Speaking About One's Accent: The Subjective Experience of Accented Journalists in Quebec and Canadian Francophone Media

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A Thesis

in The Department

of Journalism

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

the Degree of Master of Arts (Digital Innovation in Journalism Studies)

at Concordia University

Montréal, Québec, Canada

August 2025

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CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY
School of Graduate Studies

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ABSTRACT

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As Nathalie Freynet and Richard Clément (2018) write: "Le français est empreint de contradictions. Alors qu'il se veut standardisé, il figure aujourd'hui parmi les langues les plus diversifiées au monde" (p. 96). This contradiction is examined in this thesis, which looks at how the journalism industry can, on one hand, uphold strict linguistic standards while simultaneously incorporating journalists who do not necessarily correspond to these ideals. Accents are more than one's "manner of pronunciation" (Giles, 1970, p. 213). They express individual and collective identities that can match or collide with the expectations of a professional-sounding anchor voice. Although sociolinguists insist that accents and language proficiency are unrelated (Gluszek & Dovidio, 2010), "accented," non-standard speakers can face discrimination and self-stigmatization (Blanchet, 2019). Majority-group members' perceptions and reactions to accented speech and sociolinguistic representations of the French language have been thoroughly analyzed. However, the lived experience of stigmatized speakers has not received the same attention (Freynet & Clément, 2018). In response, this thesis explores how accented journalists make sense of their "audible difference" in Canadian and Quebec francophone media. Data from twelve in-depth, semi-structured interviews were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Findings, organized across four themes, paint a contrasting picture of the journalistic field as a place of both belonging and exclusion, where accented journalists engage in ambivalent behaviour that simultaneously resists the silencing of their accents, while conforming to professional expectations.

Keywords: Accents; lived experience; journalism; stigma; discrimination; voice; linguistic diversity, francophone media; reflexive thematic analysis.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Ce mémoire est dédié à tous les journalistes qui m'ont fait confiance en partageant leurs histoires, parfois douloureuses, sur un sujet dont on parle peu. Leur participation m'honore profondément et m'engage à faire résonner la pluralité de leurs voix aussi loin que possible, afin que leurs récits trouvent un écho, suscitent l'écoute et obtiennent la reconnaissance qu'ils méritent.

After three years in the Department of Journalism, and two years in the MA program, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to all those who entrusted me with their support throughout this graduate journey. It culminates in a thesis on a topic that holds a special place in my heart. I extend my warmest thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Andrea Hunter, and my second reader, Dr. Elyse Amend, who guided me through the process of qualitative research and encouraged me to explore accents and journalism with the depth and passion I aspired to convey. I am also grateful to Francine Pelletier, who joined the thesis committee and generously offered her insights and guidance, as well as everyone who provided advice in any capacity, particularly at academic conferences.

I am especially grateful to Dr. Magda Konieczna, my colleagues at the Immigration Research Initiative, to Dr. Antoine Bilodeau, and to the journalists and leaders in the field who generously shared their knowledge and perspectives, often differing from my own, and who challenged me to learn and grow. I am also particularly thankful to the institutions that financially supported this work, including Concordia University, the Department of Journalism, and the Conseil de la vie française en Amérique.

Graduate life and research often felt like a solitary pursuit, with long hours dedicated to reading, coding data, and writing, but I discovered how profoundly human and collective this process truly is. This thesis would not have been possible without the support of friends, family, and peers who walked this path with me. I am especially grateful to my colleagues in the Department, particularly my friends Sara Mizannojehdehi and Aatefeh Padidar, who offered a listening ear.

Finalement, je tiens à remercier mes parents, qui m'ont soutenu dans cette aventure et qui, malgré la distance, m'ont écouté et rassuré dans les moments de doute. J'aurais aimé célébrer cet accomplissement avec ma grand-mère Paule, une femme battante et courageuse, qui n'est plus avec nous aujourd'hui, mais dont la vie continue de m'inspirer profondément.

Table of Contents

List of Figures vii

Chapter 1: Introduction 1

Chapter 2: Literature Review 6

What is an Accent? 6

Accents and Journalists: A Blind Spot of Research 11

Accents and the French Language in Canadian and Quebec Francophone Journalism 17

Accent, Discrimination, and Stigma 25

Theoretical Framework 32

Chapter 3: Methods 41

Recruitment 41

Participant Sample 42

Data Collection 44

Confidentiality 45

Reflexive Thematic Analysis 47

Reflexive Thematic Analysis in Practice 49

Positionality Statement 53

Chapter 4: Navigating Accentedness 56

Theme 1: The Silencing of Accents: When Accents Become a Problem 57

Theme 2: The Internalization of Accent as a Problem 88

Chapter 4: Conclusion 112

Chapter 5: Accented Journalists on a Quest for Individual and Professional Recognition 114

Theme 3: Conforming While Resisting: The Ambivalence of Accented Journalists 116

Theme 4: To Make Peace with One's Accent: An Unequal Struggle to Legitimize and Reclaim a Fractured Identity 167

Chapter 5: Conclusion 197

Chapter 6: Discussion 199

RQ1: What is the Experience of Being an Accented Journalist in Quebec and Canadian Francophone Media? 200

RQ2: What Themes are Present in the Experiences of Accented Francophone Journalists? 202

RQ3: What are the Strategies Employed by Accented Francophone Journalists to Navigate the Canadian and Quebec Journalism Industries? 209

RQ4: How is Accentedness Experienced Differently Among Accented Journalists? 211
Implications for Journalism Research and Practice 227
Limitations of the Research 240
Future Research Avenues 244
Bibliography 251
Appendices 272
Appendix A: Call for Participation in Research 272
Appendix B: Interview Themes 274
Appendix C: Post-Interview Standardized Survey (Orally Administered) 277
Appendix D: Participants' Original Quotes in French with English Translations for Chapter 4 (Order of Appearance) 279
Appendix E: Participants' Original Quotes in French with English Translations for Chapter 5 (Order of Appearance) 297

List of Figures

Figure 1: Composition of the participant sample 43
Figure 2: Visual organization of the four themes and their corresponding overarching themes……
.....203

Chapter 1: Introduction

> Accent discrimination can be found everywhere in our daily lives. In fact, such behavior is so commonly accepted, so widely perceived as appropriate, that it must be seen as the last back door to discrimination. And the door stands wide open. (Lippi-Green, 1997, p. 73)

For the past thirty years, linguists in the United States, France, and Canada, notably Rosina Lippi-Green, Philippe Blanchet and Richard Bourhis, have contributed to creating a rich academic corpus, in English and French, to name and label experiences of discrimination that often go unnoticed, improving our collective understanding of how discrimination against "accented" individuals operates in society. In both languages, new concepts have been coined to describe this often-unspoken reality, such as glottophobia (Blanchet, 1998), babélophobie (Comiti, 2005), linguiscism (Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1986), linguiscisme (Bourhis et al., 2007), and accentisme (Office québécois de la langue française, 2017). Although scholars have analyzed the language of the media and its role in reinforcing dominant linguistic norms (Bourdieu, 1982; Blanchet, 2019; Cotter, 2010; Heller, 2010; Lippi-Green, 2011), as a journalist myself, it is striking to observe that the lived experiences of accented news practitioners, and their perspectives, have received far less attention.

Dubray (2024) noticed a rising public discourse about accent-based discrimination in France, following the widely mediatized 2018 incident in which politician Jean-Luc Mélenchon mockingly imitated journalist Véronique Gaurel's Toulouse accent on camera,[1] asking others to ask their questions in "comprehensible" French (Dubray, 2024, p. 15). Unions, politicians, and journalists supported Gaurel, and many colleagues, "accented" or not, reacted to the controversy

[1] A city in southwestern France known for its "distinct" accent.

on social media, sparking conversations, collective story-sharing, and solidarity within the profession (2024). In the Canadian francophone context, the recent publication of Radio-Canada host Jean-Philippe Pleau's autobiography *Rue Duplessis, ma petite noirceur*, which ranked as the fourth best-selling book in the province in 2024 (Radio-Canada, 2025), caught my attention. Pleau, who describes himself as a class defector for having fled his popular social background,[2] offers a reflection that sparked my interest:

> En 2006, alors que je tiens une chronique quotidienne à l'émission de radio jeunesse 275-*Allô*, Radio-Canada me « propose » des cours de diction. On les jugeait nécessaires pour que je puisse conserver ma place. Cela a duré un an et demi. Pour casser mon accent et le standardiser. Le dé-défavoriser. Au début, je ressentais une grande joie à ne plus parler comme les gens du milieu dont j'étais issu. Je me définissais contre eux. Mais cette acculturation n'allait pas sans me troubler. Élizabeth, une ancienne amoureuse croisée à Québec une fois les cours de diction terminés : *Veux-tu ben me dire qu'est-ce qui s'est passé ? Es-tu allé vivre en France ? C'est quoi cet estie d'accent de bourge de crisse ?* Pour la première fois, j'ai eu l'impression d'avoir trahi les miens. (Pleau, 2024, p. 82)

In the spirit of Jean-Philippe Pleau's autobiography, but at a slightly larger scale, this thesis seeks to position accented practitioners at the centre of the analysis, focusing on their identities and lived experiences. To conduct this exploratory research, reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022) was followed to analyze twelve in-depth, semi-structured interviews with journalists working in Canadian and Quebec francophone media. They shared with me their concerns, regrets,

[2] "Transfuge de classe" in the original French. Pleau deliberately chooses this term over *transclass*, emphasizing the intentional desire to escape his social background and the subjective experience of this process, rather than the mere description of an upward move from a lower to a higher social class (2024, p. 193). The notion itself has recently come under criticism (see Faerber, 2024; Véron & Abiven, 2024). Pleau clarifies that his aim is not to indulge in what Bronner (2023) calls "dolorism," but to present the facts of his life trajectory (Pleau, 2024, p. 181).

and traumas, but also gave me hope for the future, along with inspiration and motivation to share their stories in return.

While linguists and sociolinguists generally agree that everyone technically *has* an accent, since they are intrinsic to the very act of speaking, making it virtually impossible to speak "without" one, the "myth of non-accent" remains a deeply rooted belief among speakers, both at the national and provincial levels (Lippi-Green, 2011). Therefore, the use of the term "accented" underscores the socially constructed nature of accents as rooted in power relations. It mirrors the use of the term "racialized," which, as Pierre (2017, para. 17) highlights, draws attention to the socially constructed and essentializing nature of difference.

As Freynet and Clément point out, "While sociolinguistic representations of language varieties are well documented, the experience of stigmatized speakers is less well studied" (Freynet & Clément, 2018, p. 99). Following the perspective of these researchers on the subjective experiences of accent-based discrimination, the thesis investigates accented journalists' perceptions of their accents, lived experiences as members of the journalistic profession, and definitions of journalistic and linguistic identities.

While accents only represent a relatively small component of language as a whole, they are nonetheless a relevant topic for journalism studies to investigate, as they are tied to matters of both communication and identity, at the individual, institutional, and societal levels. Accents "serve as a cue to one's (potentially stigmatized) group membership" (Deaux, 2006, as cited in Gluszek & Dovidio, 2010, p. 219), and are, thus, central to investigating discrimination, allowing researchers to unpack professional and linguistic ideologies and standards.

Furthermore, temporal and geographical contexts call for an examination of "audible" diversity in the media. Throughout history, colonization, international migrations, Canada's immigration policies, and, more recently, globalization, have shaped the linguistic and ethnic landscape of Canada's francophone population, which reached 10.7 million speakers in 2021 (Canadian Heritage, 2024). Francophone immigrants, originating from various countries such as France, Haiti, Algeria, and Lebanon, carry with them their accents and varieties of French. Allophones who learn French also contribute to this linguistic mosaic. In 2021, 9 million people in Canada reported a first language other than French or English (Canadian Heritage, 2022). This linguistic diversity extends across French-speaking communities throughout Canada, from Acadia in the East to British Columbia in the West.

Although francophones in Canada and Quebec are diverse groups in various ways, there is no available quantitative data to assess the translation of this reality into the news media industry's workforce. Data about linguistic diversity in newsrooms is lacking. Although the Canadian Journalism Association's annual Diversity Survey is leading the way toward assessing diversity in the industry more thoroughly, it mainly focuses on gender and race as indicators of newsroom diversity. Optional questions about spoken languages were introduced in the 2022 edition of the survey. In the 2023 edition, only 18.7% of surveyed newsrooms collected this data (Canadian Association of Journalists, 2023). In 2024, nine news outlets collected data on spoken language among 270 newsrooms that responded to the survey (Canadian Association of Journalists, 2024).

Stemming from the above-mentioned considerations, the thesis aimed to address one main research question: *What is the experience of being an accented journalist in Quebec and Canadian francophone media?* Three sub-questions were formulated to guide the analysis: (a) What themes are present in the experiences of accented francophone journalists? (b) What are the strategies

employed by accented francophone journalists to navigate the Canadian and Quebec journalism industries? And (c) how is accentedness experienced differently among accented journalists?

This thesis research may contribute to raising awareness about the issue of voice diversity in the media, encouraging future studies to take this dimension into consideration. While recent decades have seen growing recognition of the importance of representing "visible minorities" in the media, similar attention did not seem to have been given to "audible" minorities. Accents often remain blind spots in discussions of diversity, equity, and inclusion, particularly in journalism, where the perceived clarity of language, central to the delivery of information, may be viewed as challenged by the presence of an accent.

It is hoped that this research will benefit accented journalists by offering them a space to reflect on their own experiences and to find both similarities and contrasts with the testimonies of the twelve participants interviewed. These findings may inspire them to reflect on their identities as professionals and speakers of the French language. I have learned from this endeavour and cherish every step, detour, and even setback that has allowed me to grow in my own journey for belonging and identity, while also deconstructing my own preconceived ideas about what an "accent" is often assumed to be.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature review primarily draws on scholarship from France, the United States, Canada and Quebec in order to place different linguistic realities into perspective. Given the scarcity of studies directly addressing the topic under consideration, the review incorporates a variety of works ranging from descriptive analysis of news media language to critical examinations of the relationship between language and power, which form the theoretical foundation of the thesis. First, the review clarifies the meaning attributed to the concept of "accent." Secondly, it emphasizes the need to account for the lived experiences of stigmatized speakers, particularly accented journalists, as this area remains underexplored in academic research. The topic is then situated within the linguistic context of the French language and journalism in Quebec and Canada. Fourth, the review positions the research in relation to studies on discrimination and stigma. Finally, it outlines the theoretical framework guiding the investigation.

What is an Accent?

This section aims to clarify the definition of, and the analytical approach to, a central concept used throughout the research: accent. In this thesis, accents are considered as social constructs. The terms "accent," "accentedness," and "accented" are unsatisfactory, if not misleading, since, from a sociolinguistic perspective, "accents" do not describe a tangible linguistic reality, but rather emerge as a perception in the minds of speakers, functioning as signs of difference and identity. Nonetheless, investigating "accents" remains a fruitful endeavour, as it may illuminate the power relationships between minority and majority language groups in society.

Accents, Othering, and Interactions

One major social construction of accents is their perception as a feature of the *Other*, rather than the self, therefore giving them a "depreciatory connotation" (Carton et al., 1983, p. 3, as cited in Gasquet-Cyrus, 2013, p. 184). Linguistic alterity thus lies at the heart of language variation between groups and contributes to identity differentiation. As Monique and Pierre Léon succinctly put it: "On a toujours un accent pour quelqu'un d'un autre groupe linguistique" (Léon & Léon, 1997, p. 202).

However, when this figure of the "accented Other" takes on a pejorative connotation, it can become a powerful mechanism of exclusion, a potential source of stigmatization and discrimination. As Grégory Miras notes, "les chercheurs ou chercheuses ont-elles reconnu que l'accent ne se limitait pas à une dimension phonétique et qu'il s'inscrivait dans une perspective humaine et altéritaire" (Miras, 2023, p. 159). This view aligns with Meyer's (2011) argument that "l'accent devient ainsi un marqueur identitaire qui ne sert pas tant à marquer une identité (le même) qu'à marquer une altérité (l'autre)" (p. 35).

Considering the above, this thesis adopts the perspective of *the pragmatics of accents*. Since accent is a social construct emerging in the ears of listeners and built through specific interactions and contexts, it is more than a matter of sound, as it also conveys social meaning. As Boudreau and Gasquet-Cyrus (2021) argue:

> An accent is not only a set of features or the sound variation in a language, but a far more complex phenomenon, exceeding phonetic aspects. […] Thus, accents can no longer be considered as linguistic "varieties," but as ways of speaking which vary according to

> contexts, social interactions and moving identities, in a global world framed by the mobility of agents. (Boudreau & Gasquet-Cyrus, 2021, p. 260)

In a foundational collective volume, Planchenault and Poljak conceptualize the pragmatics of accents, stating that their goal is "to present a more nuanced approach to accents in which their instability and ambiguity (rather than stability and consistency) are highlighted by the context of interaction, which also brings essential clues to better interpret the presence/performance of these accents" (Planchenault & Poljak, 2021, p. 2).

Emphasizing that accents are socially constructed positions them alongside their corollary: "standard language." James Milroy and Lesley Milroy described it as "an idea in the mind rather than a reality – a set of abstract norms to which actual usage may conform to a greater or lesser extent" (Milroy & Milroy, 1985, pp. 22-23, as cited in Lippi-Green, 2011, p. 44). Following Rosina Lippi-Green (2011), this thesis regards "non-accent" and "standard language" as myths. Even if these "myths" are abstractions in the minds of speakers and linguists, they influence reality in ways that shape perceptions of language and its "deviations," which ultimately reflect into actions leading to potential stigmatization and discrimination. As Lippi-Green underlines: "Myths are magical and powerful constructs; they can motivate social behaviour and actions which would be otherwise contrary to logic or reason" (2011, p. 44). These actions include valorizing certain varieties while purposefully eradicating other "dialects" deemed less "pure." Therefore, studying accents in journalism raises broader questions that go beyond phonology, pronunciation, or journalistic language style. Accents, due to the potential stigma and value judgments they can carry, also pose ethical questions (Paveau & Rosier, 2008, as cited in Gasquet-Cyrus, 2010, p. 185), especially in journalism, where language practices are scrutinized, managed, and controlled throughout the production and dissemination processes. These ethical concerns about accent-based

discrimination and stigmatization will be further explored in a subsequent section of the literature review.

An Imperfect Concept

It must be underlined that "accent" is not a concept over which there is consensus among linguists and must therefore be employed with careful consideration. As Fox underlines: "Accent has proved to be one of the most controversial of the prosodic features, generating a considerable amount of theoretical debate" (Fox, 2000, p. 114, as cited in Gasquet-Cyrus, 2010, p. 180). Lippi-Green observes that "in so far as linguists are concerned, the term has no technical or specific meaning" (2011, p. 44) and describes "accent" as a fluid category (p. 46). It is therefore productive to investigate what an "accent" means in "the minds of the speakers" (p. 44). Similarly, Gasquet-Cyrus (2010) explains that "accent" is often regarded as a common-sense category for non-linguists, who oftentimes comprehend it as a synonym for pronunciation:

> Si l'accent est considéré comme « prononciation », c'est donc souvent dans une conception très large et très floue. N'étant ni phonéticiens ni (socio)linguistes, les locuteurs n'ont pas forcément les outils pour décrire ce qu'ils perçoivent, mais ils n'en sont pas moins très prolixes lorsqu'il s'agit d'évaluer ou de catégoriser les accents, le leur ou ceux des autres. (pp. 182-183)

In fact, the meanings of "accent" may differ significantly between research participants and researchers. Howard Giles (1970), in his definition, considers accent to be one's manner of pronunciation and establishes a difference between "accents" and "dialect," the latter implying "variations from the standard code at most levels of linguistic analysis," while accents solely affect one's pronunciation (p. 213). Likewise, Lippi-Green (2011) echoes this view, stating that "two

varieties of a single language are distinguished by accent when differences are restricted primarily to phonology (prosodic and segmental features)" (p. 46), and that "if two varieties of a single language also differ in morphological structures, syntax, lexicon, and semantics, then they are different varieties, or dialects, of the same language" (p. 46).

However, speakers do not generally follow the distinction between pronunciation and language variety. As Boudreau observes: "Pour les individus en général, l'accent renvoit aussi bien au vocabulaire qu'à une certaine manière de dire ou de « performer » son identité" (Boudreau, 2021, p. 25). For non-linguists, accents often represent a matter of identity and society (Gasquet-Cyrus, 2010, p. 184) that also include "lexicon, expressions, and ways of speaking" (Hall, 2008, p. 239, as cited in Gasquet-Cyrus, 2010, p. 183), diverging from whichever local "standard" language they hold as a reference:

> C'est le découpage ethno-sociolinguistique réalisé par les locuteurs eux-mêmes qui détermine les « repères » internes au continuum, les ponctuations (au sens systémique), ces barrières symboliques demeurant donc toujours relatives, discutables, ouvertes, mouvantes et subjectives, mais fonctionnelles. (Blanchet, 2000, p. 100, as cited in Gasquet-Cyrus, 2010, p. 184)

In this thesis, the concept of "accent" therefore serves as a starting point for engaging with the experiences of accented journalists. It is neither an ending point nor a categorization, but an entryway into a conversation. This concept is not treated as stable, definitive, or ultimate and beyond critique. Instead, its use in research may be particularly useful since it activates accented journalists' socially constructed images, which may not be as strongly evoked by more "technical" terms, such as "pronunciation" or "non-standard language variety."

Accents and Journalists: A Blind Spot of Research

A review of online, non-academic sources, such news articles, commentary, opinion pieces, and journalistic works, indicates that testimonies of accent-based discrimination and self-stigmatization among journalists have been documented across various Western contexts, including in France (Apathie & Feltin-Palas, 2019; Bardou, 2015; Lacombe, 2018; Lacroux, 2017), the United States (Regatão, 2018; Kumanyika, 2015), the United-Kingdom (Serra, 2023a, 2023b), in Quebec (Etienne, 2022; Richard & Robichaud, 2021a; Roulot-Ganzmann, 2013), and English Canada (Kahn, 2020; Sathiyanathan & Xing, 2018). Some sources published in France draw on quotes and analyses from scholars (such as Gasquet-Cyrus, Candea, and Blanchet) to frame personal anecdotes within theory (see Bardou, 2015; Lacroux, 2017; Miras, 2022).

A Research Agenda in Progress

Within the francophone academic sphere, the most extensive body of research on accented journalists originates from France. This includes an unpublished thesis presented in a radio format (Nieziolek, 2018), a study on the management of accents in journalism schools (Gasquet-Cyrus & Masson, 2022) presented at an international colloquium, but that remains unpublished, and a master's thesis in journalism defended at Science Po Grenoble (Dubray, 2024). In their study, Gasquet-Cyrus and Masson (2022) interviewed students, educators, and program directors from journalism schools. Among accented students, the authors noticed that they were subjected to "social, normative, and ideological pressures" (p. 17), aimed at "correcting" their accent through remarks and particular exercises. Students reported experiencing linguistic insecurity and demonstrated a tendency to align their accent with the "norm" of their *milieu*. The authors conclude that glottophobia operates within the field of journalism and may influence students' professional trajectories.

Dubray's (2024) thesis explored accent and regionalisms in France's public service television and radio media sectors. The most relevant section of her work, in relation to the present study, involved interviews conducted with three journalists identifying as having a "regional" accent. Participants said they had been encouraged to lose their non-Parisian accent, beginning as early as journalism schools. These pressures went beyond conventional pronunciation codes proper to the spoken journalistic language style, as a purely "technical" skill, to erase their regional accent. Stigmatizing behaviours were reported in journalism schools, such as being mocked or told that they would not succeed in national media. These experiences, coupled with the linguistic homogeneity of their cohorts, contributed to feelings of isolation. In the workplace, accented journalists reported self-censorship, reflecting an integration and interiorization of the journalistic market's dominant language norm, as well as implicit forms of discrimination, through comments from colleagues and managers that may not be malicious, but were condescending. Regional radio was described as more tolerant towards accent variation, unlike national broadcast media, and participants noted that their perceived credibility fluctuated depending on the topic they were assigned to cover. Some ultimately developed strategies to oppose linguistic norms, reaffirming positive language identity in order to legitimize their pronunciation in the journalistic field and diversify accents in the media.

However, the scope of Dubray's study is more narrowly focused, as it includes three journalists, all described as having a "regional" accent. As such, the study centers on "native-like" speakers and does not extend to accents typically perceived as "foreign." Moreover, the lived experiences of accented journalists working in the written press are not explored. Indexing accents solely to voice and associating them only with broadcast media can obscure the more subtle ways this audible marker operates in the written press sector. While accents are certainly heard in

broadcast journalism, they may also interfere in day-to-day interactions with colleagues, regardless of the media employed.

Apart from the above-mentioned contributions that investigated the lived experiences of accented journalists, francophone sources addressing this topic remain scarce. Gasquet-Cyrus (2013), in his broader analysis of accent-based discrimination in France, dedicated a brief portion to accented journalists from Southern France. Among the thirteen interviewees, one journalism student recounted feeling "hung up"[3] when training for radio hosting, being told that his accent was a "handicap" (p. 238) and that it would hinder his integration into the France Bleu network (a regional public radio broadcaster in France). Blanchet (2019), in his contribution to the understanding of glottophobia in France,[4] only dedicated a few sentences to the situation of journalists who do not speak "standard" French. In the English-language literature, Lippi-Green (2011, p. 47) recounts the story of James Kahakua, a weather presenter in Hawai'i who was denied promotion and fired due to his "local" accent, deemed improper by his employer and an accent reduction specialist.

Beyond Traditional Research Pathways

Despite growing scholarly and journalistic interest, evidenced by these various academic and non-academic sources, the lived experience of accented journalists, or how it *feels* to be accented, remains largely unexplored in the context of Canadian and Quebec francophone media. To date, the question of accents in the media has mainly been investigated by researchers in two directions: (1) describing the language used in the media (which may not always reference "accents" explicitly), and (2) examining audience perceptions of, and reactions to, accented speech.

[3] "complexé" in the original source
[4] See *Discriminations : combattre la glottophobie*, 2019.

The Language of the Media in Quebec. Studies describing the French language spoken by journalists in Quebec include the work of Rochette et al. (1984), Reinke and Ostiguy (2005), Maurais (2005), and Olsen (2024). These studies adopt a descriptive approach and do not center the analysis of their corpus on "accent" as an analytical category, although "pronunciation" has been scrutinized by Reinke and Ostiguy (2005). These studies have been conducted with the wider concern for the quality of the French language in mind, starting with Rochette et al.'s (1984) analysis of the quality of oral expression among 65 television and radio hosts in Montreal. Reinke and Ostiguy (2005) examined the quality of Quebec French spoken on television by hosts and newsreaders, analyzing phonological and morphological variables in 38 shows aired on public (Radio-Canada) and private (TVA, TQS, TQc) channels between February 1999 and February 2000. The study exclusively focused on "familiar" and "standard" forms of French, viewing pronunciation as a class-based status marker, with no attention given to the perceived origin of the speakers. Maurais (2005) approach the question of language quality by analyzing grammar, syntax, and vocabulary used by journalists working in public and private Quebec stations, without addressing pronunciation or accents. This line of inquiry has continued into the present, as evidenced by Olsen's (2024) evaluation of the quality of spoken French across 40 public radio morning shows, involving a total of 134 radio contributors.

Accented Speech Through the Ears of Majority Groups. From another disciplinary angle, studies from psychology, political science, and speech therapy, among others, have examined listeners' evaluations of, and responses to, accented speech in a variety of settings and among different populations, often through quantitative methods (e.g., Cargile et al., 1994; Gauvin &

Bilodeau., 2025; Jiang, Sanford & Pell, 2018; Lev-Ari & Keysar, 2010; Lopes, et al., 2013).[5] In journalism specifically, Lopes et al. (2013) found that listeners preferred TV hosts with a "softened" Brazilian accent over a "regional" one, concluding that:

> It is important for speech language pathologists and audiologists to be aware of television spectators' linguistic attitudes in relation to the speech of television journalists, and to work with the latter's communication skills and accents, thus improving the relations established between television journalists and the community through television. (Lopes et al., 2013, p. 480)

Perceived credibility seems to be a recurring theme in studies examining the perceptions of majority-group listeners and their evaluation of accented speech. In their psychology experiment of native speakers' perception of non-native speech, Lev-Ari and Keysar (2010) found that: "While participants rated statements with mild accent just as truthful as statements by native speakers, they rated heavily accented statements as less truthful than either" (p. 1095). They obtained this finding after testing for prejudice against foreigners, concluding that a non-native accent "might reduce the credibility of non-native job seekers, eyewitnesses, reporters or news anchors." (p. 1095). If journalists are to be regarded as experts with authority over what is considered "proper" language and information, studies about other authority figures, such as scientific experts (Gauvin & Bilodeau, 2025), can provide valuable points of comparison. In Quebec and Ontario, Gauvin and Bilodeau (2025) found that "having a foreign accent and being part of a visible minority hinders the possibility of being considered a credible expert by members of the majority group" (Gauvin & Bilodeau, 2025, p. 135). Overall, authors argue that an accent's effect on perceived credibility

[5] For a more complete review of the person-perception emphasis in psychological studies of accents, see Gluszek and Dovidio, 2010.

depends on specific regional contexts and respondents' conception of national identity, which may be more or less inclusive or exclusive. Based on their findings, they suggest that accent was an even more powerful factor of exclusion than race.

While these studies on the perceived (lack of) credibility of non-native speakers provide valuable insights into the mechanisms of bias against accented speakers, they are not unquestioned. Souza and Markman (2013) claimed that Lev-Ari and Keysar's findings (2010) "might have been a case of a false positive" (p. 1363). It is reasonable to assert that results may vary depending on the criteria and variables considered, and that specific contextual factors likely play a crucial role in determining attitudes towards accents.

Centring the Subjectivities of Accentedness. Although quantitative studies on majority-group members' perceptions are crucial in identifying patterns of discrimination, qualitative research focusing on stigmatized speakers' perspectives may bring forward complementary avenues for finding solutions to a multifaceted issue. As Gluszek and Dovidio (2010, p. 215) note in their review of accent stigma in social psychology, research has disproportionately focused on the perspective of "stigmatizers," leaving accent stigma itself underexplored in the field of stigma studies. Similarly, Freynet et al. (2018) underline the limited availability of research that centers on stigmatized speakers' perspectives.

In contrast, work on second-language speakers has investigated these questions. Researchers have given attention to the issue of accent self-perception among learners (Derwing, 2003; Dupouy, 2019). Studies that invite participants to reflect on their accents and possible experiences of discrimination and stigma have also been conducted in various professional environments, such as highly skilled migrants working in STEM (science, technology, engineering

and mathematics) in Hawaii (Rita & Karides, 2022) and overseas-born bilingual social workers residing in Australia (Harrison, 2013).

The present thesis contributes to this line of inquiry by focusing on the lived experiences of accented journalists in Canadian and Quebec francophone media, therefore studying stigmatization "in the eyes of the stigmatized," and not through the lens of the dominant group's perceptions. A particularly relevant model is the study by Freynet, Clément, and Sylvestre (2018), who conducted a qualitative investigation of the experience of accent stigmatization among 36 native and non-native French speakers living outside of Quebec. The study explored participants' self-perception of their accents, the forms of discrimination they experienced, and their responses to discriminatory experiences. Findings suggest that feelings of pride, belonging, and language competency are reinforced or diminished by one's attitude toward participants' accents and that many non-standard francophone speakers perceive stigmatization in Canada (in various settings and forms). Researchers identified "behavioural, cognitive and affective responses to and consequences of discrimination" (Freynet et al., 2018, p. 5).

Accents and the French Language in Canadian and Quebec Francophone Journalism

The thesis draws in part from sources outside Canada, including works from France, the United States, and studies related to the language. These sources must be critically examined, as they may not fully reflect the specificities of the French language in Quebec and Canada and the sociocultural realities of these places. For example, studies from France can be closely embedded in France's socio-cultural and political contexts that differ from francophone North America. One such context is unilingualism, defined by Boyer as an ideology that has historically structured the imaginary of the French linguistic community, grounded in "l'imposition d'*une* norme (la seule légitime) sur les « marchés [linguistiques] officiels », « dominants »" (Boyer, 2015, para. 9).

Moreover, France-based research may also be enshrined in the assumption of the monocentricity of the French language, although it has been increasingly challenged. Recent scholarship emphasizes the polycentric and polyareal nature of French (Pustka et al., 2019). This perspective is fundamental when considering francophone regions often perceived as peripheral within the global Francophonie, such as Quebec and other Canadian francophone communities.

In light of these discussions, the following section aims to situate the research inquiry within its specific francophone context. The discussion focuses on how "standard language" is understood in Quebec and, more specifically, in the journalism field. The objective is not to define a linguistic norm against which the speech of accented journalists (participants) will be measured, but to provide contextual grounds for the thesis by acknowledging how participants themselves conceptualized language norms in their profession. Letting participants articulate their understanding of "standard language" in their own words avoids imposing external definitions that may not accurately reflect their lived realities.

The Language of the Media in Francophone Media

As noted earlier, existing descriptive studies on the language used in Quebec media have largely aimed to assess the quality of spoken French. Notably, the works of Reinke and Ostiguy, and Maurais were produced under the mandate of the Office québécois de la langue française, as part of a linguistic situation monitoring. At first glance, the concept of "the quality of the language" (*la qualité de la langue*) can appear disconnected from the issue of accents. However, in the Quebec context, which constitutes the epicentre of French-language media production in Canada, concerns with language quality carry a particular historical weight.

The concept of *la qualité de la langue* first appeared in the works of Jean-Denis Gendron in the 1960s (Vinay, 1996). As the only province in Canada and region in North America with a

francophone majority, Quebec and its French-speaking population have long struggled with linguistic insecurity, in relation to the French variety from France (the former colonial motherland), and in response to the threat of anglicization. This insecurity was most famously illustrated in the debates around the *joual*, a highly anglicized form of Quebec French (Cajolet-Laganière & Martel, 1993), particularly spoken among Montreal's popular classes (Remysen, 2022). Progressively, *la querelle du joual* gave way to the question of standardizing Quebec French, which gained prominence in the 1970s, with two opposing positions disagreeing on which linguistic norm to follow. One group, known as the *internationalisants*, recommended an alignment with international French (from France), while the *endogénistes* promoted a standard rooted in Quebec's linguistic realities. In their 1993 study, Cajolet-Laganière and Martel, who sided with the endogénistes, analyzed oral surveys, press coverage, academic studies, official documents, and dictionaries. They concluded that "l'auto-dépréciation des pratiques linguistiques est un phénomène collectif et constant au Québec depuis au moins le XIX^{e} siècle et touche autant l'oral que l'écrit" (1993, p. 177). For these authors and others, linguistic affirmation and the development of a Quebec-specific standard are viewed as necessary responses to this history of linguistic insecurity and self-devaluation.

Describing what constituted the spoken standard language in Canadian and Quebec francophone media is not the aim of this thesis. However, the potential role this notion plays in shaping accented journalists' lived experiences and their self-perception of language is of significant interest. A connection, even implicit, may exist between "accent" and "spoken standard language" in the minds of speakers and shape their attitudes toward language "deviations." Language standardization is a process rooted in history, rather than fixed at a particular moment. As Cotter, investigating the language of news, explains:

> Standardization processes play a role in influencing language use and attitudes about use – and, inevitably, language in the media. Standardization ideologies emerged in the wake of the printed world and may be considered an extension of intrinsic human propensity to equate moral stature with truthfulness and competence in language use, as Cameron (1995) has argued." (Cotter, 2010, p. 212)

Cotter defines standardization as "a process generally wrought by conscious intervention on the part of social groups, either in a collectively unreflective and somewhat ad hoc manner or very deliberately, either from within a speech community or from without [...]. The goal of language standardization, as Milroy and Milroy (1999, p. 6) succinctly put it, is the "suppression of optional variability in language," to minimize variety and choice. A standard language means that one form or variety of usage is preferred, privileged, and expected to be used in particular social contexts and discourse situations, and is considered the norm to aspire to." (Cotter, 2010, p. 188). The role of the media in this process is twofold: it both reflects ongoing standardization and actively contributed to its production. As Cotter explains, "news practitioners respond to socially motivated standardization pressures. At the same time, they work actively to honor the discursive metalinguistic norms and rules of their craft" (2010, p. 190). What is particularly relevant for this research is that the journalists under study work within institutions that are supposedly assumed to uphold the "standard" language norms, which even becomes embedded in their professional identity. However, "having" an accent that deviates from this norm may carry heightened consequences. As Castro notes in his analysis of Galician accent in Spanish newscasts: "The language used by TV newscasters when reporting the news is supposed to represent the standard language of a wider linguistic group devoid of any regional, dialect, or group identifying characteristics" (Cotter, 2010, as cited in Castro, 2017, p. 127).

This places accented journalists in a paradoxical situation: they are simultaneously insiders and outsiders. This tension makes it all the more compelling to explore how they make sense of this position. In a journalistic environment that seems to favour linguistic homogeneity, "having" an accent signals a form of difference that may conflict with a professional identity grounded in an "ideology of technique and neutrality" (Schudson, 1978, p. 184, as cited in Cotter, 2010, p. 211).

In Quebec, it can be argued that the quality of the language may have become part of the professional identity of the media sector and is linked to considerations of language quality and standardization. As Remysen (2010) shows in his comparative analysis of Société Radio-Canada and VRT's (Flanders' public television network) linguistic policies, the expression "qualité de la langue" is prevalent in SRC's approach, although its definitions are not always clear and its implementation by the linguistic advisor is inconsistent. The use of "standard" Canadian or Quebec French is also a source of internal tensions and contradictions. While reports and policies express a desire to reflect more diverse linguistic realities, notably regional forms of Canadian and Quebec French, to foster a better connection with local audiences,[6] French used by the SRC must, at the same time, remain intelligible for all audiences, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and ideally for francophones from all around the world, through the use of "international" French (Remysen, 2010). The ambivalences described by Remysen are evident in a Radio-Canada report titled *La qualité du français à Radio-Canada : principes directeurs* (Lafrance & Gourd, 2004). While the report suggests an opening toward regional varieties and accents, it simultaneously emphasizes the importance of communicative effectiveness in on-air language. Notably, the issue of "foreign," non-Canadian accents, remains unaddressed. Nevertheless, this stance appears to mark a relative

[6] See the 2003 report from the *Groupe de travail sur la qualité de la langue* to Radio-Canada, in which audience members surveyed at public consultations expressed interest in hearing local, regional accents, and not only Montreal French.

evolution from earlier descriptions of the language norms at Radio-Canada. In 1989, for instance, a review published in *C'est-à-dire*, one of the publications of Radio-Canada's linguistic and translation services, adopted a somewhat stricter position on regionalisms. The authors invited journalists to soften "la couleur trop régionale de nos prononciations" without "radically" altering their phonetics. The language norm at Radio-Canada was described as follows:

> La langue officielle de Radio-Canada est de niveau neutre, soit du niveau courant de la bonne langue, sans intention stylistique marquée. On évite le recours arbitraire et constant aux tours familiers ou populaires, tout comme on se garde de donner, par l'utilisation de tours recherchés ou littéraires, une impression de pédantisme. Ce que l'on vise en somme, c'est une langue simple et de bon aloi. (Dubuc, 1990, p. 148).

In addition to professional language norms, accented journalists are also subject to broader societal linguistic expectations (Cotter, 2010). In Quebec, as in Flanders, public media also contribute to shaping national identity and feelings of belonging (Remysen, 2010). As Remysen observes:

> La langue des médias publics a aussi une valeur symbolique importante. En tant que véritables institutions, ces chaînes contribuent en grande partie au développement d'une identité nationale (voir Van den Bulck et Van Poecke, 1996) dont la langue constitue souvent la pierre angulaire. [...] Si les médias publics veulent contribuer à une image positive de l'identité de la communauté à laquelle ils s'adressent, leurs pratiques langagières doivent donc refléter la diversité et la spécificité culturelle et linguistique de leur public (2010, p. 124).

In Quebec, the language used by Radio-Canada and its evolution through time is emblematic of the process of standardization of Quebec French, which is closely tied to the construction of a distinct national identity in the province. When Radio-Canada's radio service was created in the mid-1930s, the variety of French spoken on-air was closer to that of the language of the French-Canadian elite (Dubuc, 2001). Over time, the language used shifted to reflect a more Quebecois reality, even though the language spoken on air remained more elitist than the variety spoken by most of the population (Reinke and Ostiguy, 2005). In his work on the modernization of the Quebec accent, Gendron (2014, p. 53) explains that under the leadership of Dubuc, then director of Radio-Canada's Linguistic Service, the broadcaster's language model shifted toward a more "natural" and less *guindé* (uptight) style. The role of the media, such as Radio-Canada, is summarized by linguists Martel and Cajolet-Laganière (1995) in their call for standard Quebec French titled *Oui... au français québécois standard*:

> Depuis quelques décennies, grâce aux réseaux de communication de la radio puis de la télévision, un nouveau modèle de prononciation a pris forme entre l'ancien usage canadien et l'usage français de France. La langue des principaux annonceurs et annonceuses a été jugée excellente et est ainsi devenue le modèle de prononciation au Québec. Ce modèle n'est pas français; il n'est surtout pas parisien car le peuple québécois rejette cette prononciation « à la française » qu'il juge trop « pointue ». C'est ce qu'on a appelé le modèle « radio-canadien » du français parlé au Québec. (Martel & Cajolet-Lanagière, 1995, p. 18)

Today, the language spoken by journalists, particularly Radio-Canada when presenting the news, is regarded by linguists as a reference point for speakers. This is underscored in a panfrancophone perceptual study of the pronunciation norms conducted by Chalier (2021):

> Les journalistes-présentateurs de médias audiovisuels, en particulier ceux de Radio-Canada, représentent le groupe de locuteurs considéré par une majorité des informateurs comme la référence en matière de pronunciation [...]. Les raisons du choix de cette variété par les Québécois sont également mentionnées par les informateurs, et similaires à celles des Suisses romands : il s'agit d'un français québécois perceptivement « neutre » au niveau géographique panquébécois et d'une « norme de compromis » à mi-chemin entre les variétés québécoises et la conception des Québécois d'un « français de France ». (p. 162)

Discussing the concept of authenticity, French sociolinguists Maria Candea and Laélia Véron cite Canadian francophone media as an example of how accent shifts toward a more "authentic" type can help better represent local linguistic realities:

> Il en reste pas moins que les accents régionaux peuvent aussi servir de gage d'authenticité, permettent de se reconnaître, de partager une culture ancrée dans un territoire. Cela incite certaines personnes à ne pas les oublier, à renégocier leur place, voire à les adopter (de manière plus ou moins artificielle) pour se forger une identité. C'est ainsi que les médias au Canada francophone ont amorcé un changement progressif et pratiquent un français de plus en plus local (Candea & Véron, 2021, p. 196).

That being said, the debate around the standardization of Quebec French is not a central focus in this thesis. The research did not aim to interview only journalists who do not speak standard Quebec French, as the notion of a standard language was considered, following Lippi-Green (2011), primarily in its ideological or "mythical" dimension. As an ideology, the standard language continues to inform broader socio-cultural and linguistic contexts in which accented journalists working in francophone media evolve, without necessarily being aware of it.

In line with the understanding of standard language as an ideological construct, this thesis deliberately moved away from the normative assumption that the media must reflect a particular variety of French. Instead, it sought to listen to journalists, regardless of whether they conform to or distance themselves from such norms. Sociolinguist Annette Boudreau, who approaches standard language through the prism of *ideology*, has argued that standard language, stigma, and discrimination are deeply intertwined when it comes to the question of "accents," which leads to the next section of this literature review:

> Le « standard » est en effet une abstraction imaginée qui ne correspond pas à la réalité des pratiques linguistiques, qui ne sont ni fixes ni homogènes. On peut donc traiter le standard comme une idéologie lorsque ce registre est élevé au rang de variété dominante à l'exclusion des autres variétés, ce qui mène à le concevoir comme la seule forme légitime, d'où son lien avec différentes formes de discrimination et avec l'insécurité linguistique. Ces discriminations sont surtout visibles dans les commentaires sur les accents (Blanchet, 2019; Lippi-Green, 1997; Planchenault et Poljak, 2021), le premier lieu de la rencontre avec la différence. (Boudreau, 2023, p. 45)

Accent, Discrimination, and Stigma

This section situates the research topic within the study of discrimination and stigma. It introduces glottophobia as a concept of reference, underlines that accents are a source of stereotypes and stigmatization, and reviews different forms of accent-based discrimination.

A Social Conception of Language

Central to this thesis is the understanding that languages are fundamentally social practices. When approached through a social prism, languages are not neutral tools of communication, but

are objects, and their speakers are subjects and actors transcended by power relationships that can generate discrimination. This social conception of languages is described by researchers Elatiana Razafimandimbimanana and Fabrice Wacalie, who examine linguistic microaggressions in New Caledonia:

> Premièrement, une conception sociale des langues signifie qu'une « norme » linguistique n'existe pas en soi. La variation est effectivement un phénomène intrinsèque à toutes les langues, dès lors que des groupes sociaux – au sens large et non exclusivement ethnicisé – en font un espace de sens, y développent des sentiments d'attachement et, de ce fait, les utilisent pour se distinguer des autres groupes voire pour s'opposer. La deuxième implication est la nécessaire déconstruction d'un stéréotype quasi intemporel : croire que les notions de « pureté », d'« authenticité » et de « nativité » s'appliqueraient aux langues, c'est accepter qu'elles s'appliquent aux hommes. Repenser les langues en tant que pratique sociale comme une autre permet de comprendre en quoi elles font aussi l'objet de (dé)valorisations subjectives. Au même titre que l'objectivation des « ethnies », « races », « religions », « sexes », « classes sociales », etc., les langues, étant faites de variations, provoquent des jugements de valeur des tensions, des conflits et inéluctablement des discriminations. (Razafimandimbimanana & Wacalie, 2019, p. 156)

Accents as a Source of Discrimination

In line with this social conception of language, a central concept that informs this thesis is Blanchet's *glottophobia*. This type of discrimination against linguistic varieties is considered by this author as an *alterophobia*, meaning the fear of another person bearing a language variety that is deemed to be deviant. Glottophobia includes "accents" but also other components of one's language. It can be defined as the following:

> Le mépris, la haine, l'agression, le rejet, l'exclusion, de personnes, discrimination négative effectivement ou prétendument fondée sur le fait de considérer incorrectes, inférieures, mauvaises certaines formes linguistiques (perçues comme des langues, des dialectes ou des usages de langues) usitées par ces personnes, en général en focalisant sur les formes linguistiques (et sans toujours avoir pleinement conscience de l'ampleur des effets produits sur les personnes). (Blanchet, 2019, p. 44)

Glottophobia is rooted in linguistic ideologies that sanctify a standardized language variety and norm and demonize others. These beliefs (positive and negative) inform the sociolinguistic representations speakers have of themselves and others. Glottopolitical actors (mainly the education system and the State, although Blanchet gives credit to the media) transform the domination of a particular language into an unquestionable hegemony. Therefore, Blanchet and Clerc Conan (2018) state that glottophobia can become structural and institutionalized and is correlated to unease with linguistic diversity. Although Blanchet studied France to establish his concept of glottophobia, he argues that this is a typical case that may be adapted to other societies, mentioning the works of Bourhis et al. (2007) on linguicism in Canada.

An Intersectional Approach

Furthermore, this thesis adopts an intersectional approach in order to capture the complexity of accent-based discrimination. Employing glottophobia this way is helpful because, as Blanchet (2019) reminds us, it is first and foremost a form of discrimination directed at people. Glottophobia centers the attention on individuals and their multiple intersecting identities as the real objects of discrimination, rather than language variation itself. Accents are identifiers drawing a border between the *Self* and the *Other* (Meyer, 2011, p. 36). Meyer (2011) suggests the hierarchization of accents hides a hierarchization of speakers as well. Speakers are not discriminated against based

on purely linguistic reasons, but rather because of the "convocation of an assessment of community belonging suggested by the accent" (p. 39).[7] In that sense, an intersectional approach to accent is necessary to understand the situated nature of accent-based discrimination. As Blanchet (2021) summarizes:

> L'établissement du caractère illégitime des disparités de traitement à prétexte linguistique rejoint les perspectives d'analyse des langues et variétés comme attributs catégoriels contribuant à l'identification individuelle ou collective. En ce sens, les discriminations glottophobes croisent les discriminations au prétexte de l'origine réelle ou supposée, de la situation économique, du genre, par exemple. (2021, p. 156)

Blanchet (2021) further notes, in the *Dictionnaire de sociolinguistique*, that the concept of glottophobia has been positively received in subaltern and postcolonial studies as an additional tool to investigate the intersecting forms of discrimination (p. 158). Several previous studies have incorporated intersectional analyses that included accent-based discrimination. Most notably, in the context of Quebec, Lapointe (2018), in a sociology Ph.D. thesis defended at Université Laval, examined the socioeconomic insertion, mobilization of social networks, and identity construction of Peruvian immigrants in the province, which included experiences of accent-based discrimination. On a related topic, Jennifer-Ann Beaudry (2024), in a master's thesis in communications defended at the Université de Sherbrooke, investigated the challenges faced by racialized journalists from immigrant backgrounds (1st and 2nd generation) in Quebec media. Intersectionality was not explicitly mentioned as a theoretical or analytical framework, and while accents were not the focus of the study, they were mentioned twice in the dissertation. Among the

[7] "La pratique langagière et l'individu social qu'elle symbolise ne sont pas discriminés par leur dimension linguistique mais par la convocation d'une évaluation de l'appartenance communautaire suggérée par l'accent" (Meyer, 2011, p. 39).

eight participants, those who were first-generation immigrants arrived in Quebec at a young age and received their education in the province. Beaudry notes that the participants "had" a Quebec accent and demonstrated familiarity with the cultural references of the province (p. 69). As she suggests, future research should focus on journalists who immigrated as adults to assess "if there are additional difficulties" in their professional experiences (p. 69).

The present thesis, therefore, understands participants' lived experiences, including accent discrimination, as part of a wider interconnected and interdependent system of oppression that is *vocalized* through what others perceive as an "accent."

Discrimination in Practice: A Continuum

Employing the term "discrimination" in this thesis necessarily calls for acknowledging the various forms this phenomenon can take. As Meyer (2011) notes in her analysis of accents and discrimination in the ready-to-wear clothing sector, discrimination needs to be understood as part of a continuum of attitudes and behaviours that include systemic discrimination, discrimination, and segregation among the negative gradients, and aggregation, insertion and integration in the positive gradients, with a middle-range intermediary position (p. 48). In a journalistic workplace environment, accent-based discrimination should not only be conceived as the refusal to grant an on-air position or a promotion to an accented person without justification, but also through interactions with colleagues, managers, and members of the public. Drawing on Guespin (1985) and Bulot (2006), Blanchet underlines that glottopolitics[8] are constructed by all speakers all the time through their actions at the microsociolinguistic (interactions) and macrosociolinguistic (policies, institutions) levels (Blanchet, 2019).

[8] "Toute action de gestion de l'interaction langagière où intervient la société" (Guespin, 1985).

For example, at the micro scale, Munro (2003), in his landmark legal study of human rights cases of accent-based discrimination in Canada, identified three forms of discrimination, namely "discrimination in employment due to inappropriate concern with accent, discrimination due to accent stereotyping, and harassment based on accent" (p. 38). Likewise, the approach of Elatiana Razafimandimbimanana and Fabrice Wacalie (2020) to linguistic micro-aggressions among youth in New Caledonia, which is itself inspired by the concept of racial micro-aggressions, is enlightening to grasp the insidiousness of accent-based discrimination, as it reveals the "caractère banal et banalisé d'idéologies puristes" that are interiorized (p. 4).

As Blanchet (2021) notes, discrimination implied by glottophobia is a result of a process of stigmatization (p. 155). In his canonical definition, Goffman (1963/1986) defines stigma as "an attribute of a person that is deeply discrediting," which reduces the bearer "in our minds from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one" (p. 3). In their analysis of the stigma of nonnative accents in communication, Gluszek and Dovidio (2010) draw on Goffman's definition, adding that, according to Crocker et al. (1998, p. 505), a stigma also "conveys a social identity that is devalued in a particular social context" (p. 216).

Gluszek and Dovidio (2010) compiled research that has shown that accented speakers are subjected to negative perceptions, especially nonnative speakers, who are seen as "less pleasant to listen to" and associated with various stereotypes: less intelligent, less loyal, less competent, and "speaking the language poorly" (p. 217). The consequences of accent-based discrimination and minority language stigmatization, and more widely the imposition of a fixed linguistic norm as the hegemonic standard, are reported in the academic literature, such as linguistic insecurity (in New Caledonia, see Razafimandimbimanana and Wacalie, 2020; in francophone minority communities in Canada, see Freynet et al., 2018), and *auto-odi*, or self-hate, which is an extreme form of

diglossia (Ninyoles, 1969). Most notably, Freynet, Clément, and Sylvestre (2018), in their study of the experiences of accent discrimination among francophone minority speakers in Canada, found that the consequences of accent stigmatization can be observed in all "the settings in which they occurred," which can affect "social, leisure, academic and professional potential" (p. 28). Participants "described internalizing discriminatory attitudes with accounts of feelings of self-inadequacy manifested, in this case, by linguistic insecurity and self-stigmatization" (p. 28), which, the authors argue, could pose a threat to the resilience of these linguistic communities, the maintenance of their language and their identity (p. 28). The journalism-specific consequences of accent-based discrimination and stigma have started to be documented in France (Dubray, 2024; Gasquet-Cyrus & Masson, 2022), and the present thesis aims to contribute to this ongoing process.

As previously outlined, accent-based discrimination has been studied in a variety of settings, including professional environments. Broadcast journalism requires communicating with a clientele (an audience) through voice. Conceptualizing accent-based discrimination in this industry is complicated since communicative skills may play a central role in perceived employability and competency. As Blanchet (2019) notes, in many societies, language discrimination is not perceived as a form of discrimination against a person, but rather as an evaluation that is "purely linguistic," "objective and incontestable" (p. 44). The weak legitimacy of accent-based discrimination can also be found in Canadian law. As Hideg et al. (2023) explain in an article published in *The Conversation*: "Accents are not an explicit protected category under the Canadian Human Rights Act, although they are related to the protected category of national or ethnic origin. This lack of protection undermines the legitimacy of accent discrimination" (para. 18). Moreover, if the person's ability to perform their work is proven to be impacted by their accent, the accent can be legally considered as a legitimate ground for discriminatory treatment. It is

possible to argue that some people in the news media industry may find it reasonable to discriminate based on accent since it can be perceived as a lack of perceived competency. As Creese reminds in her study of Sub-Saharan migrants experiencing an erasure of their English competency in Vancouver: "Although accents that are not 'local' can sometimes lead to miscommunication, research suggests that 'foreign' accents do not necessarily impair communication; instead, it is the negative perceptions of 'foreign' accents that have social consequences (Derwing et al., 2002; Lippi-Green, 1997; Munro et al., 2006)" (Creese, 2010, p. 297).

Moreover, it is necessary to underline that journalists evolve in a professional setting that values linguistic norms. Robert Dubuc (2001), former director of Radio-Canada's Linguistic Service and specialist of the public broadcaster's linguistic norm, underlines that public media in Canada give particular attention to the "maîtrise de la langue" in staff selection and hiring processes. Candidates undergo a recruitment process that involves language tests and evaluations. Additionally, hired journalists' language mistakes are scrutinized by managers.

Theoretical Framework

This final section of the literature review dives into the theories that inform the thesis research. It introduces Bourdieu's theory of symbolic domination and language economics (1977; 1982; 1991; 2001) and their respective limitations. Goffman's micro-level, interactional analysis of stigma is used to complement Bourdieu's macro-level view and formulate a more comprehensive framework used in this study of accented journalists' lived experience in Canadian and Quebec francophone media.

As previously outlined, this thesis aims to investigate the subjectivities of those who experience accentedness in Canadian and Quebec francophone media. This way, studying stigmatization "in the eyes" of the stigmatized is an endeavour inspired by Freynet and colleagues'

approach (2018). However, in line with reflexive thematic analysis's mantra that "data do not speak for themselves" (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 91), it must be emphasized that it is not enough to assume a purely inductive approach to studying accented journalists' lived experiences. These are necessarily interpreted, the dataset coded, and themes developed, which are all endeavours that are likely to be influenced by a body of preexisting literature. Using an approach that is both inductive (data-driven) and deductive (theory-driven), I aimed at recognizing the theories that may influence the interpretation of the data, while remaining open to participants' insights that may contradict, question, or nuance preexisting theories and previous research findings. As Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (2022) emphasize, reflexive thematic analysis is rarely only deductive or inductive, but rather a continuum. As they underlined: "We cannot simply give voice [to research participants], because who we are always shapes what we notice about our data and the stories we tell about them" (Fine, 1992, as cited in Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 56). An inductive approach, therefore, represents a meaningful starting point to engaging with the data, but a complementary deductive approach may be necessary to critically interrogate the meanings expressed by participants.

Language and Power

> Reconnaître, faire taire, se taire ou entendre la voix d'autrui, en particulier lorsque le processus s'engage au sein de relations de pouvoir plus ou moins explicites, peut en effet signifier parler à sa place, l'assigner au silence, le forcer à parler immédiatement, ou, au contraire, de manière différée, défendre son point de vue, le traduire, l'interpréter, le manipuler, dans tous les sens du terme. (Weirich et al., 2022, p. 1, as cited in Boudreau, 2023, p. 12)

An underlying theme throughout this literature review is that language is at the centre of power relations. Departing from the concept of accent itself, language (which accent is a part of) is a tool of power. The term *voice* translates this idea of power in a way that it shows who is allowed to speak, when, and under which circumstances. Thinking in terms of voices, and not only accents, as will be done in parts of this thesis, enables us to render most visible these power relations. As Acadian sociolinguist Annette Boudreau (2023) wrote in her book about linguistic insecurity in the Francophonie, all types of "voices," those which are made heard and those that are not heard and remain silent, should be taken into consideration:

> Les silences sont partie prenante de ces voix qui n'arrivent pas à se dire, et ils font partie des pratiques linguistiques, aussi paradoxal que cela puisse paraître. Pratiquer le silence est une manière de dire sans dire, non sans liens avec des formes d'insécurité linguistique et identitaire. (Boudreau, 2023, p. 12)

These voices, as Boudreau continues, are not equal, and do not "uphold the same values." Some are "marginalized, killed, negated or ignored" (p. 12), while others are heard. In the context of the present thesis, the emphasis on issues of power, and therefore, careful attention is given to the mechanisms that played out in either the *silencing* or *audibilization* of accented journalists' voices.

A Bourdieusian Perspective. A particularly relevant framework to analyze power relations is offered by a Bourdieusian approach, which conceptualizes journalism as a field structured by relations of power and symbolic capital.

In Bourdieu's theory, symbolic violence is employed by the dominants to assert their domination. As Landry (2006) explains, symbolic domination is not "instantly intelligible" to its

victims, but rather “subtle and always invisible” (p. 85). Blanchet (2019) notes that the complicity of the victims is central to the continuation of linguistic domination in society. In a sense, the dominated participate in their own domination (Landry, 2006, p. 85). As Bourdieu stated:

> Toute domination symbolique suppose de la part de ceux qui la subissent une forme de complicité qui n’est ni soumission passive à une contrainte extérieure, ni adhésion libre à des valeurs. [Elle] réside précisément dans le fait qu’elle suppose de la part de celui qui la subit une attitude qui défie l’alternative ordinaire de la liberté et de la contrainte. (1982, p. 36)

Hegemony is attained when the dominants and the dominated share the same “schemes of perception and appreciation” (Bourdieu, 1997, p. 286, as cited in Landry, 2006, p. 87). As Bourdieu’s concept of habitus shows, members of a given linguistic community share a common language-related “matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions” (Castro, 2017, p. 209) that allows them to identify out-group individuals.

Bourdieu’s analysis is structured around the unequal power relations between the dominants and the dominated, who do not share the same amount of capital, whether it be cultural, economic or symbolic. Language (which includes accents) is part of incorporated cultural capital. The possession of the right type of cultural capital (linguistic resources) in a given field allows for the increase of a person’s economic capital (Harrison, 2013, p. 194). In the present thesis, the journalistic field is considered distinct and autonomous, alongside its particular hierarchies and norms that inform the relationships and interactions within the field.

The theory of language economics may be particularly relevant since the analysis takes place in a professional environment, a market in which agents mobilize different types of capital and compete to obtain scarce, prestigious positions and recognition. Researchers investigating different

aspects of language have applied Bourdieu's language economics theory to their object of study, including Galician accent in Spanish television news bulletins (Castro, 2017), overseas-born bilingual social workers residing in Australia (Harrison, 2013), and accent-based discrimination against Sub-Saharan migrants in Vancouver (Creese, 2010).

At the core of Bourdieu's view of language is the idea that language is more than a material reality. As he stated: "Linguistic competence has less to do with grammatical structures and more to do with the ability to command the right to speak and the power to be heard" (Bourdieu 1977, p. 648, as cited in Creese, 2010, p. 296). His theory, refined in *Ce Que Parler Veut Dire : L'économie des Échanges Linguistiques* (1982) and *Language and Symbolic Power* (1991), is based on the concepts of linguistic capital, linguistic market and linguistic habitus. This vision allows one to evaluate the market value of language varieties based on society's "power structures and the language of the social and cultural elite" (Castro, 2017, p. 209). As Bourdieu (1986) notes, linguistic capital is "unrecognized as capital and recognized as legitimate competence" (p. 245, as cited in Creese, 2010, p. 296), which allows speakers of socially valued language variety to assert their domination as rooted in meritocracy. In the vision of language economics, language is commodified and used as a currency to exchange goods on the labour market, such as prestige and high-level positions. In today's context of neoliberalism and globalization, in which the present thesis takes place, the (re)definition of "authentic" voice and its value have to be particularly scrutinized. Heller (2003), who analyzed the commodification of language in the context of globalization and neoliberalism, states the following:

> The commodification of language which renders language amenable to redefinition as a measurable skill, as opposed to a talent, or an inalienable characteristic of group members), as well as the simultaneous marketing of authenticity, challenge State and community-based

systems of producing and distributing linguistic resources, redefine the relationship between language and identity, and produce new forms of competition and social selection (2003, p. 474).

Nuancing Bourdieu's Approach

However, Bourdieusian theories have certain limitations that need to be recognized and overcome. First, Bourdieu analyzed the French society of the second half of the 20th century. The adaptation to today's Canadian society must be made carefully. Secondly, Bourdieu has focused extensively on matters of social class and French regional languages, while questions of race and ethnicity have not received the same attention. A contemporary analysis of accent cannot ignore the racial and ethnic dimensions of language as factors in the devaluation and exclusion of individuals, which is why this thesis employs an intersectional lens. In that regard, Creese's (2010) work on the language skills of sub-Saharan African immigrants in Vancouver constitutes an enlightening synthesis of Bourdieu's work on language (via the concept of cultural capital) and intersectional approaches. Creese underlines the racial dimension of the object of study and Canada's colonial history to analyze sub-Saharan African immigrants' experiences of discrimination and stigmatization, concluding that linguistic capital is erased among Commonwealth immigrants in Vancouver. Finally, it has been noted that Bourdieu's vision conveys a miserable (*misérabiliste*) image of the dominated (Bastin, 2003, p. 12). Bastin (2003) notes that the Bourdieusian approach to journalism is somewhat heterogeneous. Typically, according to Bastin, while the Bourdieusian analysis sees the dominants as having strategies of positioning, honour-seeking or distinction, the dominated are viewed as laborious prisoners of their practice who somatize this situation in an unhappy consciousness (p. 12). It should be noted, however, that being dominated does not mean a person has no room for manoeuvre. This quote from Bastin is

enlightening: “[l’analyse bourdieusienne] néglige aussi d’accorder aux dominés la jouissance d’une certaine liberté de choix professionnel et de mise en récit de leur pratique” (Bastin, 2003, p. 12).

Bourdieu’s “top-down” approach conveys the risk of imposing a predefined framework of analysis on the experience of accented journalists, regardless of their subjective interpretations, or hides the potential presence of forms of agency that may go unnoticed, but nevertheless challenge dominant norms of their professional environment.

Accents: Stigma in Interactions. The interactionist sociology of stigma, as developed by Erving Goffman, can be seen as a complementary approach to Bourdieu that can encompass what it subjectively means to experience stigmatization and adapt to it. In *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (1963/1986), Goffman does not mention accents as a potential cause for stigma. Some references to voice impairments are made, such as stuttering. Even if Goffman focuses on more “visible” forms of stigma, such as disabilities, his approach to symbolic interactionism allows one to understand the processes, the “moral career” stigmatized individuals go through and the different concealment techniques they employ to appear as “normal” as possible in public life. As Sempé summarizes, thinking in terms of moral career allows one to identify ‘the cycle and the modifications’ that structure the representations that individuals make of themselves, based on the perceptions and judgments about themselves that they believe emanate from the actors with whom they interact (Sempé in Encyclopedia Universalis, n.d.). This perspective, based on the individuals (journalists) and their interactions (colleagues, managers, the public), adds complexity to Bourdieu’s approach that is enshrined in wider societal norms.

Goffman defines stigma as “an attribute that is deeply discrediting, but it should be seen as a language of relationships, not attributes” (Goffman, 1963/1986, p. 3), which means that stigmas

are not discreditable in nature, but rather based on context. Stigmatized individuals have, in Goffman's words, "reduced life chances" due to their stigmatized situation:

> By definition, of course, we believe the person with a stigma is not quite human […] On this assumption, we exercise varieties of discrimination, through which we effectively, if often unthinkingly, reduce his life chances. (Goffman, 1963/1986, p. 5)

Stigmatized individuals engage in "passing," which is "the management of undisclosed discrediting information about self" (Goffman, 1963/1986, p. 42). However, as Kalei Kanuha underlines in a study of lesbians and gay men of colour, passing can be used situationally to "resist social oppression" and is not always based upon a rejection of the stigmatized identity (Kalei Kanuha, 1999, p. 27). To Goffman, the level of perceptibility of the possibly stigmatizing element is crucial in order to pass successfully (Goffman, 1963/1986, p. 48). Even if in the case of accent, the ability to fully hide is questionable, passing is nonetheless an interesting concept to take into account, as it pertains to the potential strategies employed by accented journalists to navigate the journalism industry. Moreover, Goffman underlines that in their moral career, stigmatized individuals can reach a point where they embrace their stigmatized identity instead of hiding it. They can reverse the stigma and turn it into a positive source of pride (Goffman, 1963/1986, p. 101). Finally, a last attitude of stigmatized individuals can be enlightening in the context of this proposed research. Ambivalence, which is the discrepancy between the acquired identity standards and the failure to conform to them, can lead stigmatized individuals to distinguish themselves from others who appear as even more stigmatized than they are (Goffman, 1963/1986, pp. 106-108). Goffman describes this ambivalent attitude as a "kind of self-betraying" in which the stigmatized try to "normify their own conduct but also to clean up the conduct of others in the group" (Goffman, 1963/1986, p. 107).

Drawing on Goffman's approach to the experience of stigmatization, but expanding it to nonnative accents in communicative contexts, Gluszek and Dovidio (2010, p. 220) propose a model of the stigma of nonnative accents in communication (SNAC). Due to its complexity, this model is not used as a reference framework in this thesis. However, the SNAC model provides valuable insights into understanding accented speakers' "psychological responses" and active "contribution to the interaction processes and outcomes" (Gluszek & Dovidio, 2010, p. 221). In the SNAC framework, accented speakers' perceptions and beliefs about being the target of prejudice and discrimination are central to the analysis, as they can influence speakers' well-being and future interactions. Research on this topic shows increased anxiety (Stephan & Stephan, 1985), social avoidance (Derwing, 2003), negative psychological health outcomes and stress (Wated & Sanchez, 2006), and modifications of self-presentation (Cargile et al., 1994). On a more positive side, "accented individuals may embrace their new identity as a unique positive characteristic that makes them distinct from the majority of the native population," and "develop a positive in-group identity" (Gluszek & Dovidio, 2010, p. 221).

Chapter 3: Methods

This thesis research employed reflexive thematic analysis, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2021, 2022), to analyze data drawn from twelve in-depth, semi-structured interviews conducted with journalists recruited through a call for participation.

Recruitment

Participants were recruited between October 2024 and January 2025 through a call for participation (see Appendix A). The call was disseminated via professional newsletters, including those of the Canadian Association of Journalists and the Fédération professionnelle des journalistes du Québec, as well as through Facebook groups (Association des journalistes indépendants du Québec; Concordia Journalism and Communications Studies Alumni) and the researcher's personal LinkedIn account. Additionally, the Radio-Canada Workers' Union also shared the call for participation, although the specific platform or format of that dissemination was not identified. Interested journalists were invited to contact the researcher by email.

Inclusion criteria were determined as: (1) self-identification as a francophone "with an accent" in Quebec, (2) present or past work experience in Quebec as an employee or a freelancer, and (3) current or past practice of journalism in a francophone media outlet. The call for participation specified that all types of media (spoken and written) were included. Focusing solely on radio and television would have excessively narrowed the scope of the sample and potentially rendered invisible a significant portion of accented journalists working in Canadian and Quebec francophone media. Instead, the call for participation explicitly invited journalists with diverse media experiences, including written press journalists who never appeared on broadcast media, in order to more inclusively capture the varied experiences of accented journalists. The call also

adopted an inclusive definition of "francophone," stating that "anyone who speaks French and identifies with the inclusion criteria mentioned above is invited to participate in the study."

Initially, the geographic scope of the study was limited to Quebec, but was subsequently extended to include participants working in francophone media across Canada. The use of the term "accent" was addressed explicitly in the call, where it was described as a social construct. It was emphasized that the term was not intended to categorize participants, but to explore whether this label resonated with their lived experiences in journalism, therefore situating the study within an anti-oppressive perspective.

Participant Sample

The sample of participants recruited did not aim to be statistically representative of a given population, in line with reflexive thematic analysis, which rather focuses on deeply contextual findings. A total of thirteen interviews were conducted. However, the first participant (PN1) was later excluded from the analysis, as their profile did not fully meet the inclusion criteria. As a result, participants are referred to as PN2 through PN13.

An overview of the participants indicates that half identified as male (6) and half as female (6). Nine participants were working, or had worked, in Quebec at the time of the interview. Four worked in Canadian provinces other than Quebec, namely Ontario (3/4) and Alberta (1/4). Most participants (8/12) have had an international migration journey. Among them, six originated from France, one immigrated from a Latin American country,[9] and another, born in Canada, was of Rwandese origins and grew up in various Western and Central African countries. Participants with no international migration journey were either born in Quebec (3) or in another Canadian province,

[9] For confidentiality reasons, the precise country of origin is not indicated in the research findings.

in a minority francophone context (1). Participants described their accents in multiple terms, from "regional Quebec" to "anglophone," as well as "French" and hybrid forms (such as "Northern French and Quebec"). Ethnic and racial backgrounds were self-identified, mostly as "white," with the exception of two participants who identified as "Latino with multiple origins" and "Black." Likewise, the first language spoken did not vary much among participants, with 10/12 reporting "French," one "English," and another "Spanish." In terms of medium of journalistic expression, only three journalists had only experienced working in the written media sector, while most have had a combination of written and broadcast experience.

Figure 1

Composition of the participant sample

	Province(s)	International Migration Journey	Media	Self-Identified Accent(s)	Ethnic/Racial Background (self-identified)	First Spoken Language
PN2	Quebec	No	Written & Broadcast	Franco-Ontarian, French, Quebec	"White"	French
PN3	Quebec	No	Broadcast	Regional Quebec, international	"Caucasian, Canadian"	French
PN4	Ontario	No	Written & Broadcast	Regional Quebec, linked to disability	"Caucasian"	French
PN5	Quebec	No	Written	Anglophone	"Quebecer, White"	English
PN6	Quebec	France-Quebec	Written & Broadcast	French	"White, Caucasian"	French
PN7	Quebec	France-Quebec	Written & Broadcast	French	"European, Caucasian, French	French
PN8	Quebec, Western Canada	Latin America-Quebec-Canadian Province	Written	Latino	"Latino, multiple origins"	Spanish
PN9	Quebec	Quebec-France-Quebec	Written	French from France	"Caucasian"	French
PN10	Quebec	France-Quebec	Written & Broadcast	French	"French"	French
PN11	Ontario	France-Ontario	Written & Broadcast	Southern French	"Caucasian"	French
PN12	Quebec	France-Quebec	Written	Hybrid, northern French and Quebec	"French"	French
PN13	Ontario	Quebec-Western/Central Africa-Ontario	Broadcast	Multiple: standard French, Gabonese, Ivorian, Togolese, Beninese	"Black, Rwandese, African, Canadian"	French

This research aimed to reflect the diversity of linguistic realities that characterize the complexity of the issue under investigation. To this end, the researcher sought to recruit participants from a range of linguistic backgrounds, including journalists who acquired French at a younger age and others who learned the language later in life. This approach was informed by Gluszek and Dovidio's (2010) warning that the stigma and the experience of "having" an accent may vary among so-called "native" and "nonnative" speakers (2010, pp. 228-230). Furthermore, Beaudry (2024), in her study of racialized journalists in Quebec francophone media, indicated the need for future research to focus on journalists who immigrated to Quebec as adults, and who may not speak "with" a Quebec accent.

Data Collection

The twelve in-depth, semi-structured interviews that were used in this thesis were conducted virtually on Zoom and lasted between 1h and 1h35, with an average of 1h14. Interviews were audio-recorded, then transcribed and coded manually on MAXQDA, a qualitative data analysis software. Participants were also afforded as much power as possible throughout the research process by, for example, being given the opportunity to access the transcript of their interview and add, remove, or modify information. All interviews were conducted in French. The analysis was based on the original French transcripts, as they most accurately conveyed participants' views. Translating the quotes might have altered their meaning, particularly when participants used culturally specific references. The researcher is fully bilingual, and a list of all participants' quotes translated to English is provided in Appendices D and E.

In-depth, semi-structured interviews seemed particularly relevant to the topic under investigation as they focus on the lived experiences and subjectivities of the research participants. This thesis aims to capture the essence of how it *feels* to "have an accent" in Canadian and Quebec

francophone journalism, and how accented practitioners *perceive* themselves within the journalistic field. In doing so, it aligns with Hesse-Biber and Leavy's (2011) assertion that:

> Qualitative approaches center on understanding the subjective meanings that individuals give to their social worlds. They seek out how individuals come to understand their world and privilege subjective forms of knowledge-building. The social reality is multiple, not unitary; there is no single truth that is sought (2011, p. 33).

The interviews were performed based on a set of interview themes established as a basis to guide the conversation with participants (see Appendix B). At the start of the interview, participants were explicitly invited to depart from the questions asked by the interviewer and explore topics and information that may be relevant to them. Therefore, unexpected and valuable information was brought forward. Importantly, in line with a vision of knowledge as co-created between researchers and their participants, it must be emphasized that several participants actively engaged in dialogue by asking me questions. These moments contributed to personal reflection and learning on my part. At the conclusion of the interview, participants were invited to answer orally to a standardized survey (see Appendix C) containing demographic questions. The purpose of this survey was to obtain a clearer profile of the research participants. The responses were not included in the findings.

Confidentiality

Preserving the confidentiality of the participants who requested it was a central ethical concern throughout the research process. This was particularly important given the sensitivity of the information they shared, which included accounts of stigmatization that could entail personal or professional risks. Offering confidentiality was even more crucial to allow participants to feel as comfortable as possible in order to express their opinions, including critical ones. Given the relatively small size of the group under investigation (accented journalists), it is reasonable to

assume that participants could be re-identified through a combination of personal information and certain identifying factors, such as their employer, media outlet, accent, race, ethnicity, origin, or age. Rich, detailed descriptions intended to give depth to their experiences could unintentionally reveal their identities, thus requiring careful ethical consideration in the presentation of findings and the maintenance of confidentiality (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011, p. 125). To address this, participants were asked in the consent form whether they wished their participation to be confidential. If participants opted for confidentiality, all identifying information was removed from the interview transcript, which included their name, age, and affiliation with a specific media organization. Out of the twelve participants, eleven chose to remain confidential in the publication of the research findings.

Since "accents" are the focus of this study, this identifying information may have been difficult to remove without impacting the results. However, if the participant wanted their identity to remain confidential and if the researcher and/or participant felt revealing the type of accent would have breached confidentiality, their information was used without this identifying information. It was deemed possible to talk about a participant's experience without divulging what "kind" of accent they had. At times, the description of certain participants' accents was altered and rendered more generic to avoid disclosure of too many details. It is thought that the research findings, outlined in the upcoming chapter, managed to provide enough context without revealing too much about participants' identities. Despite legitimate concerns about confidentiality on the side of the researcher, participants were also given the option to waive confidentiality, thus giving them agency in the research process. Only one participant, PN13, seized this opportunity. His name was not used for consistency. However, potentially identifying information that was pertinent to the research was included.

Consent was sought at multiple stages of the research process, upon signing the concept form, before and during the interview, particularly when participants made sensitive statements, at the end of the interview, and again during transcript review. At this final stage, participants were invited to add, modify, or remove information from the transcript. They also retained the possibility to withdraw from the study up to three months after their interview.

Reflexive Thematic Analysis

Reflexive thematic analysis, as outlined in Braun and Clarke (2006, 2021, 2022), was followed throughout the research process. Reflexive thematic analysis is "a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). A theme captures "a wide range of data that are united by, and evidence, a shared idea, sometimes quite obviously, and sometimes far less obviously, and sometimes in quite different ways" (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 77). Data collection, coding and pre-analysis were conducted simultaneously. A six-step process to reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was employed iteratively, which translated into the following steps: (1) familiarization with the data, (2) generation of initial codes, (3) search for themes, (4) review of the themes, (5) definition and naming of the themes, (6) thematic report writing.

It is important to note that the themes presented in the findings section did not "emerge" naturally from the data, uninfluenced by prior knowledge and theoretical positions. As Braun and Clarke caution: "An account of themes 'emerging' or being 'discovered' is a passive account of the process of analysis, and it denies the active role the researcher always plays in identifying patterns/themes, selecting which are of interest, and reporting them to the readers" (Taylor & Ussher, 2001, as cited in Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 80). The use of reflexive thematic analysis in this research was particularly well suited to the theoretical lens applied to "accent," as a socially

constructed trait that emerges through perceptions and interactions. As with other phenomena related to bias, stigma, and discrimination, the study of accents demands careful attention to researchers' own assumptions and perceptions, which requires a sustained reflexive process. As Rangan et al. (2023) argue in *Thinking with an Accent: Toward a new object, method, and practice*, a point further explored in the discussion chapter, research on accents must move beyond what accents "are" to consider what they "do" in social interactions. This includes examining how accents themselves can shape researchers' own perceptions and interpretations (Rangan et al., 2023).

In the present thesis research, data coding was conducted both inductively and deductively. This combination allowed for engagement with dual layers of subjectivity: that of the participants, and my own, influenced by the theories mobilized in this thesis. Reflexive thematic analysis offered the ability to explore how these subjectivities converged or diverged. The recognition that "data do not speak for themselves" (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 91) in reflexive thematic analysis aligned with a premise of this thesis that one's accent is not merely an "objective" linguistic feature to be described, but a perception of the self and others, embedded in broader social constructs. In this framework, participants' lived experiences, as narrated during in-depth, semi-structured interviews, were understood as necessarily mediated by the researcher's own perceptions of their voices, stories, and positionalities. Although the aim of the thesis was to center and make sense of the subjectivities of the participants, particularly in light of the limited scholarship on the lived experiences of stigmatized speakers (Freynet et al., 2018), it was also essential to acknowledge that this interpretive process was shaped by my own subjectivity.

This study was therefore aligned with a "soft" relativist ontology and constructionist epistemology, which recognized the lived experiences of participants but situated them as

constructed within systems of power in which language is mobilized to produce meaning. In this context, a reflexive approach provided a tool for sustained attention to my ontological and epistemological stances, life history, and positionality throughout the research process. Reflexive thematic analysis supported a view of knowledge as co-constructed and dialogical, whereby the interpretive insights produced during interviews actively shaped the findings presented in this thesis.

Reflexive Thematic Analysis in Practice

First, during and after the manual transcription of the interviews, using MAXQDA, the researcher familiarized himself with the data set by actively and repeatedly reading the transcripts, which spanned from October 2024 to February 2025, while interviews were conducted. Informal notes and ideas necessary for the coding phase of the research were generated and stored on MAXQDA. It must be noted that "analysis" in a reflexive thematic analysis is an ongoing process that starts as early as the interviews themselves. Preliminary ideas and notes were taken after each interview through audio notes, which were transcribed and later added to, removed from, or nuanced in the analysis. The researcher also wrote initial observations from the first three interviews in November 2024 that were discussed with the thesis supervisor, which helped reflect on the outcomes of the first interviews, refine the relevant directions of the research, and address early concerns about the fear of over-interpreting the data.

Secondly, basic "initial codes" based on the content of the twelve interviews were generated from January 2025 to March 2025. The data, in the form of transcripts, were coded using MAXQDA's interface. The software was not used to automatically generate codes. Codes were generated manually by the researcher, with MAXQDA offering a centralized interface to organize these codes. Concerns outlined in Braun and Clarke (2022) regarding the use of qualitative data

analysis software were carefully considered prior to making the choice to use MAXQDA. The chosen software was employed to support the researcher's data analysis efforts, not to substitute them, conscious that deep engagement with the data is at the forefront of qualitative research. As suggested by Braun and Clarke, audio notes were recorded as a way to find another medium to engage with data. Furthermore, conversations with supervisors, fellow students, and various other persons met in and outside academia, as well as the feedback obtained, offered opportunities to reflect out loud on the data, which often proved beneficial, as articulating thoughts aloud facilitated analytical engagement.

The coding of the data occurred at different levels (individual word, sentence(s) and paragraph(s). A total of 274 codes were generated across the twelve interviews (which amounted to 14 hours and 48 minutes of recording). Not all the generated codes were retained in the subsequent development of themes presented in the findings. Each code was labelled, assigned a colour, and grouped with other codes to form loosely defined categories based on analytic similarity. These categories were reorganized iteratively throughout the coding process.

The distinction between codes and themes was a concern, especially in the early phases of the process. There was an initial apprehension about "code with themes," especially when codes progressively became less descriptive and more conceptual. As per its definition, a code is the "most basic segment" of information extracted from the raw data, while a theme is a "broader," more conceptual and elevated unit of analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 88). As Braun and Clarke explain: "A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set analysis" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82).

A discussion with the second reader, to whom some of the coded interview excerpts were shown, helped alleviate these concerns, which were partly related to the perceived tension between deductive and inductive coding. Initially, prior to conducting, transcribing, and analyzing the interviews, the coding approach was determined as inductive, which meant that interviews would not be coded in a way that corresponds to the researcher's "analytic preconceptions" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 83), and that themes would be identified at a semantic, more "explicit" level.

However, when immersed in the data and the reality of coding interviews, it became clear that the distinction between inductive and deductive coding was more porous than originally assumed. Reflexive thematic analysis allows for a blended coding approach that incorporates induction and deduction. In the early stages, a strict adherence to inductive coding often resulted in overly descriptive codes that lacked analytical depth. After consulting with the second reader, a more flexible approach was adopted, combining induction and deduction. As a result, data were also coded at the latent level, which involves attention to the "underlying ideas, assumptions and conceptualization – and ideologies - that are theorized as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data" were also given particular attention (p. 84). Deductive codes were labelled as such on MAXQDA, and whenever a code appeared to stem from a theoretical preconception, this was noted in the code label. It was therefore understood that even conceptually oriented, deductive codes were not considered "themes" since themes are not simply summaries of codes but are developed through a deeper interpretive process that identifies shared meaning across the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

Thirdly, these initial codes were further analyzed and interpreted, with some grouped together to form preliminary themes. This phase began gradually during the coding process itself, as analytical notes were added into MAXQDA and on a separate Word document to capture

emerging ideas regarding potential themes. A coding reliability check (such as having a supervisor review 10% of the transcripts) was not considered appropriate. Reflexive thematic analysis views the researcher's subjectivity not as a limitation but as a resource, and the use of a single coder is generally considered best practice (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Nonetheless, discussions with the thesis supervisor and the second reader played a role in ensuring the rigour of the analysis and addressing questions or concerns. These exchanges, and the reflections they prompted, certainly shaped the interpretation of the data and the findings presented in this thesis.

Fourthly, the development of preliminary themes involved ongoing engagement with the dataset through a recursive process taken to ensure that emerging themes remained grounded in the data and accurately reflected participants' experiences. At the same time, initial themes were cautiously treated to avoid an early foreclosure. Alongside writing about preliminary themes, these were organized visually on a mind map generated on MAXQDA. Visualizing the tentative themes facilitated the exploration of relationships between them and helped assess their coherence.

Fifth, through continued writing, visualization, and discussion with supervisors, seven initial themes were defined and named, accompanied by two overarching themes and 6 subthemes. Careful attention was given to ensuring each theme was coherent and relevant to the research questions, and that each contributed to telling a broader, integrated story.

Finally, the writing of the two findings chapters formally began. As the analysis matured and deepened through the writing process, thematic overlaps became apparent between themes 2 and 3, as well as between themes 4 and 5, and themes 6 and 7. Consequently, the themes were refined and consolidated into four final themes. Subthemes collapsed into their respective themes, as they appeared to be too conceptually narrow and insufficiently distinct to stand alone. During the writing process, particular attention was taken to avoid reducing themes to topic summaries.

The challenge was to strike a balance by providing rich contextual descriptions to ground the analysis, while also offering a deep interpretation of the data. Ongoing feedback and exchanges with the thesis supervisor help navigate this delicate balance.

Positionality Statement

The intersection of "accents" and journalism is a topic in which I have a personal interest, as a journalist myself, and one I feel deeply invested in. Although I am a non-linguist, my professional and personal journey led me to research this subject. In particular, conversations with peers and observations among students at the Department of Journalism at Concordia University were particularly decisive in selecting this thesis topic. I am a French immigrant-settler in Quebec, carrying with me a cultural and linguistic heritage, as well as a history, which accompanied me throughout this thesis research, contributed to shaping my worldviews and, therefore, the interpretation of the data. My positionality in relation to this research is informed by two main axes.

First, as an immigrant journalist in Canada, I have heard of and encountered some of the concerns, challenges, and barriers faced by others in a similar position. Early in my immigration journey, I worked as a journalist in Toronto and was briefly introduced to the context of Francophone minority communities. This experience nurtured in me a pluralistic vision of the Canadian Francophonie and a preliminary, outsider's understanding of the challenges these communities face. Second, on the linguistic front, I am perceived as "accented" in both Toronto and Quebec. Growing up in France, speaking what is considered "standard" French, I belonged to the national majority group and was consequently not thought to "have" an accent, nor did I think of myself as "accented." I have since experienced linguistic differences firsthand, as my French adapts to my new environment and my "accent" shifts depending on interlocutors. My experience

of bilingualism, navigating between French and English in Toronto and Concordia University, has also taught me how language shapes worldviews and identity. I have found that my sense of self and communicative ease vary depending on the language I employ. The very own choice to write this thesis in English inevitably shapes the way participants' experiences are interpreted, represented, and communicated.

These positions and experiences must be situated in the context of my social privileges, as a white male with access to graduate education, and an immigrant from a wealthy Francophone European country. I also consider myself thankful for not having been subjected to accent-based discrimination in Quebec or Canadian professional contexts. On the contrary, I have often felt welcomed in these spheres.

Considering the above, I therefore wanted to understand the experiences of journalists whose paths and backgrounds differed from mine, and this by including as broad a range of participants as possible, across dimensions such as race/ethnicity, francophone minority status, language background, and gender. As a journalist, I share a certain degree of professional insider status with the participants, which may have positioned me as an insider in some respects, though I remained an outsider in others. I felt resonance with journalists from France, but did not share similar lived experiences as those who grew up in Canada or were immigrants from non-European backgrounds.

Finally, academic discussions of languages in Canada, especially of dominant languages, cannot be dissociated from colonial histories and the imperative of decolonization. The present thesis was primarily conducted at Concordia University in Montreal, with online interviews in other parts of Quebec and Canada. These are Indigenous territories, many of which were never ceded. Montreal/Tiohtià:ke is the unceded territory of the Kanien'kéha nation, and many other Indigenous

peoples have lived on, and continue to live on, this Island and the surrounding areas. For a researcher from France, one of the two colonial powers that claimed these territories, this context is not insignificant. This research was undertaken with a personal sensitivity and awareness of the power dynamics embedded in the French language and the colonial processes that endangered linguistic diversity globally, including Indigenous languages, "regional" languages in France, and minority languages in Canada. I am myself not detached from this history, and my presence on this colonial land bears particular significance. I am a historical product of France' linguistic unification, a process that began under the Monarchy, and continued through the Revolution and the successive Republics (Bourdieu, 1982, pp. 28-34), which institutionalized a particular, historically and socially situated variety of French as a national "standard" through centralized processes such as the law, the education system, and the media, at the expense of other languages spoken on its territory. I therefore grew up under the illusion of the "myth of non-accent" (Lippi-Green, 2011) and only began to question this paradigm as I educated myself about the history of the French language.

Chapter 4: Navigating Accentedness

This first findings chapter, composed of two themes, addresses a key element of the experience of accented Francophone journalists: the ways in which accentedness shapes both their self-perception and how they are perceived by others. This interactional, deeply contextual, and dialogical construction of accentedness is best symbolized through the idea of a double-reflexive interpretive lens. This lens operates on two interrelated levels. First, it structures journalists' own understanding of their experiences: having an accent becomes something that filters their interpretation of interactions as well as social and professional environments, fueling a heightened awareness of their audible linguistic difference. Second, the accentedness lens affects how they are perceived externally, triggering judgements and assumptions that may lead to stigmatization.

Accentedness, as both an externally imposed marker of difference and an internalized identity, takes the shape of a social position that is actively (re)negotiated in daily interactions, and that accented journalists must constantly manage with uncertainty and vigilance. This theme, therefore, underscores the socially constructed nature of accentedness, how it is incorporated by speakers and influences their treatment and navigation of the journalistic field.

"Navigating," though a term that might apply to any professional trajectory, takes a distinct meaning here. While all journalists must technically navigate their field, accented journalists do so with an added burden. For them, accentedness is often perceived as a liability, a deviation from the norm that must constantly be accounted for. This creates the feeling of having to navigate *against* the current.

This chapter is divided into two themes. (1) ***The silencing of accents: When accents become a problem***: focuses on how journalists' accent is progressively problematized by

themselves and others, becoming a source of personal concern and heightened vigilance, as well as a consequence of stigmatizing comments and behaviours. Some accents remain unproblematized in particular contexts, highlighting the relational and situational nature of accent-based stigmatization. (2) ***The internalization of accent as a problem*** explores how one's problematized accent is internalized as a problematic feature, triggering a variety of emotional, psychological, and behavioural responses. These reactions reflect a broader struggle for legitimacy, credibility, and perceived competence. At the identity level, this process often leads accented journalists into an "in-betweener" position, where they are neither fully accepted nor fully rejected. While it is a space of marginalization, in-betweenness also holds the potential for resistance.

Theme 1: The Silencing of Accents: When Accents Become a Problem

This theme dives into the problematization of accents. Participants' accounts underline an important aspect of their accents: They are not a problem by nature, but rather the cause of others' perceptions and behaviours that disqualify linguistic difference, both in society and newsrooms. Participants' accents had not always been a problem in their lives. For many, it became an issue when getting into the world of journalism, including journalism school, and for others, it had already started when immigrating to Québec and Canada, and gained magnitude when becoming a journalist. Silencing is a process that slowly shifts internal and external perceptions of one's accent as a problematic element that needs to be managed, constrained, and ultimately confined and rendered inaudible or undetectable in one's writing, in the case of written press journalists, which will be further developed in themes 2 and 3. However, this continuum is dynamic. Participants progressively become aware of their "difference," how it feels to be stigmatized and subjected to negative portrayals and stereotypes. "Having" an accent is the result of a learned process. Individuals are not born aware of their accentuation. Rather, this awareness emerges through

experiences of stigma. Through the process of silencing one's accent, the tension between problematization and normalization becomes more apparent. Silencing plays a crucial role in wider processes of *audibilization* and *inaudibilization*. Thinking about the presence or absence of accents on-air as being the result of such processes reveals the often-invisible power struggles that otherwise naturalize the established social order (Bourdieu, as cited in Landry, 2006).

Accent Awareness, or "Becoming" an Accented Journalist

For an accent to be silenced, it has to exist in the ears of others who hold power to render it inaudible. Participants became conscious that they were audibly "different" and perceived by others as accented speakers. Their perceived accentedness is not monolithic but rather fluctuates depending on the interactions in which they find themselves. Participants share a common situation: they tend to hear themselves "speaking with an accent." Such "accent" becomes an external element to them, objectified, and subjected to evaluations from the self and others. For some participants, their accent becomes a central part of how they define themselves. The self-definition of a person as someone who "has" an accent is not as evident as it may sound. In fact, participants' stories underlined that accent awareness is a process influenced by external interactions in both everyday life and the journalism field itself. This journey allows for trajectories that can vary significantly depending on the said individual, but all tend to lean towards more self-awareness of one's accent and realizing the potential stigma associated with this apparently unique feature in the journalism industry. For some participants, accent awareness began earlier in life, even before they entered the journalism field, while others "discovered" their accentedness upon starting journalism school or working in a newsroom.

The development of one's accent consciousness can start early on in life, before starting a formal journalism career, influencing perceptions and behaviours after entering the field. One

participant, identifying as Franco-Ontarian, remembers the challenges associated with her way of speaking growing up in Ontario:

> Pendant mon enfance, les 14 premières années de ma vie, c'était un sentiment de honte absolu parce que quand on grandit comme francophone en milieu minoritaire, ce qu'on nous apprend dès qu'on est en mesure d'apprendre quoi que ce soit, c'est qu'on est minoritaire et que le français peut être sale. Pour vous donner une idée, on m'a déjà dit « speak white » donc ça peut aller très loin quand même. Donc l'accent me gênait énormément. J'avais l'impression que c'était du mauvais français, que j'étais moins compétente, que je parlais en français cassé, brisé. (PN2)

In this quote, "speak white" was directed at the Franco-Ontarian participant as a slur that refers to the injunction to speak English rather than French. The expression originates in a historical context where English was associated with power and higher social hierarchies, while French was devalued and perceived as inferior. In the context of Ontario specifically, it is worth noting that instruction in French was prescribed in the province's bilingual schools after the first two years of primary instruction from 1912 to 1927, following the implementation of Regulation 17 (Bock, 2020), which contributed to the symbolic and practical marginalization of French. Here, the participant evokes this insult as a key memory of linguistic stigma, highlighting the internalization of a dominant ideology that casts her French as "dirty" or broken when spoken in an Anglophone province. The racial undertone of "speak white" functions metaphorically to index whiteness onto the English language. Thus, this anecdote captures both linguistic and symbolic violence rooted in colonialism and nationalism, which contributed to the participant's sense of linguistic inferiority and insecurity.

Having moved to Montreal, this participant claims to have "lost" her Franco-Ontarian accent and that Montreal's accent comes to her most spontaneously. Yet, even after erasing this stigmatized accent, she still remained well aware of how her various accents may be perceived when entering the Quebec journalism industry. This participant is able to alternate between different francophone accents, including a more "québécois" and "continental French" accent depending on interactional contexts, a phenomenon defined as linguistic accommodation (Giles, 1973; Ruch & de Benito Moreno, 2023).

Immigrant journalists are confronted with similar accent awareness processes. For most, this happens through immigrating to Canada and Québec and integrating into this new society. Two out of six French participants reported having a "regional" French accent (from Northern France and the Southwest), suggesting they were already conscious of their audible difference when living in France. One reported having a more "standard" accent from Paris. Another said "French from France," and the others did not describe the accent they had before immigrating. When moving to Canada and Québec, they all realized that they were now labelled based on their foreign-sounding voices and uniformly identified as "French," despite some of them having "regional" features:

> Je trouve que l'accent justement, c'est une sorte d'étendard hyper visible qui fait qu'on te renvoie, on te classifie instantanément français, peu importe ton histoire, peu importe d'où tu viens, peu importe si t'es belge d'ailleurs, et ça, ça fait que je serai toujours considérée comme telle ici. Et ça, j'en ai bien conscience. (PN9)

Accent awareness operates well beyond strict professional boundaries into more personal and intimate spheres of journalists' experience. Most notably, it can exacerbate distance with relatives who "kept" one's original accent. One participant who originates from a rural region of

Quebec known for its “distinct” accent, and has to hide this feature to keep her on-air position, recalls that when visiting family, she became much more aware of how her accent had shifted compared to relatives who stayed in the region. Although she claims to be able to retake a regional accent when going back, she now feels that this accent has become part of her “past” life:

> Les membres de ma famille l’ont. Quand j'y retourne, là je l'entends beaucoup plus qu'avant, parce qu'avant, quand je l'avais encore moi-même, je l'entendais pas vraiment. Maintenant je l'entends beaucoup plus. (PN3)

For immigrant journalists, accent awareness is triggered when returning to their home country, including visiting relatives. French participants explained that when returning to France, their French identity was questioned, sometimes in subtle ways. For some, the fact that they had included Québécois vocabulary and pronunciations was pointed out as “not French” or incorrect, which suggests they were perceived as outgroups by fellow citizens. This also happened in the newsroom to a participant who temporarily went back to France to work at a newspaper:

> En France, ces petites différences-là sont tellement plus pointées qu’au Québec. Tu vois ce que je veux dire ? En France comme au Québec, on entend à mon accent ou aux expressions que j’utilise que je ne suis pas d’ici. Mais en France, c'était pointé systématiquement. Ce n’était jamais malveillant, mais à chaque jour j'avais des remarques sur les expressions que j'utilisais, et cetera. Tout le temps, tout le temps. Ici [au Québec], c'est beaucoup plus diffus, inclusif, bienveillant. (PN7)

For French participants, linguistic ambivalence, which manifests in other speakers’ difficulty in categorizing them as Québécois, Canadian, or French, is a key factor in the construction of an in-betweener identity, an aspect further explored in theme 2.

As previously mentioned, future journalists can become aware of their perceived accentedness before pursuing a journalism career. This awareness is pervasive, invading even intimate circles of their existence, and contributing to a problematization of participants' accents. During interviews, journalism education was identified as a critical site contributing to one's accent problematization or normalization. Among the 12 participants included in the study, six had a formal journalism education, with two in Canada, one in the United States, and three in France. One Quebec participant, in particular, cited journalism school as a milestone, recalling the ways in which this experience made him realize how "different" he was from his future colleagues. This participant, who had the most to say about journalism education, insisted on the stigmatization he faced, feeling a stark contrast between his past "carefree"[10] life in his community and the program's unfriendly environment. This person, who has a disability that affects his pronunciation, received comments that he "has" an accent. The participant explained that his disability influences his capacity to reproduce certain sounds. As a consequence, his voice signals a "difference," which he described as "chewing" syllables. Although he did not grow up with other people sharing the same disability around him, he felt safer and not that much different from others before entering the journalism program. There may have been comments about his pronunciation in his childhood, but he said journalism school was the place where he "learnt" he had such a so-called "accent" because of comments made by professors. This participant reported being asked to "correct" his accent by professors, reinforcing the idea that the perceived presence of an accent is an "error" that can be "fixed." The journalism school experience was a reality check for this participant, who felt disqualified and deemed unfit for the journalistic profession based on his voice. He reported that

[10] The participant used the adjective "insouciant" to describe his past attitude.

professors questioned his ability and his dream to work in television journalism. These comments had a lasting impact and continued years after when entering the newsroom:

> Avec le temps, ça s'est placé, entre guillemets, mais il y a encore des gens qui vont m'écouter puis qui vont me dire : « Il y a un petit quelque chose, je comprends pas c'est quoi. On comprend pas c'est quoi le problème, mais il y a un problème, il y a un accent quand tu parles ». Et ça, je le vis encore. (PN4)

The experience of this accented journalist is particularly interesting to consider, as it broadens the scope of what can be understood as an "accent" in someone's mind, expanding its meaning from assumed origins to audible forms of disability.[11] It echoes Gasquet-Cyrus' meaning of accent as broad and often nonspecific for non-linguists. Accent is rather a "common-sense category" (Gasquet-Cyrus, 2010, p. 182) employed by everyday speakers to describe what they perceive as a deviation from the norm. In the example outlined above, the term "accent" seemed to have been utilized as a common-sense category to describe the disabled participant's pronunciation as non-standard and diverging from the expectations of a journalistic voice.

Journalism education seems to play a role in both the problematization and normalization of accents. Research carried out in France (Baudry, 2024; Gasquet-Cyrus & Masson, 2022) shows that journalism education constitutes a key stage in accented journalists' stigmatization journey, as

[11] The participant himself stated the reason for participating in the study as the importance of broadening discussions around accents to include disabled individuals.

it represents a place where they are first confronted with professional expectations and possibly comments that delegitimize their accents.

Among the six French journalists interviewed in this research, three received a formal journalism education in France. They did not report accent-based stigmatization. A French participant explained receiving no specific voice-related training during radio classes at his journalism school in France and mainly relying on mimicry to develop his radio voice. This experience reflects research conducted in France, Québec, and Switzerland, which identified that broadcast journalists and presenters adopt a widespread strategy of vocal imitation to mould their on-air voice, often without receiving explicit guidance on accent during their training (Chalier, 2021). Rather than addressing accent variations directly, journalistic trainings tend to prioritize general vocal performance broadly. This tendency contributes to the relatively uniform speech patterns heard across francophone media in these three regions, a consistency that journalists themselves often link to peer influence, "mimicry," and alignment in the workplace, also known as linguistic accommodation (Pustka et al., 2017).

Accent Awareness and the Limits of Accent Diversity in Journalism. Investigating the process of accent awareness shows how accented journalists end up perceiving the world through the lens of accent itself, which infiltrates their interpretive frameworks. No longer protected by the ignorance of the myth of non-accent (Lippi-Green, 2011), they are immersed in and confronted with the fact that their accent, as a social construct, influences evaluations, judgments and actions they are subjected to. Unlike "native" speakers living within the "myth of non-accent," these participants were well aware that their voices were recognizable and labelled as "different." As will be explored in theme 3, some participants explained the accents they employed were often a choice, rarely personal, but rather dictated by concerns around how they may be perceived by

others, such as the public and colleagues, which suggests that, for them, speaking cannot be relegated to the domain of the unconscious and uncontrollable but has become a conscious act. Therefore, using a so-called "authentic" voice on the radio was described by the following Franco-Ontarian participant, who can alternate between different francophone accents, as an "utopia":

> C'est impossible [d'employer une voix authentique] parce que le choix est toujours motivé par des questionnements. Donc si l'animateur à qui je parle il est Québécois, les auditeurs sont Québécois, je veux ni être la Française du Plateau, et je veux pas non plus qu'on pense que je fais semblant d'essayer de garder mon accent franco-ontarien. Ou voilà, c'est toujours encore une fois en rapport aux autres et j'essaie d'anticiper comment les autres vont recevoir mon accent. Et à cause de ça, je pense que c'est impossible qu'il y ait un accent authentique, parce que je vais faire encore plus attention d'être authentique, entre guillemets, c'est-à-dire d'utiliser l'accent québécois que j'ai aujourd'hui dans une radio québécoise. Et puis même si c'est l'accent qui me vient le plus naturellement, ça reste un choix donc ça reste un petit peu… Il y a une limite à cette authenticité. (PN2)[12]

Navigating accentedness resembles a sword of Damocles: accented individuals know that they are constantly scrutinized and at risk of being judged. In contrast, it is within personal settings that participants reported feeling most "authentic," or at least most comfortable, sounding like themselves without fear of judgment or of being identified as outsiders. The following participant also feels comfortable around his colleagues, because of the positive relationships they managed to establish:

[12] Here, the participant refers to the cliché of the "French from Le Plateau," a neighbourhood in Montreal known for its significant French population, who are perceived as refusing to integrate into Quebec society, including in linguistic terms, keeping an audibly distinct "French" accent.

> À titre purement individuel, j'ai un avis sur ma façon de parler par rapport à ce que les autres me renvoient dans la vie, mais quand je te dis, moi, j'ai pas l'impression d'avoir un accent, c'est que quand je suis à la maison, j'y pense pas. Bon, peut-être au travail non plus j'y pense pas, parce je suis avec des gens que je connais, mais, quand je suis à l'extérieur c'est sûr que je sais que quand je vais ouvrir la bouche, je vais avoir un accent. (PN10)

This awareness leads some accented journalists to consciously manage this perceived difference. These efforts will be explored in theme 3. In the end, accent awareness reduces journalists' capacity to imagine a different media landscape, in which more diverse voices, including their own, would be normalized and made audible to the public.

Problematizing Accentedness: Dynamics of Stigmatization and Exclusion

As outlined in the previous subsection, one's accent can progressively become a source of scrutiny, which contributes to the development of accent awareness among accented journalists. This subsection further examines this phenomenon through the lens of accent-based stigmatization. Once an accent is rendered audible, it can shape how a journalist is perceived by their peers, potentially leading to stigmatization. The presence of one's accent, once constructed, becomes problematized through a series of interactions and behaviours, both inside and outside the newsroom, that negatively impact accented journalists. Problematization operates along a continuum, as does the nature of accent-based stigmatization, ranging from subtle microaggressions to overt exclusionary behaviours. In reflexive thematic analysis, it is important to emphasize that although a theme revolves around a central organizing concept (Braun & Clarke, 2022), the way a common idea is expressed can vary across the dataset, depending on the context, and between participants. Indeed, problematization is visible through experiences that, at first glance, seem quite distinct. The present subsection showcases these nuances and diversity of

experiences in which problematization found itself at the core of exclusionary mechanisms, including the distinction between broadcast and written press journalists.

Navigating accentedness means navigating others' perceptions, which can materialize through stigmatizing or exclusionary discourses and actions. These can have tangible, harmful consequences on wellbeing at work, interpersonal relations and professional trajectories. Although these dynamics primarily happen in the professional sphere, external elements also shape the experience of accent-based stigmatization. Understanding how professional and broad social environments interact provides a richer understanding of accent-based stigmatization. Forms of silencing, exemplified through an array of comments and behaviours, highlight how accented journalists are problematized, constructed as outsiders within the field of journalism, and ultimately perceived as the "other."

Facing Accent-Based Stigmatization. Testimonies from participants emphasize the diversity of places and actors that contribute, directly and indirectly, to stigmatizing accented journalists. Stigmatization originates from colleagues, managers, and the upper hierarchy and is reactualized in daily interactions. They create a system of peer control that ensures compliance with journalistic norms and expectations around voice. The sources journalists rely on to produce their stories can also become agents of stigmatization, particularly during interviews. Ultimately, members of the public, by emitting feedback after a story is published, aired or broadcast, can also produce stigmatization. Overall, the various types of stigmatizing comments and exclusionary actions outlined below lean towards the problematization of journalists' accents. It suggests that they might be perceived as outsiders to their professional field and be "othered."

Commenting on One's Accent. Experiences shared by participants suggest that inside the workplace, colleagues and managers reaffirm what constitutes the boundaries of an acceptable journalistic voice and evaluate journalists along this line. This includes being commented on, being required or advised to take diction classes, and being threatened to be taken off-air. One broadcast journalist from a rural region of Quebec recalled her experience entering this new field, insisting that she did not feel her accent was positively "welcomed" by managers and colleagues. She noted that she received comments in the first months, when she was still being trained for television and radio, underlining that she must be careful when pronouncing certain words so that her regional accent would not slip up. The participant recognized that most comments sounded respectful, were said with good intentions and a genuine wish to help her fit into her new position. However, colleagues did not always seem to understand how these comments made her feel and were sometimes hurtful. What colleagues saw as pronunciation or diction mistakes represented more than a technicality for this journalist from a rural region of Quebec; it targeted a part of her identity. Overall, this situation signals that commenting on one's pronunciation may be a normalized phenomenon in newsrooms, which is not necessarily seen as problematic.

Diction Classes. Among the six participants who had a broadcast journalism experience, three reported being asked or advised to take diction classes, a recommendation that, in their eyes, further problematized their accent. One participant, previously introduced, who lives with a disability that affects his pronunciation, pursued a journalistic career by joining the web team at a media organization. He was given the opportunity to experiment with producing a television piece. Following the broadcast of his first report, he recalled receiving the following feedback from his manager:

> On m'a rencontré dans le bureau de mon gestionnaire pour me dire : « Puis, est-ce que tu es fier de toi ? ». Je suis comme : « Ben, c'est le premier reportage, quand même ». Puis il me dit : « Mais va falloir que tu pratiques ta diction, puis que tu travailles sur ton parler parce que tu as un accent, t'sais ». (PN4)

This feedback underlines how one's accent can be conflated with diction. Another participant's testimony suggests that diction training operated as a covert way of erasing accentedness, which treated her Quebec regional accent not as a legitimate variation of Quebec French but as an "error" to be corrected, a problem to be addressed. Already during recruitment, expectations about conforming to a normative voice were subtly introduced. This participant recounted:

> On m'a dit qu'il faudrait que je travaille ma diction de façon générale, ce qui n'était pas vraiment étonnant parce que je n'avais jamais travaillé en radio ou télé. Donc c'est un commentaire très général. C'est vrai que je me rappelle que [durant] mon entrevue d'embauche, on m'a mentionné que je devrais travailler ma diction et que j'aurais accès à du coaching de diction au besoin. Mais à ma connaissance, on ne m'a pas dit que je devrais perdre mon accent. (PN3)

However, over time, this participant came to realize that working on "diction" in practice meant suppressing her accent. She recalled working with a diction coach:

> Elle me disait qu'elle ne voulait pas que je perde mon accent, mais justement, je devais travailler une série de syllabes pour les prononcer autrement. Donc au final, ben c'étaient les syllabes qui sont typiques de l'accent [de la région]. Mais elle voulait surtout pas que je perde mon accent. C'est pas ça l'objectif selon elle, mais dans les faits, c'était ça. Mais elle

était très gentille, très généreuse, donc j'en ai pas contre la personne, mais clairement son mandat était d'uniformiser le français des gens qui venaient la consulter. (PN3)

This phenomenon will be further scrutinized in theme 3, notably in relation to how accented journalists articulate discourses of resistance and develop awareness around these norms and expectations.

Dealing with Sources. In addition to the experiences of diction classes and the professional pressure to conform to linguistic norms, participants also reflected on how their accents could influence their interactions with sources during interviews. While much rarer than other stigmatizing interactions, such as with colleagues and managers, interactions with sources during interviews also contributed to problematizing journalists' accents. The relationship journalists have with their sources is quite distinct from the relationship they have with their colleagues. While some participants forge bonds and sometimes friendships with colleagues, allowing them to reverse stigma and educate them, the source-journalist relationship is often more distant and briefer, in addition to being external to the workspace. Due respect and professionalism might prevent an accented journalist from responding to stigmatizing comments originating from a source. The participant who had the most to say about the potential stigma associated with her accent that emerges in interaction with sources, a French immigrant working in the written press in Quebec, claimed she was questioned by a source about why she does not have a Quebec French accent while she is working for a Quebec-based outlet. Her expected identity, as a journalist for a Quebec media, did not match the expectations of the voice the interviewee heard, which sparked further questioning about the journalist's identity:

> Ça peut être un peu déstabilisant, en mode tu te présentes comme neutre, journaliste, Québec, voilà, *let's go*, et puis là, la personne en face dit : « Mais pourquoi vous êtes française ? ». [...] Et maintenant t'es là, bon, on peut passer aux questions ? Parce que là je vais pas vous raconter ma vie pour la troisième fois de la semaine. (PN7)

Most surprisingly to her, the person making this comment was a source based in France. She said this questioning created a "small" barrier, delaying the start of the interview and redirecting the focus onto her own identity rather than the interview itself. This inversion of the roles, with the interviewer being interviewed by the interviewee, calls into question the participant's sense of professional identity. The quote suggests the journalist wanted to assert her professional journalistic identity over her perceived Frenchness. Although this situation may seem innocent from an outsider perspective, for the participant, it reinforces the self-questioning of one's identity and its legitimacy to exercise journalism in Quebec, because of preestablished expectations of what a journalist sounds like in this part of the Francophonie. By using the adjective "neutral" and expressing a reluctance to share her personal history, this journalist shows how she wanted to separate her immigrant identity from her professional persona. However, she felt unable to do so fully out of respect for the source. Shielding her personal identity behind her professional role appears as a way to avoid being questioned about her immigrant identity. This represents a wider trend among participants, who voiced their wish to be recognized first and foremost for their professionalism and skills, rather than treated differently on the basis of other facets of their identity, such as accent, immigration background, or disability, which is an element that will be discussed in the next chapter.

Consequences for Professional Opportunities. Beyond daily interactions, participants also reflected on how their accent could impact their long-term professional trajectories. For example,

in addition to his concerns about diction classes, the participant with a disability considered how his accentedness might have shaped his career path within the company and limited his opportunities. Following the aforementioned meeting with his manager, he recalled:

> J'ai comme été sous le choc. Parce que pour moi, ça a été un *reality check*. C'est une confirmation que je suis différent et non seulement que je suis différent, mais la façon dont je parle m'impose des limites dans ma carrière. […] Je suis sorti de là avec plein de questionnements, une déception parce que je me suis dit, bah mon rêve de petit gars de faire de la télé pourra peut-être pas se réaliser. Après ça, on m'a renvoyé au web. (PN4)

This participant was not alone in expressing concerns that accentedness could hinder upward professional mobility. Several participants feared that recruiters might view accented journalists as a liability, particularly given the highly competitive nature of the broadcast industry, where members of the public can easily switch to another channel if they struggle to understand journalists and presenters. One participant also pointed out that, especially in Quebec, managers' expectations regarding standard pronunciation may function as a form of gatekeeping, making it more difficult for foreign applicants to enter the industry. At the same time, it is important to recognize that some participants in this study attained high-ranking positions within their organizations, both in broadcast media (with high visibility and broad on-air presence) and in the print press (in senior management roles). However, participants who suspected they had faced accent-based discrimination often lacked concrete or indisputable evidence to confirm their impressions, even though they continued to perceive accent-related barriers in recruitment and career advancement. This more subtle, insidious dimension of accent-based stigmatization will be discussed more in depth in the next section, underlining that what is perceived as accent-based stigmatization manifests in ways far more nuanced and complex than overt exclusion.

The Subtle Problematization of Accents. The forms of accent-based stigmatization discussed above may sometimes appear to be direct and explicit, but participants also reported more insidious and indirect forms of stigmatization, among them, what can be identified as linguistic microaggressions. Although participants did not name these experiences as such, the way they recalled and interpreted them strongly suggests that linguistic microaggressions are present in newsroom environments. For example, one journalist from a region of Quebec previously introduced, who conceals her accent to remain on-air, shared the following experience:

> Il y a une collègue, entre autres, qui m'a dit : « Ah toi, ton français, t'as tellement amélioré ton français. Waouh bravo ». Mais c'est pas mon français que j'ai amélioré, c'est mon accent que j'ai perdu, donc c'est pour ça qu'elle me félicitait. Ben, c'est fait gentiment, mais pour elle mon français auparavant était pas correct. (PN3)

What might be perceived as a normalized, innocent, or even well-intentioned comment was, in fact, impactful for the participant. While seemingly positive, such remarks reinforce a certain linguistic hierarchy by implying that regional Quebec varieties are incorrect. Linguistic microaggressions, defined by Razafimandimbimanana and Wacalie as "des remarques insidieuses qui pointent une personne du doigt en raison d'une caractéristique linguistique" (2019, p. 156), offer a powerful concept to mobilize in order to better understand the implicit value judgements embedded and normalized in everyday, seemingly banal comments about language, its varieties, and accents. Although originally conceptualized in New Caledonia, a region shaped by its own realities, where about 40 Kanak Indigenous languages, and other languages, coexist in a context where the linguistic domination of the French language constitutes a colonial legacy (Razafimandimbimanana & Wacalie, 2019, p. 156), the concept of linguistic micro-aggressions

has been remobilized elsewhere, including in the francophone minority setting of Acadia (Arrighi, 2024).

Thinking in terms of linguistic microaggressions is particularly valuable because it brings to light forms of domination that might otherwise be dismissed as insignificant. As Razafimandimbimanana and Wacalie underline, "en apparence ordinaires, voire bien intentionnées, ces petites réflexions, une fois intériorisées, finissent par provoquer des inhibitions linguistiques et nourrissent en parallèle le sentiment de ne plus être un locuteur légitime" (2019, p. 156).[13] It shifts the analytical focus away from searching for overt "proofs" of discrimination and toward how stigmatized speakers feel and interpret the dynamics of daily interactions. As such, it is important to emphasize that participants' lived experiences of accent-based stigmatization are often embedded in the unspoken, comprised of feelings, impressions and subtle cues interpreted as judgements against their audible particularities. While the emotional burden of stigma will be developed in theme 2, the following examples illustrate how accented journalists make sense of accent-based stigmatization and how it further complicates their professional trajectories. This approach, introduced in the methodology section, prioritizes the subjective meaning-making of "having" an accent, rather than focusing exclusively on externally observable instances of stigmatization.

Returning to the question of career advancement, for instance, a participant used the term "glass ceiling" to describe the perceived inequity of opportunities between accented speakers and native Quebec French speakers. While hiring processes might appear to be meritocratic at first glance, participants felt that hidden biases against accented journalists limited their capacity to

[13] Translation from the author: "Seemingly ordinary, even well-intentioned, these small remarks, once internalized, end up causing linguistic inhibitions and simultaneously fuel the feeling of no longer being a legitimate speaker."

climb up the professional ladder. This French journalist in Ontario experienced a conflict with his employer that he attributed to his accent. He has since transitioned to freelance journalism and other professional activities:

> Je voyais qu'il y avait des gens qui avaient des postes, et moi j'ai essayé d'avoir des postes et j'ai même fait le test interne pour travailler à la radio comme reporter. Et bah, c'est allé nulle part. J'en ai parlé à d'autres personnes qui avaient des origines francophones différentes qui ont eu la même expérience, enfin le même ressenti, je dirais que l'expérience, tu vois, c'est mon interprétation de la réalité. (PN11)

The difficulty of pinpointing the exact sources of accent-based stigmatization and the lack of tangible proof to support claims of discrimination often left participants with strong emotional reactions, which will be discussed more in theme 2.

In the Quebec context, another participant, who originates from a Latin American country, remembered the struggles he faced when attempting to be published in Francophone media outlets:

> Peut-être qu'il y a une impression générale au Québec, par rapport aux étrangers, que c'est très difficile de maîtriser le français. Et d'après moi, si toi tu maîtrises la langue française au niveau des accents, particulièrement au Québec, ça pourrait te donner un peu plus d'accès, je crois, même au niveau professionnel. Je me suis rendu compte que, peut-être à cause de mon accent, c'est mon impression, peut-être que je me trompe, mais peut-être que j'aurais eu beaucoup plus d'accès dans mon métier. (PN8)

What he found most destabilizing was not only the lack of opportunities given to him in Quebec but the sense of being ignored and unacknowledged. This participant perceived anglophone

media as more welcoming and ultimately found professional opportunities outside Quebec, in francophone community media. However, he also recognized that the availability of these opportunities might have been partly due to the less competitive nature of media markets in provinces with smaller francophone populations. Reflecting on his earlier experiences in Quebec, he stated:

> Jamais j'avais eu de réponses. Jamais, jamais, même une critique constructive. J'aimerais que quelqu'un puisse me dire, peut-être : « On te prend pas parce que ton français est pas beau ». Bon, encore des choses comme ça. Jamais, j'ai eu un *feedback*, que ce soit négatif ou positif, c'est comme… Je suis ignoré. (PN8)

These testimonies reveal that accent-based stigmatization is rarely overt or acknowledged, but instead operates through diffuse, everyday interactions that shape journalists' self-perceptions and professional trajectories. Even in the absence of clear, provable instances of discrimination, accented journalists navigate a world of subtle exclusions, emotional labour, and constrained opportunities. The next theme will explore how the emotional and psychological impacts of these dynamics manifest in the lived experiences of participants.

Seeing Beyond the Accent: Stigma, Exclusion, and Intersectionality. The experiences of journalists working in broadcast and written press, as collected through this research, are particularly representative of the phenomenon of accent-based stigmatization and align with a broader problematization that extends beyond accent alone. Beyond differences in media, participants also attributed their perceived origins and immigration status as significant factors explaining their perceived exclusion from the field of journalism. These dynamics do not always overlap with language or accent as such, but they nonetheless contribute to participants being

othered and subjected to portrayals of outsiders. In this sense, accent functions as a window into other facets of participants' identities that are problematized within the journalism industry. This underlines the intersectional natures of accents and voices in general, as both catalysts for and reflectors of various, intersecting forms of oppression.

In their testimonies, participants echoed a wider anti-immigrant sentiment that they think influences how they are perceived professionally. Immigrant participants noted the presence, and in some cases, the growth, of anti-immigrant sentiments in Quebec. French participants in particular voiced repeated concerns about how their Frenchness is often problematized, especially in the media and public discourse, impacting their feeling of belonging in Quebec. They identified both colleagues and members of the public as agents of stigmatization based on their origins:

> C'est de la maladresse, mais on me le dit quand même que : « Ah oui bah, chez vous ». [...] C'est le « chez toi ». C'est quand même toujours… Mais j'habite ici. Y a comme des fois des petites réflexions qui me disent que, ah oui, c'est vrai, bon, peut-être que je suis pas tant intégrée que ça. (PN12)

Across participants, various forms of stigmatization suggest that immigrant journalists do not fully match local expectations of what a journalist in Quebec media should be. One participant recounted being questioned by a colleague about the perceived mismatch between her identity as a French immigrant and her place in a Quebec-based media organization, implying that her accent and name did not align with what was expected of someone working in an outlet strongly associated with Quebec as a province.

This outsider framing is further reinforced by external perceptions that there might be "too many" French immigrants working in Quebec media. A French participant employed in the written

press shared an anecdote illustrating how such anxieties, although sometimes expressed humorously, can feel uncomfortable. She recalled a colleague's comment during a presentation of new employees, noting that a joke about celebrating the 14th of July, the National Day of France, revealed these underlying tensions about the growing presence of French journalists in Quebec:

> Dans les bureaux, il y a énormément de Français [...] la dernière fois, ils ont fait une présentation de plein de nouveaux employés. Y a quelqu'un qui a dit : « Bon, ben maintenant on va pouvoir faire le 14 juillet férié ». C'était drôle, mais pas tant, puis là j'ai fait : « Ah, *come on* ». Puis, ça vient avec un sentiment d'anticipation. Cette semaine, ils ont décidé de faire un événement de galette des rois. Puis ça me tentait pas d'y aller parce que je voulais pas entendre des réflexions sur : « Ah oui ben c'est encore les Français qui font ça ». (PN12)

Concerns around exclusion were not limited to French immigrants. Another participant, originally from a Latin American country and having immigrated to Quebec over 15 years ago, hypothesized that negative attitudes toward immigration and ethnocultural diversity might explain his repeated rejections by francophone publications. He believed that assumptions about his ability to speak French well enough, combined with Quebec's emphasis on protecting the French language and its identity, contributed to these exclusionary behaviours.

Negative attitudes towards immigrants also surfaced on social media and comment sections. Among the twelve participants included in the study, only two reported receiving comments targeting their accent or perceived nationalities. Compiled, these comments suggest that immigrant journalists can be seen as reporting on the host society as outsiders, allegedly incapable of fully understanding local realities. One journalist, for instance, recalled seeing the following comment

under one of her articles: « C'est nos taxes qui paient cette Française pour venir couvrir notre actualité » (PN7).[14]

As with remarks from colleagues, online comments also revealed the perception that French immigrants might be overrepresented in media spaces, at the perceived expense of Quebecois journalists:

> Il m'est déjà arrivé de m'exprimer et d'avoir des commentaires par exemple sur Twitter et tout, de gens qui disent : « Ah encore quelqu'un qui a un accent français ». Donc c'était pas directement adressé à moi, mais c'était en réponse au segment dans lequel j'étais intervenue. « Ah mais c'est pas vrai, y a pas de journalistes québécois ». Tu vois, des trucs. Ça, j'ai déjà entendu. (PN9)

Stereotypes of arrogance among French immigrants emanate from the comments. Particularly when covering sensitive topics such as environmental issues, one participant was perceived as "lecturing" Quebecers or as positioning herself as morally superior:

> Il y a pas mal de choses comme ça, comme : « Les Français qui viennent au Québec pour nous faire la leçon ». Je couvre notamment l'environnement, donc je reçois des remarques comme : « Ok, la Française qui vient pour nous faire la morale ». C'est pas mal ça. Il y a aussi que je fais souvent référence, mais c'est normal, à des exemples qui viennent de la France, notamment en environnement. Ça peut être mal perçu. Encore une fois, ça peut être perçu comme la Française qui vient ramener ses exemples et qui comprend pas la réalité québécoise. (PN7)

[14] Translation from the author: “It’s our taxes that pay for this French woman to come cover our news.”

Conclusion. The experiences presented here reveal how accent-based stigma is intertwined with other identity markers such as nationality, immigration status, and perceived cultural differences. Although accent initially appears as the primary marker of exclusion, it signals a broader set of intersectional dynamics. As outlined, accent-based stigmatization manifests itself across a continuum, from overt exclusionary actions to more insidious forms such as linguistic microaggressions and subtle acts of silencing, which contribute to discomfort and marginalization, but also to longer-term consequences for professional trajectories. Some participants achieved high-ranking positions, while others reported facing invisible barriers that are difficult to prove. Accent-based stigmatization is reactualized in daily interactions with colleagues, managers, sources and the public, creating a pervasive system of peer control over what is considered an acceptable journalistic voice. Even comments framed as well-intentioned advice can reflect and reinforce a normative linguistic standard that delegitimizes accentedness. It is also important to underline that the boundary between professional and societal spheres is porous. Broader societal perceptions of belonging influence newsroom dynamics. Rarely named or acknowledged, accent-based stigmatization still has tangible emotional and psychological consequences. Centring on the subjective experiences of stigma, which will be further developed in theme 2, allows us to recognize the damaging effects that lie in what is unsaid, unacknowledged or normalized. In this sense, this theme highlights the importance of paying attention not only to blatant acts of exclusion but also to the subtler, everyday mechanisms through which accented journalists are problematized and othered. However, amid accent-based stigmatization, participants' insights also revealed a counter-narrative. The next part examines how certain accents, particularly those perceived as normalized, unproblematized, or underproblematized, operate invisibly in contrast and what these reveal about power structures in francophone media.

Accents as Non-Issue: Normalized, Unproblematized and Under-problematized Voices in the Newsroom

There is no singular or monolithic reality for accented journalists working in francophone media in Quebec and Canada. Participants' experiences are diverse. In fact, the silencing of accents is sometimes complicated by an opposite dynamic. In certain contexts, participants' voices seem to be perceived as "normal" or unproblematic. This interrogates the circumstances under which accents can be normalized, under-problematized, or unproblematized in journalism. Not all participants acknowledged experiencing explicit silencing, or at least not in the same way or with the same intensity. Four participants even stated that their accent was not an issue for colleagues, audiences, or others in their work environment. Rather than contradicting theme 1 (*the silencing of accents*), these accounts illustrate the complexity and fluidity of what it means to "have" an accent, its internal and external perceptions, and its consequences in newsrooms.

Accentedness exists along a spectrum of problematization, which ranges from accent-deafness to accent-based discrimination (the latter being discussed above). These reflections are grounded in participants' own narratives, which may not fully capture every aspect of their lived realities but nonetheless shed light on how accentedness and belonging are constructed and constantly renegotiated in professional journalistic settings. The three categories (normalized, unproblematized, and under-problematized accents) further conceptualize how accented voices are perceived even when they are not explicitly silenced or discriminated against. Participants' experiences often move between these categories depending on context, interactions, or audiences.

The Normalized Accent. The perceived presence of one's accent is normalized in several accounts from participants. Understanding the reasons for these apparently more "neutral" experiences is crucial, as it underlines the circumstances under which one's voice is not explicitly

disqualified and is more or less harmoniously integrated in its professional environment without creating friction. It also highlights power imbalances between accented journalists themselves. While some enjoy the privilege of being seen as "normal," others continue to face silencing.

The story of a French journalist who worked in various radio settings, including a community radio station, exemplifies the possible normalization of one's accent in practice. She claims to feel completely "integrated" and "respected" and that she never received comments about her accent from colleagues or members of the public. While she is aware that her Frenchness is audible, she believes her professionalism prevails:

> Je sais pas si je veux renvoyer une image particulière, mais je suis consciente que les gens entendent la Française (rires). Donc je suis consciente de mon accent, je suis consciente qu'on m'entend avec mon accent français. Mais bon, c'est comme ça. Est-ce que je veux renvoyer une image particulière ? Indépendamment de l'accent, j'espère envoyer une image de quelqu'un qui maîtrise son sujet. (PN6)

At the same time that her accent is normalized by others, and in the way she presents it herself, it is striking to note that she also contributes to the problematization of other speakers' accents. This reflection emerged toward the end of the interview and appears to signal a moment of self-awareness. Despite her successful professional integration, she acknowledges the difficulties that can arise when a guest's accent is perceived as harder to understand by the public:

> L'accent peut être un obstacle à la compréhension. […] Il y a des invités que je sais qu'ils ont un fort accent et que ça va être compliqué de les comprendre pour les auditeurs. […] Ça peut nuire à la compréhension, en particulier à la radio, parce qu'on voit pas la personne, on voit pas la bouche bouger. Et ça, c'est gênant parce que je trouve que ça discrimine ces

> gens-là alors qu'en fait ils ont des propos très intéressants […]. Si la personne est difficile à comprendre, on sait bien que l'auditeur, il va changer de poste […]. Donc on est un peu mal pris. […] Je me dis : « Bon ben je le réinviterai pas parce que la voix passe pas, ou parce que l'accent est trop prononcé, c'est trop difficile ». (PN6)

This example illustrates how the internalization of professional norms around clarity and intelligibility can lead even those whose own accents are accepted in a given context to reproduce linguistic hierarchies unintentionally by seeing certain accents as less compatible with the demands of broadcast media and its market. This signals a form of insidious conformism that will be further explored in the next chapter.

The Unproblematized Accent. Like normalized accents, unproblematized accents are not treated as a concern. However, they are not necessarily embraced either. In these cases, one's accent is absent from discussions with colleagues. It is neither acknowledged nor judged, to the point that it appears as a non-issue. Five participants reported feeling well-integrated and not remembering that someone in the newsroom ever commented on or reacted to their accent. These situations underline the existence of positive working relationships between journalists, "accented" and "unaccented," in newsrooms. The absence of open judgment or discussion created an atmosphere in which they did not feel "different" because of how they spoke. This does not necessarily mean they perceived their own accent as "normal" either, due to self-stigmatization or self-consciousness, but only that it was not scrutinized or talked about. While some participants experienced their accent as a non-issue, others encountered more ambiguous or contradictory responses. One such case is that of a Canadian journalist of Rwandese origin who worked in radio in Ontario, which shows how the same accent can be simultaneously normalized and problematized, valorized and delegitimized. This person described his French as "standard" and

his accent as “soutenu,”[15] linking it to his education in the French international education system he attended in Western Africa. He associates his accent with being comprehensible worldwide and considers it better than those of colleagues from Quebec. Overall, a certain form of prestige is associated with his accent. He became disillusioned when he began working in radio:

> Je n'ai eu que des compliments pour mes accents, pour mon accent, depuis toujours, donc je n'ai jamais pensé que ça pouvait être quelque chose de nocif ou quelque chose qui pourrait m'empêcher de travailler [pour ce média]. (PN13)

And yet, a manager forced this journalist to take diction classes alongside another colleague originating from an Eastern European country:

> C'est là où j'ai compris que peut-être que l'accent dérangeait certaines personnes. Je n'ai jamais eu de reproches du public, mais peut-être que le directeur en question n'aimait pas la façon dont on parlait. (PN13)

At the same time that his accent was problematized by this manager, the public did not seem to be on the same wavelength, and, on the contrary, some complimented his voice as being reflective of the diversity of the Franco-Ontarian community, which reinforced a sense of its legitimacy and accent normalization. This highlights a tension between institutional gatekeeping, or silencing of accents, and audience reception, symptomatic of a broader disconnect between professional and public expectations surrounding this journalist’s voice:

> Je trouvais que j'avais beaucoup confiance en moi. Et les fois où, bon, quand je devais passer au micro, ça se passait très bien. J'avais l'impression que le message était reçu. D'ailleurs, de temps en temps, j'avais des échos positifs de francophones qui, bien sûr, à cette époque,

[15] High-end, or formal accent

ne pouvaient pas mettre un visage sur la voix, mais quand ils me croisaient, ils disaient : « Ah mais c'est toi ? Ah oui, mais c'est bien ». (PN13)

The Underproblematized Accent. Under-problematized accents are minimally acknowledged. They might be recognized as "different" from the norm but are not explicitly questioned or stigmatized. Although there may be mild awareness or occasional comments, this does not fully problematize the accented journalists' feelings of legitimacy or belonging in the profession. In these situations, accentedness seems to be tolerated without being directly addressed. For instance, six participants downgraded the potential differential treatment associated with their accent, stressing the fact that it is an insignificant issue with no perceived consequences. This could be linked to a wider trend of minimizing their experience, developed in the next chapter. The effect of underproblematized accents is a sort of muted tension. While the accent is not quite inaudible, it is not fully accepted or celebrated either, and has the potential to be problematized.

The experience of a French participant exemplifies how a single journalist can move along the spectrum of accent problematization throughout a career. His trajectory reveals shifting perceptions of his French accent across different professional settings, from normalization to problematization, to underproblematization. His first experience was in a Quebec radio station where he worked alongside other young French immigrants. He described the atmosphere in positive terms, shaped by a sense of autonomy, minimal managerial oversight, and an absence of audience feedback. The homogeneity of the team and the lack of external pressure contributed to making this newsroom safer for this participant, like a protective bubble around him. In contrast, his second experience in radio was much more difficult. He was told that listeners had complained about not understanding him, marking a clear shift toward the problematization of his accent. This negative feedback seemed to leave a lasting impression. The participant now appears to have

internalized this experience, becoming more self-conscious about his French accent. Although he now works in a more positive and supportive environment, no longer in radio but in print, this moment of disqualification continues to shape how he perceives his own accent. This participant reflected on his experience going back to the radio as an interviewed guest. He described anxiety that did not exist when he first started in journalism:

> C'est fou, j'ai coanimé des émissions et je m'en foutais totalement. Et là, j'étais très stressé à l'idée de parler à [média radio]. Je voyais les gens très à l'aise à la radio et je me disais : « Comment ils font ? J'étais comme ça avant ». […] Le fait que maintenant je sache que j'ai un accent et que ben, peut-être, c'est moi qui me le fais un peu trop sentir. (PN10)

This transformation underlines how a disqualifying experience can lead to the internalization of self-doubt, even when participants feel professionally integrated. In his current role in print media, his accent is no longer the object of scrutiny. It is neither corrected nor commented upon, making it underproblematized. Unlike the explicit normalization in his first job or the overt problematization in his second, his accent now exists in a neutral zone. It is present, yet unacknowledged, which contributes to a more comfortable professional setting. However, the participant's anxiety when returning to the radio as a guest suggests that the earlier negative experience continues to shape his self-perception, even when others no longer seem to question it.

Conclusion. The experiences presented in this section are not meant to be representative of all accented journalists. They illustrate a broader dynamic. An accent is never fully normalized, nor entirely problematic. Navigating accentedness involves composing with and responding to shifting perceptions of the self and attitudes of others. The three accent cases, normalized, unproblematized and underproblematized, embody the fluctuating and interactional nature of accent problematization. They show that one’s accent is not inherently a problem in itself, but is rather

problematized depending on professional environments, expectations around journalistic voice, the degree of managerial oversight and norm enforcement in a given media organization. These various examples reinforce the idea that accentedness, its perceptions and evaluations exist on a continuum ranging between being a non-issue and becoming grounds for exclusion or discrimination. Movements of *va-et-vient* reinforce the fluidity of accentedness. Resisting reification, accents are neither good nor bad by essence, but rather socially constructed and renegotiated within specific spatiotemporal contexts. They reflect a situated, tacit consensus that can shift and be challenged. This will be further analyzed in the next chapter, which explores how journalists resist being subjected to problematizing discourses and instead mobilize tactics, solidarities, and discourses to reclaim their voices and challenge powerful structures of silencing. Ultimately, emphasizing the fluid, unstable, and often ambivalent dynamics of accent problematization shifts from often simplistic representations. Accented journalists are never either victims or heroes of their circumstances, but rather complex professionals whose trajectories resist essentialist narratives and reveal the ongoing negotiation of legitimacy, authority, and belonging in the newsroom.

Theme 1 Conclusion: Interrogating the Problematization of Accentedness

The testimonies gathered in this first theme highlight how accent is a central vector of stigma in journalists' experiences. Far from being a static feature, accentedness is relational, context-dependent, and rendered problematic through interactions, before and after entering the journalistic field. Accent problematization affects journalists' self-perception and feelings of inclusion in journalism schools, newsrooms, and beyond. Journalism schools appear as a key site where norms around vocal performance are internalized and policed, leading to early stigmatization of accents. Similarly, newsroom interactions reproduce normative ideals of what a credible journalistic voice is, which contribute to peer control. Nevertheless, these experiences are not

uniform. Some participants reported environments in which their accent was normalized or rendered irrelevant, suggesting that the perception of accentedness remains fluid and contingent on specific contexts. This unevenness underscores potential implicit hierarchies that structure audible difference. While certain voices pass unnoticed, others are pointed out as incorrect. As will be examined in the subsequent theme, the silencing and problematization of accentedness acts as a mechanism of exclusion that influences journalists' intimate relationship to their own voice. Participants' accounts emphasized the consequences of a problematized accentedness resulting in self-monitoring and a lack of perceived credibility, legitimacy, and professional competence.

Theme 2: The Internalization of Accent as a Problem

Theme 1 explored how accentedness is progressively problematized and reinforced in daily interactions. Accented journalists came to recognize their audible difference. Theme 2 shifts the focus inwards by examining how external stigma becomes internalized and shapes how journalists see themselves through the lens of inadequacy. This theme focuses on the internalization of one's accent as a problem, the emotional, behavioural and psychological responses it triggers. Navigating accentedness in the newsroom involves being confronted with external perceptions of one's accent that then transform perceptions of the self. Having to manage depreciative perceptions of the self and one's own discomfort, shame, and self-consciousness is tedious and can be, as it will be shown, potentially harmful. Participants' testimonies suggest their problematized accents symbolize a lack of credibility, legitimacy and ultimately, authority. Some even described a sense of linguistic insecurity and self-censorship.

This theme unfolds in four interrelated parts: (1) the emotional, psychological, and behavioural responses to a problematized accentedness, (2) forms of self-stigmatization, self-censorship, and their limits, (3) the perception of having an accent as a "lack," and (4) accented

journalists as in-betweeners, holding a fragmented sense of the self that grapples with incompatible, divergent expectations. These elements are presented separately for improved clarity but are often tied together in participants' narratives of lived experience. The following quote, from a broadcast journalist who actively worked to hide her Quebec regional accent to remain on-air, powerfully illustrates the dynamics explored in this theme:

> On m'a clairement fait sentir que mon accent n'était pas le bienvenu. Donc j'ai commencé à travailler très activement à le perdre. Et ce qui fait que maintenant, bizarrement, j'ai plus cette fierté-là si quelqu'un me dit « ah, j'entends ton accent [régional] », ben je vais plutôt le voir comme un échec un peu. C'est-à-dire que normalement je devrais plus l'avoir, mais là, la personne est capable de l'entendre. Donc ça veut dire que j'ai fait une faute en parlant si la personne est capable d'entendre mon accent maintenant. Je trouve ça triste en fait, parce que selon moi, il devrait y avoir une multitude d'accents en ondes. (PN3)

This testimony encapsulates multiple aspects of internalized stigma. The participant shifted her view of her Quebec regional accent from pride to shame, framed her voice as a mistake, and exhibited a state of self-surveillance and awareness. The situation at play also illustrated a conflict between personal values, where the participant believes in the value of accent diversity, and adhering to professional expectations by silencing her own accent. This tension between belief and behaviour will be further explored in theme 3, which focuses on the negotiation of norms and resistance. Here, the quote clearly illustrates how the internalization of one's accent goes in tandem with a heightened sense of consciousness, where the accented speaker experiences a split sense of self, being able to imagine herself being heard through the ears of others. This heightened consciousness of their accent, hypervigilance and linguistic insecurity is not trivial, but rather leans

into a wider phenomenon of self-stigmatization among participants that is reminiscent of a form of symbolic domination (Bourdieu, 1997).

Emotional, Psychological, and Behavioural Responses to a Problematized Accentedness

As described in theme 1, accent awareness is a foundational experience for many accented journalists who anchor themselves as *audibly* different from their colleagues. However, in this theme, such awareness resurfaces but becomes more tied to emotions, particularly when participants recall moments of stigma or anticipate being judged. Their reflections reveal an intricate web of emotional, psychological, and behavioural responses.

Responding to a Stigmatized Identity. Throughout the interviews, a consistency in the emotional landscape of accented journalists can be noticed. Participants express a variety of negative feelings, such as regret, sadness, shame, guilt, anger, and a sense of personal loss related to their accent and identity. Others describe frustration, low self-confidence, and disappointment in themselves for not being able to fit in. This was particularly visible in the testimony of a journalist from Latin America, who expressed feeling frustrated when thinking about his accent when he talks in French, because it demonstrates to others that he seemingly failed to improve the quality of his French.

The above-mentioned feelings are often closely tied to a perceived lack of legitimacy, credibility, or competence as a journalist, a trend examined later in this section. Among all the feelings experienced by accented journalists, nostalgia is a strong, ambiguous feeling that several participants reported. It is an antagonist, bittersweet feeling, because it often mixes positive views of the past with a negative feeling of loss. One participant evoked nostalgia for a time when she used to have a Franco-Ontarian accent, which she has since lost, feeling a lack of alignment

between her identity and how she expresses herself as a journalist. While still identifying with this francophone group, she can only mimic the Franco-Ontarian accent. Such a feeling is further complicated by the fact that she used to feel ashamed of her accent. Nostalgia was also shared by another journalist, who has a regional Quebec accent. She described how she felt when she was asked to take diction classes to stay on-air:

> D'abord choquée, je dirais, parce que j'avais quand même beaucoup d'expérience. J'avais plusieurs années où je n'avais pas cherché à le perdre, où j'en étais fière, et là je me faisais dire que finalement, il n'était vraiment pas le bienvenu. Ensuite, je dirais stressée, parce que ça demande quand même beaucoup d'efforts, de perdre un accent qu'on a depuis la naissance. Donc ça demande vraiment une prise de conscience, beaucoup d'énergie. Et je dirais un peu honteuse, bizarrement, et je trouve ça regrettable, mais dès que mon accent ressort, ça peut arriver à l'occasion, mais là je me sens fautive, et là j'ai comme honte, on entend mon accent alors que j'ai été pendant des années très fière de l'avoir. (PN3)

This discrepancy, mentioned by this participant, between the way accented journalists speak in professional settings and their deeper sense of identity, can create discomfort, a thread further examined later in this theme. The quote above also underlines how accented journalists are not only labelled by others, but come to see themselves through these imposed categories, which signals a form of internalized stigma. The act of speaking becomes an emotionally loaded experience, tied to self-perception and fear of judgment.

Immigrants' testimonies were particularly insightful to examine, as they stressed the emotional responses that came with feeling othered. These participants expressed feelings of vexation and emotional fatigue when confronted with comments on language that reinforce their labelling as immigrants. Having to manage a heightened sensitivity to remarks, even those that are

seemingly positive (for example, a compliment like “you said it like a Québécois”), represents a form of emotional labour. One participant, a French journalist working in Quebec and who describes her accent as a hybrid between Quebec French and French from France, summarized the feelings expressed by other immigrants. Such comments turn her French identity into her “only characteristic”:

> On va toujours me rappeler que je suis pas née ici. […] Il y a de la frustration qui vient avec ce côté-là, genre « ah, tu l'as vraiment bien dit ». Ok, parce qu'il y a une bonne façon de le dire ? […] Il y a aussi toujours de la réaffirmation de, ben oui, j'ai un accent. (PN12)

Several French participants shared similar feelings of irritation, fear of being objectified and perceived only through the lens of their Frenchness that conveys clichés and negative stereotypes attached to this part of their identity:

> C'est-à-dire que quand on m'attaque pour une question de contenu, on va toujours me référer au fait d'être Française. En fait ça, c'est chiant, c'est hyper désagréable. […] C'est le truc qui me blesse le plus alors que tout le reste, voilà. Mais ça, je trouve que c'est vraiment, bas le côté : « En plus elle est Parisienne. Les Parisiennes nous donnent des leçons ». (PN9)

Beyond the inconvenience of having to bear stigmatizing comments, it must be underlined that some participants also experienced much harsher feelings, especially when facing what they perceive as forms of discrimination. One French participant found himself in conflict with his employer over his perceived origins and ultimately left the company. He described this experience as “traumatizing”:

> La discrimination, c'est aussi une blessure affective. […] Honnêtement, je sais plus si y a vraiment eu un moment déclencheur, même si souvent y a le contexte. Et puis il y a souvent comme quelque chose, comme la goutte qui fait déborder le vase. (PN11)

This situation, when journalists have to heal trauma and cope in the aftermath of stigma, will be further examined in the next chapter, when examining journalists' desire to resist professional norms surrounding language.

Hyper-vigilance, Linguistic Insecurity and Hypercorrection. Another common trend among participants that vividly exemplifies the internalization of accent as a problem is that many described a state of hyper-vigilance about how they sound. In addition to being able to hear themselves talking "with an accent," with some anticipating how others might react before even speaking, many became extremely vigilant in interactions, especially in broadcast contexts. This intense awareness sometimes led to a form of internal fragmentation where participants perceived their speech through the imagined ears of others rather than their own. This state of hyper-vigilance goes beyond the simple awareness described in theme 1, which represents only the first piece of a broader puzzle. Here, an internal problematization mechanism comes into action, contributing to self-silencing, which can have harmful consequences on self-image and well-being at work. For instance, participants experienced emotional fatigue, a lack of confidence when they talked in public, and sometimes resignation when they felt they could be "forever perceived" as accented speakers. The tension is not always tied to direct external remarks, which could signal a form of self-stigmatization in which accented journalists become actors of their own domination, a point that will be further developed later in theme 2. Some participants reported feeling discomfort or unease even in the absence of explicit, external comments about their accent. One journalist noted feeling embarrassed when her accent made her audibly French in Montreal, a city where she sees

prejudices attached to French immigrants. Another participant expressed concerns about never being able to be fully "authentic" because of hypervigilance:

> Y a une forme de, je sais pas, une sorte d'hypervigilance linguistique, tu vois, où je m'entends parler, j'entends mon accent, j'entends mes intonations alors que, je sais pas, c'est comme un… ouais, ça rajoute une hyperconscience, tu sais, comme les Anglais disent, ils sont *self-conscious*. Il y a ce truc-là un peu avec l'accent. (PN9)

This tension escalates when it translates into linguistic insecurity. Linguistic insecurity may express itself orally, when writing, or in a combination of the two. This phenomenon underlines how one can believe that their way of speaking is not legitimate or valued in society. Boudreau defines it as such:

> L'insécurité linguistique peut se caractériser comme une forme de malaise, plus ou moins accentué selon les personnes, lié à la crainte de ne pas parler sa langue comme il se doit ou selon la norme prescrite dans certaines situations. Elle est donc rattachée aux représentations qu'un groupe de gens ou que l'individu entretient à l'égard de sa/ses langues et celles des autres. Ces représentations sont fluctuantes chez un même individu qui peut se représenter sa langue positivement ou négativement selon les situations d'interactions dans lesquelles il se trouve. (Boudreau, 2023, p. 8)

One of the strong features of linguistic insecurity is the prevalence of shame among speakers (Boudreau, 2023). One participant, who had the most to say about linguistic insecurity, vividly expressed the feeling of shame and stigma attached to being Franco-Ontarian, which resulted in linguistic insecurity:

> Quand un Québécois ou un Français me corrige, ça vient me chercher en fait parce que même si c'est pas l'intention de la personne, pour moi, ça vient rechercher cette espèce de sentiment d'infériorité, puis cette insécurité de « ah, je suis anglicisée », ou « je suis Franco-Ontarienne ». (PN2)

As seen in the previous quote, this linguistic insecurity can express itself in the relationship to other speakers of French language varieties that are perceived to be superior, here, Quebecers and French speakers. The participant developed this point further:

> L'accent franco-ontarien, c'est pas seulement un accent dans le sens phonétique, mais c'est aussi langagier, c'est aussi dans le vocabulaire. Donc il y a des mots en anglais. On parle un peu franglais des fois. Mais ce qui nous vient plus naturellement quand on grandit dans ce milieu, c'est peut-être 80 % français, 20 % anglais […]. Il y a un peu de honte et de culpabilité parce que quand on explique ça à un Québécois, on va souvent nous renvoyer qu'on a été anglicisé ou colonisé, ou je ne sais quoi, ou américanisé. Donc c'est pas un accent qui m'évoque des sentiments très positifs. (PN2)

Continuing, the participant stated that joining the writing press sector in Quebec sparked linguistic insecurity the most:

> À l'écrit évidemment, on n'a pas le droit de faire des fautes et c'est normal, mais j'étais très très, très, très, très anxieuse au début parce que j'avais vraiment très peur qu'on me compare, ou qu'on, justement, me renvoie que : « Ben tu vois, c'est ça l'école francophone en Ontario, ça donne des gens qui savent pas écrire ». J'avais vraiment très peur que chaque faute soit dramatique et que chaque faute soit quasiment sociologique. (PN2)

This testimony echoes Freynet and colleagues' investigation of the experience of accent stigmatization among native and nonnative French speakers in Canada, which concluded that "many participants described internalising discriminatory attitudes with accounts of feelings of self-inadequacy manifested, in this case, by linguistic insecurity and self-stigmatisation" (Freynet et al., 2018, p. 28). It also underlines how past microaggressions and glottophobia may have contributed to the participant's hypersensitivity (Boudreau, 2023).

As becomes apparent, the emotional and psychological toll of problematized accentedness translates into tangible behaviours. A behaviour of hypercorrection accompanied this linguistic insecurity. Some journalists displayed a heightened self-monitoring of speech in search of errors or disqualifying features. They reviewed their written work meticulously, fearing that even slight slips could betray their difference and validate the misconception that they are less competent than "standard" speakers. Linguistic insecurity is a particularly pervasive feeling because it can emerge even when the person is conscious that they are "objectively" competent. This is the case of the Franco-Ontarian participant, who explained that she always tried to outperform in writing competency, so that she would not be pointed out for the way she speaks, which reduces the stereotype of the Franco-Ontarian who "does not know how to properly write French."

A couple of nuances must be underlined regarding the linguistic insecurity experienced by the participants. First and foremost, five journalists did not recognize themselves in the concept of linguistic insecurity, rejecting the idea that they may have experienced it. On the contrary, they found a sense of security in their work by reaffirming their linguistic competency, especially their written skills. This rejection might be linked to a desire to avoid self-victimization and asserting one's professionalism in a field where language is central to the actor's capacity to perform their duties. Some cited the French education system as a strength because of a perceived emphasis on

literacy and writing skills that made participants feel more confident about their ability to avoid mistakes:

> Très souvent en fait mes boss me disent souvent que j'écris vraiment très bien. J'ai vraiment beaucoup de compliments là-dessus. Donc je pense que, à chaque fois je suis surprise, [...] mais ça, c'est juste peut-être parce que je fais pas de fautes d'orthographe, que j'écris avec une bonne syntaxe, et cetera. Mais je pense qu'en France, on a particulièrement une éducation à l'école primaire où on nous rabâche tellement certains trucs, ça n'a pas de sens. (PN7)

Although insecurities sometimes emerged among French participants regarding vocabulary choices (making sure they use Quebec French vocabulary in their writing), this did not seem to question their overall capacity to perform their work. As previously outlined in theme 1, depending on the situation and interaction, some accented journalists felt their voices were at times normalized, unproblematized, or underproblematized.

Again, this underlines how navigating accentedness is experienced in fundamentally unequal ways among accented journalists. While some may be able to capitalize on their linguistic sense of security, shield themselves from stigmatization, or enjoy healthy work environments, others have to grapple with constant insecurity in their social interactions and their own work. These inequalities are not only visible in the question of linguistic insecurity, but also in other spheres of journalists' experiences that will be outlined throughout the findings section. For example, as will be seen in the next chapter, not all participants were equal when it came to mobilizing discursive resources to resist accent-based stigmatization.

Furthermore, linguistic insecurity varied in intensity. Unlike the Franco-Ontarian participant, the French journalists who reported linguistic insecurity did not see it as a wider questioning and devaluation of their identity as French immigrants in Quebec. On the contrary, shame was prevalent in the accounts of the Franco-Ontarian journalist.

Finally, it must be acknowledged that self-awareness of one's voice is not exclusive to accented journalists. Journalists in general can also feel self-conscious about their voice, their on-air delivery, and their ability to avoid mistakes. Moreover, not all journalists are necessarily comfortable talking in front of a camera or taking the mic. One's accent is thus one piece of a wider puzzle concerning journalists' vocal and written ease. For instance, in the case of participants in this study, while participants described their accent as a source of discomfort in expressing themselves both socially and professionally, some nuanced this perspective by noting that broadcast journalism was never their intended career path. Once again, there is no singular or typical profile of the accented journalist, and the inclusion of both broadcast and print media professionals in this research adds further complexity to the picture.

Self-stigmatization, Self-censorship and Their Limits

What is possible to glimpse from the beginning of this theme is that the internalization of accent as a problem is intimately tied to forms of self-stigmatization. Participants not only shared how stigmatization made them feel or behave, but also expressed how they are contributing to preventively shield themselves from the stigma attached to their accent. This anticipation underlines how accented speakers can actively burden themselves with stigma. Self-stigmatization has a particularly insidious functioning. Even participants who reported no negative interactions, comments, or accent-based discrimination can feel extremely self-conscious about how they speak and how others may negatively perceive them.

Self-stigmatization: Becoming One's Own Culprit. One participant, an Anglo-Quebecer working in francophone media, is emblematic of this phenomenon of self-stigmatization. This journalist claims to have never heard a comment about his way of speaking or been excluded in his professional life in Quebec due to how he speaks. He recalled an experience being interviewed for a show, feeling stressed, but in the end, he was surprised not to receive comments about his accent. He referred to his fears as "false fears" and mentioned he thinks his journalistic *milieu* is open to his difference, and he has never felt treated differently for being an "Anglo who adopted French" (PN5). However, he still has internalized a feeling of inferiority, a lack of credibility and self-consciousness, because he sounds anglophone when speaking French. The following excerpt illustrates how these self-inflicted fears, although unjustified, still fuel a feeling of discredit and concrete action to reduce his accent:

> A: Comme journaliste, […] je veux que la accent est sur les faits, ou l'accent est sur l'histoire, puis je veux pas être une distraction de l'histoire, puis je suis souvent inquiété qu'avec mon accent, c'est une distraction. Je ne sais pas si c'est vrai, mais ça, c'est mon perception.
>
> Q: Parce que, est-ce qu'il y a déjà des gens qui vous l'ont dit, ou qui vous l'ont fait [savoir] ?
>
> A: Non, il y a personne, personne qui a dit ça. C'est vraiment un… C'est vraiment une perception pour moi. Jusqu'au point que j'utilise [inaudible] des apps pour pratiquer mon, pour essayer de diminuer mon accent. (PN5)

As previously outlined in the discussion of theme 1, phenomena linked to stigmatization are dynamic and evolve on a continuum, from problematization to normalization. Self-stigmatization, as well, is not absolute, but rather ambivalent, or even contradictory at times. Thus,

it is challenging to capture it from an external perspective. This ambivalent nature will be further explored in the next chapter, more precisely in theme 3. Still, the way the previously introduced participant described his relationship with his anglophone accent is particularly indicative of this ambivalence. This participant claims to be proud of his French but still would like to revisit it to sound more "neutral" and expresses regret for failing to properly master French earlier in his life. These ambivalent, in-tension feelings are vividly described in the following use of the pejorative, idiomatic expression "blôke":

> J'ai comme un accent assez prononcé, comme anglais, comme un anglophone. Jusqu'au point que je me décris comme un *blôke-o-phone*, comme on utilise le petit nom pour les Anglais à Québec, les *blôkes*. (PN5)

In Quebec French, blôke is a pejorative expression aimed at anglophones (Favre, 2021). The fact that the participant identifies with this stigmatizing word is interesting. Is it to make fun of himself, dedramatise his situation and way of speaking by reappropriating what is often an insult, or is it a sign that this participant self-stigmatizes himself and recognizes his linguistic illegitimacy as a speaker of Quebec French? The second interpretation would be supported by Bourdieu's analysis of symbolic power (1982, 1997), stating that symbolic domination operates when the dominated incorporate the disposition of the established order and contribute to reproducing it in daily actions. On the other hand, the first interpretation would be a sign of agency and self-reflection, questioning a Bourdieusian approach to self-stigmatization. While there may be no definitive answer as to which interpretation better captures this Anglo-Quebecer's experience, both shed light on the complexities of being an accented journalist.

Self-censorship, a Difficult Self-evaluation. In discussions around self-censorship, participant also expressed difficulties in assessing their own self-stigmatization. Journalists did not

always feel certain of the deeper causes explaining what could appear to be self-censorship. One French journalist in Quebec suggested that a negative experience at a radio station, where the audience complained that his accent was not comprehensible, may have unconsciously deterred him from pursuing a career in this field he enjoyed. Looking back at his career trajectory, this participant re-interpreted it during the interview to reconsider his accent as a potential factor in explaining self-censorship:

> Je pense que ça a joué dans le fait que je me sente moins à l'aise avec mon accent, et moins à l'aise pour faire de la radio. Je me sentais moins dans un élément agréable, enfin *safe*, tu vois, pour parler et tout ça. Puis c'est peut-être ça qui a fait que je me suis un peu détourné de la radio après, parce que je me suis dit en radio, tu sais, là, je serai toujours français quoi qu'il arrive. (PN10)

While he drew this link between stigma and self-censorship, this participant was not blind to other factors that may have contributed to not going back into radio, signalling an ability to critically reflect on experiences of self-stigmatization. This French journalist had to leave journalism temporarily after this negative experience in radio due to immigration reasons. With the time spent outside journalism, he then encountered an opportunity in the written press that he had been hoping for a long time. Self-censorship remained difficult to completely make sense of, especially when it was conflated with a manifest lack of desire for certain positions and opportunities. A Canadian journalist of Rwandese origins who worked in francophone broadcast media in Ontario framed self-censorship through the idea of a personal choice. While moving to Montreal could have led him to climb up the professional ladder, he decided to stay in Ontario. At the same time, he also cited more systemic factors, such as being among the rare Black individuals in the industry, and potential integration challenges in Quebec, as a source of self-censorship:

> Je voulais rester […] et continuer autant que je pouvais. Et non, Montréal ne m'a jamais attirée, parce que j'ai toujours trouvé que même si c'était La Mecque [du journalisme francophone], je ne pensais pas avoir une chance de m'intégrer là-bas. Je ne voyais pas d'autres journalistes comme moi. Il arrivait une fois en passant que j'entende Michaëlle Jean, mais c'était rare. (PN13)[16]

As the previous examples show, it is complicated to assert that the Bourdieusian theory of symbolic domination fully applies in this case. Participants remained highly aware of their career choices, the systemic barriers limiting their agency, and the broader power dynamics at play. Ultimately, self-stigmatization and self-censorship are complex and multifaceted processes that are not easily assessed. This is not to suggest that these phenomena are absent, but rather that they must be understood through the lens of participants' subjectivities, as well as the socio-political contexts and power relations in which they are embedded. Taking this into account allows one to grasp the complexities, sometimes the contradictions, of such phenomena, and reveals how the internalization of one's accent as a problem is both contextual and dynamic. Importantly, this internalization of one's accent as a problem does not invalidate forms of self-reflection or agency, as participants actively interpret and make sense of their experiences of exclusion and othering.

Having an Accent as a "Lack": Legitimacy and Credibility in Question

Internalized, the problematization of one's accent operates as a depreciative element in one's sense of professional identity and competence. A common paradox observed across participants is that one's accent, although it is said to be an added element (maybe due to the prevalence of the myth of non-accent), often means less in practice. Participants reported an overall

[16] Michaëlle Jean, Canada's first Black Governor General, was previously a news anchor at Radio-Canada.

feeling of a lack when expressing themselves about how their accent and related stigmatization make them feel. Taken together, these "lacks" revolve around the ideas of credibility and legitimacy as a journalist. This feeling of a lack, at the core of accent problematization, is sometimes clearly articulated by participants and visible through the comments they received. These "lacks" are often intertwined and evoke feelings of incompetence, lack of credibility, and illegitimacy. The idea of "lacking" is important to investigate because it is linked to the question of who has the authority to have their voices heard in the media. All these lacks revolve around the idea of who has the authority to be a journalist and have their voices heard.

The Impostor Syndrome. The figure of the impostor was explicitly mentioned by one participant, and more implicitly by others. This participant, who has a disability that modifies his pronunciation, said he has been feeling for a long time like an "impostor" because of his audible difference, which impacted his confidence in his capacity to succeed. He shared how this feeling followed him for a long time during his career, even after he achieved to attain a broadcast role, which was his ambition. He expressed how lucky and grateful he is, almost as if he were not legitimate to deserve his position:

> Avec le temps, j'ai réussi quand même à prendre ma place puis à m'intégrer. Mais c'est sûr qu'au début je me suis questionné à savoir si j'allais pouvoir continuer, ou si j'allais pouvoir faire de la télévision finalement. Puis veut veut pas, ça va teinter mes choix toute ma carrière entre guillemets parce que, encore aujourd'hui, je me trouve chanceux de pouvoir pratiquer ce métier […]. Il y a des collègues qui me dissent : « Mais pourquoi t'es chanceux ? Y a pas de chance, c'est normal ». Je suis comme : « Ben c'est vrai, c'est normal ». Mais peut-être que puisqu'on m'a mis des béquilles, et à l'école et au début de ma carrière, ben moi, je suis

encore avec ce *mindset*-là que c'est fragile cet emploi que j'ai quand j'ai la façon que je parle. (PN4)

For participants who do not have French as a first language, the lack of legitimacy is visible through their perception that they "borrow" someone else's language, which, to them, implies particular caution and respect in using it properly. Second-language speakers especially face the burden of feeling like "intruders" in a language that is not originally theirs. Other journalists expressed concerns revolving around credibility, feeling self-conscious because of the potential for their accent to divert attention from facts, which are at the core of journalistic credibility. For them, their voice could become an element of distraction rather than an "objective" conveyor for information. One participant, an Anglo-Quebecer journalist, expressed how this feeling plays out in his professional life: "Je sens un manque de crédibilité en français, quand je parle français, que peut-être c'est une barrière, que le monde, en place d'écouter mes mots, ils écoutent mon accent premièrement" (PN5).[17]

Similarly, a journalist from a region of Quebec expressed that she may be perceived as "folkloric" and less "serious," thus, less credible, if she uses a typical regional expression on air. At the same time, she recognized that using her regional Quebec accent might make her seem more sympathetic at times and closer to her audience, which shows the ambivalence of using a stigmatized accent strategically, which will be developed in theme 3, when journalists subvert conformism through sometimes subtle forms of resistance.

As will be examined in theme 4, some of these "impostors" have the capacity to cross the boundary of legitimacy and credibility by adapting their accent, or even fully "erasing" it. This is

[17] Translation from the author: "I feel a lack of credibility in French, when I speak French, that maybe it's a barrier, that people, instead of listening to my words, first listen to my accent."

what was expressed by the same participant from a region of Quebec who, despite being conscious of the potentially stigmatizing nature of her accent, acknowledged that she now feels more credible after having started to work on her diction: “Je pense que maintenant je n'ai plus d’accent ou en tout cas plus d'accent très audible. Je peux l'avoir encore par moment, donc j'ai quand même une certaine crédibilité, je crois, en ondes” (PN3).[18]

She explained her employer’s desire to uniformize voices to not distract the audience or seem “more serious” and credible on air. Interestingly, this participant drew a comparison between accent homogenization and dressing codes for anchors, suggesting a wider standardization process in the broadcast industry that overall delegitimizes the expression of individuality. In this account, one’s accent seems to be one element to control, among other elements. In the following quote, the gendered perspective provided by the journalist shows how using accent as a concept as a starting point can help foster insights into the wider management of diversity in the journalism industry, which highlights the intersectional potential of accent:

> Moi, comme je suis en ondes […] il y a des lignes directrices de ce qu'on peut et on ne peut pas porter en ondes. Et l'objectif est souvent de ne pas attirer l'attention sur des éléments autres que le propos, donc, et d'avoir toujours l'air de bon goût, sérieux. Il y a des lignes directrices là-dessus. […]. On ne veut pas qu’un décolleté ou une couleur attire tellement l'attention que les gens n'écoutent plus le propos. J'ai l'impression que c'est un peu une volonté de ça aussi de la part de la Direction. Je suis pas dans leur tête, mais je sais qu'il y a une volonté que ce soit aplani ces différents accents. (PN3)

[18] Translation from the author: “I think that now I no longer have an accent, or at least no longer a very noticeable accent. I can still have it sometimes, so I still have a certain credibility, I believe, on air.”

Who Can Say "Us"? This lack of credibility and legitimacy extends to matters of representation. Immigrant journalists, in particular, might be concerned about their potential lack of perceived legitimacy to speak in the name of the host society. Feelings of credibility, and their lack, were visible through the discussion of journalistic topics that participants covered. For instance, some participants expressed feeling credible when covering science, because of its perceived fact-based, apolitical nature. On the contrary, immigrant journalists may feel less legitimate to report on topics that have a highly symbolic aspect. Culture and politics were cited as sources of concern. The following participant, a French journalist working in the written press, mentioned her experience reporting on hunting, a deeply enshrined cultural practice, especially in Quebec regions:

> Y a certains sujets où je me sens plus illégitime et où je sens qu'on va me le dire que je suis française, et je le sens quand je parle à mes interlocuteurs [qui lui dissent, par exemple] : « Ah mais vous savez peut-être pas, mais au Québec, la chasse, na, na ». (PN9)

Continuing, this journalist reasserts her legitimacy by emphasizing her professionalism and ability to learn about the topics she covers, even as a foreigner:

> Alors que je fais mes devoirs comme tout le monde, je me suis renseignée. Puis c'est pas vrai que tous les Québécois connaissent bien la chasse non plus. Donc y a certains trucs comme ça que je perçois un peu comme des micro-agressions peut-être, en tout cas des… Où en fait ma compétence va être un peu remise en question, ou en tout cas un peu questionnée parce que j'ai pas l'étiquette, ou j'ai pas la tête de l'emploi, plutôt l'accent de l'emploi. (PN9)

As one written press French journalist in Quebec explained, concerns around credibility become especially acute on platforms like social media. Mediating the news through social media and addressing the public in this more direct way requires authority to speak on behalf of the group, a form of confidence that the following journalist did not have. This journalist, a French immigrant in Quebec, recalls her experience creating social media for a local audience:

> J'étais un peu gênée parce que pareil, les réseaux sociaux, c'est censé être cool et jeune et tout ça et on s'adresse au public québécois, *yay*. Sauf que s'adresser au public québécois en tant que Française, à chaque fois, bah vu que c'est sur les réseaux sociaux, j'ai toujours peur que les gens se dissent : « Ouais, ok, d'accord, c'est une Française qui nous explique des choses de France ». Et puis tu sais, qu'ils scrollent, alors que non, là je vais parler de la réalité québécoise. Donc ça, je dis : « Ah bah nous, au Québec on XYZ ». Mais je dis ça avec mon accent français (rires). Et tu sais, j'ai toujours peur que les gens soient comme « hein ? Pourquoi est-ce que tu dis "nous" ? ». Alors que personne me l'a fait remarquer, mais c'est plus moi qui me dis, si j'étais Française en France et j'entends un Québécois dire « ouais, nous en France », je trouverais ça un peu étrange sur les réseaux sociaux. (PN7)

This passage encapsulates the tension of representation. This participant feared overreaching or being seen as "inauthentic" when claiming a shared identity with a group that may not fully see her as belonging because of how she sounds. Even in the absence of explicit audience rejection, the internalized sense of a lack of credibility can be strong enough to generate self-censorship or at least hesitation. This hyper-awareness is a reminder that accented journalists not only speak *with* an accent, but also imagine how their words are received, filtering themselves preventively through others' ears. Conversely, the same French journalist felt more comfortable

including herself in the Quebec group when writing, indicating that, for some, the written medium may be a safer space for them to navigate accentedness and otherness:

> Le « on » et le « nous », bah, je le fais bien à l'écrit, j'ai aucun complexe par rapport à ça. Mais par contre le « on » et le « nous » alors que les gens m'entendent et me voient sur les réseaux sociaux, c'est différent. (PN7)

To summarize, accented journalists often internalize their accent as a lack of credibility, legitimacy, and authority. These feelings are not fixed, but evolve depending on the context, media, and even the perceived audience. For many journalists, it evolves into a deeper form of tension. They find themselves caught between different worlds and expectations. This in-betweenness is not only a bridge between two identities, personal and professional, but also a border space that is inhabited and where identities are negotiated, which can be exhausting and isolating.

Accented Journalists as In-betweeners: From Stigma to Resilience and Resistance

Accented journalists often find themselves walking a delicate line. Like equilibrists, they navigate their careers on a tightrope stretched between professional expectations and personal identities. Balancing these two forces goes beyond adaptation. Accented journalists actively negotiate their identities at each step, adjusting to shifting winds and nurturing an in-betweener identity. This metaphor of the equilibrist constantly adjusting captures the emotional and professional tightrope that many participants described. It reflects the sense of not just having to navigate between two worlds, but to be suspended in the space between them, without solid footholds on either side. This precarious situation can produce discomfort, negative emotions, and identity loss.

Specifically, French journalists working in Quebec often described a sense of identity displacement, such as feeling “too French” to be fully Québécois, but no longer entirely French in the eyes of their fellow citizens. This perception contributes to what several participants articulated as an “in-betweener” identity that is characterized by fragmentation and fluidity but can lead to an identity gap in which participants feel they no longer fully belong to the French nation, while also not being entirely accepted in Quebec and Canada. One French participant, who grew up in France with ties to Canada, illustrates this vividly in her testimony:

> Quand je suis arrivée ici, je me suis un peu pris la claque de bah finalement, j'appartiens pas du tout à ce monde-là. Pourtant, j'étais venue beaucoup de fois quand j'étais petite. J'avais des connaissances, mes parents avaient des très bons amis ici et tout ça. Mais clairement, j'étais française et on me l'a fait comprendre. Puis c'est très correct et tout ça, mais… Je me suis un peu pris une claque en arrivant, je pense. Et aujourd'hui, je te dirais que je me sens, oui comme pas mal d'expats, un peu paumée, c’est-à-dire quand je suis en France y a plein de trucs qui m'échappent que j'ai pas suivis et tout ça, mais quand je suis ici, je me sens tout le temps française en fait. (PN9)

Her testimony captures the emotional dissonance between imagined belonging and lived experience when immigrating to Québec. Despite a strong attachment, she was quickly confronted with the limits of this belonging, marked most audibly by her accent.

One of the clearest manifestations of this in-betweenness in the professional field, and the tensions these emerges through it, is the question of who has the legitimacy to say “we,” to speak on behalf of the national audience, which echoes the previous subsection that looked at accented journalists’ feeling of a lack of legitimacy and credibility to assert their position are insiders. The in-betweener identity represents a permanent negotiation of legitimacy. At the same time, this

fragmented identity is not experienced uniformly. Some participants embrace their accent as a meaningful part of their journey and see their hybrid speech patterns as a reflection of migration and adaptation, while others describe it as a burden, an audible sign that prevents full access to professional opportunities and marks them as perpetual outsiders. One Anglo-Quebecer journalist, for instance, described his accent as a deeply personal reminder of difference, even within his own family, as his children now speak flawless Quebec French and can switch between English and French. Beneath the surface, his reflection on his accent is reminiscent of the Two Solitudes, the fracture, lack of contact and interest between French and English Canadians, that this journalist is contributing to bridge through his position of in-betweener in the francophone journalism field:

> Mon accent, c'était l'évidence que j'ai appris le français, que c'était pas une priorité quand j'étais plus jeune parce que je viens d'une époque où c'était vraiment les cultures distinctes. Il y avait vraiment un côté anglo, un côté franco, puis les deux ils mélangent pas, puis pour moi ça c'était un... C'est vraiment un regret pour moi que j'ai pas découvert l'autre côté (rires). Le grand, l'autre côté du Québec avant que j'étais comme dans la fin de ma vingtaine. Ça, c'est dommage. Puis pour moi, mon accent, c'est toujours comme un *reminder*, un aide-mémoire. (PN5)

This state of in-betweenness can lead to a sense of identity loss. For many participants, accent is not just a marker of origin; it becomes a symbol of estrangement, of a self that no longer fully fits anywhere. This can provoke nostalgia for a past identity that was once stable and unquestioned. For example, a broadcast journalist from a Quebec region spoke of her former regional accent as a symbol of regional pride, something tied to her personal history, that is now lost due to diction classes. Her words evoke nostalgia for a former self that had to be reshaped to adapt to professional expectations:

> Maintenant, je parle, je pense, un français plus international qu'auparavant, mais c'est certain que jusqu'à mon entrée [dans le domaine du journalisme], j'avais clairement un accent [régional] que je n'avais jamais cherché à perdre cela dit, vraiment pas […]. Je n'ai jamais essayé de perdre mon accent [régional]. Au contraire, j'en étais fière. (PN3)

Yet, out of this rupture emerges a creative process. Participants are not only suspended between two extremities of a tightrope, but they are also actively rebuilding a new sense of identity, hybrid, plural, and evolving. In-betweenness is not an end, but rather a starting point to rebuilding purpose and legitimacy as an accented journalist. This redefinition may be unstable, but it also opens the possibility for new forms of belonging, anchored less in national narratives and more in personal trajectories and community bonds. Accentedness as a site for identity reconciliation and reclamation will be explored in the final theme of this thesis.

Conclusion

Theme 2 focused on how the internalization of accentedness as a stigma affects journalists in the daily work they produce. Beyond external reactions, participants described how their accent turned into the lens through which they perceived themselves, from their journalistic performance to their feelings of belonging in the profession. The experience of "having" an accent influences journalists in the most intimate spheres of their existence, as a burden that shapes their emotions and identity, prompting behavioural changes. The internalization of accent as a problem manifests through self-control, linguistic insecurity, and self-censorship, among other consequences. Being on-air, interacting with colleagues or sources, can trigger discomfort, shame, or feelings of inadequacy. These subtle but persistent forms of pressure can remain invisible, or incomprehensible, to others in newsrooms, while still carrying a signification emotional weight for accented journalists.

Participants' accounts also show that the internalization of accent as a problem is not experienced uniformly among journalists. Some are more vulnerable to linguistic insecurity, while others express a greater sense of linguistic confidence. A few describe professional environments where their accent is received with neutrality or even appreciation, whereas others struggle with a persistent sense of inadequacy, even in the absence of explicit stigmatization. Immigrant journalists, in particular, face specific challenges that non-immigrants may not encounter. These varied experiences highlight broader inequalities in how accents are perceived and evaluated: not all accented voices are treated equally, nor do they carry the same social burden. Overall, having an accent is frequently associated with a sense of lack. The internalization of accent as a problem can be destabilizing. However, with this internalization comes increased reflexivity. Many accented journalists develop an in-betweener identity characterized by feelings of identity loss, which may, however, open the possibility for a reappropriation of a stigmatized condition.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

Together, themes 1 and 2 have stressed that one's "accent" is inherently a social construct dependent on contexts and interactions inside and outside the formal journalistic field. Although more imagined than tangible, accentedness has concrete consequences. The process of accent awareness emerges as deeply relational, triggered by others' reactions and taking root in early life, upon entering journalism or migrating to Quebec and Canada. This process transforms one's voice from an unproblematized or underproblematized element into a site of heightened consciousness, where journalists come to perceive themselves as different. This perceived difference becomes progressively problematized through everyday stigmatization in and outside newsrooms. Through peer scrutiny, managerial control, diction training, and microaggressions, accented journalists are often subjected to exclusion. These interactions shape their sense of belonging, emotional well-

being, and sometimes career trajectories. While overt discrimination is not always named, the cumulative weight of these experiences can lead to self-doubt, self-surveillance, and self-stigmatization. Participants developed various examples of internalized stigma that expressed themselves through an array of emotional, psychological, and behavioural responses.

This fragility is further complicated by the emergence of an "in-betweener" identity among participants, which is this state of being suspended between multiple linguistic and cultural reference points, without a full anchoring in any one of them. This in-betweenness can be experienced as a source of discomfort, identity loss, or nostalgia, but it can also open up new possibilities for identity reconstruction that will be explored in theme 4. Overall, navigating accentedness involves a continuous negotiation of legitimacy and professional identity in a field where the "ideal" journalistic voice is not neutral. Within this constrained environment, accented journalists try to adapt to expectations in order to obtain professional recognition, which can oppose another journey toward personal recognition.

Chapter 5: Accented Journalists on a Quest for Individual and Professional Recognition

Every quest begins with a challenge, and for accented journalists, that challenge lies in being heard and recognized in a profession where norms around language and voice are tightly policed. This chapter focuses on a central force that motivates accented journalists to both conform to and resist the professional norms of journalism surrounding language: the quest for recognition. In this journey, accented journalists are searching for both professional legitimacy and personal affirmation, while facing norms that often relegate them to their difference or deficiency.

The previous chapter introduced how professional expectations around language (as a form of power) materialize in everyday interactions and produce forms of stigma. This stigma is not only external but internalized, becoming deeply embedded in how journalists perceive themselves and their professional legitimacy. While it did not paint the most hopeful picture, it laid the groundwork for understanding the dynamics explored in this final chapter. The previous chapter charted terrain in which accented journalists operate; this next chapter turns toward the paths participants actively forge through that terrain, shifting the focus to agency and from description to action.

This chapter encompasses two themes. Theme 3 dives into an apparent paradox, in which accented journalists both conform and resist norms and expectations. Theme 4 underscores how journalists manage to make peace with their accented condition by asserting a sense of legitimacy and reclaiming a fractured identity.

This quest for recognition is not straightforward. It is marked by twists and setbacks along the road. Some journalists conform to professional expectations around voice and accent as a way to move forward, while others push back. Most do both, by resisting and conforming in sometimes contradictory ways. Silence, for instance, may appear passive but can also serve as a deliberate

strategy of resistance or survival. Similarly, speaking up may not always be heard as empowerment, but might instead carry risks in newsrooms. Throughout this chapter, action is understood broadly: as outward defiance, quiet negotiation, strategic adaptation, and resilience.

The concept of recognition is at the core of this chapter, which helps make sense of both themes (3 and 4). Recognition is defined as "a positive acknowledgment or affirmation of a person's existence, identity, rights, or achievement. It is sometimes said to be a necessary condition for self-confidence, self-respect, and self-esteem" (Jütten, 2022, para. 1). In this context, recognition appears in both professional and individual forms. Professional recognition refers to the desire among accented journalists to be acknowledged as full, legitimate members of the journalistic profession. This often involves conforming to its norms and standards, particularly those related to language, accent, and vocal performance. This form of recognition is not only about fitting in but can also involve expanding the boundaries of who belongs in journalism. Conforming to professional standards may thus serve a dual function: striving for acceptance while simultaneously legitimizing the presence of accented journalists within the field.

Individual recognition, by contrast, refers to a more personal process of reclaiming identity. Drawing on Goffman's (1963/1986) notion of a "spoiled identity," this recognition involves participants reflecting on who they are and choosing to affirm and valorize elements of their identity that may have been previously stigmatized. It is through this process that journalists seek to assert their perceived difference as legitimate and valuable within journalism and in society more broadly.

These two forms of recognition are deeply intertwined. At times, the line between the journalist and the person behind the professional façade is blurred. Attempting to sharply separate these dimensions would be artificial. Instead, they coexist and interact harmoniously or in tension.

Reconciling conformism and resistance (explored further in theme 4) can prove challenging, but allows accented journalists to regain power over their narratives, how they interpret their lived experiences, and ultimately make sense of their audible difference.

In this quest for recognition, the path is not linear, and not all journalists follow the same route. Recognition is not always achieved, and even when it is, it may be partial or fragile. This process involves coping strategies, tensions, ambivalence, and moments of contradiction. While it might seem logical to view conformism, resistance, and identity reclamation as sequential or cumulative, the lived realities of participants suggest otherwise. What emerges is a diversity of routes shaped by journalists' individual backgrounds, institutional contexts, and intersecting identities. Understanding these uneven journeys requires an intersectional lens, attentive to how race, gender, disability, rurality, and other factors shape access to recognition.

Ultimately, this chapter underscores that the quest for recognition is not just about arriving at a final destination, but about what happens along the way. Through negotiations, sacrifices, and affirmations, accented journalists navigate a profession that often demands their conformity while undervaluing their differences. It is in this movement that their agency and subjectivities take shape.

Theme 3: Conforming While Resisting: The Ambivalence of Accented Journalists

This theme explores a core internal tension experienced by accented journalists: the often-conflicting pull between personal authenticity and professional aspirations. At the heart of their narratives lies a fundamental question: how can one be recognized as a "good journalist" while staying true to oneself, particularly when one's voice is marked as deviating from journalistic norms?

Instead of forming a homogenous group, participants occupy different positions along a shifting continuum. Some lean toward vocal confrontation, while others engage in more discreet forms of resistance. These positions are not fixed: they evolve in response to changing circumstances, personal histories, and professional pressures. This dynamic landscape resists binary categorization. Conformism and criticism often appear intertwined, overlapping in participants' testimonies and sometimes only discernible beneath the surface. For clarity, the theme is divided into two subsections, though, as will be emphasized, the boundary between resistance and compliance is rarely sharp.

Inspired by Hirschman's (1970) model of exit, voice, and loyalty, this theme considers the evaluations and judgments participants make when navigating linguistic expectations. Journalists constantly assess how much they can endure, what strategies may offer the most professional reward, and what risks come with speaking out. Loyalty to journalistic norms and colleagues often appears necessary for career stability, yet some participants employ voice or even exit strategies, although less frequent, but highly revealing, to assert their agency in the face of exclusion. These moments of dissent open possibilities for resistance that expose the limits of current practices and offer insight into how accented journalists negotiate their place within the journalistic field.

Ultimately, this theme underscores that coping with linguistic stigma does not follow a singular path. Conformism and resistance coexist, often within the same individual, and may be expressed through both action and silence. Whether through strategic adaptation, subtle critique, or calculated dissent, participants' voices challenge the presumed neutrality of professional norms and reveal the ongoing struggle for recognition.

Between Conformism and Adaptation: When Professional Success is at Stake

To succeed in their careers or at least mitigate the potential negative effects of their accentedness, participants, both in the written press and broadcast media, adopted a range of behaviours, situated between adaptation and conformism. Adaptation refers to a process involving a series of changes that progressively reshape an individual's capacity to adjust their behaviour in response to the environment and its evolving constraints. Usually, adaptation confers a higher degree of consciousness and agency, which is why the second subsection of theme 3 will introduce the notion of coping to further complicate the analysis and offer additional nuance to the experience of accented journalists. Conformism, while it may involve adaptive behaviours, carries a greater moral weight. Conforming often entails accepting the superiority of certain norms and embracing the underlying assumptions behind expectations that manifest as both codified and uncodified cultural standards. Adaptation and conformism share similarities, but the latter allows less room for individuals to critically assess or resist the norms they are aligning with. This contrast is most clearly articulated in the tension between concepts of voluntary servitude[19] (La Boétie, 1576/1963) and symbolic domination (Bourdieu, 1997). In participants' narratives, the boundary between these two dynamics is thin and unstable, often crossed in both directions, making it necessary to use both concepts in dialogue.

This subsection introduces: (1) the systems of peer control and norm enforcement present in professional settings; (2) the process of passing and the consequences of failing to pass, revealing

[19] Voluntary servitude refers to Étienne de La Boétie's *Discours de la servitude volontaire* (1576), written in reaction to French absolutism. In political philosophy, it examines the paradox of people's propensity to obey power, not through coercion but by their own consent. La Boétie suggests that domination persists because subjects themselves sustain it through habits of obedience and conformity. In this sense, *voluntary servitude* questions the internalized desire for submission, one that requires refusing this cycle of self-imposed subordination to reclaim freedom. This view unpacks the politics of obedience as mostly self-constructed and reverses the traditional view of power as externally imposed (Ropert, 2022, para. 8).

both the advantages or aligning with dominate expectations and the inequalities in participants' ability to camouflage the traces of their voices; and (3) the extent to which accented journalists conform to professional norms, considered through the lenses of voluntary servitude and symbolic domination, which underlines both the internalization of symbolic domination are and possible avenues for subversion and resistance.

Systems of Peer-control and Norm Enforcement. Inside newsrooms, accented journalists, whether in written or broadcast positions, live under the impression that their work is subject to heightened scrutiny. Building on the feelings of hyperawareness and hypervigilance discussed earlier (theme 2), their testimonies in this section point out how language norms are enacted and enforced in the day-to-day operations of media production. Their insights suggest that norms are not only internalized by journalists but also trigger adaptive mechanisms, sometimes preventive, to align their practices with dominant linguistic expectations in their professional field. Most specifically, this section examines two interconnected mechanisms of control, linguistic gatekeeping and the influence of hierarchies and unspoken norms within media organizations.

Linguistic Gatekeeping: Before, During, and After Broadcast and Publication. Systems of norm enforcement can be understood as a way of managing deviancy, preventively, during the production process, and after a story is published or aired. Most notably in participants' testimonies, the moment of linguistic revision, before a script is heard or a story published, is a particularly crucial site of linguistic gatekeeping. Initially developed within journalism studies to examine how certain news stories are selected, or excluded, by editors and media institutions (Lewin, 1947; White, 1950), gatekeeping offers a useful framework for understanding how language norms can function as a form of control. While traditionally applied to editorial decision-making, gatekeeping can also operate at a more subtle, interpersonal level, governing who is deemed professional

enough to speak in the public sphere. In this sense, linguistic gatekeeping extends beyond accent and pronunciation to include vocabulary choices, register, and tone, all of which become criteria for inclusion or exclusion within media institutions. These norms shape not only what is said, but who gets to say it, and how they must sound to be heard. For instance, one Canadian journalist from Rwandese origins, who worked in radio in Ontario, recalled how strong feedback from a copy editor led him to become particularly careful with word selection:

> J'ai fait un reportage et j'avais écrit, parce que je parlais des accidents de voiture, et j'ai parlé de chauffards. Et là, on devait passer notre texte à une dame qui s'occupait de voir si tout était ok. Et la dame, c'était une Québécoise, chauffards, c'est pas passé. « Chauffard, c'est quoi ? Qu'est-ce que ça veut dire ? ». Alors c'était, ça arrivait. Alors quand je devais passer mon texte à quelqu'un pour qu'il relise, j'essayais de m'assurer qu'il n'y ait pas de termes qui pouvaient les froisser. (PN13)

Colleagues in the newsroom also contribute to reinforcing these norms through informal peer feedback, even before copy editors start official story editing. The same participant shared an instance of peer correction:

> Il y avait une ou deux personnes qui me reprenaient à mon avis pour rien. Par exemple, je me souviens aller faire un reportage une fois et j'avais dit : « Monsieur tel, en charge de la société d'alcool ». Et il y a un monsieur qui travaillait [pour le même employeur] qui est venu me dire « ah non », après le reportage « ah non », dit-il, « on dit pas en charge, c'est de l'anglais. » Et c'est bizarre parce que les Français disent « en charge » souvent. Et bien sûr moi, quand on me dit ça, je disais : « Ok, ça va, j'ai compris ». (PN13)

Such forms of surveillance lead some journalists to police their own speech, pre-emptively adapting to avoid correction and maintain perceptions of professionalism. A French journalist in Quebec described how she monitors herself, sometimes imperfectly, when speaking on the radio:

> J'ai toujours cette appréhension d'utiliser des anglicismes de France, ou des images, ou des expressions très franco-françaises à l'oral, à la radio. C'est terrible à chaque fois, donc j'essaie de me reprendre tout de suite si jamais c'est le cas. (PN7)

In live broadcast contexts, linguistic gatekeeping intensifies. One journalist mentioned being actively monitored by managers during on-air segments. This editorial oversight creates a control mechanism pressuring her, especially if her accent accidentally "slips." In such cases, post-broadcast feedback framed these "mistakes" as threats to her on-air position.

Importantly, control mechanisms were not always experienced negatively. While certain journalists found copy editors, managers, and colleagues insensitive, others expressed relief at being guided through the process of linguistic adaptation, making sure that their articles would appear "local" to their readers. One French journalist working in Quebec's written press appreciated linguistic gatekeeping as a learning opportunity.

Hierarchies and Unspoken Norms: When Norms Come from Above and Nowhere. This desire to fit in, however, does not always originate from direct, obvious feedback. Pressure to conform stems from unspoken norms and diffuse institutional hierarchies and expectations that are difficult to trace back to a single person or a set of codified rules. Linguistic gatekeeping is even more opaque as it appears to come from above and from nowhere simultaneously. Beyond conscious efforts to adapt their voices or ways of writing, accented journalists often operate within

systems where, although norms are unspoken, they are powerfully enforced. When it comes to resisting norms, the room for manoeuvre is quite narrow in these professional environments.

When asked about what constitutes a "standard" francophone media accent or how employers justify denying opportunities to accented journalists, participants voiced a nuanced understanding of the norms surrounding oral performance. Overall, most described having internalized a shared professional ethos that emphasizes communication comprehensibility and clarity with the audience through a journalistic voice. These expectations, however, are not formalized in editorial policies. One journalist, for instance, stated that he moulds oral performance on a "radio voice," slower and more articulated, which does imitate a Quebec French accent per se, but rather meets unspoken expectations of a "professional" voice. Other participants' testimonies pointed out that, while the norms of oral performance are not explicitly tied to accent, they can serve as indirect, unacknowledged mechanisms of exclusion.

One journalist, who had the most to say about these unspoken norms, described them as being enforced from the top down. She explained that since there was no "official discourse" about accents at her media organization, meaning no ground on which to challenge norms, it felt impossible to resist them:

> On n'a pas le contrôle là-dessus, donc même si j'avais voulu me battre contre ça, j'aurais pas gagné, parce que ce sont des non-dits. Les gens en ondes, ce sont les patrons qui décident si oui ou non ils restent en ondes. Donc si tu ne collabores pas, si tu ne changes pas ce que les patrons veulent que tu changes, ils vont simplement te retirer des ondes, c'est leur droit. C'est la façon dont fonctionnent les médias. Donc tu peux pas t'entêter à conserver ton accent si les patrons ne veulent pas que tu l'aies, parce que tu vas tout simplement ne plus être en ondes. Donc c'est pas un combat qu'on peut mener. (PN3)

She continued, explaining that decisions about who can remain on-air are rarely framed as related to one's accent:

> Le patron ne dira pas : « On ne confiera pas tel poste à cette journaliste parce qu'elle a un accent ». C'est un peu… De la même façon qu'ils diront pas : « Ben on ne confiera pas tel poste à tel journaliste parce qu'elle a trop de rides ». C'est quelque chose qui ne se dit pas. Je ne pense pas que le patron le dira officiellement parce que là ils se feraient tirer des roches. Comme tu sais, on prône beaucoup la diversité et tout ça, mais dans les faits ça peut peser dans les décisions des patrons. Donc comme employé, si tu te plies pas à ces critères, ben t'as aucun moyen de combattre ça si c'est un élément dans leur décision. (PN3)

In large media organizations, participants described complex hierarchies that dilute responsibility across multiple layers of management. Who has the final word in terms of linguistic gatekeeping remains complicated to establish. This diffusion of power makes it complicated for some to challenge exclusion. Power is not solely concentrated in the hands of immediate, identifiable managers.

One journalist mentioned that decisions about on-air voices are made at the level of the upper management, beyond the reach of regular newsroom employees. Another French journalist working in Ontario emphasized the influence of broader corporate cultures in shaping experiences of exclusion. This participant, who believes his accent became a discriminatory factor in his upward professional mobility, noticed that although he had positive relationships with colleagues, they remained silent when he faced inequality. He and another participant, a Canadian journalist of Rwandese origins, both noted how their Ontario-based newsrooms mirror Quebec's editorial priorities and internal norms around language, even when those norms did not reflect the multicultural realities of local francophone audiences. These dynamics contributed to the

reproduction of an implicit hierarchy, with Quebec journalism and norms occupying a privileged position over the "rest" of Canadian francophone minorities.

In these various accounts, accented journalists appear to conform out of necessity, with little agreement as to the validity of norms and their enforcement. As will be shown in the second part of this theme, critiques are present throughout journalists' discourse, particularly among those who had a first-hand experience of rejection due to their accent. Understanding and adapting to these unspoken rules does not mean that journalists always accept their legitimacy. Some continue to resist in subtle ways.

Passing, and the Failure to Pass as "Unaccented." In the pursuit of professional recognition, accented journalists find themselves negotiating the fine line between adapting to local, linguistic and professional norms, and preserving a sense of self. Both broadcast and written press journalists felt this tension, where their voice became a marker of belonging. While some participant described conscious effort to blend in vocally, others expressed their inability to do so and discomfort. The following section explores this dynamic through the concept of passing, shedding light on how journalists consciously or unconsciously modify their modes of expression to meet perceived expectations of normality.

Passing, introduced by Goffman (1963/1986), refers to a stigma-management technique used by individuals with socially "spoiled" identities in order to appear "normal" in the eyes of others. Although Goffman does not address voice-related stigmas in depth, some of his reflections on discreditable identities can help understand how one's accent may be managed by individuals to avoid stigmatization through techniques of information control. Goffman defines such techniques as "to conceal or obliterate signs that have come to be stigma symbols," these, alongside the use of "disidentifiers" (p. 92). In this context, linguistic accommodation can be interpreted as a

passing tactic when employed to erase or soften linguistic traits that may be perceived as markers of difference by the public. It is defined as "the adjustments speakers make to become linguistically more (convergence) or less (divergence) similar to an interlocutor, or to a social environment," which can both happen in the short-term and in the long-term (Ruch & de Benito Moreno, 2023). For instance, in the context of this research, participants reported being able to alternate between language varieties (e.g. Quebec "regional" French and "standard" Quebec French), accents, lexical registers, and other features, depending on specific interaction contexts, such as during broadcasts. Participants who were able to adapt their speech described that this modulation occurred both consciously and unconsciously. This phenomenon remained difficult for participants to make sense of, as they cannot always draw a clear line between what stems from a conscious effort to adapt and what reflects a more unconscious pull toward conformism, as illustrated in the following quote that blends both registers. This French journalist, working in Quebec, with prior experience in broadcasting, blended the conscious and the unconscious in the way she described her experience:

> C'est drôle, c'est mon conjoint qui me le dit. Moi je m'en rends pas vraiment compte mais il me dit : « Mais c'est bizarre quand tu parles à la radio, t'as comme une autre façon de parler ». Et je pense qu'en fait je suis, y a vraiment un complexe ou une volonté de pas avoir l'air trop Française quand je parle à la radio, qui fait que je suis ultra consciente de certaines prononciations et que peut-être que je fais un peu de, que je force un peu ou, je sais pas parce que j'en suis pas, je sais pas comment dire, c'est pas volontaire, j'essaye pas d'imiter, mais j'ai l'impression que je vais faire plus de « euh ». (PN9)[20]

For some participants, the ability to modulate one's voice, consciously or not, represented a way to control how their identity was perceived. One French journalist based in Ontario, who

[20] Voluntary, stressed Quebec French pronunciation from the participant.

admitted to having modified his voice in the past to pass as a local, linked this process to behaving like a chameleon:

> Faire le caméléon, ça pourrait être effectivement avantageux. Et par caméléon, je veux dire faire couleur locale, entre guillemets. Le caméléon, tu vois, il a la capacité de se camoufler, de se fondre avec son environnement pour être invisible, comme un camouflage. (PN11)

This comparison illustrates how passing can be seen as a strategy to avoid being marked as the "other." Several participants noted that sounding local could offer professional advantages, including perceived credibility. As another journalist expressed, passing literally means to "blend in with the scenery," removing a part of what makes her stand out:

> J'aimerais bien avoir un accent québécois qui empêcherait les gens de savoir d'où je viens, juste pour voir ce que ça fait de vivre quelques jours dans la peau de, je suis pas identifiée comme venant d'ailleurs. Est-ce que ça changerait quelque chose à ma vie professionnelle ? Je pense que ça me donnerait encore plus de crédibilité. J'aimerais l'essayer. (PN12)

However, linguistic accommodation can be seen as a double-edged sword depending on each participant's circumstances. It was experienced ambivalently. On one end, it functioned as a strategic coping mechanism, allowing accented journalists to navigate professional expectations in the present and prevent future stigmatization by sounding as "normal" as possible. Using linguistic accommodation as a response to past trauma appears as a plausible interpretation, especially in the case of one Franco-Ontarian participant, who experienced heightened linguistic insecurity. For her, this strategy seemed to have proved effective:

> J'ai assez l'accent québécois pour ne pas que ça paraisse, en fait, je pense. C'est très rare dans les dernières années-là, dans les trois quatre dernières années, c'est très rare qu'on m'ait demandé d'où venait mon accent. (PN2)

On the other hand, linguistic accommodation can be experienced painfully. For some, this made them feel as if they were hiding a part of themselves or even betraying their "authentic" identity. These feelings and emotional burden echoed earlier reflections (theme 2), about the stigmatizing effects of being asked to take diction classes or being corrected, for instance. Passing, in these cases, was perceived as a loss of the self.

Importantly, passing did not operate equally across all media. For journalists working in the written press, the risk of failing to pass was lower, even seen for some as mitigated, as written language allows for greater control and more impersonal expression. Unlike oral expression, the author's potentially stigmatized accent and identity are not immediately disclosed. French participants explained that they were mostly able to remove most identification markers from their writing, including French idiomatic expressions and anglicisms that are used in France, but not in Quebec, by working closely with Quebecois colleagues or using online Quebec French dictionaries. They avoided metaphors or comparisons that were not comprehensible to a Quebec audience.

Nevertheless, limits surfaced in these mitigation techniques. Notably, fewer than half of the participants reported having the ability to change their accent toward a more "standard" Quebec French. The failure to pass suggests that the desire to conform does not necessarily translate into the capacity to fully achieve this ideal or adapt completely to the local environment. While vocabulary and certain stylistic elements can be adjusted, differences in deeper journalistic cultures, norms, and editorial standards remain harder to shift. For instance, one French journalist in Quebec explained how her education in France subtly influenced her writing up to today. Another

indirectly highlighted how journalistic culture and editorial expectations in Quebec differed from those of France in the preference for shorter, more direct writing, compared to the more "intellectual" style of an outlet such as *Le Monde*. Even with careful editing, a participant felt her identity remained legible through her byline, as her name did not sound local.

The many limitations to journalists' ability to pass highlight how passing is a far more complex process than written or vocal adaptation. It also requires cultural fluency. As one participant stressed, beyond the question of accent, having enough cultural and professional capital is key to succeeding in the journalistic market. This French journalist, who had a negative experience working in radio in the past, wondered about his ability to pass as a Quebecer:

> Si j'avais l'accent québécois, mais que j'avais pas les références [...] jusqu'où j'arriverai à berner les gens ? (rires) Tu vois, jusqu'où ? Parce qu'il y a l'accent, mais il y a aussi les expressions, il y a… Je sais pas dans quoi, qu'est-ce que ça englobe l'accent ? Parce que si j'avais l'accent québécois, ça va peut-être changer effectivement au début, quand j'avais pas de pas réseau, pas de… chercher du boulot, peut-être. Et puis qu'on était dans les années, qu'on était en 2010, peut-être que ça aurait changé… Mais finalement, tu sais, y a pas que ça, je connais pas les références de hockey, je connais pas les expressions québécoises. Mais ça veut pas dire que j'aimerais avoir l'accent québécois. Moi, je suis très bien comme je suis. (PN10)

His reflection raises the question of adequation, or the alignment between one's voice and the content it conveys. If sounding like a local may help establish credibility, or even intimacy with the audience, the content must reflect expected cultural fluency; otherwise, this alignment falls apart. One's voice is not simply a conveyor of information, but the vessel of a shared, imagined

identity. In this case, passing is merely a matter of phonetics, but a cultural repertoire that journalists must appropriate in order to fully pass in a given society.

Across both broadcast and written media, journalists successfully passing remains a source of concern and is rarely fully achieved or "acquired." The desire to conform was complicated by the inability to do so, especially among those who did not grow up in Quebec or Canada, or who were not first-language French speakers. When these participants shared a desire to pass, they also realistically acknowledged that this desire is vain. This gap, or tension, between the desire and the inability to pass, was expressed most vividly by this written press journalist from France, who expressed her disappointment that her accent is unfortunately still hearable, even in her writing:

> Les trucs qui m'ont le plus vexés justement dans mon travail, c'est quand on corrigeait mes textes avec « on dit pas ça ici ». Tu sais, encore le « ici » qui te dit « oui mais t'es pas d'ici ». Et c'est là que j'ai commencé à me dire : « Ah *shit*, même à l'écrit on le voit ». Tu vois, parce que pendant longtemps je me disais : « Bon à l'oral on oublie ça, je pourrais pas faire illusion ». Mais je pensais qu'à l'écrit oui, mais en fait non [...] C'est là que je le vois, je me dis : « Ah bon ben, c'était pas assez québécois ? ». (PN12)

This sense of "never being from here," even in writing, resonated strongly with other participants, particularly immigrants. Through the testimony of one who had a previous experience in radio, it is possible to see that the failure to pass and self-stigmatization go hand in hand:

> Quand j'articule beaucoup, j'ai tendance à revenir vers un accent français, et ça m'énerve un peu parce que je préfère que les gens entendent que je suis là depuis longtemps plutôt que les gens se dissent : « Attends, elle est française de France ? ». Donc c'est vrai qu'à la radio

à chaque fois j'ai cette petite gêne de : « Ah merde ça s'entend beaucoup quand même que je suis Française ». (PN7)

Overall, passing emerged as a deeply contextual, often unreachable process. While some journalists attempted to pass in order to protect themselves or gain legitimacy, others experienced the limits and pain of these efforts. Still, passing is also a highly ambivalent process. As shown in an earlier participant reflection, while journalists may be aware of the strategic advantages of such a tactic, they may not be willing to entirely conform to the underlying cultural expectations. This opens the door to a more nuanced reflection on resistance. As will be shown, some participants deliberately refused to pass as a form of resistance to normative expectations around their voices and accents.

Conformism or Adaptation? Between Symbolic Domination and Voluntary Servitude. The previous observations on the participants' ability to adjust their vocal and written modes of expression to align with both professional and societal expectations reflect the tension between conformism and adaptation. In Bourdieu's terms, this raises the question of how deeply symbolic power is internalized and naturalized by participants. Are they engaging in a form of voluntary servitude, as La Boétie (1576/1963) described, willingly conforming to dominant norms? Or does symbolic domination within the journalistic field operate as an invisible, unquestioned force? Participants' experiences suggest a more nuanced understanding of how accentedness is managed in journalism. Rather than conforming uniformly, they position themselves along a continuum: while some lean more toward adaptation, others resist more openly. These interpretations are not mutually exclusive. They coexist and overlap in practice. The metaphor of a shifting balance captures this dynamic: some participants tilt more heavily toward conformism, others toward resistance, with many in the middle, blending elements of both.

Symbolic Domination in Discourses and Attitudes: Between Fixity and Ambiguity. A wide range of discourses and attitudes about language and journalism reflect mechanisms of symbolic domination, wherein dominated journalists unconsciously adopt the interpretive frameworks of dominant groups and reproduce the dominant order (Bourdieu, 1980). These norms and beliefs become internalized, shaping worldviews, perceptions, and behaviours in ways that reproduce an established social order that may run counter to the interests of the dominated. Such internalization occurs without awareness of the domination at play. This subsection does not aim to provide an exhaustive typology of such discourses but rather to highlight particularly vivid examples that illustrate symbolic domination. The goal is not to judge the participants, but to understand how these interpretive frames influence their perceptions as accented speakers and professionals, especially in the context of striving for personal and professional recognition. As previously outlined, discourses reminiscent of symbolic domination and a capacity for reflexivity are not mutually exclusive, opening possible avenues for journalists to openly challenge and question norms and expectations around language and accents in journalism.

Discourses About Languages. One way symbolic domination manifests itself is in the reproduction of the myths of "non-accent" and "standard language" (Lippi-Green, 1997), which are widespread beliefs in the existence of an "unaccented" voice, a voice that would not be identified as "accented" and represents the "standard" language in a given society. For participants who see themselves as "accented," believing in the possibility of approaching an "unaccented" voice represents both a form of self-devaluation and a source of motivation to pass. The following participant, a journalist originating from a Latin American country who immigrated to Quebec, recalls the frustration attached to his "accented" voice:

> Des fois c'est un peu frustrant parce que je veux m'améliorer tout le temps. Et des fois les gens disent que c'est à cause que tu parles plusieurs langues, que c'est tout le temps tu vas avoir des accents, mais pour moi l'idéal c'est de ne pas avoir d'accent. [...] Je vais m'améliorer [...] Y a une petite frustration dedans tout le temps, mais j'essaie de m'améliorer. (PN8)

The experience of another participant, a Franco-Ontarian journalist previously introduced, is also reminiscent of how symbolic domination can be integrated and expressed through feelings of linguistic insecurity, which affect perceived language competence and self-esteem, most vividly translating to shame. By moving to Quebec, this participant "lost" her Franco-Ontarian accent, but linguistic insecurity remained, especially as she became a journalist. Still, "changing" one's accent, while it may be interpreted as a form of symbolic domination, remains an ambiguous process. In fact, some participants made a difference between accent adaptation and erasure. For instance, one Anglo-Quebecer participant, who feels self-conscious about his anglophone accent when speaking French, shared that he uses an app to practice his diction, with the objective of "softening" his accent to Quebec French. However, he draws a clear line between "erasing" his accent, a form of absolute conformism he rejects, and "adapting" his accent, which he sees as a more favourable and realistic outcome. The multiple ways in which symbolic domination expressed itself also appear to be reversible, an aspect that will be explored in a subsequent subsection. For instance, this Anglo-Quebecer journalist had a moment of self-realization during the interview, when he realized his appreciation for hearing diverse accents in Quebec francophone media contradicts his own desire to reduce his:

> C'est un peu contradictoire pour moi à dire que j'aime le mélange puis, à le même moment, je veux avoir un accent moins… Un accent qui est moins évident, mais j'aime le mélange des accents. (PN5)

Similarly, the Franco-Ontarian participant expressed clear signs of awareness, and shared that she may have unconsciously censored herself and is now trying to make peace with this problematized part of her identity by affirming her Franco-Ontarian roots.

In rarer instances, participants' metalinguistic discourses appeared to reproduce and reinforce certain hierarchies of linguistic legitimacy, echoing broader structures of symbolic domination. These discourses mobilized notions of prestige and standardization, suggesting that language varieties could be ranked according to their social value or professional acceptability. One journalist, a Canadian of Rwandese origins, exemplifies this dynamic. In describing his own way of speaking, he presented it as a form of "standard" French, which is broadly accepted and above reproach. He explained this variety of French was acquired through his education in the French international school system across several Western and Central African countries where he grew up:

> Ça passe partout, c'est la plupart du temps le registre soutenu. Et c'est, si vous voulez, un français qui est, entre guillemets, comestible pour tout le monde, c'est-à-dire qu'il n'y a pas quelqu'un qui pourrait en fait le remettre en question parce qu'il ne comprendrait pas ou alors qu'il y aurait des régionalismes. Donc je dirais que pour cette raison, c'est un français standard, donc qui pourrait passer un peu partout. (PN13)

Throughout the interview, this participant articulated a strong sense of linguistic legitimacy, particularly when discussing his experience in a newsroom. He recalled being required to undertake

diction coaching with a specialist from Montreal, along with another colleague of foreign origin. While the coaching did not focus explicitly on their accent, it sought to shift their linguistic style toward a more conversational and familiar tone, one presumed to resonate more with local audiences:

> Ce qu'il voulait entre guillemets corriger, c'était la diction qui n'était peut-être pas assez proche des gens, c'était quelque chose comme ça. Il fallait peut-être ne pas respecter totalement la grammaire, c'est-à-dire au lieu de dire « je ne veux pas », peut-être dire « il veut pas faire ça », au lieu de « il ne veut pas », rendre ça, pour eux, peut-être un peu souple, entre guillemets, je pense [...] parce que je n'ai jamais vraiment réussi à savoir, et ça a été une semaine où on s'est vraiment posé des questions, que tout ce que le monsieur disait non seulement on pouvait le dire, mais on le disait mieux que lui. (PN13)

The participant's surprise was reinforced by his perception that his Québécois colleagues, who were apparently not asked to undergo the same training, were, in his view, "less good" linguistically. Importantly, the meaning this participant attaches to his way of speaking, as well as the prestige and competency claims that are mobilized, must be understood in light of his broader trajectory as a racialized and accented journalist navigating an often-stigmatizing professional environment, in addition to his own hybrid and multifaceted identity in the Canadian multicultural context. Asked whether this "standard" French accent best represents him, the participant explained his attachment is profoundly personal and rooted in his family history:

> C'est aussi un peu un hommage à mon père dans le sens où il ne parlait pas comme ça, mais il tenait à ce que ses enfants aient une éducation assez bonne. Et comme on voyageait beaucoup, il tenait absolument à nous mettre tous, on n'était pas nombreux, Dieu merci, on était juste trois, mais il tenait à nous mettre tous dans des lycées français, dans des écoles

qui sont réputées internationales. Et je crois que quelque part, c'est aussi un peu pour faire hommage à mon père et à ma mère, parce qu'ils ont tenu à cela, et j'en suis le résultat. (PN13)

Seen from this perspective, the participant's assertion of linguistic prestige is more complex than a reproduction of linguistic domination. It is also a reclamation of pride and an affirmation of identity embedded in his family legacy. Asserting a form of prestige related to his accent means, in this perspective, reclaiming pride against colleagues who questioned this participant's linguistic and professional legitimacy.

Attitudes Towards One's Professional Exclusion. In this perspective, symbolic domination is asserted on one side, and questioned on the other, further complexifying the dilemma in which accented journalists find themselves. Stigmatized speakers can convey, and sometimes implement, symbolic domination, upholding norms and standards that they simultaneously resist in subtle ways.

One participant, a journalist originally from a Latin American country, embodied this paradox, demonstrating how symbolic domination can be internalized in self-deprecating narratives, yet also mobilized to regain control over one's lived experience when that control has been denied. This participant expressed a deep admiration and respect for Quebec, as a province with a unique culture and language in North America. Despite identifying with Quebec society, he did not feel entirely accepted within it. He voiced frustration at what he perceived as a silent rejection from Quebec francophone publications, highlighting a lack of perceived professional recognition. This dichotomy between admiration and professional rejection expressed itself during the interview, when he adopted the imagined perspective of a majority group member to rationalize his feeling of professional exclusion. While expressing a sense of being dismissed due to a

presumed lack of linguistic proficiency, he simultaneously took a distanced, sociological stance to relativize his negative experience. He emphasized immigrants' responsibility to adapt to Quebec's francophone society, expressing a desire to acquire a native-sounding Quebec accent, which suggests a desire for assimilation:

> Si je me mets à la place d'un Québécois et j'avais eu cette histoire, et avec les groupes qui se confrontaient, toute ça, c'est sûr que même inconsciemment, je vais donner des possibilités aux gens qui ont les noms en français. C'est juste pour conserver comme notre pays, comme les gens disent au Québec, c'est normal, c'est un peu inévitable. [...] Je comprends aussi, je blâme pas le Québec pour ça. J'essaye de comprendre toute la sociologie derrière aussi. (PN8)

At the same time, this posture is difficult to interpret solely through the lens of symbolic domination. Is this recontextualization an adaptive strategy to cope with professional downgrading and lack of recognition, or an instance of internalized symbolic power? Both views may coexist. This ability to hold multiple, sometimes conflicting, viewpoints represents an extreme case where dominant narratives and personal resistance coexist and illustrates the ways accented speakers process and (re)interpret their lived experiences. They continuously navigate the dominant gaze while attempting to reassert control over their own narratives. These dynamics blur the boundaries between conforming to the established order and resisting exclusion. The participant's pursuit of professional recognition within the Quebec francophone media ecosystem, which he feels excluded from, encapsulates this paradox:

> Je me sens un peu blessé, mais je comprends aussi, comme je t'avais dit. Moi, je vais être réalisé le jour que je [me] vois dans un grand journal de Montréal, ou d'autres pays

> francophones, en France ou quoi que ce soit. Si je vois que je publie déjà dans un grand journal […], je pourrais me sentir à l'aise, même si je parle encore avec un accent. (PN8)

This journalist from Latin America is not the only one to express a split perspective, having to navigate between an imperative to conform and a personal will to resist and reclaim a sense of legitimacy. Other journalists held opposing views about their lived experience of stigmatization. Most vividly, they rejected victimhood and embraced a meritocratic discourse while occasionally expressing critical views toward the vulnerable situations and barriers they encountered. This meritocratic stance often frames professionalism as a way to prevent further stigmatization. The reluctance to identify oneself as a "victim" is constitutive of a difficult journey towards self-legitimization. Some were hesitant to even label their experiences as "discrimination."

This rejection of victimhood reveals ambivalences. It can function as a defence mechanism protecting journalists' sense of self-worth and professional identity, knowing that some participants encountered traumatic, or at least uncomfortable experiences, while simultaneously reflecting the internalization of dominant ideologies that minimize or invalidate accent-based discrimination. At the same time, it may also signal that openly discussing linguistic stigma is a professional taboo, especially for journalists who recognize holding other forms of privilege, such as whiteness.

For instance, participants tended to downplay the comments they received, referring to them as "clumsy" or "small remarks" rooted in ignorance and a lack of sensitivity rather than pure malice with discriminatory intent. As previously discussed, the concept of linguistic microaggressions may better capture these interactions. Though minor in appearance and denomination, microaggressions still carried emotional weight for participants. When sharing how these microaggressions made her feel, a French journalist working in Quebec both recognized their negative impact, while remaining careful not to attribute harmful intent to her colleagues:

> Quand on est tombé en pandémie et j'étais à la maison, je me suis rendu compte que : « Ah, je me sens plus tranquille ». C'est horrible à dire là, mais j'entendais moins de réflexions au travail qui me faisaient sentir que j'étais pas d'ici parce que ça va être des conneries de : « Ah tiens, qu'est-ce que tu manges ? Une salade d'endives ? Ah ben oui, c'est du Nord », tu vois. Enfin, tu sais, c'est comme les enfants immigrants qui sortent leur lunch à l'école et qui se font taquiner parce qu'ils ont un repas qui est pas comme les autres. Fait que j'étais moins confrontée à cette différence. Puis je sais que ça part pas d'une mauvaise intention parce que je sais que mes collègues m'apprécient, mais je l'ai quand même ressenti que j'avais un quelque chose en moins à ce moment-là à gérer, de ah oui, c'est vrai, faut que je fasse attention. (PN12)[21]

Distinction strategies were also frequently employed by accented journalists seeking to differentiate themselves from others in similarly stigmatized positions. In these narratives, calls for journalistic values and professionalism were foregrounded as a counterweight to potential discrimination. One French journalist working in Quebec emphasized her credibility and journalistic integrity as central to how she believes she is perceived by her audience:

> Le fait que on me perçoive comme quelqu'un qui sait de quoi elle parle, qui fait correctement son travail, qui se renseigne sur les sujets dont elle parle. Enfin, tu vois… pour moi là, le côté intégrité, déontologie, rigueur, c'est des choses qui sont importantes en tant que journaliste, et ça je pense, comme je te disais au début, je pense que je suis respectée pour ça et que ça m'a pas empêché du tout d'être une bonne journaliste ici ou d'être considérée comme telle […]. Je me sens pas du tout victimisée ou quoi que ce soit. (PN9)

[21] Endives are typically associated with cuisine from Northern France.

Of course, this rejection of victimhood may also reflect a desire to preserve self-esteem and professional worth. As will be further explored in the final section, calls to professionalism carry ambivalence. For some, professionalism suggests their accent has had little impact on their career, rendering it a non-issue. For others, professionalism is invoked to assert pride and justify their success despite the obstacles posed by their accent, acknowledging the added burden and calling for greater awareness of accented journalists' realities.

From Symbolic Domination to Voluntary Servitude. Given the extent to which participants appear aware of their position, it is worth considering whether the concept of "voluntary servitude" might more accurately resonate with the lived experience of accented journalists. Several journalists described choosing journalism despite their accents becoming an issue in this field. Sacrifices were viewed as necessary to access, remain, and progress in the profession. In their calculations, it appeared more rewarding to remain loyal to their employer by adapting to language expectations than to voice dissent or exit the organization, especially given the pressures of market competition and the risks of speaking out in professional settings. Often, participants explained that becoming a journalist was a well-motivated choice, stemming from a passion or profound sense of vocation. One participant said she consciously masked her regional Quebec accent as a "defence mechanism" for her career advancement. For her, "passing" represents a way to stay competitive in terms of linguistic capital, compete in the field of journalism, and obtain professional recognition. She framed her compromise as a matter of choice:

> J'ai décidé de le voir un peu comme un défi en fait, plutôt que de m'acharner ou de me fâcher contre la situation. J'ai décidé de travailler sur mon accent pour le perdre et de pouvoir rester en ondes. Si j'avais pas voulu, si je m'étais braquée, je serais partie. Parce qu'à un moment donné, il faut accepter de le faire et pas le faire non plus toujours de façon fâchée ou

négative. Donc à un moment donné, tu dis : « Ok, je lâche prise, c'est ce que ça prend ». J'aimais aller en ondes, donc j'ai fait ce qu'il fallait pour pouvoir le rester. (PN3)

As will be discussed next, this form of voluntary servitude and the adaptations it entails could be better understood as strategies of coping within a constrained environment, allowing journalists to reclaim a degree of agency over their professional paths, even while acknowledging the structural forces that limit their range of possibilities.

Conclusion. It remains difficult to draw a clear boundary between symbolic domination, understood as the internalization of hegemonic language norms with limited agency, and voluntary servitude, where accented journalists make strategic concessions in order to integrate into their field. Participants occupy a position where conformity to dominant norms coexists with moments of critical reflection or resistance. Language expectations are deeply internalized, often shaping journalists' behaviours and self-perceptions, but they are not immutable. As participants' testimonies reveal, their repertoire of responses ranges from overt critique to pragmatic adaptation, and the balance between the two varies from one individual to another.

In this landscape, the question of responsibility becomes central. Who is accountable for the reproduction of linguistic hierarchies and the exclusion of accented voices? Participants point to a multiplicity of actors, such as employers, colleagues, institutions, audiences, and accented journalists themselves, whose interactions shape the field of glottopolitics (Guespin, 1985). These everyday actions of language management may unintentionally contribute to reinforcing a glottophobic social order (Blanchet, 2019), but they also hold the potential to disrupt it. As will be seen in the next subsection, accented journalists contest dominant norms, although these forms of resistance are often subtle rather than overt or confrontational.

A Desire to Resist Professional Norms in a Constrained Environment

Accented journalists often seek recognition in professional environments that implicitly demand linguistic conformity. Inside these constrained spaces marked by normative expectations about voices, resistance rarely manifests as overt defiance. Instead, it expresses itself through subtler acts, such as discursive critiques, strategic adaptation, or personal reflexivity that allow individuals to navigate power while preserving a sense of self. This subsection explores how journalists resist language norms not only through action but also discourses and various forms of coping strategies, mobilizing concepts such as *tactics* and *strategies* (de Certeau, 1980), and coping (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) to make sense of the interplay of dominance and agency.

As Blanchet (2019) argues, challenging the glottopolitical order begins in the realm of self-awareness. It is through these mental and discursive shifts that individuals and groups begin to question the naturalized hierarchies surrounding language and imagine alternative ways of being. Bourdieu similarly suggests that combating symbolic domination requires an effort of countertraining of the *habitus* (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 172), aimed at transforming both bodily dispositions and cognitive structures of the dominated (Landry, 2006, p. 91). In fact, many participants in this study are already deeply aware of how their accent operates as a site of power and exclusion, but also has a subversive potential. Their reflections, even though they are not systematically translated into action, may signal the emergence of such a countertraining.

This subsection introduces (1) a typology of resistance, through cautious actions and discursive creations, and (2) various coping strategies where adaptation and resistance intersect.

A Typology of Resistance: Between Cautious Actions and Discourses. Throughout participants' testimonies, it appeared that resisting through direct confrontation of journalistic norms and expectations remained rare, though not entirely absent. Vocal and direct confrontation was reported less frequently than subtle forms of dissent through discourse. Although the following participants represent outliers, their experiences are crucial in understanding the specific conditions under which some accented journalists allow themselves to voice their concerns more openly (Hirschman, 1970). In contrast, other participants remained much more cautious in their approach and voiced dissent through discourses produced during the interview moment itself.

Voicing Dissent: Risks and Recognition. Among the reported experiences of dissent, most notably, some participants confronted colleagues over stigmatizing behaviours and comments, and one journalist took a more overt stand against their employer. One such participant works in broadcast journalism and has a disability that affects his pronunciation. After facing what he perceived to be rejection when entering the profession, he eventually broke into the broadcast world. Nevertheless, this professional achievement and form of recognition did not shield him from comments that delegitimized his distinct way of speaking, such as when a colleague told him that he "sounds weird" and was difficult to understand. When asked how he responded to such stigmatizing situations, the participant shared:

> De plus en plus mal on dirait, c'est drôle. Je sais pas si je réagi plus amplement parce qu'on est vraiment rendu dans un contexte d'inclusion, de diversité tout ça. Réagir mal, c'est pas le bon terme, mais je réajoute plus sur la défensive maintenant, parce que avant, je dirais que quand on me parlait de ça, j'essayais d'être soumis, puis je me disais : « Ok désolé, on va travailler là-dessus », puis aujourd'hui, ben je me rends compte finalement, bon, la société a un petit peu changé puis on se rend compte que c'est pas de ma faute si je parle de

cette façon-là. C'est que physiologiquement [...] je parle différemment d'autres personnes. (PN4)

Here, the participant points to a shifting context marked by greater emphasis on inclusion and diversity, which, in his view, empowers him to resist stigmatizing remarks with more confidence. He moved from a previously "submissive" posture to a more assertive position, embodying resistance in the act of responding and asserting the legitimacy of audible difference. He avoids framing his reaction as "bad," instead characterizing it as defensive, suggesting a justified and legitimate response rather than an emotional, inappropriate, or disrespectful one. His testimony suggests that the diversity and inclusion discourse has helped reverse the burden of proof, placing it on those who stigmatize, and not on those who are stigmatized. Yet, the struggle for legitimacy continues in everyday interactions. His voice remains atypical in the media landscape, even if he perceives meaningful progress since the beginning of his career:

> Aujourd'hui je dirais, je suis plus dans le mode défensif où je vais justifier ce qui se passe, je vais leur expliquer : « Ben oui mais c'est normal que tu comprennes pas ou que j'aie l'air un petit peu différent. Puis ça s'appelle une surdité, tu sais ». Puis c'est juste que je trouve dommage encore aujourd'hui, faut qu'on… ça arrive beaucoup moins souvent qu'avant, mais encore aujourd'hui, des fois, il faut qu'on s'excuse pratiquement de parler de la façon que je parle. (PN4)

Such confrontational attitudes have the potential to escalate when accented journalists become more vocal about their perceived exclusion, potentially putting their employment and career trajectories at risk. While some participants confronted colleagues, either directly or indirectly, challenging hierarchical superiors remained much rarer and fraught. The confrontations

must be carefully calculated, with responses crafted and delivered strategically, even under pressure.

For instance, one journalist, a French immigrant working in Quebec, recalled a manager's comment made during the hiring process, which she interpreted as questioning her feeling of belonging and legitimacy in the Quebec journalism industry. In her response, she emphasized her adherence to journalistic values and her sense of professionalism to counter the underlying narrative of otherness:

> J'ai dit que j'avais suffisamment de compétences professionnelles pour pallier les éventuelles lacunes que j'avais au niveau historique ou culturel sur le Québec, et que en fait quand t'es journaliste t'es pas expert de tout, mais par contre tu sais où aller chercher l'info, et que ça changeait rien que j'ai pas passé toute ma vie au Québec. (PN9)

This appeal to professionalism plays a key role in how accented journalists reclaim a positive professional identity and assert their legitimacy within the media ecosystem, an issue explored more deeply in the final theme. The journalist eventually secured this position at the media outlet, where she continued to work, viewing this as evidence that her French origins did not ultimately disadvantage her, despite being questioned about her background.

More dramatically, resolute confrontational strategies may not always yield the desired outcomes. In an industry where voices are heavily standardized, open denunciation and voicing dissent remained extremely rare among participants. One participant recalled how he confronted his employer in a more radical way, over what he perceived as accent and origin-based discrimination. In retrospect, he acknowledged that his response may have been too "aggressive." He ultimately left the media organization. This experience highlights the interplay of voice, exit,

and loyalty strategies (Hirschman, 1970) as accented journalists navigate perceived unfair treatment in the newsroom. In his case, when loyalty became untenable, voice emerged as a last resort to reclaim some sense of agency. Voicing and exiting coexisted, demonstrating how, for some, speaking out is mobilized as a last resort to attempt to regain some agency over an imbalanced power dynamic. These tactics may not always work in favour of accented journalists. Although this participant expressed regret over the outcome, other accented and foreign journalists may have benefited from his misfortune. This participant sought some relief in the idea that his struggle was not in vain. Reflecting on the aftermath, he shared:

> J'en ai parlé. C'est d'ailleurs pour ça que je sais que y a d'autres personnes qui ne sont pas canadiennes, francophones, ils ont eu également ces difficultés-là. Peut-être que ma démarche à l'interne, ça a fait aussi réfléchir les ressources humaines. Donc peut-être qu'indirectement, j'ai peut-être contribué, mais c'est les autres après moi qui en ont bénéficié. (PN11)

Resisting Cautiously. Although direct and upfront forms of resistance were reported by some participants, these instances remain scarce. In fact, testimonies stressed the difficulties of speaking up, the silence imposed on accented journalists, and, for some, the resignation that comes with the sense that their cause is indefensible.

As previously outlined, the power of hierarchy within newsrooms often inhibits journalists from openly addressing behaviours they perceive as problematic. The risk of professional consequences or being labelled as overly sensitive can discourage direct confrontation. As a result, dissent is more readily expressed after journalists leave the newsroom. Those still employed tend to rely on more indirect, cautious, and discursive forms of resistance, as will be seen in the following part.

This tendency to avoid direct confrontation was particularly pronounced among one accented journalist who must navigate not only the implicit norms of professional communication, but also the racialized and linguistic expectations projected on him. This participant, a Canadian journalist of Rwandese origins, had to respond to a stigmatizing interaction where he proceeded with caution and diplomacy. The following quote exemplifies the delicate balancing act required in these situations. In this case, he was faced with a linguistic microaggression, the repeated questioning about the origin of his accent:

> A: Il est arrivé à deux reprises que deux personnes viennent me voir et me demandent d'où sort mon accent. Et j'ai trouvé ça un peu incongru et j'ai essayé d'expliquer très honnêtement que je viens d'Afrique, que j'ai étudié presque tout le temps dans les lycées français et que c'est peut-être pour ça que je suis à l'aise avec un accent standard. Et ils étaient pas satisfaits. Figurez-vous.
>
> Q: Ah oui ?
>
> A: Oui, ils étaient pas satisfaits. Ils se grattaient le menton en disant : « Est-ce que vous êtes sûr ? ». Je dis oui. « Vous avez vécu en France ? ». J'ai dit non, j'ai pas vécu en France. Ils disent : « Ah mais c'est étrange ». Ils n'arrivaient pas à vraiment comprendre ça parce que pour eux, si vous avez grandi en Afrique, il faut que vous ayez l'accent totalement africain, je pense. J'ai l'impression. Je ne sais pas, ou à cause de mon nom de famille. (PN13)

Here, the journalist responds with restraint and diplomacy. Rather than expressing his frustration, he engages in self-explanation, attempting to explain to his colleagues that his accent originates from his education in French international schools in Africa, where he grew up. Despite his efforts, his interlocutors remain skeptical, which betrays their assumption that a Black person

from Africa cannot "naturally" speak with a "standard" French accent because of the prestige associated to it, highlighting how the misalignment between the journalist's accent and perceived race, on one side, and others' racialized expectations, on the other, can become a source of exclusion. The journalist's response illustrates the tension between the need to assert linguistic legitimacy and the fear of being perceived as confrontational or "aggressive." In such cases, the line between calm self-justification and more assertive resistance is thin, and the journalist must navigate it with care.

As illustrated in the previous quote and echoed in other journalists' testimonies, explicit criticism of stigmatizing experiences tended to come out during the interview rather than at the moment the incidents occurred. Several participants used the interview space as an opportunity to revisit and reinterpret their understanding of past stigmatizing interactions. These reflections would have been difficult to articulate directly to colleagues at the time. By contrast, the interview functioned as a space where these participants could step back to express emotions that would have been difficult to share within the professional constraints of the newsroom. These delayed responses act as a form of processing, allowing journalists to challenge and distance themselves from the othering perception that can accompany their presence in newsrooms.

When direct resistance is constrained in newsrooms by hierarchies and the need to maintain positive interpersonal rapport, accented journalists can engage in more nuanced forms of contestation. Through diplomatic responses, retrospective reinterpretations, and reflective discourse articulated in the interview setting, these journalists enact a form of resistance that, while less visible, underscores their critical awareness of the exclusionary dynamics they face.

Resisting Through Discourse. Participants' critiques of professional norms and linguistic expectations often emerge during the interview itself rather than in the moment of the stigmatizing

experience. This observation adds complexity to the ways in which resistance is articulated. Resistance does not necessarily manifest directly in interactions with sources of stigma but often takes the form of a discursive construction retrospectively mobilized to make sense of exclusionary experiences and to reclaim control over how their accent and linguistic identity are perceived within the journalistic field.

The simple fact that participants create and share these narratives in the interview setting is significant. It suggests that the interview served as a space where the usual power dynamics of silencing could be momentarily suspended. In contrast to the constraints of professional environments, where discussions of linguistic marginalization are often unwelcome or discouraged, the interview allowed participants to voice concerns and discomforts that otherwise remain unspoken. Some participants described the process as a form of relief, appreciating the opportunity to be heard and acknowledged in the context of this academic research. One participant expressed the desire to engage in this type of conversation:

> Je trouve que c'est quand même un sujet sensible, souvent tabou dans les médias dont on entend peu parler, mais qui a quand même, je pense, une assez grande importance parce qu'on est nombreux à avoir un accent au départ et à devoir composer avec certaines réticences du côté des employeurs. Donc ça, je pense que c'est un enjeu important. (PN3)

Another participant, a French journalist working in Quebec, explained that there is little general awareness of the issues surrounding language and accents in journalism:

> C'est intéressant de parler de son expérience de, j'allais dire d'immigrant, mais de professionnel avec un accent. On n'a pas toujours l'occasion d'en parler, puis c'est quelque

chose que les Québécois peuvent peut-être pas toujours comprendre, c'est normal je le comprenais pas avant de changer de pays, non plus. (PN10)

Across participants, confronting colleagues and managers was not a viable option for many, who could only afford to show signs of resistance in safer environments. This tendency is reinforced by the fact that, of the twelve interviewees included in the findings, only one consented to having their identity disclosed.

Within these discourses of resistance voiced during the interviews, one broadcast journalist called attention to the gap between public-facing commitments to diversity and the actual practices within newsrooms. She described a "double discourse" in her organization on issues of diversity. While diversity is promoted in its public image, internally, she was asked to take diction classes to "improve" her pronunciation, which effectively erased her regional Quebec accent. She denounced what could be qualified as "performative" diversity:

Je pense qu'il y a tellement un espèce de soucis de diversité, de respect, de tout ça, que je pense pas que les patrons, ben en fait il y a des patrons qui le disent, mais ils n'avoueraient pas qu'ils demandent à leurs employés de perdre leur accent, ils viendraient pas dire publiquement en ondes : « Nous, on demande à tous nos journalistes de perdre leur accent ». Sauf que dans les faits, c'est ce qui se passe. (PN3)

This organizational double-discourse, combined with the nuance between "accent" and "pronunciation," is criticized by this participant. Asked whether she would favour a more indirect or overt approach to asking accented journalists to change their accent, the participant explained:

En fait, je trouve hypocrite, ça me choquait de me faire dire, « tu peux garder ton accent » mais faut que tu modifies ta prononciation de telle façon qu'on l'entende plus dans les faits,

c'est un peu ce qu'on disait, donc je trouvais ça hypocrite. Je pense que quant à ça, je préfère l'approche frontale, même si c'est choquant. (PN3)

This participant was critical of how managers and her diction coach rebranded her accent as a technical matter of pronunciation rather than a marker of diversity. The insidiousness of this double discourse lies in the fact that, while it discursively legitimizes the presence of linguistic diversity in theory, framing it as a respectable aspect of one's identity, in practice, by treating accent as a "pronunciation" issue, linguistic diversity is recast into a sanitized, technicized concept, hence a depoliticized issue. As such, it becomes something to be worked on and "improved," effectively placing it outside the protective umbrella of diversity politics. This reveals a disconnect between the discourse of diversity and the lack of actual change in journalistic expectations at the newsroom level. It also fuels disillusionment and cynicism on the part of this accented journalist, who must navigate the gap between the organization's public image and the reality of professional norm enforcement. In contrast, it is worth noting the experience of a previously introduced participant with a disability, who found that the discourse of diversity and inclusion empowered him to assert his difference as a legitimate expression, while in the above-mentioned case, the same discourse had alienating effects.

Faced with dominant language norms that can lead accented journalists to self-stigmatization, some participants developed an opposing discourse that favours linguistic diversity against the logic of voice standardization. Participants who voiced these discourses also tended to be quite aware of how dominant norms structure the journalism field and reduce accented journalists' chances of professional success. As the following participant, a French journalist in Quebec, underlines, diversity in the media remains a distant horizon due to market pressures and a lack of initiative from recruiters:

> J'approuve pas du tout le fait que ces personnes-là, qui ont un fort accent, ne soient pas beaucoup dans les médias, mais je pense qu'il y a cette appréhension-là de la part des recruteurs. Le public a envie de parler à des gens qui leur ressemblent. Et puis bon bah voilà c'est… mais c'est terrible, mais c'est comme ça. Alors qu'au contraire, on devrait à mon avis encourager la diversité dans les médias, sous toutes ses formes, et je suis contente que certains le fassent. Mais j'ai l'impression que c'est la réflexion qui se fait lors des entretiens d'embauche, parce que les recruteurs ne veulent pas perdre leur audience. (PN7)

Others also integrated elements from the legal register to emphasize the need for actual equality of chances for accented journalists. One participant, stressing the importance of having more diverse voices on air, argued that accent should not be a barrier to employment when applicants' qualifications are equal, and suggested that such differential treatment likely already constitutes a form of discrimination under Quebec law.

For some participants, one's accent is a singular and positive feature, one that is basic but often overlooked when discussing issues of diversity. Not hearing accents on-air, for them, amounts to denying audience members the opportunity to hear themselves reflected in the media. These participants reframe accent from a purely linguistic or technical detail to an ethical issue that needs to be foregrounded in the media. They associate the call for greater diversity of accents with broader concerns about the representation of audiences as full members of society. For instance, a Quebec journalist whose first language is English explained that hearing different accents on-air signals to him that Quebec is a "mix," a diversified society in which members can recognize themselves in the voices they hear in the media.

Overall, participants challenged the idea of a mythicized "standard" language positioned at the top of a linguistic hierarchy, and that would be used as a gold standard to evaluate the

appropriateness of media language. They alternately referred to this ideal as “language” or “accent,” describing it as “international French,” “radio-canadien,” “neutral,” “montréalais,” a “mix of Quebec and French accents,” or even “accentless” or “unaccented” French. While many acknowledged that this “standard” accent is often seen as an asset in building a successful career, they also criticized it for failing to reflect the diversity of francophone audiences. One journalist described it as lacking “colour,” suggesting it conveys a monochrome, reductive image of society.

A Franco-Ontarian journalist offered a particularly nuanced and critical perspective, emphasizing the “biased” and socially constructed nature of what is perceived as the “standard.” Although praised for her “Radio-Canada accent,” she questioned its legitimacy as a representative voice for francophone audiences in Quebec and Canada:

> Tu peux être sûr que t'auras pas de problème à la radio ou même à la presse écrite, si voilà, t'es dans le standard, puis t'as ce qu'on appelle l'accent international. Donc je pense que celui-là est privilégié. D'un autre côté, je pense que cette idée-là est un peu biaisée par le fait que les gens qui écoutent les médias comme Radio-Canada ou un journaliste du *Devoir* ou de *La Presse* qui s'en va faire un topo radio, ou qui va à *Tout le monde en parle*, je ne sais quoi, forcément, le lectorat est peut-être d'une certaine classe sociale ou d'un certain milieu, ça peut être très montréalais surtout. Et donc on a cette idée que c'est un meilleur accent, plus représentatif, mais on va en région, l'accent est différent. Et puis je pense que ça dépend de la station de radio. Je pense qu'il y a des stations de radio où un accent plus que les gens vont qualifier de « populaire », c'est pas mon expression, mais c'est celle qu'on

utilise communément, va en fait être plus apprécié parce que les gens ont l'impression de s'entendre. (PN2)[22]

Her reflection underscores that the supposedly "neutral" and "superior" standard in journalism is in fact socially situated, reflecting the linguistic preferences of a particular cultural and economic elite, often urban, Montréal-based, and middle-class. She relativizes the authority of this norm, suggesting that in other contexts, such as regional radio, accents labelled as "popular" (a term she explicitly distances herself from) are more appreciated, precisely because they allow people to hear themselves. In doing so, she deconstructs the notion of a singular linguistic standard for francophone media, instead framing legitimacy as context-dependent and grounded in localized forms of social recognition.

Between Voice and Silence: Coping, where Adaptation and Resistance Intersect. Despite the prevalence of the above-mentioned discourses signalling resistance to professional language norms in journalism, it is important to emphasize that actively resisting beyond these discursive expressions remains a significant challenge for many participants. However, this dilemma between a desire to resist and a necessity to conform does not remain an unresolved contradiction, as participants deployed a variety of coping strategies to navigate the ambivalent reality they inhabit. This raises a fundamental question: Is adapting to professional norms synonymous with capitulation? Does adaptation always mark the end of resistance?

Coping can be defined as the "thoughts and behaviors used to manage the internal and external demands of situations that are appraised as stressful" (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004, p. 745). This process "unfolds in the context of a situation or condition that is appraised as personally

[22] *Tout le monde en parle* is a popular Quebec talk show aired by the public broadcaster, Radio-Canada.

significant and as taxing or exceeding the individual's resources for coping [and is] initiated in response to the individual's appraisal that important goals have been harmed, lost, or threatened" (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004, p. 747). Within this framework, coping is not a passive form of submission, but an active and strategic response to external pressures of the journalistic field. Drawing on Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1980), the notion of *tactics* is illuminating, as it highlights how individuals employ tactics, which are creative and subtle manoeuvres, to navigate, negotiate, and at times subvert the strategies of organizations that constrain them in their professional environments.

Thus, the various forms of linguistic accommodation reported by accented journalists should be understood concurrently through the lens of conformism and symbolic domination. As previously outlined, participants capable of modulating their accent often reflect critically on this process. For example, a broadcast journalist described concealing her Quebec regional accent as a "defence mechanism" essential to career advancement, especially as she witnessed an accented colleague being pulled off the air for refusing to work on their pronunciation. Linguistic accommodation, therefore, functions as a double-edged sword: it opens professional opportunities while simultaneously requiring a partial renunciation of one's linguistic identity.

Reclaiming Agency: Coping as a Powerful, Yet Imperfect, Endeavour. During interviews, participants repeatedly acknowledged the limits imposed on their "authenticity" in the realm of journalistic expression, both oral and written. Many described a disconnect between their professional practice and personal identity, often justifying this gap by emphasizing that journalism is, above all, a form of labour that is structured, constrained, and shaped by institutional norms, whereas more "authentic" self-expression was said to belong to the domain of private life.

For some, this perceived lack of “authenticity” in a professional role was sometimes experienced as a form of loss that prompted strategies of negotiation or resistance. Finding “cracks” in the journalistic craft, a few participants were able to assert a more personal voice in rare moments where they could take liberties with journalistic conventions.

One broadcast journalist, for instance, reflected on the rigid nature of scripted delivery in newscasts, noting that writing that is spoken in scripts is highly standardized and reviewed by editors, and subject to tight delivery. However, he described how live interviews outside of the newsroom sometimes became a space for a more spontaneous and personal style of expression. As he explained:

> Par exemple, au Parlement, il arrivait des moments où, quand il y avait une manifestation, on trouvait quelques francophones qui réagissaient à vif et là, bien sûr, les questions qu'on leur posait n'étaient pas écrites. C'était selon la situation, donc, là bien sûr, on essaie d'être nous-mêmes, on essaie d’être plus proches de ce que l'on est. Quand on lit un texte, parce que quand on lit un texte, c'est pas juste nous, il y a aussi, comme je vous ai dit en tout cas à cette époque, quelqu'un qui révise, même si c'est déjà écrit. (PN13)

This testimony emphasizes the tension between controlled forms of journalistic speech and unscripted moments that allow for more expressive agency. The participant could temporarily express a more personal voice, showing how authenticity can be negotiated in certain spaces as a form of coping against rigid professional expectations. Yet, it remains much more difficult to subvert norms in environments that are highly policed, as a journalist from a Quebec region suggested. This journalist found a subtle way of getting her regional Quebec accent audible on-air, while she usually must suppress it. She recognizes that, at times, using a regional Quebec accent can make her seem more “sympathetic” to the audience, who can appreciate this expression of a

regional identity. Although very subtle and not always voluntary, this signals an attempt at resisting her Quebec regional accent's silencing. This journalist remained realistic and stressed the risks of having her accent "slip" involuntarily by receiving negative feedback from managers monitoring her speech.

Coping seems to be made easier for participants who attained a certain level of power, such as a high-level management position, which enables them to subvert norms with much smaller consequences. Becoming a linguistic gatekeeper allows one to authorize what would usually not be. Of course, this requires being in certain positions of power, which are unattainable for many in the profession. The example of a French journalist working in Quebec's written press is particularly telling. She recalled how, when entering the newsroom at a low-level position, she first leaned into adhering to the norms of written Quebec French. She has since been able to let elements of the French from France variety enter her articles, without being too conscious about it:

> Je me suis vraiment adaptée […]. Puis en général, maintenant j'ai changé là parce que j'ai eu [âge], mais à l'époque j'étais vraiment pas du tout en mode rébellion, résistance puis je veux montrer que c'est comme ça. Mais maintenant, je vois que, sans me le dire spontanément, je passe un peu certains trucs, je sais pas comment dire mais, ouais en fait j'essaye… Je vois que la réflexion que j'ai, c'est vraiment d'accepter que j'écris différemment parce que j'ai un peu mélangé tout ça. (PN12)

Among participants, coping did not always appear to be a successful strategy. However, participants found comfort in at least making the effort. The following participant mobilized his identity to try to push the boundaries of what was considered newsworthy within his news organization. Although his testimony may not initially seem directly related to the question of accent, a closer examination reveals that his accent, origins, and position as a Canadian of Rwandan

descent are all intertwined in shaping his professional identity. Here, it is important to emphasize that accent must be understood as more than a linguistic feature. It constitutes a part of a broader identity mosaic that cannot be reduced to a purely linguistic element. In the newsroom, this journalist encountered gatekeeping when attempting to bring underreported topics into the news coverage. This passage illustrates how an accented identity can be mobilized in the newsroom to advocate for more diverse coverage. Accent is not merely a cosmetic or superficial concern. It signals a difference, and behind that difference lie lived experiences, perspectives, and worldviews that can be mobilized into journalistic practice. In this instance, resistance is expressed through the act of pitching stories on underreported or overlooked topics, despite the persistent challenge of editorial gatekeeping. The participant was responding to a question about the potential impact of his multiple national affiliations on his practice. His efforts, though constrained by resistance and hierarchical barriers, represent a subtle form of resistance:

> Dans la façon que j'ai essayé de trouver des sujets qui pouvaient intéresser plus les communautés afro, et je n'y arrivais pas tout le temps, et ça, c'était un peu dommage. Donc ça me préoccupait. Parce que bon, celui qui s'occupait des nouvelles nous donnait nos nouvelles, nos sujets. Quelquefois on proposait des sujets, mais ils n'étaient pas forcément pris. Donc oui, je dirais que là-dessus je n'avais pas beaucoup de choix. (PN13)

By leveraging this multifaceted identity, the journalist attempted to cope with a feeling he shared during the interview, that of not being considered by his colleagues. Proposing alternative coverage constitutes a form of resistance, introducing the perspectives of a community whose voices often remain unheard in journalistic spaces. In this case, his efforts to use his identity to challenge the boundaries of newsroom coverage were not necessarily fruitful, but they remain significant.

However, in other situations, newsroom colleagues became sources of support, engaging in forms of solidarity that help accented journalists cope with potentially stigmatizing experiences. Some participants were able to find safer spaces within their organizations and beyond, where they could express their feelings more openly, at times engaging in collective trauma healing. Navigating the logics of exclusion and inclusion in the newsroom was challenging for several participants. As discussed in the previous chapter, colleagues can be key agents of accent-based stigmatization in newsrooms. Yet, accented journalists occasionally found safer spaces with certain colleagues who made room for them to share their lived experiences and challenges. These supportive interactions most frequently took the form of conversations and attentive listening.

For instance, one French journalist working in the written press in Quebec recalled sharing her insecurities with colleagues, even preventively, as a way to de-dramatize uncomfortable situations and avoid potentially harmful comments or behaviours. “Breaking the ice,” in this sense, was a strategy for taking control of interpersonal dynamics that could otherwise become stigmatizing. She shared:

> C'est plus moi une façon d’éviter que les autres me renvoient cette faiblesse-là. Je préfère la mettre sur la table et dire : « Ok, hey, ça je suis insécure là-dessus. Est-ce que vous pouvez me donner des conseils ? ». Et donc ça fait que les gens apprennent, n'osent pas venir faire des blagues là-dessus parce qu'ils savent déjà que c'est un sujet un peu sensible. Je pense qu'il y a une petite technique derrière, mais aussi sincèrement, il y a des choses sur lesquelles j'ai vraiment besoin de conseils par rapport à ça de la part de mes collègues, c'est-à-dire : « Est-ce que telle expression s'utilise d’après vous ? Est-ce que ? ». Ça m'arrive de temps en temps de leur demander. Et ils me rassurent toujours par rapport à ça. (PN7)

What stands out in this testimony is that the participant did not report overt experiences of accent-based stigmatization in her newsroom. On the contrary, her narrative reflected a form of self-stigmatization. Sharing her insecurities with colleagues became a way to reclaim agency, managing her own vulnerability rather than letting it be used against her. Similarly, this participant also described a coping strategy involving a Quebec colleague, a photographer, who served as an intermediary during fieldwork and interviews. Because of her accent, the journalist feared being perceived as French, with all the associated stereotypes, and thus as a foreigner, potentially unable to understand the lived realities of local sources. She also worried about her capacity to understand regional Quebec accents and vocabulary. Especially when reporting in rural Quebec or covering sensitive issues like environmental disasters or homelessness, this photographer helped bridge the cultural and linguistic gap by decoding insiders' "jokes" or references:

> À chaque fois, je suis avec mon photographe dans des situations comme ça, et c'est le photographe qui met un petit peu de lubrifiant social dans la conversation, qui utilise les mêmes expressions, parce que moi je suis souvent perdue. En termes de vocabulaire, j'arrive à comprendre, mais je vais pas nécessairement avoir le réflexe d'utiliser moi-même ce vocabulaire-là. (PN7)

Although her perception of being seen as an "outsider" to Quebec society persisted, she at least managed to cope with added barriers and complete her work with the help of this colleague. This suggests that coping is not a perfect solution, but rather a form of piecemeal survival, a patchwork effort to navigate through interactions or situations where accented journalists are at risk of being, or feeling, stigmatized.

Sometimes, however, coping through the help of colleagues was not an option. When journalists felt that their coworkers either could not understand or were unwilling to engage with

their lived experiences of accentedness, they found solidarity among others who shared similar backgrounds. One French journalist working in Quebec explained how she was able to confide her frustrations, particularly those stemming from comments she interpreted as targeting her French identity, to another French colleague. This exchange laid the foundation for an emerging sense of shared experience where journalists engage in strategies of legitimacy-building and identity reclamation. These colleagues reflected together on a particular incident in the newsroom. While the participant, who described herself as more sensitive, found the event distressing, the other seemed less affected. Despite this difference, their dialogue fostered mutual understanding:

> C'est lui qui m'a fait remarquer que dans les médias, il entend beaucoup de réflexions sur les Français, donc c'est lui qui m'a comme fait réaliser que ça, c'était plus libéré. […] Je me suis questionnée. Puis je me suis rappelée des situations, par exemple la blague du 14 juillet, il a trouvé ça drôle. Et que je pense que je suis plus sensible que lui à ces questions-là. Mais ça nous a énervés en vrai, je pense que le sentiment… Des fois ça m'énerve, des fois je suis plus blasée parce que c'est juste comme habituel. Je suis quand même contente d'avoir quelqu'un qui peut me comprendre. Parce que sinon, je pense que je me sentirais très isolée dans ce genre de situation-là. (PN12)[23]

This mutual understanding between accented colleagues can be conveyed through something as subtle as a shared, knowing glance. One participant, a Canadian journalist of Rwandese origin who underwent diction training, recounted how a simple exchange of looks with a colleague, also of foreign origins and who was subjected to the same training, became a quiet but meaningful form of coping. Although they never discussed their discomfort, the look conveyed a

[23] The 14th of July is France's national holiday.

mutual recognition of the problematic nature of the situation and a shared resistance to the idea that their accents needed correction, refusing normalization and acceptance:

> On s'est regardés. C'étaient plus des regards de complicité que de commentaires […]. Les fois où on était ensemble, on se regardait de temps en temps, comme pour dire : « Il y a quelque chose qui n'est pas très clair ici, il y a quelque chose qui n'est pas très clair ». Mais on n'est pas allé plus loin que ça. (PN13)

Coping, indeed, does not necessarily take the form of words and interactions. Instead, it can reside in small gestures that create comfort against normative expectations. Collective and relational, even in quiet iterations, coping offers tools for resistance, such as with this participant who refuses to accept the forced problematization of his accent. This form of solidarity reaffirms the participant's ability to offer a counter-narrative to dominant professional narratives of linguistic conformity, even through the recollection of a micro, non-verbal interaction. Yet, by remaining silent in its expression, this example of coping brings into sharp focus the ambivalent, but complementary forces that transcend the experience of accented journalists: resistance and conformity.

The Ambiguities of Coping. Between the lines, it becomes apparent that coping is an ambiguous process for certain accented journalists, especially when journalists seem to hold deeply internalized expectations of what a "journalistic" voice should be. The simultaneous association of coping mechanisms and traits of conformism reveals the practical limitations of relying solely on the concept of coping. Indeed, coping refers not only to the management of professional expectations in day-to-day newsroom settings but also functions as a narrative device outside the formal boundaries of journalism. The stories participants told about themselves seem deeply

embedded into two opposing frameworks: one of assimilation and conformity to dominant linguistic norms, and another of reflexivity and subtle resistance to those norms.

The testimony of a journalist from a Latin American country provides an emblematic example of the ambiguity between the incorporation of hegemonic discourses and the ability to play, literally, with mainstream portrayals of Latino speakers. The feeling of "a lack," developed and discussed in theme 1, was particularly salient in his lived experience. He felt that his French was not "good" enough. This participant had prior radio experience in his country of origin. When asked whether he would consider replicating that experience by participating in a francophone broadcast in Canada, he responded:

> A: Si j'avais une émission de radio ou la télé pour moi personnellement, en français, je devais mettre mon niveau 80 % de plus, d'après moi, parce que c'est mon exigence. D'après moi, je parle français à 20 % maintenant, je devrais arriver au reste de 80 % qui me manque.
>
> Q: Sinon, tu te sentirais pas à l'aise de le faire ?
>
> A: Non, à date, à mon niveau maintenant, non pas du tout, pas du tout. Je devrais même me préparer comme un an ou quelque chose de même pour avoir un niveau de confiance pour m'exprimer dans… Parce qu'avant je faisais le show à la radio, mais dans mon pays d'origine, dans des radios communautaires et tout ça, alors j'aime bien comme faire le *entertain*, comme ils disent ici, au public. (PN8)

Feeling that his French was insufficient for a "serious" journalistic broadcast, this participant denied himself the possibility of speaking on air. However, he resolved this impasse by evoking a hypothetical situation in which he would lean into a stereotypical portrayal of a Latino voice, thus creating a character that would allow him to feel more confident:

A: Je pourrais être à l'aise de parler à la télé tout ça si je me mets dans un personnage, comme le Latino qui parle pas bien le français, je pourrais le faire sans problème.

Q: Ah oui ?

A: Ah oui, absolument. Oui. Oui, oui. Disons parce qu'aux États-Unis ils ont par exemple, c'est cette madame Sofía Vergara, je sais qu'elle parle bien l'anglais, mais elle accentue un accent latino, l'anglais comme un peu croche, mais ça c'est exprès. (PN8)

He concluded this reflection with the following remark:

Si les gens, ils savent déjà que c'est un Latino qui parle un peu croche le français, ben j'accepterai parce que j'aime bien le show-business. Oui absolument […]. Parce qu'il faut être réaliste aussi, parce que moi je suis pas politiquement correct, je fais des blagues sur ma situation. Des fois je dis à mes amis au travail : « S'il vous plaît, appelle pas l'immigration parce que je vais pas partir [dans] mon pays d'origine ». Tout ça. Mais je joue avec toutes ces réalités. (PN8)

What is most striking in this testimony is the ambiguity of the participant's attitude: is he performing according to audience expectations of a "Latino" voice that signals linguistic struggle and immigrant status, or is this a form of subversion, a deliberate adoption of a vocal mask that shields him behind a character, allows him to express himself more freely? This example raises difficult interpretative questions. Is this performance a manifestation of internalized stigma and linguistic insecurity, and a feeling of inferiority, expressed through the reproduction of a stereotyped voice (the Latino immigrant who speaks "broken" French)? Or is it a strategic reclamation of agency? In a highly constrained environment, this participant's room for manoeuvring is narrow. By voluntarily leaning into a stereotyped voice, he may reclaim a degree

of confidence and gain access to the airwaves, especially in a format that aligns with humour, entertainment, and "showbiz," which he acknowledged enjoying. This blurs the boundary between adaptation and conformity. By mobilizing a cliché, he carves out a presence in a media space where he feels otherwise excluded. In this sense, his performed voice could be seen as a form of resistance. At the same time, it risks reinforcing a stereotype of linguistic otherness.

The comparison he draws with the American Colombian actress Sofía Vergara adds another layer to this narrative coping technique. The participant recognizes that what the public may perceive as a stereotypical or "broken" accent, equated with ignorance or failure to assimilate, can be a strategic choice. It becomes an audible façade, a consciously crafted persona designed to improve one's chances of success in the media. In adopting this humorous and exaggerated voice, the participant shields himself from critique: there is nothing to hide or feel ashamed of because, in a sense, he prevents judgment by laughing at himself. In contrast, in a more serious or informational broadcast setting, his "Latino" accent in French might expose him to scrutiny from the public and self-consciousness.

In this light, the participant reminds us that journalistic broadcast genres, whether humoristic or informational, are fundamentally performances, where actors embody roles and voices that are deemed appropriate. In this spectacle, deviating from the script can be a *faux pas*, carrying professional risk. Approaching broadcasting as spectacle, with its archetypal actors and voices, allows for a powerful denaturalization of the journalistic voice, revealing it as a cultural construct sustained by underlying mechanisms of domination and reproduction. Conforming to an expected voice, however, does not prevent the "actor" from reappropriating the meaning attached to it. As this participant stated, he "play[s] with all those realities," including the expectations surrounding his accent when speaking French.

In an industry where accented speakers face reduced opportunities for on-air roles, performing a version of "broken" French that does not reflect his actual fluency might become a calculated move to regain a sliver of power in the face of stigma and exclusion. Bridging resistance and conformism, this example of narrative coping highlights the contradictions inherent to participants' pursuit of professional legitimacy. Centring their voices in the analysis opens space for a more nuanced understanding of these ambivalent strategies.

Conclusion. As seen throughout this subsection, accented journalists afforded themselves the possibility to openly voice dissent toward actors and structures that perpetuate linguistic stigma. Such overt expressions of resistance, particularly when they challenge employers or colleagues, often carry risks, potentially threatening mobility and interpersonal relations within the newsroom. As a result, most participants chose more cautious paths, engaging in subtle, indirect, and often silent forms of resistance. The interview setting itself emerged as a privileged space for voicing this resistance. Participants used the moment of the interview to articulate critiques that might otherwise remain suppressed. While these narratives are retrospective and sometimes ambivalent, they nonetheless reveal a reflexive stance toward dominant norms and power relations.

The intersection of conformity and resistance is at the core of the coping strategies described by participants. Coping, in this sense, functions as a mechanism through which participants navigate the tension between survival within the system and the desire to push back against its exclusions. While coping may offer a means of reclaiming limited forms of agency in a highly constrained professional landscape, it remains a fragile solution.

Theme 3: Conclusion

Theme 3 explored the ambivalent positioning of accented journalists as they navigate linguistic expectations within their professional field. They actively negotiate between their desire to succeed and the need to remain true to themselves. Living through this tension, participants do not align with either full conformity or outright resistance but rather evolve on a continuum shaped by contextual elements. Some adapt in subtle ways, others resist more openly, while many blend both approaches depending on the situation.

Throughout the testimonies, the notions of symbolic domination and voluntary servitude have served to illuminate the blurred boundary between internalized linguistic hierarchies and strategic adaptation. Passing, whether as a conscious tactic or an unconscious adjustment, appeared both as a coping mechanism and, at times, a source of discomfort or perceived loss. In many cases, adaptation was necessary for professional survival, but it rarely entailed full acceptance of the norms it sought to comply with. Coping emerges as a powerful but imperfect form of agency, an effort to reconcile professional expectations with personal identity in a constrained environment. Journalists' decisions to adapt, resist, or remain silent are shaped by complex judgments about what is possible and worth the cost.

While this theme stressed how accented journalists navigate the tension between conformity and resistance, the struggle does not end inside the newsroom. Beneath these professional calculations, deeper and more personal forms of negotiation are visible: The efforts to come to terms with one's own accent, and with what it symbolizes in a field that tends to favour linguistic homogeneity and standardization. Many participants engaged in identity-based endeavours. The focus on the next theme turns to more intimate dimensions of being an accented speaker in

francophone media, examining how journalists attempt to make peace with their accent, reclaim a fractured sense of identity, and legitimize their presence in the journalism industry.

Theme 4: To Make Peace with One's Accent: An Unequal Struggle to Legitimize and Reclaim a Fractured Identity

As previous themes underscored, accented francophone journalists in Quebec and Canada are on a tumultuous journey. Navigating their accentedness in a professional environment where their audible difference is often problematized, these journalists underwent a reconfiguration of their identity. Reshaped around self-depreciative perceptions and stigma, this identity was coupled with ambivalent behaviours, oscillating between conforming to professional norms and resisting them. Amid this conflicting reality, hope for change emerges, nonetheless. Making peace with their accent, some participants engaged in a process of legitimation, of themselves and other accented journalists, and embarked on a process of identity reclamation. In this quest for recognition, accented journalists attempted to weld back together two fractured identities: the professional and the linguistic. For clarity, this part analyzes journalists under their professional identity first, and linguistic second. However, both are often intertwined in participants' narratives.

As worthy professionals, they assert legitimacy and express a desire to be recognized and accepted on the basis of their skills. This legitimation can be understood as a process through which power, its relative authority, and the credibility of a journalist are constructed and become widely accepted as "natural." This process "brings the unaccepted into accord with accepted norms, values, beliefs, practices, and procedures" (Zelditch, 2001, p. 9). However, for accented journalists in this research, legitimation does not necessarily mean entering the realm of mainstream norms. Participants proceed to alternative legitimation that reframes their accented speech not as a

deviation from the norm, but as a voice grounded in lived experience and expression of linguistic diversity in the Francophonie.

As speakers, they assert the positive value attached to what others perceive as an "accent," but that they affirm as an integral, and positive, part of their identity. Reclamation can be defined as the process undertaken by marginalized groups to reshape the meaning associated with words that often designate them in a pejorative lens (Godrej, 2011). This form of linguistic reclamation happens in the public sphere, and through the mobilization of actors around this common goal, opposing mainstream representations and discourses about themselves. More specifically, identity reclamation refers to a similar work, but at the individual level of one's consciousness. It relates to an individual's self-understanding and how a person comes to question and challenge internalized hegemonic discourses to reclaim ownership of their own identity (Godrej, 2011).

It must be emphasized that making peace with one's accent does not mean losing the war, or even capitulating. Parallel to reconsidering their professional worth and regaining pride is their accentedness, these participants continued to denounce situations they considered to be unfair, for instance, by naming accent-based discrimination as a legitimate form of discrimination and sharply opposing differential treatment on the basis of one's accent.

This theme raises important questions for journalism regarding the management of diverse identities within the field that cultivates a unidimensional vision of the "journalist." In a way, participants assert a multifaceted definition of what a journalistic identity could be. The expression of their accented voice, either written or oral, forces the coexistence of identities that are not meant to be. Can the industry accept the individuality of its practitioners, who may be more than professionals? As this research shows, behind a professional, there is a speaker. Some wished to be recognized, considered, and appreciated as a whole, not as fragments, not having to constrain their

voices. Bridging discourses and practices on diversity remained an obstacle, discussed in this final theme.

Importantly, it must be recognized that not all participants included in this study engaged in these processes of legitimation and reclamation, and some did not necessarily fully regain pride and a positive sense of identity. Identity reclamation sometimes remains deeply aspirational, especially when having to grapple with the consequences of stigma and discrimination, or the barriers to voicing dissent within news organizations. These processes, legitimation and reclamation, were also imperfect, transcended by individual and collective tensions, with participants not all necessarily agreeing on the terms used to name their lived experiences, and the means to employ to achieve greater equity and representation. Away from images of "accented" speakers as a homogenous group, this theme underscores the variety of points of view that complicate the collective struggle towards legitimizing accented journalists in the media.

This theme is organized around two main subsections. First, accented journalists, as worthy professionals, assert their legitimacy. Second, these journalists are simultaneously on a quest for identity reclamation, redefining themselves as proud speakers. The conclusion subsection touches on the difficulties of such endeavours, as a process that is necessarily a source of contestation, within accented journalists themselves, but also in their professional environments, raising broader questions about the viability, acceptation, and relevance of solutions for better inclusion of linguistic diversity and its accents in the journalism industry and society at large.

Reconciling Fractured Identities: Accented Journalists as Worthy Professionals

> J'ai pas envie qu'une histoire d'accent soit un obstacle à ça. Je pense que le travail que je fais est plus grand que ça. Je pense aussi que c'est comme une espèce de lutte psychologique

> que je dois régler moi-même. Tu sais, faut que j'arrête aussi de me poser autant de questions sur mon accent au moment d'entrer en ondes. Je pense que je devrais vraiment plus me concentrer sur ce je raconte plutôt que sur l'accent avec lequel je le raconte. Donc, j'y participe [aux médias parlés] pour cette raison. (PN2)

The experience of this participant, a Franco-Ontarian journalist working in Quebec, offers a vivid example of resilience. Although she experiences linguistic insecurity and self-stigmatization as an accented journalist, she chooses to remain heard in broadcast media. Her testimony encapsulates several key elements discussed in this final theme. Through a process of accent legitimation and identity reclamation, she exemplifies those participants who refuse silence and actively embrace their perceived audible difference.

Professionalism and linguistic competence. The work undertaken by accented journalists to reassert legitimacy and reclaim pride in their identity often takes the form of a conscious effort. This includes a form of individual work on their own accented speech to sound more "like themselves." As one French participant working in Ontario expressed, consciously refusing to alter his accent is "about not denying who I am" (PN11). Among participants, a widespread strategy was to invoke professionalism as a way to reclaim their legitimacy as journalists despite holding a stigmatized accent.

Throughout the interviews, participants made numerous legitimacy-building claims, producing discourses that asserted their merit within the journalistic field. One participant, a journalist whose disability affects his pronunciation, initially faced rejection from broadcast journalism. Eventually, however, he was given a second chance to produce a television report, which led to a more permanent on-air position. Reflecting on the reasons why he managed to secure such a position, he speculates that managers may have recognized his professionalism and

understanding of journalistic standards. In the excerpt below, he reaffirms his ability to succeed as a journalist despite being perceived as accented:

> Outre la façon que je parle, mon histoire, je pense elle était bonne. Je la racontais d'une très bonne façon visiblement, parce qu'ils appréciaient ça. J'allais trouver des intervenants qui étaient adéquats. Donc je pense qu'ils se sont rendus compte bah, sur les 10 points qui font un bon reporter, on a 9 et demi, que ça fonctionne bien, tu sais, il y a le demi-point de l'accent. Avec le temps, j'ai réussi quand même à prendre ma place puis à m'intégrer. (PN4)

In some instances, participants' claims to legitimacy leaned into a meritocratic discourse, a feature previously discussed in theme 3. However, in this context, merit is not used to frame the accent as a flaw to be overcome. On the contrary, journalists assert that their accent is an integral part of their professional identity, something that must be accepted as is. These journalists affirm their self-worth and professional capacity, refusing the implication that legitimacy only comes with conformism. For accented broadcast journalists in particular, asserting their mastery of spoken French frequently served as a legitimizing tool, debunking the preconceived idea that their accent impairs their ability to be understood by a broader audience. For example, the previously introduced journalist (PN4) was once asked to take classes to "improve" the way he spoke. Confronted with this injunction, he sought out speech-language pathologists for guidance. He was repeatedly turned away, as specialists concluded that he did not face any communication issues that would justify intervention:

> Est-ce que j'ai des enjeux de communication dans ma vie tous les jours ? Aucun. Je me fais comprendre. Donc j'étais pas un bon client pour les gens que j'ai rencontrés. [Ils] m'ont rapidement dit qu'ils ont d'autres chats à fouetter, essentiellement, que de me donner des

cours à moi, parce que la réalité est que mon français et ma façon communiquer est si bonne que c'est mon travail à temps plein en étant journaliste. (PN4)

This journalist undertook a long personal and professional journey before coming to recognize his legitimate place within broadcast journalism, despite having an "atypical" voice. Having struggled for years with a feeling of imposture, he now feels that he has earned his position and is fully integrated into the journalistic field. Narratives of deservingness, which correspond to the belief that journalists had progressively "earned" their place in professional spaces, were closely linked to feelings of empowerment. "Dominating" their fears and overcoming internalized self-consciousness, several journalists managed to reconcile with their accent and shed the impostor syndrome that had once accompanied it. One French journalist working in Quebec described the complex interplay of these emotional processes. After years of professional advancement within her media organization, she explained that she had gradually become prouder of her French accent and more at ease with how it signals her identity:

J'ai l'impression que j'assume beaucoup mieux qui je suis, et je pense je me suis un peu renforcée aussi, c'est-à-dire que professionnellement, je me sens suffisamment solide pour assumer voilà, la façon dont je parle, d'où je viens, alors qu'au début, j'étais plus fragile et que je pense que c'est quelque chose qui me fragilisait d'avoir cet accent français, de pas se fondre dans la masse, de devoir faire plus mes preuves parce que j'étais Française. Là maintenant, j'ai l'impression que je les ai faites mes preuves et ça, je me sens plus forte par rapport à ça. (PN9)

Needless to say, French language proficiency is a core competency in journalism. It is therefore not surprising that accented journalists remobilized this skill as a form of proof of their legitimacy to practice the profession. Many participants explicitly denounced the conscious and

unconscious biases that persist around linguistic norms, and that portray accented journalists as less adequate. One participant in particular, the Franco-Ontarian journalist introduced earlier, spoke strongly against such prejudices, urging recruiters to revise their practices to mitigate the risk of accent-based discrimination, especially in the hiring of journalists from Canadian francophone minority communities. She argued that recruitment tests should be "accent-blind":

> Ce qui pourrait être pas mal en fait, c'est de passer des tests de français, nonobstant l'accent, c'est-à-dire avant même de se poser la question « est-ce que l'accent passe ? », c'est : « Est-ce que le niveau de français passe ? ». Parce que souvent, on va associer un accent non-québécois, non-français, à un niveau de français plus bas. Et ça, si on veut parler de discrimination, je peux en faire tout un discours parce que oui, là-dessus, on entend un Franco-Albertain qui sort de l'université versus un Québécois qui sort de l'UQAM [Université du Québec à Montréal], la plupart vont embaucher celui qui sort de l'UQAM. Le niveau de français n'est pourtant pas forcément meilleur. Donc je pense que sur les tests de français, on peut définitivement améliorer les choses. (PN2)

Although the participant employs the hypothetical case of a Franco-Albertan graduate, this example serves as a reflection of her own lived experience as someone from a minority francophone context. By articulating the example in hypothetical and generalized terms, she distances herself while simultaneously affirming her inclusion in the broader category of minority francophone speakers subject to discrimination.

Building legitimacy through naming. As with resistance (explored in theme 3), legitimacy appears to be expressed more often discursively than practically. In this context, naming emerged as both a tool for legitimation and a source of emotional comfort for participants, who had long struggled with making sense of their stigmatizing experiences. As seen in the mobilization of a

pro-linguistic diversity discourse, which allowed some journalists to "reverse the burden of the proof" onto those perpetuating accent-based stigmatization, naming functioned similarly. To varying degrees, participants described finding meaning in their experiences through the use of conceptual tools. In recounting the challenges she faced as an accented journalist from France living in Quebec, this participant introduced various concepts (auditive discrimination, microaggression, accent-based discrimination) without prompting from the interviewer. For her, naming such stigmatizing experiences, regardless of the exact term used, and sharing such experiences with others facing similar situations, can potentially become an emotional outlet, pointing to both its therapeutic and collective dimensions. Still, the participant's perception that "there is not really a term" signals the difficulties of finding the right word to describe one's experience of accent-based stigmatization:

> Parler de racisme est un peu excessif. Mais peut-être de discrimination auditive ou de microagression, je sais pas […] y a pas vraiment de terme, mais de discrimination liée à l'accent ou de remarques liées à l'accent, et le fait d'en parler avec d'autres gens qui vivent la même chose, bon, c'est un peu un exutoire, quoi, après on passe à autre chose. (PN9)

The concept of microaggression resonated with several participants, who recognized themselves in the term and in situations it describes. For them, this naming helped reuniting a fractured sense of identity by emphasizing the unfair and often insidious nature of the comments or treatment they had endured. The same journalist reflected on the power of naming:

> Je pense que de sensibiliser, de le nommer, de… Tu vois, le terme, je connais même pas alors que je le subis depuis 16 ans. Je trouve que c'est un truc qui est super important et les médias, à mon avis, si on leur mettait un peu la tête dans leur caca en disant : « Ça, ce que tu fais, c'est de la discrimination pure et simple au même titre que rejeter quelqu'un parce

qu'il a un nom africain », et bien je pense qu'ils seraient bien embêtés et qu'ils seraient bien obligés de changer leurs façons de faire. (PN9)

For participants, naming their realities represented a form of empowerment, building a better understanding and fostering an understanding of a shared condition among accented speakers. As will be discussed in the conclusion, some participants expressed discomfort with analogies between accent-based discrimination and racism, questioning the appropriateness of the term discrimination in this context. Nonetheless, labelling a social phenomenon using a specific term is far from a neutral act. It can represent a first, crucial step toward recognition and mobilization.

The power that resides in drawing attention to a phenomenon that might otherwise remain invisible. It opens space for personal and collective awareness and can possibly lead to the construction of a social problem. Naming is the condition of the potential emergence of a social problem, recognized as such, and that can subsequently be subject to the construction of a public problem. As Emmanuel Henry (2020) underlines, the construction of public problems refers to processes "through which social problems […] acquire a public dimension" (p. 152), and that "talking about the construction of public problems underscores that processes of publicization are all but natural or spontaneous, and that there is no direct link between the objective importance of a problem, and the public surface it occupies" (2020, p. 152).[24]

It must be acknowledged that participants did not guide themselves alone on this path for self-recognition and healing. In reuniting their fractured identities, accented journalists were sometimes alone, but more often received support from peers and colleagues. Furthermore, in an

[24] Translation from the author.

optic of co-creation of knowledge, I, the researcher, also played a role in shaping the direction of the interviews. While participants were free to explore themes that emerged organically, I occasionally introduced the concept of linguistic microaggressions.

In total, the term microaggression appeared in five interviews. In four of these cases, the participant was prompted with a question about whether this term could describe their experience. One participant, upon hearing the term for the first time, reacted: "J'ignorais. J'aurais jamais pensé, mais oui, je pense que ça, ça s'applique tout à fait" (PN11).[25] Another agreed that it was "completely the right term" and proceeded to describe an incident she identified as a microaggression. A French participant showed surprise when she learnt about the existence of terms such as "accentism" and "glottophobia." She recognized the potential of a term like accentism to raise awareness of her situation:

> C'est une réalité à laquelle les gens sont totalement hermétiques, c'est-à-dire qu'autant la couleur de peau, on commence à être un peu sensibilisés, conscients de nos biais. Autant je pense que l'accent, il y a encore beaucoup de gens qui tombent des nues, moi, quand je leur dis, des Québécois, quand je leur dis : « Mais en fait, on me renvoie systématiquement à mon accent ». [Ils répondent] : « Ah bon ? Ah bon ? ». Donc je pense que c'est quelque chose qui est peu connu, l'accentisme. Donc oui, je crois que ce serait intéressant de sensibiliser à ça. (PN9)

The mobilization of the notion of "authentic voice" also helped participant connect disparate elements of their lived experience. When asked about this notion, one journalist expressed

[25] "I didn't know. I would have never thought, but yes, I think that applies perfectly."

appreciation for the interview's ability to put words on his realities, which allowed him to better understand and articulate his ongoing efforts to preserve his accent:

> Honnêtement, j'apprécie beaucoup cette entrevue parce que t'arrives à mettre des mots, parce que t'as fait ton travail de recherche et ton travail académique. Moi c'est plus du vécu, même si j'ai de l'auto-réflexion qui quand même… Microagression, authenticité, minorité audible… C'est oui. Donc je dirais oui, c'est une quête d'authenticité que je fais. C'est pour ça que j'essaye de conserver mon accent. (PN11)

For this French participant, the word "discrimination" was also employed in the same healing sense. Although the situation he recounted had caused him deep distress, naming it retrospectively as discrimination helped him build a new understanding of his life trajectory, as an individual and an immigrant in Canada from a former colonial country:

> Ça m'a rendu beaucoup plus ouvert à la différence d'avoir été victime de discrimination. Je pense que ça m'a aussi ouvert beaucoup plus aux erreurs du passé du pays colonial d'où je viens […]. De se retrouver la plus petite poupée russe après avoir grandi dans un pays où c'était peut-être la plus grosse poupée russe, ça donne un point de vue différent et ça peut permettre de comprendre un petit peu mieux qu'est-ce que ça veut dire d'être victime de discrimination. Donc finalement quand on fait partie d'une majorité, on est peut-être moins soumis à ce genre de microagressions ou de macroagressions. Et puis finalement de se retrouver tout au bas de l'échelle, ça donne un point de vue différent. Et puis ça permet de prendre conscience de certaines choses. (PN11)

Enduring discrimination prompted this journalist to reverse his former perspective as a French person. The metaphor of the matryoshka dolls symbolizes this shift from being part of the

majority group to experiencing otherness and a more vulnerable position. This reflexivity allowed the participant to decenter himself from past forms of ignorance of systemic inequalities, which opened the way toward cultivating a more critical view of France's colonial and postcolonial legacies. Using the term "discrimination" functioned as a sort of personal healing mechanism as well as a political act in which he repositioned himself within a broader historical context, which underlines how naming is deeply connected to sense-making.

Conclusion: Rethinking the "Authentic" Voice. Welding together fractured identities, the professional and the linguistic, becomes an act of self-reconciliation. Against the perception that their accent "spoils" their identity, some journalists engaged in a deliberate and conscious effort to reserve both external and internalized stigma. This process, similar to what Goffman describes as a rupture in one's "moral career," involved rejecting the imperative to "pass" and instead embracing one's stigmatized identity (Goffman, 1963/1986) as integral to professional identity. However, this aspiration is not seamless. As one Franco-Ontarian participant explained, being "true" to her voice requires vigilance: "J'essaie d'y faire attention, j'essaie de parler le plus naturellement possible parce que je veux aussi être naturelle. Naturelle, c'est pas le bon mot, je veux être intègre en fait, je veux être moi-même" (PN2).[26]

This attention to controlling one's voice directly contradicts the idea of the "authentic voice" as something natural. Instead, authenticity appears as an ongoing negotiation, as an aspiration more than a stable fact. Some participants questioned or critiqued the notion itself, thought as a myth that cannot be attained because of their need to constantly adapt to social interactions and communicational environments, which suggests that an "authentic" voice is better

[26] "I try to pay attention to it, I try to speak as naturally as possible because I also want to be natural. Natural, that's not the right word, I actually want to be honest, I want to be myself."

understood not as a fixed linguistic reality, but as a subjective adequation between the vocal performance, self-image, and the identity sought to be projected. In this sense, authenticity is self-perceived and resides in the speaker's own metalinguistic discourses, without necessarily being heard as such in the ears of others.

Such heightened self-awareness and critique of normativity also echo Bourdieu's symbolic revolution, defined as an "action collective visant à rompre pratiquement l'accord immédiat entre [les] structures incorporées et les structures objectives" (Bourdieu, 1992, p. 149, as cited in Landry, 2006, p. 91), which itself necessitates a "countertraining" against these very own incorporated structures (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 172). As Bourdieu summarizes in *Pascalian Meditations*: "While making things explicit can help, only a thoroughgoing process of countertraining, involving repeated exercises, can, like an athlete's training, durably transform habitus" (2000, p. 172).

In fact, journalists' struggle took the shape of collective efforts and acts of solidarity. These legitimation efforts have deep connections to broader collective aspirations for a media future where accents are included. As one Franco-Ontarian participant explained, her choice to remain in broadcast journalism transcends her own person, almost as if it were a political action. She sees her media presence as a way for Quebec and Canadian Francophonie to better acknowledge one another:

> Je suis très pro rapprochement entre le Québec et l'extérieur du Québec. Et selon moi, si on peut commencer à la radio par s'inviter les uns et les autres, ça peut déjà être pas mal, notamment pour faire découvrir les accents. Alors l'accent québécois, tout le monde le connaît à l'extérieur du Québec, c'est pas un problème, mais l'inverse n'est pas forcément vrai. (PN2)

This desire to be heard and to make room for accent diversity in the media soundscape signals a quest that goes beyond professional recognition. It marks the beginning of a more personal journey toward identity reclamation, where pride in one's accent is mobilized to resist linguistic exclusion. This quest is the focus of the next subsection.

Proud Speakers on a Quest for Identity Reclamation

> The construction of self-conception remains a site of deep contestation. We are, in different complex ways, always subject to others' stories about us, so that our ownership of our identity is partial at best. In the construction and maintenance of any one person's identity, a complex web of personages participates in an equally complex web of ongoing dialogical interactions that involves the authoring of stories, the exchange of ideas, and the craving out of ownership. (Godrej, 2011, p. 111)

To heal fractured elements of their linguistic and professional identities, several accented journalists engaged in a process of identity reclamation. Reclamation refers to the active redefinition of "spoiled" parts of a person's identity that have been previously devalued through stigma. It aims to transform what has been experienced as a source of marginalization into a source of pride or legitimacy. Godrej (2011) argues that the concept of reclamation has been applied to "the public sphere of explicit verbal discourse" (p. 111), understood as a space where marginalized groups work to resignify derogatory labels imposed upon them. This type of linguistic reclamation functions as a political and discursive act, "a tool for disarming the power of a dominant group to control one's own and others' views of oneself, to categorize oneself or one's group in a totalizing way" (p. 111). Such linguistic reclamation is noticeable among certain accented journalists, who developed a more positive definition of what "having" an accent means.

However, another form of reclamation observed among participants operates at the level of individual self-understanding, echoing Farah Godrej's focus on how reclamation can happen in the "private sphere" and the consciousness of individuals. In her attempt to develop a phenomenology of reclamation in the context of women's studies, Godrej shifted the focus from linguistic, public reclamation to the reclamation within "the interior female consciousness," which "remains a site of colonization by patriarchal discourse" (p. 111). Employing a discursive model of identity construction, she underlines that "reclaiming self-understanding […] is in part about liberating this consciousness from its propensity to judge itself through the lens of the dominant group, to speak to itself and of itself in the voice of patriarchy" (p. 112). For accented journalists, reclamation is not only about asserting pride externally, but also transforming the way they think and speak about themselves.

Toward Accent as Pride. For several participants, particularly those who initially reported a damaged sense of identity, this individual process of identity reclamation was evoked during the interviews. This process is neither absolute nor perfect, but it allows participants to reposition themselves as legitimate speakers and professionals.

One participant, who has a disability that affects his pronunciation, offers an emblematic case of such inner transformation. Asked whether he would consider changing his accent, he replied:

> Après mon premier reportage télé, je t'aurais dit que je voudrais avoir la voix de mes autres collègues de correspondant à l'étranger, avec le plus beau français, puis la langue la plus soutenue avec un accent qui est beaucoup plus canadien-français ou international, parce que visiblement, c'est la clef du succès. Aujourd'hui, je te dirais que je suis extrêmement fier de la voix que j'ai, puis que je la changerai pas. Puis je me dis, écoute, ça va peut-être me

> donner moins d'opportunités ou d'occasions, mais je vais être heureux. Puis je vais pas me prendre pour quelqu'un d'autre. Je vais pas falsifier ma voix, falsifier mon accent. Donc je ne changerai pas pour un autre accent, même si j'avais vraiment un accent français soutenu, j'aurais peut-être plus d'opportunités. (PN4)

What is being claimed here is a voice that has a right to exist professionally without having to be "falsified" to obtain recognition. His voice, marked by both an "audible" disability and a "regional" Quebec accent, carries a double stigmatization. Nonetheless, he discursively reclaims a more positive identity by highlighting how his unique voice may be an asset to represent and connect with the publics he serves:

> Je suis fier de faire le métier que je fais parce qu'on m'a souvent dit que je pourrais pas le pratiquer à cause de mon handicap. Donc moi, j'ai une grande fierté de ça, puis même des fois, je me dis : « Écoute, que j'ai un accent de sourd entre guillemets, ben ça permet à d'autres personnes de s'identifier ». […] Ça sert à quelque chose que je sois moi en ondes à la télévision aussi, fait que c'est une belle fierté. (PN4)

This pride extends to his regional Quebec French accent:

> Même affaire quand on me dit j'ai un accent de Queb, de Québécois de région rurale, je suis comme, bah, c'est ce qui fait aussi ma personnalité. Puis c'est ce qui fait aussi des fois que j'ai l'impression d'être proche de mon auditoire, moi, quand je travaille. Puis souvent on va le faire remarquer : « Je sais pas comment tu fais, mais toi, t'es capable de parler au monde, là ». (PN4)

Through his reflections, linguistic identity and disability, once perceived as barriers, can become a site of resistance and pride. In line with Godrej's theoretical framing, such forms of

identity reclamation challenge the internalized norms of linguistic homogenization and affirm the value of voices that defy standardization efforts in news organizations. More broadly, Gluszek and Dovidio (2010), reviewing the literature on accents, listed numerous studies showing that accented speakers can view their particularity as an asset rather than a liability. For example, they may embrace "their new identity as a unique positive characteristic that makes them distinct from the majority of the native population," develop "a positive in-group identity," or, when they perceive their accent positively, "may focus on the positive aspects of speaking with an accent, be more assertive in communication, and experience more positive interactions" (2010, p. 221).

Reclamation: An Ambivalent Quest. Identity reclamation is a slow journey and often a non-linear process, with turning points, ups, and downs. Shifting perceptions of one's accent, from a shameful burden to a symbol of identity pride, is a crucial step in rebuilding a fractured sense of self.

One Franco-Ontarian journalist working in Quebec, who reported experiencing linguistic insecurity, shared her evolving relationship with her accent and identity. The interview served as a moment of introspection, allowing her to imagine an alternative trajectory in which she would have allowed herself to be more "natural":

> Si je reprenais naturellement l'accent franco-ontarien, que je débarquais à la radio, que je me disais la même chose que je me dis aujourd'hui, c'est-à-dire « ne change pas ton accent, sois naturelle », je pense pas que je serais gênée honnêtement, parce que j'ai grandi depuis, j'ai compris qu'il n'y avait pas à avoir honte. (PN2)

Her testimony reveals the ambivalent nature of identity reclamation. Far from being a definitive endpoint, the process is composed of fluctuating and sometimes contradictory feelings

that can appear to be paradoxical. The same participant reflected on her journey with a mixture of grief and pride:

> Je sais qu'enfant c'était particulièrement difficile, et puis donc, voilà, ça me suscite un petit peu de tristesse, un petit peu de honte. D'un autre côté, ça me rend d'autant plus fière d'être francophone aujourd'hui. En rétrospective, ça renforce ma fierté. (PN2)

This coexistence of seemingly opposing feelings is central to her testimony. Notably, both accents, the Franco-Ontarian one she "lost" and the Quebecer one she "adopted," are associated with pride. Her account illustrates a reconciliation between multiple affiliations, where Franco-Ontarian roots and belonging to Quebec are no longer perceived to be mutually exclusive. Instead of a fight against herself, reclamation takes the form of embracing several identifications and allegiances. Her attitude toward Quebec and Quebec French evolved over time, leaving space for new forms of belonging and pride. What was previously resisted gradually became embraced:

> Quand je suis arrivée au Québec, j'avais beaucoup d'idées préconçues sur le Québec, beaucoup de préjugés et j'ai fait beaucoup de chemin depuis. Mais au début, en fait, j'avais vraiment pas envie d'adopter l'accent québécois. Je résistais quasiment à ça parce que je sais pas je voulais pas devenir Québécoise à la base. Et puis mon attitude aujourd'hui est très très, très différente. Aujourd'hui, il y a beaucoup de fierté associée à ça. Et puis ben ouais, l'accent québécois, je dirais, c'est plus de la fierté qu'autre chose. Un petit peu de tristesse parce que ça veut dire aussi que j'ai perdu l'accent franco-ontarien. Mais voilà, je pense qu'on s'intègre aussi un petit peu par l'accent des fois. Donc, c'est ça, pour l'accent québécois, je dirais surtout de la fierté. (PN2)

In this ongoing quest for identity reclamation, several accented journalists highlighted the importance of encountering inspiring role models who prompted them to reflect on alternative ways of perceiving their accent. The previously cited Franco-Ontarian journalist, for instance, explained that meeting with inspiring francophone figures helped her realize that there was no shame in her accent. Encounters with other accented journalists also proved significant, prompting further reflection and questioning of participants' identity and accent. One French journalist, originally from Northern France, a region with a distinct accent, shared how a conversation with another journalist from the same region triggered a deeper awareness of how much she altered her French accent to blend in:

> Je me rends compte qu'on a pas du tout la même façon de parler parce qu'elle, je sais qu'elle vient du Nord, puis je sens qu'elle cherche pas du tout à gommer [son accent] et je trouve ça très inspirant parce que je me dis, moi, j'ai voulu faire un peu le caméléon au détriment de comment je me sentais. Je me dis : « Mince, j'aurais peut-être pas dû le faire autant ». Mais après je peux pas le changer, ça. Puis, mais quand même, je me disais : « Ah ouais, on a vraiment pas la même façon de vivre ça ». Je me rends compte qu'elle a vraiment un accent du Nord. (PN12)

These moments of recognition, whether through introspection or contact with others, illustrate how identity reclamation is rarely solitary but catalyzed by dialogical creations that open space for alternative forms of legitimacy.

Legitimizing Accented Professionals and Speakers: The Case of Canadian Francophone Communities. The reclamation of a positive linguistic identity sometimes intersects with professional considerations. In several participants' accounts, the proud speaker and the worthy professional enter a symbiosis in which it becomes difficult to distinguish one from the

other. The most vivid examples were especially visible among participants with experience working in francophone communities outside Quebec. Three journalists articulated a narrative of self-legitimation grounded in the conviction that their in-between position, linguistic, cultural and geographic, could be mobilized as a professional strength, namely, that they could better represent local francophone publics. They described their accents as bridges connecting them more easily to the diverse audiences they served, hence contributing to solving issues of underrepresentation in the media. These references to audiences serve a double purpose: rebuilding the legitimacy of their accent and stressing their professional worth. For instance, one French journalist working outside Quebec described the local francophone community as a "mosaic" in which he belongs, which contributed to his impression that local audiences positively received his journalistic work. He felt integrated, sensing that his audible "difference" was accepted. The fact that the linguistic and cultural diversity within Canadian francophone communities is often shaped by immigration may have made this sense of inclusion more accessible for accented professionals with a migrant background.

In one case, this feeling of inclusion and belonging within minority francophone contexts extended beyond linguistic identity to include racial and cultural dimensions. One journalist, a Canadian journalist of Rwandese origins, explained how he thought his accented voice was received by local listeners, prompting a sense of recognition and purpose. His presence on the airwaves turned into a vehicle for representation, as the only Black journalist in his newsroom at the time:

> A: J'ai toujours eu l'impression que j'avais franchi un pas pour les gens qui écoutaient. Ils étaient contents parce qu'ils n'avaient pas l'habitude d'entendre un accent différent.
>
> Q: Ah oui ?

A: Ah oui, mais je vous assure. Pendant longtemps, j'étais seul et puis après, il y avait un certain Lionel Perron, je crois, et lui était noir, mais a grandi au Québec. Donc quand il parlait, on pouvait pas savoir que c'était un Noir. Et moi non, on savait qu'il y avait quelque chose de différent et à cause de ça, beaucoup de gens, même des... Je me souviens, quelqu'un qui avait un journal communautaire […] a vraiment beaucoup apprécié parce qu'il disait : « Bien, c'est pas souvent qu'on entend des gens comme ça à la radio ». Et même un professeur […] de nationalité burundaise m'a dit : « J'espère qu'on vous garde ». Alors je me suis dit « ça alors ». Mais j'ai quand même tenu […] alors c'est pas mal. (PN13)

Including the "outside of Quebec" perspective in this research opened new possibilities for thinking about linguistic diversity in Canadian francophone media. Two immigrant-background participants with journalistic experience in this minority setting offered a vivid example of how physical and symbolic distance from Quebec, the "fortress" of French in North America and the epicentre of French-language media production in Canada, afforded them greater freedom to assert their legitimacy as accented speakers. Their narratives included critiques of Quebec's immigrant integration model, contrasting it with Canadian multiculturalism. Through this different model, they claimed full belonging in Canada and contributed to resolving the "in-betweener" paradox of being never entirely from here nor from elsewhere. In this process, they embraced their accents as an affirmation of identity and resilience, which was accompanied by stances against linguistic assimilation. One participant, originally from France, shared how he humorously reclaimed the persistent comments from Quebecers on his "unchanged" accent by linking it to Quebec's own motto of cultural memory (*je me souviens*), thus claiming his own right to remember his roots:

A: Tu sais ce que je réponds maintenant quand on me dit, « t'as pas perdu ton accent » ? […] Je dis : « ben moi aussi, j'ai le droit de me souvenir ».

Q: En référence à la devise du Québec ? C'est ça ?

A: Ben oui, ouais. Je me souviens et j'admire la résilience culturelle que le Québec a, et j'ai beaucoup appris de ce côté-là, mais moi aussi, cette résilience culturelle, j'y ai droit en tant qu'immigrant. (PN11)

In this response, the participant stresses his right to cultural resilience as an immigrant, much like Quebec's own linguistic heritage. He frames this claim within the broader framework of Canadian multiculturalism, explicitly linking his accented voice to his status as a citizen with full rights of recognition: "Revendiquer mon authenticité, entre guillemets, ça a été aussi associé au fait que maintenant je suis un citoyen. Je fais partie d'ici, donc acceptez-moi comme je suis, puisqu'apparemment c'est ça qu'on fait ici" (PN11).[27]

Throughout the interview, this journalist adopted a posture of defiance toward the perceived hegemony of Quebec in the Canadian Francophonie and the French-language media ecosystem. For instance, he portrayed Quebec journalists working temporarily in francophone communities outside Quebec as outsiders, parachuted in for a limited time before returning to the "motherland." By contrast, he claimed an insider status rooted in commitment to long-term presence. More broadly, he criticized the perceived attitude of Quebecers working in his francophone community:

On est colonisés par les Québécois ici. Ils débarquent, en fait, c'est un peu les poupées russes, mais les Québécois font à la francophonie canadienne ce qu'ils reprochent aux Français de France de faire à la francophonie, c'est-à-dire se croire comme la norme ou l'étalon or. […] Ils me regardent de haut parce que je suis un Français et que ça s'entend. Et

[27] "Claiming my authenticity, so to speak, has also been linked to the fact that now I am a citizen. I am part of this place, so accept me as I am, since apparently that's what you do here."

même si […] je suis plus Franco-Ontarien qu'eux, quelque part, j'ai l'impression qu'ils se pensent plus légitimes que moi. (PN11)

His critique challenges linguistic hierarchies and reaffirms the legitimacy of multiple accents, language varieties, and identities within the Francophonie. In this light, staying to work outside Quebec represents a form of resistance. In this local context, they reclaim a form of belonging, constitutive of identity reclamation. One Canadian journalist of Rwandese origins echoed this view. While he recognized that moving to Quebec might have opened more professional opportunities, he stressed his attachment to the local francophone community. For him, moving to Quebec would have meant facing integration issues. For him, integration did not mean erasing difference. It is through professional contacts with Quebec and Franco-Ontarian cultures in the workplace that he realized what integration meant to him:

> Ça m'a permis de savoir ce que je voulais et ce que je ne voulais pas. Beaucoup d'immigrants décident ou d'aller à l'est ou d'aller à l'ouest, c'est-à-dire que je vois beaucoup [d'immigrants] surtout ceux qui sont au Québec, qui pensent que l'intégration, c'est ressembler à l'autre. Moi je pense pas. L'intégration, c'est pouvoir continuer son chemin et avoir les valeurs similaires à celles des autres, mais qui sont des valeurs nobles. Tant qu'elles sont nobles, la route est ouverte. (PN13)

These narratives highlight how accented journalists outside Quebec have forged paths to pride that assert inclusion in their own terms. Their experiences of identity reclamation are constructed in opposition to dominant models of language and integration. Reclaiming a positive linguistic and professional identity is a tumultuous journey that is both individual and political. Through this process, they affirm their belonging, claim their right to difference, and articulate how their voices can positively contribute to their professional and cultural landscapes.

In-Betweenness: Inhabiting and Claiming a Liminal Space. Making peace with one's accent is a process of personal recognition, through which the meaning associated with it gradually shifts from being a source of distress or shame to becoming a powerful tool for navigating a hostile professional environment. In this way, some participants reframed their position of in-betweenness in more positive terms, contributing to the reclamation of an identity that became multifaceted.

For instance, one participant found a way to reconcile his in-betweener identity by revindicating a "passportless" identity, deliberately situating himself as a transnational subject evolving in a liminal space:

> Quand je remonte à ce processus d'identifier qui j'étais, de vouloir garder mon accent […], ici, je suis le Français de France, là-bas, je suis le Canadien, et entre les deux, je me suis dit : « Mais qui suis-je ? ». C'est pour ça que j'ai essayé de trouver une identité sans passeport. (PN11)

Embracing in-betweenness thus took the form of stigma shifting. Instead of feeling ashamed of their "differences," some participants emphasized how navigating the in-between could be a strength rather than a flaw. The following participant described himself as living through a multitude of identities that coexist in harmony, although reconciling them within the Canadian context required efforts:

> Au 21e siècle, j'espère qu'on va accepter l'idée qu'on peut être plusieurs choses à la fois. C'était un grand défi pour moi parce que, depuis tout petit, étant Rwandais mais ne pouvant pas vivre au Rwanda, j'ai dû penser à la question de l'identité très jeune. […] Je dirais que je m'identifie aux trois nations, la nation rwandaise, la nation africaine et la nation canadienne. Et quand on lit mes articles […] on a l'impression qu'on est en face de quelqu'un

> qui a trois nationalités. Et je ne pense pas qu'au 21e siècle, avec tous les transferts de population sur les continents, je ne pense pas qu'on puisse avoir une idée uniforme de notre identité. Je pense que c'est une erreur. Si on fait ça, ce n'est pas purement folklorique, c'est la réalité. On est tout ça en même temps. Et on peut cohabiter, ça peut cohabiter tout ça, c'est clair. (PN13)

In-betweenness can be experienced and reinterpreted in a positive light. This act of reframing may offer a way to surpass the more negative aspects traditionally associated with this condition. As such, in-betweenness can be inhabited and claimed as a form of resistance that rejects simple narratives about who is entitled to be a journalist. This reappropriation of in-betweenness as a source of strength is not exclusive to immigrant experiences. The experience of an Anglo-Quebecer journalist offered a rich and complex illustration of in-betweenness, extending the concept beyond immigrant positions to include the internal linguistic and cultural fractures within Quebec society itself. His trajectory, as an Anglo-Quebecer, shaped by the *Two Solitudes*, a metaphor that evokes the historical divide between anglophones and francophones in Canada, educated and professionally socialized in American journalism, and later re-integrated into Quebec's francophone media sphere, reflects not just a personal crossing of boundaries, but a deliberate inhabiting of the liminal space between them.

What stands out is the tension between belonging and inadequacy. Despite his strong emotional attachment to Quebec and self-identification as Québécois, rather than strictly anglophone or francophone, a distinction he rejects, he carries a persistent sense of linguistic inferiority, especially in comparison to his wife and children, whom he views as fluently bilingual and symbolically more "complete." His anglophone accent in French is experienced as a reminder of the fluency he "lacks" and was never fully attained. This "lack" echoes themes of self-

consciousness and internalized hierarchy found among accented francophone immigrants, though his case emerges from a domestic linguistic divide in Quebec rather than international migration. What is particularly significant in his experience is that, rather than withdrawing from an uncomfortable setting, he chooses to stay in this precarious francophone space that makes his accent more audible to others. He continues to work in French-language journalism, fully aware of his perceived difference, and even agrees to participate in a TV interview in this language. This active decision challenges the notion that linguistic insecurity always leads to withdrawal or assimilation. Instead, his position becomes a political stance, a form of engagement with Quebec that acknowledges complexity, contradiction, and discomfort. His presence in the francophone media sphere becomes an act of resistance, challenging exclusionary norms by embracing a more fluid and hybrid conception of his identity as a speaker of Quebec French and a journalist. His story adds a valuable dimension to the concept of in-betweenness, as a condition that is not always imposed, but sometimes deliberately inhabited, stressing that being in-between linguistic worlds can coexist with a strong sense of belonging. In a context like Quebec, where the French language is a foundational marker of national identity, his case highlights the possibility of claiming belonging outside of linguistic perfection. Far from disqualifying him from belonging, his accent becomes a symbol of the complexity of identity, suggesting that the in-between space can be the very site of re-imagined belonging and identity reclamation.

Cultivating Pride, Survival and Resilience. Throughout the previous themes and respective sections, the struggles faced by accented journalists emerged with a striking intensity and emotional weight. My efforts to convey the participants' stories, characterized by stigma, painful anecdotes and silences, could not always fully capture the magnitude and the emotional

burden of their experiences. The emotions felt during the interviews, both by participants and me, are only partially reflected in this thesis.

What remained most notable, however, is the resilience demonstrated by many participants, who decided to stay committed to their profession despite the hardships they encountered. Even those who left journalism expressed a deep sense of pride. Reflecting on his time in the newsroom and the person he has become since leaving the industry, one participant shared:

> J'ai réussi à en faire une victoire, si vous voulez. Ça aurait pu être un échec parce que je connais des gens qui ont souffert dans leur chair. Voilà, pour différentes raisons, parce que ce n'était pas facile. [Être] un journaliste, c'est jamais tout à fait facile, mais c'est qu'il y avait ces éléments de jugement. On était quand même jugés s'il faut dire, vu que notre produit on doit le lire au grand public, on est jugé, on est jugé sur la forme, le fond. (PN13)

This participant, like others, demonstrated varying forms and degrees of resilience. For many, although the sacrifices they made, such as masking their accent, were often painful, they ultimately cultivated a sense that these efforts were not in vain. Resilience was mobilized to make sense of stigmatizing experiences, portraying an alternative image of themselves as survivors, not victims, and bolstering legitimizing narratives that contribute to challenging stigma. In doing so, they allowed themselves to reinterpret their professional journey and retake control of their personal stories.

For those who remained in journalism, resilience represented a form of agency exercised within the constraints of the field. For those who left, narratives of resilience helped them process and heal from past traumas. One journalist, previously quoted, framed his successful professional trajectory outside journalism, where he received praise and recognition, as a response to the

difficulties he faced in the newsroom. He has since been invited back by his former employer to present his work:

> J'ai un peu l'impression d'avoir survécu à quelque chose. Oui, j'ai survécu. Et le fait qu'ils me tendent le micro est un luxe. Je ne suis plus là à essayer de chercher la nouvelle. Je suis la nouvelle. Donc je suis passé de l'autre côté du miroir, donc pour moi, je vois ça comme une victoire et c'est un baume au cœur. (PN13)

For those still working in journalism, speaking openly about their hardships functions as a survival strategy, which contributes to a form of collective conscientization. Overall, participants who managed to enter and remain in the journalism industry while being identified as "accented" sometimes saw themselves as trailblazers for inclusion, having achieved what would have once seemed unattainable. One journalist, who has a disability affecting his pronunciation, shared:

> Les gens comme moi, je me suis pas vu dans les médias pendant toute mon enfance, pendant mes 20 premières années de ma vie, fait que ça a quand même été tout un défi de me lancer là-dedans, puis même de me faire dire que j'allais pas réussir. Donc pourquoi est-ce qu'on n'en voit pas plus de gens comme moi ? Ben parce qu'on s'est pas vus. (PN4)

While these stories of resilience command respect, they should not obscure the ongoing struggles, stigma, and discrimination experienced by other accented journalists. The path toward self-legitimation and identity reclamation is fraught with many obstacles, and at times, collective tensions and disagreements.

Theme 4 Conclusion: A Tumultuous and Unequal Journey

Throughout theme 4, accented journalists embarked on a journey to legitimize and reclaim a fractured identity. This process unfolds at the intersection of professional and linguistic identity, both of which have been destabilized by experiences of stigma and exclusion.

On the professional level, accented journalists aim to assert a sense of legitimacy by emphasizing their skills and positive contributions to the journalistic field. This included their capacity to connect with diverse francophone audiences, which reframed their audible difference not as a deficit but as a resource that enriches newsroom perspectives. On the linguistic level, as proud speakers, accented journalists asserted the positive value attached to their accent. Although this process of identity reclamation is rarely linear or complete, it nonetheless provides an avenue through which journalists can begin to reconcile personal authenticity with professional expectations, allowing them to make peace with their accent and counter stigma by expressing pride.

In participants' accounts, making peace with one's accent emerges as a long and uneven process. Not all participants simply endured their experiences. Instead, they reinterpreted them, drawing strength from their stigma and forging new ways for personal and professional recognition. For many, reclaiming identity did not end with their accent but extended to finding new ways to belong. This journey infused stigma with purpose, transforming exclusion into belonging and silence into critique. These twelve participants agreed to share their stories, never simple, always ambivalent, but theirs are only a few among many waiting to be heard.

However, the limitations and ambiguities of these processes of legitimation and reclamation must be underlined, as they raised questions and appeared contested by some participants. Not all

participants engaged in this process, or at least not with the same intensity. Some did not feel the need to do so because their sense of pride and identity did not seem to have been negatively affected, particularly among those whose testimonies reflected the experience of having an unproblematized accent. Others, however, appeared not to engage in identity reclamation because they did not yet seem ready to do so.

Furthermore, divergences among accented journalists appeared, particularly around the question of naming accent-based discrimination, and how it should be evaluated in relation to other forms of discrimination. These disagreements underline the diversity of perspectives within the group, an expected outcome given the heterogeneity of the participant sample, which was "only" united by their self-identification as accented journalists.

A point of contention revolved around the comparison with racism. One journalist equated accent-based discrimination with racial discrimination. However, others expressed concern about the appropriateness of this analogy, positioning accent-based stigmatization as less severe than racism. The following journalist captured this tension between the need to raise awareness about the experience of accented journalists and being cautious not to conflate it with racism:

> Je crois qu'il y a une petite ouverture, mais c'est sûrement qu'il y a un manque de sensibilisation encore. Ça irait de pair avec le fait de dire : « Ben en fait c'est une discrimination comme une autre, l'accent ». Et donc autant on trouve ça inacceptable maintenant de dire : « Ah bah je l'ai pas prise parce qu'elle a l'air un peu trop arabe ». Bon bah de dire à quelqu'un : « Je te prends pas parce que t'as un peu un trop un accent [régional], ou tu dis un peu trop "du coup," » bah c'est aussi discriminatoire. Alors tu sais, encore une fois, je le mets pas sur la même gravité. C'est pas la même échelle de gravité, mais ça relève des mêmes biais. (PN9)

These concerns are far from trivial. They underscore a concrete challenge in addressing accent-based stigmatization in the public sphere: What are the appropriate words to denounce it? How can accented journalists make their lived experience visible without eclipsing other struggles racialized journalists may face? At the same time, is the difficulty in naming accent-based discrimination not reminiscent of what Blanchet (2019) identifies as the hegemony of glottophobic language ideologies, where such rejection is not recognized as a form of alterophobia (discrimination against individuals), but rather as an objective form of language evaluation?

Overall, most white journalists who used the term "discrimination" carefully distinguished their experience from racism. One participant, for instance, referred to herself as an "audible minority," a way to acknowledge the disadvantage she faced without conflating it with the particular challenge of being a "visible" minority:

> Je trouvais ça quand même très approprié parce que je trouve que je suis très privilégiée, parce que je suis blanche, française, je parle français, puis j'ai jamais subi de racisme dans ma vie, mais… Et je pense que j'ai eu un mini aperçu de ce que ça pourrait être quand, justement, j'entends certaines critiques, et cetera. Mais je veux pas non plus, tu sais, je peux pas me comparer à des personnes qui sont victimes de discrimination, là, fait que je peux imaginer que ceux qui sont français avec une autre couleur de peau et un autre accent, ce serait différent. (PN12)

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This second findings chapter has examined accented journalists' quest in pursuit of professional and individual recognition, expressed through the ways participants navigate the tensions between the structural constraints of the field and their personal agency. If the first chapter grounded the discursive and institutional pressures that affect accented journalists' often-

stigmatizing lived experiences, this second one has turned toward the active ways in which they respond to norms and expectations around language, which oscillate between adaptation and contestation.

Theme 3 delved into a central paradox participants had to reckon with: the coexistence of conformism and resistance. Far from operating in binary terms, accented journalists engaged in strategies that blurred the distinction between these two concepts, both adjusting their oral and written production to meet expectations and simultaneously criticizing those very own standards in the reflexive space offered by research interviews. Some maintained conformity in professional contexts, but expressed ambivalence or even discomfort in private, which shows how resistance did not always take the form of open defiance but was rather strategic and quiet.

Theme 4 continued the analysis by building an understanding of journalists' attempts to reassert ownership over their identities despite being perceived as outsiders. Through personal reflection, discursive reframing, and assertion of pride, participants sought to reclaim a sense of legitimacy that had been fractured by stigmatizing experiences. This process was neither linear nor complete. Reclamation did not always result in full acceptance, but nonetheless opened a space and possibilities for the construction of alternative narratives.

Across both themes, the pursuit of recognition unfolded in linguistic and professional dimensions of participants' identity. Through this quest, journalists sought to create a space for their voices to be accepted as legitimate. In this sense, seeking recognition is a personal endeavour as much as a political and symbolic action that challenges the existing boundaries around professional identity and voice in the journalistic field, raising broader questions about what an inclusive journalistic voice could mean in Quebec and Canadian francophone media.

Chapter 6: Discussion

This research investigated the lived experiences of journalists perceived to "have" an accent in Quebec and Canadian francophone media. In speaking about their accents, these journalists painted a bittersweet picture of their profession, one of passion and pride, but also of tension and disillusionment. For many, journalism holds a deep emotional meaning. They are dedicated and find purpose in their work. Yet, the perception of "having" an accent, whether internally felt or externally imposed, transforms this space of belonging into a site of potential exclusion. While seemingly a "small" or "inconsequential" element of their lived experience, their accent can, especially when entangled with other expressions of identity, carry disproportionate weight and reverberate widely throughout their professional lives.

Through their individual testimonies, participants also shed light on the more structural management of linguistic diversity in journalism. While the research centers on issues of language and accent, its findings might resonate more broadly with wider considerations around diversity and inclusion, or the lack thereof, in Quebec and Canadian francophone media. The journalists who shared their stories embody identities that extend beyond their accent, thus contributing to a broader identity mosaic in journalism and, in doing so, generating intersectional insights into the relationship between voice and identity in the media.

This thesis sought to answer a general research question: *What is the experience of being an accented journalist in Quebec and Canadian francophone media?* To guide the research and analysis, three sub-questions were formulated. RQ2 explored the themes present in these experiences; RQ3 examined the strategies accented journalists use to navigate the Quebec and Canadian journalism industries; and RQ4 questioned how accentedness is experienced differently among accented journalists.

RQ1: What is the Experience of Being an Accented Journalist in Quebec and Canadian Francophone Media?

The four themes developed throughout the reflexive thematic analysis process, and summarized below, encapsulate several dimensions of the experiences of accented journalists. However, it must be emphasized that they represent only a partial account of these experiences. Overall, participants' lived experiences were diverse. Attempting to articulate one unifying narrative, while also acknowledging the particularities of each journey, proved to be a challenging task. Each account is unique, even as it resonates with others. The process of synthesis undertaken, though aimed at being as holistic as possible, required the reduction of complex experiences into categories, words, and themes to identify core organizing concepts that structure the experiences of accented journalists in Quebec and Canadian francophone media. Despite the multifaceted nature of these experiences of "having" an accent, seven elements appeared to be particularly salient.

First, the experience of these journalists is shaped by stigma and perceptions of difference. This feeling of being the "auditory other" is not only linked to their accent, but also, for some, to their immigration status. Though accentedness is more often imagined through the presumed ears of others than materially visible, it has tangible effects on participants' sense of professional adequacy and how they perceive external judgements and treatment. In line with Munro's (2003) typology of accent discrimination, several participants described experiences of accent stereotyping and harassment based on accent. As for "discrimination in employment due to inappropriate concern with accent" (p. 38), this proved to be the most contentious. Participants struggled to "prove" it, and the centrality of language skills in journalism could be used to invalidate such claims.

Accentedness is not a fixed or permanent position. It is transient, contextual, and not always negative or problematized. Participants' accents do not generally prevent them from fulfilling their

journalistic work. Rather, their accentedness resurfaces in specific situations, during linguistic revision, the editing process, while on air, or during interactions with potentially stigmatizing actors, such as receiving feedback from peers, managers, or the audience, both in person and online. On the contrary, participants also identified moments and spaces, personal and professional, where they did not feel their "difference" was emphasized.

Accented journalists navigate their professions between inclusion and exclusion. They evolve in a journalistic field constrained by language norms and expectations, more often tacit and unspoken than clear and transparent. A journalist's "accent" may shift them between the centre and the margins of the journalistic field, which prompts journalists to actively counter, when possible, their marginalization. Negotiating the expression of their accentedness allows them to simultaneously belong and be excluded from certain sub-spheres of the journalistic field, with some choosing to "erase" their accent to be on air. Their position in the field also depends on the perceived acceptability of their accent in their specific environment. As participants described, these perceptions and judgements are not static. They reported seeing both progress and setbacks in the acceptance of accents in the media, which some journalists connected to their own professional trajectories.

The experience of accented journalists can be conceptualized through the concept of in-betweenness. As in-betweeners, accented journalists occupy a liminal space in which they simultaneously belong and are partially excluded. Through an interplay of specific contexts, integration, and negotiation of identity, they are able to evolve in certain journalistic settings. Through this experience, the figure of the equilibrist captures and embodies their vulnerability. Walking a tightrope between professional expectations and the expression of their identities, this balancing act underscored a tension between the desire to reassert a more "authentic" expression

and the need to meet professional expectations. In this paradoxical situation, resistance and conformism coexist.

Accentedness is a journey that can be experienced with solitude or in community. For "regular" newsroom workers or freelancers, journalism can be an isolating adventure. For accented journalists in particular, this isolation can be compounded by the absence of support, understanding, or spaces to share their experiences, and is an additional layer of difficulties to the challenges faced by media workers in general. For those who found support, the ability to speak about shared challenges was relieving.

Overall, accented journalists' experience is characterized by a desire for recognition. Whether adapting or conforming to language norms, journalists first and foremost aim to be recognized for their journalistic work and competence. Through this, journalists exercise agency within a highly constrained environment, actively reinterpret stigmatizing lived experiences, engage in acts of legitimation and reclaim a more positive sense of identity.

Finally, this research emphasizes the inequalities and differences between accented journalists in the ways they navigated "being" accented speakers in journalism. Some accents are more normalized and accepted than others. Participants also varied in their capacity to respond to discrimination, depending on their unequal access to resources to produce acts and discourses of resistance.

RQ2: What Themes are Present in the Experiences of Accented Francophone Journalists?

Although the participant sample was quite heterogeneous, which is likely a result of the open call for participation, shared patterns of meaning are identifiable across the experiences of these accented journalists, allowing the researcher to develop four themes. These themes were

organized along two main axes, or "overarching themes," each of which was laid out in Chapters 4 and 5. The first overarching theme, *Navigating Accentedness*, focused on accentedness as a force shaping both journalists' self-perception and how they are perceived by others. The second, *Accented journalists on a quest for individual and professional recognition*, explored the pathways journalists carve out while navigating often stigmatizing professional experiences.

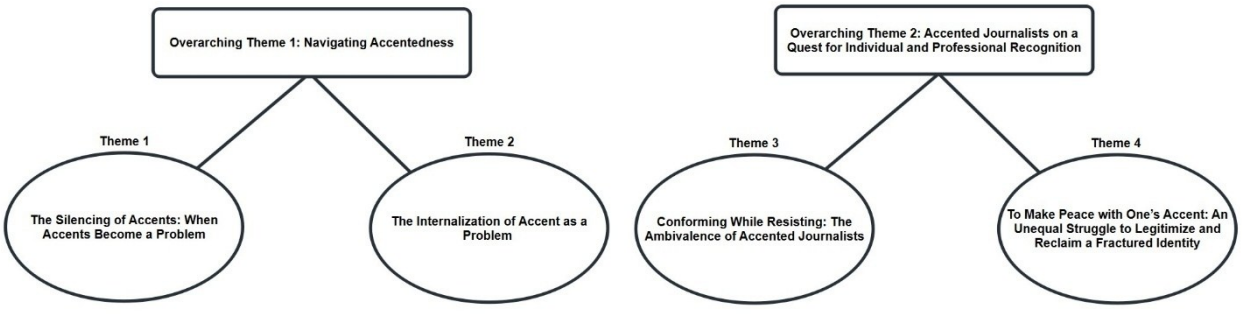
Each overarching theme encompassed two themes. The first overarching theme included: *(1) The silencing of accents: When accents become a problem*, and *(2) The internalization of accent as a problem*.

The second overarching theme included: *(3) Conforming While Resisting: The Ambivalence of Accented Journalists*, and *(4) To Make Peace with One's Accent. An Unequal Struggle to Legitimize and Reclaim a Fractured Identity*.

These overarching themes and their corresponding themes are visually summarized in the following graph for clarity.

Figure 2

Visual organization of the four themes and their corresponding overarching themes



Theme 1: The Silencing of Accents: When Accents Become a Problem

The first theme underscores how one's accent, once unproblematized, emerges as a central vector of stigma in the lived experience of accented journalists in francophone media. In this view, one's accent is not a fixed linguistic trait, but a socially constructed and context-dependent label that becomes salient through interactions that frame it as "deviant," in particular in journalism schools and newsrooms, where norms around vocal performance are internalized and enforced. These spaces, alongside broader experiences in society, play a role in shaping awareness of accentedness and instilling expectations around what constitutes a credible journalistic voice. Participants describe developing a heightened sensitivity to how they and others perceive their voices, which can result in self-monitoring and anticipation of stigmatizing behaviours.

This process of accent awareness presents a shift in perception. One's accent becomes an interpretive lens that filters journalists' understanding of their experience and affects how they are perceived externally, affecting their own professional identity as journalists. Unlike other speakers of dominant groups who benefit from the "myth of non-accent" (Lippi-Green, 2011), namely, the privilege of being perceived as "unaccented," accented journalists are made conscious of their audible difference, which is a subject of scrutiny and evaluation. Speaking in professional spheres, therefore, is neither unconscious nor effortless, but can turn into a source of a lack of credibility, legitimacy and competence.

This accent-based stigma does not operate in isolation from participants' other facets of identity. Participants' experiences point to a layering of exclusionary dynamics in which accent may serve as a proxy for intersectional markers, such as nationality, race, disability, immigration status, francophone minority status, and culture. Stigmatization unfolds along a continuum, from overt exclusion to more diffuse microaggressions and silencing practices, which, while subtle, have

tangible and harmful effects on participants' emotional and psychological well-being and career trajectories. In several cases, participants navigated invisible barriers to advancement that were difficult to prove but deeply felt and described informal newsroom dynamics that reinforce the normative ideal of professionalism.

Nevertheless, accents are not uniformly problematized. Testimonies paint an uneven terrain where certain accents, in certain situations and interactions, went unnoticed or were more accepted. In contrast, other voices were othered and subjected to correction. These discrepancies highlight implicit hierarchies that position some voices as more legitimate than others. Simultaneously, the labelling as "accented" is fluid and relational, shifting across time and space. Moments of ease and acceptance were described in personal and trusted environments, but coexisted with moments of discomfort and exclusion.

Theme 2: The Internalization of Accent as a Problem

Theme 2 turns inward, exploring how accented journalists come to perceive their own voices as problematic. Participants described how awareness of their accent shaped how they believed others perceived them, and how they came to see themselves as "lacking" legitimacy, credibility and sometimes competence. Over time, their accent became a filter through which they interpreted their journalistic performance and professional identity.

This internalization manifests in various ways: heightened self-consciousness when speaking on-air, discomfort in interactions with colleagues or sources, and self-censorship aimed at avoiding potential judgment. The weight of this burden often goes unrecognized in newsrooms, yet it shapes the everyday experiences of accented journalists in significant ways. Moments of self-consciousness and linguistic hypervigilance shed light on how stigma is integrated and reproduced

without necessarily having to face external stigmatization. One participant from a Canadian minority francophone community in particular reported linguistic insecurity (Boudreau, 2023), with feelings of shame and perceived inferiority compared to Quebec French speakers.

Although this theme outlines a variety of emotional, psychological and behavioural answers to accent stigmatization, these were not experienced uniformly. Immigrant journalists, in particular, faced stigma related to being perceived as foreigners, a trait made audible through their accent. At the heart of these experiences lies a recurring sense of a lack. Paradoxically, this internalization of stigma often gives rise to reflexivity. Many participants articulate a growing awareness of the dissonance between how they perceive themselves and how they believe they are perceived by others. This fractured self-perception contributes to the emergence of what can be described as an in-betweener identity, where accented journalists are caught between the conflicting pressures to conform and a desire to affirm their hybrid identity. For some, this identity is experienced as a loss, while for others, it opens a space for eventual reappropriation and redefinition.

Theme 3: Conforming While Resisting: The Ambivalence of Accented Journalists

Theme 3 explored the deep ambivalence that characterizes how accented journalists navigate the Canadian and Quebec journalism industries. At the heart of participants' experiences lies a central tension: how to achieve professional recognition despite being perceived as an accented speaker? Far from being passive subjects of conformity, accented journalists described a continuum on which they positioned themselves, oscillating between conformism and resistance.

Their professional environments imposed pressures that prompted journalists to adjust their oral and written expression to meet expectations. Through formal mechanisms (such as editorial revision and diction coaching) and information interactions (including peer correction and

feedback), a system of linguistic gatekeeping shaped journalists' possibilities for being heard. The desire to "pass" an unaccented, through altered pronunciation and vocabulary, was a protective response to these pressures. However, passing was rarely complete and often experienced ambivalently as a form of loss or self-betrayal.

Participants' testimonies reveal that conformism is not always synonymous with full acceptance of the norms being conformed to. Instead, many describe calculated efforts to comply with expectations in order to survive professionally, while maintaining a degree of critical distance. Resistance is present across participants, though it rarely takes the form of open defiance. Resistance emerged in discourses, retrospective reinterpretations, subtle deviations from norms, or carefully chosen moments of authenticity during unscripted segments. Interviews themselves became spaces where journalists could name and reflect on experiences that had previously remained silenced in the newsroom.

This theme challenges binary views of conformity against resistance. Accented journalists live within an ambivalent space where adaptation can be both protective and painful, and resistance may be expressed through voice or silence. These behaviours of coping, contestation, and linguistic accommodation reflect how accented journalists constantly negotiate belonging in their professional environment. This ongoing balancing act underscores the need to recognize accented journalists not as passive subjects of linguistic norms, but as active agents navigating constrained choices.

Theme 4: To Make Peace with One's Accent: An Unequal Struggle to Legitimize and Reclaim a Fractured Identity

For many accented journalists, the experience of working in French-language journalism involved an ongoing effort to legitimize and reclaim their professional and linguistic identities. They attempted to weld back together these two fractured identities.

In response to forms of marginalization, participants asserted the value of their skills, professionalism and linguistic competence. This alternative legitimation process challenges the idea that an accent signifies a deficiency or a deviation from the expected professional standards. For some, asserting their self-worth and professional competency served as a tool to tackle the feeling of being an "impostor." By naming the forms of stigmatization they encountered, such as microaggressions, certain participants reframed their accented speech as legitimate.

The simultaneous movement toward identity reclamation involved a deeper and more personal transformation in which the reappropriation of one's accent transformed it from a source of shame to a symbol of pride. Drawing on Godrej's reclamation of self-understanding (2011), it is possible to notice that journalists began to interrogate and challenge internalized hegemonic discourse about linguistic legitimacy, which materialized in participants embracing their accent as an expression of plural identities and a product of lived experience. This was especially salient among those working outside Quebec, who asserted their ability to represent some of the facets of diversity in francophone communities across Canada. This quest for reclamation, however, is not linear. It is made of contradictory feelings and spurs the need to reconcile sometimes contradictory identities and affiliations. Finding inspiration from role models helped some journalists on this journey.

At the heart of this process lies the ambivalent expression of the in-betweenness: occupying this liminal space was experienced both as a form of vulnerability and as a source of resistance. For some accented journalist, it became a way to shift the stigma associated with their accent and identity. Reinterpreting in-betweenness this way opens up the possibility of transforming it into a site of agency that allows accented journalists to move beyond its traditionally negative connotations. In that sense, several participants expressed a sense of resilience and even described themselves as trailblazers paving the way for greater diversity in journalism.

However, not all accented journalists were equal on this quest for legitimacy and reclamation. Not all participants engaged in this process, or at least not with the same intensity. Some questioned the language used to describe their experiences. Some participants expressed discomfort comparing their experiences of stigmatization with racism. These disagreements underscore a broader difficulty in naming and addressing accent-based stigmatization in the public sphere. As Blanchet (2019) argues, the hegemony of glottophobic ideologies often masks linguistic discrimination as neutral or technical evaluation, rendering it invisible as a form of alterophobia, namely, a discrimination against persons. The difficulties in naming accent-based stigmatization might reflect the structural challenges accented journalists face in making their experiences visible and politically actionable.

RQ3: What are the Strategies Employed by Accented Francophone Journalists to Navigate the Canadian and Quebec Journalism Industries?

Accented journalists in francophone media employ a range of strategies that are often overlapping and ambivalent in order to navigate constrained professional environments with language expectations that may downgrade their audible difference. These strategies reflect an interplay between adaptation and the pursuit of personal and professional recognition.

Some journalists conform to language expectations, consciously or unconsciously, by modifying their accents, vocabulary, or writing style to align with often unspoken professional standards. This includes what could be qualified as "passing" (Goffman, 1963/1986) as "unaccented," or sounding more "local," to increase credibility and reduce the risk of stigmatization. Adaptation was often viewed as a pragmatic necessity for on-air roles and was framed as a voluntary compromise to remain competitive in the journalistic market. Importantly, not all journalists reported being able to accommodate linguistically to the point that they could sound "local," especially for those who did not grow up in Quebec or Canada. Even those who were able to "pass" feared that their accent could slip up. To avoid rejection or correction, some journalists internalized linguistic norms and engaged in preventive self-monitoring, which includes avoiding expressions or idioms that do not correspond to the local standard. Some adopted coping mechanisms that included modulating their pronunciation, adopting standardized registers in specific contexts, or seizing unscripted moments to express themselves with a more personal voice. These tactics offered a degree of agency without overt confrontation of professional norms. Navigating accentedness in the journalism industry was, at times, a lonely experience for some participants. Finding other accented journalists or supportive colleagues was a way, for some, to bring some relief and express their feelings.

In rare instances, journalists directly confronted colleagues or managers about stigmatizing comments or practices. While open defiance against linguistic norms and agents of stigmatization, many participants displayed forms of resistance through discursive strategies. They criticized the myth of the "standard" language or accent, questioned what they perceived to be performative diversity discourses in newsrooms, and reframed their accents as markets of legitimacy and audience representation. These forms of narrative coping were often articulated retrospectively, in

safer spaces like the research interview, while the newsroom context was approached with much more caution and silence.

Finally, several journalists oscillated between internalized linguistic hierarchies and reflexive distance from them. They may express linguistic insecurity while simultaneously critiquing the exclusionary nature of professional norms, which illustrates a form of dual awareness that fuels adaptation and resistance behaviours. Overall, framing journalists' behaviours is "strategy," as this research sub-question assumed, requires more nuance than expected, as the line between conscious and unconscious, adaptation and resistance, and conformism and confrontation seems blurrier than expected. In that context, passing strategies or the desire to "pass" may not only be interpreted as a rejection of a stigmatized identity, namely one's accent, but, as underlined by Kalei Kanuha in a study of lesbians and gay men of colour, as a situational use to "resist social oppression" (Kalei Kanuha, 1999, p. 27). Knowing the constraints of the journalism industry and its highly competitive nature and systems of control, "passing" may be used to integrate into spheres of power that would otherwise be more difficult to access for accented journalists.

RQ4: How is Accentedness Experienced Differently Among Accented Journalists?

Initially focused on the differences between journalists who learnt French earlier in life (L1) and those who did so later (Lx), this final sub-question proved to be excessively narrow. The broad inclusion criteria (based on self-identification as an "accented" journalist in francophone media) may have allowed for the recruitment of a more diverse group of participants, therefore expanding the analysis beyond the age of language acquisition as a primary factor in shaping experiences of accentedness. Diversity among participants combined with the intersectional lens employed in this research prompted a more thorough examination of the intersection of various identities and lived experiences in influencing accentedness, its perception and negotiation. This exploratory approach

sought to understand how they might interrelate in contexts of glottophobia and journalistic practice.

As a result, the researcher decided to foreground a range of interwoven factors, the purpose not being to measure or quantify their presence and impact, an aim misaligned with reflexive thematic analysis. The following list, therefore, outlines and reflects on those that seemed most relevant and is illustrative rather than exhaustive, which offers starting points for future studies.

The Intersection of Disability and Accent

Disability emerged as one of the most unexpected factors impacting how accentedness was lived differently among participants. The narrative of one participant whose disability affects his pronunciation sheds light on the overlooked intersections between voice, disability, and accentedness in journalism. His experience illustrates how journalism practices and expectations create barriers to his inclusion. Far from being neutral, these activate normative expectations surrounding the "journalistic voice." These expectations, which prioritize fluency, clarity, and control, function as implicit gatekeeping mechanisms that disproportionately affect those who deviate from the norm, whether because of an accent, a disability, or both. This participant described the emotional burden of having to explain himself, manage others' reactions to his voice, and prove his legitimacy. In this context, mobilizing critical sociolinguistics in conjunction with disability studies may contribute to illuminating these dynamics of othering and exclusion. For instance, in "The Construction of the Disabled Speaker: Locating Stuttering in Disability Studies," Joshua St. Pierre (2012) emphasizes that "broken speech" is constructed by both a speaker and a hearer. Stuttering is not inherently problematic. Instead, it is constructed as such through the normative expectations of hearers embedded in "cultural norms of efficiency, pace and self-mastery" (p. 1). When those expectations are not met, the burden of communicative failure is

placed disproportionately on the speaker, who is judged for lacking competence or discipline. Drawing an analogy with "heavily accented" speech, St. Pierre (2012) argues that:

> Dominant hearing groups hide the construction of their normalcy, passing themselves off as occupying a naturally given position. When hearing *does* require extra effort, the dominant group is veiled behind its universal and unmarked position. Therefore, not only are communicative norms constructed by speakers and hearers, but deviation in this communicative relation is shouldered disproportionally by the minority group. (p. 8)

Furthermore, St. Pierre's analysis of the liminal position of the stutterer, who is neither fully "abled" nor fully "disabled," offers a compelling parallel for the accented journalist. Liminality, as St. Pierre puts it, "can help explain the unclear and conflicting expectations forced upon stutterers, who, unlike many other disabled people, are often expected to perform on the same terms as the able-bodied" (p. 3). As for speaking "without" an accent, participants' testimonies share how external injunction often treats accentedness as an element that is thought to be controllable by individuals, while research on this topic is much more nuanced (Gluszek & Dovidio, 2010, p. 222). As these authors underline, while "researchers generally tend to agree that individuals who learned a language later in life are unlikely to acquire a native-like pronunciation" (p. 222), beliefs about controllability are enduring:

> Anecdotal stories of rare instances in which people have obtained native-like accents (Derwing, 2003; Moyer, 2007) and the media that portray actors imitating various accents (successfully, such as actors Hugh Laurie and Meryl Streep) may serve as a basis for beliefs among both listeners and speakers that accents can be eliminated, beliefs that may normally be erroneous (Lippi-Green, 1997). (Gluszek & Dovidio, 2010, p. 222).

As St. Pierre (2012) notes, what is perceived as disfluency, thus, is "interpreted as a distinctly moral failure" that "undercuts and threatens capitalistic virtues" of speed, control, and productivity (p. 3).

The parallels extend further. St. Pierre critiques the medicalization of stuttering, arguing that it is framed as an individual defect requiring treatment and correction. In the same way, accentedness is often pathologized, treated as a problem to be fixed through diction classes or speech therapy. Several participants in this study recounted such experiences: being encouraged, or forced, to seek voice coaching, being excluded from on-air roles, or internalizing the need to modify their way of speaking to conform to expected standards. This framing ignores the social and relational dimensions of language. As St. Pierre notes, stuttering is often treated as an individual, biological problem, rather than as experiences shaped by "interpersonal interaction and interpretation" (p. 5). Overall, the interventions proposed to "fix" stuttering, like accents, contribute to reinforcing widespread assumptions about language "fluency." As St. Pierre suggests, the "medicalization and social structures reinforce the oppression of disabled speakers through objectification and abled/disabled binaries" (p. 6). Likewise, the binary between "accented" and "unaccented" speakers is reinforced by the assumption that an accent can be efficiently erased, provided efforts are made.

French-as-a-Second-Language Journalists

The first language spoken by journalists shaped how they experienced accentedness and perceived their own linguistic legitimacy. Journalists whose first language was not French, such as English or Spanish, described a heightened sense of vulnerability. Some felt like linguistic "intruders," carrying the weight of self-consciousness and fearing their accent might undermine their journalistic credibility by creating a distraction. Even when they did not face overt

discrimination, they still internalized a sense of inferiority or lacked confidence, perceiving their accent as a potential barrier to being fully accepted by the public. A first-generation immigrant from a Spanish-speaking country in South America, for instance, internalized the idea that his French is “less good” than others’, and considered “losing” his accent a natural step in the process of integrating into a new society. This echoes Gluszek and Dovidio’s review of the literature on the stigma of non-native accents in communication (2010), stating that speakers’ “beliefs about controllability over progress may have important consequences on their psychological and behavioural responses when communicating” (p. 222). For instance, speakers who believe in their ability to eliminate their accent may “see interactions with native speakers as a learning process and to seek out such contacts, which in turn may lead to a noticeable decrease in the accent strength” (Moyer, 2007). However, if speakers are not able to completely eliminate their accents, Gluszek and Dovidio warn they may experience “negative psychological consequences (e.g., feelings of failure) and feel more negative and self-conscious about their accents” (2010, p. 222).

The experience of this first-language Spanish speaker underscores how some journalists may adhere to a linguistic assimilation imperative, not viewing the erasure of their accent as a threat to their identity but as a reasonable condition for effective communication and professional and social belonging. These cases remain rare in the current sample and call for more targeted research into the particular challenges faced by non-French-language background journalists. It also needs to be acknowledged that this question of identity threat is further complicated by the fact that the degree to which identity preservation must be sought is a contested issue among scholars. As Derwing and Munro underline (2009), studying immigrant L2 speakers in English Canada, the tension between the preservation of identity and changing a speaker’s pronunciation is not automatic. According to Derwing and Munro, discussions of accents and identity tend to be too

often “over-simplistic,” ignoring, among other things, that “people can have multiple identities” (p. 485) and that a speaker’s ability to use their accent as a means of expressing identity is limited by how much control they have over its features. Many aspects of an accent are non-volitional: they are not the result of a conscious decision or choice. These features depend on factors such as the age at which a second language is learned, the similarity between the first and second language’s “phonological inventory,” language exposure, “aptitude,” and “motor control,” among other variables. Because these elements are largely beyond the speaker’s control, it is misleading to interpret accents as an “intentional expression of identity” (p. 486). However, other aspects of accent are volitional and can be consciously adjusted. Authors argue that supporting second-language speakers in working with these adjustable features can improve intelligibility, therefore expanding their capacity for expressing their identities. Based on interviews they conducted with engineers who speak English as a second language in Canada, the authors argue:

> These engineers have found that some aspects of their pronunciation are a liability, and they have expressly asked for help. We therefore don’t think it is immoral or threatening to their identities to assist them to become more intelligible. We have no expectation that pronunciation students will fully adopt Canadian English patterns – there is no need to erase their accents. We simply want them to achieve successful communication both at work and in their everyday lives – exactly what THEY want and why they have sought help. (Derwing & Munro, 2009, p. 485)

At a theoretical level, these concerns echo a wider debate, outlined in theme 3 of this thesis, about the boundary between conformism, a form of submission tainted by tacit ideologies and forms of hegemonies, and adaptation, a seemingly more conscious act of strategically abiding by norms to suit a professional purpose. In the experience of accented journalists in this research, the

line between the two remains blurry. As Bourdieu (1983) himself asked, “Lorsque les groupes stigmatisés revendiqu(ent) le stigmate comme principe de leur identité, faut-il parler de résistance ? Et quand, à l’inverse, ils travaillent à s’approprier ce qui leur permettrait de s’assimiler, faut-il parler de soumission ?” (p. 123). Therefore, as the experience of second-language French journalists underlines, there may be a need to demystify and make explicit power relations in language and what is not or less controllable about one’s accent, so that journalists can make conscious choices to adhere to these norms, subvert them, or combine both strategies.

International Migration History

The previous factor (French as a second language) and international migration history share similarities, as both signal a form of dissonance between accented journalists and the majority francophone group in Quebec and Canada. More broadly, contexts of socialization influenced how participants were integrated into Quebec and Canadian francophone groups, societies, cultures, and, therefore, their language varieties. Journalists with an international migration history were not socialized within these groups and, therefore, were unable to “pass” as unaccented in these groups. Beyond the issue of “accent” itself, immigration also meant participants arrived with a lack of local professional experience and cultural reference, which many recognized as a barrier to employment, although some asserted that this is a normal step in one’s immigration journey that must not be confused with illegitimate discrimination.

Immigration also shaped journalists’ experience of accentedness as it created turning points where participants became aware of their accent as a form of symbolic displacement. For many immigrant journalists, arriving in Quebec or Canada marked the beginning of heightened scrutiny and self-awareness. French-born participants often arrived in Quebec with a sense of linguistic security, only to be confronted with the need to “relearn” or adapt to Quebec French as a “second

dialect." For them, accentedness emerged through divergence from Quebec norms. For some, this awareness continued across borders: a French journalist reported feeling "less French" even upon returning to France due to lexical borrowings from Quebec French. In these cases, accentedness is entangled with a broader sense of foreignness and dislocation, often perceived by others through cues such as accent, name, or behaviours perceived to be stereotypically French. Some immigrant participants reported being seen as lacking insider knowledge compared to domestic journalists, which became a barrier to accessing professional opportunities or feeling trusted by the sources they interviewed and the public. These assumptions were not only language-related but rooted in deeper anxieties about cultural belonging and professional legitimacy. The experience of exclusion was often intensified when accentedness was conflated with being foreign, reinforcing the perception that immigrant journalists could not fully understand local realities or represent the host society, even when participants actively demonstrated openness to learning about these.

However, the large majority of journalists among those who experienced international migration (6/8) were originally from France, and all French participants self-identified as either "White," "Caucasian," or "French." Although French people constitute the largest immigrant group in Quebec in 2021,[28] amounting to 7.7% of it (Statistics Canada, 2023),[29] further investigation could look into the lived experiences of racialized and immigrant journalists originating from other countries, such as Haiti, Algeria, and Morocco, which are the three largest immigrant groups in Quebec after France (Statistics Canada, 2023).

[28] Immigrants born in France constituted the 17th largest migrant group in Canada in 2021, accounting for 1.4% of the immigrant population.
[29] This statistic excludes temporary immigrants, such as work permit holders, international students, and asylum seekers awaiting refugee status, which is an immigrant category that necessarily includes journalists. It includes permanent residents and immigrants who have acquired Canadian citizenship through naturalization.

The above-mentioned points related to immigrant journalists echo Beaudry's (2024) concerns about the potential additional issues faced by journalists who immigrated to Quebec later in life as adults. The next section will add the specific challenges of racialized journalists, two of whom also appeared to be of immigrant background, thus closely relating to Beaudry's thesis focus.

Race and the Experience of Accentedness

Among all the differential factors that influenced participants' lived experiences of accentedness, race did not appear to be the most prominent. This may be partly due to the absence of specific theoretical and analytical frameworks, such as critical race theory, in the research design.[30] Nevertheless, it is worth noting that for the two journalists in this study who self-identified as racialized, race influenced how their accent was perceived and how they had to negotiate it in professional contexts. For these racialized journalists, accentedness was often inseparable from broader racialized assumptions about linguistic legitimacy and belonging. One Black participant reported that his accent, associated with a "prestigious" variety of French that colleagues reportedly interpreted as "French from France," was nonetheless perceived through a racial lens, resulting in experiences of othering. In his case, accent functioned as both a linguistic and racial marker, prompting him to justify or defend his legitimacy, often with caution and restraint, leading to the use of diplomatic forms of answers and strategic use of silence as a protection. In contrast, white journalists, particularly those from France, experienced a shift in positionality. In their country of origin, they belonged to a majority group, but in Quebec, or elsewhere in Canada, they encountered a form of linguistic downgrading that required them to grapple with what discrimination "feels like." While most were hesitant to equate their experience with discrimination based on race, they

[30] For an analysis grounded in critical race theory on how racialized journalists navigate the Canadian media industry, see Séraphin (2023) and Wu (2023).

did recognize how accentedness displaced them symbolically, creating a form of in-between position shaped by both privilege and exclusion.

In the Shadow of the "Standard" Language: Experiencing Accentedness from Francophone Minority and Regional Perspectives

For one journalist from a francophone minority community, the stigma attached to her accent was rooted in internalized linguistic insecurity, shaped by early life experiences of linguistic marginalization and a sense of linguistic inferiority. Over time, she developed an ability to switch between accents depending on the context in order to meet the expectations of different social spheres, including the journalistic field, where she primarily uses Montreal French. This adaptability was not only linguistic but also symbolic, reflecting a strategic negotiation of identity. Nevertheless, this flexibility came at a cost: a persistent feeling that her voice could never be fully "authentic" in every setting. Despite this tension, she ultimately reclaimed her accent with pride, viewing it as a marker of resistance and resilience.

Her story also stresses the power imbalance between Quebec and the rest of French-speaking Canada, emphasizing that accentedness may also be read through the lens of intra-francophone relationships, where Quebec's linguistic dominance overshadows the legitimacy of other francophone voices. To a lesser extent, the experience of journalists perceived as speaking with a "regional" Quebec accent can be compared to that of journalists from francophone minority communities. Although each context has its specificities, with linguistic insecurity in francophone minority settings often emerging from a perception of inferiority toward Quebec French (Boudreau, 2023), both groups of journalists described their need to align with a form of French perceived as "more standard." In the Canadian media ecosystem, this norm was described using disparate terms such as "français soutenu canadien-français," "montréalais," "international," or "radio-canadien."

While these adjectives refer to geographic locations, they also carry undertones of class and social prestige. Although class was not among the most salient aspects of accented journalists' experiences analyzed in this thesis, it did surface on occasion in participants' testimonies. One journalist from a francophone minority background, for example, was complimented for her "radio-canadien" accent, which she did not associate with negative connotations, while still recognizing that this accent can be used pejoratively, such as to insult someone of "bourgeois du Plateau," referencing a wealthier, gentrified area of Montreal. At the same time, she noted that in the context of regional broadcasting, sounding more "popular" could be better received by local audiences than more formal French.

These observations invite further reflection on the intersection of class with other identity factors, particularly in relation to francophone minority and regional Quebec identities. Annette Boudreau's reflections on the use of "standard" French among francophones in Acadie[31] raise the questions of strategic and conscious adaptation to legitimate language in the pursuit of upward social mobility. In the Radio-Canada podcast *Parler mal* (Richard & Robichaud, 2021a), which explores linguistic insecurity, Boudreau cautions that efforts to counter linguistic insecurity can be misunderstood as encouraging speakers to express themselves as they wish in all communication situations. Insisting that speakers use stigmatized language varieties in every context can come at a social cost, potentially compromising their access to employment. For speakers who are already socially and economically marginalized, holding on uncritically to their "non-standard" variety of French as a form of resistance may not ultimately serve their interests Richard & Robichaud, 2021b).

[31] Francophone group rooted in Canada's Maritime provinces (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island), whose members live within a majority English-speaking population.

This perspective resonates with the experience of journalist Jean-Philippe Pleau, who, in his autobiography *Rue Duplessis, ma petite noirceur* (2024), mentions that, to remain on air, Radio-Canada suggested he take diction classes. Pleau describes himself as a class defector for having "fled" his lower-class, regional Quebec background. It took him a year and a half to "break" and "standardize" his accent through diction classes (Pleau, 2024, p. 82). As of today, Pleau is still a journalist on Radio-Canada's show *Réfléchir à voix haute*. Reflecting on his experience, he expressed mixed feelings:

> Qui suis-je vraiment ? Celui qui a perdu sa langue dans une formation de Radio-Canada à force de travailler à la vernir ou celui qui a adopté la langue de son milieu d'accueil, une langue qui cède sa place à l'ancienne dans certaines circonstances, de stress ou de détente ? Il m'est difficile d'admirer cette partie de moi, abandonnée le long de ma route et qui néanmoins m'accompagne toujours. Paradoxalement, j'aime la poésie et la *chouenne* des gens de l'île aux Coudres dans les films de Pierre Perrault. Pourquoi ne pas aimer celles de Jean-Pierre Pleau de la rue Duplessis lorsqu'elles se mélangent à la mienne ? (p. 83)[32]

Similarly, in the podcast *Parler mal*, Éric Dow, an Acadian PhD student in sociolinguistics from Nova Scotia and singer of the band *Cy*, singing in Acadjonne French,[33] introduced the notion of linguistic securitization. For him, understanding the power relationships and history behind the standardization of French, including the highly relative legitimacy of the Parisian standard French norm, helped him overcome his own linguistic insecurity. Yet, rather than rejecting standard French

[32] Jean-Pierre Pleau, who is illiterate, is the author's father. Chouenne is a regional variation of Quebec French spoken in the Charlevoix region (Gadbois & Bérubé, 2006).
[33] Variety of French spoken in the Baie Sainte-Marie area in Nova Scotia.

outright, he describes learning to “master the standard code” and use it strategically as “a tool like any other one” to ease social mobility (Richard & Robichaud, 2021c).

The approaches previously outlined advocate for speakers to think in terms of language varieties and foster their ability to switch codes strategically depending on the social and communicative context, without necessarily erasing one’s linguistic identity, although the line between the two can be blurry. However, it is important to acknowledge that not all speakers may be equal in accessing these linguistic tools. Drawing on her analysis formulated in *Dire le silence Insécurité linguistique en Acadie 1867-1970*, Boudreau (2021) emphasizes that:

> Ce ne sont pas tous les locutrices et les locuteurs qui peuvent « jouer de la langue et en rire », [...] ou qui peuvent se permettre de le faire. Les conséquences d’user librement de sa langue ne sont pas les mêmes pour un poète que pour une personne de qui l’on s’attends à une certaine manière de parler. De plus, il serait irresponsable de dire que les gens peuvent parler comme ils le veulent dans toutes les situations de communication, car comme je viens de le dire, pouvoir *choisir* les traits de langue que l’on donne à voir suppose justement que l’on a un choix, et ce choix n’est pas donné à tout le monde, certaines personnes ayant à payer un prix social fort si elles s’expriment dans leur vernaculaire. Il existe une grande différence entre ceux et celles qui connaissant les règles du jeu, et les autres, qui ne saisissent pas les logiques de pouvoir implacable liées à la manière de parler. (Boudreau, 2021, p. 197)

For instance, Dow was able to pursue graduate studies in sociolinguistics, raising important questions about the role of privilege in both learning the “standard” language and resisting it. Similarly, the participants in this study, whether from francophone minority communities or regional areas of Quebec, were able to pursue higher education and leave their regions of origin to

build careers in journalism. Their trajectories likewise point to forms of capital, suggesting that, while reflexivity and adaptability are key to building one's capacity to act, access to resources may help foster these qualities, enabling a more effective response to linguistic stigmatization and easing the barriers to entering the journalistic field. These concerns extend to other research participants, who did not all face accent-based stigmatization with the same tools or resources. Some were better equipped to formulate criticism, having attained a certain level of professional recognition and possessing the linguistic, discursive, and rhetorical skills to do so. In particular, fluency in French appeared to enable some participants to articulate their experiences with greater nuance. These uneven capacities to name and resist stigmatization highlight the need to situate accentedness within broader power relations in the journalistic field.

In or Outside Quebec? Media Infrastructures and National Identity

Integrating the perspectives of French-speaking journalists who do not work in Quebec, although it was not an initial focus of this thesis, proved to be a useful endeavour in highlighting the interplay between Quebec, which sees itself as the centre of the French language in North America, and more peripheral francophone regions. In this regard, the structuration of the French-language media ecosystem in Canada also strongly influenced the experience of participants who exercise journalism outside Quebec. Participants working outside Quebec felt they were still judged and required to abide by Quebec language standards, since a significant part of their journalistic production would not be consumed by the local audience, but by Quebec's. Therefore, they often produce their journalistic work with the Quebec audience in mind, which influences language choices. One journalist noted how the composition of the newsroom and the hierarchy, which at the time seemed to be composed of a majority of staff from Quebec, imported and reinforced expectations to abide by language expectations influenced by Quebec French, which he

criticized. Despite these negative experiences, on the other hand, some accented journalists working outside Quebec sometimes described finding inclusive and welcoming journalistic and linguistic communities in which they were able to integrate without feeling the pressure to "change" their accent. Some participants' testimonies suggest that these journalists working outside Quebec may have internalized the framework of Canadian multiculturalism, within which they assert a sense of belonging, while their perceptions of Quebec reflect unease toward an integration model that they view as more exclusionary. Accented journalists feeling accepted in francophone communities outside Quebec can also be understood in connection to their local francophone public, one in which some journalists felt empowered to represent a "francophone mosaic" that reflected their own diversity.

These findings, although limited in scope, raise questions about the role of national identity in both Quebec and Canada, as it relates to accented voices. Further investigating how journalists' relationship with their own accent may shape their feelings of belonging and acceptance in Canada and Quebec could offer practical insights into supporting the integration of immigrant journalists in both professional and social spheres. The fact that some journalists felt "othered" might point to tensions in how national and provincial contexts accommodate, or fail to accommodate, linguistic difference. In the case of Quebec, Haroun-Rabah Aramis (2024), surveying members of the majority group in Quebec (individuals born in Canada, not members of a visible minority or Indigenous group, and whose mother tongue is French) found that respondents perceived Quebec accent as a marker of national identity, one considered more important than ethnic markers (such as to be born in Quebec and have French Canadian ancestors), though still less important than speaking French itself. As Aramis concludes: "S'intégrer au groupe national au Québec ne signifie donc pas, selon certains, de seulement parler la langue française, mais également de bien la parler"

(2024, p. 79). These findings raise important questions about how one's accent, and by extension, perceived nationality as an embodied marker of difference, might conflict with the imagined audience, and ultimately, the imagined community that constitutes the nation (Anderson, 2016). An accent may create friction by rendering audible a misalignment between who is assumed to be capable of representing a national, majority group and the vocal expression of a journalist's perceived identity. This misalignment may trigger representations of the journalist as more peripheral to the core national "us." Therefore, these considerations invite us to consider which accents are most included or excluded in the construction of national identity, and how it might be reconsidered around inclusive values that could foster a sense of belonging among accented and immigrant journalists. Studying French-accented voices in the media, Planchenault (2015) gives particular attention to the role of cinematographic/filmic media in the differentiation of voices, but the role of informational media in this process would also be worth examining. As she reminds:

> If this phenomenon of [voice] differentiation may be perceived as essential to the nation-building process ('It is through the Other that the nation forms its boundaries' - Haque 2012: 21), one should bear in mind that xenophobic discourses share similar tools of exclusion. In this vein, Goffman (1963) explains how the *normals* construct a stigma-theory to explain the *stigmatized'*s inferiority and account for the danger that they represent (1963: 5) (Planchenault, 2015, p. 43)

The Journalistic Craft: Media, Topics and Beats, Between Shielding and Exposure

Throughout their testimonies, accented journalists described certain media formats and topics as either safer or riskier for them, temporarily diverging from the subject of accent as such. These shaped their experience of being perceived as accented within journalism, as they could either shield them from or expose them to scrutiny. Topics of cultural and political significance for

local audiences, or sensitive topics such as the environment, tended to be associated with a heightened fear of inadequacy and negative reactions from the public, particularly among immigrant journalists, who expressed anxiety about their ability to represent and speak on behalf of the host society, namely Quebec.

Conversely, one journalist from a Latin American country explained he would feel more at ease in entertainment media and humour, citing his ability to imitate the "Latino speaker with broken French" in a way that aligned with public expectations of him. For others, covering science constituted a form of protection, a beat that shielded them against scrutiny. Science journalism was often described using notions of objectivity, factuality, and neutrality, qualities that participants felt distanced them from criticism related to their perceived difference.

Similarly, journalists working in the written press, while not entirely exempt from accent-based stigmatization, generally felt more comfortable than their broadcast counterparts. The written format was perceived as offering an additional layer of distance from the audience, thereby muting the audible expression of their accent. Nevertheless, several journalists worried that their accent, or origins, might still be discernible in their writing when it does not align with the local Canadian journalistic writing style.

Implications for Journalism Research and Practice

Exploratory in nature, this research sought to draw on a wide range of insights to outline possible directions for future inquiry. It identified various sites and actors involved in accent-based stigmatization in the field of journalism. Participants' accounts highlight the importance of recognizing the multiple points at which interventions may be necessary.

Acknowledging that an accent, to be perceived as such, requires the presence of a speaker and a hearer engaged in an interaction, even mediatized, underlines that solutions cannot rest solely on the shoulders of accented journalists. Instead, multi-level approaches could include individual-level strategies, such as confidence-building and equipping journalists with tools to respond to stigmatization, alongside collective actions raising awareness and promoting education about linguistic diversity through the media. Thus, potential interventions extend beyond newsrooms to encompass broader societal spheres.

The Case of Journalism Schools

This research underlines that an accent itself is not as much of a barrier as the environment in which it is received. Colleagues, journalistic norms, and the imagined expectations of audiences, among many other factors, create the perception of an accent as a problem and a barrier to inclusion. As theme 1 highlighted, the gradual problematization of one's accent can begin prior to joining the formal journalism setting of the newsroom. Journalism schools appear as a site where students may internalize norms about what constitutes acceptable journalistic vocal performance and language. One participant vividly recalled realizing he "had" an accent during interactions in his journalism program, a realization that had a negative impact on his self-confidence. These findings are a reminder that journalism schools serve as places of early professional socialization, where certain linguistic standards are established and later carried into the workplace. This echoes Dubray's insights from research participants reporting stigmatizing behaviours and comments in journalism schools (2024), as well as Gasquet-Cyrus and Masson's (2022) research on the management of accents in French journalism schools, which interviewed students, educators, and program directors. As they underline:

> À des degrés divers, ces élèves rendent compte de certaines pressions sociales, normatives, idéologiques auxquelles ils/elles ont été confronté·es au cours de leur formation, sous forme de remarques ou d'exercices particuliers. Pour certain·es, le rapport à l'accent dans ces écoles peut générer des formes d'insécurité linguistique mais aussi d'accommodation, de convergence, d'« effacement » de l'accent. (Gasquet-Cyrus & Masson, 2022)

Mirroring their approach, ethnographic observations, interviews with both students and instructors, and content analysis of course material could be employed to analyze the management of accents in Quebec and Canadian journalism programs. As pinpointed by the authors, it appears important to examine how accents are talked about in these settings, namely, the epilinguistic discourses that shape perceptions of language in journalism. This could also be extended to newsroom environments in order to seize the values, meanings, and attitudes attached to accented speech. Curricula and pedagogies could also be analyzed to investigate how students perceived to "have" an accent are approached and considered by educators and peers, especially to identify how to create safer environments for students to explore their full potential.

The situated, relational, and dynamic nature of accentedness, as shown throughout this thesis, suggests that any journalist may be perceived as accented, depending on the context. This is especially evident in the experience of immigrant journalists. As such, all journalism students could benefit from learning about accent-based stigmatization, unconscious biases, and appropriate responses to these phenomena. Certain groups of students may be more likely to be perceived as accented within the Canadian context. Future research could explore the experiences of journalism students from various backgrounds: international students, those from regional areas of Quebec or the wider Canadian Francophonie, individuals from low-income backgrounds, students with

disabilities, and others. Comparative studies across institutional settings, such as francophone and anglophone universities, programs within and outside of Quebec, would be particularly valuable.

Although journalism programs in French outside Quebec are rare,[34] they could present a compelling site for an investigation, raising questions about which linguistic "norms," if any, are transmitted to students, and how linguistic legitimacy is negotiated in minority-language contexts. The experience of international journalism students, who were not included in this study, would also prompt questioning. Immigrant journalists interviewed for this research often described a form of symbolic linguistic downgrading, particularly French immigrants who shifted from being part of a dominant group to being perceived as "accented." International students may arrive in Canada with varying levels of linguistic capital and legitimacy, which could affect both their academic experience and future professional integration. Unlike immigrant journalists who arrive after completing their education, international students may use their studies to gain familiarity with Canadian journalism linguistic expectations, as well as local and national cultural norms. This period of adjustment may be key to understanding their longer-term trajectories in (or outside) the journalism industry.

While journalism education may contribute to the marginalization of accented speakers, it can also be part of the solution. It may provide opportunities to develop and experiment with best practices for inclusive, linguistically diverse learning environments. That said, journalism schools operate under the tension between pedagogical goals and the expectations of the industry. As long as newsroom standards around accents remain implicit and unexamined, it is unlikely that change initiated in classrooms will translate into lasting transformation within the profession at large.

[34] Known programs are information-communication (Université de Moncton), journalisme numérique (Université d'Ottawa), journalisme (Collège La Cité, Ottawa).

Moreover, it is important to acknowledge that not all journalists receive formal training prior to entering the field. For these reasons, newsrooms emerge as crucial sites for intervention.

Inclusivity in Newsrooms

Not all participants reported negative experiences related to their accent in newsrooms. Some described supportive environments and positive interactions with colleagues. These accounts offer insights into factors and preventive strategies that may help mitigate the stigmatizing potential of accentedness. One such factor appears to be the nature, size, and composition of newsroom teams. Journalists working in the community sector, with smaller newsrooms and tight-knit teams with close interpersonal relationships, reported feeling greater acceptance. The sense of mutual reliance within these teams may foster greater acceptability of participants' accents. Even within larger organizations, some journalists found ways to cultivate supportive relationships. One participant, for instance, shared her insecurities about not mastering Quebec French writing norms with colleagues as a way to prevent insensitive remarks and obtain positive feedback.

More broadly, this research underscores the importance of breaking the silence that surrounds the question of accents in journalism. Several participants felt that their colleagues, especially those who do not experience accentedness, might not fully understand or be willing to listen to their concerns. Accent-based stigma is rarely overt. While some journalists reported receiving explicit comments about their accent, many described more subtle forms of exclusion, often in the form of microaggressions. A recurring issue was the lack of clarity around what is considered acceptable or unacceptable, making it difficult for journalists to contest unspoken norms.

Reconciling Individual and Collective Solutions

What arises from the previously outlined solutions is the tension between individual and collective responses. Solutions that tend to be individualizing, such as accent reduction or self-monitoring, likely risk reinforcing the notion that accentedness is a personal flaw to be managed, "fixed," or "corrected." Such approaches echo participants' accounts of attempting to control or minimize their accent, while placing little responsibility on speakers deemed "unaccented" or the institutions in which these interactions occur. Moving beyond this binary requires a dual approach that incorporates both individual empowerment and collective responsibility.

At the individual level, this includes equipping journalists with the tools and vocabulary to understand and respond to accent-based stigma. Terms such as *glottophobia*, *accenteism*, *linguistic insecurity*, and *microaggressions* can help name instances of stigmatization, make them more visible, and respond to and mobilize against such experiences. Several strategies for responding to accent-based stigmatization may also include correcting stereotypes, expressing empathy toward actors of stigmatization and encouraging their reflection.

Importantly, the question of solutions did not emerge spontaneously in participants' accounts. It was rather introduced by the interviewer. When prompted to reflect on possible collective responses, participants often emphasized the importance of initiating conversations within newsrooms about the experience of "having" an accent. They suggested involving multiple stakeholders, including newsroom staff, managers, and senior leadership. Some were surprised to learn that equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) training focused on language issues already exists, although it remains uncommon, and expressed interest in such initiatives. Participants also called for non-judgmental attitudes, the removal of hiring barriers, and the training of recruiters to address unconscious biases. Hiring more accented journalists was proposed by some, though one

participant expressed discomfort with the idea of quotas. While several participants felt that awareness of racial discrimination has grown in recent years, they noted that language-based forms of exclusion remain less visible and are often overlooked. Many insisted on the need to engage managers and leadership teams in large organizations, seeing top-down approaches as more likely to produce structural change than bottom-up efforts.

In discussing collective solutions with participants, one major obstacle emerged: the perceived role of the audience in contributing to the exclusion of diverse voices from the media landscape. Several journalists described receiving complaints from listeners, aggressive messages on social media, or hostile comments under their articles, either targeting their accent or perceived origins. The perceived reluctance of media organizations to feature on-air accented journalists was often described as a "chicken-or-egg" dilemma. Is the presumed preference of the public for "unaccented" speech the reason for the lack of accent diversity on air, or is it a consequence of that very absence? Some participants questioned whether the audience's "taste" for standard speech reflects a freely made preference or a socially shaped perception. In a study from Brazil, for instance, a sample of television audience members expressed a preference for "softened" accent over a regional accent (Lopes et al., 2013). Yet, as the authors suggest, these preferences may themselves be the result of long-standing standardization practices within the broadcasting industry, which is an example of a feedback loop where exposure shapes taste, and taste, in turn, justifies limited exposure.

Individualizing solutions reinforces a paradigm in which journalists are expected to adapt their accents to fit audience expectations. Such a model is rooted in ideologies of self-responsibility and meritocracy, placing the full burden of "fixing" an accent on individual speakers. This may be reinforced in journalism, a profession where language quality and mastery are central to

professional identity. Journalists are often seen, and see themselves, as "guardians of the language," which can make any deviation from perceived linguistic norms easily conflated with a lack of competence.

When asked whether the public and the broader media ecosystem are "ready" to hear more accented voices on air, participants often responded by downplaying the importance of the audience's perceived readiness. Instead, they stressed the need for bold action. As one journalist stated, "si on attend que les gens soient prêts, on n'y arrive jamais" (PN9),[35] suggesting that greater representation of accent diversity may gradually shift expectations and normalize audible difference.

In this light, the media's own role becomes central, both in increasing on-air linguistic diversity and offering tools for educating the public. Media coverage could help deconstruct linguistic prejudice by informing the public about the socially constructed nature of accents and linguistic hierarchies. By denaturalizing and objectivizing social reality, a process by which dominant structures and hierarchies are made visible and contestable through discourse and cultural production (Bourdieu, 1992, as cited in Landry, 2006), the media can play a central role in accompanying a symbolic revolution. In this context, journalism and public broadcasting hold the potential to foster greater awareness among the general public.

Traditionally, solutions to the "problem" of accents have been envisioned through accent-reduction therapies.[36] However, it is possible to look at solutions rather than modify the perceptions and evaluations of listeners, the public, colleagues and newsroom managers.[37] Gisele Regatão, an

[35] Translation from the author. "If we wait for people to be ready, we never get there."
[36] See Lippi-Green (1997) for more on accent reduction.
[37] For instance, Cook (1999) suggests that L2 accented speakers could rather be seen as multicompetent than deficient speakers.

assistant professor of journalism at the City University of New York, originally from Brazil, underlines that the media has a transformative role in shifting the public's perspective on accents (2018, para. 18). To her, it is necessary to break journalists and editors' assumptions that the public is reluctant to hear accents by making audacious decisions that increase the audibility of accented journalists. Similarly, in Quebec, speech pathologist and author Agathe Tupula Kabola (2024) insists on the importance of promoting audible minorities in the media as a way to reduce bias in an article published in *Le Devoir*, stating that: "J'ai la profonde conviction que si l'on entendait une plus grande variété de voix et d'accents dans l'espace public, nos oreilles s'habitueraient, et nos biais s'amenuiseraient" (para. 11).

Some initiatives already reflect the potential of the media to bring awareness to the question of accents and contribute to deconstructing myths around them. For instance, the podcast *Parler mal*, produced by Radio-Canada, tackles issues of linguistic insecurity and the legitimacy of non-standard French varieties (Richard & Robichaud, 2021a). It includes a testimony from Béatrice Roomy, who was then a journalism student and originally from the Gaspésie region of Eastern Quebec. Roomy shared her concerns about feeling disadvantaged when trying to find a job in journalism (Richard & Robichaud, 2021d). Beyond this, Radio-Canada has aired programs that interrogate the social meaning of accents and promote openness to linguistic diversity. For instance, speech-language pathologist Agathe Tupula Kabola was invited to demystify the linguistic adaptation processes many immigrants undergo (Dugal, 2022), and a video explainer examined the barriers faced by actors who "have" an accent in Quebec, highlighting the perceived exclusion of non-standard voices within the Quebec francophone cultural sphere (Rad, 2021). In English Canada, CBC Toronto published a four-part article series, *The Accent Effect*, which aimed at exploring "accents and how they might shape the way we are viewed by others and the way we

view ourselves" (Sathiyanathan & Xing, 2018). The CBC also compiled testimonies from its own staff members who shared their experiences of accentedness in a video series (CBC, 2024). Additionally, the public broadcaster published a first-person story by Julia Embuscado Daantos, who recounted how she perceives her accent as a barrier to acceptance as an immigrant from the Philippines living in Alberta (Daantos, 2024).

Overall, the careful attention to the dynamic and interactional nature of accent problematization, as demonstrated in this thesis, underscores how one's accent is neither good nor bad by nature, but the product of an ongoing negotiation of legitimacy across the journalism field. This reveals a potential for reconciling professional standards with greater linguistic inclusivity. Reframing efforts may be undertaken to shift the understanding of "accents" and of diversity in general, from being seen as "problems" to being recognized as contributions that linguistically diverse individuals bring to journalism. What might it mean to imagine a different journalistic landscape, where the diversity of voices is embraced not as a deviation, but as a rich expression of the many identities that make up Canadian and Quebec societies?

This aspiration, mirroring Blanchet's humanist approach to glottopolitics (2019), may already be shared by various actors in the field, but as the participants' testimonies illustrate, it remains, in different ways, an aspirational work in progress. Glottopolitics,[38] which are "any action of language interaction management where society intervenes" (Guespin, 1985), are "constantly constructed" in everyday life (Blanchet, 2019) and may contribute to shaping the public's expectations toward on-air journalists. While these glottopolitics can "reinforce and reproduce a certain (glottophobic) social order," they can also "seek to build an alternative society," through

[38] Translation from the author. "Toute action de gestion de l'interaction langagière où intervient la société" (Guespin, 1985).

humanist glottopolitics (Blanchet, 2019). From this perspective, shifting public perceptions of accents and linguistic diversity may represent an alternative path that moves away from uniquely "softening" journalists' accents toward constructing societal acceptance.

Limitations of Solutions

The solutions based on this research previously outlined, however, may face several limitations outlined below, such as (1) the limited recognition of accent-related struggles within newsrooms, (2) the lack of collective mobilization due to individual pressures and workplace risks, (3) the absence of consensus among accented journalists, (4) the risk of aestheticizing and depoliticizing the audible presence of accented voices (5), the potential for tokenism without structural change in journalism practice and representations.

The struggles faced by certain accented journalists may not always be seen as worth engaging with by their colleagues. As one journalist emphasized, raising concerns related to accents in the workplace remains an unlikely option, as media professionals are often preoccupied with other pressing issues, such as union rights and workload management. Colleagues may be more focused on individual pursuits, such as securing desired positions or covering topics that interest them. In such a context, the risks associated with speaking out may be too high for accented journalists, especially when their concerns are not perceived as part of the shared struggles of the newsroom.

As outlined in the conclusion of theme 4, accented journalists themselves do not necessarily agree on how to address accent-based stigmatization or the broader issue of representation it raises. While the vast majority of participants expressed support for greater linguistic diversity in the media, including a wider range of accents on air, this position was sometimes ambiguous. One

participant, for instance, questioned how increased diversification might affect the presence of Quebec accents in the media, noting that she would feel uncomfortable if it were no longer the majority on air.

Many participants perceived a growing openness in the media industry to hiring accented journalists. Those with more years of experience perceived a positive shift over time, citing, for instance, the presence of Cameroonian journalists in Manitoba, or of Diana Gonzalez, a journalist of Colombian origin, working at Radio-Canada in Montreal. As one imagines a media landscape in which "accents" are fully accepted and integrated, it becomes necessary to interrogate the deeper implications of making linguistic diversity audible, just as "visible" diversity is portrayed. Some participants described on-air accents as "beautiful." Perceiving accents in purely aesthetic terms has implications. This aestheticization, while potentially signalling a form of reclamation, where accents are no longer viewed as shameful, can also act as a double-edged sword, risking depoliticizing the presence of accented voices, removing the social and historical weight they carry. These comments on the aesthetic value of accents suggest that accent diversity may be framed within a capitalist market logic. In this view, a journalist's voice is a commodified product consumed without regard for its inherently political dimensions. Diversity, in such a framework, is a marketable good that exists to fulfill a perceived demand from audiences. The danger here lies in the commodification and aestheticization of accent, which can obscure its political significance and reduce it to a superficial marker of apparent inclusion.

Rather than celebrating the surface-level "beauty" of accents, their presence may offer an opportunity to acknowledge their deeper ties to various mechanisms that contributed to their silencing: colonial legacies, the assimilation of Indigenous peoples (including the loss of cultures and languages) and immigrants, as well as the persistent exclusion of various groups, relegated to

the margins of the public sphere, including disabled people. Accounting for these elements of context, hearing "uncommon" voices in the media is symbolic, representing a gesture toward a media space that could be more representative and democratic.

On a more practical level, the same emphasis on audible diversity, although it may be well-intentioned, also entails the risk of tokenism. The issue of tokenism of accented journalists, recognizing that the "presence" of an accent can also coincide with other identity markers, did not appear to be experienced by participants in this study and therefore, cannot be answered in the context of this research, but could be explored in subsequent projects. While participants in this research did not report experiencing tokenism directly, it remains a relevant concept for future research, especially given that accentedness often intersects with other markers through which identity is expressed. Tokenism refers to a performative form of inclusion that satisfies or placate "the moral requirement for the inclusion of structurally disadvantaged people in groups that are better placed in terms of the outcomes of a particular society, thereby maintaining the idea that this mobility is available to all individuals when in fact it is not" (Grant, 2017). Initially theorized by Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1977) in her study of women in an American company sales force, tokenism has since been expanded to critique "diversity of façade," where the illusion of inclusivity hides sustained forms of inequalities. "Diversity" is treated as an endpoint, not as a process through which discrimination is addressed within organizations.

As accents co-occur with other identity dimensions, they are likely to vocalize fragments of one's identity that may be tokenized. Cases of tokenism in Canadian journalism, not related to accents, have been documented, such as in relation to racialized (Cheung, 2024; Zeng, 2016) and Indigenous journalists (Lasalle, 2024). As underlined by Cheung (2024), citing a *Review of Journalism* investigation of the CBC, tokenism also fuels journalism practice itself. A journalist

based in Western Canada shared: “It felt like I could only report on diverse stories, and those were the only stories that they wanted because they have to fill this diversity quota” (Cheung, 2024, p. 198). Journalist Gabrielle Paul, a member of the Pekuakamiulnuatsh of Mashteuiatsh First Nation, denounced the risk of tokenism in journalism during a 2023 roundtable at the Université de Montréal:

> On dit vouloir plus de journalistes autochtones dans les salles de nouvelles, mais on n’est pas prêt à changer les façons de faire [...]. Le modèle journalistique est encore très colonial, poussant davantage les Autochtones à s’y conformer que l’inverse. (Lasalle, 2024, para. 19)

As Paul and Cheung’s testimonies suggest, diversification efforts in newsrooms must be accompanied by deeper transformations in journalistic practices and organizational structures to avoid tokenism. The risk of tokenism could be especially salient in broadcasting, where the presence of a few accented voices may be used to showcase progress while masking persistent barriers. It might have appeared in the background of interviews, when, as previously outlined, participants pointed at certain accented journalists as “proof” of the ongoing audible diversification of francophone media. This is why deliberately including journalists working outside broadcasting, as this research intended, may prove valuable in investigating the experience of accented journalists who work “off-air,” thus decentering the focus on audibility alone to see how accentedness is not only heard, but shapes daily newsroom interactions and participates in a broader web of power.

Limitations of the Research

The present research, in line with reflexive thematic analysis, did not aim to generate findings that are generalizable to other linguistic, geographical, or media contexts (Braun & Clarke, 2022). The twelve participants who shared their lived experiences were not purposefully selected to be representative of the entire journalistic profession in Quebec and Canada. Rather, efforts were

made to obtain a group of participants whose identities and lived experiences could be as diverse as possible. The wide heterogeneity in terms of characteristics, backgrounds, and professional trajectories impacted the direction of the research and its results. Participants differed in many respects, including first language spoken, race and ethnicity, journalistic medium of expression, international immigration history, and the "types" of accents they (and others) perceived themselves to have. They also lived and worked within various linguistic contexts, francophone and non-francophone.

Nonetheless, it is important to note that no Indigenous journalist took part in this research. Partial data from the Canadian Association of Journalists' 2024 Newsroom Diversity Survey for 2024 indicate that Indigenous journalists represented 3.5% of those working in media organizations that responded to the survey, while they represented 5% of the Canadian population (Canadian Association of Journalists, 2024, p. 12). In addition, the study would have benefited from the inclusion of participants from a wider range of origins. Among the eight immigrant journalists interviewed, six were from France, which may have limited the cultural and linguistic diversity of perspectives.

Finally, the use of the word "accent" in the recruitment process may have excluded some potential participants. Journalists who do not self-identify as "accented" may still have relevant insights into how their voices are perceived or judged in professional contexts. Depending on individual assumptions about what constitutes an "accent," some may have thought they did not qualify for participation, despite potentially having valuable contributions to make. This may be particularly relevant for speaker who may have "lost" their accent over time, whether through processes of acculturation and linguistic assimilation.

As a method, reflexive thematic analysis acknowledges that this type of qualitative research is not conducted from a neutral standpoint. The recognition of positionality, combined with reflexivity throughout the research process, was undertaken to ground the findings in an ethic of transparency. As mentioned in the methods section, the researcher is himself a journalist and a French immigrant living, studying, and working in the province of Quebec. He is not a trained linguist but brings insights from professional experience and lived experience of being an "accented" speaker in Quebec. While this shared background with participants may have facilitated rapport and trust, it may also have led some participants to presume shared understandings or to downplay certain aspects of their experiences.

The transdisciplinary focus of this research, drawing mainly from sociolinguistics, sociology and social psychology, also contributed to both enriching and restricting the interpretation of the findings. Other fields, such as sound studies and disability studies, may also be mobilized to contribute to a wider understanding of "accents" in journalistic contexts.

Among the theories utilized, it is important to underline that most originate from the Western world, particularly France, Canada, and the United States. These, although eloquently offering compelling analyses of social realities, are, of course, not universal. The very concept of "accent" warrants critical scrutiny and careful use, as it may not be equally relevant or applicable across cultural contexts. As a social construct, "accent" may also carry embedded cultural values about language.

Reflexive thematic analysis does not aim to produce broadly generalizable findings. It is rather embedded in generating deeply contextual knowledge that may be considered "softly" generalizable (Braun & Clarke, 2022). This research, although not broadly generalizable in the statistical sense, might still be transferable. Through the detailed and contextualized descriptions

of participants, their lived experiences, and specific settings, it is hoped that readers will be able to assess the extent to which the findings may be transferable to other contexts and or situations.

The scarcity of previous studies on the same topic in Canada also limits the possibility of drawing comparisons with existing research. Other researchers are therefore invited to test the relevance of these findings beyond the context studied in the present thesis, to look into other regions of the world, languages, and media types, to compare, contrast, and draw potential relationships between different lived experiences of accented journalists. For readers, whether journalists or not, it is the researcher's hope that this study might offer a degree of naturalistic, or representational generalizability (Lewis et al., 2024) whereby participants' stories, and research findings, resonate with readers' own "personal engagement in life's affairs or vicarious, often tacit, experiences (Smith, 2018, p. 140).

Ultimately, the data collection method, in-depth, semi-structured interviews, has its own strengths and limitations, which necessarily impacted the research findings. The accounts provided by participants should be understood as subjective narratives. Some of the events they described occurred across long spans of time, and their factual accuracy cannot be independently verified. Nonetheless, what remains powerful, and what this thesis aimed to highlight, is how participants weave together elements of their personal histories to construct new meanings. The process of narrativization necessarily involves recontextualization. These narratives remain powerful and valuable, as they suggest participants' capacity to make sense of their lived experiences, including those that may have been difficult or traumatic. Efforts were made to ensure that participants felt as comfortable as possible. Both the participants and the researcher share the experience of being journalists, which made building rapport relatively easy, especially with French participants who

share this identity with the researcher. However, it is important to remain conscious of what was nonetheless left unsaid during the interviews, due to a lack of time, opportunity, or comfort.

Future Research Avenues

As an exploratory study, this research aimed to open further research avenues. As such, theoretical developments, comparative analyses, and the use of complementary research methods could lead to new insights into the management of accents and the lived experiences of accentedness in the journalism field.

Accent and Journalism Studies

As Braun and Clarke (2022) underline, unlike grounded theory, reflexive thematic analysis may not be the most adequate for developing theoretical models. Although theory-building is not an objective of this thesis, it nonetheless engaged with a constellation of theories, some directly related to "accents," others more distant, throughout the research process. Research findings suggest that the concept of "accent" itself may require further refinement for a more precise use in journalism studies.

Contributing to the conceptualization of the pragmatics of accents from a critical sociolinguistic approach, Planchenault and Poljak (2021) advocate for a "deliberate focus on the contexts of interaction and on accent's communicative action within these contexts" (2021, p. 6). Journalism offers a particularly rich context in this regard, as it combines mediatized communication with more immediate interpersonal interactions, such as those in and outside newsrooms.

Interdisciplinary accent studies may also provide a fertile ground for preliminary reflections at the intersection with journalism studies. In *Thinking with an Accent: Toward a New Object,*

Method, and Practice (Rangan et al., 2023), the editors propose a shift in perspective, from asking what an accent *is* to asking what it *does* in social interactions and how it may be thought of alongside it, rather than treated as an object of judgment or correction. They write:

> Accent, we propose, is the capacity of listeners to imagine vocalic bodies that exceed the control and the calculations of the speaker. Equally, accent is the capacity of communicating bodies to upend what beholders and listeners (think they) see, hear, or know. What we hear as the accented voice of the other—which is also to say, as a sign of alterity— emerges in perception. If accent indexes anything, it is the eminently embodied character of any communicative encounter, crisscrossed as it is by libidinal and economic power relations (Rangan et al., 2023, p. 3).

Thinking with an accent is proposed as an epistemological stance and a method of inquiry, which, for journalism researchers, implies engaging with accentedness as a situated, embodied, and mediatized way of knowing. What the editors argue is that a decolonial mode of inquiry, described as "a practice that is multimodal, multisensorial, and thoroughly mediatized" (2023, p. 11), offers potential for investigating both the lived experiences of accented journalists and the positionalities of researchers themselves in the knowledge-production process.

This perspective also confronts a core difficulty encountered in the present research: How to mobilize the concept of accent without reinforcing its essentializing and stigmatizing connotations? As the editors caution:

> Extant discussions of accent are bound together by an investment in specifying accent as something that is knowable, that is to say, as something that can be used to identify certain speakers; something that can mark, brand, or stigmatize them; and as something that

> characterizes a type of utterance. These approaches are limiting precisely because they produce modes of knowing that confirm the stability of their object, accent, as a material fact. To think and know this way is to miss how accentedness shapes how we know, as a coded and commodified source of value, as a practice of formal and informal schooling, and as a mode of perception that we may exercise without knowing (2023, p. 11).

The tension between using the concept of "accent" as an object of study, thereby risking its reification, and acknowledging its fluid, dialogic and socially constructed functioning certainly poses a significant challenge for research inquiries on this topic. It is worth noting that certain French sociolinguists are warning against the use of "accent" in phonetics and phonology, precisely because of the essentialism danger it entails. They instead advocate for the alternative concept of *pluriphonie* (polyphony), arguing that "accent" should be reserved for sociolinguistics, where it serves as a "tool of categorization and stigmatization of individuals based on actual or supposed shibboleth (such as ethnic categories)" (Candea & Gasquet-Cyrus, 2022). These scholars emphasize the value of *pluriphonie,* defined as "the coexistence in the same space, the same situation, or within the same person, of different variants of pronunciation of the same language" (2022).[39] They argue that "eliminating accents from our ways of thinking" and "operational categories to classify people" could be:

> Une manière de favoriser la vivacité des différentes manières de prononcer une langue comme le français mais aussi une manière de prendre conscience de la richesse de sa propre palette stylistique dans le domaine de la prononciation. Cela éviterait deux écueils redoutables : l'homogénéisation à marche forcée de l'ensemble de la francophonie et le

[39] Both translations are from the author.

repli identitaire autour d'introuvables « accents authentiques purs ». (Candea & Gasquet-Cyrus, 2023, para. 20)

These conceptual moves may avoid the pitfall of essentialism, but do not account for the epistemological value the concept of accent retains (Rangan et al., 2023). These considerations invite researchers to critically reflect on their positionalities and the implications of using, or not using, the concept of accent in their scholarly work, research questions, and dissemination of research findings.

The same dilemma of essentialism arises for speakers whose accent or language variety may be stigmatized. As this research has shown, some accented journalists created a counter-discourse centred on asserting their vocal "authenticity" as legitimate, identifying with the concept of "authenticity." Others, however, remained suspicious about this term to define themselves. For those who embraced it, "authenticity" may have served as a way to empower themselves and reverse the stigma attached to their accent by expressing pride instead of shame. In contrast, other participants viewed "authenticity" as either an unattainable vocal ideal, since their voice is constantly adjusted to meet norms, or as a form of essentialism, questioning the preconceived idea that there would be only one "authentic" accent within a language.

Boudreau, in her study of French in Acadia, was well aware of this dilemma, noting that the demand for authenticity often stems from a desire to fight back against linguistic insecurity. She developed the concept of authenticity as *ideology* to describe how this notion may be enshrined in a contemporary neoliberal logic, echoing the work of Monica Heller (2003, 2014) and Alexandre Dûchene (Duchêne & Heller, 2012), two authors who observed that "les conditions actuelles sur les plans politique et économiue sont propices au développement de matrices discursives mettant

en scène la fierté (fierté souvent liée à une forme de revendiation de l'authentique) et le profit qui lui est associé" (Boudreau, 2021 p. 197). As Boudreau further explained in her analysis:

> Les discours sur l'authentique, sur la transparence, sur le vrai s'inscrivent dans la logique du discours néolibéral, qui met l'accent sur l'individu comme seul responsable de son bien-être. Être authentique, c'est en somme le nouveau slogan qui touche à toutes les sphères de la vie sociale, y compris la langue. Il est devenu essentiel d'afficher ou performer son identité. (Boudreau, 2021, p. 196)

Research Contexts

As previously outlined, future studies could investigate specific sites where accent-based stigmatization is produced or reinforced, such as journalism schools and newsrooms. They may also draw on comparative analysis to explore journalists' lived experiences across organizational contexts. For instance, comparing the English- and French-language service units of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC/Radio-Canada), the federally-mandated public broadcaster in Canada, could shed light on how language norms in English and French corporate cultures, editorial standards, and internal polices shape the experiences of accented journalists in these media landscapes. Such research could examine various aspects of these organizations, including their equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) initiatives and employee resource groups (Zvobgo, 2024), seeking to understand if and how issues of language and accents are acknowledged and addressed internally.

The present research focused exclusively on journalists who self-identified as "accented" within the Canadian and Quebec francophone contexts. Future research aiming for a more comprehensive understanding of this issue would benefit from including complementary

perspectives from colleagues, managers, organizational leadership, and even members of the public. The scope could also be broadened to include different journalistic settings, such as public, private, and community media sectors, as well as news organizations operating at the local, national, and international levels.

Deepening comparisons between regions, such as francophone communities in Acadia, francophone communities in Canada, Quebec, France, and other French-speaking regions of Europe, could yield further insights into the international and transnational dimensions of accentedness, its lived experiences, perceptions, and management in journalistic settings. In that regard, integrating perspectives from francophone Africa would be particularly crucial for accounting for colonial and postcolonial dynamics in a region often imagined as the supposed "future" of the French language (Gazan, 2024; Venne, 2023), where French is experiencing sustained growth (Organisation internationale de la francophonie, 2022) alongside local languages undergoing revitalization, the overlap of the two giving rise to hybrid linguistic forms (Kouamé & Marcoux, 2025).

Research Methods

Pursuing the research directions previously outlined would require expanding the breadth of qualitative research methods employed. For instance, critical analysis of language policies in news organizations, journalism schools' curricula, and course materials could clarify how accent and linguistic diversity are addressed, or ignored, in these institutional and organizational contexts. Ethnographic observations could further enrich this understanding by shedding light on the day-to-day management of these issues. Policy analysis might draw inspiration from the work of Marie-Élaine Lebel and Marlon Valencia (2024), who applied decolonial and EDI frameworks to examine bilingual education policies at York University, highlighting that these policies omit the realities

and needs of students, including those who do not identify as either francophone or anglophone, Indigenous students, and those who engage in translanguaging practices. Ultimately, focus groups may offer a collective space for exploring shared experiences of accented journalists, therefore addressing a limitation caused by one-on-one interviews. Focus groups may be able to contribute to fostering solidarity-building techniques and collective action around issues of linguistic discrimination in media environments.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Call for Participation in Research

Participant·es recherché·es : L'expérience des journalistes francophones « ayant un accent » au Québec

Bonjour,

Je suis étudiant à la maîtrise en journalisme à l'Université Concordia. Je m'intéresse à la diversité linguistique dans les médias francophones au Québec, en particulier aux journalistes « ayant un accent ».

Je suis à la recherche de participant·es pour prendre part à des entretiens de recherche d'une durée maximale d'une heure réalisés par téléphone, Zoom ou en personne, selon votre préférence.

But de l'étude :

Dans cette recherche, j'explore les expériences de vie des journalistes travaillant dans le domaine des médias francophones au Québec, et ce en relation avec leur prononciation du français, ce qui est communément appelé « l'accent ». L'objectif est de mieux comprendre les réalités des journalistes dont la prononciation du français est jugée différente de celle en usage dans les médias francophones québécois.

Je m'intéresse à différents aspects, comme :

1) La relation que vous entretenez avec votre accent, votre perception de celui-ci

2) Les façons dont vous appréhendez et évoluez dans votre environnement professionnel

3) Votre identité professionnelle, linguistique, et votre sentiment d'appartenance à la profession journalistique et à la francophonie

Critères de participation :

Les critères d'inclusion dans l'étude sont les suivants :

1. Vous-vous identifier comme un ou une francophone « ayant un accent » au Québec
2. Vous travaillez actuellement, ou avez travaillé, comme journaliste salarié·e ou indépendant·e (pigiste) au Québec
3. Vous exercez (ou avez exercé) le métier de journaliste pour un média francophone

Tous les types de médias (parlés comme écrits) sont inclus dans l'étude. L'étude utilise une définition inclusive de « francophone ». Toute personne parlant français et se reconnaissant dans les critères d'inclusion mentionnés ci-dessus est invitée à participer à l'étude.

Note sur l'utilisation du mot « accent » : « Accent », tel qu'employé dans cet appel à participation et dans l'étude, fait référence à une construction sociale. L'utilisation de ce mot ne vise pas à vous catégoriser, mais à déterminer si ce concept résonne avec votre expérience vécue. Bien que tout le monde « ait un accent », en fonction de votre contexte propre et de vos interactions, vous pourriez être considéré·e comme « ayant un accent » plus qu'une autre personne.

Cette étude est ancrée dans une vision anti-oppressive. Elle est ouverte à toute personne s'identifiant au présent appel. Le chercheur s'engage à faire preuve de non-jugement. Originaire de France, il est journaliste et s'identifie comme « ayant un accent » dans le contexte québécois.

Confidentialité :

Je souhaite pouvoir publier les résultats de cette recherche, ce qui inclut des informations pouvant vous identifier. Votre nom et votre employeur ne seront cependant pas mentionnés, sauf si vous le désirez.

Vous aurez le choix de garder votre identité confidentielle. Dans ce cas, votre nom ou toute autre information permettant de vous identifier ne seront pas utilisés dans le cadre de la recherche.

Vous êtes également libre de vous retirer de cette étude à tout moment, jusqu'à trois mois après l'entretien.

Contact :

Si vous êtes intéressé·e, je vous invite à me contacter à clement.lechat@mail.concordia.ca. Je pourrai vous fournir plus d'informations sur l'étude, répondre à vos questions et vous envoyer la liste des questions pour vous donner une idée des thèmes que je souhaiterais aborder lors de l'entretien.

Merci de l'attention que vous voudrez bien porter à cette étude.

Clément Lechat

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Protocole de recherche 30020205 approuvé par l'Office de la recherche de l'Université Concordia le 16 juillet 2024.

Appendix B

Interview Themes

A) Thème 1 : Accents et Perceptions

Identité :

1. Quelle variété de français parlez-vous ?
2. Vous identifiez-vous à un groupe linguistique ?
3. Comment vous définissez-vous ?
4. Vous sentez-vous francophone ?
5. Vous considérez-vous comme faisant partie d'une minorité audible ?
6. Avez-vous un accent ?
    a. Que pensez-vous de votre accent ?
    b. Parlez-moi de votre accent : Quelle relation entretenez-vous avec votre façon de parler ?
    c. Quelles émotions et sentiments vous viennent à l'esprit lorsque vous pensez à votre accent ou à votre façon de parler le français ?

Jugements :

1. Pensez-vous que certains accents soient meilleurs que d'autres ?
2. Au Canada, dans la vie de tous les jours, pensez-vous qu'il y ait une variété de français qui soit supérieure aux autres, qu'il s'agisse d'un standard selon lequel vous êtes évalué ou comparé ?
3. Et dans votre milieu professionnel, quelle est la variété de français la plus adéquate pour l'expression des journalistes dans les médias francophones au Canada, et pourquoi ?
4. L'accent est-il un obstacle à la qualité de la langue française ?
5. L'accent est-il un obstacle à la compréhension du public ?
6. Pensez-vous entendre des accents autres que québécois dans les médias francophones canadiens ?
    a. Comment expliquez-vous leur absence ou leur présence ?

B) Thème 2 : Vie Professionnelle

Identité :

1. Pensez-vous avoir une place dans le milieu du journalisme francophone au Canada et/ou au Québec ?
    a. Vous sentez-vous intégré dans votre milieu de travail ?
    b. Vous sentez-vous appartenir à la profession journalistique ?
2. Que pensez-vous des journalistes qui s'expriment avec leur accent en ondes ?
    a. Pensez-vous que certains accents soient plus appropriés que d'autres lorsqu'il s'agit pour un journaliste de s'exprimer en ondes ?
3. Est-il acceptable de refuser un poste en ondes à un journaliste en raison de son accent ?
4. Vous arrive-t-il d'évaluer ou de juger l'accent d'autres journalistes ?

Expérience :

1. Parlez-moi de votre parcours professionnel
    a. Pourquoi exercez-vous la profession de journaliste au Canada, et pour le média pour lequel vous travaillez présentement ?
2. Avez-vous de l'intérêt pour les médias parlés (radio, télévision) et l'apparition en ondes ?
    a. Avez-vous déjà été dans cette position ?
    b. Comment vous sentez-vous lorsque vous vous exprimez en ondes ?
3. La question de l'accent s'est-elle posée au moment de choisir votre profession, et/ou lors de votre formation ?
4. L'accent est-il un sujet de discussion dans votre milieu professionnel, et/ou dans votre vie personnelle ?
5. Au quotidien, comment gérez-vous le fait d'avoir un accent dans le cadre de votre travail de journaliste ?
6. Avez-vous déjà vécu des expériences, qu'elles soient positives ou négatives, en lien avec votre accent, dans le monde professionnel ?
    a. Comment vous sentez-vous lorsque cela arrive ?
    b. Pensez-vous être traité différemment en raison de votre accent ou de la façon dont vous parlez le français ?
    c. Pensez-vous que certaines opportunités d'emploi ou de promotion ne vous sont pas proposées et/ou accessibles en raison de votre accent ?
7. Jugements et évaluations :
    a. Qu'est-ce que vos collègues pensent de votre accent ?
    b. Qu'est-ce que vos supérieurs/managers pensent de votre accent ?
    c. Avez-vous déjà reçu des rétroactions ou commentaires de la part de membres du public au sujet de votre accent ou de votre façon de vous exprimer en français ?
    d. Dans ces situations, comment réagissez-vous ?
    e. Pourquoi pensez-vous que ces personnes expriment ces jugements sur votre accent ?
8. Pensez-vous déjà avoir ressenti de l'insécurité linguistique dans le cadre de votre travail de journaliste ?

C) Thème 3 : Futur et Meilleures Pratiques

Changement Individuel :

1. Si vous pouviez parler avec un autre accent, de quel accent s'agirait-il, et est-ce que cela changerait quelque chose dans votre vie professionnelle ?
2. Pensez-vous qu'une voix véritable ou authentique soit atteignable ?
    a. Pensez-vous qu'il vous serait possible de parler avec cette « vraie » voix dans le cadre de votre travail ?
3. Changez-vous de voix lorsque vous vous exprimez en ondes (ou code-switching/alternance codique) ?
4. Pensez-vous qu'il soit possible d'atténuer, cacher ou changer son accent ?
    a. L'avez-vous déjà fait ou considéré ?
5. Comment envisagez-vous votre avenir professionnel dans les médias canadiens francophones ?

Changement Collectif :

1. Avez-vous déjà reçu, ou entendu parler, de formations en équité, diversité et inclusion (EDI) portant sur les discriminations linguistiques ?
    a. Qu'en pensez-vous ?
2. Quelles sont selon vous des actions qui permettraient une plus grande acceptation des accents dans les médias, et une plus forte inclusion des journalistes qui ont un accent ?
3. Comment pensez-vous que le public réagirait s'il vous entendait parler avec votre accent en ondes ?
4. Le public et le milieu des médias sont-ils prêts à entendre plus d'accents ?
5. Quels seraient les conséquences, s'il y en a, d'entendre plus d'accents sur les ondes des médias canadiens francophones ?

Appendix C

Post-Interview Standardized Survey (Orally Administered)

*Toutes les questions ne s'appliquent pas nécessairement à vous. N'hésitez pas à ignorer les questions qui ne sont pas pertinentes ou auxquelles vous ne souhaitez pas répondre.

Questions démographiques :

- Quel âge avez-vous ?
- À quel(s) genre(s) vous identifiez-vous ?
- Quel est votre lieu de résidence actuel ? Comment décrieriez-vous votre origine ethnique ou raciale ?
- Quel est votre parcours éducationnel ?

Questions sur l'expérience professionnelle :

- Quelle est votre situation d'emploi actuelle ?
    - Quel est votre emploi (titre et poste) ?
    - S'agit-il d'une position managériale ?
- Avez-vous reçu une formation collégiale ou universitaire dans le domaine du journalisme ?
- Combien d'années d'expérience accumulées avez-vous dans le domaine du journalisme au Canada ?
- Combien d'années d'expérience accumulées avez-vous dans le domaine du journalisme à l'extérieur du Canada ?

Questions sur l'apprentissage et la pratique des langues :

- Quelle est la première langue que vous avez apprise ?
- Quand avez-vous appris le français ?
- Dans quel contexte avez-vous appris le français ?
- Quelles langues autres que le français savez-vous parler, lire ou écrire ?
- Quelles langues sont régulièrement utilisées sur votre lieu de travail, par vous ou par d'autres employés ou dirigeants ?
- Quelle est la langue que vous parlez le plus régulièrement à la maison ?
- Quelles sont les autres langues que vous parlez régulièrement à la maison ?

Questions sur l'immigration et la citoyenneté :

- Quel est votre pays de naissance ?
- Dans quels pays, provinces et villes avez-vous grandi ?
- Quelle est votre, ou quelles sont vos, nationalité(s) ?
- Avez-vous déjà résidé dans d'autres pays que le Canada ?
- Êtes-vous citoyen·ne du Canada ? Êtes-vous résident·e permanent·e du Canada ?
- Êtes-vous résident·e temporaire ?
    - Si oui, dans quelle catégorie ?
- Quand êtes-vous arrivé au Canada ?
    - Sous quelle catégorie d'immigration ?
- Dans quelle province ou dans quel territoire vous êtes-vous installé lorsque vous êtes arrivé au Canada ?

Appendix D

Participants' Original Quotes in French with English Translations for Chapter 4 (Order of Appearance)

Note: Only long quotes are translated here. Shorter quotes are translated in the text using footnotes. The translations were made by the author, who is bilingual, and are as literal as possible in an effort to remain closer to the original meaning.

Quote N1

Original (French):

« Pendant mon enfance, les 14 premières années de ma vie, c'était un sentiment de honte absolu parce que quand on grandit comme francophone en milieu minoritaire, ce qu'on nous apprend dès qu'on est en mesure d'apprendre quoi que ce soit, c'est qu'on est minoritaire et que le français peut être sale. Pour vous donner une idée, on m'a déjà dit "speak white" donc ça peut aller très loin quand même. Donc l'accent me gênait énormément. J'avais l'impression que c'était du mauvais français, que j'étais moins compétente, que je parlais en français cassé, brisé. » (PN2)

Translation (English):

"During my childhood, the first 14 years of my life, it was a feeling of absolute shame, because when you grow up in a Francophone minority setting, what we are taught as soon as we are able to learn anything, is that we are a minority and that French can be dirty. To give you an idea, I was once told, 'speak white,' so it can go very far. So, the accent embarrassed me enormously. I had the impression that it was bad French, that I was less competent, that I was speaking a broken, shattered French." (PN2)

Quote N2

Original (French):

« Je trouve que l'accent justement, c'est une sorte d'étendard hyper visible qui fait qu'on te renvoie, on te classifie instantanément français, peu importe ton histoire, peu importe d'où tu viens, peu importe si t'es belge d'ailleurs, et ça, ça fait que je serai toujours considérée comme telle ici. Et ça, j'en ai bien conscience. » (PN9)

Translation (English):

"I find that the accent, precisely, is a kind of highly visible banner which causes you to be sent back, and instantly classified as French, no matter your history, no matter where you come from, even if you're Belgian by the way, and that, that makes it so that I will always be considered as such here. And that, I am fully aware of." (PN9)

Quote N3

Original (French):

« Les membres de ma famille l'ont. Quand j'y retourne, là je l'entends beaucoup plus qu'avant, parce qu'avant, quand je l'avais encore moi-même, je l'entendais pas vraiment. Maintenant je l'entends beaucoup plus. » (PN3)

Translation (English):

"My family members have it. When I go back there, then I hear it much more than before, because before, when I still had it myself, I didn't really hear it. Now I hear it much more." (PN3)

Quote N4

Original (French):

« En France, ces petites différences-là sont tellement plus pointées qu'au Québec. Tu vois ce que je veux dire ? En France comme au Québec, on entend à mon accent ou aux expressions que j'utilise que je ne suis pas d'ici. Mais en France, c'était pointé systématiquement. Ce n'était jamais malveillant, mais à chaque jour j'avais des remarques sur les expressions que j'utilisais, et cetera. Tout le temps, tout le temps. Ici [au Québec], c'est beaucoup plus diffus, inclusif, bienveillant. » (PN7)

Translation (English):

"In France, those little differences are so much more pointed than in Quebec. You see what I mean? In France, as in Quebec, you can hear from my accent or the expressions I use that I'm not from here. But in France, it was pointed out systematically. It was never malicious, but every day I had remarks about the expressions I used, et cetera. All the time, all the time. Here [in Quebec], it's much more diffuse, inclusive, benevolent." (PN7)

Quote N5

Original (French):

« Avec le temps, ça s'est placé, entre guillemets, mais il y a encore des gens qui vont m'écouter puis qui vont me dire : "Il y a un petit quelque chose, je comprends pas c'est quoi. On comprend pas c'est quoi le problème, mais il y a un problème, il y a un accent quand tu parles." Et ça, je le vis encore. » (PN4)

Translation (English):

"With time, it has settled, so to speak, but there are still people who will listen to me and then tell me, 'There's a little something, I don't understand what it is. We don't understand what the problem is, but there is a problem, there's an accent when you speak.' And that, I still experience it." (PN4)

Quote N6

Original (French):

« C'est impossible [d'employer une voix authentique] parce que le choix est toujours motivé par des questionnements. Donc si l'animateur à qui je parle il est Québécois, les auditeurs sont Québécois, je veux ni être la Française du Plateau, et je veux pas non plus qu'on pense que je fais

semblant d'essayer de garder mon accent franco-ontarien. Ou voilà, c'est toujours encore une fois en rapport aux autres et j'essaie d'anticiper comment les autres vont recevoir mon accent. Et à cause de ça, je pense que c'est impossible qu'il y ait un accent authentique, parce que je vais faire encore plus attention d'être authentique, entre guillemets, c'est-à-dire d'utiliser l'accent québécois que j'ai aujourd'hui dans une radio québécoise. Et puis même si c'est l'accent qui me vient le plus naturellement, ça reste un choix donc ça reste un petit peu… Il y a une limite à cette authenticité. » (PN12)

Translation (English):

"It's impossible [to use an authentic voice] because the choice is always motivated by questionings. So, if the host I'm speaking to is Québécois, the listeners are Québécois, I don't want to be the French woman from the Plateau, and I also don't want people to think I'm pretending to try to keep my Franco-Ontarian accent. Or well, it's always, once again, in relation to others, and I try to anticipate how others will receive my accent. And because of that, I think it's impossible that there is an authentic accent, because I will pay even more attention to being authentic, so to speak, that is, to using the Québécois accent I have today on a Québécois radio station. And even if it's the accent that comes most naturally to me, it's still a choice, so it's still a little… There's a limit to this authenticity." (PN12)

Quote N7

Original (French):

« À titre purement individuel, j'ai un avis sur ma façon de parler par rapport à ce que les autres me renvoient dans la vie, mais quand je te dis, moi, j'ai pas l'impression d'avoir un accent, c'est que quand je suis à la maison, j'y pense pas. Bon, peut-être au travail non plus j'y pense pas, parce je suis avec des gens que je connais, mais, quand je suis à l'extérieur c'est sûr que je sais que quand je vais ouvrir la bouche, je vais avoir un accent. » (PN10)

Translation (English):

"On a purely individual level, I have an opinion about the way I speak in relation to what others reflect back to me in life, but when I tell you, me, I don't feel like I have an accent, it's because when I'm at home, I don't think about it. Well, maybe at work I don't think about it either, because I'm with people I know, but when I'm outside, it's for sure that I know that when I open my mouth, I will have an accent." (PN10)

Quote N8

Original (French):

« On m'a rencontré dans le bureau de mon gestionnaire pour me dire : "Puis, est-ce que tu es fier de toi ?" Je suis comme : "Ben c'est le premier reportage, quand même." Puis il me dit : "Mais va falloir que tu pratiques ta diction, puis que tu travailles sur ton parler parce que tu as un accent, t'sais." » (PN4)

Translation (English):

"They met me in my manager's office to tell me, 'So, are you proud of yourself?' I'm like, 'well, it's the first report, after all.' Then he tells me, 'But you're going to have to practice your diction, and work on your way of speaking because you have an accent, you know.'" (PN4)

Quote N9

Original (French):

« On m'a dit qu'il faudrait que je travaille ma diction de façon générale, ce qui n'était pas vraiment étonnant parce que je n'avais jamais travaillé en radio ou télé. Donc c'est un commentaire très général. C'est vrai que je me rappelle que [durant] mon entrevue d'embauche, on m'a mentionné que je devrais travailler ma diction et que j'aurais accès à du coaching de diction au besoin. Mais à ma connaissance, on ne m'a pas dit que je devrais perdre mon accent. » (PN3)

Translation (English):

"I was told that I would need to work on my diction in general, which wasn't really surprising because I had never worked in radio or television. So it's a very general comment. It's true that I remember that [during] my job interview, I was told that I should work on my diction and that I would have access to diction coaching if needed. But to my knowledge, I wasn't told that I should lose my accent." (PN3)

Quote N10

Original (French):

« Elle me disait qu'elle ne voulait pas que je perde mon accent, mais justement, je devais travailler une série de syllabes pour les prononcer autrement. Donc au final, ben c'étaient les syllabes qui sont typiques de l'accent [de la région]. Mais elle voulait surtout pas que je perde mon accent. C'est pas ça l'objectif selon elle, mais dans les faits, c'était ça. Mais elle était très gentille, très généreuse, donc j'en ai pas contre la personne, mais clairement son mandat était d'uniformiser le français des gens qui venaient la consulter. » (PN3)

Translation (English):

"She was telling me that she didn't want me to lose my accent, but precisely, I had to work on a series of syllables to pronounce them differently. So, in the end, well, they were the syllables that are typical of the [regional] accent. But she especially didn't want me to lose my accent. That's not the objective, according to her, but in practice, that's what it was. But she was very kind, very generous, so I don't hold anything against the person, but clearly her mandate was to make the French of the people who came to see her uniform." (PN3)

Quote N11

Original (French):

« Ça peut être un peu déstabilisant, en mode tu te présentes comme neutre, journaliste, Québec, voilà, *let's go*, et puis là, la personne en face dit : "Mais pourquoi vous êtes française ?" [...] Et maintenant t'es là, bon, on peut passer aux questions ? Parce que là je vais pas vous raconter ma vie pour la troisième fois de la semaine. » (PN7)

Translation (English):

"It can be a little unsettling, like you present yourself as neutral, journalist, Quebec, there you go, let's go, and then the person in front of you says, 'But why are you French?' […] And now you're

there, well, can we move on to the questions? Because I'm not going to tell you my life for the third time this week." (PN7)

Quote N12

Original (French):

« J'ai comme été sous le choc. Parce que pour moi, ça a été un *reality check*. C'est une confirmation que je suis différent et non seulement que je suis différent, mais la façon dont je parle m'impose des limites dans ma carrière. […] Je suis sorti de là avec plein de questionnements, une déception parce que je me suis dit, bah mon rêve de petit gars de faire de la télé pourra peut-être pas se réaliser. Après ça, on m'a renvoyé au web. » (PN4)

Translation (English):

"I was kind of in shock. Because for me, it was a reality check. It's a confirmation that I am different, and not only am I different, but the way I speak imposes limits on my career. […] I left there with lots of questions, a disappointment because I said to myself, well, my little-boy dream of doing TV might not be able to come true. After that, I was sent back to the web." (PN4)

Quote N13

Original (French):

« Il y a une collègue, entre autres, qui m'a dit : "Ah toi, ton français, t'as tellement amélioré ton français. Waouh bravo." Mais c'est pas mon français que j'ai amélioré, c'est mon accent que j'ai perdu, donc c'est pour ça qu'elle me félicitait. Ben, c'est fait gentiment, mais pour elle mon français auparavant était pas correct. » (PN3)

Translation (English):

"There is a colleague, among other things, who told me, 'Ah, you, your French, you've improved your French so much. Wow, bravo.' But it's not my French that I improved, it's my accent that I lost, so that's why she was congratulating me. Well, it was said kindly, but for her, my French before wasn't correct." (PN3)

Quote N14

Original (French):

« Je voyais qu'il y avait des gens qui avaient des postes, et moi j'ai essayé d'avoir des postes et j'ai même fait le test interne pour travailler à la radio comme reporter. Et bah, c'est allé nulle part. J'en ai parlé à d'autres personnes qui avaient des origines francophones différentes qui ont eu la même expérience, enfin le même ressenti, je dirais que l'expérience, tu vois, c'est mon interprétation de la réalité. » (PN11)

Translation (English):

"I saw that there were people who had positions, and I tried to get positions, and I even did the internal test to work in radio as a reporter. And well, it went nowhere. I talked about it with other people who had different Francophone origins who had had the same experience, well, the same feeling, I would say that the experience, you see, is my interpretation of reality." (PN11)

Quote N15

Original (French):

« Peut-être qu'il y a une impression générale au Québec, par rapport aux étrangers, que c'est très difficile de maîtriser le français. Et d'après moi, si toi tu maîtrises la langue française au niveau des accents, particulièrement au Québec, ça pourrait te donner un peu plus d'accès, je crois, même au niveau professionnel. Je me suis rendu compte que, peut-être à cause de mon accent, c'est mon impression, peut-être que je me trompe, mais peut-être que j'aurais eu beaucoup plus d'accès dans mon métier. » (PN8)

Translation (English):

"Maybe there is a general impression in Quebec, regarding foreigners, that it's very difficult to master French. And in my opinion, if you master the French language at the level of accents, particularly in Quebec, I think it could give you a little more access, even professionally. I realized that, maybe because of my accent, it's my impression, maybe I'm wrong, but maybe I would have had much more access in my career." (PN8)

Quote N16

Original (French):

« Jamais j'avais eu de réponses. Jamais, jamais, même une critique constructive. J'aimerais que quelqu'un puisse me dire, peut-être : "On te prend pas parce que ton français est pas beau." Bon, encore des choses comme ça. Jamais, j'ai eu un *feedback*, que ce soit négatif ou positif, c'est comme… Je suis ignoré. » (PN8)

Translation (English):

"Never had I received any response. Never, never, not even constructive criticism. I would like someone to be able to tell me 'Maybe we're not taking you because your French isn't good.' Well, things like that. Never have I received feedback, whether negative or positive, it's like… I'm ignored." (PN8)

Quote N17

Original (French):

« C'est de la maladresse, mais on me le dit quand même que : "Ah oui bah, chez vous." [...] C'est le "chez toi." C'est quand même toujours… Mais j'habite ici. Y a comme des fois des petites réflexions qui me disent que, ah oui, c'est vrai, bon, peut-être que je suis pas tant intégrée que ça. » (PN12)

Translation (English):

"It's clumsy, but they still say to me, 'Ah, yes, well, where you come from.' […] It is the 'where you come from.' It's still always… but I live here. Sometimes there are little remarks that make me think, ah yes, that's true, maybe I'm not really that integrated after all." (PN12)

Quote N18

Original (French):

« Dans les bureaux, il y a énormément de Français [...] la dernière fois, ils ont fait une présentation de plein de nouveaux employés. Y a quelqu'un qui a dit : “Bon ben maintenant on va pouvoir faire le 14 juillet férié.” C'était drôle, mais pas tant, puis là j'ai fait : “Ah *come on*.” Puis, ça vient avec un sentiment d'anticipation. Cette semaine, ils ont décidé de faire un événement de galette des rois. Puis ça me tentait pas d'y aller parce que je voulais pas entendre des réflexions sur : “Ah oui ben c'est encore les Français qui font ça.” » (PN12)

Translation (English):

“In the offices, there are a huge number of French people […] the last time, they made a presentation of lots of new employees. Someone said, ‘Well, now we’ll be able to make July 14 a holiday.’ It was funny, but not really, and then I went, ‘Ah, come on.’ Then, it comes with a feeling of anticipation. This week, they decided to have a galette des rois event. But I didn’t feel like going because I didn’t want to hear comments like, ‘Ah yes, well, it’s the French again who do that.’” (PN12)

Quote N19

Original (French):

« Il m'est déjà arrivé de m'exprimer et d'avoir des commentaires par exemple sur Twitter et tout, de gens qui disent : “Ah encore quelqu'un qui a un accent français.” Donc c'était pas directement adressé à moi, mais c'était en réponse au segment dans lequel j'étais intervenue. “Ah mais c'est pas vrai, y a pas de journalistes québécois.” Tu vois, des trucs. Ça, j'ai déjà entendu. » (PN9)

Translation (English):

“It has already happened that I expressed myself and received comments, for example, on Twitter and all, from people who say, ‘Ah, another person with a French accent.’ So, it wasn’t directly addressed to me, but it was in response to the segment in which I had intervened. ‘Ah, but that can’t be true, there aren’t any Québécois journalists.’ You see, things like that. I’ve heard that before.” (PN9)

Quote N20

Original (French):

« Il y a pas mal de choses comme ça, comme : “Les Français qui viennent au Québec pour nous faire la leçon.” Je couvre notamment l'environnement, donc je reçois des remarques comme : “Ok, la Française qui vient pour nous faire la morale.” C'est pas mal ça. Il y a aussi que je fais souvent référence, mais c'est normal, à des exemples qui viennent de la France, notamment en environnement. Ça peut être mal perçu. Encore une fois, ça peut être perçu comme la Française qui vient ramener ses exemples et qui comprend pas la réalité québécoise. » (PN7)

Translation (English):

“There are quite a few things like that, like, ‘The French people who come to Quebec to lecture us.’ I cover, in particular, the environment, so I receive remarks like, ‘Ok, the French woman who comes to moralize us.’ That’s pretty much it. There is also that I often refer, but that’s normal, to examples that come from France, notably in the environment. That can be perceived badly. Once again, it can be perceived as the French woman who comes to bring her examples and who doesn’t understand the Quebec reality.” (PN7)

Quote N21

Original (French):

« Je sais pas si je veux renvoyer une image particulière, mais je suis consciente que les gens entendent la Française (rires). Donc je suis consciente de mon accent, je suis consciente qu'on m'entend avec mon accent français. Mais bon, c'est comme ça. Est-ce que je veux renvoyer une image particulière ? Indépendamment de l'accent, j'espère envoyer une image de quelqu'un qui maîtrise son sujet. » (PN6)

Translation (English):

“I don’t know if I want to convey a particular image, but I’m aware that people hear the French lady (laughs). So, I’m aware of my accent, I’m aware that I’m heard with my French accent. But well, that’s how it is. Do I want to convey a particular image? Regardless of the accent, I hope to convey the image of someone who masters her subject.” (PN6)

Quote N22

Original (French):

« L’accent peut être un obstacle à la compréhension. […] Il y a des invités que je sais qu’ils ont un fort accent et que ça va être compliqué de les comprendre pour les auditeurs. […] Ça peut nuire à la compréhension, en particulier à la radio, parce qu’on voit pas la personne, on voit pas la bouche bouger. Et ça, c’est gênant parce que je trouve que ça discrimine ces gens-là alors qu’en fait ils ont des propos très intéressants […]. Si la personne est difficile à comprendre, on sait bien que l’auditeur, il va changer de poste […]. Donc on est un peu mal pris. […] Je me dis : “Bon ben je le réinviterai pas parce que la voix passe pas, ou parce que l’accent est trop prononcé, c’est trop difficile.” » (PN6)

Translation (English):

“The accent can be an obstacle to understanding. […] There are guests that I know have a strong accent, and it will be complicated for the listeners to understand them. […] It can harm comprehension, particularly on the radio, because you don’t see the person, you don’t see their mouth move. And that’s awkward because I find that it discriminates against these people even though they actually have very interesting things to say […]. If the person is difficult to understand, we know well that the listener will switch channels […]. So, we’re a bit stuck. […] I tell myself, ‘Well, I won’t invite them again because the voice doesn’t work, or because the accent is too strong, it’s too difficult.’” (PN6)

Quote N23

Original (French):

« Je n'ai eu que des compliments pour mes accents, pour mon accent, depuis toujours, donc je n'ai jamais pensé que ça pouvait être quelque chose de nocif ou quelque chose qui pourrait m'empêcher de travailler [pour ce média]. » (PN13)

Translation (English):

"I have only ever received compliments for my accents, for my accent, always, so I never thought that it could be something harmful or something that could prevent me from working [for this media outlet]." (PN13)

Quote N24

Original (French):

« C'est là où j'ai compris que peut-être que l'accent dérangeait certaines personnes. Je n'ai jamais eu de reproches du public, mais peut-être que le directeur en question n'aimait pas la façon dont on parlait. » (PN13)

Translation (English):

"That's when I realized that maybe the accent bothered certain people. I have never received any complaints from the public, but maybe the director in question didn't like the way we spoke." (PN13)

Quote N25

Original (French):

« Je trouvais que j'avais beaucoup confiance en moi. Et les fois où, bon, quand je devais passer au micro, ça se passait très bien. J'avais l'impression que le message était reçu. D'ailleurs, de temps en temps, j'avais des échos positifs de francophones qui, bien sûr, à cette époque, ne pouvaient pas mettre un visage sur la voix, mais quand ils me croisaient, ils disaient : "Ah mais c'est toi ? Ah oui, mais c'est bien." » (PN13)

Translation (English):

"I felt that I had a lot of self-confidence. And the times when, well, when I had to go on the microphone, it went very well. I had the impression that the message was received. By the way, from time to time, I had positive feedback from Francophones who, of course, at that time, couldn't put a face to the voice, but when they met me, they said, 'Ah, it's you? Ah yes, but that's good.'" (PN13)

Quote N26

Original (French):

« C'est fou, j'ai coanimé des émissions et je m'en foutais totalement. Et là, j'étais très stressé à l'idée de parler à [média radio]. Je voyais les gens très à l'aise à la radio et je me disais : "Comment ils font ? J'étais comme ça avant." […] Le fait que maintenant je sache que j'ai un accent et que ben, peut-être, c'est moi qui me le fais un peu trop sentir. » (PN10)

Translation (English):

“It’s crazy, I co-hosted shows and I didn’t care at all. And then, I was very stressed at the idea of speaking on [radio media]. I saw people very comfortable on the radio, and I told myself, ‘How do they do it? I was like that before.’ […] The fact that now I know that I have an accent and, well, maybe it’s me who makes myself feel it a bit too much.” (PN10)

Quote N27

Original (French):

« On m'a clairement fait sentir que mon accent n’était pas le bienvenu. Donc j'ai commencé à travailler très activement à le perdre. Et ce qui fait que maintenant, bizarrement, j'ai plus cette fierté-là si quelqu'un me dit : “Ah, j'entends ton accent [régional],” ben je vais plutôt le voir comme un échec un peu. C'est-à-dire que normalement je devrais plus l'avoir, mais là, la personne est capable de l'entendre. Donc ça veut dire que j'ai fait une faute en parlant si la personne est capable d'entendre mon accent maintenant. Je trouve ça triste en fait, parce que selon moi, il devrait y avoir une multitude d'accents en ondes. » (PN3)

Translation (English):

“I was clearly made to feel that my accent was not welcome. So, I started working very actively to lose it. And what makes it so that now, strangely, I no longer have that pride if someone tells me, ‘Ah, I hear your [regional] accent,’ well, I will see it more as a bit of a failure. That is to say, normally I shouldn’t have it anymore, but now the person is able to hear it. So that means I made a mistake in speaking if the person is able to hear my accent now. I actually find that sad, because in my opinion, there should be a multitude of accents on the air.” (PN3)

Quote N28

Original (French):

« D'abord choquée, je dirais, parce que j'avais quand même beaucoup d'expérience. J'avais plusieurs années où je n'avais pas cherché à le perdre, où j'en étais fière, et là je me faisais dire que finalement, il n'était vraiment pas le bienvenu. Ensuite, je dirais stressée, parce que ça demande quand même beaucoup d'efforts, de perdre un accent qu'on a depuis la naissance. Donc ça demande vraiment une prise de conscience, beaucoup d'énergie. Et je dirais un peu honteuse, bizarrement, et je trouve ça regrettable, mais dès que mon accent ressort, ça peut arriver à l'occasion, mais là je me sens fautive, et là j'ai comme honte, on entend mon accent alors que j'ai été pendant des années très fière de l'avoir. » (PN3)

Translation (English):

“First shocked, I would say, because I still had a lot of experience. I had several years during which I hadn’t tried to lose it, during which I was proud of it, and then I was being told that, after all, it really wasn’t welcome. Then, I would say stressed, because it still takes a lot of effort to lose an accent that one has had since birth. So, it really requires awareness, a lot of energy. And I would say a bit ashamed, strangely, and I find it regrettable, but as soon as my accent comes out, it can happen occasionally, but then I feel guilty, and then I kind of feel ashamed, one can hear my accent even though I had been very proud of having it for years.” (PN3)

Quote N29

Original (French):

« On va toujours me rappeler que je suis pas née ici. […] Il y a de la frustration qui vient avec ce côté-là, genre : “Ah, tu l'as vraiment bien dit.” Ok, parce qu'il y a une bonne façon de le dire ? […] Il y a aussi toujours de la réaffirmation de, ben oui, j'ai un accent. » (PN12)

Translation (English):

“I’m always reminded that I wasn’t born here. […] There’s frustration that comes with that side, like, ‘Ah, you said it really well.’ Ok, because there’s a right way to say it? […] There’s also always the reaffirmation of, well, yes, I have an accent.” (PN12)

Quote N30

Original (French):

« C'est-à-dire que quand on m'attaque pour une question de contenu, on va toujours me référer au fait d'être française. En fait ça, c'est chiant, c'est hyper désagréable. […] C'est le truc qui me blesse le plus alors que tout le reste, voilà. Mais ça, je trouve que c'est vraiment, bas le côté : “En plus elle est Parisienne. Les Parisiennes nous donnent des leçons.” » (PN9)

Translation (English):

“That is to say, when I am attacked over a content issue, they will always refer me back to the fact that I’m French. Actually, that is annoying, it’s very unpleasant. […] That’s the thing that hurts me the most, whereas everything else, well, whatever. But that, I find it really, like, the side of, ‘On top of that, she’s Parisian. Parisians give us lessons.’” (PN9)

Quote N31

Original (French):

« La discrimination, c'est aussi une blessure affective. […] Honnêtement, je sais plus si y a vraiment eu un moment déclencheur, même si souvent y a le contexte. Et puis il y a souvent comme quelque chose, comme la goutte qui fait déborder le vase. » (PN11)

Translation (English):

“Discrimination is also an emotional wound. […] Honestly, I don’t remember if there was really a triggering moment, even though there is often the context. And then there’s often something, like the drop that makes the vase overflow.” (PN11)

Quote N32

Original (French):

« Y a une forme de, je sais pas, une sorte d'hypervigilance linguistique, tu vois, où je m'entends parler, j'entends mon accent, j’entends mes intonations alors que, je sais pas, c'est comme un… ouais, ça rajoute une hyperconscience, tu sais, comme les Anglais disent, ils sont *self-conscious*. Il y a ce truc-là un peu avec l’accent. » (PN9)

Translation (English):

“There’s a form of, I don’t know, a kind of linguistic hyper-vigilance, you see, where I hear myself speak, I hear my accent, I hear my intonations, whereas, I don’t know, it’s like a… yeah, it adds hyper-awareness, you know, like the English say, they’re self-conscious. There’s that thing a bit with the accent.” (PN9)

Quote N33

Original (French):

« Quand un Québécois ou un Français me corrige, ça vient me chercher en fait parce que même si c'est pas l'intention de la personne, pour moi, ça vient rechercher cette espèce de sentiment d’infériorité, puis cette insécurité de “ah, je suis anglicisée,” ou “je suis Franco-Ontarienne.” » (PN2)

Translation (English):

“When a Québécois or a French person corrects me, it really affects me because even if that’s not the person’s intention, for me it brings up this kind of feeling of inferiority, and this insecurity of ‘ah, I’m anglicized,’ or ‘I’m Franco-Ontarian.’” (PN2)

Quote N34

Original (French):

« L'accent franco-ontarien, c'est pas seulement un accent dans le sens phonétique, mais c'est aussi langagier, c'est aussi dans le vocabulaire. Donc il y a des mots en anglais. On parle un peu franglais des fois. Mais ce qui nous vient plus naturellement quand on grandit dans ce milieu, c'est peut-être 80 % français, 20 % anglais […]. Il y a un peu de honte et de culpabilité parce que quand on explique ça à un Québécois, on va souvent nous renvoyer qu'on a été anglicisé ou colonisé, ou je ne sais quoi, ou américanisé. Donc c'est pas un accent qui m'évoque des sentiments très positifs. » (PN2)

Translation (English):

“The Franco-Ontarian accent is not just an accent in the phonetic sense, but also linguistic. It’s also in the vocabulary. So, there are English words. Sometimes we speak a bit of Franglais. But what comes more naturally when you grow up in this environment is maybe 80% French, 20% English […]. There’s a bit of shame and guilt because when you explain this to a Québécois, you’re often told that you’ve been anglicized or colonized, or I don’t know what, or Americanised. So, it’s not an accent that evokes very positive feelings for me.” (PN2)

Quote N35

Original (French):

« À l'écrit évidemment, on n’a pas le droit de faire des fautes et c'est normal, mais j'étais très très, très, très, très anxieuse au début parce que j'avais vraiment très peur qu'on me compare, ou qu'on, justement, me renvoie que : “Ben tu vois, c'est ça l'école francophone en Ontario, ça donne des gens qui savent pas écrire.” J'avais vraiment très peur que chaque faute soit dramatique et que chaque faute soit quasiment sociologique. » (PN2)

Translation (English):

“Obviously in writing, you’re not allowed to make mistakes, and that’s normal, but I was very, very, very, very, very anxious at the beginning because I was really very afraid that I would be compared, or that, precisely, I would be told, ‘Well, you see, that’s what French-language school in Ontario produces: people who can’t write.’ I was really very afraid that every mistake would be dramatic and that every mistake would be almost sociological.” (PN2)

Quote N36

Original (French):

« Très souvent en fait mes boss me disent souvent que j'écris vraiment très bien. J'ai vraiment beaucoup de compliments là-dessus. Donc je pense que, à chaque fois je suis surprise, [...] mais ça, c'est juste peut-être parce que je fais pas de fautes d'orthographe, que j'écris avec une bonne syntaxe, et cetera. Mais je pense qu'en France, on a particulièrement une éducation à l'école primaire où on nous rabâche tellement certains trucs, ça n'a pas de sens. » (PN7)

Translation (English):

“Very often, in fact, my bosses often tell me that I write really very well. I get a lot of compliments on that. So I think that every time I’m surprised, […] but that’s maybe just because I don’t make spelling mistakes, that I write with good syntax, and so on. But I think that in France, there’s particularly an education in primary school where they hammer certain things into you so much, it doesn’t make any sense.” (PN7)

Quote N37

Original (French):

« A: Comme journaliste, […] je veux que la accent est sur les faits, ou l'accent est sur l'histoire, puis je veux pas être une distraction de l'histoire, puis je suis souvent inquiété qu'avec mon accent, c’est une distraction. Je ne sais pas si c'est vrai, mais ça, c'est mon perception.

Q: Parce que, est-ce qu'il y a déjà des gens qui vous l'ont dit, ou qui vous l'ont fait [savoir] ?

A: Non, il y a personne, personne qui a dit ça. C'est vraiment un… C'est vraiment une perception pour moi. Jusqu'au point que j'utilise [inaudible] des apps pour pratiquer mon, pour essayer de diminuer mon accent. » (PN5)

Translation (English):

“A: As a journalist, […] I want the focus to be on the facts, or the focus to be on the story, and I don’t want to be a distraction from the story, and I’m often worried that with my accent, it’s a distraction. I don’t know if that’s true, but that’s my perception.

Q: Because, has anyone ever told you that, or made you aware of it?

A: No, there’s no one, no one who has said that. It’s really a… It’s really a perception for me. To the point that I use [inaudible] apps to practice, to try to reduce my accent.” (PN5)

Quote N38

Original (French):

« J'ai comme un accent assez prononcé, comme anglais, comme un anglophone. Jusqu'au point que je me décris comme un *blôke-o-phone*, comme on utilise le petit nom pour les Anglais à Québec, les *blôkes*. » (PN5)

Translation (English):

"I kind of have a fairly strong accent, like English, like an anglophone. To the point that I describe myself as a *blôke-o-phone*, like the nickname they use for English people in Quebec, the *blôkes*." (PN5)

Quote N39

Original (French):

« Je pense que ça a joué dans le fait que je me sente moins à l'aise avec mon accent, et moins à l'aise pour faire de la radio. Je me sentais moins dans un élément agréable, enfin *safe*, tu vois, pour parler et tout ça. Puis c'est peut-être ça qui a fait que je me suis un peu détourné de la radio après, parce que je me suis dit en radio, tu sais, là, je serai toujours français quoi qu'il arrive. » (PN10)

Translation (English):

"I think that played a role in the fact that I felt less comfortable with my accent, and less comfortable doing radio. I didn't feel in a pleasant, safe element, you know, to speak and all that. And maybe that's why I somewhat turned away from radio afterward, because I thought, in radio, you know, I will always be French no matter what." (PN10)

Quote N40

Original (French):

« Je voulais rester […] et continuer autant que je pouvais. Et non, Montréal ne m'a jamais attirée, parce que j'ai toujours trouvé que même si c'était La Mecque [du journalisme francophone], je ne pensais pas avoir une chance de m'intégrer là-bas. Je ne voyais pas d'autres journalistes comme moi. Il arrivait une fois en passant que j'entende Michaëlle Jean, mais c'était rare. » (PN13)

Translation (English):

"I wanted to stay […] and continue as much as I could. And no, Montreal never attracted me, because I always thought that even if it was the Mecca [of francophone journalism], I didn't think I had a chance to fit in there. I didn't see other journalists like me. Occasionally, I would hear Michaëlle Jean, but that was rare." (PN13)

Quote N41

Original (French):

« Avec le temps, j'ai réussi quand même à prendre ma place puis à m'intégrer. Mais c'est sûr qu'au début je me suis questionné à savoir si j'allais pouvoir continuer, ou si j'allais pouvoir faire de la télévision finalement. Puis veut veut pas, ça va teinter mes choix toute ma carrière entre guillemets parce que, encore aujourd'hui, je me trouve chanceux de pouvoir pratiquer ce métier […]. Il y a

des collègues qui me dissent : “Mais pourquoi t’es chanceux ? Y a pas de chance, c’est normal.” Je suis comme : “Ben c'est vrai, c’est normal.” Mais peut-être que puisqu’on m’a mis des béquilles, et à l'école et au début de ma carrière, ben moi, je suis encore avec ce *mindset*-là que c’est fragile cet emploi que j’ai quand j’ai la façon que je parle. » (PN4)

Translation (English):

“Over time, I still managed to take my place and integrate. But of course, at the beginning, I questioned whether I would be able to continue or whether I would ultimately be able to do television. And whether you like it or not, it will colour my choices throughout my career, so to speak, because even today I consider myself lucky to be able to practice this profession […]. There are colleagues who tell me, ‘But why are you lucky? There is no luck, it’s normal.’ And I’m like, ‘Well, that’s true, it’s normal.’ But maybe because I was given crutches, both at school and at the start of my career, well, I still have this mindset that the job I have is fragile, given the way I speak.” (PN4)

Quote N42

Original (French):

« Moi, comme je suis en ondes […] il y a des lignes directrices de ce qu'on peut et on ne peut pas porter en ondes. Et l'objectif est souvent de ne pas attirer l'attention sur des éléments autres que le propos, donc, et d'avoir toujours l'air de bon goût, sérieux. Il y a des lignes directrices là-dessus. […]. On ne veut pas qu’un décolleté ou une couleur attire tellement l'attention que les gens n'écoutent plus le propos. J'ai l'impression que c'est un peu une volonté de ça aussi de la part de la Direction. Je suis pas dans leur tête, mais je sais qu'il y a une volonté que ce soit aplani ces différents accents. » (PN3)

Translation (English):

“Me, since I’m on air […] there are guidelines about what we can and cannot wear on air. And the objective is often not to draw attention to elements other than the content, and to always appear tasteful and serious. There are guidelines about that. […]. We don’t want a low neckline or a colour to attract so much attention that people stop listening to the content. I have the impression that this is also somewhat the intention of management. I’m not in their heads, but I know there is a desire for these different accents to be flattened.” (PN3)

Quote N43

Original (French):

« Y a certains sujets où je me sens plus illégitime et où je sens qu'on va me le dire que je suis Française, et je le sens quand je parle à mes interlocuteurs [qui lui dissent, par exemple] : “Ah mais vous savez peut-être pas, mais au Québec, la chasse, na, na.” » (PN9)

Translation (English):

“There are certain topics where I feel more illegitimate and where I feel that people will point out that I’m French, and I feel it when I speak to my interlocutors [who, for example, tell her]: ‘h, but you may not know, but in Quebec, hunting, na, na.’” (PN9)

Quote N44

Original (French):

« Alors que je fais mes devoirs comme tout le monde, je me suis renseignée. Puis c'est pas vrai que tous les Québécois connaissent bien la chasse non plus. Donc y a certains trucs comme ça que je perçois un peu comme des micro-agressions peut-être, en tout cas des… Où en fait ma compétence va être un peu remise en question, ou en tout cas un peu questionnée parce que j'ai pas l'étiquette, ou j'ai pas la tête de l'emploi, plutôt l'accent de l'emploi. » (PN9)

Translation (English):

"While I do my homework like everyone else, I did my research. And it's not true that all Quebecers know hunting well either. So, there are certain things like that that I perceive a bit as microaggressions, perhaps, in any case… Where in fact my competence is a little questioned, or at least somewhat challenged because I don't have the label, or I don't have the look of the job, rather the accent of the job." (PN9)

Quote N45

Original (French):

« J'étais un peu gênée parce que pareil, les réseaux sociaux, c'est censé être cool et jeune et tout ça et on s'adresse au public québécois, *yay*. Sauf que s'adresser au public québécois en tant que Française, à chaque fois, bah vu que c'est sur les réseaux sociaux, j'ai toujours peur que les gens se dissent : "Ouais, ok, d'accord, c'est une Française qui nous explique des choses de France." Et puis tu sais, qu'ils scrollent, alors que non, là je vais parler de la réalité québécoise. Donc ça, je dis : "Ah bah nous, au Québec on XYZ." Mais je dis ça avec mon accent français (rires). Et tu sais, j'ai toujours peur que les gens soient comme "hein ? Pourquoi est-ce que tu dis 'nous' ?" Alors que personne me l'a fait remarquer, mais c'est plus moi qui me dis, si j'étais Française en France et j'entends un Québécois dire "ouais, nous en France," je trouverais ça un peu étrange sur les réseaux sociaux. » (PN7)

Translation (English):

"I was a bit embarrassed because, you know, social media is supposed to be cool and young and all that, and we're addressing the Quebec audience, yay. Except that addressing the Quebec audience as a French person, every time, well, since it's on social media, I'm always afraid people will think, 'Yeah, okay, a French person is explaining things from France to us,' and, you know, that they'll just scroll, whereas no, now I'm going to talk about Quebec reality. So, I say, 'Ah, well, here in Quebec we XYZ.' But I say it with my French accent (laughs). And, you know, I'm always afraid people will be like, 'Huh? Why do you say "we"?' Even though no one has ever pointed it out to me, but it's more me thinking, if I were French in France and heard a Quebecer say, 'yeah, us, in France,' I would find it a bit strange on social media." (PN7)

Quote N46

Original (French):

« Le "on" et le "nous," bah, je le fais bien à l'écrit, j'ai aucun complexe par rapport à ça. Mais par contre le "on" et le "nous" alors que les gens m'entendent et me voient sur les réseaux sociaux, c'est différent. » (PN7)

Translation (English):

“The ‘on’ and the ‘nous’ well, I handle that fine in writing, I have no complex about it. But on the other hand, the ‘on’ and the ‘nous’ when people hear and see me on social media, it’s different.” (PN7)

Quote N47

Original (French):

« Quand je suis arrivée ici, je me suis un peu pris la claque de bah finalement, j'appartiens pas du tout à ce monde-là. Pourtant, j'étais venue beaucoup de fois quand j'étais petite. J'avais des connaissances, mes parents avaient des très bons amis ici et tout ça. Mais clairement, j'étais française et on me l'a fait comprendre. Puis c'est très correct et tout ça, mais… Je me suis un peu pris une claque en arrivant, je pense. Et aujourd'hui, je te dirais que je me sens, oui comme pas mal d'expats, un peu paumée, c’est-à-dire quand je suis en France y a plein de trucs qui m'échappent que j'ai pas suivis et tout ça, mais quand je suis ici, je me sens tout le temps française en fait. » (PN9)

Translation (English):

“When I arrived here, I kind of got hit with the realization of, well, ultimately, I don’t belong to this world at all. Yet, I had come many times when I was little. I had acquaintances, my parents had very good friends here, and all that. But clearly, I was French, and they made me understand it. And that’s totally fine and all, but… I kind of got hit with it when I arrived, I think. And today, I would tell you that I feel, yes, like a lot of expats, a bit lost, that is, when I’m in France, there are lots of things I miss because I haven’t kept up, and all that, but when I’m here, I feel French all the time, actually.” (PN9)

Quote N48

Original (French):

« Mon accent, c'était l’évidence que j'ai appris le français, que c'était pas une priorité quand j'étais plus jeune parce que je viens d’une époque où c’était vraiment les cultures distinctes. Il y avait vraiment un côté anglo, un côté franco, puis les deux ils mélangent pas, puis pour moi ça c'était un... C’est vraiment un regret pour moi que j'ai pas découvert l’autre côté (rires). Le grand, l'autre côté du Québec avant que j'étais comme dans la fin de ma vingtaine. Ça, c’est dommage. Puis pour moi, mon accent, c'est toujours comme un *reminder*, un aide-mémoire » (PN5)

Translation (English):

“My accent was the evidence that I had learned French, that it wasn’t a priority when I was younger because I come from a time when the cultures were really distinct. There was really an Anglo side, a Franco side, and the two didn’t mix, and for me that was a… It’s really a regret for me that I didn’t discover the other side (laughs). The big, other side of Quebec before I was, like, in my late twenties. That’s unfortunate. And for me, my accent is always like a reminder, a memory aid” (PN5)

Quote N49

Original (French):

« Maintenant, je parle, je pense, un français plus international qu'auparavant, mais c'est certain que jusqu'à mon entrée [dans le domaine du journalisme], j'avais clairement un accent [régional] que je n'avais jamais cherché à perdre cela dit, vraiment pas […]. Je n'ai jamais essayé de perdre mon accent [régional]. Au contraire, j'en étais fière. » (PN3)

Translation (English):

"Now, I speak, I think, a more international French than before, but it's certain that until I entered [the field of journalism], I clearly had a [regional] accent that I had never tried to lose, really not […]. I never tried to lose my [regional] accent. On the contrary, I was proud of it." (PN3)

Appendix E

Participants' Original Quotes in French with English Translations for Chapter 5 (Order of Appearance)

Quote N50

Original (French):

« J'ai fait un reportage et j'avais écrit, parce que je parlais des accidents de voiture, et j'ai parlé de chauffards. Et là, on devait passer notre texte à une dame qui s'occupait de voir si tout était ok. Et la dame, c'était une Québécoise, chauffards, c'est pas passé. "Chauffard, c'est quoi ? Qu'est-ce que ça veut dire ?" Alors c'était, ça arrivait. Alors quand je devais passer mon texte à quelqu'un pour qu'il relise, j'essayais de m'assurer qu'il n'y ait pas de termes qui pouvaient les froisser. » (PN13)

Translation (English):

"I did a report and I had written, because I was talking about car accidents, and I talked about 'chauffards.' And then, we had to pass our text to a lady who was in charge of seeing if everything was okay. And the lady, she was Québécoise, 'chauffards,' it didn't pass. 'Chauffard, what is it? What does it mean?' So that was, that happened. So when I had to pass my text to someone to reread, I tried to make sure there weren't terms that could offend them." (PN13)

Quote N51

Original (French):

« Il y avait une ou deux personnes qui me reprenaient à mon avis pour rien. Par exemple, je me souviens aller faire un reportage une fois et j'avais dit : "Monsieur tel, en charge de la société d'alcool." Et il y a un monsieur qui travaillait [pour le même employeur] qui est venu me dire "ah non," après le reportage "ah non," dit-il, "on dit pas en charge, c'est de l'anglais." Et c'est bizarre parce que les Français disent "en charge" souvent. Et bien sûr moi, quand on me dit ça, je disais : "Ok, ça va, j'ai compris." » (PN13)

Translation (English):

"There were one or two people who corrected me in my opinion for nothing. For example, I remember going to do a report once and I had said: 'Mr. so-and-so, in charge of the liquor corporation.' And there was a man who worked [for the same employer] who came to tell me 'ah no,' after the report, 'ah no,' he said, 'we don't say in charge, that's English.' And it's strange because the French say 'en charge' often. And of course me, when someone told me that, I would say: 'Ok, it's fine, I understand.'" (PN13)

Quote N52

Original (French):

« J'ai toujours cette appréhension d'utiliser des anglicismes de France, ou des images, ou des expressions très franco-françaises à l'oral, à la radio. C'est terrible à chaque fois, donc j'essaie de me reprendre tout de suite si jamais c'est le cas. » (PN7)

Translation (English):

“I always have this apprehension of using anglicisms from France, or images, or very French expressions when speaking on the radio. It’s terrible each time, so I try to correct myself right away if ever that’s the case.” (PN7)

Quote N53

Original (French):

« On n'a pas le contrôle là-dessus, donc même si j'avais voulu me battre contre ça, j'aurais pas gagné, parce que ce sont des non-dits. Les gens en ondes, ce sont les patrons qui décident si oui ou non ils restent en ondes. Donc si tu ne collabores pas, si tu ne changes pas ce que les patrons veulent que tu changes, ils vont simplement te retirer des ondes, c'est leur droit. C'est la façon dont fonctionnent les médias. Donc tu peux pas t’entêter à conserver ton accent si les patrons ne veulent pas que tu l'aies, parce que tu vas tout simplement ne plus être en ondes. Donc c'est pas un combat qu'on peut mener. » (PN3)

Translation (English):

“We don’t have control over that, so even if I had wanted to fight against it, I wouldn’t have won, because these are unspoken things. The people on air, it’s the bosses who decide whether or not they stay on air. So if you don’t cooperate, if you don’t change what the bosses want you to change, they will simply take you off the air, it’s their right. That’s the way the media work. So you can’t stubbornly keep your accent if the bosses don’t want you to have it, because you will simply no longer be on air. So it’s not a fight we can wage.” (PN3)

Quote N54

Original (French):

« Le patron ne dira pas : “On ne confiera pas tel poste à cette journaliste parce qu'elle a un accent.” C'est un peu… De la même façon qu'ils diront pas : “Ben on ne confiera pas tel poste à tel journaliste parce qu’elle a trop de rides.” C'est quelque chose qui ne se dit pas. Je ne pense pas que le patron le dira officiellement parce que là ils se feraient tirer des roches. Comme tu sais, on prône beaucoup la diversité et tout ça, mais dans les faits ça peut peser dans les décisions des patrons. Donc comme employé, si tu te plies pas à ces critères, ben t'as aucun moyen de combattre ça si c'est un élément dans leur décision. » (PN3)

Translation (English):

“The boss will not say: ‘We will not give such a position to this journalist because she has an accent.’ It’s a bit… In the same way, they will not say: ‘Well, we will not give such a position to this journalist because she has too many wrinkles.’ It’s something that is not said. I don’t think the boss will say it officially because then they would get stones thrown at them. As you know, we promote diversity a lot and all that, but in reality, it can weigh in on the decisions of the bosses. So as an employee, if you don’t comply with these criteria, well, you have no way to fight against that if it is an element in their decision.” (PN3)

Quote N55

Original (French):

« C'est drôle, c'est mon conjoint qui me le dit. Moi je m'en rends pas vraiment compte mais il me dit : "Mais c'est bizarre quand tu parles à la radio, t'as comme une autre façon de parler." Et je pense qu'en fait je suis, y a vraiment un complexe ou une volonté de pas avoir l'air trop Française quand je parle à la radio, qui fait que je suis ultra consciente de certaines prononciations et que peut-être que je fais un peu de, que je force un peu ou, je sais pas parce que j'en suis pas, je sais pas comment dire, c'est pas volontaire, j'essaye pas d'imiter, mais j'ai l'impression que je vais faire plus de "euh." » (PN9)

Translation (English):

"It's funny, it's my partner who tells me. I don't really realize it myself, but he tells me: 'But it's strange, when you speak on the radio, you have like another way of speaking.' And I think that in fact I am, there's really a complex or a desire not to sound too French when I speak on the radio, which makes me ultra aware of certain pronunciations and maybe I do a bit of, that I force a bit or, I don't know because I'm not, I don't know how to say, it's not voluntary, I don't try to imitate, but I feel like I will do more 'euh.'" (PN9)

Quote N56

Original (French):

« Faire le caméléon, ça pourrait être effectivement avantageux. Et par caméléon, je veux dire faire couleur locale, entre guillemets. Le caméléon, tu vois, il a la capacité de se camoufler, de se fondre avec son environnement pour être invisible, comme un camouflage. » (PN11)

Translation (English):

"Being a chameleon, that could indeed be advantageous. And by chameleon, I mean blending in locally, in quotation marks. The chameleon, you see, has the ability to camouflage itself, to blend with its environment to be invisible, like camouflage." (PN11)

Quote N57

Original (French):

« J'aimerais bien avoir un accent québécois qui empêcherait les gens de savoir d'où je viens, juste pour voir ce que ça fait de vivre quelques jours dans la peau de, je suis pas identifiée comme venant d'ailleurs. Est-ce que ça changerait quelque chose à ma vie professionnelle ? Je pense que ça me donnerait encore plus de crédibilité. J'aimerais l'essayer. » (PN12)

Translation (English):

"I would really like to have a Québécois accent that would prevent people from knowing where I come from, just to see what it's like to live a few days in the shoes of, I'm not identified as coming from elsewhere. Would that change something in my professional life? I think it would give me even more credibility. I would like to try it." (PN12)

Quote N58

Original (French):

« J'ai assez l'accent québécois pour ne pas que ça paraisse, en fait, je pense. C'est très rare dans les dernières années-là, dans les trois quatre dernières années, c'est très rare qu'on m'ait demandé d'où venait mon accent. » (PN2)

Translation (English):

"I have enough of a Québécois accent so that it doesn't show, actually, I think. It's very rare in the past few years, in the last three or four years, it's very rare that I've been asked where my accent comes from." (PN2)

Quote N59

Original (French):

« Si j'avais l'accent québécois, mais que j'avais pas les références [...] jusqu'où j'arriverai à berner les gens ? (rires) Tu vois, jusqu'où ? Parce qu'il y a l'accent, mais il y a aussi les expressions, il y a… Je sais pas dans quoi, qu'est-ce que ça englobe l'accent ? Parce que si j'avais l'accent québécois, ça va peut-être changer effectivement au début, quand j'avais pas de pas réseau, pas de… chercher du boulot, peut-être. Et puis qu'on était dans les années, qu'on était en 2010, peut-être que ça aurait changé… Mais finalement, tu sais, y a pas que ça, je connais pas les références de hockey, je connais pas les expressions québécoises. Mais ça veut pas dire que j'aimerais avoir l'accent québécois. Moi, je suis très bien comme je suis. » (PN10)

Translation (English):

"If I had a Québécois accent, but I didn't have the references […] how far could I manage to fool people? (laughs) You see, how far? Because there's the accent, but there are also the expressions, there is… I don't know in what, what does the accent encompass? Because if I had the Québécois accent, maybe it would change indeed at the beginning, when I didn't have a network, didn't have… looking for a job, maybe. And then we were in the years, we were in 2010, maybe it would have changed… But in the end, you know, it's not just that, I don't know the hockey references, I don't know the Québécois expressions. But that doesn't mean I would like to have the Québécois accent. Me, I'm very fine as I am." (PN10)

Quote N60

Original (French):

« Les trucs qui m'ont le plus vexés justement dans mon travail, c'est quand on corrigeait mes textes avec "on dit pas ça ici." Tu sais, encore le "ici" qui te dit "oui mais t'es pas d'ici." Et c'est là que j'ai commencé à me dire : "Ah *shit*, même à l'écrit on le voit." Tu vois, parce que pendant longtemps je me disais : "Bon à l'oral on oublie ça, je pourrais pas faire illusion." Mais je pensais qu'à l'écrit oui, mais en fait non [...] C'est là que je le vois, je me dis : "Ah bon ben, c'était pas assez québécois ?" » (PN12)

Translation (English):

“If I had a Québécois accent, but I didn’t have the references […] how far could I manage to fool people? (laughs) You see, how far? Because there’s the accent, but there are also the expressions, there is… I don’t know in what, what does the accent encompass? Because if I had the Québécois accent, maybe it would change indeed at the beginning, when I didn’t have a network, didn’t have… looking for a job, maybe. And then we were in the years, we were in 2010, maybe it would have changed… But in the end, you know, it’s not just that, I don’t know the hockey references, I don’t know the Québécois expressions. But that doesn’t mean I would like to have the Québécois accent. Me, I’m very fine as I am.” (PN12)

Quote N61

Original (French):

« Quand j'articule beaucoup, j'ai tendance à revenir vers un accent français, et ça m'énerve un peu parce que je préfère que les gens entendent que je suis là depuis longtemps plutôt que les gens se dissent : “Attends, elle est française de France ?” Donc c'est vrai qu’à la radio à chaque fois j'ai cette petite gêne de : “Ah merde ça s’entend beaucoup quand même que je suis Française.” » (PN7)

Translation (English):

“When I articulate a lot, I tend to revert to a French accent, and it annoys me a bit because I prefer that people hear that I’ve been here a long time rather than people saying, ‘Wait, is she French from France?’ So it’s true that on the radio every time I have this little embarrassment of, ‘Ah damn, it’s really noticeable that I’m French.’” (PN7)

Quote N62

Original (French):

« Des fois c'est un peu frustrant parce que je veux m'améliorer tout le temps. Et des fois les gens disent que c'est à cause que tu parles plusieurs langues, que c'est tout le temps tu vas avoir des accents, mais pour moi l'idéal c'est de ne pas avoir d'accent. [...] Je vais m'améliorer [...]. Y a une petite frustration dedans tout le temps, mais j'essaie de m'améliorer. » (PN8)

Translation (English):

“Sometimes it’s a bit frustrating because I want to improve all the time. And sometimes people say it’s because you speak several languages that you’re always going to have accents, but for me, the ideal is not to have an accent. […] I’m going to improve […]. There’s a little frustration in it all the time, but I try to improve.” (PN8)

Quote N63

Original (French):

« C'est un peu contradictoire pour moi à dire que j'aime le mélange puis, à le même moment, je veux avoir un accent moins… Un accent qui est moins évident, mais j'aime le mélange des accents. » (PN5)

Translation (English):

“It’s a bit contradictory for me to say that I like the mix and, at the same time, I want to have a less… An accent that is less obvious, but I like the mix of accents.” (PN5)

Quote N64

Original (French):

« Ça passe partout, c'est la plupart du temps le registre soutenu. Et c'est, si vous voulez, un français qui est, entre guillemets, comestible pour tout le monde, c'est-à-dire qu'il n'y a pas quelqu'un qui pourrait en fait le remettre en question parce qu'il ne comprendrait pas ou alors qu'il y aurait des régionalismes. Donc je dirais que pour cette raison, c'est un français standard, donc qui pourrait passer un peu partout. » (PN13)

Translation (English):

“It works everywhere, most of the time it’s the formal register. And it’s, if you will, a French that is, in quotation marks, edible for everyone, that is to say that there isn’t anyone who could actually question it because they wouldn’t understand or there would be regionalisms. So I would say that for this reason, it’s a standard French, so it could work just about anywhere.” (PN13)

Quote N65

Original (French):

« Ce qu'il voulait entre guillemets corriger, c'était la diction qui n’était peut-être pas assez proche des gens, c'était quelque chose comme ça. Il fallait peut-être ne pas respecter totalement la grammaire, c'est-à-dire au lieu de dire “je ne veux pas,” peut-être dire “il veut pas faire ça,” au lieu de “il ne veut pas,” rendre ça, pour eux, peut-être un peu souple, entre guillemets, je pense [...] parce que je n'ai jamais vraiment réussi à savoir, et ça a été une semaine où on s'est vraiment posé des questions, que tout ce que le monsieur disait non seulement on pouvait le dire, mais on le disait mieux que lui. » (PN13)

Translation (English):

“What he wanted, in quotation marks, to correct was the diction that maybe wasn’t close enough to people, it was something like that. Maybe one shouldn’t fully respect grammar, that is to say instead of saying ‘I don’t want to,’ maybe say ‘he doesn’t want to do that,’ instead of ‘he does not want to,’ make it, for them, maybe a bit flexible, in quotation marks, I think […] because I never really managed to know, and it was a week where we really asked ourselves questions, that everything the man said not only could we say it, but we said it better than him.” (PN13)

Quote N66

Original (French):

« C'est aussi un peu un hommage à mon père dans le sens où il ne parlait pas comme ça, mais il tenait à ce que ses enfants aient une éducation assez bonne. Et comme on voyageait beaucoup, il tenait absolument à nous mettre tous, on n’était pas nombreux, Dieu merci, on était juste trois, mais il tenait à nous mettre tous dans des lycées français, dans des écoles qui sont réputées internationales. Et je crois que quelque part, c'est aussi un peu pour faire hommage à mon père et à ma mère, parce qu'ils ont tenu à cela, et j'en suis le résultat. » (PN13)

Translation (English):

“It’s also a bit of a tribute to my father in the sense that he didn’t speak like that, but he cared that his children had a fairly good education. And since we travelled a lot, he absolutely wanted to put all of us, there weren’t many of us, thank God, there were only three, but he wanted to put all of us in French high schools, in schools that are reputedly international. And I believe that somewhere, it’s also a bit to pay tribute to my father and my mother, because they insisted on that, and I am the result.” (PN13)

Quote N67

Original (French):

« Si je me mets à la place d'un Québécois et j'avais eu cette histoire, et avec les groupes qui se confrontaient, toute ça, c'est sûr que même inconsciemment, je vais donner des possibilités aux gens qui ont les noms en français. C'est juste pour conserver comme notre pays, comme les gens disent au Québec, c'est normal, c'est un peu inévitable. [...] Je comprends aussi, je blâme pas le Québec pour ça. J’essaye de comprendre toute la sociologie derrière aussi. » (PN8)

Translation (English):

“If I put myself in the place of a Québécois and I had had this story, and with the groups confronting each other, all that, it’s certain that even unconsciously, I’m going to give opportunities to people who have French names. It’s just to preserve, like our country, as people say in Quebec, it’s normal, it’s a bit inevitable. […] I also understand, I don’t blame Quebec for that. I try to understand all the sociology behind it as well.” (PN8)

Quote N68

Original (French):

« Je me sens un peu blessé, mais je comprends aussi, comme je t’avais dit. Moi, je vais être réalisé le jour que je [me] vois dans un grand journal de Montréal, ou d’autres pays francophones, en France ou quoi que ce soit. Si je vois que je publie déjà dans un grand journal […], je pourrais me sentir à l'aise, même si je parle encore avec un accent. » (PN8)

Translation (English):

“I feel a bit hurt, but I also understand, as I told you. I will feel accomplished the day I see myself in a major Montreal newspaper, or in other Francophone countries, in France or whatever. If I see that I am already publishing in a major newspaper […], I could feel comfortable, even if I still speak with an accent.” (PN8)

Quote N69

Original (French):

« Quand on est tombé en pandémie et j'étais à la maison, je me suis rendu compte que : “Ah, je me sens plus tranquille.” C'est horrible à dire là, mais j'entendais moins de réflexions au travail qui me faisaient sentir que j'étais pas d'ici parce que ça va être des conneries de : “Ah tiens, qu'est-ce que tu manges ? Une salade d'endives ? Ah ben oui, c'est du Nord,” tu vois. Enfin, tu sais, c'est comme les enfants immigrants qui sortent leur lunch à l'école et qui se font taquiner parce qu’ils ont un

repas qui est pas comme les autres. Fait que j'étais moins confrontée à cette différence. Puis je sais que ça part pas d'une mauvaise intention parce que je sais que mes collègues m'apprécient, mais je l'ai quand même ressenti que j'avais un quelque chose en moins à ce moment-là à gérer, de ah oui, c'est vrai, faut que je fasse attention. » (PN12)

Translation (English):

"When we fell into the pandemic and I was at home, I realized, 'Ah, I feel more at ease.' It's horrible to say, but I heard fewer remarks at work that made me feel I wasn't from here because it would be nonsense like, 'Ah, hey, what are you eating? An endive salad? Ah, well, yes, that's from the North,' you see. Well, you know, it's like immigrant children who take out their lunch at school and get teased because they have a meal that's not like the others. So I was less confronted with this difference. And I know it doesn't come from bad intentions because I know my colleagues appreciate me, but I still felt that I had something less to manage at that moment, like ah yes, that's right, I have to be careful." (PN12)

Quote N70

Original (French):

« Le fait que on me perçoive comme quelqu'un qui sait de quoi elle parle, qui fait correctement son travail, qui se renseigne sur les sujets dont elle parle. Enfin, tu vois… pour moi là, le côté intégrité, déontologie, rigueur, c'est des choses qui sont importantes en tant que journaliste, et ça je pense, comme je te disais au début, je pense que je suis respectée pour ça et que ça m'a pas empêché du tout d'être une bonne journaliste ici ou d'être considérée comme telle […]. Je me sens pas du tout victimisée ou quoi que ce soit. » (PN9)

Translation (English):

"The fact that I am perceived as someone who knows what she's talking about, who does her work correctly, who informs herself about the subjects she talks about. Well, you see… for me, the side of integrity, ethics, rigor, these are things that are important as a journalist, and that, I think, as I told you at the beginning, I think I am respected for that and it hasn't at all prevented me from being a good journalist here or being considered as such […]. I don't feel victimized at all or anything like that." (PN9)

Quote N71

Original (French):

« J'ai décidé de le voir un peu comme un défi en fait, plutôt que de m'acharner ou de me fâcher contre la situation. J'ai décidé de travailler sur mon accent pour le perdre et de pouvoir rester en ondes. Si j'avais pas voulu, si je m'étais braquée, je serais partie. Parce qu'à un moment donné, il faut accepter de le faire et pas le faire non plus toujours de façon fâchée ou négative. Donc à un moment donné, tu dis : "Ok, je lâche prise, c'est ce que ça prend." J'aimais aller en ondes, donc j'ai fait ce qu'il fallait pour pouvoir le rester. » (PN3)

Translation (English):

"I decided to see it a bit as a challenge, actually, rather than stubbornly fight or get angry about the situation. I decided to work on my accent to lose it and to be able to stay on air. If I hadn't wanted to, if I had been stubborn, I would have left. Because at some point, you have to accept doing it

and not always do it in an angry or negative way either. So at some point, you say: 'Ok, I let go, that's what it takes.' I liked being on air, so I did what was necessary to be able to stay there." (PN3)

Quote N72

Original (French):

« De plus en plus mal on dirait, c'est drôle. Je sais pas si je réagi plus amplement parce qu'on est vraiment rendu dans un contexte d'inclusion, de diversité tout ça. Réagir mal, c'est pas le bon terme, mais je réajoute plus sur la défensive maintenant, parce que avant, je dirais que quand on me parlait de ça, j'essayais d'être soumis, puis je me disais : "Ok désolé, on va travailler là-dessus," puis aujourd'hui, ben je me rends compte finalement, bon, la société a un petit peu changé puis on se rend compte que c'est pas de ma faute si je parle de cette façon-là. C'est que physiologiquement [...] je parle différemment d'autres personnes. » (PN4)

Translation (English):

"It seems worse and worse, it's funny. I don't know if I react more broadly because we are really in a context of inclusion, diversity, and all that. Reacting badly is not the right term, but I react more on the defensive now, because before, I would say that when people talked to me about it, I tried to be submissive, and then I would say: 'Ok, sorry, we'll work on that,' and today, well, I realize finally, well, society has changed a little bit, and we realize that it's not my fault if I speak this way. It's just that physiologically […] I speak differently from other people." (PN4)

Quote N73

Original (French):

« Aujourd'hui je dirais, je suis plus dans le mode défensif où je vais justifier ce qui se passe, je vais leur expliquer : "Ben oui mais c'est normal que tu comprennes pas ou que j'aie l'air un petit peu différent. Puis ça s'appelle une surdité, tu sais." Puis c'est juste que je trouve dommage encore aujourd'hui, faut qu'on… ça arrive beaucoup moins souvent qu'avant, mais encore aujourd'hui, des fois, il faut qu'on s'excuse pratiquement de parler de la façon que je parle. » (PN4)

Translation (English):

"Today I would say, I'm more in the defensive mode where I'm going to justify what's happening, I'm going to explain to them, 'Well, yes, but it's normal that you don't understand or that I look a little different. And it's called hearing loss, you know.' And it's just that I find it a shame even today, we have to… it happens much less often than before, but even today, sometimes, we practically have to apologize for speaking the way I speak." (PN4)

Quote N74

Original (French):

« J'ai dit que j'avais suffisamment de compétences professionnelles pour pallier les éventuelles lacunes que j'avais au niveau historique ou culturel sur le Québec, et que en fait quand t'es journaliste t'es pas expert de tout, mais par contre tu sais où aller chercher l'info, et que ça changeait rien que j'ai pas passé toute ma vie au Québec. » (PN9)

Translation (English):

“I said that I had enough professional skills to make up for the possible gaps I had in terms of history or culture about Quebec, and that in fact, when you’re a journalist you’re not an expert in everything, but on the other hand you know where to find the information, and that it didn’t change anything that I hadn’t spent my whole life in Quebec.” (PN9)

Quote N75

Original (French):

« J'en ai parlé. C'est d'ailleurs pour ça que je sais que y a d'autres personnes qui ne sont pas canadiennes, francophones, ils ont eu également ces difficultés-là. Peut-être que ma démarche à l'interne, ça a fait aussi réfléchir les ressources humaines. Donc peut-être qu'indirectement, j'ai peut-être contribué, mais c'est les autres après moi qui en ont bénéficié. » (PN11)

Translation (English):

“I talked about it. That’s actually why I know that there are other people who are not Canadian, Francophone, who also had these difficulties. Maybe my internal approach also made human resources reflect. So maybe indirectly, I may have contributed, but it’s the others after me who benefited from it.” (PN11)

Quote N76

Original (French):

« A: Il est arrivé à deux reprises que deux personnes viennent me voir et me demandent d'où sort mon accent. Et j'ai trouvé ça un peu incongru et j'ai essayé d'expliquer très honnêtement que je viens d'Afrique, que j'ai étudié presque tout le temps dans les lycées français et que c'est peut-être pour ça que je suis à l’aise avec un accent standard. Et ils étaient pas satisfaits. Figurez-vous.

Q: Ah oui ?

A: Oui, ils étaient pas satisfaits. Ils se grattaient le menton en disant : “Est-ce que vous êtes sûr ?” Je dis oui. “Vous avez vécu en France ?” J'ai dit non, j'ai pas vécu en France. Ils disent : “Ah mais c'est étrange.” Ils n'arrivaient pas à vraiment comprendre ça parce que pour eux, si vous avez grandi en Afrique, il faut que vous ayez l'accent totalement africain, je pense. J'ai l'impression. Je ne sais pas, ou à cause de mon nom de famille. » (PN13)

Translation (English):

A: “It happened twice that two people came to see me and asked me where my accent comes from. And I found it a bit incongruous, and I tried to explain very honestly that I come from Africa, that I studied almost all the time in French high schools, and that maybe that’s why I’m comfortable with a standard accent. And they weren’t satisfied. Imagine that.

Q: Oh, really?

A: Yes, they weren’t satisfied. They scratched their chins, saying, ‘Are you sure?’ I said yes. ‘Did you live in France?’ I said no, I didn’t live in France. They said, ‘Ah, but that’s strange.’ They

really couldn’t understand that because for them, if you grew up in Africa, you have to have a completely African accent, I think. I feel like that. I don’t know, or because of my last name.” (PN13)

Quote N77

Original (French):

« Je trouve que c'est quand même un sujet sensible, souvent tabou dans les médias dont on entend peu parler, mais qui a quand même, je pense, une assez grande importance parce qu'on est nombreux à avoir un accent au départ et à devoir composer avec certaines réticences du côté des employeurs. Donc ça, je pense que c'est un enjeu important. » (PN3)

Translation (English):

“I find that it is still a sensitive subject, often taboo in the media, that we hear little about, but which still, I think, has quite a significant importance because many of us have an accent at the start and have to deal with certain reluctances on the part of employers. So that, I think, is an important issue.” (PN3)

Quote N78

Original (French):

« C'est intéressant de parler de son expérience de, j'allais dire d'immigrant, mais de professionnel avec un accent. On n'a pas toujours l'occasion d'en parler, puis c'est quelque chose que les Québécois peuvent peut-être pas toujours comprendre, c'est normal, je le comprenais pas avant de changer de pays, non plus. » (PN10)

Translation (English):

“It’s interesting to talk about one’s experience of, I was going to say, as an immigrant, but as a professional with an accent. We don’t always have the opportunity to talk about it, and it’s something that Québécois people may not always understand.” (PN10)

Quote N79

Original (French):

« Je pense qu’il y a tellement un espèce de soucis de diversité, de respect, de tout ça, que je pense pas que les patrons, ben en fait il y a des patrons qui le disent, mais ils n'avoueraient pas qu'ils demandent à leurs employés de perdre leur accent, ils viendraient pas dire publiquement en ondes : “Nous, on demande à tous nos journalistes de perdre leur accent.” Sauf que dans les faits, c'est ce qui se passe. » (PN3)

Translation (English):

“I think there is so much of a kind of concern with diversity, respect, all that, that I don’t think the bosses, well in fact there are bosses who say it, but they wouldn’t admit that they ask their employees to lose their accent, they wouldn’t publicly say on air, ‘We ask all our journalists to lose their accent.’ Except that in reality, that’s what happens.” (PN3)

Quote N80

Original (French):

« J'approuve pas du tout le fait que ces personnes-là, qui ont un fort accent, ne soient pas beaucoup dans les médias, mais je pense qu'il y a cette appréhension-là de la part des recruteurs. Le public a envie de parler à des gens qui leur ressemblent. Et puis bon bah voilà c'est… mais c'est terrible, mais c'est comme ça. Alors qu'au contraire, on devrait à mon avis encourager la diversité dans les médias, sous toutes ses formes, et je suis contente que certains le fassent. Mais j'ai l'impression que c'est la réflexion qui se fait lors des entretiens d'embauche, parce que les recruteurs ne veulent pas perdre leur audience. » (PN7)

Translation (English):

"I don't at all approve of the fact that those people, who have a strong accent, aren't much in the media, but I think there is this apprehension on the part of recruiters. The audience wants to talk to people who resemble them. And well, there you go… It's terrible, but that's how it is. Whereas, on the contrary, in my opinion, we should encourage diversity in the media, in all its forms, and I'm glad that some do. But I have the impression that this is the reflection that happens during job interviews, because recruiters don't want to lose their audience." (PN7)

Quote N81

Original (French):

« Tu peux être sûr que t'auras pas de problème à la radio ou même à la presse écrite, si voilà, t'es dans le standard, puis t'as ce qu'on appelle l'accent international. Donc je pense que celui-là est privilégié. D'un autre côté, je pense que cette idée-là est un peu biaisée par le fait que les gens qui écoutent les médias comme Radio-Canada ou un journaliste du *Devoir* ou de *La Presse* qui s'en va faire un topo radio, ou qui va à *Tout le monde en parle*, je ne sais quoi, forcément, le lectorat est peut-être d'une certaine classe sociale ou d'un certain milieu, ça peut être très montréalais surtout. Et donc on a cette idée que c'est un meilleur accent, plus représentatif, mais on va en région, l'accent est différent. Et puis je pense que ça dépend de la station de radio. Je pense qu'il y a des stations de radio où un accent plus que les gens vont qualifier de « populaire », c'est pas mon expression, mais c'est celle qu'on utilise communément, va en fait être plus apprécié parce que les gens ont l'impression de s'entendre. » (PN2)

Translation (English):

"You can be sure that you won't have a problem on the radio or even in the print press if, well, you're in the standard, and you have what is called the international accent. So I think that one is privileged. On the other hand, I think this idea is a bit biased by the fact that people who listen to media like Radio-Canada or a journalist from *Le Devoir* or *La Presse* who goes to do a radio report, or who goes on *Tout le monde en parle*, I don't know what, inevitably, the readership is maybe from a certain social class or a certain background, it can be very Montreal-centered especially. And so we have this idea that it's a better accent, more representative, but if you go to the regions, the accent is different. And then I think it depends on the radio station. I think there are radio stations where an accent that people would call 'popular,' it's not my expression, but it's the one commonly used, will actually be more appreciated because people feel like they hear themselves." (PN2)

Quote N82

Original (French):

« Par exemple, au Parlement, il arrivait des moments où, quand il y avait une manifestation, on trouvait quelques francophones qui réagissaient à vif et là, bien sûr, les questions qu'on leur posait n'étaient pas écrites. C'était selon la situation, donc, là bien sûr, on essaie d'être nous-mêmes, on essaie d'être plus proches de ce que l'on est. Quand on lit un texte, parce que quand on lit un texte, c'est pas juste nous, il y a aussi, comme je vous ai dit en tout cas à cette époque, quelqu'un qui révise, même si c'est déjà écrit. » (PN13)

Translation (English):

"For example, in Parliament, there were moments when, during a demonstration, we found some Francophones who reacted sharply, and there, of course, the questions that were asked weren't written. It was according to the situation, so, of course, we try to be ourselves, we try to be closer to who we are. When we read a text, because when we read a text, it's not just us, there is also, as I told you at that time, someone who revises it, even if it's already written." (PN13)

Quote N83

Original (French):

« Je me suis vraiment adaptée […]. Puis en général, maintenant j'ai changé là parce que j'ai eu [âge], mais à l'époque j'étais vraiment pas du tout en mode rébellion, résistance puis je veux montrer que c'est comme ça. Mais maintenant, je vois que, sans me le dire spontanément, je passe un peu certains trucs, je sais pas comment dire mais, ouais en fait j'essaye… Je vois que la réflexion que j'ai, c'est vraiment d'accepter que j'écris différemment parce que j'ai un peu mélangé tout ça. » (PN12)

Translation (English):

"I really adapted […]. And in general, now I've changed because I'm [age], but at the time, I really wasn't at all in a mode of rebellion, resistance, and I want to show that it's like that. But now, I see that, without telling myself spontaneously, I skip over certain things, I don't know how to say it, but, yeah, actually I try… I see that the reflection I have is really to accept that I write differently because I've mixed all that a bit." (PN12)

Quote N84

Original (French):

« Dans la façon que j'ai essayé de trouver des sujets qui pouvaient intéresser plus les communautés afro, et je n'y arrivais pas tout le temps, et ça, c'était un peu dommage. Donc ça me préoccupait. Parce que bon, celui qui s'occupait des nouvelles nous donnait nos nouvelles, nos sujets. Quelquefois on proposait des sujets, mais ils n'étaient pas forcément pris. Donc oui, je dirais que là-dessus je n'avais pas beaucoup de choix. » (PN13)

Translation (English):

"In the way, I tried to find subjects that could interest the Afro communities more, and I didn't succeed all the time, and that was a bit unfortunate. So that concerned me. Because, well, the person

in charge of the news gave us our news, our subjects. Sometimes we proposed subjects, but they weren't necessarily taken. So yes, I would say that regarding that, I didn't have much choice." (PN13)

Quote N85

Original (French):

« C'est plus moi une façon d'éviter que les autres me renvoient cette faiblesse-là. Je préfère la mettre sur la table et dire : "Ok, hey, ça je suis insécure là-dessus. Est-ce que vous pouvez me donner des conseils ?" Et donc ça fait que les gens apprennent, n'osent pas venir faire des blagues là-dessus parce qu'ils savent déjà que c'est un sujet un peu sensible. Je pense qu'il y a une petite technique derrière, mais aussi sincèrement, il y a des choses sur lesquelles j'ai vraiment besoin de conseils par rapport à ça de la part de mes collègues, c'est-à-dire : "Est-ce que telle expression s'utilise d'après vous ? Est-ce que ?" Ça m'arrive de temps en temps de leur demander. Et ils me rassurent toujours par rapport à ça. » (PN7)

Translation (English):

"It's more my way of avoiding that others reflect that weakness back at me. I prefer to put it on the table and say, 'Ok, hey, I'm insecure about this. Can you give me some advice?' And so that makes people learn, they don't dare to make jokes about it because they already know it's a somewhat sensitive subject. I think there's a little technique behind it, but also, sincerely, there are things on which I really need advice from my colleagues regarding that, that is, 'Is this expression used in your opinion? Is it?' Sometimes I ask them. And they always reassure me about that." (PN17)

Quote N86

Original (French):

« À chaque fois, je suis avec mon photographe dans des situations comme ça, et c'est le photographe qui met un petit peu de lubrifiant social dans la conversation, qui utilise les mêmes expressions, parce que moi je suis souvent perdue. En termes de vocabulaire, j'arrive à comprendre, mais je vais pas nécessairement avoir le réflexe d'utiliser moi-même ce vocabulaire-là. » (PN7)

Translation (English):

"Every time, I'm with my photographer in situations like that, and it's the photographer who puts a little social lubricant into the conversation, who uses the same expressions, because I am often lost. In terms of vocabulary, I manage to understand, but I won't necessarily have the reflex to use that vocabulary myself." (PN7)

Quote N87

Original (French):

« C'est lui qui m'a fait remarquer que dans les médias, il entend beaucoup de réflexions sur les Français, donc c'est lui qui m'a comme fait réaliser que ça, c'était plus libéré. […] Je me suis questionnée. Puis je me suis rappelée des situations, par exemple la blague du 14 juillet, il a trouvé ça drôle. Et que je pense que je suis plus sensible que lui à ces questions-là. Mais ça nous a énervés en vrai, je pense que le sentiment… Des fois ça m'énerve, des fois je suis plus blasée parce que c'est juste comme habituel. Je suis quand même contente d'avoir quelqu'un qui peut me

comprendre. Parce que sinon, je pense que je me sentirais très isolée dans ce genre de situation-là. » (PN12)

Translation (English):

"He was the one who pointed out to me that in the media, he hears a lot of remarks about the French, so he was the one who made me realize that this was more freeing. […] I questioned myself. Then I remembered situations, for example, the July 14 joke, he found it funny. And I think that I am more sensitive than him to these issues. But it really annoyed us, I think the feeling… Sometimes it annoys me, sometimes I'm more indifferent because it's just habitual. I'm still glad to have someone who can understand me. Because otherwise, I think I would feel very isolated in this kind of situation." (PN12)

Quote N88

Original (French):

« On s'est regardés. C'étaient plus des regards de complicité que de commentaires […]. Les fois où on était ensemble, on se regardait de temps en temps, comme pour dire : "Il y a quelque chose qui n'est pas très clair ici, il y a quelque chose qui n'est pas très clair." Mais on n'est pas allé plus loin que ça. » (PN13)

Translation (English):

"We looked at each other. They were more looks of complicity than comments […]. The times we were together, we looked at each other from time to time, as if to say, 'There's something that isn't very clear here, there's something that isn't very clear.' But we didn't go any further than that." (PN13)

Quote N89

Original (French):

« A: Si j'avais une émission de radio ou la télé pour moi personnellement, en français, je devais mettre mon niveau 80 % de plus, d'après moi, parce que c'est mon exigence. D'après moi, je parle français à 20 % maintenant, je devrais arriver au reste de 80 % qui me manque.

Q: Sinon, tu te sentirais pas à l'aise de le faire ?

A: Non, à date, à mon niveau maintenant, non pas du tout, pas du tout. Je devrais même me préparer comme un an ou quelque chose de même pour avoir un niveau de confiance pour m'exprimer dans… Parce qu'avant je faisais le show à la radio, mais dans mon pays d'origine, dans des radios communautaires et tout ça, alors j'aime bien comme faire le *entertain*, comme ils disent ici, au public. » (PN8)

Translation (English):

"A: If I had a radio or TV show for myself personally, in French, I would have to put in 80% more of my level, in my opinion, because that's my requirement. In my opinion, I speak French at 20% now, I should reach the remaining 80% that I lack.
Q: Otherwise, you wouldn't feel comfortable doing it?
A: No, at my level now, no, not at all, not at all. I would even have to prepare for like a year or something to have a level of confidence to express myself in… Because before I did the show on

the radio, but in my country of origin, on community radios and all that, so I like to kind of entertain, as they say here, the audience." (PN8)

Quote N99

Original (French):

« A: Je pourrais être à l'aise de parler à la télé tout ça si je me mets dans un personnage, comme le Latino qui parle pas bien le français, je pourrais le faire sans problème.

Q: Ah oui ?

A: Ah oui, absolument. Oui. Oui, oui. Disons parce qu'aux États-Unis ils ont par exemple, c'est cette madame Sofía Vergara, je sais qu'elle parle bien l'anglais, mais elle accentue un accent latino, l'anglais comme un peu croche, mais ça c'est exprès. » (PN8)

Translation (English):

"A: I could be comfortable talking on TV and all that if I put myself in a character, like the Latino who doesn't speak French well, I could do it without any problem.
Q: Oh, really?
A: Oh, yes, absolutely. Yes. Yes, yes. Let's say, because in the United States, for example, there's this lady, Sofía Vergara, I know she speaks English well, but she exaggerates a Latino accent, the English is a little off, but that's on purpose." (PN8)

Quote N100

Original (French):

« Si les gens, ils savent déjà que c'est un Latino qui parle un peu croche le français, ben j'accepterai parce que j'aime bien le show-business. Oui absolument […]. Parce qu'il faut être réaliste aussi, parce que moi je suis pas politiquement correct, je fais des blagues sur ma situation. Des fois je dis à mes amis au travail : "S'il vous plaît, appelle pas l'immigration parce que je vais pas partir [dans] mon pays d'origine." Tout ça. Mais je joue avec toutes ces réalités. » (PN8)

Translation (English):

"If people already know that it's a Latino who speaks French a little off, well, I would accept it because I like show business. Yes, absolutely […]. Because you have to be realistic too, because I'm not politically correct, I make jokes about my situation. Sometimes I say to my friends at work, 'Please, don't call immigration because I'm not leaving [to] my country of origin.' All that. But I play with all these realities." (PN8)

Quote N101

Original (French):

« J'ai pas envie qu'une histoire d'accent soit un obstacle à ça. Je pense que le travail que je fais est plus grand que ça. Je pense aussi que c'est comme une espèce de lutte psychologique que je dois régler moi-même. Tu sais, faut que j'arrête aussi de me poser autant de questions sur mon accent au moment d'entrer en ondes. Je pense que je devrais vraiment plus me concentrer sur ce je raconte plutôt que sur l'accent avec lequel je le raconte. Donc, j'y participe [aux médias parlés] pour cette raison. » (PN2)

Translation (English):

“I don’t want a story about an accent to be an obstacle to that. I think the work I do is bigger than that. I also think it’s a kind of psychological struggle that I have to resolve myself. You know, I also have to stop asking myself so many questions about my accent when going on air. I think I should really focus more on what I’m saying rather than on the accent with which I say it. So, I participate [in spoken media] for that reason.” (PN2)

Quote N102

Original (French):

« Outre la façon que je parle, mon histoire, je pense elle était bonne. Je la racontais d'une très bonne façon visiblement, parce qu'ils appréciaient ça. J'allais trouver des intervenants qui étaient adéquats. Donc je pense qu'ils se sont rendus compte bah, sur les 10 points qui font un bon reporter, on a 9 et demi, que ça fonctionne bien, tu sais, il y a le demi-point de l'accent. Avec le temps, j'ai réussi quand même à prendre ma place puis à m'intégrer. » (PN4)

Translation (English):

“Besides the way I speak, my story, I think it was good. I told it in a very good way, apparently, because they appreciated it. I would find interviewees who were appropriate. So I think they realized, well, out of the 10 points that make a good reporter, we have nine and a half, that it works well, you know, there’s the half point for the accent. Over time, I still managed to find my place and integrate.” (PN4)

Quote N103

Original (French):

« Est-ce que j'ai des enjeux de communication dans ma vie tous les jours ? Aucun. Je me fais comprendre. Donc j'étais pas un bon client pour les gens que j'ai rencontrés. [Ils] m’ont rapidement dit qu’ils ont d'autres chats à fouetter, essentiellement, que de me donner des cours à moi, parce que la réalité est que mon français et ma façon communiquer est si bonne que c'est mon travail à temps plein en étant journaliste. » (PN4)

Translation (English):

“Do I have communication issues in my everyday life? None. I make myself understood. So I wasn’t a good client for the people I met. [They] quickly told me that they had other fish to fry, essentially, than to give me lessons, because the reality is that my French and my way of communicating is so good that it’s my full-time job as a journalist.” (PN4)

Quote N104

Original (French):

« J’ai l'impression que j'assume beaucoup mieux qui je suis, et je pense je me suis un peu renforcée aussi, c'est-à-dire que professionnellement, je me sens suffisamment solide pour assumer voilà, la façon dont je parle, d’où je viens, alors qu’au début, j'étais plus fragile et que je pense que c'est quelque chose qui me fragilisait d'avoir cet accent français, de pas se fondre dans la masse, de

devoir faire plus mes preuves parce que j'étais Française. Là maintenant, j'ai l'impression que je les ai faites mes preuves et ça, je me sens plus forte par rapport à ça. » (PN9)

Translation (English):

"I feel like I assume much better who I am, and I think I've strengthened myself a bit too, that is to say professionally, I feel solid enough to assume, well, the way I speak, where I come from, whereas at the beginning, I was more fragile and I think it was something that made me fragile to have this French accent, to not blend in with the crowd, to have to prove myself more because I was French. Now, I feel like I have proven myself, and that I feel stronger regarding that." (PN9)

Quote N105

Original (French):

« Ce qui pourrait être pas mal en fait, c'est de passer des tests de français, nonobstant l'accent, c'est-à-dire avant même de se poser la question "est-ce que l'accent passe ?" c'est : "Est-ce que le niveau de français passe ?" Parce que souvent, on va associer un accent non-québécois, non-français, à un niveau de français plus bas. Et ça, si on veut parler de discrimination, je peux en faire tout un discours parce que oui, là-dessus, on entend un Franco-Albertain qui sort de l'université versus un Québécois qui sort de l'UQAM [Université du Québec à Montréal], la plupart vont embaucher celui qui sort de l'UQAM. Le niveau de français n'est pourtant pas forcément meilleur. Donc je pense que sur les tests de français, on peut définitivement améliorer les choses. » (PN2)

Translation (English):

"What could actually be not bad is to take French tests, regardless of the accent, that is to say, even before asking the question 'Does the accent pass?', it's: 'Does the level of French pass?' Because often, a non-Québécois, non-French accent will be associated with a lower level of French. And that, if we want to talk about discrimination, I could make a whole speech about it because yes, on that, we hear a Franco-Albertan who graduates from university versus a Québécois who graduates from UQAM [Université du Québec à Montréal], most will hire the one who graduates from UQAM. The level of French is not necessarily better. So I think regarding French tests, things can definitely be improved." (PN2)

Quote N106

Original (French):

« Parler de racisme est un peu excessif. Mais peut-être de discrimination auditive ou de microagression, je sais pas […] y a pas vraiment de terme, mais de discrimination liée à l'accent ou de remarques liées à l'accent, et le fait d'en parler avec d'autres gens qui vivent la même chose, bon, c'est un peu un exutoire, quoi, après on passe à autre chose. » (PN9)

Translation (English):

"Talking about racism is a bit excessive. But maybe about auditory discrimination or microaggression, I don't know […] there's not really a term, but discrimination related to the accent or remarks related to the accent, and talking about it with other people who experience the same thing, well, it's a bit of a release, you know, then we move on to something else." (PN9)

Quote N107

Original (French):

« Je pense que de sensibiliser, de le nommer, de… Tu vois, le terme, je connais même pas alors que je le subis depuis 16 ans. Je trouve que c'est un truc qui est super important et les médias, à mon avis, si on leur mettait un peu la tête dans leur caca en disant : "Ça, ce que tu fais, c'est de la discrimination pure et simple au même titre que rejeter quelqu'un parce qu'il a un nom africain," et bien je pense qu'ils seraient bien embêtés et qu'ils seraient bien obligés de changer leurs façons de faire. » (PN9)

Translation (English):

"I think raising awareness, naming it, … You see, the term, I don't even know it, even though I've been experiencing it for 16 years. I think it's something that is super important, and the media, in my opinion, if we put their heads in their own mess by saying, 'This, what you're doing, is pure and simple discrimination, just like rejecting someone because they have an African name,' well, I think they would be quite embarrassed and would be obliged to change their ways of doing things." (PN9)

Quote N108

Original (French):

« C'est une réalité à laquelle les gens sont totalement hermétiques, c'est-à-dire qu'autant la couleur de peau, on commence à être un peu sensibilisés, conscients de nos biais. Autant je pense que l'accent, il y a encore beaucoup de gens qui tombent des nues, moi, quand je leur dis, des Québécois, quand je leur dis : "Mais en fait, on me renvoie systématiquement à mon accent." [Ils répondent] : "Ah bon ? Ah bon ?" Donc je pense que c'est quelque chose qui est peu connu, l'accentisme. Donc oui, je crois que ce serait intéressant de sensibiliser à ça. » (PN9)

Translation (English):

"It's a reality to which people are totally oblivious to, that is to say, regarding skin colour, we are starting to be a bit sensitized, aware of our biases. But I think with the accent, there are still many people who are completely surprised when I tell them, Québécois, when I tell them, 'But actually, I'm systematically referred back to my accent.' [They respond]: 'Oh really? Oh really?' So, I think it's something that is little known, accentism. So yes, I think it would be interesting to raise awareness about it." (PN9)

Quote N109

Original (French):

« Honnêtement, j'apprécie beaucoup cette entrevue parce que t'arrives à mettre des mots, parce que t'as fait ton travail de recherche et ton travail académique. Moi c'est plus du vécu, même si j'ai de l'auto-réflexion qui quand même… Microagression, authenticité, minorité audible… C'est oui. Donc je dirais oui, c'est une quête d'authenticité que je fais. C'est pour ça que j'essaye de conserver mon accent. » (PN11)

Translation (English):

“Honestly, I really appreciate this interview because you manage to put words, because you did your research and your academic work. For me, it’s more lived experience, even if I do have self-reflection that still… Microaggression, authenticity, audible minority… Yes. So, I would say yes, it’s a quest for authenticity that I pursue. That’s why I try to maintain my accent.” (PN11)

Quote N110

Original (French):

« Ça m'a rendu beaucoup plus ouvert à la différence d'avoir été victime de discrimination. Je pense que ça m'a aussi ouvert beaucoup plus aux erreurs du passé du pays colonial d'où je viens […]. De se retrouver la plus petite poupée russe après avoir grandi dans un pays où c'était peut-être la plus grosse poupée russe, ça donne un point de vue différent et ça peut permettre de comprendre un petit peu mieux qu'est-ce que ça veut dire d'être victime de discrimination. Donc finalement quand on fait partie d'une majorité, on est peut-être moins soumis à ce genre de microagressions ou de macroagressions. Et puis finalement de se retrouver tout au bas de l'échelle, ça donne un point de vue différent. Et puis ça permet de prendre conscience de certaines choses. » (PN11)

Translation (English):

“Being a victim of discrimination made me much more open to difference. I think it also opened me much more to the past errors of the colonial country I come from […]. Finding myself as the smallest Russian doll after having grown up in a country where I was perhaps the biggest Russian doll gives a different perspective and can allow a slightly better understanding of what it means to be a victim of discrimination. So ultimately, when you are part of a majority, you may be less subjected to this kind of microaggressions or macroaggressions. And finally, finding yourself at the very bottom of the hierarchy gives a different perspective. And it allows you to become aware of certain things.” (PN11)

Quote N111

Original (French):

« Je suis très pro rapprochement entre le Québec et l’extérieur du Québec. Et selon moi, si on peut commencer à la radio par s’inviter les uns et les autres, ça peut déjà être pas mal, notamment pour faire découvrir les accents. Alors l’accent québécois, tout le monde le connaît à l’extérieur du Québec, c’est pas un problème, mais l’inverse n’est pas forcément vrai. » (PN2)

Translation (English):

“I am very much in favour of rapprochement between Quebec and outside Quebec. And in my opinion, if we can start on the radio by inviting each other, that can already be quite something, notably to showcase accents. So the Québécois accent, everyone knows it outside of Quebec, that’s not a problem, but the reverse is not necessarily true.” (PN2)

Quote N112

Original (French):

« Après mon premier reportage télé, je t'aurais dit que je voudrais avoir la voix de mes autres collègues de correspondant à l'étranger, avec le plus beau français, puis la langue la plus soutenue

avec un accent qui est beaucoup plus canadien-français ou international, parce que visiblement, c'est la clef du succès. Aujourd'hui, je te dirais que je suis extrêmement fier de la voix que j'ai, puis que je la changerai pas. Puis je me dis, écoute, ça va peut-être me donner moins d'opportunités ou d'occasions, mais je vais être heureux. Puis je vais pas me prendre pour quelqu'un d'autre. Je vais pas falsifier ma voix, falsifier mon accent. Donc je ne changerai pas pour un autre accent, même si j'avais vraiment un accent français soutenu, j'aurais peut-être plus d'opportunités. » (PN4)

Translation (English):

"After my first TV report, I would have told you that I wanted to have the voice of my other colleagues who are correspondents abroad, with the most beautiful French, and the most formal language with an accent that is much more Canadian-French or international, because apparently, that is the key to success. Today, I would tell you that I am extremely proud of the voice I have and that I would not change it. And I tell myself, listen, maybe it will give me fewer opportunities or occasions, but I will be happy. And I will not pretend to be someone else. I will not falsify my voice, falsify my accent. So, I would not change for another accent, even if I really had a formal French accent, I might have had more opportunities." (PN4)

Quote N113

Original (French):

« Je suis fier de faire le métier que je fais parce qu'on m'a souvent dit que je pourrais pas le pratiquer à cause de mon handicap. Donc moi, j'ai une grande fierté de ça, puis même des fois, je me dis : "Écoute, que j'ai un accent de sourd entre guillemets, ben ça permet à d'autres personnes de s'identifier." […] Ça sert à quelque chose que je sois moi en ondes à la télévision aussi, fait que c'est une belle fierté. » (PN4)

Translation (English):

"I am proud to do the job I do because I was often told that I could not practice it because of my disability. So, I have great pride in that, and sometimes I even tell myself, 'Listen, that I have a 'deaf accent,' well, it allows other people to identify themselves.' […] It serves a purpose that I am myself on air on television as well, so it is a beautiful source of pride." (PN4)

Quote N114

Original (French):

« Même affaire quand on me dit j'ai un accent de Queb, de Québécois de région rurale, je suis comme, bah, c'est ce qui fait aussi ma personnalité. Puis c'est ce qui fait aussi des fois que j'ai l'impression d'être proche de mon auditoire, moi, quand je travaille. Puis souvent on va le faire remarquer : "Je sais pas comment tu fais, mais toi, t'es capable de parler au monde, là." » (PN4)

Translation (English):

"Same thing when people tell me I have a Québécois accent from a rural region, I'm like, well, that's also part of my personality. And it's also what sometimes makes me feel close to my audience when I'm working. And people often point it out: 'I don't know how you do it, but you're able to speak to people, you know.'" (PN4)

Quote N115

Original (French):

« Si je reprenais naturellement l'accent franco-ontarien, que je débarquais à la radio, que je me disais la même chose que je me dis aujourd'hui, c'est-à-dire “ne change pas ton accent, sois naturelle,” je pense pas que je serais gênée honnêtement, parce que j'ai grandi depuis, j'ai compris qu'il n’y avait pas à avoir honte. » (PN2)

Translation (English):

“If I naturally took back a Franco-Ontarian accent, came into radio, and told myself the same thing I tell myself today, that is, ‘Don’t change your accent, be natural,’ I honestly don’t think I would feel embarrassed, because I’ve grown up since then and I’ve understood that there’s nothing to be ashamed of.” (PN2)

Quote N116

Original (French):

« Je sais qu’enfant c'était particulièrement difficile, et puis donc, voilà, ça me suscite un petit peu de tristesse, un petit peu de honte. D’un autre côté, ça me rend d’autant plus fière d’être francophone aujourd’hui. En rétrospective, ça renforce ma fierté. » (PN2)

Translation (English):

“I know that as a child it was particularly difficult, and so, well, it brings up a little sadness, a little shame. On the other hand, it makes me even prouder to be francophone today. In retrospect, it reinforces my pride.” (PN2)

Quote N117

Original (French):

« Quand je suis arrivée au Québec, j'avais beaucoup d'idées préconçues sur le Québec, beaucoup de préjugés et j'ai fait beaucoup de chemin depuis. Mais au début, en fait, j'avais vraiment pas envie d'adopter l'accent québécois. Je résistais quasiment à ça parce que je sais pas je voulais pas devenir Québécoise à la base. Et puis mon attitude aujourd'hui est très très, très différente. Aujourd'hui, il y a beaucoup de fierté associée à ça. Et puis ben ouais, l'accent québécois, je dirais, c'est plus de la fierté qu'autre chose. Un petit peu de tristesse parce que ça veut dire aussi que j'ai perdu l'accent franco-ontarien. Mais voilà, je pense qu'on s'intègre aussi un petit peu par l'accent des fois. Donc, c'est ça, pour l'accent québécois, je dirais surtout de la fierté. » (PN2)

Translation (English):

“When I arrived in Québec, I had a lot of preconceived ideas about Québec, many prejudices, and I have come a long way since. But at the beginning, in fact, I really didn’t want to adopt the Québécois accent. I almost resisted it because, I don’t know, I didn’t want to become Québécoise at first. And my attitude today is very, very, very different. Today, there is a lot of pride associated with it. And well, yeah, the Québécois accent, I would say, is more about pride than anything else. A little bit of sadness because it also means that I have lost the Franco-Ontarian accent. But there you go, I think we also integrate a little through our accent sometimes. So, that’s it, for the Québécois accent, I would mainly say pride.” (PN2)

Quote N118

Original (French):

« Je me rends compte qu'on a pas du tout la même façon de parler parce qu'elle, je sais qu'elle vient du Nord, puis je sens qu'elle cherche pas du tout à gommer [son accent] et je trouve ça très inspirant parce que je me dis, moi, j'ai voulu faire un peu le caméléon au détriment de comment je me sentais. Je me dis : "Mince, j'aurais peut-être pas dû le faire autant." Mais après je peux pas le changer, ça. Puis, mais quand même, je me disais : "Ah ouais, on a vraiment pas la même façon de vivre ça." Je me rends compte qu'elle a vraiment un accent du Nord. » (PN12)

Translation (English):

"I realize that we don't have the same way of speaking at all because she, I know she comes from the north, and I feel that she doesn't try at all to mask [her accent], and I find that very inspiring because I tell myself, I wanted to act a bit like a chameleon at the expense of how I felt. I tell myself, "Damn, maybe I shouldn't have done it so much." But afterwards, I can't change that. And yet I still told myself, "Oh yeah, we really don't experience this the same way." I realize that she really has a northern accent." (PN12)

Quote N119

Original (French):

« A: J'ai toujours eu l'impression que j'avais franchi un pas pour les gens qui écoutaient. Ils étaient contents parce qu'ils n'avaient pas l'habitude d'entendre un accent différent.

Q: Ah oui ?

A: Ah oui, mais je vous assure. Pendant longtemps, j'étais seul et puis après, il y avait un certain Lionel Perron, je crois, et lui était noir, mais a grandi au Québec. Donc quand il parlait, on pouvait pas savoir que c'était un Noir. Et moi non, on savait qu'il y avait quelque chose de différent et à cause de ça, beaucoup de gens, même des... Je me souviens, quelqu'un qui avait un journal communautaire […] a vraiment beaucoup apprécié parce qu'il disait : "Bien, c'est pas souvent qu'on entend des gens comme ça à la radio." Et même un professeur […] de nationalité burundaise m'a dit : "J'espère qu'on vous garde." Alors je me suis dit "ça alors." Mais j'ai quand même tenu […] alors c'est pas mal. » (PN13)

Translation (English):

"A: I always had the impression that I had broken new ground for the people who were listening. They were happy because they weren't used to hearing a different accent.
Q: Oh, really?
A: Oh yes, but I assure you. For a long time, I was alone, and then there was a certain Lionel Perron, I think, and he was Black but grew up in Québec. So, when he spoke, you couldn't tell he was Black. And me, no, you could tell there was something different, and because of that, many people, even… I remember someone who had a community newspaper […] really appreciated it because he said, "Well, it's not often that we hear people like that on the radio." And even a professor […] of Burundian nationality told me, "I hope they keep you." So, I said, "Wow." But I still persisted […] so that's not bad at all." (PN13)

Quote N120

Original (French):

« A: Tu sais ce que je réponds maintenant quand on me dit : “t'as pas perdu ton accent ?” […] Je dis : “ben moi aussi, j'ai le droit de me souvenir.”

Q: En référence à la devise du Québec ? C'est ça ?

A: Ben oui, ouais. Je me souviens et j'admire la résilience culturelle que le Québec a, et j'ai beaucoup appris de ce côté-là, mais moi aussi, cette résilience culturelle, j'y ai droit en tant qu'immigrant. » (PN11)

Translation (English):

“A: You know what I answer now when people ask me, “You haven’t lost your accent?” […] I say: “Well, I also have the right to remember.”
Q: In reference to Québec’s motto? Is that it?
A: Well, yes, exactly. I remember and I admire the cultural resilience that Québec has, and I’ve learned a lot from that, but I also have the right to that cultural resilience as an immigrant.” (PN11)

Quote N121

Original (French):

« On est colonisés par les Québécois ici. Ils débarquent, en fait, c'est un peu les poupées russes, mais les Québécois font à la francophonie canadienne ce qu'ils reprochent aux Français de France de faire à la francophonie, c'est-à-dire se croire comme la norme ou l’étalon or. […] Ils me regardent de haut parce que je suis un Français et que ça s'entend. Et même si […] je suis plus Franco-Ontarien qu’eux, quelque part, j'ai l'impression qu'ils se pensent plus légitimes que moi. » (PN11)

Translation (English):

“We are colonized by the Québécois here. They show up, and it’s a bit like Russian dolls, but the Québécois do to the Canadian Francophonie what they criticize the French from France for doing to Francophonie, that is, thinking of themselves as the norm or the gold standard. […] They look down on me because I’m French, and it’s audible. And even though […] I’m more Franco-Ontarian than they are, somehow, I feel like they consider themselves more legitimate than I am.” (PN11)

Quote N122

Original (French):

« Ça m'a permis de savoir ce que je voulais et ce que je ne voulais pas. Beaucoup d'immigrants décident ou d'aller à l'est ou d'aller à l'ouest, c'est-à-dire que je vois beaucoup [d'immigrants] surtout ceux qui sont au Québec, qui pensent que l'intégration, c'est ressembler à l'autre. Moi je pense pas. L'intégration, c'est pouvoir continuer son chemin et avoir les valeurs similaires à celles des autres, mais qui sont des valeurs nobles. Tant qu'elles sont nobles, la route est ouverte. » (PN13)

Translation (English):

“It allowed me to know what I wanted and what I didn’t want. Many immigrants decide to go east or west, that is, I see a lot [of immigrants], especially those in Quebec, who think that integration means looking like everyone else. I don’t think so. Integration is being able to continue on your own path while sharing values similar to others, as long as those values are noble. As long as they are noble, the path is open.” (PN13)

Quote N123

Original (French):

« Quand je remonte à ce processus d'identifier qui j'étais, de vouloir garder mon accent […], ici, je suis le Français de France, là-bas, je suis le Canadien, et entre les deux, je me suis dit : “Mais qui suis-je ?” C'est pour ça que j'ai essayé de trouver une identité sans passeport. » (PN11)

Translation (English):

“When I look back at this process of identifying who I was, of wanting to keep my accent […] here, I’m the French from France, over there, I’m the Canadian, and in between, I asked myself, ‘But who am I?’ That’s why I tried to find a passportless identity.” (PN11)

Quote N124

Original (French):

« Au 21e siècle, j’espère qu'on va accepter l'idée qu'on peut être plusieurs choses à la fois. C'était un grand défi pour moi parce que, depuis tout petit, étant Rwandais mais ne pouvant pas vivre au Rwanda, j'ai dû penser à la question de l'identité très jeune. […] Je dirais que je m'identifie aux trois nations, la nation rwandaise, la nation africaine et la nation canadienne. Et quand on lit mes articles […] on a l'impression qu'on est en face de quelqu'un qui a trois nationalités. Et je ne pense pas qu'au 21^{e} siècle, avec tous les transferts de population sur les continents, je ne pense pas qu'on puisse avoir une idée uniforme de notre identité. Je pense que c'est une erreur. Si on fait ça, ce n'est pas purement folklorique, c'est la réalité. On est tout ça en même temps. Et on peut cohabiter, ça peut cohabiter tout ça, c'est clair. » (PN13)

Translation (English):

“In the 21st century, I hope that people will accept the idea that one can be several things at once. It was a major challenge for me because, since I was very young, being Rwandan but not able to live in Rwanda, I had to think about the question of identity very early. […] I would say that I identify with three nations: the Rwandan nation, the African nation, and the Canadian nation. And when one reads my articles […], one has the impression of facing someone who has three nationalities. And I do not think that in the 21st century, with all the population movements across continents, one can have a uniform idea of one’s identity. I think this is a mistake. If one does that, it is not purely folkloric; it is reality. We are all of that at the same time. And it can coexist, all of that can coexist, clearly.” (PN13)

Quote N125

Original (French):

« J'ai réussi à en faire une victoire, si vous voulez. Ça aurait pu être un échec parce que je connais des gens qui ont souffert dans leur chair. Voilà, pour différentes raisons, parce que ce n'était pas

facile. [Être] un journaliste, c'est jamais tout à fait facile, mais c'est qu'il y avait ces éléments de jugement. On était quand même jugés s'il faut dire, vu que notre produit on doit le lire au grand public, on est jugé, on est jugé sur la forme, le fond. » (PN13)

Translation (English):

"I managed to turn it into a victory, if you will. It could have been a failure because I know people who have suffered physically. That's for various reasons, because it wasn't easy. [Being] a journalist is never entirely easy, but there were these elements of judgment. We were still judged, so to speak, since our work has to be read by the general public, we are judged, we are judged on both form and content." (PN13)

Quote N126

Original (French):

« J'ai un peu l'impression d'avoir survécu à quelque chose. Oui, j'ai survécu. Et le fait qu'ils me tendent le micro est un luxe. Je ne suis plus là à essayer de chercher la nouvelle. Je suis la nouvelle. Donc je suis passé de l'autre côté du miroir, donc pour moi, je vois ça comme une victoire et c'est un baume au cœur. » (PN13)

Translation (English):

"I kind of feel like I survived something. Yes, I survived. And the fact that they hand me the microphone is a luxury. I'm no longer there trying to find the news. I am the news. So I've crossed to the other side of the mirror, and for me, I see that as a victory and it's a balm for the heart." (PN13)

Quote N127

Original (French):

« Les gens comme moi, je me suis pas vu dans les médias pendant toute mon enfance, pendant mes 20 premières années de ma vie, fait que ça a quand même été tout un défi de me lancer là-dedans, puis même de me faire dire que j'allais pas réussir. Donc pourquoi est-ce qu'on n'en voit pas plus de gens comme moi ? Ben parce qu'on s'est pas vus. » (PN4)

Translation (English):

"People like me, I didn't see myself in the media throughout my childhood, during the first 20 years of my life—so it was quite a challenge to get into that world, and even to be told that I wasn't going to succeed. So why don't we see more people like me? Well, because we didn't see ourselves." (PN4)

Quote N128

Original (French):

« Je crois qu'il y a une petite ouverture, mais c'est sûrement qu'il y a un manque de sensibilisation encore. Ça irait de pair avec le fait de dire : "Ben en fait c'est une discrimination comme une autre, l'accent." Et donc autant on trouve ça inacceptable maintenant de dire : "Ah bah je l'ai pas prise parce qu'elle a l'air un peu trop arabe." Bon bah de dire à quelqu'un : "Je te prends pas parce que t'as un peu un trop un accent [régional], ou tu dis un peu trop 'du coup,' » bah c'est aussi

discriminatoire. Alors tu sais, encore une fois, je le mets pas sur la même gravité. C'est pas la même échelle de gravité, mais ça relève des mêmes biais. » (PN9)

Translation (English):

"I think there is a small opening, but it's surely because there is still a lack of awareness. This would go hand in hand with saying, 'Well, actually, an accent is discrimination like any other.' And so, just as we now find it unacceptable to say, 'Oh, well, I didn't hire her because she looks a little too Arab,' well, to tell someone, 'I'm not hiring you because you have a bit of a [regional] accent, or you say 'so' too much,' that is also discriminatory. So, you know, again, I'm not putting it on the same level of severity. It's not the same scale of severity, but it stems from the same biases." (PN9)

Quote N129

Original (French):

« Je trouvais ça quand même très approprié parce que je trouve que je suis très privilégiée, parce que je suis blanche, française, je parle français, puis j'ai jamais subi de racisme dans ma vie, mais… Et je pense que j'ai eu un mini aperçu de ce que ça pourrait être quand, justement, j'entends certaines critiques, et cetera. Mais je veux pas non plus, tu sais, je peux pas me comparer à des personnes qui sont victimes de discrimination, là, fait que je peux imaginer que ceux qui sont français avec une autre couleur de peau et un autre accent, ce serait différent. » (PN12)

Translation (English):

"I still found it very appropriate because I think I am very privileged, since I am white, French, I speak French, and I have never experienced racism in my life, but… And I think I got a small glimpse of what it could be when, precisely, I hear certain criticisms, and so on. But I don't want to, you know, I can't compare myself to people who are victims of discrimination, so I can imagine that for those who are French with a different skin colour and a different accent, it would be different." (PN12)