

# ACADIAN FRENCH AND LINGUISTIC THEORY<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

*This article identifies some profitable areas of research for Acadian linguistics, in particular, research in sociolinguistics and in grammatical theory. The value of Acadian French data for the testing of theories of language change and for the study of syntactic variation within generative grammar is explored.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Interest in Acadian French has grown tremendously over the past two decades, and with it, there has been a dramatic increase in articles and monographs on linguistic aspects of these varieties. While the first publication on Acadian French, Pascal Poirier's 'La langue acadienne', appeared in 1884, most publications are considerably more recent. The great majority of the 430 entries in Edward Gesner's 1986 *Bibliographie annotée de linguistique acadienne* are post-1960 and 65 date from the period 1980-85. In the bibliography, the varieties of Acadian French spoken in all four Atlantic provinces and in Louisiana are well represented.<sup>2</sup> Descriptive studies of phonology and vocabulary are especially prominent, understandably so since these are the foci of traditional dialectology. There are also a significant number of morphological studies, as might be expected since most comparative work on Acadian compares it with standard French and Acadian varieties differ considerably from standard French in verb morphology.

Obviously documentation of present-day Acadian varieties is both necessary and important, as evidenced by the continuing value to modern researchers of landmark works such as Geneviève Massignon's 1962 *Les parlers français de l'Acadie*, a (principally) lexical study based on fieldwork conducted in the mid-1940s. However, in this article I will focus not on the significance of such documentation for the historical record, but on how research on Acadian French may also be important in the development of linguistic theory, specifically sociolinguistic theory and grammatical theory.<sup>3</sup> In the case of sociolinguistic theory, Acadian communities are quite different from the ones usually investigated by variationists: they are bilingual and they typically do not exhibit the sort of social stratification found, say, in New York City or Norwich. By studying how and by whom linguistic change is implemented in such communities we are able to study the extent to which the Labovian model can account for linguistic innovation and for the diffusion of linguistic change. With respect to grammatical theory, the grammars of varieties of Acadian, while in many respects quite similar, differ from those of other

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<sup>2</sup> Acadian French refers to varieties of French spoken in North America (principally in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island in Canada and in Louisiana in the United States) which have their origin in the 'centre-ouest' of France.

<sup>3</sup> I will be concerned here with Atlantic Canada Acadian French; for more on the sociolinguistics of Louisiana varieties, see Brown (1988); for more on Louisiana French and grammatical theory, see Brown (1986).

varieties of French in nontrivial ways. Therefore, they may provide important data for the study of parametric variation.

## 2. SOCIOLINGUISTIC THEORY

It is sometimes remarked that Canadian French is one of the world's language varieties most studied by sociolinguists. Most notably, there have been the pioneering Montreal French studies begun two decades ago by Henrietta Cedergren and Gillian Sankoff and the continuing work on the Cedergren-Sankoff corpus and on more recent Montreal corpora by Cedergren, David Sankoff, Pierrette Thibault and their associates, along with the studies of Ontario French undertaken over the past fifteen years by Raymond Mougéon and his associates, and the investigations of the French spoken in Ottawa-Hull by Shana Poplack and her associates, beginning in the early 1980s.

Over the last decade, sociolinguistic studies of Acadian varieties spoken in all four Atlantic Provinces have also been undertaken (cf. Flikeid 1984 for northeastern New Brunswick, King 1983 for Newfoundland varieties, King and Ryan 1988 for Prince Edward Island varieties, Flikeid 1989 for Nova Scotia varieties). As we might expect, the Acadian studies reveal complex, but structured, organization of linguistic variation, or as Labov has termed it, orderly heterogeneity. They reveal as well tension between maintenance of Acadian linguistic features (carriers of Acadian identity) and linguistic change in the direction of community-external standards. For instance, in her northeastern New Brunswick study, Flikeid (1984) found evidence of style shifting on the part of younger speakers in the direction of less use of certain well-known phonological features of Acadian, such as palatalized variants of /k/ and /g/, but widespread use (across age groups) of certain other features, such as the fronting of low back nasal vowels in stressed, open syllables.

A principal finding of Labov and his followers has to do with linguistic changes in progress: change begins with working or lower middle class speakers and then spreads to other social groups (cf. Labov 1966, 1980; Labov, Yaeger and Steiner 1972).<sup>4</sup> In his classic New York City study, Labov (1966) developed what has become the standard methodology for sociolinguistic studies: informants are ranked on a social class index based on a number of socioeconomic factors and are then divided into social class groupings on the basis of their SEC scores. Such stratification studies have been conducted in a large number of urban contexts, from Philadelphia to Sydney, Australia to Panama City to St. John's, with considerable success.

Sociolinguistic studies of Acadian varieties have found the interrelated factors of age, level of education, and level of bilingualism to be the more important social factors in the analysis of linguistic variation and change (cf. Flikeid 1984, King 1983). In general younger, more bilingual, better educated (in French) Acadians speak less conservative Acadian French. For example, in one case of change in progress in the direction of the external standard, the spread of the [w] variant of orthographic *-oi-* in northeastern New Brunswick, Flikeid (1984) found that age is by far the most important social factor, with younger speakers leading the

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<sup>4</sup> Labov (1966) develops a curvilinear model of social diffusion of linguistic change wherein the working and lower-middle classes are the innovators. However, Kroch (1978) argues for a linear model in which the dominant force is the upper class's resistance to such innovations. For discussion, and an attempt to reconcile the two approaches, see Guy (1988).

While he has in the past rejected the possibility of rapid and sweeping linguistic change, Labov (1991) admits to the possibility of such change but only in face of 'catastrophic social events'. (p. 245, my emphasis).

change. These results are what we might expect since the small communities studied intensively display little social stratification among their francophone inhabitants.

This is not to say that socioeconomic factors are never found to be significant. In one small community currently under study, Abram-Village in Prince Edward Island, the notion of the linguistic marketplace, i.e., of 'how speakers' economic activity, taken in its widest sense, requires or is necessarily associated with competence in the legitimized language' (Sankoff and Laberge 1978: 239), has been found to be of some importance. My account of one case of linguistic variation in Abram-Village (cf. King 1991a), i.e., variation in the use of the well-integrated English lexical borrowing *back*, is in terms of marketplace ranking. In this specific case there is a negative correlation between use of *back* and higher marketplace ranking.

However, Mougeon and Beniak's studies of a number of francophone communities in Ontario lead them to suggest that, in the case of linguistic change in minority languages, change may not 'proceed in the way described by Labov for monolingual communities, that is, via the introduction of an innovation by an individual speaker or by a small group of speakers belonging to a particular social class, and its subsequent propagation to other speakers of the same class and eventual adoption by speakers of other classes' (Mougeon and Beniak 1991a: 13). The five Ontario communities they have studied in detail, i.e., Hawkesbury, Cornwall, North Bay, Pembroke and Welland, all display social class variation. In their 1991 book they report that in only one case among the many linguistic variables they have investigated is there anything but a loose connection with social class. Rather degree of minority-language-use restriction and level of bilingualism are the key factors.<sup>5</sup>

Acadian communities are another important testing ground for Mougeon and Beniak's hypothesis that linguistic innovation may involve the autonomous behaviour of one or more speakers. The study of Acadian varieties, including those spoken in areas in which there is clear social stratification (e.g., in urban centres such as Moncton<sup>6</sup>), in areas in which there is social differentiation not readily correlated with socioeconomic factors (e.g., in areas such as Baie Sainte-Marie in Nova Scotia) and in small, relatively homogeneous villages (e.g., in L'Anse-à-Canards in Newfoundland or in Chéticamp in Nova Scotia), allows us to investigate further Mougeon and Beniak's hypothesis. Of course, as Flikeid (1988: 196) points out, this is not an easy undertaking, since 'découvrir les dimensions pertinentes de la structure sociale existante exige des recherches sociologiques, une connaissance intime du milieu et aussi de l'innovation dans les techniques sociolinguistiques utilisés', but it is nevertheless an important one.

The considerable variation, in terms of length and degree of language contact, among Acadian communities in the Atlantic provinces allows us to investigate the effects of degree of language restriction on linguistic variation and change. In Abram-Village, for instance, over 90% of the inhabitants are French-speaking and there is longstanding stable bilingualism, whereas in the other Prince Edward Island community currently under study, Saint-Louis, fewer than 30% of the population now speak French and there is fairly well-advanced language

<sup>5</sup> Mougeon and Beniak (1991b) presents an elaboration of their theory of the relationship of social class, minority-language-use restriction and level of bilingualism.

<sup>6</sup> Roy (1979) is a sociolinguistic study of the use of *but* and *so* in the French of Moncton, a city of approximately 55,000 people at the time of the study, of whom fully a third were francophone. However, limitations on the size of the study made it possible for her to investigate the speech of only one social group, blue-collar workers. Likewise McKillop's 1987 study of the French spoken in Edmunston did not investigate the possible effects of social class on linguistic variation and change.

shift.<sup>7</sup> Patterns of variation for the above-mentioned case of lexical borrowing were found to have a different sociolinguistic explanation in each community: the linguistic marketplace was useful in Abram-Village whereas in Saint-Louis the explanation was in terms of degree of bilingualism. In Saint-Louis, young informants who are English dominant and who do not control Acadian did not use the French adverb *back*, which differs in terms of category membership and meaning from its source in English (cf. King 1991a for details).

Acadian may also provide important data for other issues relating to language contact. While all linguists would undoubtedly agree that social factors play a role in determining the linguistic effects of language contact, there is disagreement as to whether one can predict the nature of these effects (purely) on the basis of social factors. Thomason and Kaufman (1988: 74-76) establish a very general borrowing scale whereby, in cases of language maintenance, they predict type and degree of borrowing on the basis of degree of contact, ranging from the borrowing of content words in cases of 'casual contact' to heavy structural borrowing in cases of 'very strong cultural pressure'. In other words theirs is an 'anything goes' perspective according to which elements from any linguistic subsystem may be borrowed, depending on the particular social factors in play. But while the authors argue for the preeminence of social factors, they are not, as they themselves note, sociolinguists:

... our perspective is that of the historical linguist, not of the sociolinguist. To anthropologists and sociolinguists, the sociolinguistic/sociocultural aspect of our analysis will seem very shallow ...our main goal is to describe and analyze linguistic results of language contact situations, and to correlate these results with certain fairly general kinds of social factors. So, although we argue that social factors are the primary determinants of the linguistic outcome of contact situations, our focus is on systematizing the linguistic facts rather than on the various kinds of social influences. (p. 36)

Nor are the great majority of case studies upon which they draw sociolinguistic in nature. One problem, then, with evaluating Thomason and Kaufman's theory comes from the language contact literature itself. Often studies make very strong claims, based on little data or on data that can be interpreted in a number of ways. Gumperz and Wilson's well-known study of Kupwar, in which (they claim) Marathi and Urdu, both Indic languages, along with Kannada, a Dravidian language, have all fallen together syntactically, is based on rather scanty evidence, as even those who readily accept the notion of syntactic borrowing admit (e.g., Thomason and Kaufman (1988: 86-7).<sup>8</sup> But Muysken and Appel (1987) demonstrate that, when one looks closely, quite a number of cases of alleged syntactic borrowing may have other interpretations, specifically, that they involve internally-motivated evolution which superficially resembles developments in the source language. Dorian (1990) points to another difficulty, i.e., the tendency to make comparisons with the standard variety of the contact language, not with the contact variety. For example, she notes that in the case of her own work on East Sutherland Gaelic, comparisons with standard English, as opposed to the Scots contact variety, could lead to some erroneous claims of English influence. A related problem is failure to consider adequately the history of the language and to treat particular linguistic features as innovations due to external influence when these features actually existed at earlier stages in the language. For example, Hiberno English is commonly thought to have developed a number of tense-aspect distinctions

<sup>7</sup> The population of Abram-Village was 334 in 1986 and that of Saint-Louis was 154. These figures come from the 1986 census.

<sup>8</sup> In generative grammar, syntactic structure is thought to be largely determined by lexical information (cf. Chomsky 1981, etc.). From this perspective it is difficult to see how syntactic structure could be transferred from one language to another without the borrowing of lexical items (carrying syntactic properties). See King (1991c) for discussion.

under the influence of Irish Gaelic. However, Harris (1991) points out with respect to these 'innovations':

Virtually all of those who have claimed that the peculiarities of Irish English aspectual usage can be traced to a substratal source have based their conclusions on a straightforward comparison with present-day Standard British English. They make no reference to the fact that, in some cases, very similar patterns of usage are to be found in other regional varieties of English as well as in earlier forms of the standard language. Crucially, there is plenty of evidence to indicate that such patterns were widespread in the seventeenth century, the formative period of Irish English. (p. 206)

What makes the Acadian varieties a good testing ground for theories of language contact is that we now have large corpora for quite a number of Acadian varieties, as well as for many related varieties of French. Only community studies, I would argue, can give us reliable data by which we can delineate how social factors influence the outcome of particular language contact situations.

Our knowledge of the history of French and of modern French varieties spoken in France should also prevent specialists at least from making certain erroneous claims, although of course the average person seems to believe the stereotype of Canadian French varieties moving inexorably towards English. For instance, the existence of orphan prepositions in relative clauses in Canadian French, as in 'la fille que je sors *avec*', is regarded by many as a case of English influence. However, Bouchard (1982) convincingly argues that this is not so. Such constructions existed in French in the fourteenth century, still exist in some popular Metropolitan varieties in which there could be no possibility of English influence, and have counterparts in other Romance languages.

But while varieties of Acadian are well documented, this is not the case for Atlantic Canada English, where only certain varieties of Newfoundland English have undergone comprehensive study (cf. Loughheed 1988). Canadian English (apart from that spoken in Newfoundland) is widely regarded to be homogeneous, with the exception of some regional lexical variation. However, lack of sufficient evidence to support this claim makes the idea of general Canadian usage a dangerous assumption for language contact studies, which should investigate the vernacular in each contact situation.<sup>9</sup>

As mentioned above, in the Acadian-speaking areas of Atlantic Canada there is considerable variation as to degree of language contact (e.g., percentage of French speakers vs English speakers, provision of French services in a community, etc.). Therefore, given the variety of social situations which exist in closely-related language varieties, we are in an excellent position to compare social factors and linguistic outcomes across communities. Flikeid's 1989 study of English borrowing and French-English codeswitching in five Acadian communities in Nova Scotia is a case in point. Flikeid shows striking intercommunity differences in the use of words of English origin, differences which are interpretable in terms of degree of contact with English. Flikeid's finely grained analysis is based on the systematic comparison of a large corpus of data for each community through the use of quantitative sociolinguistic methods.

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<sup>9</sup> For instance, in my work on *back* in Prince Edward Island Acadian I have been struck by differences in my own (Newfoundland) usage of *back* in English from that of Ontario and U.S. speakers. For instance, I readily accept 'We were back friends' meaning 'We were friends again' (in P.E.I. Acadian, 'J'étions *back* amis'), regarded as ungrammatical by speakers of other English varieties whom I have polled. The next step is the investigation of *back* usage in vernacular Prince Edward Island English.

It might appear at first glance that, since English and French are fairly similar typologically, Acadian data would not be particularly revealing in the study of linguistic effects of language contact. However, research has shown that there are important differences between linguistic borrowing in Acadian and in other varieties of Canadian French. For instance, Acadian, Québécois and Ontario French all borrow verbs, but only certain Acadian varieties have borrowed prepositions (as in 'Quoi ce qu'il t'a parlé *about*?'). Likewise, certain Acadian varieties, but no other Canadian varieties of which I am aware, have borrowed *wh*-words (as in 'Tu peux faire *whatever* que tu veux').

A number of intercommunity differences have also been uncovered. For instance, in Prince Edward Island, as one might predict, Saint-Louis is more advanced than Abram-Village for some instances of linguistic borrowing. In both varieties, *wh*-words are restricted to relative clauses. However, in Abram-Village the inventory consists of *wh*-ever words and *which* (as in 'l'argent *which* que j'ai donné à Desmond'), whereas in Saint-Louis it is also possible to have structures such as 'la raison *why* qu'il a venu...' (cf. King 1991b). Further, I have found that differences in the use of English-origin *back* in three Acadian communities correlate with social factors pertaining to the contact situation. In a language contact situation of relatively short duration (L'Anse-à-Canards, Newfoundland) *back* functions very much as it does in English, i.e., as an intransitive preposition (as in 'Il a allé *back* à Toronto'). In the two Prince Edward Island communities, however, which involve contact situations of much longer duration, *back* is an adverb with a more generalized meaning than English *back* (e.g., 'J'ai *back* oublié' means 'I forgot again').

Thus the range of contact situations along with the degree of linguistic variation which exist in Atlantic Canada makes comparison across Acadian varieties (and with other varieties of Canadian French) an undertaking which should yield significant results for the study of the relationship between social factors and linguistic outcomes in language contact.

### 3. GRAMMATICAL THEORY

For Chomsky, the study of language is concerned with the study of *I* (or intensional) language, i.e., with properties of the mind of the speaker which make up his/her knowledge of the language, as opposed to properties of the external world which may influence language use.<sup>10</sup> Within the 'principles and parameters' framework (cf. Chomsky 1981, 1982, 1986b), a small number of universal principles, some of which are parameterized (i.e., have different values or settings) account for the range of human languages. These principles are considered to be innate; the choice of setting for a particular parameter is made on the basis of exposure to primary linguistic data during the language acquisition process. Grammatical variation is thus explicable in terms of differences in parameter settings which give rise to language-particular rules which operate under specific conditions predictable by the theory. For instance, one well-studied parameter can be described as the possibility of having phonetically-null subject positions (i.e., the so-called null subject parameter). Whereas the subject is obligatory in English and in French, it is optional in languages such as Spanish and Chinese. Recent research within the principles and parameters framework (cf. Jaeggli and Safir 1989) seeks to uncover the abstract grammatical property which best accounts for this observation.

This comparative approach differs from traditional comparative linguistics in that its goals are psychological, i.e., generativists seek to uncover how parameters are fixed or set in

<sup>10</sup> Issues such as the social diffusion of linguistic change are outside the scope of this psychological approach since they involve the study of E (or externalized) language (cf. Chomsky 1986a).

one direction on the basis of the experience available to the language learner. Since nonstandard varieties, like standard varieties, are readily acquired by native speakers they must also be accounted for by the theory of grammar. Further, as Rizzi (1989: 9) points out, the study of dialectal variation is particularly important in accounting for the existence of parameters:

Les paramètres de la grammaire universelle peuvent être conceptualisés comme les points de bifurcation fondamentaux du système grammatical général, les différences irréductibles entre les systèmes grammaticaux particuliers. Afin d'identifier empiriquement ces points de fracture primitifs, il est essentiel de focaliser le travail comparatif sur des systèmes grammaticaux assez proches. En effet, des langues dont la structure globale est très éloignée permettraient plus difficilement d'isoler des différences primitives plausibles, à cause de l'interaction complexe, parfois inextricable, d'une multiplicité de différences observables. L'étude des variétés dialectales...offre donc une occasion privilégiée pour identifier des paramètres. Nous avons affaire, dans l'étude comparative des dialectes, à des systèmes grammaticaux extrêmement proches, qui ne diffèrent que pour un nombre restreint de propriétés fondamentales; ces propriétés sont donc relativement faciles à isoler et à démêler de toute interférence cachée.

For example, through the study of a number of Romance varieties (including Québécois, Algerian French (i.e., *pied-noir*), Frioulan, Fiorentino and Trentino, Occitan, standard French and Italian, etc.) Roberge and Vinet (1989, chapter 2) show a relationship between varieties having subject clitics and varieties allowing null subjects: the underlying difference, they argue, is not whether a variety has the null subject property or not, but in how *pro* (an empty category occupying subject (or object) position) is identified, by the subject clitic in the former case and by the verbal morphology in the latter. They go on to argue that standard Italian and French are structurally more similar than previously thought to be the case, a conclusion which probably would not be reached without having studied the grammars of such a range of related varieties, nonstandard as well as standard.

Chambers and Trudgill (1991) rightly point out that scant use has been made of data from nonstandard English dialects in the development of grammatical theory. However, such is not the case with dialects of Romance languages. In the past decade, data from northern Italian varieties, such as Trentino and Fiorentino, from North African varieties of French, from Québécois, etc., have figured prominently in the development of accounts of parametric variation.

Likewise, the syntax of Acadian varieties may also be an important source of data for the study of parametric variation. While the grammars of Acadian varieties are similar to Québécois, a number of important differences exist. For instance, King and Roberge (1990) show that the number of prepositions that can occur as so-called orphan prepositions is larger in Prince Edward Island Acadian than in other varieties of French reported in the literature. Along with allowing 'les filles que je sors *avec*', given above with reference to Québécois, Acadian also allows the occurrence of *à* and *de* without an adjacent lexical complement, as in 'Où ce qu'il vient *de*?'. Further, we demonstrate that the Prince Edward Island varieties allow preposition stranding (i.e., they allow movement of the object of the preposition, leaving behind a trace<sup>11</sup>), a phenomenon not known to occur in other French varieties, nor in any other Romance language.<sup>12</sup> The Prince Edward Island data are of theoretical, as well as descriptive, importance since Prince Edward Island Acadian is now a testing ground for proposed accounts of

<sup>11</sup> For Québécois Bouchard (1982) argues that preposition stranding is not involved but that the adjacent complement position is filled by *pro*.

<sup>12</sup> Data presented in Flikeid (1989) which seem similar to Prince Edward Island usage lead us to hypothesize that Nova Scotia varieties also allow preposition stranding.

preposition stranding. King and Roberge (1990) show that the PEI facts cast doubt on a number of general proposals which have appeared in the literature, e.g., reanalysis based on the structural relationship between the verb and preposition (cf. Hornstein and Weinberg 1981), correlation of presence versus absence of preposition stranding with presence versus absence of Exceptional Case Marking (cf. Kayne 1980) and analyses based on overt morphological Case distinctions (cf. Pollock 1989). In Prince Edward Island varieties, we show that the behaviour of prepositions follows from their status as head governors (cf. King and Roberge 1990 for details).

Finally, language contact phenomena may also be studied from the perspective of grammatical theory, offering alternate explanations of phenomena which (superficially) appear to involve syntactic borrowing. For instance, it is tempting to regard Prince Edward Island Acadian structures such as 'Quoi ce que tu as parlé à Jean de hier?' as an obvious case of syntactic borrowing. However, variants such as those given below (taken from King and Roberge 1990), are all grammatical in Acadian whereas literal translations of 1 a and c are ungrammatical in English.

- 1      a.      Quoi ce que tu as parlé hier à Jean de?  
          b.      Quoi ce que tu as parlé à Jean hier de?  
          c.      Quoi ce que tu as parlé hier de à Jean?  
          d.      Quoi ce que tu as parlé de à Jean hier?

Thus direct syntactic borrowing does not give us an account of the free nature of preposition stranding in Prince Edward Island Acadian. The situation becomes clearer when one takes into account the fact that this French variety has borrowed a number of prepositions from English, e.g. *in, about, over, etc.*, as in 'Quoi ce qu'il t'a parlé *about*?' (What did he talk to you about?). We argue that the borrowing of English prepositions has led to the reanalysis of French prepositions resulting in their now having a particular syntactic property; they are head governors and may license a trace. Thus there is a change in lexical specification of French prepositions under the influence of English. Sentences in 1 diverge from English usage because aspects of French grammar are at play: French lacks the strict adjacency requirements shown by English in a number of constructions. Therefore, we do not have syntactic borrowing as such but rather lexical borrowing which has syntactic effects in the borrowing language. Our account is superior to a syntactic one because the divergence between French and English usage falls out from a general fact about French syntax; if we did not consider the role of the English prepositions we would not be able to capture these facts.

The Prince Edward Island *wh*-word data mentioned above might also be treated, superficially, as a case of extreme grammatical interference. However, in King (1991b) I argue that they actually support a view of the peripheral nature of borrowed elements in Acadian, specifically that, unlike French-origin *wh*-words, English origin ones do not undergo syntactic *wh*-movement. This sort of analysis depends on explicit distinctions between lexical and nonlexical (i.e. functional) categories, a theory of the role of the lexicon in determining syntactic structure and the availability of appropriate tests for syntactic movement. Thus grammatical theory enables us to identify more precisely the linguistic effects of language contact.

## 4. DIRECTIONS FOR ACADIAN LINGUISTICS

In general, research on Acadian varieties of French is flourishing. In this article I have pointed out that what we know of the social situation of varieties of Acadian French lends it to the testing of hypotheses regarding both the social diffusion of linguistic change and the social factors which promote or impede linguistic interference. We have also seen how current research in generative grammar draws on the study of closely-related language varieties and that Acadian French is both a valid and useful object of study from this perspective.

Both the sociolinguistic and generative avenues of research outlined above are essentially comparativist in nature and here they are seen to have in common the broadening of the context of Acadian linguistics. While sociolinguistic studies of grammatical variation and research within generative grammar are usually carried out independently of one another, Chambers and Trudgill (1991: 295) point out the need for more sophisticated treatments of grammatical variation in the 'dialect' literature. This does not of course mean that there can or should be a blending of research paradigms since there are fundamentally different goals involved, but that (some) theory of grammar should be a central component to explanations of grammatical change and, as Chambers and Trudgill (1991: 295) put it, 'more grammatically sophisticated treatments of nonstandard dialects are needed, and so is a more empirically based approach to grammatical theory.'

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