

## **Le français CANADIEN: A Diasporic Approach to Affrication and Assibilation in Cajun French**

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Although quite often neglected and ignored in the academic setting, Cajun French is a rich dialect that speaks to the multicultural nature of the French language as a whole. Despite a steady decline in speakers of Cajun French since the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century, there is still much to be learned from those who continue to use this language as a vital means of communication. Furthermore, its local influence and importance on the culture and history of Louisiana is owed, at least in part, to its connection with the varieties of French spoken in much of Eastern Canada, particularly in Quebec and the Maritime provinces.

From a linguistically diasporic viewpoint, I plan to explore the importance of this connection with Canada within the realm of the Cajun French phonological system. More specifically, I will present my research detailing the prominence of the phonological features of assibilation and affrication within the speech of Cajun men in four specific speech communities in Louisiana. My research not only represents a multi-Parish view of the variation of Cajun French, but I will also include a cross-generational approach that explores the nuances of language shift/change that is in the midst of occurring here despite the decline of the dialect in recent times. Furthermore, these phonological features, which are extensions of the Canadian dialects, help to better link Louisiana's unique francophone heritage and language with that of Canada's. Such a conclusion is important to the overall credibility and acceptance of Cajun French as a viable and sustainable dialect worthy of being continually preserved here in Louisiana. It is thus my hope that this linguistic research will help promote the importance of French in Louisiana by relating it to other successfully maintained varieties of North American French.