

THE LANGUAGES OF NEW YORK STATE:

A CUNY-NYSIEB GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS



LUISANGELYN MOLINA, GRADE 9

ALEXANDER FUNK



CUNY-NYS INITIATIVE ON
EMERGENT BILINGUALS

This guide was developed by CUNY-NYSIEB, a collaborative project of the Research Institute for the Study of Language in Urban Society (RISLUS) and the Ph.D. Program in Urban Education at the Graduate Center, The City University of New York, and funded by the New York State Education Department. The guide was written under the direction of CUNY-NYSIEB's Project Director, Nelson Flores, and the Principal Investigators of the project: Ricardo Otheguy, Ofelia García and Kate Menken. For more information about CUNY-NYSIEB, visit www.cuny-nysieb.org.

Published in 2012 by CUNY-NYSIEB, The Graduate Center, The City University of New York, 365 Fifth Avenue, NY, NY 10016. www.nysieb@gmail.com.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alexander Funk has a Bachelor of Arts in music and English from Yale University, and is a doctoral student in linguistics at the CUNY Graduate Center, where his theoretical research focuses on the semantics and syntax of a phenomenon known as ‘non-intersective modification.’ He has taught for several years in the Department of English at Hunter College and the Department of Linguistics and Communications Disorders at Queens College, and has served on the research staff for the Long-Term English Language Learner Project headed by Kate Menken, as well as on the development team for CUNY’s nascent Institute for Language Education in Transcultural Context.

Prior to his graduate studies, Mr. Funk worked for nearly a decade in education: as an ESL instructor and teacher trainer in New York City, and as a gym, math and English teacher in Barcelona. He makes his home in the language hotbed of Jackson Heights, Queens, a home he shares with his Italian-speaking, English-teaching wife, and their three emergent bilingual sons.

About This Guide

This Guide to the Languages of New York State is designed as a resource for all education professionals, but with particular consideration to those who work with bilingual¹ students. Several ideas have underpinned its conception and execution:

- a) the languages other than English (LOTEs) spoken by bilingual students are neither obstacles nor excess baggage, but **resources of great value** to our community;
- b) the mission of supporting and encouraging students in home language development belongs to **all teachers**, not only those from similar linguistic backgrounds and/or certified in language education;
- c) **language and culture** are sufficiently intertwined as to make the understanding of one without the other a distinctively hollow experience;

and...

- d) the development of translingual and transcultural competence is not an on-off switch, but rather a **lifelong process** of engaging with different communities.

Educators constantly face the task of overcoming distances: between us and our students, between families and schools, between student performance and classroom objectives, and so on. In nearly all cases, these distances are best bridged when both sides extend toward each other, and it is no exception when it comes to language. The sense of linguistic distance between emergent bilinguals² and the English-speaking world can seem vast, and while great efforts should be and are made to help these students extend themselves toward ever-greater inclusion in the Anglosphere, one of the strongest positive messages we can send as educators is that we will work to **bridge linguistic distance** from our end, too. This Guide is a means to following through on that message.

¹ We use the word *bilingual* throughout to mean ‘speaking more than one language.’ *Multilingual* has certain advantages over this term, but the disadvantage of denoting ‘more than two languages.’ *Plurilingual* signifies exactly what we have in mind, but in our view hampers the reading experience by dint of its unfamiliarity.

² Consistent with the CUNY-NYSIEB vision, we use the term *emergent bilingual* to denote students traditionally referred to as *English Language Learners*. “[O]ur use of the term... conceptualizes these students as much more than learners of English only, since they are developing proficiency and literacy in academic English from the base of home language practices. Furthermore, the term *emergent bilinguals* acknowledges that the education of these students must go beyond simply English language learning, to include a challenging curriculum in the content areas that also meets their social and emotional needs.” For more: <http://www.nysieb.ws.gc.cuny.edu/our-vision/>

French

1. French in Brief

French for 'French (language)':

français [frã.sɛ]

French word for 'English (language)':

anglais [ã.glɛ]

Writing system(s):

Latin (alphabetic)

US Speakers (Shin & Kominsky, 2010):

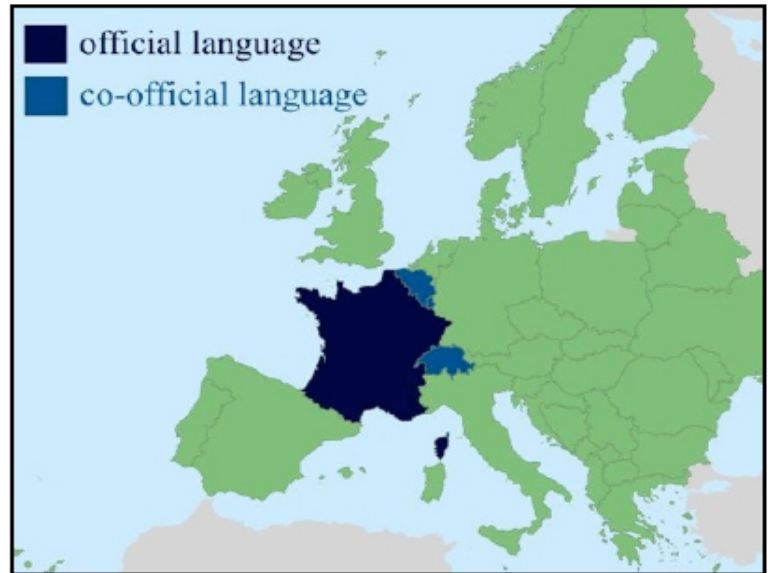
1,355,805

Language family (related languages):

Indo-European / Romance
(Catalan, Haitian Creole)

Official national language (*co-official) in:

| | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| *Belgium | Guinea |
| Benin | *Haiti |
| Burkina Faso | *Luxembourg |
| *Cameroon | *Madagascar |
| *Canada | Mali |
| Central African Rep. | Monaco |
| *Chad | Niger |
| *Comoros | Rep. of the Congo |
| Côte d'Ivoire | *Rwanda |
| Dem. Rep. of the Congo | Senegal |
| *Djibouti | *Switzerland |
| France | *Vanuatu |
| Gabon | |



Minority language (> 5% speakers):

Algeria; Lebanon; Morocco; Tunisia

Ethnic French in US (US Census, 2010b):

8,761,496 (French)

2,042,808 (French Canadian)

Top 3 US Metro areas where French is spoken (Shin & Kominsky, 2010):

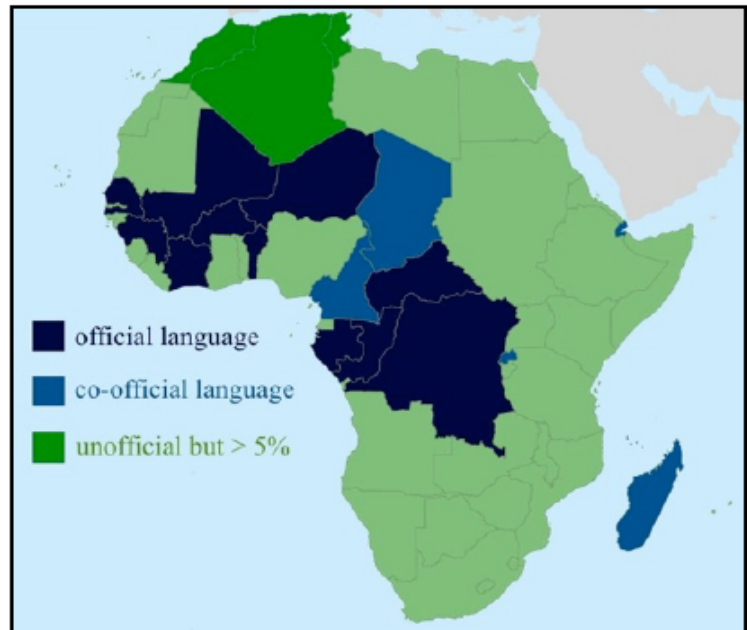
New York, Washington DC, Boston

Did you know that...

... the most populous nation with French as its official language is the Democratic Republic of the Congo?

2 French in Global Context

Measured only in “native speakers¹,” French is the 16th most widely spoken language in the world, behind Telugu, Vietnamese, and Marathi (Lewis, 2009), but this metric fails to do justice to the continued global significance of the language. The more than 60 million speakers of French as a home language are complemented by an even greater number of speakers who learn it outside the home, bringing the worldwide total of French speakers to roughly 200 million. French remains an official language in many **West African ex-colonies**, and has similar status in other pockets throughout the world, including Quebec (Canada), Haiti, French Guiana (a territory of France in South America), and Vanuatu in the Pacific. It retains a significant if fading presence in other former colonies, most notably Lebanon, North Africa and Southeast Asia. Most US speakers of French have roots in communities in **Canada and Louisiana** that formed part of a global French empire centuries ago.



2.1 History and Politics

As a Romance language, French--like Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, and others--is a form of Latin passed down through one of the various European speech communities into which the Roman Empire splintered. One of the first post-Roman influences on the language was **Old Frankish**, the Germanic language of the Franks, a tribe that occupied the power vacuum in Gaul left by the fall of the Romans. Old Frankish existed alongside both Latin and the gradually distinctive vernacular French for several centuries, was likely the home language of Charlemagne, Europe’s first great medieval emperor, and is the source of a number of structures in modern French, e.g., *avec* ‘with,’ which differs etymologically from the equivalent word in most other Romance languages (compare Spanish and Italian *con*, Portuguese *com*).

Like Spanish and English, French achieved the great bulk of its global diffusion through colonial expansion. For simplicity’s sake, we can divide France’s global empire into two chronologically

¹ In keeping with the CUNY-NYSIEB view that “a speaker never has a language, but simply uses or performs” one (<http://www.nysieb.ws.gc.cuny.edu/our-vision/>), this guide has avoided the terms *native language*, *first language/L1*, and *mother tongue*, as these typically reflect a rigidity at odds with our vision. In the case of French, the gap between the two views is particularly stark: by focusing on the ‘tree’ of ‘first language’ speakers, ‘L1’-keyed data miss the ‘forest’ of French’s enormous global importance. Lewis’s (2009) data and rankings based on them serve as a useful estimate of a language’s diffusion, but must be taken with a grain of *sel* ‘salt,’ an especially large one here.

distinct iterations. France's **pre-Revolutionary empire was centered in North America and**



the Caribbean, and passed out of direct French control by the dawn of the 19th century, with the Louisiana Purchase and Haitian Revolution following earlier Canadian losses in the French and Indian Wars (known in French as *les Guerres Intercoloniales* 'the Intercolonial Wars'). France's **post-Napoleonic Empire extended throughout Southeast Asia, North Africa, and West Africa**, was primarily acquired in the late 19th century, and dissolved through the 20th-century indigenous independence

movements. Napoleon's early-19th-century wars of conquest on the European continent had striking cultural and political effects, but left relatively little in the way of linguistic legacy.

Fig. 1: Historical Timeline

| | |
|---------------|--|
| 58-52 BC | Julius Caesar wages successful Roman campaign in Celtic-speaking Gaul |
| 1st c. BC | Romans rule modern-day France: Latin subsumes local tongues (except Breton) |
| 3rd-4th c. AD | Germanic tribes (Alemanni, Burgundians, Visigoths, Franks) invade (3rd-4th c.) |
| 481-511 | Clovis I unites Germanic-speaking Frankish tribes, conquers Roman rump state |
| 800 | Charlemagne expands Frankish kingdom to include much of modern W. Europe |
| 9th c. | Emergence of Old French alongside Old High German (Frankish), formal Latin |
| 9th-10th c. | Scandinavian invaders conquer present-day Normandy, quickly adopt French |
| 1066 | William of Normandy conquers England; French language governs for 200 years |
| 1539 | Francis I makes (Middle) French the official language of court, ousting Latin |
| 1605-11 | French establish colonies in Acadia (now Nova Scotia), Quebec, Montreal |
| 1630s | Richelieu creates <i>Académie française</i> ; Descartes writes <i>Discours de la Méthode</i> |
| 1699 | Foundation of Louisiana colony links North American and Caribbean territories |
| 1754-63 | French & Indian War; British expel Acadians--some go to Louisiana ('cajuns') |
| 1789-94 | French revolution : Louis XVI executed (1793); Reign of Terror (1793-94) |
| 1791 | Slave uprising in Saint-Domingue (Haiti); France frees slaves in colonies (1794) |
| 1799-1804 | General Napoleon Bonaparte stages coup d'état, establishes 1st Empire |
| 1803 | Louisiana Purchase : 828,000 sq. miles (~15 states) sold to U.S. for \$15 million |
| 1803-1815 | Napoleonic Wars: European empire briefly expands as far as Moscow |
| 19th c. | 'Scramble for Africa': France colonizes N. and W. Africa, also S.E. Asia |
| mid 20th c. | World War II: Nazis occupy France; French colonies achieve independence |

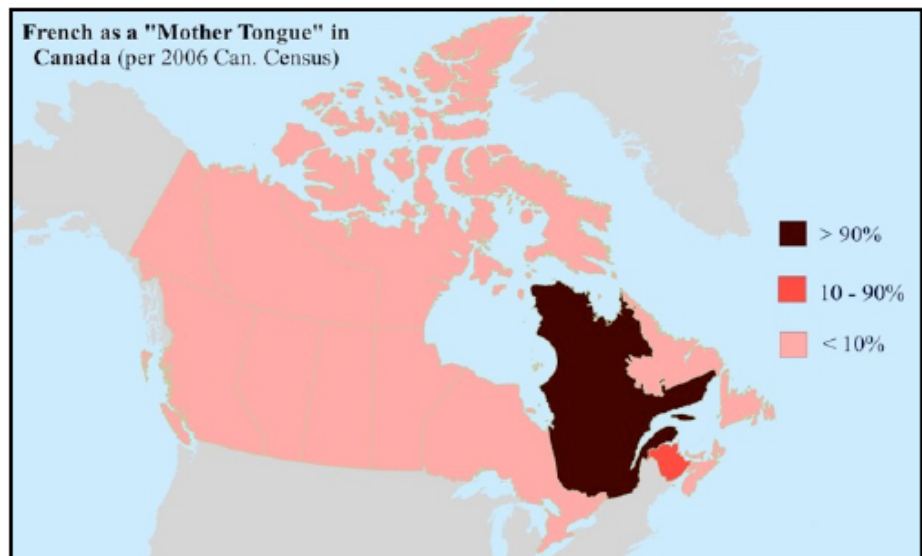
Toward the end of *les Guerres Intercoloniales*, the British forcibly deported thousands of French-speaking Acadians, an event that has come to be known as *le Grand Dérangement* ‘the Great Upheaval.’ At first, the Acadians were sent to the nearby American colonies, but as reports came that some were attempting to return to Acadia, a second wave was shipped all the way to France and England. From this second wave formed a group of settlers that re-emigrated to America, settling in the French Louisiana colony at the mouth of the Mississippi River: their descendants call themselves ‘Cajuns.’

Despite the expulsion, and although the country itself now no longer has political ties to France, Canada’s French-speaking community remains large (at roughly seven million, over 20% of the Canadian population), vibrant, and influential in North American politics and culture. Most French Canadians live in New York State’s neighbor to the north, **the province of Quebec**--

Canada’s largest province by area, and second largest by population. French is Quebec’s only official language at the provincial level, and 80% of the population is monolingual (Statistics Canada, 2007)².

After early immigration by French Huguenots, in 1627 Cardinal Richelieu banned non-Catholics from settling in *Nouvelle-France* ‘New France,’ as French Canada

was then known. Consequently, the Catholic Church has played a central role in Quebecois society throughout its history. The **seigneurial system** of land distribution and occupation--essentially, a New World variety of feudalism concocted by Richelieu--was also a key organizing institution until its abolishment in 1854, and is often blamed for the population pressures that led nearly a million French Canadians to emigrate to New England between the 1840s and the Great Depression. The fifty years following the *Révolution Tranquille* ‘Quiet Revolution’ of the 1960s have seen a modern, secular, progressive province develop around the bustling, international city of Montreal, home of the 1976 Summer Olympics, and the smaller capital city of Quebec. The possibility of political separation from Canada is a perennial hot-button issue, with secession failing by a mere 1% of the vote in Quebec’s most recent plebiscite, held in 1995.



² The data represented in the accompanying map are also from the 2006 Census, which used the term *mother tongue*. This guide has preferred to focus on *home language* as a more useful concept, but does not substitute one term for the other when reporting data, as they presumably bear distinct empirical footprints. A Nigerian couple that grew up speaking Zarma and Hausa in different homes might choose to use French--their common language of schooling--as a home language; neither of them would likely list it in a census that asked for *mother tongue*, but would list French as a *home language*. Home languages can emerge throughout life, while L1s and mother tongues cannot.

2.2 Culture and Lifestyle

The cultural backgrounds of New York State French speakers vary widely, with no individual background predominating. Many come from Haiti, though only a minority of Haitians speak French; this culture is discussed in detail in the “Haitian Creole” section of this guide. Others come from Africa, but not in particularly concentrated numbers from any one country. Recent immigrants from France, and upstate New Yorkers with longstanding roots in French North America round out the picture.

Strong ties to **the Catholic Church** have historically set Quebec apart from not only surrounding regions of North America, but also from France itself, where the Dechristianization of the French Revolution severed such links with lasting force, and *laïcité* ‘secularism’ is enshrined in the preamble of the Constitution as a defining ideal. In the 2001 Census, 83% of Quebecers identified themselves as Roman Catholic, the highest percentage of any province; by contrast, roughly 64% of French citizens describe themselves as Catholic (Analyse, 2010).

Many French Canadian traditions date back to New France’s roots as a fur trapping colony. Its traditional cuisine, for instance, features greasy dishes like *oreilles de crisse* (fried pork jowls, literally ‘Christ’s ears’) and *tourtière*, a **meat pie** often made with wild game mixed with more traditional meats, and originally made from flesh of the *tourte* ‘passenger pigeon,’ a bird native to North America but hunted to extinction by the 20th century. From October to April, one might breakfast on *orieilles de crisse* smothered with locally-extracted maple syrup at a farm’s *cabane à sucre* ‘sugar shack.’

France’s contributions to world culture have been no less than seminal: 2nd-millennium France not only produced great art, philosophy, architecture, literature and cuisine, but rather framed how much of the world views these domains. To merely mention the names Monet, Rembrandt, and Gauguin is to miss the influence that the French art world had on (the non-French) Picasso and Van Gogh; French political philosophy is not merely the sum of Voltaire, Rousseau, Montesquieu, and other French writers, but also a legacy of inquiry that inspired Jefferson and Marx. The word ‘culture’ itself--like ‘art,’ ‘philosophy,’ ‘architecture,’ and ‘cuisine’--come to us from French, and illustrate the extent to which enlightenment and aesthetic refinement continue to be associated with the French language.

Perhaps few 21st century time-spaces can fully live up to such a tradition, but contemporary Quebec boasts world-class artistic activity, from jazz to graphic novels, comedy festivals to cinema; its current best-known exports are the singer Céline Dion and the performance troupe *Cirque du Soleil* (‘Circus of the Sun’). Although nobody knows the precise origins of ice hockey, it is generally agreed that the first organized indoor game was played in Montreal in 1875, and it is no exaggeration to say that **hockey is a national obsession** for both Quebec and Canada. The Montreal Canadiens are the world’s arguably best-known and indisputably winningest

professional hockey team, and--after the recent departures of the Expos baseball team and Nordiques hockey squad--Quebec's lone remaining major North American sports franchise.

2.3 Linguistic Variation and Contact

One of the earliest variations among the Latin vulgates of Medieval Gaul was that between the *Langue d'Oïl* 'language of oil' spoken in the north, and the *Langue d'Oc* 'language of oc' spoken in the south, the terms referring to the different words for 'yes' in the two regions. The Italian poet Dante counted these varieties alongside 'si languages' as the major varieties of Europe's vulgates in the 14th century. In truth, the difference between the two groups in France is far larger than a single term, and today linguists consider Occitan--the *Langue d'Oc*--a separate language, with Provençal among its various dialects, all endangered. Standard French, also known as Metropolitan French, is the predominant contemporary form of *Langue d'Oïl*; the combination of strong institutional support for (ever insistence upon) the standard and a historically mobile population within France has led to regional accents such as Lyonnais, Meridional, Alsatian and Corsican having marginal status.

The global diffusion of French has had something of a **centrifugal effect**. Canada's standard *français québécois* is quite similar to Standard French when written, but distinctive in spoken form (Papen, 1998), and a number of distinctive regional dialects have formed in North America over the centuries following colonization. This has also occurred in Africa:

Fig. 2: Some *variétés régionales* 'regional dialects' of French

| Europe | N. America | Africa |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Standard/Metropolitan | Standard/Quebecois | Maghreb |
| Meridional/Francitan | Joual | Sub-Saharan |
| | Acadian | |
| | New England | |
| | Cajun/Louisiana | |

Standard French, as particularly specified by the Paris-based *Académie française* (established by Cardinal Richelieu in the 17th century), has exerted a strong influence on the other world varieties, and is usually the default standard in educational and governmental institutions throughout *la francophonie* 'the French-speaking world.' This history of centralized linguistic authority has strongly **discouraged the influence of non-standard dialects** and outside languages, effectively limiting the number of borrowings from contact languages. Nonetheless, it is often these lexical connections to neighbor languages that mark each world variety as unique: Amerindian words in Quebecois, Arabic words in Maghreb, and African words in Sub-Saharan.

2.4 Language and Education

Quebec's 1977 Charter of the French Language specifies **French as the language of instruction** from kindergarten through secondary school, with English a mandatory subject for all students. An exception is made in school districts with high numbers of *Premieres Nations* 'First Nations' languages, such as Cree, Inuit, or Inuktitut, districts mostly in the northern reaches of the province.

In contrast, **France has a much more centralized language policy**, with no power granted to regions to establish languages of instruction other than French. Discussion of minority language rights--and government obligations to minority language support--came to a head in 1999 when France signed the European Charter of Regional and Minority Languages, but did not ratify it, ostensibly under the view that doing so would be unconstitutional. It remains unsigned today.

Literacy rates in Canada and France are at 99%, those in Francophone Africa significantly lower, e.g. 67% in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 48.7% in Côte d'Ivoire (CIA, 2012). In many countries with small French-speaking populations, however, French is spoken by the educated classes; the literacy rate among Francophones, therefore, is in all likelihood higher than the broader national rate.

3. French in the United States

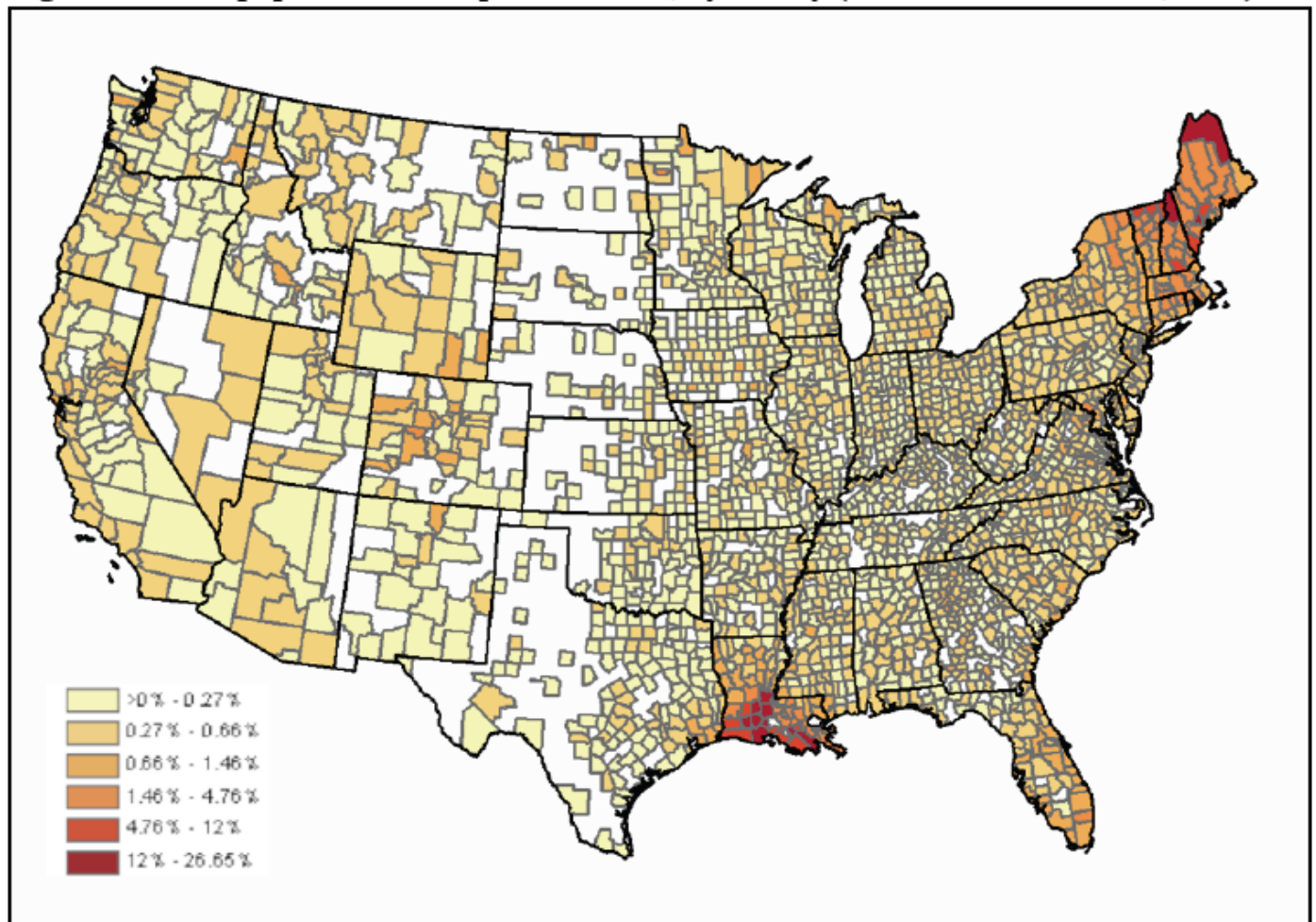
The extensive reach of French exploration and settlement in the USA can be seen in place names across the country, from Detroit to Des Moines, Baton Rouge to Mt. Rainier. Today, however, the country's longstanding French-speaking communities have their roots in just two 16th-century settlements: Acadia, which started as a group of 79 settlers on an island in present-day Maine, and New France, the forerunner of modern Quebec. As mentioned above, the French-speaking Cajuns of Louisiana trace their roots to Acadians dislocated by *le grand dérangement* (Valdman, 2010). Francophone remnants of *le Pays des Illinois* 'Illinois Country' long dotted **the Great Plains and upper Midwest**--the region of the USA with the most French toponyms (Terre Haute, Joliet, Eau Claire, etc.)--but these have all but flickered out, and the language variety known as Missouri French is now essentially extinct. A community north of Miami, Florida known as 'Floribec' consists of around 60,000 retirees mixed with Haitian immigrants (Valdman, 2010), but for obvious reasons is not likely to form a lasting multi-generational speech community.

3.1 National Trends

The Louisiana and New England *franco-américaine* communities are relatively unique among non-English speech communities in having a) **very few 'fresh arrivals,'** as the limited number of French-speaking immigrants who do come to America every year usually gravitate towards distant cities; and b) the homogenizing presence of Standard French in the school system, discouraging the already marginal use of regional and vernacular varieties. There have not been

any enormous waves of French immigration to New France/Quebec after the English took over the territory, but the community has instead grown historically through higher birth rates, sometimes called *la revanche des berceaux* ‘the revenge of the cradles’ (Valdman, 2010).

Fig. 3: % of US population that speaks French, by county (2005 Census via MLA, 2012)



Great effort has gone into the *la survivance*, the preservation of Cajun and Franco-American culture over the centuries, though the institutional supports for French are a far cry from those across the national border in Quebec. Parochial schools with instruction in French formed one of the few historical sources of institutional support in the USA, but many closed after the 1960s, sending francophone students to **public school systems that often actively discouraged the use of French**, and certainly did not develop it. Lifelong French-speaking students in the 1970s reported being punished for ‘incorrect’ French by their public school teachers, and being banned from using the language on the playground (Jacobson, 1984).

As the effects of the 1968 Bilingual Education Act took hold, more of a focus was trained on support for French or, at the very least, transitional programming. A government-sponsored effort to support the French language in Louisiana called **CODOFIL** was launched in 1968 under the slogan *l'école a détruit le français, l'école doit reconstruire le français* ‘schools destroyed

French, schools must rebuild French,' but quickly met with resistance from the local community for its insistence on Standard French--to the extent of importing 'qualified' teachers from Belgium and France--and perceived air of snobbery toward the Cajun culture and language (Valdman, 2010). Though CODOFIL gradually came to embrace the Louisiana varieties of French, and though institutions such as the University of Maine, the University of Southern Maine, and the government of France all have programs to study and support *franco-américaine*, the community remains relatively 'invisible' to the wider US population. Indeed, its many contributors to American society are rarely associated with their cultural heritage:

Fig. 4: French-American boldface names

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Louis Chevrolet | Swiss-born co-founder of Chevrolet car company |
| Kate Chopin | New Orleans writer (<i>The Awakening</i>); French Canadian mother |
| Céline Dion | Grammy-winning singer from Quebec; splits time in USA |
| John Frémont | US Senator (CA); first Republican Presidential candidate |
| Robert Goulet | Broadway star (<i>Camelot</i>); French Canadian parents |
| Jack Kerouac | Writer (<i>On the Road</i>); French Canadian parents |
| Pierre Charles L'Enfant | Architect/civil engineer; designed Washington, DC |
| Tony Parker | NBA Champion (x3); born in Belgium, raised in France |
| Oliver Stone | Oscar-winning writer/director (<i>Platoon</i>); French mother |

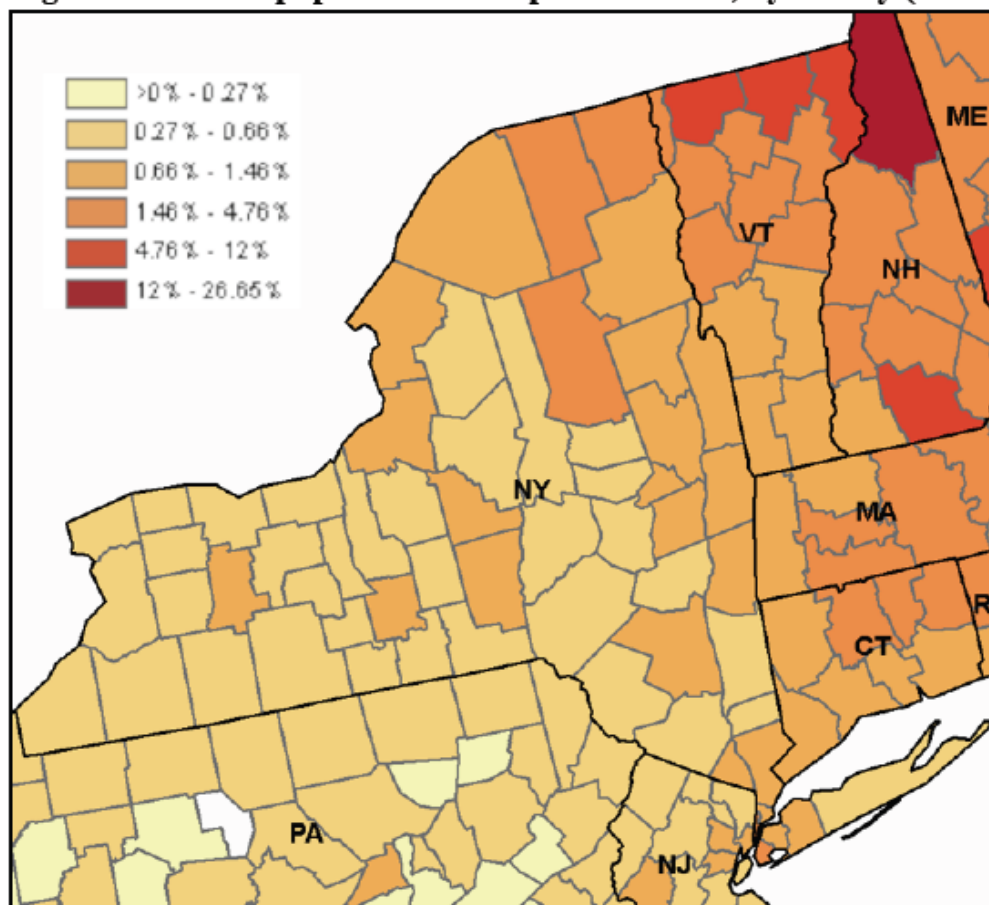
A recent study of eight New England communities by Fox & Smith (2006, cited in Valdman, 2010) shows a wide range of home use of French: in Van Buren, ME, 75% of the ethnically French community reported using French at home, while in Southbridge, CT and Bristol, MA, the number was under 10%. In all of the towns surveyed, use of French dropped between 1990 and 2000.

3.2 French in New York State

A glance at Figure 3 above shows that the greatest concentration of US French speakers can be found in the states of Louisiana and Maine; however, the greatest number of French speakers belongs to New York State, with 141,017 as of 2007 (Valdman, 2010). Similarly, though the greatest concentration of French speakers in New York State can be seen in Figure 4 in St. Lawrence, Hamilton, Franklin and Clinton counties near Quebec, the largest numbers are found in three boroughs of New York City: Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens, in descending order. The 2000 Census counted 4,095 French speakers in the four upstate counties, 90,365 in the three boroughs mentioned.

While most of the upstate population can be reasonably inferred to have longstanding Franco-American roots, the New York City francophones appear to be a mixed group. Precise statistical data on country of origin for New York City French speakers is hard to come by, but informal journalistic descriptions suggest that Haitian, European French, and West African immigrants are the most populous groups in the city.

Fig. 4: % of NYS population that speaks French, by county (2005 Census via MLA, 2012)



4 Structures of Note in French

Like English, French is a language whose written form gives only **inconsistent clues to pronunciation**. In particular, letters written at the end of words have a strong tendency not to be pronounced: *haut* ‘high,’ *eau* ‘water,’ *au* ‘to the/of the’ and the interjection *oh!* are all pronounced the same way in isolation--[o]--while *mai*, *maie*, *mais*, *mes*, *m’es*, *m’est*, *met*, and *mets* are all pronounced [mɛ]. The difficulties of French orthography, nasal vowels, and phenomena like elision and liaison are balanced by a high number of cognates between French and English, which eases the acquisition of vocabulary. French-speaking learners of English, on the other hand, often struggle with English spelling, stress patterns, and consonants due to structural differences between the languages.

4.1 Sound System

Typically only one or two French consonant sounds present difficulty to the English speaker: the ‘r’ sound [ʁ], pronounced by many French speakers with a raspy, uvular ‘clearing of the throat,’ and the [ɲ] sound at the end of words, as in *montagne* [mɔ̃.taj] ‘mountain,’ which typically occurs only in the middle of English words, such as ‘lasagna’ and ‘canyon.’ French vowels are trickier: the letter ‘u’ usually represents an ‘ee-through-pursed-lips’ sound (IPA [y]) that does not

occur regularly in English, while the vowels [a], [ɛ], and [ɔ] all come in **nasalized versions** that are meaningfully distinct, and marked with ‘~’ in IPA. Thus, pairs like *ça* [sa] ‘that’ and *sang* [sã] ‘blood,’ *cet* [sɛ] ‘this’ and *sain* [sɛ̃] ‘healthy,’ and *seau* [so] ‘bucket’ and *son* [sɔ̃] ‘sound’ must be differentiated in speech and perception.

The French letter ‘h’ is generally silent, so pronunciation of the English version can be problematic for French-speaking emergent bilingual learners (EBLs); similarly, final ‘s’ can be a problem for students decoding written English. The different pronunciation of ‘r’ challenges French-speaking learners of English, as do a number of phonemes that don’t exist in French (Harris, 1987):

(Consonants)

[θ] at the beginning of ‘thin’

[ð] at the beginning of ‘this’

[dʒ] at the beginning of ‘jump’

vs. [ʒ] at the end of ‘mirage’

[tʃ] at the beginning of ‘change’

vs. [ʃ] at the beginning of ‘shy’

(Vowels)

[æ] at the beginning of ‘ash’

[ɪ] at the beginning of ‘igloo’

[ʊ] in the middle of ‘could’

vs. [u] in ‘cooed’

Stress differences between the two languages can lead to a number of pronunciation difficulties for EBLs. French generally puts a light stress on the end of words, while English words feature heavier stresses, usually on early syllables; the contrast is particularly challenging with cognates like ‘realize,’ ‘specific,’ and ‘normal,’ which francophone learners are likely to pronounce with stress on the last syllable, or merely not enough stress on the appropriate one. At the phrase level, French tends to stress the adjective in noun-adjective pairs, whereas English does the opposite; the French-style stress can confuse listeners into thinking a contrast is being drawn when none is--compare ‘John is an intelligent man’ with ‘John is an intelligent man.’ French tends to stress the first content word in phrases/sentences, while English stresses the last: ‘I went to the bank’ vs. ‘I went to the bank’ (Mojsin, 2009).

4.2 Writing Systems

French and English share the Latin alphabet, as well as the historical misfortune of having standardized their spelling systems before major sound changes affected how the language is pronounced. French uses several accents on vowels, the *accent aigu* ‘accute accent’ as on the last letter of *café*, the *accent grave* ‘grave accent’ as on the last letter in *où* ‘where,’ and the *accent circonflexe* ‘circumflex accent,’ used in *forêt* ‘forest.’ Unlike the similar accents in Spanish and Italian, **these do not indicate stressed syllables**, but rather serve subtler objectives, e.g. to distinguish homographs like *ou* ‘or’ and *où* ‘where,’ or to indicate historically present ‘s,’ as the circumflex does in *forêt*. Learners of both languages must learn a host of irregularities between spelling and pronunciation.

4.3 Grammar

French grammar presents less of a challenge to English speakers than its sound and spelling systems. It is an SVO language in which the main subject of a sentence must always be present, and which inverts verbs and subjects in questions, much like English in all three cases.

Adjectives tend to follow nouns, a slight difference, but not without exception--e.g. *la grande grange rouge* 'the big, red barn' (literally, 'the big barn red')--French adjectives of size tend to precede their nouns. Object pronouns such as *la* and *le* 'him/her/it' occur before rather than after verbs: *je le vois maintenant* 'I see it now' (literally, 'I it see now').

4.4 How Names Work

French names typically follow a pattern of **PERSONAL PERSONAL FAMILY**, with the second given name rarely used. In France, women do not legally take their husband's last name, and children may be given the family name of either parent, or both hyphenated. Thus, Brigitte Anne-Marie Bardot was born to Anne-Marie Mucel and Louis Bardot, and did not take the last name of any of her four husbands.

4.5 'Friends' and Classroom Phrases

English borrowed many French words relating to education and high culture during the centuries in which the two co-existed in English society (roughly 1100-1300), and the two languages looked to the same Greek and Latin sources for the wave of vocabulary that later came in with the Renaissance and Enlightenment. As a result, 'academic friends' between the two languages abound; the following list is merely a representative sample.

Fig. 5: French-English Academic 'Friends'

| | | | |
|----------------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| <u>Elementary</u> | | <i>proverbe</i> | 'proverb' |
| <i>abréviation</i> | 'abbreviation' | <i>réciproque</i> | 'reciprocal' |
| <i>apostrophe</i> | 'apostrophe' | <i>révolution</i> | 'revolution' |
| <i>hémisphère</i> | 'hemisphere' | <i>système</i> | 'system' |
| <i>mesurer</i> | 'to measure' | | |
| <i>octogone</i> | 'octagon' | <u>Secondary</u> | |
| <i>planète</i> | 'planet' | <i>amplitude</i> | 'amplitude' |
| <i>population</i> | 'population' | <i>bactéries</i> | 'bacteria' |
| <i>reproduction</i> | 'reproduction' | <i>colonialisme</i> | 'colonialism' |
| <i>synonyme</i> | 'synonym' | <i>hypothèse</i> | 'hypothesis' |
| <i>volume</i> | 'volume' | <i>parabole</i> | 'parabola' |
| | | <i>paradoxe</i> | 'paradox' |
| <u>Intermediate</u> | | <i>précision</i> | 'precision' |
| <i>cycle</i> | 'cycle' | <i>quadratique</i> | 'quadratic' |
| <i>diversité</i> | 'diversity' | <i>symbole</i> | 'symbol' |
| <i>fonction</i> | 'function' | <i>théorème</i> | 'theorem' |
| <i>photosynthèse</i> | 'photosynthesis' | <i>virus</i> | 'virus' |

Fig. 6: Classroom Phrases in French and English

| | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| <u>Greetings & Questions</u> | | <i>Comment puis-je vous aider?</i> |
| <i>Bonjour.</i> | ‘Hello.’ | ‘How can I help you?’ |
| <i>Bienvenu(e) dans notre classe.</i> | ‘Welcome to our classroom.’ | |
| <i>Comment allez-vous?</i> | ‘How are you?’ | <u>Directions</u> |
| <i>Vous avez besoin de quelque chose?</i> | ‘What do you need?’ | <i>Levez-vous</i> |
| <i>Vous voulez aller aux toilettes?</i> | ‘Do you need to go to the bathroom?’ | ‘Stand up’ |
| | | <i>Asseyez-vous</i> |
| | | ‘Sit down’ |
| | | <i>Lisez</i> |
| | | ‘Read’ |
| | | <i>Ecrivez</i> |
| | | ‘Write’ |
| | | <i>Écoutez</i> |
| | | ‘Listen’ |
| | | <i>Répondez</i> |
| | | ‘Answer’ |
| <u>Compliments & Niceties</u> | | <i>Parlez avec votre partenaire</i> |
| <i>Bon travail!</i> | ‘Good work!’ | ‘Talk with your partner’ |
| <i>Merci!</i> | ‘Thank you!’ | <i>Travaillez en groupe</i> |
| <i>Si l vous plaît.</i> | ‘Please.’ | ‘Work in your group’ |
| <i>Excusez-moi.</i> | ‘Excuse me.’ | <i>Ouvrez votre livre/cahier</i> |
| | | ‘Open your book/notebook’ |
| <u>Communication</u> | | <i>Sortez votre stylo/crayon</i> |
| <i>Voulez-vous dire...?</i> | ‘Do you mean...?’ | ‘Take out your pen/pencil’ |
| <i>Que pensez-vous?</i> | ‘What are your thoughts?’ | <i>Ecrivez les devoirs (dans votre agenda)</i> |
| | | ‘Write down your homework’ |

5 Further Reading and References

5.1 Imaginative Literature

Ages 4-8

de Brunhoff, Jean. *Babar the King*. (English or French)

Hebert-Collins, Sheila. *Jean-Paul Hebert Was There*. (Bilingual)

Saint-Exupery, Antoine. *The Little Prince*. (English or French)

Ages 8-12

Goscinny, Rene. *Le Petit Nicolas*. (English or French)

Carrier, Roch. *The Hockey Sweater*.

Freedman, Russell. *Lafayette and the American Revolution*.

Ages 12-16

Brown, Chester. *Louis Riel: A Comic-Strip Biography*

Martel, Suzanne. *The King's Daughter*.

Yates, Elizabeth. *With Pipe, Paddle and Song: A Story of the French-Canadian Voyageurs*.

Ages 16-adult

Carey, Peter. *Parrot and Olivier in America*.

Chopin, Kate. *The Awakening*.

Kerouac, Jack. *Visions of Gerard*.

5.2 English Language Periodicals

France24 News--<http://www.france24.com/en/france/>

The Gazette (Quebec)--<http://www.montrealgazette.com/>

The Haitian Times--<http://www.haitiantimes.com/>

West Africa News--<http://westafricanews.com/>

5.3 French Language Periodicals

Le Journal de Montréal (Canada)--<http://www.journaldemontreal.com/>

Le Matin (Haiti)--<http://www.lematinhaiti.com/>

Le Monde (France)--<http://www.lemonde.fr/>

Le Potentiel (Dem. Rep. of Congo)--<http://www.lepotentiel.com/>

Le Républicain Niger--<http://www.republicain-niger.com/>

5.4 References

Analyse: Le Catholicisme en France (2010). Paris: IFOP Département Opinion et Strategies d'Enterprise.

The CIA World Factbook (2012). Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency.

Online version: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html>

Harris, M. (1987). French. In Comrie, B. ed., *The World's Major Languages*. Oxford: OUP.

Jacobson, P. (1984). The Social Context of Franco-American Schooling in New England. *The French Review*, 57:5.

Lewis, M, ed. (2009). *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 16th edition. Dallas, Tex.: SIL International. Online version: <http://www.ethnologue.com/>.

Modern Language Association (2012). The MLA Language Map. Online version: http://www.mla.org/map_main

Papen, R. (1998). French: Canadian varieties. In Edwards, J. ed., *Language in Canada*. Cambridge: CUP.

Shin, H. & R. Kominski (2010). *Language Use in the United States: 2007*, American Community Survey Reports, ACS-12. Washington, DC: US Census Bureau.

Statistics Canada (2007). The Evolving Linguistic Portrait, 2006 Census. Ottawa: Minister of Industry.

Terrazas, A. (2009). African Immigrants in the United States. Washington DC: Migration Policy Institute.

- U.S. Census Bureau (2010a). Detailed Language Spoken at Home and Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years and Older by States: 2006-2008 [data file]. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/hhes/socdemo/language/about/faqs.html>
- U.S. Census Bureau (2010b). Selected population profile in the United States: 2010 American Community Survey 1-year estimates [data file]. Retrieved from <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>
- Valdman, A. (2010). French in the USA. In Potowski, K., ed., *Language Diversity in the USA*. Cambridge: CUP.