Sociolinguistic variation in advanced long-residency L2 French users

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In the literature on sociolinguistic variation in L2 French, we find mainly variationist accounts of advanced university students’ mastery (or lack thereof) of several well-known features in spoken French such as ne deletion, Tu/Vous, and Nous/On (e.g. Howard et al 2013). However, the field has rarely dealt with advanced long-residency L2 users, except for Donaldson (2011, 2015), also focusing on French. It seems plausible that these participants, which are more socially and culturally integrated, would shed new light on the findings as regards the acquisition of sociolinguistic competence and more generally on the debate regarding adult learners’ possibilities to become nativelike.

To fill this gap, we propose a study of the variation in spoken L2 French in two different communicative tasks, defined according to Koch & Oesterreicher’s continuum (2001), i.e. a Life story interview and an on-line role-play. Participants are 10 NNS with a LOR in France of at least 5 years and 10 matched NS:

Specifically, we will examine the use of five known parameters of sociolinguistic variation in French: ne deletion, Tu/Vous, Nous/On, Object drop and colloquial vocabulary. The parameters will be studied quantitatively, but qualitative, contextual use of the negation and Nous/On will also be accounted for.


Keywords: variation, nativelikeness, French, sociolinguistics.