of this exploratory qualitative study with postsecondary students cannot be generalized to all official language minority young adults. However, the results offer a glimpse into microlevel processes of linguicism and the significance of provincial context. One potential direction for future research would be to conduct a quantitative study of the prevalence of linguicism among official language minorities while assessing the different stigma theories and attitudes toward official bilingualism in the general population. Another possibility for future research is the inclusion of questions about perceptions of belonging and sentiments of linguistic insecurity among different official language minority communities. Finally, future research projects can also document the wide range of individual and collective strategies mobilized by official language minorities in different provinces to cope with linguicism.

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