

## **Dialect contact in three varieties of Acadian French: Variation in the expression of future temporal reference**

Recently, there has been a virtual explosion of variationist studies of future temporal reference in French. In North America, there is largely a split between Acadian and Laurentian results. Prior research shows Acadian French to be closely in line with descriptions of 17<sup>th</sup> century French in that temporal distance constrains choice between the inflected (*je mangerai*) and the periphrastic future (*je vais manger*). However, Laurentian varieties appear to have almost entirely lost this constraint; choice of variant is mainly governed by sentential polarity.

The present study focuses on systematic comparisons of three Acadian varieties: Baie Sainte-Marie, NS; Îles-de-la-Madeleine, QC; and L'Anse-à-Canards, NL, varieties which differ considerably in their settlement patterns and contact histories. BSM is at one end of a continuum due to dialect isolation across several centuries while IM is at the other end due to successive waves of Acadian settlers since the late 1700s. AC is in an intermediary position, but with the added dimension of late 19<sup>th</sup> century secondary European French settlement.

Variationist analysis of data from twelve speakers (b. 1870-1930) per community shows different stages of the grammaticalization of the periphrastic future: 1) BSM shows vestiges of the earliest stage of grammaticalization (Fleishman 1982), since it functions to mark imminence more than general proximity; 2) BSM and AC mirror earlier results of Acadian French since temporal distance (not polarity) is selected as significant; and 3) IM shares aspects of both Acadian and Laurentian systems with significant effects for both temporal distance and polarity. This first variationist analysis of FTR for IM indicates a point on the PF's grammaticalization path between AC and Laurentian French, where the PF is the general future marker. Our comparison shows how sociolinguistic history helps explain the different grammaticalization stages in these varieties and sheds light on the future system more generally.

### **References**

Fleischman, Suzanne. 1982. *The future in thought and language: Diachronic evidence from Romance*. New York: Cambridge University Press.