

Les variantes linguistiques

SUBJECT

FLA

GRADE

11-12

LENGTH

~1.5 hours

OVERVIEW/RATIONALE

This lesson explores some of the many variants of the French languages and the concept of a standardized French. French and English are two languages that exhibit interesting varieties of linguistic variants. Such manifestations can take place in the form of regional dialects, accents, registers, etc. French speakers in Canada are in constant interaction with a large variety of linguistic variants and there is a widely held belief that certain variants of the French language are superior to others – a belief that is also upheld by many Anglophones. For example, many believe that the French spoken in France is of greater quality and authenticity than the French spoken in Quebec. Although these beliefs stem, in part, from historical, political, and geographical matters, this introductory lesson will only explore some of the issues that arise from such beliefs using exemplars and facilitated discussions.

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OBJECTIVES	<p>Students will be able to identify and compare some variants of the English language (Understanding & Analyzing).</p> <p>Students will be able to identify and compare some variants of the French language (Understanding & Analyzing).</p> <p>Students will be able to analyze some of the attitudes people have toward different variants of the French language.</p>
MATERIAL	<p>Print off the resource IC-2.1 <i>Une conversation particulière</i> for each group of two or three students.</p> <p>Have the following movie videos, that highlight different French accents and dialects, buffered and ready to play throughout the lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A short clip (2 min) from the movie <i>The Pink Panther</i>: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z6oeAdemFZw• Trailer (2 min) for <i>Bienvenue chez les ch'tis</i> to showcase two specific accents in France: (Please note that this trailer contains one swear word.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ZbGb8Tzi6o• Trailer (1:30 min) for the movie <i>La grande séduction</i> to showcase a regional Quebecois accent: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FbyiPs53nJw• An interview with the well-known Franco-Albertan storyteller Roger Dallaire: (screening from 1:30 – 3:15 is sufficient): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VanZyPpa_yY• An interview between a Quebecer and a man who speaks Chiac: (screening the first 2 minutes is sufficient) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6hOSbA5pPZw&t=70s

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Optional video (3 min) that wittily entertains the idea of a standardized French in Ontario: (mature content from 1:50 – 2:00 that should first be vetted by the teacher or simply end the screening at 1:48) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Uj_p2kNzI8&t=17s
ACTIVITIES	<p>Start the lesson off with some comedic relief! Show students the following clip of Steve Martin learning English (although he is an English speaker who is speaking with a fake French accent for his role) in the movie the Pink Panther. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z6oeAdemFZw</p> <p>Now ask students what happened at the end of the English lesson. Who was most frustrated by the end of the lesson? What was the teacher trying to get the student to accomplish? Despite her despair, was he successful in communicating a clear and comprehensible message? Is one English accent better than the other?</p> <p>Then ask students to list off different accents they have heard in their first language (presuming this is English). The teacher may want to talk about the different accents within a country such as how English can sound different from one state to another in the United States. Many people from Boston sound different than many people from Texas and people from western Canadian provinces sound different than people from Newfoundland, for example. The teacher could then move on to comparing the different accents in different countries such as England, Australia, New Zealand and various countries in Africa.</p> <p>The teacher could then ask students if they know of any specific English words or phrases that are used in various places or contexts. An example of this could be the many ways to say "friend." Some people might use the slang words "buddy" or "pal." In countries such as Australia, New Zealand, and England, we hear people use the slang word "mate."</p> <p>Ask students if they know of any different words in English that mean the same thing but that certain groups of people use to distinguish themselves from another group. The following is a brief list of American words with their British equivalent to the right:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• cell phone / mobile• high school / secondary school• elevator / lift• sweater / jumper• pants / trousers• chips / crisps• fries / chips• cookie / biscuit• cilantro / coriander• hood / bonnet <p>Once students think of some other words, ask them if one word is more proper than the other one? Is one word better than the other? Is one word more correct</p>

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than the other? Who decides which word is better?

Now move on to the different variants of the French language. To begin, ask students what diverse types of French accents they are familiar with. To highlight an example of two different accents in France (south & north), play the following movie trailer: (Please note that it is not recommended to search for the movie trailer with English subtitles as the author has vetted such videos and the translations are erroneous.) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZbGb8Tzi6o>

Following this, ask students if they heard two distinct French accents in this video. Ask them when this took place and what communicative problems arose from it. Teacher reference: The man from the south of France pronounces the word "les siens" (his/hers) differently from the man from the north of France. The man from the north of France pronounces it with the "ch" sound instead of the "s" sound, resulting in "les chiens" (the dogs) as well as total confusion between the two men. Ask students which pronunciation would be the most proper of the two? Then ask students if both men from the scene would agree with their answer?

Now explain to students that they will listen to a video that captures a regional Quebecois accent. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FbyIPs53nJw>

Following this, ask students if they noticed a difference between the French spoken in this video in comparison to the previous video? Ask them which variant they prefer and why? Ask them which variant they feel most people would prefer and why?

Next, show a few minutes of the following video of a Franco-Albertan who has a strong regional accent. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VanZyPpa_yY

Following this, ask students what they noticed about his accent? Ask students if they interpreted him as a confident speaker in French? Ask students how they think a Parisian would interpret his accent and why?

Finally, show a few minutes of this interview of a Quebecer interviewing a person who speaks *Chiac*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6hOSbA5pPZw&t=70s>

Now explain to students that, despite all these accents, they must pick one that the rest must conform to. This may incite some conversation and debate. Allow students some time to converse. If needed, ask students why it would be beneficial if everyone spoke the same way as well as which disadvantages this might have. The teacher could also go back to the conversation of English variants and ask students which variant of that language should become the standard model.

Following this, hand out the resource IC – 2.1 *Une conversation particulière* to small groups of students. The teacher may choose to do this activity as a class or to let small groups read together. If students read in their groups, ask each student to take on the role of one of the speakers in the conversation: Le Québécois, Le Franco-Albertain, and Le Français de France.

After this, ask students how each of these fictional characters responded to each other? What disposition did they take on the French language? (superiority, defensiveness, curiosity, acceptance, etc.) Ask students if they have ever had

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	this type of a conversation with someone before?
PROMPTS	<p>In a consecutive lesson, students could explore the topic of a standardized French. This could easily be developed around the following FNB film about Acadians in Nova Scotia. It beautifully highlights the lack of acceptance and respect that Acadians are faced with when trying to be recognized as French speakers within Canada. This film is called "Bittersweet Blues" by Stephanie David (2015) and it contains English subtitles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• https://www.nfb.ca/film/bittersweet_blues/ <p>Following the viewing of this short film, the teacher could ask students why these Acadians are proud of their unique variant of the French language. Other questions to pose include, but are not limited to, the following: How is language and culture intertwined? Why are people attached to their specific variation of the language – Acadian in this case? Is a standardized French important? Why or why not? In what ways is a standardized French beneficial and in what ways could it be disadvantageous?</p> <p>To continue exploring an even more distinct variant of the French language, allow students to watch the following NFB short that looks at <i>le Chiac</i>. The film is called "Éloge du Chiac" and although it is older, it is rich in student exchanges and informative opinions – many of which debated to this day. This film does not contain English subtitles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D45_YQhr4mq <p>In another consecutive lesson, students could explore some of the various francophone communities within Canada. For example, there is a wide held belief within Quebec that francophone communities outside of Quebec are either small or non-existent. Furthermore, for many historical and political reasons, a number of Quebecers associate <i>La Francophonie</i> and the Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day celebrations solely with their province and not with the rest of Canada. The following NFB short showcases curious interactions between Quebecers and Franco-Ontarians through an experiential activity as well as interviews with festival goers. This video contains mature content and should be vetted by the teacher as many festival goers are consuming alcohol and using tobacco products. The film is called "So, where do we fit in" by Andréanne Germain (2008) and it contains English subtitles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• https://www.nfb.ca/film/so_where_do_we_fit_in/

RESOURCES

- IC-2.1 *Une conversation particulière*
- For more Quebecois expressions:
<http://www.je-parle-quebecois.com/>

NOTES

This lesson plan can easily be split up into two sequential lessons.

Due to the variety of French accents students

- For more Quebecois words:
<http://www.dictionnaire-quebecois.com/definitions-s.html>

are being exposed to, a listening outcome could be listed for this lesson.