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# French Outside Europe FREE

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## Summary

The first French colonial era goes back to the 17th and 18th centuries. It encompasses North American territories, the Antilles, and the Indian Ocean. The second colonial era started in the 19th century and ended in the 1960s. It first reached the Maghreb and Lebanon, followed by sub-Saharan Africa, where two colonial powers, France and Belgium, exported the use of French. The last territories affected by the expansion of the French language are to be found in the Pacific.

**Keywords:** French-speaking world, language contact, secondary and tertiary dialects, regionalisms, archaisms, borrowings, code-switching, diglossia, polyglossia

**Subjects:** Historical Linguistics, Language Families/Areas/Contact, Sociolinguistics

## 1. Introduction

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Following Coseriu's terminology (1981), expatriate varieties of French can be categorized as either "secondary dialects" (exported by native speakers who migrated outside of their native land) or "tertiary dialects" (spoken by speech communities who initially spoke another native tongue). Secondary dialects have undergone koineization (Siegel, 1985; Thibault, 2016a) and variant reallocation processes (Britain & Trudgill, 1999) and have been exposed to adstrate effects, whereas tertiary dialects, often born out of secondary dialects, have been influenced by substrate effects. The influence of the European norm has also decreased in all varieties of expatriate French; these therefore display a number of archaisms, imported French regionalisms, "diastratisms" (socially stigmatized colloquialisms that tend to disappear in European Standard French), and numerous innovations.

Overseas varieties of the first colonial era are based on 17th- and 18th-century French and are either secondary dialects (Canada, Louisiana) or tertiary dialects (in the case of Creole speakers). The varieties that emerged in the second colonial era are mostly tertiary dialects and are based on 20th-century French.

## 2. Overseas Varieties of the First Colonial Era (17th–18th Centuries)

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The overseas varieties of the first colonial era are to be found in North America and the Antilles on the one hand, and in the Indian Ocean on the other. They share a significant number of linguistic traits that go back to the French spoken by the colonists. The following situations will be distinguished: Laurentian French, Acadian French, Louisiana French, French in the West Indies, and French in the Indian Ocean.

### 2.1 History, Geography, Politics, and Demographics

#### 2.1.1. Laurentian French

Most of the colonists settled down along the shores of the St. Lawrence River in the second half of the 17th century. They mainly came from Paris (particularly the women) and western French regions. A majority of them were from urban areas, where regional French was already widely spread (compared to the countryside, where primary dialects were still dominant): the historical basis of Laurentian French is to be found in this koineized urban variety.<sup>1</sup> In 1763 (Treaty of Paris), the territory known until then as “Nouvelle-France” fell into British hands. This was the beginning of a new era, marked by two major phenomena: the abrupt interruption in contact with European French, and the growing influence of the English language. After the British conquest, immigration from France was banned and English-speaking immigrants started arriving. Nevertheless, the French-speaking population kept on growing. Between 1850 and 1950, Québec’s population grew from 1 million to 5 million inhabitants and the percentage of French speakers in the province always numbered above 80%.

According to the last federal census (2016, statcan <http://www.statcan.gc.ca>), a total of 10,360,760 Canadian citizens reported being able to hold a conversation in French (approximately 30% of the total population); 7,619,040 of them live in Québec (practically 95% of the total population of this province), 1,530,435 in Ontario, and 313,095 in New Brunswick.

#### 2.1.2. Acadian French

Samuel de Champlain landed on the coast of Nova Scotia (named “Acadie” during the French regime) in 1604 and founded Port-Royal (now Annapolis, Nova Scotia) in 1605. The first settlers started arriving around 1636. When Acadie turned British in 1713 (Treaty of Utrecht), the presence of the Acadians was first tolerated by the British, who granted them the right to remain neutral; but in 1755, as the Seven Years’ War was about to break out, they were forced to pledge allegiance to the British Crown. As retaliation against their refusal, their property was burned down and they were expelled to the eastern coast of the continent. Some were

even sent to France, while a few thousand made it to Louisiana. After the end of the Seven Years' War, many of them returned, but their lands had been given away to British settlers (Thibault, 2003).

Nowadays, the biggest concentration of Acadians is found in New Brunswick (313,095 respondents out of a population of 736,280, according to the 2016 census [statcan <<http://www.statcan.gc.ca>>], report being able to hold a conversation in French). Nova Scotia (96,085 out of 912,300) and Prince Edward Island (17,955 out of 141,020) have smaller and more isolated French-speaking communities.

### 2.1.3. Louisiana French

In 1682, Robert Cavelier de La Salle sailed the Mississippi all the way down to the Gulf of Mexico and took possession of this huge territory in the name of French king Louis XIV, in honor of whom he named it "Louisiana." Colonization started only at the very end of the century, and New Orleans was founded in 1718. At the end of the Seven Years' War (1763), England received the territories east of the Mississippi and Spain the western ones. A new treaty (San Ildefonso) made Louisiana French again in 1800, but Napoleon sold it to the United States in 1803, and the southernmost portion of this vast territory became the 18th American state in 1812.

A few thousand Acadians ended up in Louisiana between 1764 and 1785 (Klingler, 2017, p. 397). The "Acadiens" became "Cadiens," who in turn became "Cajuns" in English. Their linguistic and cultural legacy in French-speaking Louisiana is very significant (even though it has been overestimated). Another major event was the arrival of 10,000 refugees from Santo Domingo in the decade following the Haitian Revolution (1804). The population of New Orleans then doubled in a few years. After the Civil War, though, French was abandoned as a prestige language, prohibited in school, and socially stigmatized until the 1960s. With the advent of the American civil rights movement, French experienced a resurgence in Louisiana, and the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana was created in 1968 aiming "to preserve, promote, and develop Louisiana's French and Creole culture, heritage, and language" (Louisiana Act, 2010, §651, A <<https://legis.la.gov/Legis/Law.aspx?d=84519>>).

These days, French is still spoken in Louisiana by about 125,000 speakers, most of them over the age of 65; this is a dramatic decline in comparison with the reported 200,000 speakers around 2000, and more than 260,000 in 1990 (Klingler, 2017, p. 394). These speakers are concentrated in a region officially recognized since 1971 as "Acadiana" in the southern "parishes".

### 2.1.4. West Indies and Guiana

French was exported to the West Indies in the 17th and the 18th centuries. It is now spoken in Haiti, as well as in three French overseas departments: Martinique, Guadeloupe, and French Guiana.

Haiti was first reached by French colonists in the 17th century, but Port-au-Prince was founded only in 1749. It soon became very wealthy due to the exploitation of sugarcane, for which hundreds of thousands of African slaves were imported. Slavery was abolished in 1793 for the first time but reestablished in 1802. After a general insurrection and numerous battles, Haiti proclaimed its independence in 1804. Its population now numbers over 10 million people. Only the elites speak fluent French, whereas Haitian Creole is spoken by the whole population (Fattier, 2017) and is undergoing a process of standardization. Creole and French are co-official languages.

French is also at home in Martinique and Guadeloupe, two French overseas departments where it coexists with French Creole varieties. Slavery in these islands was abolished in 1848; as ex-slaves refused to continue working in the cane fields, planters resorted to importing thousands of workers from India and, to a lesser extent, from China. French is the only official language and is spoken far more widely than in Haiti, by virtually the entire population. The islands are small but very densely populated, with approximately 400,000 inhabitants in Guadeloupe and 380,000 in Martinique (Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques  [<http://www.insee.fr>](http://www.insee.fr) [INSEE]).

On the South American continent, French is also present in French Guiana (c. 260,000 people in a landmass of 83,000 km<sup>2</sup>, INSEE  [<http://www.insee.fr>](http://www.insee.fr)). A similar colonial history gave rise to a local variety of French Creole, but unlike the situation in the insular territories, the original native languages did not disappear, and French is still in contact with a wide variety of them, as well as with immigrant languages (Alby, 2017).

### **2.1.5. Indian Ocean (I: Réunion, Mauritius, and the Seychelles)**

French has been present in the Indian Ocean since the 17th century. It is spoken in two French departments, Réunion and Mayotte, as well as in four independent states: Madagascar, the Comoros, Mauritius, and the Seychelles.

When the French first arrived at Réunion in 1638, it was still uninhabited. Servile labor forces were soon imported, slowly in the first decades but more steadily as the exploitation of sugarcane grew. The emergence of French Creole in Réunion has been explained as the result of the imperfect acquisition of colonial French varieties by the new slaves in this second phase (Chaudenson, 2003). Réunion became an overseas department in 1946; it is a small (2,510 km<sup>2</sup>) but densely populated island (840,000 inhabitants, INSEE  [<http://www.insee.fr>](http://www.insee.fr)). French is the official language, in a situation of diglossia with Réunion Creole.

Mauritius has much in common with Réunion but is almost twice as densely populated: approximately 1,260,000 inhabitants (statsmauritus  [<http://statsmauritus.govmu.org/>](http://statsmauritus.govmu.org/)) on 2,040 km<sup>2</sup>. The island was uninhabited when the first Europeans reached it and only very sparsely populated until the French colonized it (from 1715 until 1810). It underwent a typical process of Creole genesis during the French regime. Mauritius fell into British hands in 1810 and achieved independence in 1968, but English never became the first language of the

population, which is massively Creole speaking today. Even though English is the de facto official language, French is dominant in many prestigious domains and is spoken at home in a growing number of families (Robillard, 1993a, p. 130).

The Seychelles, an archipelago of over a hundred islands with a population of approximately 96,000 inhabitants (*World Factbook [Wfb]*: Central Intelligence Agency, 2021), started receiving immigrants from Mauritius around 1770. They introduced and implanted Mauritian Creole in the colony as well as colonial French. The Seychelles became British in 1810 and gained independence in 1976. Three national languages are recognized: Creole, English, and French. Unlike in Mauritius, English is more widespread than French, especially in the school system and the press (Kriegel, 2017, pp. 690–694).

## 2.2 Lexicon

Due to their common history, the expatriate varieties of the first colonial period share a good number of traits. Chaudenson (1974, pp. 591–632) identified a series of “*mots des Isles*” (“Island words”) common to most of the insular French territories, many of which are also known in North American varieties, for example, *maringouin* ‘mosquito’, of Tupi origin, which is in use in Canada, Louisiana, the Antilles, and the Indian Ocean (*DECA II*: Bollée et al., 2017, pp. 251–252).

### 2.2.1. Laurentian French

Laurentian French regionalisms include: archaisms, such as the well-known triad *déjeuner / dîner / souper* <<https://francaisdenosregions.com/2018/04/03/le-midi-vous-dejeunez-ou-vous-dinez/>> instead of *petit déjeuner / déjeuner / dîner* ‘breakfast / lunch / dinner’; French regionalisms, such as *carreauté* ‘checkered’, from Normandy); colloquialisms such as *menteries* ‘lies’; a few Amerindianisms such as *atocas* <<https://francaisdenosregions.com/2018/03/11/canneberges-ou-cranberries/>> ‘cranberries’; a very large stock of Anglicisms such as *running shoes* <<https://francaisdenosregions.com/2016/12/27/le-francais-nord-americain-premiers-resultats/>>; and numerous innovations, either semantic (*rondelle* ‘a hockey puck’) or morphological (*érable* ‘a sugar bush’ < *érable* ‘maple tree’ + suffix *-ière*) (cf. *DHFQ*: Poirier, 1998).

### 2.2.2 Acadian French

Acadian French has maintained a certain number of archaisms, such as the negative adverb *point* (in Nova Scotia). It also has a few specific Amerindianisms: for example, *couimou* ‘a common loon or red-throated loon’ (Cormier, 1999, pp. 151–152). Some Acadian Anglicisms are unknown in Québec: *frollic* ‘a party with food, music and dance’. As for a specific Acadian semantic innovation, compare *amoureux* ‘thistles’ (lit. ‘lovers’); a neologism would be *malpatient* ‘impatient’ (prefix *mal* ‘badly’ + *patient*) (cf. Brasseur, 2001; Brasseur & Chauveau, 1990; Cormier, 1999; Massignon, 1962; Péronnet et al., 1998; Poirier, 1927–1933/1993) . In

certain varieties, the influence of English has led to hybrid codes, such as the so-called *chiac*, typically spoken in the southeast of New Brunswick (cf. Chevalier & Long, 2005; Perrot, 2005; Thibault, 2011).

### 2.2.3 Louisiana French

Louisiana's intermediate position between Canada and the West Indies accounts for the composite nature of its lexical particularities (Thibault, 2014, 2016b). It shares many words that are widespread in expatriate varieties, as well as numerous North American French specificities, but also has a significant stock of Antillean words that came from Haiti. Contact languages have bequeathed a few Amerindianisms (*chaoui* 'a raccoon') and Hispanicisms (*lagnippe* 'a tip, a bonus,' from Latin American Spanish *ñapa*). The most comprehensive reference work on the Louisiana French lexicon is Valdman and Rottet (2010).

### 2.2.4 West Indies and Guiana

Contrary to North American varieties, French and French Creoles in the West Indies contain many borrowings from the indigenous languages of the region, as well as from African languages. Some Anglicisms and Hispanicisms are specific to the region. On French and French Creole lexicon in the Antilles, see *DECA I* (Bollée et al., 2018) and *II*; on regional Haitian French, see Pompilus (1961); for contemporary literary French in the Antilles, see *BDLP* <<http://www.bdlp.org>> (*Base de données lexicographiques panfrancophone*), tab "Antilles". A few examples are *serrer* 'to store,' an archaism; *caniques* 'marbles,' from Normandy; *géreur* 'the administrator of a homestead,' a morphological innovation from *gérer*; *canari* 'an earthenware pot,' from Galibi *canáli* 'earth'; *laghia* 'a dance similar to capoeira,' of African origin; *iche* 'a son or daughter,' from Spanish *hijo*; *tray*, from English.<sup>2</sup>

### 2.2.5 Indian Ocean (I: Réunion, Mauritius, and the Seychelles)

The particularities of the Indian Ocean French lexicon consist of borrowings of Malagasy (e.g., *moucate* 'despicable person' from Malagasy *lamoka* 'rotten'), Hindi (e.g., *di(pa)vali* 'Hindu holiday that celebrates light'), Tamil, and Indo-Portuguese origin; Mauritius also has a number of Anglicisms such as *overtime* 'extra hours at work'. The fundamental reference works are Chaudenson (1974) and *DECOI I,1, I,2, I,3, and II* (Bollée, 1993b–2007). For specialized works on regional French, see Saint Jorre and Lionnet (1989) (Seychelles), Robillard (1993b) (Mauritius), Nallatamby (1995) (Mauritius), Beniamino (1996) (Réunion), and Pan Yan (2008) (Mauritius).

## 2.3 Main Phonological, Morphological, and Syntactic Features

### 2.3.1. Laurentian French

The phonology of Laurentian French has been thoroughly studied (Côté, 2012, 2014; Morin, 1996). The vowel system is conservative, with the retention of all the standard oppositions that tend to disappear in France nowadays: /ɑ/ ~ /a/ (*tâche* ≠ *tache*); /e/ ~ /ɛ/ (*pré* ≠ *près*); /o/ ~ /ɔ/ (*pôle* ≠ *Paul*); short /ɛ/ ~ long /ɛ:/ (*faites* ≠ *fête*); /ø/ ~ /œ/ (*jeûne* ≠ *jeune*); /ɛ̃/ ~ /œ̃/ (*brin* ≠ *brun*). Unstressed high vowels tend to be deleted: *université* > *un'vers'té*. When stressed, in closed syllables, they become lax: *site* [sɪt], *lune* [lỹn], *soupe* [sɔ̃p]. Assibilation (/t/ > [ts], /d/ > [dz] before [i, y, j, ɥ]) is general in Laurentian French. Apical [r] used to be general in Western Laurentian, but it is falling victim to uvular [ʁ] (Côté & Saint-Amant Lamy, 2012). Word-final cluster reduction is almost systematic.

The deletion of /l/ in the definite articles and object pronouns *la* and *les* (Côté, 2012; Uritescu, 1997) is particularly frequent after certain prepositions (*sur la* > *su'a*) or in clitic clusters (*je les ai vus* > *j'es ai vus*). Analogical liaisons are frequent: *i(l) est arrivé* [jetarive] > *t'es arrivé* [tetarive]; *donnes-en, parlez-en* > *donne-moi-z'en, parlez-moi-z'en*.

A well-known grammatical feature of Laurentian French, also found in every other North American variety, is the very frequent use of expanded forms of the plural personal pronouns: *nous autres*, *vous autres*, *eux autres* (Blondeau, 2011). They function only as stressed pronouns, followed by a clitic: *nous autres, on* + verb; *vous autres, vous* + verb; *eux autres, ils* + verb. The use of *tu* (familiarity) is far more frequent than in Europe, but (formal) *vous* is still used, particularly when addressing elderly people.

Another very salient feature is the wide variety of interrogative constructions. So-called total interrogations can be built in many ways (Léard, 1995, pp. 218–223): *est-ce qu'il vient? il vient? il vient-tu?* ('is he coming?'). The expression of the progressive aspect also yields a wide range of constructions, a legacy of 17th-century French (Gougenheim, 1929, pp. 59–60; Thibault, 2009, pp. 90–93), with different social values: *il est après manger* 'he is eating' (rather colloquial), *il est en train de manger* (standard and neutral), *il est à manger* (written language).

Peculiarities of Laurentian French are, among others, verb forms such as *je vas* (equivalent of Standard French *je vais* 'I'm going'), which was very frequent in 17th-century France, and *m'as* as a morpheme of future tense (out of the phonetic reduction of *je m'en vas* 'I'm going away') (Mougeon et al., 2009; Sankoff & Thibault, 2011), as well as the very widespread use of the past infinitive with the value of a conditional subordinate clause: *Avoir su, j'serais pas venu* ('to have known, I wouldn't have come'; Léard, 1995, p. 192; Martineau & Motapanyane, 1995).



### 2.3.2. Acadian French

Acadian French phonology bears many similarities to that of Laurentian French but is nevertheless distinct: see Cichocki (2012, 2018), Falkert (2010, 2014), Flikeid (1985), King and Ryan (1989), Lucci (1972), and Ryan (2007). Acadian French has conserved the oppositions that characterize Laurentian French, with the exception of the nasal vowels: many regions show a merger between the two back vowels ([ã] and [õ]), particularly in open stressed syllables, as well as between the two front vowels ([ě] and [œ]); see Lucci (1972, pp. 64–69) and Flikeid (1985). The major differences with Laurentian French are the absence of assibilation, a widespread use of the alveolar flap [r], the preservation of /h/, frequent palatalization of /k, g/ before front vowels and /t, d/ before glides, the *ouïsme* phenomenon ([o] becomes [u] before nasal consonants and [z]) and nasal vowels before nasal consonants (*année* [ãne] vs. Standard French [ane]).

In the first person plural, instead of written French *nous chantons* ('we sing') and oral French (*nous*), *on chante*, traditional Acadian French uses *je chantons* (but not exclusively: see Neumann-Holzschuh & Mitko, 2018; Neumann-Holzschuh et al., 2005; Péronnet, 1989). In the third person plural, instead of Standard French *ils chantent* ('they sing'), Acadian French says *ils chantont* (see Chauveau, 2009). It has generalized the use of *avoir* as auxiliary for compound tenses (vs. Standard French *avoir* 'to have' and *être* 'to be') (King & Nadasdi, 2005). Its most archaic feature is the use of the *passé simple* (Gesner, 1979) and the *subjonctif imparfait* but with the generalization (originating in western French regiolects) of an [-i(r)] suffix to most verbs, as in *ils se rencontrirent* versus Standard French *ils se rencontrèrent* (Hennemann, 2014, p. 131). This trait survives mainly in Nova Scotia.

### 2.3.3. Louisiana French

The phonology and phonetics of Louisiana French have been well covered in several recent publications (Dajko, 2016; Dajko et al., 2016; Klingler, 2017; Klingler & Lyche, 2012; Picone & Valdman, 2005). This variety shares many phonological and phonetical features with Laurentian French and even more with Acadian French; nevertheless, its vocalic system of oppositions is somewhat simpler: the oppositions /e/ ~ /ɛ/, /o/ ~ /ɔ/, /ø/ ~ /œ/, /a/ ~ /ɑ/, and /ě/ ~ /œ/ are not respected.

All other features also exist in Laurentian and/or Acadian French: in some parishes, free alternation between [ã] and [õ] (Dajko & Blainey, 2016, p. 482); high-vowel laxing in word-final closed syllables; vowel nasalization before a nasal consonant (*liane* [lijã̃n], Klingler & Lyche, 2012, p. 290); palatalization of /k, g/ before front vowels and glides; assibilation of /t, d/ before front vowels and glides (but only in some parishes); alveolar flap [r]; voiceless glottal fricative /h/; and simplification of word-final consonant clusters.

Many grammatical particularities of Louisiana French are common to all North American French varieties, such as the use of the progressive periphrasis *être après* + infinitive, the combination of *pas* with *personne* and *rien*, the use of *avoir* as auxiliary in the compound tenses of verbs of movement or pronominal verbs, *je vas* for *je vais*, and the expanded form of

plural subject pronouns with *-autres* (Dajko, 2016, p. 306). The Acadian verb phrase *je chantons* ‘we sing’ is attested in historical sources in Louisiana French but fell into disuse in the 20th century (Rottet, 2005); however, the type *ils chantont* ‘they sing’ is still in use in some parishes (Klingler & Lyche, 2012, p. 284).

Other noteworthy grammatical phenomena are: the use of *qui* as a relative and interrogative pronoun instead of *quoi* (Klingler & Lyche, 2012, p. 283); the use of the past conditional instead of the present conditional or imperfect to express a posteriority or a habit in the past (Rottet, 2011); subjunctive loss (Neumann-Holzschuh, 2005); and a causative structure that matches Creole and English word order, as in *il fait l'enfant travailler* ‘he makes the child work’ (Neumann-Holzschuh & Klingler, 2018).

#### 2.3.4. West Indies

The survival of /h/, well documented in Acadian and Louisiana French, has also been recorded in Haiti (Pompilus, 1961, p. 37) as well as in Guadeloupe and Martinique (Hazaël-Massieux & Hazaël-Massieux, 1996, p. 671). As for /r/, it has several allophones: a voiced fricative velar [χ] or uvular [ʁ] before non-rounded vowels, [w] before rounded vowels, and mostly deletion in syllable-final position (Fattier, 2017, p. 615; Pustka, 2012, 2015). Word-final consonant clusters are simplified. Assibilation of /t, d/ before palatal vowels is very frequent in Haitian French and can also be heard in Martinique, as well as palatalization of /t, d/ + /j/. In order to avoid hiatuses, a homorganic glide is inserted: *guadeloupéen* [gwadlupejɛ̃], *Noël* [nowɛ̃] (Fattier, 2017, p. 615; Hazaël-Massieux & Hazaël-Massieux, 1996, p. 672).

There is a tendency to delabialize front rounded vowels, inexistent in Creole. The opposition between /e/ and /ɛ/ is kept rather well, but there is no distinction between /o/ and /ɔ/, nor between /a/ and /ɑ/ (Pompilus, 1961, pp. 40–41; Pustka & Ledegen, 2016, p. 70). Haitian French has four nasal vowels and clearly distinguishes /ɛ̃/ from /œ̃/ (Fattier, 2017, p. 615; Pompilus, 1961, p. 41), a distinction that seems to be weaker but nevertheless predominant in the Lesser Antilles <<https://françaisdenosregions.com/2016/12/18/2051/>>. Schwa deletion is less frequent than in Standard French: according to Pompilus (1961, p. 43), *fenêtre*, *au secours*, *semaine* or *neveu* all keep [ə].

As for morphosyntactic structures, there is verb fronting with doubling, also called “predicate cleft,” which replicates a structure found in Creole: *c'est rire qu'il riait* ‘he was laughing a lot,’ lit. ‘it’s laughing that he was laughing’ (Thibault, 2010a). Another very well attested syntactical Creolism is the expression of reflexive diathesis with the use of *corps* ‘body,’ as in *dépêche ton corps* ‘hurry up,’ lit. ‘hurry your body’ (Thibault, 2013). The causative structure *il fait l'enfant travailler* is particularly frequent in the West Indies, in Haiti (Govain, 2018) as well as in the Lesser Antilles (Thibault, 2018). The combination of *pas* with *rien* or *personne* also occurs in the West Indies (Thibault, 2009, pp. 95–96), where it matches a similar structure in Creole. Finally, the occasional absence of certain grammatical words—such as determinants or subordinate conjunctions—from the sentence structure, also parallels Creole structures.

### 2.3.5 Indian Ocean (I: Réunion, Mauritius, and the Seychelles)

Even though French in these territories enjoys varying statuses, a common history explains the similarities between them. The vowel system is similar to the one described previously for Louisiana: the oppositions /e/ ~ /ɛ/, /o/ ~ /ɔ/, /ø/ ~ /œ/, and /a/ ~ /ɑ/ do not exist (Beniamino & Baggioni, 1993, pp. 160–161; Chaudenson, 1978, pp. 550–553, 577–579; Ledegen & Lyche, 2016, pp. 261–262). However, /ɛ̃/ ~ /œ̃/ is attested for Réunion and Mauritius (Ledegen & Lyche, 2016, pp. 261–262), even though recent studies show that this opposition is receding in Réunion among young speakers (Bordal & Ledegen, 2009, pp. 182–183).

Simplification of consonant clusters in coda is systematic. Assibilation is sporadic in Réunion but very frequent in Mauritius. Implosive /r/ is hardly ever pronounced but has a lengthening effect on the preceding vowel. The main characteristic of the Indian Ocean French consonant system is a tendency to pronounce /ʃ/ and /ʒ/ as /s/ and /z/ (Beniamino & Baggioni, 1993, pp. 160–161; Chaudenson, 1978, pp. 551–553, 578–579; Ledegen & Lyche, 2016, pp. 263–264.)

On the phonetics of Seychelles French, Chaudenson (1978, p. 597) and Bollée (1993a, p. 125) agreed on the following features: the schwa has a strong tendency to be pronounced as [e], and so does [ɛ] in open syllables; front rounded vowels are only weakly labialized; /r/ behaves similarly as in Mauritius; assibilation is widespread; and any vowel in contact with a nasal consonant tends to be nasalized.

Many of the morphosyntactic features mentioned so far (Sections 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 2.3.3, and 2.3.4) are also attested in the Indian Ocean (Beniamino & Baggioni, 1993, pp. 162–163; Bollée, 1993a, pp. 125–126; Chaudenson, 1978, pp. 554–555, 579–580; Ledegen & Lyche, 2016, pp. 258–261), such as the use of progressive periphrases (*être à / après* + infinitive), a tendency to use *avoir* instead of *être* as auxiliary for the compound tenses, subjunctive loss, and the abandonment of functional morphemes (*à, de, que*). The causative type *il fait l'enfant travailler* is specific to Mauritius (Kriegel & Fon Sing, 2018). Kriegel (2017, p. 696) also reported an alternating use between masculine and feminine determiners, the omission of the definite article, as well as a frequent lack of agreement in gender and number.

## 3. Overseas Varieties of the Second Colonial Era (19th–20th Centuries)

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In the 19th century, a new wave of military conquests brought French to North Africa (Maghreb) and sub-Saharan Africa. It also reached the Middle East and established itself in Madagascar and the Comoros. Finally, it took root in the Pacific Ocean. The French exported to these new territories is less archaic than in the first colonial era, has less northwestern French characteristics, and has been in intensive contact with various other languages. The French varieties of the second colonial era can mainly be considered tertiary dialects (Coseriu, 1981)—that is, varieties that were initially the result of second (or foreign) language acquisition.

## 3.1 History, Geography, Politics, and Demographics

### 3.1.1 Maghreb

The Maghreb encompasses five countries: Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, and Mauritania (Morsly, 2003, p. 929). However, French has never been spoken in Libya and thrives only in the other four countries, which represent one of the most significant French-speaking regions in the world, even though French in the Maghreb is spoken more as a second language and does not enjoy official-language status.

Algeria is the biggest (2,381,741 km<sup>2</sup>) country in the area (over 43 million inhabitants, *Wfb*, 2021). The French presence started in 1830 and lasted until 1962. Throughout the colonial era, Algeria was considered a “*colonie de peuplement*,” a territory where European colonists were sent to establish settlements. An estimated 1 million “*Pieds-noirs*”—the popular nickname for the inhabitants of European origin—lived in Algeria around 1962 (Morsly, 2003, p. 931) and had to move to France after the Algerian War. Algeria’s official national languages are Arabic and Tamazight (the traditional language of Berber populations); French is considered a “primary foreign language,” but it is pervasive in Algerian society.

It is hard to evaluate the percentage of French-speakers; however, if school attendance of French classes can be considered a reliable indicator, at least one third of the population can hold a conversation in the language—a proportion that keeps on growing, thanks to rising school enrollment.

French presence in Tunisia started in 1881, and the country gained its independence in 1956. Rather small in size (163,610 km<sup>2</sup>) but densely populated (over 11 million inhabitants, *Wfb*, 2021), it had the status of a protectorate during the colonial era. Its only official language is Arabic, but French is ubiquitous. Even though it wasn’t an actual settlement colony like Algeria, it counted 250,000 citizens of European origin in 1956.

Mauritania is huge (1,030,700 km<sup>2</sup>) but very sparsely populated (c. 4 million inhabitants, *Wfb*, 2021). It became a French “*territoire civil*” in 1904, was a “colony” from 1920 until 1946, then became an “overseas territory” (1946–1956) and attained independence in 1960. At the junction between North and sub-Saharan Africa, 80% of its inhabitants belong to the Arab-Berber culture, while the remaining ethnic groups are part of black Africa. Its official language is Arabic, but French is the primary foreign language.

Morocco hosts approximately 36 million inhabitants (*Wfb*, 2021) over a territory of 446,550 km<sup>2</sup>. It became a French protectorate in 1912 and achieved independence in 1956. Spain was also present in the northern part of the country in colonial times, which left a few linguistic traces. More than 400,000 citizens of European origin were living in the country in 1956. As in Algeria, the two official languages are Arabic and Tamazight, but French is omnipresent.

It might seem surprising that French is spoken more in the Maghreb now than it was during colonial times, but several factors account for this situation. The proportion of the native population that had access to education before independence was very low; now, a growing percentage of young people are provided with elementary and secondary education, with French either as a subject matter or as a teaching medium. Another factor is that the Arabization process (Grandguillaume, 1983) faces serious obstacles: written Arabic is very distant from the spoken Arabic dialects; moreover, university-level textbooks are not always available in Arabic. The fact that many European firms do business in the Maghreb also makes French more attractive, as does the presence of a booming tourism industry. Satellite television in French is also a powerful instrument for learning the language outside the school system. And, finally, the back-and-forth of countless immigrants between the Maghreb and French-speaking Europe helps give French the image of a language that is not so “foreign” after all.

The sociolinguistic situation in the Maghreb used to be described in terms of diglossia (Ferguson, 1959). It refers to the coexistence of two related but strongly divergent varieties of one language, in this instance Arabic in the Maghreb speech community, with a hierarchical and complementary distribution of the communicative functions: classical Arabic as a prestige code, and dialect varieties for everyday purposes. The fact that French in the colonial era monopolized practically all of the prestige functions has been analyzed as a situation of “embedded diglossias” (Boukous, 1995, pp. 9, 55ff.; Jablonka, 2017, p. 467) in which the opposition between classical Arabic and spoken dialects was superimposed by another opposition between Arabic as a whole, functioning as a “Low code” (except for religious purposes), and French, acting as the only “High code.” This has changed completely since independence, and the current scheme can only be accounted for in terms of polyglossia: the Maghreb is a multilingual space, and the various languages present can function as High or Low depending on the circumstances. French is not only a language used in very formal situations; in many neighborhoods, especially affluent ones, it is also used spontaneously. Arabic appears in three forms: classical Arabic, the language of religious texts; a modern standard variety of this language, used in the media and between speakers whose dialects are very divergent; and spoken dialects, which are the only ones used in spontaneous speech with friends or family members. Finally, a significant percentage of the population uses Berber dialects, now recognized as official languages in Morocco and Algeria.

The coexistence of all these languages has given way to constant code-switching and countless borrowings: see Derradji (1998) on Algeria; Darot (1998) on Tunisia; Boukous (1996) and El Himer (2000) on Morocco; and Manzano (2011, 265ff.) on the Maghreb in general.

### 3.1.2 Lebanon

Lebanon covers a small area (10,452 km<sup>2</sup>) but has a very high population density (more than five million inhabitants, *WFb*, 2021). What sets it apart from other Arab-speaking countries is that almost half the population is Christian. France has always played an important political

role in the region, acting as the protector of Eastern Christians (Serhan et al., 2017, p. 575) and installing a network of missionary schools, which were already well established by the middle of the 19th century (Abou, 1978, p. 287). During the French mandate (1920–1943) after the dismantling of the Ottoman Empire, French became even more important and acquired official status, which was lost when Lebanon became independent in 1943. Nevertheless, its presence in the educational system has remained strong, together with English, which is also extremely popular and seen as necessary for conducting business at the international level.

Lebanese speakers experience a complex situation of polyglossia: their mother tongue is dialectal Lebanese Arabic, the main written language and the first language at school is Standard Arabic, but French and English are widespread—leading to a lot of code-switching, especially in privileged families and in the professional world. French has a visible presence in higher education, in the media, in literature (Amin Maalouf, Andrée Chedid) and in the publishing world (Gueunier, 1993, pp. 270–271; Serhan et al., 2017, pp. 579–581). French in Lebanon is highly appreciated, especially by the Christian community, who sees Paris as a cultural hub. Even though the Muslim community used to prefer English, recent studies (Serhan et al., 2017, p. 576) have shown that Druzes, Sunnites, and Shiites are increasingly drawn to French.

### 3.1.3 Sub-Saharan Africa

The largest number of officially Francophone states is found in sub-Saharan Africa. However, the percentage of actual French-speaking citizens in the region is rather low. The first Europeans to reach the West African coasts, in the 16th century, were the Spanish and Portuguese, who established trading posts. The French followed, first in Saint-Louis (founded in 1659), now in Senegal, but no settlement colony was established. Communication between Europeans and Africans was conducted through a simplified code called *lingua franca* or *porto* based on Portuguese, with elements taken from African languages. In the 19th century, religious congregations started establishing schools in coastal towns, but many churches chose to preach in the local languages. It was only in 1870 that the military conquest of the continent started gaining momentum. A few decades later, through military operations in which more or less forcibly recruited African soldiers were implicated, three groupings emerged regarding the French-speaking territories (Queffélec, 1995, p. 824): *Afrique Occidentale Française* (AOF), French West Africa, founded in 1895, its administrative center was Dakar; *Afrique Équatoriale Française* (AEF), French Equatorial Africa, established in 1911 and administered in Brazzaville; and Belgian Congo, established in 1907, to which Burundi and Rwanda, former German colonies, were added in 1918.

The first linguistic consequence of this colonialist enterprise was the imposition of French as the administrative, commercial, and legal language. It was also a language that African soldiers had to learn, in order to communicate at least minimally with their superiors and comrades from other dialectal areas. This rather abrupt contact with French gave rise to a

special variety known as *le français-tirailleur* (a *tirailleur* being a soldier of African origin in the French army), a pidgin French variety that was common between 1870 and 1945 (Ndao, 2000; Van den Avenne, 2017).

Access to education started slowly and only began to reach a wider portion of the population after the end of World War II (Queffélec, 2003, p. 945). However, most countries managed to provide education to a significant portion of their populations only after achieving independence. The fact that French was chosen in all the ex-colonies as the official language can be explained in a variety of ways: it helped to maintain a certain continuity in the management of everyday administrative issues; the African languages were not standardized; they were too numerous and not neutral enough, often seen as characteristic of a certain ethnic group in multiethnic states; the African elites had all been educated in French. The prestige of French in sub-Saharan Africa is so high that parents often reject teaching in their respective ethnicity's native languages (see Table 1).<sup>3</sup>

**Table 1. Sub-Saharan Countries Where French Is (Co-)Official**

Country	Former colonial power	“Official” languages	“National” languages as of the country’s constitution	Area (in km <sup>2</sup> )	Population in millions (est., <i>Wfb</i> , 2021)
<i>Democratic Republic of the Congo</i>	Belgium	French	Lingala, Kikongo, Swahili, Tshiluba	2,345,409	105
<i>Burundi</i>	Belgium	Kirundi, French		27,834	12
<i>Rwanda</i>	Belgium	Kinya–rwanda, French, English, Swahili		26,338	13
<i>Benin</i>	France	French		114,763	13
<i>Burkina Faso</i>	France	French	Mossi, Dyula, Fula	274,400	21
<i>Congo Republic</i>	France	French	Lingala, Kituba	342,000	5
<i>Ivory Coast</i>	France	French		322,462	28
<i>Gabon</i>	France	French		267,677	2
<i>Guinea</i>	France	French		245,857	13
<i>Mali</i>	France	French		1,241,238	20
<i>Niger</i>	France	French		1,267,000	23



Country	Former colonial power	“Official” languages	“National” languages as of the country’s constitution	Area (in km <sup>2</sup> )	Population in millions (est., <i>Wfb</i> , 2021)
<i>Senegal</i>	France	French	Joola, Mandinka, Pulaar, Seereer, Soninke, Wolof	196,712	16
<i>Togo</i>	France	French		56,785	8
<i>Central African Republic</i>	France	Sango, French		622,984	5
<i>Chad</i>	France	French, Arabic		1,284,000	17
<i>Cameroon</i>	Germany, England, France	French, English		475,650	28
<b>Total</b>				<b>9,111,109</b>	<b>329 million</b>

The total area of the contiguous space occupied by countries in sub-Saharan Africa whose official language is French is larger than the contiguous United States, and its total population reaches approximately 330 million inhabitants. But when it comes to evaluating the percentage of citizens who can be considered French speaking, many problems arise. Most countries do not have the means to survey their citizens on language use, and evaluations are based on access to education. But the many difficulties encountered by teachers (Queffélec, 2008, p. 67) make it very hard for them to bring their pupils up to an acceptable level of fluency. And the basics that are acquired in school can easily be forgotten if there is no need to reproduce them in everyday life. A realistic evaluation suggests that 15% of the population of these sixteen countries are fluent French-speakers (40 million)—typically, the elite—and some 25% (70 million) have at least some knowledge of the language (Maurer, 2015).

French is spoken more in coastal areas, big cities, higher social classes, regions without a supra-ethnic African vehicular language, and countries that are strongly plurilingual. Sociolinguists have developed a three-level model that distinguishes between “acrolects,” “mesolects,” and “basilects” (Queffélec, 2003, pp. 951–952). Acrolects correspond to the way highly educated African speakers express themselves in formal situations. Mesolects are the normal, socially neutral varieties used in everyday situations by Africans who might be considered “real” Francophones; these are characterized by a number of lexical, phonological, and grammatical traits. As for basilects, these are pidgin-like codes used by semi-speakers who craft sentences out of a limited number of French words, phonetically altered and combined in a nonnormative way, with very significant influence of native languages. Once they reach a certain social visibility, such basilects can be named and acquire an identity status; such is the case of FPI (*français populaire ivoirien*), also formerly known as *français de Moussa* (Lafage, 1990, pp. 776–777), as well as *nouchi* (Boukari, 2017, pp. 495–496; Ploog, 2010), both spoken in the Ivory Coast. Code-switching occurs intensively (see Diallo, 1998, on Guinea; Frey, 1998, on Burundi; and Ndao, 1998, on Senegal). In Cameroon, a mixed code called *Camfrançais* or *Francanglais* combines pidgin English and African elements in sentences with French syntax (Eloundou Eloundou, 2015; Essono, 1997; Féral, 1994, 1998, 2010; Harter, 2007). On code-mixing in general in sub-Saharan Africa, see Queffélec (2015).

The actual importance of French in sub-Saharan Africa lies in its being the only vehicle of written communication, and as such an essential tool of upward mobility. The fact that it has undergone a process of “Africanization” shows that it is no longer seen as a foreign reality.

### 3.1.4 Indian Ocean (II: Djibouti, Comoros, Mayotte, Madagascar)

The territories in this section share a number of characteristics: their regional proximity, their status as ex-French colonies, the relatively late presence of French in the respective linguistic communities, and intense contact phenomena with the local languages. They are also very different: Djibouti is a small state on continental Africa, between the Red Sea and the Gulf of

Aden; the Comoros are an archipelago, to which the tiny island of Mayotte geographically belongs even though it is politically a French department; and Madagascar is one of the biggest islands in the world.

Djibouti (23,200 km<sup>2</sup>; less than a million inhabitants; *WFb*, 2021) was at first a French commercial port before becoming the capital city of a French colony (*Côte Française des Somalis*, French Somaliland) in 1896. In 1967 it was renamed *Territoire français des Afars et des Issas* and gained independence in 1977. Now officially known as the Republic of Djibouti, it has two official languages: French and Arabic—but in everyday life people mostly speak one of the two officially recognized national languages, Somali and Afar. French is practically the only written language. Arabic is taught as a subject matter but is not used as a medium of instruction; its importance lies in the practice of the Muslim religion. French is mostly spoken by elites, with a lot of code-switching with Somali or Afar. Its neutral connotation is the key to its official status, in a country where the ethnolinguistic groups are often in conflict (Maurer, 1993a, p. 197).

The Comoros are a very densely populated archipelago (approximately 860,000 inhabitants over 1,862 km<sup>2</sup>, *WFb*, 2021) comprising four small islands off the northwest coast of Madagascar: Grande Comore, Anjouan, Mohéli, and Mayotte. The first three islands constitute an independent country, whereas Mayotte is a French department. In the Comoros, French is co-official with the Comorian language (related to Bantu) and Arabic. French is essentially used in public administration and the educational system, in the absence of a codified variety of Comorian. Arabic serves religious purposes. In Mayotte (376 km<sup>2</sup>, c. 270,000 inhabitants), French is the only official language, but Shimaore (the local dialect of Comorian) and Kibushi (a variety of Malagasy) have the status of regional languages.

Madagascar (587,000 km<sup>2</sup>) is home to approximately 27 million inhabitants (*WFb*, 2021). The population is of Austronesian origin, as is its language, called Malagasy, which is co-official with French. Madagascar was a French protectorate from 1896 until 1946, when it became a *territoire d'outre-mer*, and then gained independence in 1960. Even though French is the only language used in high school and college, the actual percentage of French speakers in the country hardly exceeds 15% (L'Hôte, 2019). A few daily papers and weekly magazines are published in French. Television stations offer programs in both Malagasy and French (often imported content), but radio stations mainly broadcast in Malagasy only. The lack of standardization that characterizes Malagasy helps French to maintain a strong position in society, while it also contributes to social inequalities (Bavoux, 1993, p. 177).

### 3.1.5 Pacific

French in the Pacific is spoken in four territories: three politically French collectivities—New Caledonia, Wallis and Futuna, and French Polynesia—where French is the only official language, and one independent state, Vanuatu, with Bislama (an English-based pidgin), French, and English as co-official languages.

New Caledonia is an archipelago, 1,800 km off the northeast coast of Australia, with an estimated population of 268,000 inhabitants as of 2014 (INSEE <http://www.insee.fr>). Its biggest island (Grande Terre) is 400 km long and between 40 and 50 km wide. The capital region of Nouméa hosts more than half the total population. The first European to reach it was the Englishman James Cook in 1774, but it became a French dependency in 1853 and was used as a penal colony from 1864 until 1924. A *territoire d'outre-mer* between 1946 and 1999, it is now considered a *collectivité "sui generis"* with special powers. The population is of very mixed origins, which explains the many linguistic particularities of New Caledonian French (Pauleau, 2016).

Wallis and Futuna is a small group of islands halfway between New Caledonia and Tahiti, with a population of 12,200 inhabitants as of 2013 (INSEE <http://www.insee.fr>). Missionaries were the first Europeans to make contact with Polynesian aborigines in the 19th century. The islands became a French protectorate in 1887. Following a referendum in 1959, they became a *territoire d'outre-mer* in 1961, which was converted to a status of *collectivité* in 2003.

French Polynesia is a constellation of five archipelagos in the South Pacific, some 6,000 km east of Australia; its 118 islands amount to only 4,167 km<sup>2</sup> and host 275,000 inhabitants (as of 2017, INSEE <http://www.insee.fr>). The first Europeans to reach them were Samuel Wallis (1767), Bougainville (1768), and James Cook (1769). In the 19th century, France gradually established a protectorate in the region, which in 1880 became the *Établissements français de l'Océanie*, and later achieved the status of *territoire d'outre-mer* (1946) and *collectivité d'outre-mer* (2003). The vast majority of the population is Polynesian and speaks French and Tahitian.

Vanuatu became an independent state in 1980, after being a joint Franco-British territory, or "condominium" (the so-called New Hebrides), for most of the 20th century. It is an archipelago of 83 islands more than 500 km off the northeast coast of New Caledonia, with about 300,000 people (WFb, 2021) living on its 12,189 km<sup>2</sup>. It has three official languages: Bislama, English, and French. However, the islands are home to more than a hundred indigenous languages, each of them spoken by just a few thousand people. This richness is also a weakness: native languages were not integrated into the school curriculum until very recently (2015; Ehrhart, 2017, p. 712), and education is almost always given in English or French, which are seen as the only legitimate written languages. Charpentier (1993, p. 308) estimated that approximately 5% of the population spoke native-level French and that more than 30% could understand it. Recent figures (Ehrhart, 2017, p. 712) show a comparable situation.

## 3.2 Lexicon

### 3.2.1 Maghreb

During colonial times, French was spoken only by a minority of native Arabic speakers but was the everyday language of more than 1.5 million speakers of European origin. They spoke a variety of colloquial French influenced by the southern origins of the settlers, which included a significant stock of Arabisms (Morsly, 2003, p. 936). On *Pied-Noir* French, also known as “*pataouète*,” see Lanly (1970), Duclos (1992), and Manzano (2011, pp. 239ff.). The lexical particularities of Maghreb French in the postindependence era are well documented, compare Ould Zein and Queffélec (1997) for Mauritania, Benzakour et al. (2000) for Morocco, Queffélec et al. (2002) for Algeria, and Naffati and Queffélec (2004) for Tunisia.

The most numerous borrowings come from Arabic, both classical (e.g., *achoura* ‘a Muslim religious holiday celebrated ten days after the first day of the Muslim year’) and dialectal Arabic (e.g., *douar* ‘a group of dwellings, stationary or mobile, often inhabited by members of the same family’). Many words come from the Berber dialects (e.g., *akoufi* ‘a terra-cotta pot’), but there are also hybrid words such as *gourbisation* ‘the emergence of slums in a given neighborhood’, formed on *gourbi* ‘traditional hut; by extension, slum’. The influence of Arabic (and Berber) can also reveal itself through semantic loans: *frère* (‘brother’) can refer to any male person with whom one feels an affinity; a *gazelle* is a beautiful girl; and if the river “ate” someone, it means that this person drowned in it. Moroccan French has also borrowed a few Spanish terms such as *patera* ‘flat-bottomed boat often used in various types of trafficking (drugs or refugees)’. Ottoman domination left a few words of Turkish origin such as *dey* ‘head of the Algerian government in times of Ottoman domination (1671–1830).’ Some Anglicisms are specific to Maghreb French—particularly in sports, for example, *keeper* ‘goalkeeper’.

A significant stock of Maghrebianisms are innovations, formal or semantic, based on French elements: compounds (*radio-trottoir* ‘rumors’, lit. ‘sidewalk-radio’), portmanteau words (*plasticulture* ‘plastic greenhouse growing’ < *plastique* + *culture*), prefixed (*inter-maghrébin* ‘existing or occurring between Maghreb countries’), suffixed (*cuisettes* ‘shorts’ < *cuisse* ‘thighs’ + *-ette*), and acronyms (*GAB* ‘cash dispenser’ < *guichet automatique de banque*). Semantic neologisms are also very numerous: a *cycliste* in France is a cyclist, but in Algeria and Tunisia it is a retailer who sells bicycles; a *dette* in France is simply a debt, but in Algeria it can also be a re-sit exam.

### 3.2.2 Lebanon

There are no inventories of Lebanese French lexical particularities; the following examples have been taken from Serhan et al. (2017, pp. 583–584). In the Maghreb, Arabic borrowings are very important (*knéfé* ‘semolina pudding,’ *laban* ‘a kind of yogurt’). The Arabic influence has also given rise to semantic and phrasal loans, such as *boire* (*une cigarette/une pipe/un narguilé*), lit. ‘to drink (a cigarette/a pipe/a water pipe)’. The English influence explains *téléphone cellulaire* (‘cellular phone’), also used in Canada and Haiti. A few Lebanese

archaisms are also known in other parts of the French-speaking world, such as *chambre* ‘any room in a house or apartment’ (whereas in Standard French it refers only to the bedroom). The Lebanese peculiarity can also lie in the notably high frequency of lexical items that are present in French dictionaries but seldom appear in actual speech in the French of the Hexagon, such as *estiver* ‘to spend the summer (in some touristic place).’

### 3.2.3 Sub-Saharan Africa

Many words and idioms are common to various countries, even though they may be far apart and their native languages totally different. Many factors account for this situation:

- A number of tropical realities that did not have a French name before initial contact with Africans received denominations that Europeans had already adopted in the Caribbean, such as *marigot* ‘backwater’ (Thibault, 2015).
- French expatriate employees were very mobile and contributed to the diffusion of particularisms across the whole colonial empire.
- Some cultural realities are common to many African societies and tend to be designated with the same words (e.g., kinship terms: see Thibault, 2010b).
- The use of French as a foreign language often gives way to restructuration phenomena that typically challenge the weakest points of the system.
- Some borrowings and loan translations came from contact languages that can be spoken in very large areas.

The category of archaisms is not well represented in sub-Saharan Africa. Still, the transmission of French solely through the school system, with the support of literary texts, has contributed to the blurring of the line between written and spoken codes. Some words that are strictly limited to very formal registers in European French (and therefore sound archaic) can appear in everyday conversations in some African countries such as *honnir* ‘to shame’ (*Inventaire des particularités lexicales du français en Afrique noire [IFA]*: Équipe IFA (A.E.L.I.A.), 1983, 1988).

“Francophonisms” from other parts of the French-speaking world can also be found in Africa, such as Antillanisms, whose diffusion was probably favored by the fact that many civil servants from Guadeloupe, Martinique, and even Haiti worked in Africa until independence (Condé, 2012, p. 67). Belgianisms have taken root in all former Belgian colonies (Frey, 1993, 2017).

Borrowings from indigenous languages typically refer to local fauna and flora or to cultural realities. They often combine with French affixes: for example, *kirundi* ‘Burundi’s national and co-official language’ > *kirundiphone* ‘(a person) who speaks Kirundi’ (Boucher & Lafage, 2000b). The influences are reciprocal: African languages have borrowed a good deal of French terminology, especially concerning technology (Frey, 2009; Hatungimana, 1998).

Anglicisms such as *wax* 'wax-printed fabric or loincloth' are widely attested in various areas. Words of Arabic origin are also very frequent in countries that are (partially) Muslim: for example, *médessa* 'Muslim private school, with Arabic as a teaching language'.

Morphological and semantic innovations are extremely numerous, due to the absence of adherence to language norms, to which must be added a huge need for new designations in a world where Parisian French simply cannot name things adequately.

Lexical innovations involving grammatical (morphological / morphosyntactic patterns) include:

- transitive verb > intransitive verb (*préparer* 'to cook, to prepare a meal')
- conversion from noun or adjective to verb (*enceinter* 'to make (a woman) pregnant' < *enceinte* 'pregnant' + verbal ending *-er*)
- back-formation (*alphabète* 'literate' < *analphabète* 'illiterate' with loss of the prefix *an-*)
- prefixation (*contre-sorcier* 'traditional sorcerer who can annihilate the bad spell cast by another sorcerer' < prefix *contre* 'against' + *sorcier* 'sorcerer')
- suffixation (*marabouter* 'to cast a spell' has a long series of suffixal derivatives: *maraboutage*, *maraboutique*, *maraboutisme*, etc.)
- compounds (*chéri(e)-coco* 'boyfriend, girlfriend')
- delocutives, that is, the fixation of a speech locution (*je-le-connaiss* 'pedantic intellectual,' lit. 'I-know-him'; said of someone who does a lot of name-dropping)
- truncation (*phaco* 'warthog' < *phacochère*)
- idioms (*faire couloir* 'to try to obtain a special privilege,' lit. 'to wait in the corridor')

Semantic innovations:

- metaphors (*kamikaze* 'cyclist who carries bunches of bananas,' a hazardous job)
- metonymies (*goudron* 'asphalt' > 'asphalted road')
- extensions (*mari* 'husband' > 'any man among one's in-laws [for a wife]')
- restrictions (*viande* 'meat [in general]' > 'beef')
- antonomasia (*colgate* 'any brand of toothpaste')
- pragmatic shifts (*arachide* is the normal term for 'peanut' in Africa, while in France it is felt as more technical, since speakers will rather say *cacahuète*—a word most unusual among African speakers)

The *IFA* (1983, 1988) is a very well-known reference work dedicated to the French of many francophone African countries. It was followed by the publication of various country-specific dictionaries: Boucher and Lafage (2000a) and Bounguendza (2008) for Gabon; Diallo (1999) for Guinea; Frey (1996) for Burundi; Lafage (2003) for Ivory Coast; Jouannet (1984) for Rwanda; Lafage (1989) for Burkina-Faso; Queffélec and Niangouna (1990), Veron (1999), and

Massoumou and Queffélec (2007) for Congo (former Congo-Brazzaville); Ndiaye-Corréard (2006) for Senegal; Ndjérassem (2005) for Chad; Seignobos and Tourneux (2002) and Nzessé (2009, 2015) for Cameroon; Queffélec et al. (1997) for the Central African Republic.

### 3.2.4 Indian Ocean (II: Djibouti, Comoros, Mayotte, Madagascar)

Maurer (1993a, p. 202) drew attention to a number of lexical peculiarities in Djibouti: borrowings such as *khat* 'plant with euphoriant properties'; compounds such as *élève carton* (lit., 'cardboard pupil') 'pupil who was admitted to a given school thanks to the help of a high-ranking person'; semantic innovations such as *brouter* (lit., 'to graze') 'to chew khat'; loan translations such as *avoir un oiseau dans le nez* (lit., 'to have a bird in your nose') 'to have sinusitis'. Maurer (1993b) analyzed a few issues of a local weekly magazine, *La Nation*, in which he found a small number of regionalisms, very often in quotation marks (a sign of distancing), but the most striking phenomenon was the confusion between language styles, typical of L2 proficiency.

The French of the Comoros has never been described in the literature. By contrast, Madagascan French has been studied in a number of inventories and articles. Its lexical particularities are gathered in Bavoux (2000). Constant, longtime contact with speakers from the neighboring island of Réunion have left numerous words in the local variety of French, such as *carreau* 'piece of arable land', *débarquer* 'to unload', or *camaron* 'type of big crawfish', a word of Indo-Portuguese origin. Borrowings from Malagasy are, of course, abundant: for example, *ambanivolo* 'the rural hinterland'. The presence of foreign communities accounts for other borrowings, such as *bohra* 'Shiite Muslim Indian who lives in Madagascar'. Many innovations are attested, such as: *bord* 'beach', elliptical formation out of *bord (de mer)*; *petit français* 'variety of French acquired in an informal setting' (lit., 'small French'); and *malgachiser* 'to give a Malagasy content to a school curriculum, to a cultural project' (*malgache* + suffix *-iser*). Semantic neologisms are also well documented, such as *clarinette* 'long, narrow plastic bag out of which juice can be drunk through an opening at one of the ends'.

### 3.2.5 Pacific

New Caledonia French regionalisms are described in Pauleau (2007a, 2007b) and Rézeau (2008). They include archaisms imported from other overseas varieties (*pistache* 'peanut', Standard French *arachide* or *cacahuète*); innovations from the West Indies, through Africa (*margouillat* 'small lizard'); diastatisms (*menteries* 'lies'); borrowings from Kanak (*kohu* 'a coastal tree whose wood is hard and red or yellowish'); Anglicisms (*carport*, *coaltar*, *mop*); formal innovations (*s'enkanaker* 'to adopt a way of life typical of the Kanak people', prefix *en-* + *kanak* + verb ending *-er*); *Caldoche* 'a New Caledonian citizen of European origin, whose family has lived in the country for a few generations and who knows the outback', *Cal-* + slang suffix *-doche*); and semantic innovations (*cow-boy* 'a tacky, outrageous, unfashionable man').



Polynesian French lexical particularities include archaisms (*linge* ‘clothes’); maritime expressions (*chavirer* not only ‘to capsize’ but also ‘to spill’); French regionalisms (*coussin* ‘pillow (in bed, not on a sofa)’, Standard French *oreiller*); words that came from other French colonies, such as the Antilles (*tourlourou* ‘small species of crab’ *DECA II*, pp. 359–360); Tahitian borrowings (*pareo*, now attested in many languages but originally from Tahitian *paareu*); Anglicisms (*fatty*, *truck*, *ice-cream*, *shop*, *sweater*, etc.); formal innovations (*touriste-banane* ‘beachcomber’); and semantic innovations (a *demi*, lit. a ‘half’, is a person of mixed race; a *caoutchouc*, lit. ‘rubber’, is a tire) (cf. Corne, 1978, pp. 652–657).

### 3.3 Main Phonological, Morphological, and Syntactic Features

#### 3.3.1 Maghreb

Unlike the patent archaism and relative richness of the Laurentian and Acadian French vowel systems, the phonology of Maghrebian French has far fewer oppositions, due to the influence of Arabic, which has only three vowel phonemes (/i/, /a/, and /u/). There is only one low vowel /a/, and the oppositions /e/ ~ /ɛ/, /o/ ~ /ɔ/, and /ø/ ~ /œ/ are nonexistent (Leroy, 2016, pp. 251–252). Instead of four nasal vowels, most speakers have only two, a front one and a back one: the spellings <in> and <un> correspond to [ɛ̃], while <an> and <on> tend to [ɑ̃] (Cheriguen & Leroy, 2013). French consonants do not raise major problems; /ʁ/ used to be pronounced as an alveolar trill ([r]) by male speakers (Morsly, 2003, p. 937), which is not the case anymore, the standard uvular variant [ʁ] having spread to young male speakers. Semi-speakers can display many more adaptation phenomena: any French vowel can be adapted as one of the fundamental vowels of Arabic (*inutile* [inytil] > [initil], *prophète* [pʁɔfɛt] > [prufit], etc.).

As far as morphology and syntax are concerned, some discrepancies in the use of prepositions have been noted (Boumlik, 1998, p. 79; Leroy, 2016, p. 250). The redundant use of a subject clitic pronoun between a noun phrase and a verb, due to the influence of this pattern in Arabic, is a well-documented phenomenon: *L'olivier il fait partie de notre patrimoine* (lit. *The olive tree it is a part of our heritage*); see Lanly (1970, p. 215) for Algeria, Bel-Hadj Larbi (1998, p. 33) for Tunisia, and Gaadi (1998, p. 232) for Morocco. The *imparfait* tense is not really used in narrations and seems restricted to past-tense hypothetical structures: *si je restais chez elle, elle me payait très bien maintenant* instead of *si j'étais restée chez elle, elle me payerait très bien maintenant* (lit. *if I stayed at her place, she paid me very well now, meaning 'if I had stayed at her place, she would pay me very well now'*); see Cherrad-Bencheffra (1998, pp. 94–95). Finally, one observes a tendency to prefer simple juxtaposition or coordination over subordination (*Je demande à Dieu il me donne des enfants*, lit. *I ask God he gives me children*, Garmadi-Le Cloirec, 1977, p. 90; also see Bel-Hadj Larbi, 1998, and Morsly, 2003, p. 937).

### 3.3.2 Lebanon

The phonological system has a reduced set of vowel phonemes: only one low vowel /a/, and no opposition between /e/ ~ /ɛ/, /o/ ~ /ɔ/, and /ø/ ~ /œ/. However, unlike in the Maghreb, the full set of four nasal vowels is attested. The semi-consonant [ɥ] does not exist and its velar correspondent appears instead, as in *huit* [wit] (Standard French [ɥit]). As for the consonants, the most striking feature is the survival of the so-called *h- aspiré*, in words such as *hacher*, *hanche*, *honte*, *hâte*, and so forth, actually realized as [h]. Arabic influence can trigger gemination (the so-called “[*ʃadda*]”) of a consonant, particularly if the spelling helps (*attention* [attãsjõ]); [j] is systematically doubled between two vowels: *crayon* [krejjõ]. The rhotic used to be realized as an alveolar trill ([r]), but this pronunciation is in decline among young, cultivated speakers who prefer the Parisian uvular [ʁ]. Hiatuses are not favored, and speakers insert a glide between the two vowels: *idéel* [idejɛl], *poème* [powem]. For more examples, see Serhan et al. (2017, pp. 581–583).

### 3.3.3 Sub-Saharan Africa

In sub-Saharan Africa, a trace of an accent is always present—if not, speakers are mocked and accused of speaking *en gros français* (‘in fat French,’ Lafage, 2003, p. 458); the derogatory verb phrase *faire son chocobi* ‘to speak like a Parisian’ in the Ivory Coast also refers to this behavior (Lafage, 2003, p. 217). The phonetics and phonology of French in sub-Saharan Africa are strongly influenced by language contact and show few traces of conservatism. The traditional vocalic oppositions are generally not well maintained in the mesolect (with notable exceptions, always due to the influence of the native languages).

Many scholars (Bordal, 2012, p. 30; Boukari, 2017, pp. 496–497; Daff, 2017, p. 564; Drescher, 2017, p. 524; Frey, 2017, p. 545; Lafage, 1990, p. 775; Lyche & Skattum, 2012, p. 86) have mentioned that rounded front vowels, which are not frequent in African languages, tend to be realized as unrounded ones. Oral and nasal vowels are often confused (Drescher, 2017, p. 523; Frey, 1993, pp. 252–253, 2017, p. 545), and vowel harmony is well attested in many varieties (Bordal, 2012, p. 30; Boutin et al., 2012, p. 54).

As for consonants, the most widespread and salient feature is the realization of /r/ as an alveolar trill ([r]), in opposition to the uvular fricative [ʁ] (Bilola, 2003, p. 87; Drescher, 2017, p. 523; Frey, 2017, p. 545; Lafage, 1990, p. 775; Lyche & Skattum, 2012, p. 88). The /s/ ~ /ʃ/ and /z/ ~ /ʒ/ oppositions tend to disappear (in favor of /s/ and /z/) when nonexistent in the corresponding native languages (Diallo, 1993, p. 238; Drescher, 2017, p. 524; Lafage, 1990, p. 775). A very strong tendency to favor an open syllabic structure (CV) in many native languages has caused consonant deletion in coda position and cases of epenthesis. Devoicing of stops and fricatives in word-final position is attested in many areas. Some varieties have integrated new phonemes, such as the velar fricative /x/ in Senegal French or affricates (/tʃ/, /dʒ/) in the Ivory Coast, common in borrowings from native languages.

The fact that many African languages are lexical-tone languages accounts for a different prosody in African French: instead of a single stress at the end of a rhythmic group, each content word receives an independent stress (Bordal, 2012, pp. 40–41). Extreme lengthening of the last syllable with a rising intonation has a superlative value in Ivory Coast French (Boukari, 2017, p. 497; Lafage, 1990, p. 775).

As for syntax, most of the attested phenomena seem to belong to the category of L2 learners' problems with their target language, with the possible influence of their mother tongues:

- changes in verb diathesis:
  - direct object > indirect object (*empêcher les femmes* > *empêcher **aux** femmes*, Daff, 1998, p. 108)
  - indirect object > direct object (*montrer **à** l'enfant* > *montrer **Ø** l'enfant*, Lafage, 1990, p. 781)
  - direct object > reflexive with an indirect object (*côtoyer quelqu'un* > ***se** côtoyer **avec** quelqu'un*, Edema, 1998, p. 171)
  - intransitive > reflexive (*les aiguilles tournent* > *les aiguilles **se** tournent*, Frey, 2017, p. 546)
- confusion between accusative and dative clitic pronouns: *la personne doit **lui** donner l'argent* > *la personne doit **la** donner l'argent* (Noumssi, 1999)
- confusion in the use of *être* and *avoir* as auxiliaries of the perfect tenses: *il s'est évanoui* > *il **a** évanoui* (Bilola, 2003, p. 162)
- non-causative verbs used with a causative meaning: *on les a déguerpir* 'on les a fait déguerpir' (Frey, 2017, p. 546)
- extensive use of verb phrases with *faire* + noun phrase, as in *faire cours du soir* 'suivre des cours du soir' (Drescher, 2012)
- omission of the pronoun *en* (Boukari, 2017, p. 498)
- divergent use of prepositions: *consistera **en** l'implantation* > *consistera **à** l'implantation* (Lafage, 1990, p. 781); *être pris **de** court* > *être pris **à** court* (Frey, 1993, p. 256); ***en** son honneur* > ***à** son honneur* (Onguene Essono, 2012, p. 144)
- omission of prepositions: *le matin de bonne heure* > *le matin **Ø** bonne heure* (Diallo, 1993, p. 239)
- omission of determiners when the referent is not specified: *donne-moi **un** bic* > *donne-moi **Ø** bic* 'give me a pen (any kind of pen)', as opposed to the use of *-là* with specified referents, for example, *voiture-là est gâtée* 'this (particular) car is stalled' (Boukari, 2017, pp. 497–498)

### 3.3.4 Indian Ocean (II: Djibouti, Comoros, Mayotte, Madagascar)

Maurer (1993a, pp. 200–203) mentioned a few phenomena observed in the Djibouti French basilect, such as: the sporadic use of the alveolar flap [ɾ], especially in intervocalic position; [b] for [p], since the latter doesn't exist in Somali and Afar; for the same reason, /v/, /z/, and /ʒ/ can be pronounced as [f], [s], and [ʃ]. Hypercorrections have been noted in the speech of journalists, who will say [døtəny] (instead of [detəny]) for *détenu*, in reaction to the fact that [ø] is often delabialized by basilectal speakers. As for morphosyntax, Maurer cited the indistinct use of past tenses and the high frequency of *comme ça* as a punctuating element.

The French of the Comoros has not been described yet. As for Madagascar, there are a few indications in Bavoux (1993, pp. 181–183). As expected, the most archaic vocalic oppositions tend to disappear, and [ə] can be realized as [e]. Due to the influence of the Malagasy adstrate, /s/ ~ /ʃ/ and /z/ ~ /ʒ/ are not well distinguished; /r/ can be pronounced as an alveolar trill [r], especially in male speech. As for syntax, Bavoux (1993, pp. 181–183) mentioned some irregularities in the use of prepositions and relative pronouns, and numerous cases of reduplication with various semantic properties.

### 3.3.5 Pacific

Hollyman (1978, p. 623) gave a few indications on New Caledonian French phonology. As noted for Madagascar, the archaic vocalic oppositions are nonexistent. There are only two nasal vowels: a front one (/ẽ/) and a back one (/ã/). Pauleau (2016, pp. 28–29) mentioned the voicing of voiceless consonants (*c'est ça aussi* [zezaozi]) and the vocalization of final -r (*leur colère* [lœ<sup>a</sup> golɛ<sup>a</sup>]). Standard [ɛ] becomes [e] in certain words: *père*, *mère* (Hollyman, 1978, p. 623), *fête* [fet] (Pauleau, 2016, p. 28). Darot and Pauleau (1993, p. 295) also noted the systematic backing of /a/ > [ɑ] (*kanak* [kanak]).

As for syntax, the few publications on the subject so far (Bottineau, 2016; Ledegen, 2016) draw attention to the fact that many nonstandard grammatical features in New Caledonian French are also attested in other parts of the French-speaking world (such as the loss of subjunctive forms), or represent extensions of general patterns (e.g., very frequent use of *fin* as an adverb before an adjective with a superlative meaning). Darot and Pauleau (1993, pp. 297–298) mentioned omission of the determiner (*on va boire ø chocolat, il faut acheter ø voiture*) in the lower mesolects.

On Polynesian French phonology, see Corne (1978, pp. 640–651). Tahitian influence accounts for the alveolar flap ([ɾ]) or thrill ([r]) realization of /r/, and for the fricative realization ([β]) of /v/ in initial and intervocalic position. The existence of /h/ and /ʔ/ (glottal stop) in borrowings is also due to adstratic influence. The /e/ ~ /ɛ/ opposition is generally neutralized, whereas /o/ ~ /ɔ/ is maintained. There is only a central /a/, but a complete set of four nasal vowels is attested.

As for syntax, Corne (1978, p. 652) mentioned: the use of the second-person subject pronoun *tu* (familiarity) instead of *vous* (formality) far more frequently than in Europe; the scarcity of the subjunctive; the use of some intransitive verbs as transitive ones; and *seulement* ('only') used for the progressive aspect (*je joue seulement* 'je suis en train de jouer').

## 4. Concluding Remarks

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The division between the first and the second colonial eras shows several strong tendencies. The expatriate varieties of the first group, particularly secondary dialects, typically have conservative phonological systems and a significant number of lexical archaisms and diastratisms, many of which are common to various ex-colonies of the first era. In contrast, varieties of the second group tend to display simplified phonological systems and abundant innovations, borrowings, and loan translations. The grammatical features attested in the first group usually go back to the French spoken by the first settlers, whereas the ones found in the second group are mostly typical of L2 learners' productions—which explains why many of them are in use over large territories that do not necessarily share native languages.

As far as vitality, identity, and usage are concerned, French seems to follow many different paths: in most ex-colonies of the first colonial era, its status is very strong; in territories of the second colonial era, French often has the status of a primary foreign language and/or a strictly written language. In some other countries, though, French really reaches all social classes. However, this situation seems to trigger the development of basilectal varieties with a vehicular function in the immediate urban environment but no actual prestige; it is also questionable whether such varieties can truly enable communication with the rest of the French-speaking world or allow students to attend successfully a formal education that is conducted in French. The big question for the future of the French-speaking world outside Europe is whether pidginized varieties are going to evolve toward Standard French or become stabilized varieties of their own.

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## Notes

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1. The term “Laurentian French” was coined in order to provide a generic name for Québécois French and its closest relatives, Ontario French and Western Canadian varieties, as well as most Franco-American varieties in New England, since they all derive from the initial koine that first appeared on the shores of the St. Lawrence River.
2. Galibi is a native Caribbean language.
3. “Hassaniyya was added to the list in 1995. Under the new Constitution of January 2001, which created the possibility for all languages in use in the country to become national languages, 12 other languages were eventually codified” (Boutin et al., 2012, p. 47).

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