Liaison in Ontario French: Contact, Restriction and Second Language

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Objectives

- Compare liaison in three populations of French speakers in Ontario
  - Franco-Ontarians living in a local majority situation (Heardit)
  - Franco-Ontarians living in a local minority situation (Windsor)
- Contribute to a rich and growing body of empirical research on liaison in French

Two Franco-Ontarian Communities

- Heardit
  - French sole mother tongue population: 89.0%
  - French home language: 88.1%
  - Language shift (Francophones not using French as home language): 3.0%
- Windsor
  - French sole mother tongue population: 3.5%
  - French home language: 0.9%
  - Language shift (Francophones not using French as home language): 73.4%

French as Second Language in Ontario

- Majority Anglophone province in an officially bilingual country
- Learners of French exposed to (at least) two L2 French phonological models
  - Reference French
  - Laurentien French
- Somewhere between second language and foreign language?
  - A continuum for certain linguistic variables

Speaker Groups

- PFC Hearit
  - 6 women, 6 men; 3 generations
- PFC Windsor
  - 6 women, 6 men; 3 generations
- IPFC Canadian English
  - 9 female and 3 male university students
  - 6 first year (6 of them from immersion background)
  - 6 fourth year (3 spent third year in France; 3 spent third year in Ontario)

French Liaison

- What it is
  - A sound that has a weakly stressed vowel韵尾 was pronounced when the following word(s) starts with a vowel, and under certain conditions:
    - In open word (not closed)
- Categorical
  - Liaison always (or almost always) made by native speakers: He Puts (PFC, UK)
  - Liaison made more in formal than informal speech: I’m eatin’
- Variable
  - A sound that has a weakly stressed vowel韵尾 where native speakers would not make a liaison (ex.: “es real” = “es real”)

Method

- Excerpts of three styles of speech (interview, conversation, reading passage) transcribed orthographically in Praat TextGrids
- Liaison contexts coded according to PFC/IPFC conventions
- Codes extracted using Dolmen (Eychenne 2014) to Excel file in which further coding done
- Multivariate analysis using GoldVarb

Overall Liaison Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Liaison made</th>
<th>% made</th>
<th>% made</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Categorical</td>
<td>2300</td>
<td>90.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>4300</td>
<td>94.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>43.2%</td>
<td>43.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>1100</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversation</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion

- Franco-Ontarians and minority situation
  - High level of categorical liaison realization (intermediate-advanced)
  - More variation in minority context: Windsor speakers retain stylistic competence in the use of variable liaisons
  - Anglicization in non-reconstruction of liaison consistent
  - Liaison errors among Franco-Ontarians
- Anglophone learners
  - High level of categorical liaison realization (intermediate-advanced)
  - More variation in minority context: Windsor speakers retain stylistic competence in the use of variable liaisons
  - Errors: multiple liaisons and consonant substitutions
  - Anglicization in non-reconstruction of liaison consistent
  - Liaison errors among Franco-Ontarians