

## **Between emancipation and standardization: The variable fate of Laurentian French features**

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Laurentian French, the main variety spoken in Canada (essentially in Quebec), has a special status within the French-speaking world. It most clearly embodies the pluricentric dimension of French, due to a combination of demographic, political and linguistic factors. With close to 7 million speakers, Canada hosts the second largest historical community of native speakers of French outside France. Its geographical isolation with respect to the rest of *Francophonie* has also favored the development of a variety that is perceived as quite distinctive and further away from the recognized standard. Finally, Quebec has developed since the 1960s its own language institutions, laws and policies, with the primary aim of strengthening the place of French in various aspects of public life. But which French? The initial period was characterized by subordination to the Parisian standard, negative representations of Laurentian French, and efforts towards its “dedialectalization”. Since the 1980s, however, Quebec society has supported a relative linguistic emancipation of its variety, at least at the lexical level, and representations have improved significantly. What effect does this reversal have on linguistic usage? Ever-present standardization effects appear to coexist with emerging autonomization effects, resulting in the regression, stability or even progression of specifically Laurentian features. In this talk I am interested in the factors that potentially determine the fate of Laurentian features. What makes linguistic traits in a peripheral variety susceptible to regression or, on the contrary, to maintenance or progression? At least four types of relevant factors can be considered: explicit stigmatization, saliency/frequency, systemic role, and articulatory/perceptual factors. These questions are addressed through a systematic study of a large range of Laurentian features, whether phonological, morpho-syntactic or lexical, in the PFC-Quebec corpus (Côté 2014; Côté & Saint-Amant Lamy 2023). This corpus comprises approximately 320 hours of conversation, involving 440 speakers (228 women, 212 men) from 32 survey points in Quebec and born between 1913 and 1999.