UNITY AND DIVERSITY IN ACADIAN PHONOLOGY: AN OVERVIEW BASED ON COMPARISONS AMONG THE NOVA SCOTIA VARIETIES

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ABSTRACT

The Acadian population of the Atlantic provinces is located in a number of geographically separate areas. Existing phonological descriptions of specific varieties have shown the existence of a great deal of diversity, but also much common ground. Little comparative work has been conducted to assess the extent to which the various regional varieties share the characteristics described for individual communities. New data are here brought to bear on these issues, drawn from the material collected in the course of a research project which has as its general objective the systematic charting of the linguistic differences and similarities among the Acadian communities of Nova Scotia. Features common to all these communities and to previously described varieties are distinguished from those which show interdialectal differences, and the nature of these differences is analyzed.

1. Introduction

The aim of the present article is to take a further step in the direction of a complete overview of the phonology of the Acadian French of the Atlantic provinces, by combining material gathered in Nova Scotia in the course of an ongoing research project under the direction of the present author, with the existing body of knowledge about Acadian varieties. From being described in bits and pieces through monographs on specific varieties and unorganized observations on others, the Acadian family of dialects is now increasingly an object of systematic study, and the gaps in our knowledge are gradually being filled. At a time when Quebecois phonology is becoming more and more thoroughly described, it is time that the characteristics of Acadian, widely recognized to be distinct from Quebecois and its daughter varieties, be charted in a systematic fashion, and the common features distinguished from regional characteristics within the Acadian speech community. This was not really feasible so long as large uncharted gaps still existed, since most linguists were too aware of the striking differences between varieties to feel comfortable with generalizing from whatever variety they had studied systematically to Acadian French in general.

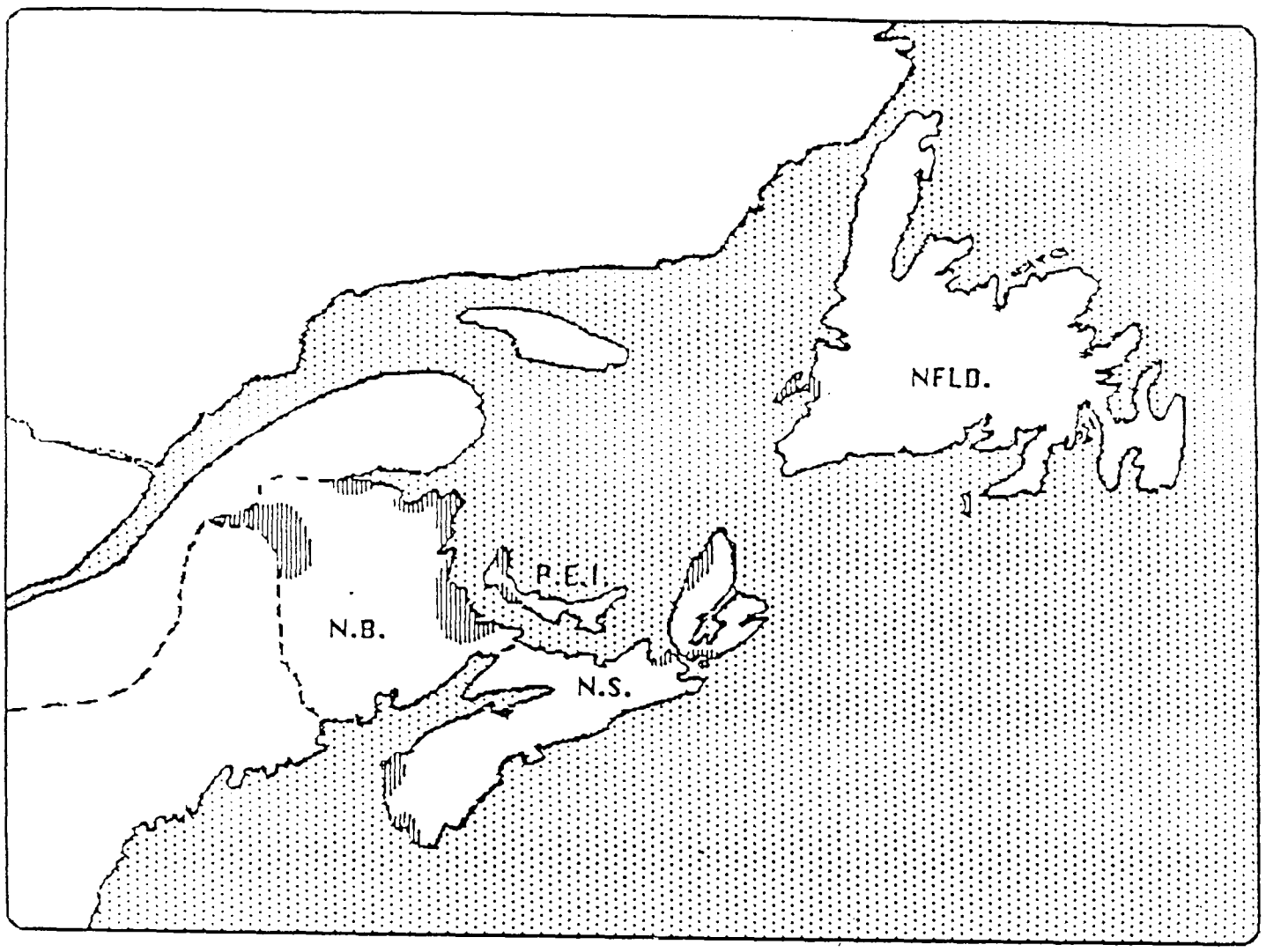


Figure 1. Major Acadian Areas of the Atlantic Provinces

A look at the map in Figure 1 shows the dispersed nature of the Acadian regions of the Atlantic Provinces, separated by large stretches of English speaking areas. It also indicates that the political boundaries between provinces are not a natural way of grouping the various regional varieties, at least on the basis of geographic proximity. Historically, the underlying unity of the Acadian varieties can be traced back to the period preceding the Deportation by the British in 1755. Prior to this date, the various settlements were geographically contiguous, having emanated from one another through expansion and spread eastward from Port Royal along the Bay of Fundy. In 1755 and subsequent years, successive expulsions scattered the Acadian population, sending them to various destinations in the New England states or back to Europe. After the Treaty of Paris in 1763, Acadians were allowed to return, on condition that they not form sizable groups. The geographic distribution as we now know it is the result of the post-Deportation resettlement.

In the present study, features analyzed on the basis of a corpus which covers all the major varieties spoken in Nova Scotia are systematically linked to earlier descriptions of Acadian phonology, as outlined in section 2 below. Particular emphasis is placed on points where the phonology of one or more varieties differs in some way from existing descriptions, both of Acadian and Quebecois. At the same time, points where hitherto undescribed varieties confirm the generality of known features are of course of interest. As much as possible, the emphasis is on synthesis and formulation of general rules rather than on the contrasting of surface differences.

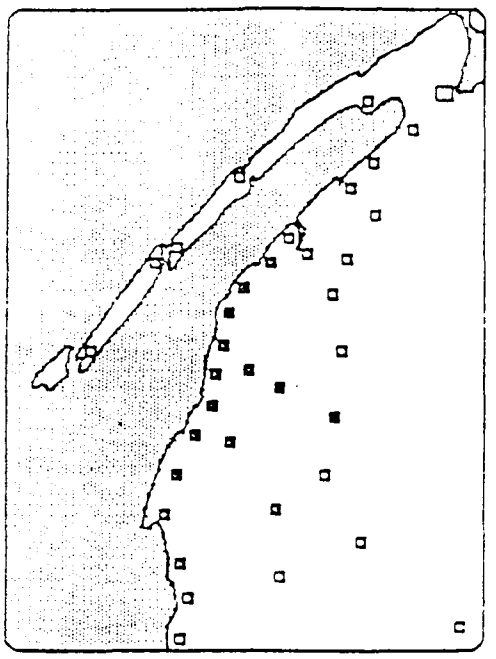
It must be borne in mind that the work presented here forms part of a multifaceted study, entitled 'A Comparative Study of the Acadian French Varieties of Nova Scotia.' The collection of the corpus was based on the need to obtain material that would be truly comparable, in particular from a sociolinguistic perspective. Thus comparisons are now possible between material recorded in similar circumstances in the different areas of the province. The sub-corpus for each regional variety has a parallel structure in terms of stratification. Analysis of this corpus is being carried out at different levels: lexical, morphological and syntactic as well as phonological.

The core Nova Scotia sociolinguistic sample consists of 130 informants. A double series of interviews was conducted, to examine style shift and accommodation when speaking to an outside francophone. All the informants were first interviewed by a member of their own community, then, at a later point in time, by an interviewer from outside the community (see Flikeid 1987). Informants range in age from 12 to 91 and represent five communities,

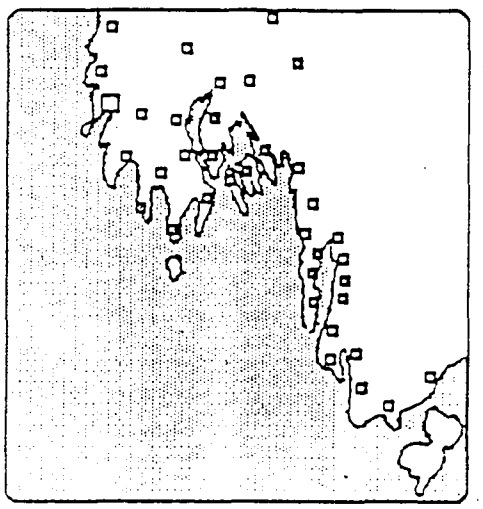
each the largest and most francophone village of each of the geographic regions: Meteghan (Baie Sainte-Marie, Clare); Pubnico (Argyle); Petit de Grat (Ile Madame, Richmond); Pomquet and Cheticamp. These regions are shown on the maps in Figure 2. Complementary to this in-depth approach, a geographic study based on the representation of all the other localities has also been undertaken. A total of 227 informants have been interviewed in all. The major part of the collected material has been transcribed and computerized.

The material in this article is based on direct analysis of the series of interviews carried out by local interviewers in the five key communities, focusing particularly on the oldest (above 60) and the youngest (12 to 25) age groups. In many cases different tendencies are found in the youngest group than in the oldest group, but their speech is not necessarily more standard. As discussed in the following section, the reasons for this lie in the particular situation of the Acadian communities as minority groups in Nova Scotia. The systematic study of age stratification is being carried out quantitatively on the basis of this corpus, as well as the study of stylistic and social variation. In the case of the other geographic points considered, only older speakers were interviewed in the initial phase.[1] 22 such interviews, representing 16 localities, have also been analyzed for the purpose of the present study in order to determine the extent of the intraregional variation. As the subsequent comparisons show, the key communities cannot be taken as representative of the surrounding communities in the case of features which exhibit fine geographical patterning.

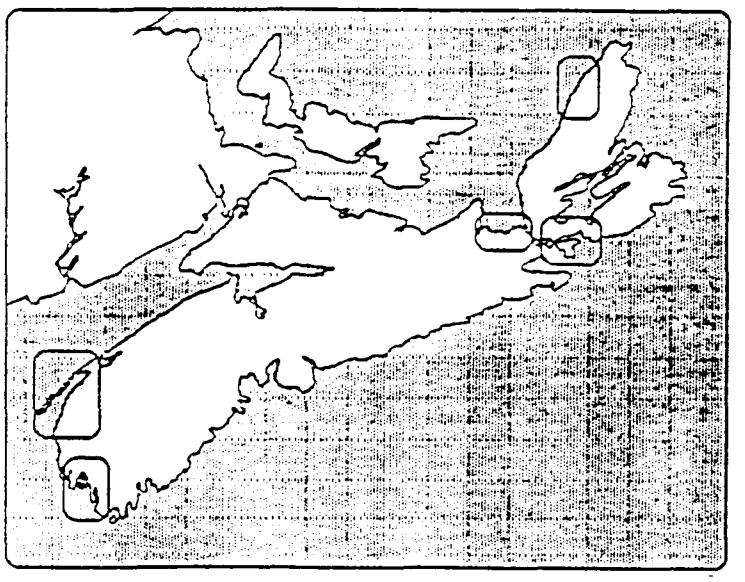
The predominantly synchronic approach adopted here is complementary to other ongoing diachronic work being carried out in the ongoing Nova Scotia project. The aim of this work is to understand the historical evolution which has led to the present stage. A major concern in this context is to discern the innovations which have taken place subsequent to settlement in Acadia from the features which have simply been preserved. This involves systematic study of the existing sources regarding earlier stages of Acadian as well as comparison with regional varieties of French, for example as charted in the Atlas Linguistique de France (ALF) at the turn of the century, and descriptions of the linguistic situation in France at the time Acadia was settled. The external evidence regarding the settlement history of the communities is also being examined. The comparison with other varieties of Acadian is to be broadened to go beyond Atlantic Canada and to extend to other varieties of French transplanted at the same period.

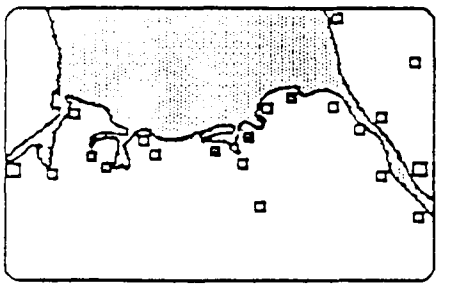


BAIE STE MARIE (CLARE)

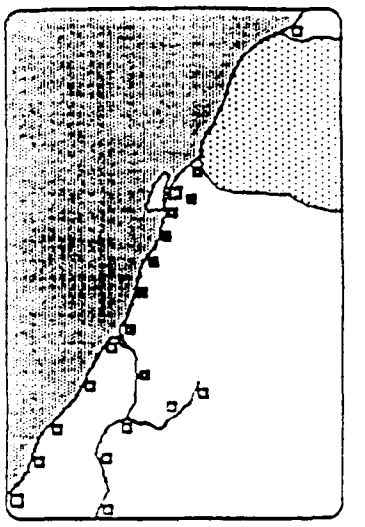


PUBNICO (ARGYLE)





POMQUET



CHETICAMP

□ Anglophone

■ Francophone

ILE MADAME (RICHMOND)

Figure 2. Major Acadian Areas of Nova Scotia

More generally, the basic focus of attention is the interplay of geographic and sociolinguistic differences. The linguistic situation of Nova Scotia is such that geographical separation/ isolation is particularly sharp between regions (separated by distances of up to 700 km). There is however also a great deal of intraregional variation. In the corpus as it presently stands, the sociolinguistic dimension is well represented. The focus of the last stage of data collection, to take place in the summer of 1988, will be to ensure that the geographic dimension is equally well documented, by using an even finer grid. The sociolinguistic analysis is facilitated by the fundamental similarity of the communities studied: all are rural, of roughly the same size, with similar occupational structure; in all of them French has a minority status. Factors which distinguish between the communities include varying degrees of exposure to English and to outside French. One major concern is to distinguish current sociolinguistic changes due to the influence of external varieties of French, including standard French (hereafter SF), from long-term internal changes.

It is not enough to enumerate the differences between the regional varieties, be they phonological or otherwise. Some way of summarizing and quantifying them must be devised. An ongoing attempt to explore the notion of linguistic distance through the application of dialectometrical methods in the analysis of the material in the corpus is reported on in Flikeid and Cichocki (1987). On the phonological level, an important aspect, not yet resolved, is the weighting of the various features included, crucial, in that distances will be greater or smaller according to the features given prominence. This article contributes towards this study in consistently establishing the type of phonological contrast involved for each feature discussed, though whether this is a relevant criterion remains to be determined. Perceived prominence may well be based on other distinctions, as discussed in the following section.

Since these other fields of inquiry consist of work in progress, results cannot systematically be incorporated here; however, wherever appropriate and available, they will be drawn on by way of illustration.

2. Discussion of Existing Work and Descriptive Framework

Contemporary work on Acadian phonology based on original analysis of collected corpora is represented mainly by the work of Lucci (1973) who described the speech of the villages surrounding Moncton in Southeastern New Brunswick, Ryan (1981), who analyzed

the speech of Meteghan in the Baie Sainte-Marie area of Nova Scotia, and Landry (1985), who focused on the vowel system in the village of Pubnico, also in Southwestern Nova Scotia. King (1978) and Barter (1985) have described varieties of Newfoundland French. Aspects of the phonology of Northeastern New Brunswick French are described in Flikeid (1984).

Ongoing work now includes that of King and Ryan on Prince Edward Island Acadian French, in progress since 1986. Some phonological observations based on their preliminary survey are discussed in King and Ryan (1986). This study will prove particularly interesting because of its comprehensive sociolinguistic approach which will allow systematic comparison of a kind not possible until now. Another interesting project is that of Phlipponneau, a questionnaire-based phonological survey, now in its preliminary stages, reported on in Phlipponneau (1987).

Articles dealing with aspects of Acadian phonology include Landry (1981) on the vowel system of another Baie Sainte-Marie village, Petit Ruisseau, and Patterson (1978a, 1978b), who reanalyzes particular known aspects of Acadian phonology. Other articles will be referred to in the text. A systematic overview of work in Acadian linguistics in general can be found in Gesner (1986).

Much of the other existing work touching upon phonology or phonetics should be considered primarily as a source of diachronic information, in that it is based on material gathered over forty years ago. As such it is of course extremely valuable. Often this work represents non-systematic observation, but taken together it constitutes a body of knowledge about Acadian 'characteristics': Massignon (1947, 1949, 1962), Haden (1954, 1973), Garner (1952), Geddes (1893-94, 1897-98, 1914), Poirier (1884, 1928), etc. A discussion of the work of these authors can be found in chapter 2 of Flikeid (1984). Phonological generalizations are to be found in some of these, e.g. Haden (1973) and Garner (1952), and in work based on their observations, notably that of Morgan (1978).

Apart from the ongoing studies described above, the methodological approach has been predominantly structuralist, with the notable exception of Landry and Patterson who adopt a consistently generative approach. All are based on the examination of the idiolects of a small number of older informants chosen so as to minimize the influence of SF. It is particularly interesting, from a sociolinguistic perspective, to examine how the variability which is nevertheless present is incorporated into the analysis. When variation is observed within an idiolect, it appears to prevent clear-cut phonological analysis. Thus for both Lucci (1973) and Ryan (1981), a major reason for concluding, for example, that the

affricates do not have phonemic status is that there exists intra- and interspeaker variation in the corpora examined.

It will here be argued that a more comprehensive and quantitative approach, which allows the sociolinguistic/stylistic variation to be identified and formulated, through variable rules or otherwise, makes a more clear-cut picture of an underlying stable system possible. When all age groups and social groups are taken into account, as is the case in this study, the picture becomes clearer rather than more confusing. For the 'snapshot' represented by the idiolect, or at most by a subgroup of the community, cannot show the moving parts, which thus become indistiguishable from the stationary ones.

The analysis carried out on the Nova Scotia corpus so far, at all levels, has brought to light the interesting fact that it is often the younger informants who represent the deepest vernacular. On the phonological level, the presence of standard forms is minimal in the youngest age group in the case of many variables. There are parallel findings on the morphological level (Flikeid 1987). This is partly due to the fact that in the series of interviews considered here, great care was taken to choose only interviewers from within each community, all in their early twenties or younger. Peer pressure not to deviate from community norms is thus strong. Also, the particular situation of the Acadian minorities must be taken into account, in particular the relative lack of exposure to SF. It is in fact among the older speakers, who have cumulated the linguistic experience of a life-time, that we find a greater presence of standard forms. The opportunities for communication with francophones from outside the community are not on the increase for the younger generation; instead, there is increasing interaction with English speakers.

An area which is purposely left aside in the existing structuralist analyses is the lexical incidence of phonemes. A number of the characteristics of Acadian French can only be described through the enumeration of the lexical set involved. An example would be the presence of /œ/ in the 'lève,' 'pèse' set. This type of feature is not per se included in these earlier studies, where the lexical distribution is taken as a given, in line with the ideal of looking at the dialect in itself, except whenever the lexical distribution coincides with a generalizable phonological observation, such as the presence of /u/ to the exclusion of /o/ and /ɔ/ before nasal consonants. When this is the case, the contrast with SF is in fact readily made in these studies; thus Lucci (1973:40) states: 'le [o] du français standard est aussi réalisé [u] dans "assommer", "bonhomme"...' And mention can then be made of other words where the incidence of /ɔ/, /o/ and /u/ is different

in Acadian French, e.g. 'chose,' 'ôter,' even though this phenomenon is one only definable by reference to a lexical set.

One of the goals of the present project has been to establish the exhaustive lexical sets involved in the various processes, which can be particularly useful, for example, for the study of lexical diffusion. This is only possible through the systematic search of the full corpus and is by no means complete yet.

When varieties are being compared, a typology of possible levels of contrast is often established. This will normally distinguish between the following main groups: a) systemic differences, involving either the inventory of phonemes as a whole (an example of this would be the presence of the phoneme /h/ in Acadian, in contrast to SF) or a subsystem, where only a subset of phonemes is allowed (an example would be the neutralization of /ɔ̃/ and /ɑ̃/ in open stressed styllables); b) phonotactic differences (e.g. the absence of /r/ or /l/ in final consonant clusters) c) realizational differences, e.g. the [χ] and [ʁ] variants of /ʃ/ and /ʒ/, and d) differences in lexical incidence, such as that exemplified by the 'lève,' 'pèse' set mentioned above. Wells (1982), who makes use of this classification when comparing English dialects, observes that differences in incidence are easily the most prominent (from speakers' point of view).[2]

In the present study, the phonological relevance of the dialectal differences studied will be systematically brought out. Whenever the analysis is sufficiently advanced to warrant it, a process/rule oriented presentation will be used. However, comparisons with existing studies will adopt the framework of the latter. Although much reference work on SF is generative, descriptions of regional varieties of France, e.g. Walter (1982), are predominantly structuralist. One difficulty, when discussing phonological patterns which are only just emerging through ongoing analysis, is that the underlying form must be chosen, even though all the relevant aspects may not yet have been elucidated. For example, is /ɛ/ or /a/ the underlying form in 'vert,' 'verte' etc. in those of the Nova Scotia dialects which have [a] in both the environments exemplified? The existence of regional Acadian varieties where we find [vart] but [vɛr] would make it logical to chose /ɛ/ as the underlying form. But in any of these regional varieties, does the Acadian speaker seeking to converge to SF have /ɛ/ as an underlying form permitting him or her to easily convert [vars] to [vɛrs] ('(il) verse') but not [tart] to *[tɛrt] ('tarte')?. Or does the process of standardization involve the learning of the lexical set? A related question, which is not directly addressed in current phonological theory, is how the sociolinguistic variation due to increasing exposure to external norms is to be treated in

the phonological analysis of regional varieties. In the course of the following presentation of specific results emerging from the phonological comparison of the Acadian dialects, these issues will come up on several occasions.

3. Oral Vowels

3.1 Length vs. vowel quality: the mid and low vowels

Descriptions of Quebecois French show that this variety maintains a distinction between the pairs of phonemes /ɛ/ - /ɜ/[3] and /a/ - /ɑ/, where the second member of each pair is inherently long, and mainly etymological in origin, though new forms have been added to the original lexical set (Santerre 1974). In the varieties of Acadian French examined in this study, this type of opposition appears to exist throughout the vowel system. Two important aspects to be addressed are whether length or vowel quality play the primary role, and to what extent this opposition coincides with the tense/lax opposition, which also plays a more general role in Acadian. These issues are of course extremely complex, both synchronically and diachronically, as shown in the recent work of Dumas (1981, 1986) and Morin (1985, 1986).

3.1.1 /ɛ/ - /ɛ:/

Some form of the length-related opposition between two E's is maintained in all the Nova Scotia varieties examined, although not as firmly in the two central varieties, those of Richmond and Pomquet. A clear-cut difference appears between the Southwestern (S.W.) varieties on the one hand and the Northeastern (N.E.) varieties on the other, as illustrated by these examples:

		S.W.	N.E.
1.	'fête'	[fe:t][4]	[fæ:t]
	'faite'	[fɛt]	[fɛt]
	'maître'	[me:t]	[mæ:t]
	'mettre'	[mɛt]	[mɛt]

In Meteghan and Pubnico, the lexical set with long E has merged with the /e/ set, so that the opposition between historically long and short E is realized through the existing opposition /e/ - /ɛ/, and not, as in the Moncton variety, for example, through length:

/ɛ/-/ɛ̃/.[5] In these varieties, then, /e/ is found in syllables closed by a greater number of different consonants than in other varieties of Acadian (see the following section), i.e. not only in words such as 'mère' and 'neige,' but also in 'quête,' 'pêche,' etc. In the Cheticamp area of Northeastern Nova Scotia, and to some extent in Richmond and Pomquet, there is also a distinct difference in vowel quality, but in this case [æ:] as opposed to [ɛ]. A lexical set which has [e:] in the Southwestern varieties and [æ:] in Cheticamp can be established: it includes words such as 'evêque,' 'prêtre,' 'paraître,' 'guêpe,' 'messe,' 'baisse,' 'traine,' 'carême,' 'vêpres' etc. Words outside this set have /ɛ/ in all the varieties examined, e.g. 'avec,' 'lettre,' 'laisse,' 'prenne,' etc.

In Richmond and Pomquet, many speakers do not seem to distinguish firmly between the two lexical sets. When there is a distinction, it either takes the form of a relatively small difference in length, e.g. [fɛ·t] - [fɛt], or a change in the vowel quality of the 'fête' set, [fæ:t] - [fɛt], i.e. in the same direction as in Cheticamp.

3.1.2 /e/ - /ɛ/

The /e/ - /ɛ/ opposition in closed syllables, which is firmly maintained in the eastern areas of New Brunswick, is also regularly found in Nova Scotia, at the two geographical extremes of the province, whereas it is virtually absent in the central varieties, Richmond and Pomquet. This opposition is best compared in the pre-R environment, where the 'mère,' 'père' lexical set can be established, realized with /e/ in Cheticamp as well as in Pubnico and Meteghan, in contrast to the /ɛ/ set, exemplified by 'mer' and 'paire.' The /e/ set also includes words such as 'frère,' 'bière,' 'arrière,' 'derrière,' 'misère,' 'manière,' etc. As we saw above, this lexical set merges with the 'fête,' 'maître' set in Pubnico and Meteghan, but not in Cheticamp. In Richmond and Pomquet, although some older speakers appear to maintain the opposition, though not systematically, the overall situation is that only /ɛ/ is found in closed syllables.

Before we can complete the discussion of the phonological analysis, an interrelated process must be examined, the 'lowering of [ɛ]' (see below) in final and pre-R position in a number of the varieties studied. Because of this process, the 'père' - 'paire' opposition is realized with a much greater difference in vowel quality in Meteghan for example than in Cheticamp. The most

differentiated pronunciations would be in each case [peᵽr] - [pɒ:r] in Meteghan, and [pe̯:ʁ] - [pɛ̯:ʁ] in Cheticamp.

To be retained from the discussion so far: the distinction between the 'maître,' 'fête' set and the 'mettre,' 'faite' set is maintained in all varieties. The second set has /ɛ/ throughout, but the 'maître' set has [æ:] in Cheticamp (Ch), [ɛ·] or [æ:] in Richmond (Ri) and Pomquet (Po), and [e:] in Pubnico (Pu) and Meteghan (Me), where diphthongization is also present, as discussed in 3.6 below. The /e/ - /ɛ/ opposition in closed syllables is present in Cheticamp and in the Southwest. These differences can be summarized through the examples in 2., bearing in mind that other variants are also present in each variety (diphthongs, retroflex /r/, etc.):

		Me	Pu	Ri	Po	Ch
2.	'mettre'	[mɛt]	[mɛt]	[mɛt]	[mɛt]	[mɛt]
	'maître'	[me:t]	[me:t]	[mɛ̯·t]	[mɛ̯·t]	[mæ:t]
	'mère'	[me:r]	[me:r]	[mɛ̯:r]	[mɛ̯:r]	[me:ʁ]
	'mer'	[ma:r]	[ma:r]	[mɛ̯:r]	[mɛ̯:r]	[mɛ:ʁ]

3.1.3 Lowering of [ɛ]

Variously called opening or lowering of E or neutralization of E/A, this process can take place in a number of different phonological environments. It is most frequently found before /r/ followed by a consonant as in [sartɛ̃] 'certain' and [marsi] 'merci.' Walker, describing contemporary Montreal French, groups these realizations among the 'residual problems' and refers to them as 'rural, archaic or otherwise stylistically marked' (1984:98). In Acadian, this feature is widespread and by no means as marked. Lucci (1973) finds it regularly only in unstressed syllables in the Moncton variety; in Northeastern New Brunswick (Flikeid 1984) it is found in both stressed and unstressed position, e.g. [ʃarʃe] 'chercher,' [parʃ] 'perche.' This is also the case in all the Nova Scotia communities studied. Other examples of words which have [a] in these contexts are:

3.	'couverture'	'couverte'
	'èsherber'	'herbe'
	'personne'	'lanterne'
	'servante'	'perdre'
	'avertir'	'cercle'

In the context where /r/ is followed by a vowel, both [a] and [ɛ] are found, e.g. [opare] 'opérer' - [ɛspɛre] 'espérer.' A lexical set having [a] must be circumscribed, e.g. 'derrière,' 'Amérique,' 'différent,' 'intéressant,' 'terrible,' 'vérité,' etc.

Synchronically we could here simply see a different distribution of the /a/ phoneme from SF. This would however give different distributions of the /a/ - /ɛ/ lexical sets between the various regions of Nova Scotia, since a distinctly Southwestern phenomenon in Nova Scotia is that it is also found before final /r/. Examples include [fa:r] 'faire,' [ta:r] 'terre' [kãsa:r] 'cancer,' where Cheticamp, Pomquet, and Richmond have [fɛ:r], [tɛ:r], [kãsɛ:r].

If we postulate a general lowering rule of [ɛ] to [a], it would apply in progressively more environments as we move from variety to variety, as illustrated in 4.:

4.	__ rC	__ rV	__ #	__ rV[6]	__ r#
	'perche'	'terrible'	'était'	'éclairer'	'terre'
Ch	[paʁʃ]	[taʁib]	[etɛ]	[eklɛ:ʁe]	[tɛ:r]
Ri, Po	[parʃ]	[tarib]	[eta]	[eklɛ:re]	[tɛ:r]
Me, Pu	[parʃ]	[tarib]	[eta]	[ekla:re]	[ta:r]

In these examples, [a] and [ɛ] are used to represent the general tendency, even though realizations given as [a] may in fact range from [æ] to [ɒ], and [ɛ] is often more open, i.e. [ɐ]. In particular, it should be noted that the Richmond realization of the 'était' set is lowered further than that of Pomquet, and, as we shall see in the following section, the Meteghan realization of the 'terre' and 'éclairer' sets is more backed.

3.1.4 Backing of [a]

The distinction between /ɑ/ and /a/ is firmly maintained in all the Acadian varieties examined. Overall, the distribution is similar to that of Quebecois, with /ɑ/ being found to the exclusion of /a/ in final open syllables (e.g. /rɑ/ 'ras') and final syllables closed by /r/ (e.g. /amɑr/ 'amarre'). The two phonemes are opposed in syllables closed by other consonants as illustrated in /hɑt/ 'hâte' - /dat/ 'date,' /ʃɑk/ 'chaque' - /sak/ 'sac.' In the varieties where [ɛ] is lowered to [a], however, the distribution of the surface realizations is different, in that [a] is found both finally and before /r/, as in [afɛ:r] -> [afa:r] 'affaire,' and [fɛ] -> [fa] 'fait.' As has been discussed for Quebecois in the

case of final /ɛ/ (Walker 1984:85), rule ordering becomes important in regard to the backing of /a/ in these positions. Walker sees /ɑ/ in final open syllables as the result of a backing rule, which does not however apply to the [a] resulting from [ɛ] lowering.

Similarly, in most Acadian varieties, the [a] resulting from [ɛ] lowering in final or pre-R position is not backed. Observations in Meteghan and in certain Argyle communities other than Pubnico, however, lead to the postulation that the situation is changing there, in that this [a] often does undergo backing. The younger speakers in particular, and a number of the older ones, pronounce [tɒ:r] 'terre,' [sɒ:re] 'serrer' etc. with a very backed [ɒ]. /o/ itself is diphthongized in this position. We thus get the series:

5. 'père' [pe:r] 'paire' [pɒ:r] 'part' [po:r] 'port' [pɔ^{w}r]

In final position the backing is less pronounced in Meteghan but in some Argyle villages the vowel resulting from /ɛ/ lowering ranges from [æ] to [ɑ].

3.1.5 [wɛ] and [wɑ]

In general the group of words with orthographic 'oi' follows a regular pattern in Acadian French: [wɛ] in final closed syllables and internal open syllables, [wɑ] in final open syllables.[7] These forms have a parallel distribution to [ɛ] and [ɑ] respectively. For example, only [wɑ] is found in final open syllables for all lexical items ('moi,' 'toi,' 'bois,' 'vois,' 'fois,' 'mois,' etc.), except in a small group of words (e.g. 'mouchoir,' 'rasoir') where the deletion of /r/ has led to realizations in [we] (e.g. [muʃwe], [rɑzwe]). As in Quebecois, there are also words with the variant /ɛ/ e.g. 'froid' [frɛt], with /u/ e.g. 'soigne' [sʊŋ], and with [ej] e.g. 'nettoyer' [nɛteje].

In closed syllables the distinction between historically long and short E is maintained, as discussed above (section 3.1.1). Thus the following sets of items have distinct vowel realizations:

6.	'boîte'	N.E. [bwæt]	S.W. [bwe:t]	'abouette'	[abwɛt]
	'poêle'	N.E. [pwæ:l]	S.W. [pwe:l]	'poil'	[pwɛl]
	'paroisse'	N.E. [parwæ:s]	S.W. [parwe:s]	'ouest'	[wɛs]

Before final /r/ or /r/ followed by a vowel, /ɛ/ lowering applies in the Southwestern (S.W.) varieties so that we get [swa:r] 'soir' and [swa:re] 'soirée,' coinciding with the SF forms though not as a result of any standardizing tendency.

3.1.6 Three E's or three A's?

To paraphrase the title of Santerre (1974), the question arises of whether three phonological A's or E's should be distinguished. This question can well be asked, since it is necessary to consider [e], [ɛ] and [ɛ:] on the one hand and [æ], [a] and [ɑ] on the other, when comparing the different varieties. As we have seen, /ɛ:/ can be [ɛ:] as in Moncton, [e:] as in Meteghan or Pubnico or [æ:] as in Cheticamp. [æ] (as well as [a]) can also be the realization of /ɛ/ in the final or pre-R position.[8]

How many phonemes is one to recognize? If we include /æ/ as a separate phoneme, it would not appear in the same lexical sets in the different varieties. In Cheticamp the only closed syllable context in which [æ], [ɛ] and [e] are all found is before the 'lengthening' consonants other than /r/, e.g. 'fraise' [fræ:z], 'treize' [trɛz] and 'anglaise' [ɑ̃gle:z].[9] Elsewhere, there is either the [æ] - [ɛ] opposition only or the [ɛ] - [e] opposition only, as before /r/. In Meteghan and Pubnico, on the other hand, the [ɛ] - [e] opposition extends to syllables closed by consonants other than /r/, and [æ] is in complementary distribution to [ɛ]. Giving it phonemic status, as Landry (1985) chooses to do, allows the generalizations based on the tenseness feature to be free of exceptions.

The phonetic realizations of the vowel in the 'faire' and 'fait' sets is as often [a] or [ɑ] as [æ], and it would be possible to see these as underlying /a/. However, this would give a different lexical distribution for the different varieties, and also goes against the distributional pattern for /a/ - /ɑ/. In this context, it is particularly interesting that in several Southwestern varieties, as noted above, [a] is increasingly backed in this lexical set, bringing it in line with the general /a/ - /ɑ/ distribution.

It must also be noted that the lexical set which undergoes affrication (see section 5.1), and which is generally limited to the __ [-back, -low] context, includes words such as 'quai,' 'guerre.' Such words are realized [tʃa] ~ [tʃɑ] and [dʒa:r] ~ [dʒɑ:r] in these varieties, i.e. with a [+low] and/or [+back] vowel, whereas 'cas' and 'gare' have [k] and [g] respectively: [kɑ], [gɑ:r]. If an affrication rule is postulated which applies in the ___[-back, -low] context, it would have to precede the /ɛ/ lowering rule, in order to differentiate between the two groups of words. However, if the 'quai,' 'guerre' group is seen as having underlying /a/, then a different analysis must be adopted for the affricates.

To summarize the discussion of this first section, the examination of the mid and low vowels has brought out differences between the regional Acadian varieties which involve both lexical incidence and phoneme inventory as well as differing extensions of several rules. And although a great deal of common ground is present, differences in analysis from that of Quebecois French should be apparent, and will become more so after the discussion of the high vowels, the role of the lengthening consonants and the nature of the diphthongization process.

3.2 Length vs. vowel quality: the high vowels

Parallel to the etymologically based difference between the two sets of A and E words, a similar distinction is regularly maintained in the Nova Scotia Acadian varieties in the case of the high vowels as well, as in the following examples: [vu:t] '(il) ôte' - [rʊt] 'route;' [i:l] 'île' - [vɪl] 'ville.' Although the distinction here is based on the same vowel quality difference analyzed as a tense/lax opposition in Quebecois French and in the Acadian French of Moncton (Lucci 1973), in both these varieties the distribution is phonetically conditioned in that laxing regularly occurs in syllables closed by non-lengthening consonants, whereas the tense variants are found before /v - z - ʒ - r/. In the Nova Scotia varieties examined, there is a phonological opposition between the two series of phonemes, /i - y - u/ and /ɪ - ʏ - ʊ / in closed syllables, which is not determined by the nature of the following consonant.[10]

Lexical sets with [i:], [y:] and [u:] can be established which are the same in all the Nova Scotia varieties and distinct from sets with [ɪ] [ʏ] and [ʊ], e.g. as in 7. (as is the case for the /ɛ/ - /ɛ:/ opposition, this distinction tends to be somewhat less stable in Richmond and Pomquet).

7.

'dix'	[di:s]	'office'	[ɔfɪs]
'plus'	[ply:s]	'usses'	[ʏs]
'pousse'	[pu:s]	'brosse'	[brʊs]

In syllables closed by the 'lengthening' consonants other than /r/ (see section 3.4.1 below), the same opposition is present, as in [ʃu:z] 'chose' - [dʊz] 'douze.'[11]

3.3 The tense/lax opposition in general

If we consider the tense/lax opposition to be phonological in the case of the high vowels, a division of the entire oral vowel system based on the [+/-tense] feature becomes possible and allows for broader generalizations than in Quebecois, such as those of Landry (1985) in regard to diphthongization in Pubnico. Generalizations which are valid for all the varieties examined can also be made as to distribution. In Table 1 on the following page, different types of environments are exemplified.

The striking similarity in distribution between final and pre-R positions is immediately evident. If we look at the tense/lax pairs, we find the tense ones in final and pre-R positions and in the lexical sets discussed previously. Before the lengthening consonants other than /r/, we do find both tense and lax vowels, however it is important to note that we do not find the merger of inherently long and lengthened pairs, as in Quebecois French. (See the discussion of the 'lengthening' environments in the following section).

An irregularity in the pattern is linked to the E's. /ɛ/ is classified as lax, yet it is found in pre-R and final positions. As discussed above, considering /æ/ as a separate phoneme, classified as [+tense], or distinguishing between /ɜ/ and /ɛ/ as does Morin (1985), eliminates this irregularity, but gives a different lexical distribution from one variety to the other.

As in SF, the tendency towards a complementary distribution of the lower mid vowels in closed syllables and the higher in open syllables is not the same for the /e/ - /ɛ/ pair as for the two others. What is noticeable in Table 1 is the parallel between pre-R and final open position on this point as well: we generally find only /o/ and /ø/ in these two positions, but both /e/ and /ɛ/.

If we look beyond the key communities we have been focusing on, however, there are varieties where [œ], for example, is found in final position, notably in several Argyle villages, where we find 'vieux' [vjœ], 'eux' [zœ], 'chanceux' [ʃɑ̃sœ]. /e/ is also lowered to [ɛ], which does not lead to any confusion with /ɛ/ since the latter is realized anywhere from [æ] through [a] to [ɒ] (see above). The distinction between infinitive and imperfect is thus maintained as [ɛ] - [a] as in [abitɛ] 'habiter' - [abita] 'habitait.'

	Final, open ___#		Final, closed by /r/ ___r#		Final, closed by 'lengthening' consonants ___C#			
i/ɪ	[li]	'lit'	[li:r]	'lire'	[vi:v]	'vivre'	[lɪv]	'livre'
y/ʏ	[sy]	'su'	[sy:r]	'sûr'	[y:z]	'use'		
u/ʊ	[fu]	'fou'	[fu:r]	'four'	[ʃu:z]	'chose'	[dʊz]	'douze'
e/ɛ	[eme]	'aimer'	[me:r]	'mère'	[fre:z][a]	'fraise'	[trɛz]	'treize'
	[emɛ][b]	'aimait'	[mɛ:r][c]	'mer'	[frɛ:z][d]			
ø/œ	[pø]	'peu'	[pø:r]	'peur'	[krø:z]	'creuse'	[pœz]	'pèse'
o/ɔ	[bo]	'beau'	[bo:r]	'bord'	[so:v]	'sauve'		
ɑ/a	[pɑ]	'pas'	[pɑ:r]	'part'	[kɑ:v]	'cave'	[ɾav]	'rave'

	Final, closed by other consonants ___C_o#				Pretonic, open ___ |C			
i/ɪ	[i:l]	'île'	[vɪl]	'ville'	[di:ne]	'dîner'	[vɪlaʒ]	'village'
y/ʏ	[ply:s]	'plus'	[ʒʏs]	'juste'	[ply:me]	'plumer'	[bʏtɛ̃]	'butin'
u/ʊ	[pu:s]	'pousse'	[brʊs]	'brosse'	[vu:te]	'ôter'	[ekʊte]	'écouter'
e/ɛ	[be:s][a]	'baisse'	[lɛs]	'laisse'	[pe:ʃe][a]	'pêcher'	[pɛʃe]	'péché'
	[bɛ:s][d]				[pɛ:ʃe][d]			
o/œ	[dø:s]	'deux'	[fœs]	'fesse'	[ʒø:di]	'jeudi'	[ʃœse]	'sècher'
o/ɔ	[o:t]	'haute'	[bɔt]	'botte'	[fo:ʃe]	'faucher'	[rɔʃe]	'rocher'
ɑ/a	[ʃɑ:k]	'chaque'	[sak]	'sac'	[rɑ:to]	'rateau'	[katɛ̃]	'catin'

Table 1. Distribution of the Oral Vowels in Final and Pretonic Syllables

a. In Southwestern varieties.
b. [æ] in Southwestern and Central varieties.
c. [æ] in Southwestern varieties.
d. [æ] in Northeastern and Central varieties.

3.4 Lengthening environments

3.4.1 Do the 'lengthening' consonants lengthen?

In Table 1, it may have been noticed that the examples of lax vowels followed by the 'lengthening' consonants other than /r/ are not transcribed as long. The evidence brought forth by the examination of the Nova Scotia corpus has made it increasingly apparent that the voiced fricatives /v/, /z/ and /ʒ/ do not necessarily constitute lengthening environments for the lax vowels. All of the following examples are realized with a short vowel by speakers of all the Nova Scotia varieties under study:

8. 'livre' [lɪv]
'douze' [dʊz]
'treize' [trɛz]
'veuve' [vœv]
'menage' [menaʒ][12]

Taken to its extreme, the situation is this: only the inherently long (i.e. tense) vowels are long before these 'lengthening' consonants, e.g.:

9. 'vivre' [vi:v]
'chose' [ʃu:z]
'chaise' [ʃe:z] or [ʃæ:z]
'pauvre' [po:v]
'âge' [ɑ:ʒ]

But these are of course long in other pre-consonantal environments as well, as we have seen. It must be noted that in terms of frequency, lexical items such as those exemplified in 8. are in the minority, the examples in 9. representing the most common pattern.

Although less general in extent, similar observations have been reported for Quebecois French. Dumas (1981:44) discusses diachronic and contemporary evidence of the variability of both phonological and phonetic lengethening before the consonants /v/ and /ʒ/. Boulanger (1986) reports on the non-lengthening of the high vowels [ɪ - ʏ - ʊ] in certain regional varieties.

The 'non-lengthening' of the lax vowels, although common to all the Nova Scotia Acadian varieties examined, appears to be subject to a standardizing influence, so that in some individuals lengthened vowels can be observed as well. There are however enough speakers of all ages who maintain the short vowels for this to be considered the basic pattern in the Acadian varieties considered.[13] The

basically non-lengthening nature of /ʒ/, for example, can be seen in the treatment of words such as 'neige' or 'collège.' When /e/ is used, it is long: [ne:ʒ], [kɔle:ʒ]. For speakers who use /ɛ/, the vowel is short: [nɛʒ], [kɔlɛʒ].

A number of words ending in /ɛv/ in Quebecois and SF have not /ɛ/ but /œ/ in Acadian, so that 'rêve' - 'lève' appear as [re:v] - [lœv] or [ræ:v] - [lœv] in the S.W. and N.W. varieties respectively. Here again the [œ] is very short, as it is in [fœv] 'fève,' [pœz] 'pèse' etc. as well.

3.4.2. Pretonic position

A characteristic of the prosodic system of the dialects studied is the prominence of pretonic syllables. In the context of our discussion here of the distribution of the tense/lax pairs, it is enlightening to examine which of the vowels are lengthened in this environment. From Table 1 it can be seen that the tense vowels can be long here too and that the lax vowels are not lengthened. This is an extremely complex point, however, in that all lexical items with tense vowels are not necessarily subject to lengthening. A thorough examination of the lexical distribution and stress patterning remains to be undertaken.

3.5 Raising of tense vowels, lowering of lax vowels

Two general tendencies of sound change, the raising of tense vowels and lowering of lax vowels, are well illustrated in Acadian. To some extent one could describe 'ouisme' in terms of the raising of [ɔ] and [o] rather than the lexical distribution of /u/ (See section 3.9). A similar case could be made for /ø/, which is raised to /y/ in [yrɔp] 'Europe,' [deʒyne] 'déjeuner,' etc. Both of these cases reflect diachronic processes and are common to all the Acadian varieties.

More to the point, however, is a change which affects the dialects variably: the overall raising of the high mid vowels, as described by King and Ryan (1986) for Prince Edward Island French. In Nova Scotia this is found mainly in Cheticamp, where the pronunciations of /e - ø - o/ are extremely closed. A similar raising can be observed in Northeastern New Brunswick. This is not the only feature which is similar in these varieties, and further comparisons, combined with research into settlement history, may

well bring out significant parallels. As an examination of Figure 1 will show, there is a relative geographic proximity between the communities in question.

The lowering of the high and mid lax vowels seems general. In the group of words 'icitte,' 'cecitte,' 'aussitte' etc. the vowel can be very open, and pronounced as [ɛ], more so in younger speakers. This is particularly noticeable in Pomquet, where it is in fact identical to the /ɛ/ of 'Pomquet' [pʊmtʃɛt]. Other /ɪ/s do not open to this extent and are distinct from /ɛ/ as are the pairs /ʊ/ and /ɔ/, /ʏ/ and /œ/.

There is a related tendency, also most pronounced in Pomquet, for the mid lax vowels /ɛ/, /œ/ and /ɔ/ to open, becoming unrounded in the process and converging towards /a/:

10.	'Noël'	[nwæl]	'seul'	[sɐl] ~	[sal]	'robes'	[rab]
	'avec'	[avæk]	'jeune'	[ʒɐn]		'étoffe'	[etaf]

3.6 Diphthongization

The diphthongization of the mid and high vowels in open syllables is characteristic of both the Pubnico and Meteghan varieties and has been well documented and analyzed by both Ryan (1981) and Landry (1985). Interestingly, informants from the various Argyle communities situated between these two villages do not have this diphthongization, which cannot thus be regarded as an overall Southwestern feature. To all extents and purposes, this process is also absent in the Central and Eastern varieties, although there is a limited tendency towards [ɔ^{w}] in closed syllables in Pomquet and Richmond. In Nova Scotia, then, diphthongization as a general process is confined to parts of the Southwestern area. It has not been attested in the Acadian varieties of the other Atlantic provinces.

There are some systematic differences between the Pubnico and Meteghan varieties. The most important one is that whereas the two coincide in diphthongizing all the [+tense, -low] vowels in open syllables, this process is extended in Meteghan to closed syllables in the case of some of the vowels. We thus have, for /o/ and /e/ for example:

		Pu	Me
11.	'peau'	[pɔ^{w}]	[pɔ^{w}]
	'faute'	[fo:t]	[fɔ^{w}t]
	'été'	[etɛ^{j}]	[etɛ^{j}]
	'quête'	[tʃe:t]	[tʃɛ^{j}t]

In addition to the fact that diphthongization is only present in a small number of the Acadian varieties, the contrast with Quebecois French also lies in the nature and distribution of the process involved. As described by Dumas (1981), diphthongization in Quebecois French can take place, subject to various constraints, in the case of all long vowels, in closed syllables and non-final open syllables. In Acadian French, the only vowels which diphthongize in closed syllables are /e/, /ø/ and /o/; this is limited to the Baie Sainte-Marie area, as described by Ryan (1981). The privileged context for diphthongization is in open syllables, internal as well as final, where high and mid tense vowels are all subject to diphthongization both in Baie Sainte-Marie and Pubnico (Landry 1985).

The presence of diphthongization has implications in terms of the realizations of the oppositions between the mid and high vowels. Whereas the raising of the tense vowels in varieties such as that of Cheticamp brings /e/ extremely close to /i/, /ø/ to /y/ and /o/ to /u/, the diphthongized variants are far more distinct, because of the greater distance between the onsets, related to the vowel quality of the corresponding lax vowels. Thus we have e.g. [ɪ^{j}] - [ɛ^{j}] in the Southwest vs. [i] - [e̞] in Cheticamp. (The Pomquet and Richmond varieties have neither the raising nor the diphthongization).

Another point where there is a sharper realizational difference in the varieties which diphthongize is in the case of the opposition /o/ - /ɑ/. /ɑ/ is extremely backed overall, becoming [ɒ] or [o]. However in the Southwestern dialects the realizations /o/ -> [ɔ^{w}] (often [ɛ^{w}]) and /ɑ/ -> [o] are always distinct, in contrast to the minimal differentiation found in Cheticamp: /o/ ->[o̞] and /ɑ/ -> [o].

3.7 Rounding of /ɛ/

A phenomenon apparently common to all varieties of Acadian but not commented on explicitly in most existing descriptions because it is linked to a lexical set and not to a phonological context, is the [œ] in the set 'fève,' 'lève,' 'appelle' etc. A

generalization based on the presence of a labial consonant following or preceding the vowel could be considered, since many of the words have these conditions present, as shown in the list below:

12.	'pèse'	[pœz]	'fève'	[fœv]
	'fesse' (v.)	[fœs]	'lève'	[lœv]
	'appelle'	[apœl]	'achève'	[aʒœv]
	'mène'	[mœn]	'trèfle'	[trœf]

A similar process of labialization has been described by Pignon (1960) for Poitou. However, other lexical items with the same phonological structure have /ɛ/, e.g. 'fesse'(s.),'élève' (s.), 'pelle,' 'semaine.' This distribution would seem to indicate that the lexical set containing /œ/ is the result of a diachronic process which did involve the labial environment.

An important aspect is that verbal alternations are involved, e.g., [ləve] 'lever' / [lœv] 'lève,' [ʒəte] 'jeter' / [ʒœt] 'jette.' This alternation is also seen in the verb 'faire': [fəzɛ] / [fœz] ('faisait' - 'faise'). Brunot (1967, vol. 2:244), sees this historically as a maintaining of [ə]. However verbs such as 'fesser' and 'sécher' have [œ] in the stem as well ([fœse], [ʃœse]) and there are also nouns which reflect the same process, e.g. 'fève,' 'trèfle,' 'lièvre.'

This redistribution of /ɛ/ and /œ/ strengthens the weak /œ/ - /ø/ opposition, adding forms such as [pœz] 'pèse' which contrast with words ending in [øz] '-euse.'

3.8 Fronting of /ɔ/

A likely more recent process, involving centralization or fronting, is one which is specific to Cheticamp, among the Nova Scotia dialects, but which has also been encountered by the author in Northeastern New Brunswick.[14] This can be viewed as a synchronic process which affects /ɔ/ in most environments, i.e. in both stressed and unstressed syllables and before all consonants except /r/, e.g.

13.	'école'	[ekœl]	'collège'	[kœleʒ]
	'Ecosse'	[ekœs]	'social'	[sœsjal]
	'poche'	[pœʃ]	'brocher'	[bʁœʃe]
	'Europe'	[yʁœp]	'adapter'	[adœpte]

Followed by /r/, /ɔ/ most often maintains its [ɔ] quality, as in [pɔʁte] 'porter,' though some realizations with [œ] exist, e.g. [mœʁy] 'morue.' Thus /ɔ/ and /œ/ are almost completely

neutralized.[15] Established English loanwords also undergo the process, e.g. [bœt] 'boat,' [lœt] 'lot,' having first become phonologically integrated with the vowel /ɔ/.

Of particular interest are the pre-nasal environments, where there is interaction with the variable rule changing /u/ to /ɔ/ i.e. standardizing. When this rule is applied, fronting of /ɔ/ also takes place. Thus u -> ɔ -> œ, which explains the presence of two non-standard variants in the 'ouisme' lexical set, e.g. [dun] ~[dœn] 'donne,' as shown in the following section.

There is to some extent a parallel process for /ʊ/ in Cheticamp. The vowel of 'toute,' for example, is quite fronted. However, speakers still distinguish /ʊ/ from /ʏ/ as in 'boutte' - 'butte.'

3.9 Ouisme

'Ouisme' is one of the most universal Acadian characteristics, reported on as early as 1884 by Poirier, and one which distinguishes Acadian from Quebecois. The present study shows it to be represented in all the Nova Scotia dialects. Treated by Lucci (1973), for example, as a neutralization of /u/, /ɔ/ and /o/ in pre-nasal environments, it also touches the lexical set 'chose,' 'ôter,' 'rôti,' 'gros,' 'os,' 'obliger,' etc. If this feature were seen simply in terms of the distribution of /u/, a variable rule would govern the standardizing tendency towards /ɔ/ and /o/. Further rules affecting /ɔ/ would apply subsequently, such as fronting in Cheticamp and lowering in Pomquet, giving, for example, [um] -> [ɔm] -> [œm] and [um] -> [ɔm] -> [am] respectively for 'homme.'

A raising rule offers certain advantages, however. Ryan (1981) points out that the neutralization of /o/, /ɔ/ and /u/ when followed by a nasal is ony partial, for two reasons. One is the existence of oppositions such as /pom/ 'paume' - /pum/ 'pomme.' This problem could be solved by having a raising rule apply only to /ɔ/ in the ___N# context, but to /o/ as well as /ɔ/ in the ___NV environment (e.g. 'homard' 'connaître'), and in the 'chose,' 'ôter' lexical set.

A second point raised by Ryan is that the realization of /ɛ̃/ in stressed syllables, which is regularly [ɔn] in the Meteghan dialect (as in 'demain' /dəmɛ̃/ -> [dəmɔn] or 'pain' /pɛ̃/ -> [pɔn]), results in an opposition between the word 'ben' (= 'bien') realized as [bɔn] and 'bonne' [bun]. If [bɔn] is derived through a rule changing /ɛ̃/ to [ɔn] in stressed final position (see Patterson 1978a and 1978b), it could simply be specified that the output from this rule does not feed the raising rule changing [ɔn] to [un].

4. Nasal Vowels

A predominantly stress-determined pattern, whereby the nasal vowels alternate between distinct realizations according to the phonological context, has been described for a number of varieties of Acadian: Southeastern N.B. (Lucci 1973), Northeastern N.B. (Flikeid 1985), Meteghan, N.S. (Ryan 1981), Petit-Ruisseau, N.S. (Landry 1981), Pubnico, N.S. (Landry 1985), Evangeline and Tignish, P.E.I. (King and Ryan 1986), Stephenville, Nfld. (King and Ryan 1987b). In all these varieties, this pattern also entails the partial neutralization of the phonemes /ɑ̃/ and /ɔ̃/. Interesting to note is the existence of localities where this neutralization does not take place: parts of the Acadian Peninsula in Northeastern N.B. (Flikeid 1985), certain villages in Southeastern N.B. (Peronnet 1985b), and in the Newfoundland community of l'Anse-à-Canards (King and Ryan 1987b).

The present study of the Nova Scotia varieties reveals that in all the communities examined, one or more of the nasal vowels conform to the general pattern of alternation described above. This often entails neutralization, but interestingly this process turns out not to be confined to the /ɔ̃/ - /ɑ̃/ opposition. In the village of Petit de Grat in Richmond, for example, /ɑ̃/ and /ɛ̃/ are neutralized, both opposed to /ɔ̃/. In Cheticamp, all the nasals are neutralized in final stressed position, with a common realization [ã].[16] There are also communities in several different areas of the province where the stressed forms are all distinct from the unstressed ones, but without any of the realizations coinciding.[17]

There are thus contrasts between the different localities with respect to several aspects: which phonological opposition(s) become neutralized, which phonetic realizations are found and in which environments the different variants appear. This is a point where a great deal of geographic variation in present. Twenty-one localities have been examined, which offer almost as many subsystems.

4.1 Types of realizations

An interesting discussion concerning the derivations of the realizations of Acadian nasals is that of Landry (1981). Describing a Baie Sainte-Marie community north of Meteghan, Landry draws on the work of Morin (1977) who analyses the nasals of an area of France, the Marais Vendéen, from which many Acadians are thought to have come. Landry derives the Petit-Ruisseau nasal variants [ɛ̃^{w}] and [ɔn] in the following manner:

14. $\tilde{\varepsilon}$ -> $\tilde{o\jmath}$ -> ɔn cf. Morin: $\tilde{e}$ -> $\tilde{a\jmath}$ -> an
$\tilde{ɔ}$ -> $\tilde{\varepsilon^{w}}$ $\tilde{ɔ}$ -> $\tilde{a^{w}}$ -> aŋ

Landry (1985) subsequently describes the Pubnico variety, where the intermediate stage [$\tilde{o^{j}}$] is the present-day realization, so that we have $\tilde{\varepsilon}$ -> $\tilde{o^{j}}$ and $\tilde{ɔ}$ -> $\tilde{\varepsilon^{w}}$.

Complementary to this is the evidence brought forth by the present study that in numerous communities the stressed realization of either /$\tilde{a}$/ or /$\tilde{ɔ}$/ or both is [aŋ] (or [ɛŋ]), parallel to that described by Morin. These include villages located between Pubnico and Clare in the Southwestern area, as well as communities in the Pomquet area and in Richmond. In addition, this form is found in use by some older speakers in communities where the present-day predominant pattern does not include it, notably in Meteghan. Although the diphthongized variants are predominantly concentrated in the Southwest, they are also found in the village of Pomquet itself and in several Richmond communities. There are thus a number of areas where [$\tilde{\varepsilon^{w}}$] and [ɛŋ] either coexist as realizations of the same phoneme in the same community or are found in closely neighboring communities.[18] Table 2 on the following page will give an indication of the geographic complexity.

These observations do not represent individual fluctuations, but community-wide patterns, indicative of the remarkable stability of intercommunity differences. The nasal vowels represent an excellent starting-point for examining the fine patterning of dialectal differences in Nova Scotia, and the charting of the realizations is only the first step towards a more thorough investigation.

The table also shows clearly the contrasts between villages separated by only a few kilometres in regard to which phonological oppositions are neutralized in stressed position. This is the case on Ile Madame in Richmond, and also in the Argyle area. As mentioned above, villages where all the realizations remain distinct in stressed position are also found in these and other areas: they include among others Pointe du Sault in Argyle, Tracadie in the Pomquet area and at least two communities in Richmond.

		/ɑ̃/		/ɔ̃/		/ɛ̃/
Clare	Concession	[ãʲ]	≠	[ɛ̃ʷ̃]	≠	[ɔn]
	Meteghan	[ɛ̃ŋ][a]	≠	[ɛ̃ʷ̃]	≠	[ɔn]
		[ɛ̃ʷ̃]	=	[ɛ̃ʷ̃]	≠	[ɔn]
Argyle	Hubbard's Point, Wedgeport	[ãŋ]	=	[ãŋ]	≠	[ɔn]
	Pointe du Sault	[ãŋ]	≠	[œ̃ŋ]	≠	[ɔn]
	Quinan	[ãŋ]	=	[ãŋ]	≠	[ãʲ̃]
	Ile Surrette	[ɛ̃ŋ]	=	[ɛ̃ŋ]	≠	[ɔ̃ʲ̃]
	Pubnico Ouest	[ɛ̃ʷ̃]	=	[ɛ̃ʷ̃]	≠	[ɔ̃ʲ̃]
	Ste Anne du Ruisseau	[ɛ̃ʷ̃]	=	[ɛ̃ʷ̃]	≠	[ãʲ̃]
Pomquet	Pomquet	[ɛ̃ʷ̃]	=	[ɛ̃ʷ̃]	≠	[ɛ̃]
		[ã]	=	[ã]	≠	[ɛ̃]
	East Tracadie, Havre Boucher	[ãŋ]	=	[ãŋ]	≠	[ɛ̃]
	Tracadie	[ã:ɲ]	≠	[ɔ̃ŋ]	≠	[ɛ̃]
Richmond	Samsonville	[ɑ̃ɲ]	≠	[ɔ̃ŋ]	≠	[an]
	Rivière Bourgeois	[ɑ̃ʲ̃]	≠	[ɔ̃ŋ]	≠	[æ̃]
	Ardoise, D'Escousse, Arichat Ouest	[ãŋ]	=	[ãŋ]	≠	[ɛ̃]
	Louisdale	[ɛ̃ã̃]	≠	[ɔ̃ŋ]	≠	[ɛ̃ã̃][b]
	Petit de Grat	[æ̃]	≠	[ãŋ]	≠	[æ̃][b]
Cheticamp		[ã]	=	[ã]	=	[ã]

Table 2. Realizations of the Nasal Vowels in Stressed Open Syllables (Nova Scotia Acadian Communities)

a. The nasalization symbols are included here, although in the V + N forms, the vowels are often denasalized.

b. Note the neutralization here of /ɑ̃/ and /ɛ̃/.

In addition to the V + [ŋ] forms found for both /ɔ̃/ and /ɑ̃/, and the V + [n] forms found for /ɛ̃/, there are realizations of /ɑ̃/ with [ɲ] as the consonantal segment in several communities. [ãʲ̃] and [ãɲ] are both found as variants of /ɑ̃/ in widely scattered points: the Baie Sainte-Marie community of Concession, the Richmond communities of Rivière Bourgeois and Samsonville, and Tracadie in the Pomquet area. We thus have a possibility of divergent developments:

15. ɑ̃ -> ãʷ̃ -> aŋ and ɑ̃ -> ãʲ̃ -> aɲ

The most plausible explanation to account for this would appear to be that in the second case we first have a fronting and raising of /ɑ̃/ to [æ̃] or [ɛ̃], which would then follow a development similar to that of /ɛ̃/, except that [ɲ] rather than [n] becomes the consonantal segment. Neighboring Richmond communities actually have [ɛ̃] as the stressed variant of /ɑ̃/.

Special consideration must be given to the variants of the sequence /wɛ̃/. Haden (1954) and Landry (1985) both point out the distinct nature of words such as 'point,' 'loin,' as does Svenson (1959) for the Marais Vendéen dialect. Geographically varying realizations of this lexical set can be charted in several of the Nova Scotia varieties examined. In Wedgeport, Argyle, we find /wɛ̃/ realized as [un] (e.g. [bəzun] 'besoin') in contrast to the realization of /ɛ̃/, which is [ɔn]. In Pointe du Sault, Argyle, the equivalent realization is [uʲ̇n] (e.g. [luʲ̇n] 'loin'). In Samsonville, Richmond, we find [pɔʲ̇n] 'point' (/ɛ̃/ is realized [an]).

4.2 Historical perspective

A real time comparison is made possible by the existence of data collected by Massignon in the 1940's in many areas of the Atlantic Provinces. Some of this is described in her 1947 article on the Southwestern Nova Scotia nasal vowels, but it has also been necessary to sift through the phonetic notations in her 1962 vocabulary study for words containing the nasal vowels. The main geographical points in Nova Scotia where Massignon gathered information were Pointe de l'Eglise, Pubnico, Petit de Grat, Cheticamp and Chezzetcook. The predominantly older speakers she interviewed were born approximately 100 years earlier than the youngest informants in the present study. The most striking observation brought out by the systematic comparison is that the

presence of the V + [ŋ] variants was more extensive than it is today. Notably Massignon gives [ɔŋ][19] in addition to [ɑ̃] as the stressed variant of /ɔ̃/ in Cheticamp, and [ɑ̃ŋ] as a variant of both /ɑ̃/ and /ɛ̃/ in Petit de Grat. She notes [ɛ̃ŋ] as the only variant of /ɑ̃/ in Pointe de l'Eglise and both /ɛ̃ŋ/ and /ɛ̃^{w}/ in Pubnico. In all four cases the present-day predominant realizations are different, as shown in 16. below:

16.

	1940 (Massignon)		Present
Cheticamp	'fond'	[fɔŋ]	[fɑ̃]
	'mouton'	[mutɑ̃]	[mutɑ̃]
Petit de Grat	'pesant'	[pəzɑ̃ŋ]	[pəzæ̃]
	'chalin'	[ʃalɑ̃ŋ]	[ʃalæ̃]
Pointe de l'Eglise	'vent'	[vɛ̃ŋ]	[vɛ̃ŋ] ~ [vɛ̃$^{w̃}$][20]
Pubnico	'temps'	[tɛ̃ŋ] [tɛ̃$^{w̃}$] ~	[tɛ̃$^{w̃}$]

In addition to the [ɑ̃ʲ̃] variant of /ɛ̃/, the [ɑ̃ɲ] variant is also attested by Massignon (Ste Anne du Ruisseau). The most interesting case of intraspeaker or intracommunity variation is the case of Chezzetcook, where Massignon's two informants jointly produced all of the following variants of /ɑ̃/: [ẽ], [ẽɲ], [ẽ$^{w̃}$], [ẽŋ] and [ɑ̃ŋ]!.[21]

Another real time comparison can be made with the observations of Haden based on material gathered in 1940-41 and described in Haden (1954, 1973). He concentrates on the Nova Scotia community of Pointe du Sault, Argyle, where he gives [ɛ̃ŋ], [ɑ̃ʲ̃], [œ̃ŋ] and [uɲ] as the principal variants of /ɑ̃/, /ɛ̃/, /ɔ̃/ and /wɛ̃/ respectively, in addition to other, secondary, variants. These observations correspond to those found in the present study, except for the /ɛ̃/, which was found to be realized as [ɔn]. The form Haden gives corresponds to the one being used in neighboring communities, as can be seen in Table 2.

In general, it is perhaps not irrelevant that there is fluctuation in the Acadian varieties between [n], [ŋ], [ɲ] and [j] for /ɲ/, as in the words 'agneau' or 'soigne.' It should also be noted that acoustically the realizations [ɛ̃$^{w̃}$] and [ɛ̃ŋ] are extremely

close, sharing a velar coarticulation. Although the realizations of the informants can most often be unambiguously classified as one or the other, there are cases where the two are difficult to distinguish. A few informants, notably in Meteghan, where as we have seen there appears to have been a change from [ɛ̃ŋ] to [ɛ̃^{w}], distinctly alternate between the two forms.

4.3 Overview of the nasal vowels

There are clear-cut, stabilized patterns in the younger generation, e.g. fusion of /ɑ̃/, /ɔ̃/ and /ɛ̃/ as [ã] in Cheticamp; fusion of /ɑ̃/ and /ɛ̃/ as [æ̃] in Petit de Grat, with a distinct realization of /ɔ̃/ as [aŋ]; fusion of /ɑ̃/ and /ɔ̃/ as [ɛ̃^{w}] in Pubnico and Meteghan with a distinct realization of /ɛ̃/ as [ɔn] in Meteghan, [ɔ̃^{j}] in Pubnico.

Attested change (both through apparent time and real time approaches) mainly consists of the partial disappearance of the V + [ŋ] forms either through dropping of the [ŋ] segment for some or all of the nasals as in Richmond and Cheticamp, or through adoption of the competing diphthongized form as in Pubnico and Meteghan. If the derivation: simple nasal vowel -> nasalized diphthong -> V + N reflects the diachronic evolution, to which one could add a final optional step: -> simple nasal vowel, then we have all four stages represented in various geographical locations. The presence of the diphthongized variants and V + N as competing forms, with the diphthongized variants winning out over the period of 100 years we have access to is particularly interesting. In the discussion of the potential case for historical unity of the dialects, we will come back to this point.

5. Consonants

As is often the case when describing varieties of French, there is more to be said about the vowel system than the consonant system. The interdialectal differences found in the case of the consonants are often purely realizational. There is however an important process to be discussed: affrication, one of the features singled out by Poirier in his pioneering 1884 article.

5.1 Affrication

Affrication is a feature common to all described Acadian varieties, and it is thus not surprising that it is present in all the Nova Scotia varieties examined. It is subject to very little geographic variation, except for some minor differences in the lexical sets involved. The pattern common to all the varieties can be summarized as follows: [tʃ] and [dʒ] are found in a number of words where SF has [k] or [tj] on the one hand and [g] or [dj] on the other. One set of items, those which correspond to SF [k] or [g], can be defined in terms of the following phonological environment: __ [-back, -low] (e.g. [tʃø], 'queue,' [dʒɛte] 'guetter'). The others, where the affricates correspond to SF [tj] or[dj], can have any vowel, e.g. [dʒɒb] 'diable' [pitʃe] 'pitié.' Before the non-low front vowels we can thus find [tʃ] and [dʒ] belonging to either set, e.g. [otʃɛ̃] 'aucun,' [tʃɛ̃] 'tien.'

Both Lucci (1973) and Ryan (1981) conclude that these are 'variantes combinatoires' of [k] [g] and [tj] [dj] despite the phonetic identity, which they comment upon explicitly as being compatible with this analysis in the structuralist perspective. A major justification for their analysis is that variation is present in the community and they feel that speakers are aware of the 'underlying' consonant or sequence, even when they do not themselves alternate. This in itself is perhaps not sufficient reason for not giving phonemic status to [tʃ] and [dʒ]. Variation is present for many features presented as regular, and need not constitute a reason for not discerning the underlying regularity.

If one postulates the phonemes /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ as basic to Acadian, as do Haden (1973) and Morgan (1978), then a variable rule changing these to [k], [tj], [g] and [dj] in the appropriate lexical sets can be postulated. The fact that these sets have to be learned corresponds to the situation many Acadian speakers find themselves in. The Nova Scotia corpus shows there to be very little variation among younger speakers in informal style. In a situation provoking maximal accommodation to a SF speaker, there is evidence of incomplete mastery of equivalent forms. Many words are known to be in alternation, but many are not i.e. those not encountered in a school situation. Other factors to be considered include lexicalization (e.g. the regular opposition between [tʃi] as in 'n'importe qui' and [ki] as in 'ceux qui parlent'), and the fact that more recently incorporated lexical items are not subject to affrication (see also Flikeid 1988).

5.1.1. Other processes involving stops

Although some overlap has been pointed out, strong isoglosses set affrication off as Acadian and assibilation as Quebecois (see Morgan 1978). An interesting finding reported on in King and Ryan (1986) is the presence of [t^s] and [d^z] in the Prince Edward Island Acadian communities, pointing to a more complex situation. Morgan (1978:89) states that there is regular assibilation in Louisiana Acadian French as well. No trace of assibilation has been found in the Nova Scotia corpus.

Aspiration of the stops is a characteristic of many of the Acadian varieties in Nova Scotia, as in [p^hi:r] 'pire' or [t^he] 'thé.' Another feature, described by Holder (1986), is the realization [χ] of the phoneme /k/, as in 'le canot' [lə χano]. This is found in a number of localities across Nova Scotia.

5.2 /h/

The phoneme /h/ is present in all the varieties examined; it is strongly maintained everywhere, in approximately the same lexical set, e.g. 'hardes,' 'haler,' 'honte,' 'hâvre,' 'hors' etc. In intervocalic position, there is a tendency for /h/ to be absent, particularly in Cheticamp: where, [do:ʁ] is the regular form of 'dehors,' while it is [dəho^{w}r] in Meteghan, and sequences such as 'le homard' are by many speakers realized [lumɑʁ].

5.3 /r/

The contrasts involving /r/ are predominantly realizational, although at least one of the processes to be discussed, the deletion of final /r/, has phonological implications. An examination of the overall picture is nevertheless interesting, because of the clear-cut regional differences, and the ongoing changes involved.

5.3.1. The distribution of [ʁ] and [r]

A sharp contrast appears between Cheticamp on the one hand, with its uniform use of dorsal /r/, and all the other areas, where apical /r/ is the basic form. There is a clear-cut dividing line, except for minor irregularities: in the strongly assimilated villages

south of Cheticamp, such as Magré, the remaining older speakers have [r], and in Pomquet there are some speakers with [ʁ].

Is the Cheticamp [ʁ] the result of a recent change which has reached completion? Flikeid (1982) reports on a rapid shift from [r] to [ʁ] in the Acadian area of Northeastern New Brunswick, studied through the apparent time approach. It is not inconceivable that a similar process could have taken place in Cheticamp. Massignon (1962:110) says of /r/: 'Le r Acadien est un r apical....' She would undoubtedly have noticed if there had been another realization in Cheticamp. Can the r -> ʁ process have been completed in the ca. 40 years which separate Massignon's informants (older speakers) from the older speakers in the present study? If so, the change presumably started in the syllable-final environment, as it did in Northeastern New Brunswick. There, speakers who had not shifted completely to [ʁ] had [ʁ] and [r] in complementary distribution, with [ʁ] syllable-finally and [r] elsewhere. A confirmation of this lies in the following comment by Massignon (1962:110): 'le r final est peu perceptible et tend à se dorsaliser.' She is here speaking generally, of the whole Acadian area. A limited tendency towards a dorsal variant is in fact found among speakers in Pomquet and Richmond. However, in these areas the shift from [r] to [ɹ], to be discussed below, has interrupted any potential shift from [r] to [ʁ].

5.3.2 Weakening and deletion of final /r/

A process which can be observed in several of the Nova Scotia varieties is the weakening and deletion of final /r/. This process must be distinguished from the diachronic process which presumably led to the lexical sets in [we] and [ø] e.g. 'mouchoir,' 'pêcheur,' or the group of infinitives in /i/, e.g. [kri] 'quérir.' These are older, lexicalized phenomena. Nor is it the same as the process which has led to the absence of /r/ as a second element of a final consonant cluster, e.g. in 'battre,' 'ancre.'

Rather, it is a generalized tendency towards a zero variant, in variation with devoiced or vocalized variants of [ʁ] or [r]. This tendency is most marked in Cheticamp, Richmond and Pomquet. In Cheticamp there is also the variant [ə] as in [pu^{ə}] 'pour.'

It was pointed out above that the final pre-R and open environments are remarkably similar in regard to the distribution of the tense-lax vowel pairs. This leads to words such as 'peu' and 'peur' being distinguished by length only, if at all, when the zero variant of /r/ is used. In Pomquet, where final /r/ before a

pause is entirely absent in the youngest generation, and where the /ɛ/ - /e/ opposition in closed syllables has disappeared, words such as 'frère' and 'frais' merge as [fræ]. A point where the breakdown of the /r/ - zéro distinction is particularly problematic is in the passé simple and past subjunctive, where only /r/ distinguishes singular from plural, as in /i passi/ 'il passa' - /i passir/ 'ils passèrent.' When going through the transcribed corpus in the correction process, numerous cases were found where a plural was initially interpreted as a singular by the transcribers but which could be identified as plural through the context.

5.3.3 R retroflexing

R retroflexing is manifestly a change in progress, which has come to completion in some areas. It consists of a change from apical r to retroflex, 'English' r, and thus affects all the [r] areas, but not the [ʁ] areas. Apparently it does not affect the dorsalized or zero final variants either. There is thus a limited set of circumstances where there is variation between [r], [ʁ] and [ɹ], i.e. in speakers from Richmond and Pomquet communities where word-final /r/ is realized [ʁ], who alternate between [r] and [ɹ] in other environments.

This retroflexing process is a rapid one. When the youngest speakers are contrasted with the oldest, it is obvious that great change has taken place. This is particularly striking when the speech of the interviewers, who are all about twenty years old, is compared to that of the older informants being interviewed. In Pomquet, Richmond and Pubnico the young have almost completely generalized [ɹ]. The environment which most favors retroflexing, and where the [ɹ] variant first appears, is the internal pre-consonantal environment, particularly after a back vowel. This is the environment where Tousignant (1987) finds the [ɹ] variant in Montreal French. However in the Nova Scotia varieties where the retroflexing process is taking place, intraspeaker alternation between [r] and [ɹ], or the complete replacement of [r] by [ɹ], can take place in any environment, as illustrated by the following examples: [tɹɛn] 'traine,' [byɹo] 'bureau,' [manjeɹ] 'manière.'

There appears to be a difference among the various regions with respect to the time of inception of this process. More older speakers have some or all [ɹ] in Pubnico and Richmond than in Pomquet. It is not to be denied that these are the areas where intimate daily contact with English has been the greatest, over the longest period of time. The checkerboard pattern of settlement can be seen particularly well for the Argyle area on the map in

Figure 2. Pomquet, although small, was quite isolated and self-contained until increased mobility started leading to rapid assimilation. There is rapid assimilation in Richmond and Argyle as well, though in the larger communities such as Pubnico and Petit de Grat, French is maintained, in a bilingual setting, with a resulting long-term situation of language contact.

Here again a quantitative study is necessary to show the progression of the change, through the various environments and through the lexicon. Non-quantitative observation shows the same words to be variably realized with [r] or [ɹ] in the same speakers. It is obvious that the spreading of the change through the environments and the lexicon is at different stages in different places, speakers and age groups. One difficulty is that some variants are difficult to identify, and there are very likely more, phonetically intermediate, variants than those discussed here.

6. Discussion

The new elements gathered and analyzed here enable a more thorough discussion of general issues in Acadian phonology. As we have seen, the Nova Scotia varieties span a great range in terms of interdialectal differences at every level considered. An important aspect of this discussion is the historical one, which will now be examined in some detail.

6.1 Historical change and change in progress

In the study of the evolution of a language or dialect, both internal and external evidence can be brought to bear. Based on the settlement history, models of reconstitution such as that of Barbaud (1984) can be elaborated. Trudgill's 1986 examination of situations of dialect transplantation shows how important the relative numerical proportions of the various groups involved in a dialect mixture situation can be to the end result. Internal evidence is equally important, in this case comparing present-day Acadian with earlier stages of French and other transplanted varieties. Starting with the internal evidence, different types of change can be distinguished:

1. There are features which appear to be common to all Nova Scotia and other Acadian dialects (and some to other exported varieties as well). A logical conclusion would be that these preceded the Deportation or even the initial arrival in Acadia. Examination of

historical sources show that many of these were often quite wide-spread in France and would thus have been shared by most of the settlers. Examples are [wɛ], [tʃ], [dʒ], [u], [h], [ar], vowel length, pretonic lengthening, many of the distributional features. The ALF shows many of these to cover a large area. A theory would be that those features found only in Acadian would have been less widespread in France than those found in other varieties, e.g. Quebecois, as well. Those found in only some areas of Acadia (and elsewhere) would have had a more restricted range in France, e.g. the diphthongs, the stressed nasal variants and the [χ] and [ɦ] variants of the palatal fricatives.

2. There are processes which are most likely to have taken place after the initial settlement, in particular after the Deportation and resettlement, since the geographical distribution of the Acadian population has been relatively stable since then and the development of the individual varieties continuous up until the present day. Our knowledge of the linguistic developments in pre-Deportation Acadia can only be based on reconstitution, i.e. if features were found in all Acadian dialects, which were not attested in the source dialects in France. Unless total linguistic unity had been achieved by the Deportation, then some degree of dialect mixture based on the varying composition of the new groupings of settlers may account for the present-day regional differences. Massignon, who was familiar both with the Acadian dialects (ca. 1940) and those of the Centre-Ouest (she was co-editor of the Atlas Linguistique de l'Ouest), although her initial focus was the lexicon, appears to have given a great deal of thought to this matter. She postulates a thorough 'brassage' (mixing) of the various population elements before the Deportation and thus feels that it is useless to attempt to trace the characteristics of regional Acadian differences to the specific French origins of the families whose names predominate in a particular area (1962:72). She attributes the present-day differences entirely to changes having taken place, different in each isolated area, since the resettlement (p. 91). It is however more likely that the 'brassage' was not complete, and that in addition to the subsequent changes in the isolated dialects, the original mixture of settlers at the resettlement phase had some bearing. It is important too that this included non-'Acadian' elements having come directly from France.

Processes that might well have take place since the resettlement could include those which involve the generalization of [ɛ] lowering, the raising of tense vowels and lowering of lax, with a concomitant shift from vowel length to vowel quality as the determining feature, the fronting of [ɔ] and the change from [r] to [ʁ].

3. Some processes can be seen to be ongoing. A first category may well include processes which have their root in the post-Deportation adjustments, e.g. the settling of the nasal consonant/nasalized glide variation, and the backing of lowered /ɛ/ to [ɒ]. A second category of processes are those which may be attributed to the recent accelerated contact with English, e.g. the change from [r] to [ɹ], the aspiration of the stops, certain changes in vowel quality. A third category, broad in scope, comprises the changes brought about by the contact with more standard varieties of French. This contact is variable in extent and date of inception, both among regions and among speakers of different ages and social/educational background.

All of these categories are best studied quantitatively, through the examination of the age-graded corpus. This is the object of ongoing work, particularly on the diffusion through different contexts and through the lexicon. The alternations involving changes towards external prestige forms are being studied in their sociolinguistic dimension and expressed through variable rules. This will also show up the difference between processes on their way to completion, generalized among the youngest speakers, e.g. the fusion of [ɛ], [ɛ:] and [e] in closed syllables in Pomquet and Richmond, or the loss of the consonantal segments of the nasal vowels in Richmond and Cheticamp. Although these changes are seemingly standard-initiated, the contrast is strong with another group of variables where there is no age-grading, but stylistic alternation, e.g. [tʃ] ~ [k], [u] ~ [ɔ]. Since Pomquet and Richmond are the least standardizing with respect to these and other points, as well as with respect to the grammatical features examined, perhaps the first processes mentioned are rather to be seen as a result of dialect levelling or internal change, than as a result of a standardizing influence.

7. Conclusion

7.1 Unity and diversity

The Acadian varieties may be conservative, but they are not static. The diachronic pattern leading to the present-day varieties of Acadian has many threads, some of which have been identified in this article. Features found consistently in all the Nova Scotia varieties, cut off from each other for 200 years, as well as in other Acadian communities, very likely represent threads which were already woven in France before the original settlers migrated. Where differences are found, a number of possibilities can be sketched out, either (a) that there were divergent developments,

developments at a different rate, dropping of features at a different rate, as Massignon suggests, or (b) that the resettlement after the Deportation brought together individuals and families who still had differences among themselves, so that new dialect mixtures took place in each new locality.

The situation of the Acadian speech communities is unique for several reasons. Firstly, the isolation and lack of contact with the outside francophone world has led to present-day dialects which are considerably removed from other dialects of modern French, in terms of preservation of features which have disappeared elsewhere. Secondly, because of the Deportation and resettlement, the natural evolution over time that an exported variety would take was cut off and the components thoroughly shuffled, so that understanding the evolution becomes an even more intricate puzzle than elsewhere. Thirdly, the physical isolation of the various groups from each other has led to independent developments (in addition to original differences?) which render them quite distinct. The focus in this article has been on finding the underlying common patterns for surface differences. However, in actual practice, there are considerable barriers to mutual understanding. Speakers from the various communities, particularly those furthest apart, do have difficulty understanding each other. Accommodation does take place in face to face contact. Acadian students from different communities who have worked on the Nova Scotia research project have been observed to communicate fairly easily with each other, but be totally unable to follow, let alone transcribe, recorded interviews from one anothers' communities.

One type of change that there has been little direct mention of in this article is the change towards external prestige forms. This is partly because such change is best studied quantitatively or not at all, and that will be the object of further work. Also, in the series of interviews on which this article is based, all the interviewers were from the same community as their informants. Due to the internal linguistic cohesion of the communities, little variation with prestige forms takes place. This type of variation shows up mainly in style shift/accommodation situations.

The type of change that has been exemplified in this article is internal change, which is particularly interesting because the direction of change or the elements which will be affected cannot be predicted in the way change towards prestige forms can. In addition, it provides more elements towards solving the puzzle of the evolution of the Acadian dialects.

7.2 Perspectives

Research is continuing within the Nova Scotia project in a number of different directions. In order to better understand the diachronic pattern, quantitative study of the existing corpus is being carried out, focusing on the patterns of change and the exact lexical distributions. Related activities include filling in the last remaining gaps in the Nova Scotia geographical grid and obtaining as much information as possible on the source dialects in France. Parallel work continues on exploring the best manner of combining dialect features to determine linguistic distance, and ultimately using these distance measures to understand the divergent developments. With respect to synchronic description, the main thrust of the study lies in identifying which sociolinguistic patterns exist, how the communities differ and to what extent structures are parallel, what form stylistic variation takes, and how the Acadian features selectively resist current factors of change.

As to the main topic of this article, the description of Acadian phonology per se, it is hoped that the discussion has brought out more clearly the different levels at which inter-regional contrasts may exist, and has given an indication of the points where a unified analysis is appropriate. To those familiar with Quebecois French, points of similarity and divergence with this variety will have become apparent. It is also hoped that this article has drawn attention to the uniqueness of the Acadian speech communities in the North American context, both in terms of their intricate linguistic history and, particularly in the case of the isolated Nova Scotia communities, in terms of the fine geographic patterning for the most part firmly preserved to the present day.

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FOOTNOTES

[1]A number of villages remain to be represented both within the identified major regions and outside of these, during the final stage of data gathering to take place this summer. Additional younger speakers will also be interviewed in the localities already visited.

[2]For a discussion of the relationship between salience and phonological contrast in regard to dialect contact situations, see also Trudgill (1986). Milroy (1980, 1987) describes the use of lexical sets in the delimitation of sociolinguistic variables.

[3]To use the symbol advocated by Santerre (1974).

[4]The diphthongization of the vowel which is found in the Baie Sainte-Marie communties in this environment is not indicated here. See section 3.6.

[5]Cf Ryan (1981:64), Lucci (1973:56).

[6]When the /r/ is prevocalic, two lexical sets must be distinguished, one set which has [a] overall, illustrated here by 'terrible,' and one which has [a] only in the Southwestern regions, illustrated by 'éclairer.'

[7]With the exception of Northeastern New Brunswick, where final [wɛ] is also found (see Flikeid 1984).

[8]Haden (1973) gives phonemic status to /æ/ in all varieties of Acadian except for the northernmost areas. Landry (1985) concludes that /æ/ has phonemic status in Pubnico.

[9]See below (section 3.4.1) for a discussion of the effect of these consonants.

[10]Landry (1985) adopts this analysis in his description of the Pubnico variety, whereas Ryan (1981) regards the distribution as allophonic in the Meteghan variety. Based on the present author's observations, there is no inherent difference between the lexical distribution of these vowel pairs in Meteghan and Pubnico.

[11]Boulanger (1986) reports on a regional usage in Quebec where [ɪ - ʏ - ʊ] are found before /v - z - ʒ/, as in the word [eglɪz] 'église.' The distribution remains phonetically conditioned however, in that in this variety the lax variants are used systematically in all words having the appropriate context.

[12]Landry (1985) transcribes these and similar words with [ɪ:], [ʊ:], [ɛ:] etc. However, most of the Pubnico informants in the prsent study were found to have the non-lengthened variants.

[13]A systematic study of all the lexical items involved may well reveal a pattern of lexical diffusion, with a subset of words having a lengthened lax vowel.

[14]Barter (1985) reports similar realizations for Newfoundland communities.

[15]An incident giving an interesting indication of speakers' perception: in a phonetics class, searching for minimal pairs for the /ø/ - /œ/ opposition, a Cheticamp student repeatedly came up with forms such as [kœl] 'colle' and [nœs] 'noce,' intended to illustrate the phoneme /œ/.

[16]/œ̃/ is distinct from /ɛ̃/ in other positions, as in 'emprunte' - 'empreinte.' The two are systematically neutralized in the stressed position considered here; thus 'un' is [jã] in Cheticamp, [jɛ̃] in Richmond and Pomquet, [jɔn] in Meteghan and [jɔ̃] in Pubnico, parallel to forms in /ɛ̃/.

[17]For simplification, a stress-determined pattern is assumed. It must however be noted that in some dialects one finds in prevocalic position the same variants as in open stressed syllables (see Landry 1981).

[18]This appears to be the case as well in one of the Prince Edward Island communities studied by King and Ryan (1986), Evangeline.

[19]Massignon's original transcription has been changed to correspond to that used throughout this article.

[20]Younger speakers in the Baie Sainte-Marie area now have [ɛ̃$^{w̃}$]; older speakers with [ɛ̃ŋ] are attested in Meteghan.

[21]This is a community where strong assimilation to English has taken place and few if any younger speakers exist, and was not included in the initial Nova Scotia sociolinguistic corpus. It is one of the localities to be studied in the final phase.

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