

*La Francophonie de l'Acadie: Teaching French and its Value as
Commodity and Marker of Identity in an Acadian School*

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Abstract

This study examines how teachers and administrators at École acadienne de Pomquet, located in the small Acadian community of Pomquet, Nova Scotia, understand the value of teaching the French language. It argues that teachers and administrators consider French valuable as a commodity and as a marker of identity. The research methodologies used for this study included participant observation during a Service Learning Program placement, semi-structured focus groups and individual interviews with teachers and administrators at the school. Research findings were analysed using Pierre Bourdieu's and Monica Heller's theories of language commodification and social power. The study concluded that the cultural and economic values of the French language – which inevitably also include the social and political values of the language – are intimately and inseparably linked and relevant. School teachers and administrators see French as a commodity, since speakers can gain economic benefits by selling their fluency. They also consider French a marker of Francophone and Acadian community identity and, in Nova Scotia where being fluent in French means being a bilingual, as a marker of Canadian national identity.

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Part 1:

French Language in an Acadian School

Chapter 1:

Introduction

One brisk Wednesday morning, at 7 AM, a school bus pulled up to the curb of a street near my home to pick me up. I was on my way to the nearby Acadian Francophone school, *École acadienne de Pomquet*, to do my weekly three hours of volunteer work as part of a university Service Learning program. The school bus was my only means of transportation. The bus began to fill up, and it got much louder. There were numerous avid conversations being shouted over the rumblings of the bus by the elementary-aged students with whom I was seated. They spoke about video games and trips to a swimming pool. They teased each other. They shared someone's new toy. A young boy of first or second grade sat with me in the front seat. He could not sit still and continuously stood in his seat to interact with his peers. The bus driver would reprimand the boy and tell him to "sit down," and he would do just that. A few minutes later, the cycle would start again. Every time he stood with his backpack partially opened, a book entitled 1000 English Words would come perilously close to falling to the floor.

"Clang, clang, rattle-bing-bang, gonna make my noise all day:" these are the lyrics of song in a beloved Robert Munsch book which describe the morning school bus rides perfectly (1985). This song, two weeks beforehand, had been sung proudly, loudly and repeatedly by a young boy sitting two seats behind me. These rides were always a cacophony of noise. The ruckus was also almost always in English. Although they rode on a bus bought by the Francophone school board of Nova Scotia and were almost all of Acadian heritage, the children appeared to feel more at ease conversing in English than in French. Speaking English was the common denominator shared by all and reinforced by a predominantly Anglophone province, country and popular culture.

The social construction of the experience of reality is greatly influenced by the symbolism of language (Bourdieu 1977: 646, 648-649; Lucy 1997: 291-292, 294). Language's many symbolic meanings and its structural forms can change over time, whether these meanings and forms are social, cultural, political or economic (Bourdieu 1977: 646, 648; Perry 2003: 119). Through its symbolic meanings, language holds power (Bourdieu 1977: 646, 648-649). Certain languages, or forms of languages, have power over others (Bourdieu 1977: 652). A language user can manipulate situations within a particular social, cultural, political or economic setting when the language he or she considers his or her own is the standard (Bourdieu 1977: 649, 654-655). Beginning with these ideas, my goal is to study the value accorded to French language use in an Acadian school located in a sea of Anglophone speakers. I am interested in examining the varying cultural, social and economic values of the French language in Canada's bilingual society. I am particularly curious about documenting and interrogating through this case study the situation of Canadian French linguistic minorities and their struggles with language maintenance and loss.

My research focuses on the Francophone school of *École acadienne de Pomquet* located in Pomquet, Nova Scotia. The primary question I pose is: "Do the teachers and administrators at *École acadienne de Pomquet* believe that speaking, reading and writing in French is important because it gives students economic benefits or because it is part of an Acadian identity?" Consequently, I also ask how the relationship between French language and Acadian identity is defined in relation to the answer to the first question. I want to analyse how teachers and administrators at the school understand the dynamic interplay of values surrounding the French language.

Specifically, this research examines the value teachers and administrators give to French

as a commodity in a bilingual society where speaking French leads to economic benefits in the workplace compared to the value they give to French as a marker of identity for Acadian Francophone students. It also documents teachers' and administrators' impressions of the value students and parents give to learning French as a primary language at school and, in the case of some students, at home. Finally, it examines the individual choices teachers and administrators make about the value of learning French when designing the educational programs and classes delivered at the school.

Acadian communities in Nova Scotia have long fought for the preservation and intergenerational transmission of the French language and other Acadian cultural knowledge and practices in public schools across the province (Ingold 2003: 332). When living in an environment where English is the primary language spoken by a large majority of the population, the preservation of language and culture is an unavoidable obstacle (Heller 1996: 141). The existence of such a strenuous and long-fought struggle demonstrates the value that Acadian communities and some of the people living in them give to speaking French. I argue that, although individuals vary in the value they attribute to the French language either as an identity marker or as a commodity or as both, many teachers and administrators working at the Acadian school I studied value the language as an identity marker and for its economic worth. They do not perceive these two values as either separate or conflicting. Similarly, they see Acadian and Francophone identities as integrated rather than separate or conflicting. In other words, the economic value of the French language is becoming part of Acadian identity. I argue, therefore, that by finding economic value in the French language which is already intimately and inevitably tied to Acadian identity, the school's personnel have come to value Acadian identity for its ties to a language which benefits them and their students both culturally and economically.

My experience with the teachers and administrators of *École acadienne de Pomquet* has demonstrated that, for them, the economic and cultural values of French are complementary. Teachers and administrators, furthermore, believe that, like them, the parents of the students emphasize the value of French as a commodity and as an identity marker. On the other hand, according to my study participants, a significant number of students express vague, uncertain, and at times negative opinions about the value of French although, for some, this changes once they graduate. This study shows, furthermore, that one of the main goals of the school's teachers and administrators is to instil values and raise awareness of both the cultural and economic value and power French.

In support of my argument, this paper will first give an account of the context of French language education in Nova Scotia and in Pomquet. The historical and present contexts are fundamental in understanding the diachronic development of the situation in which values of French language are formed. I will then proceed with the theoretical perspective and methodology framing my study. Lastly, in the final chapters, I will address my conclusions concerning the ideas of French language as commodity and marker of identity at *École acadienne de Pomquet*.

Chapter 2:

Acadie and French Language Education

Acadian French and Québécois French are the two primary varieties of French which exist in Canada, although recent immigration has added several new Francophone linguistic variations.¹ The style known as Acadian French results from various historical, political and social factors. Québécois French differs from Acadian French because the original French colonialists who constitute each group came from different periods of settlement and also came from different regions of France. Roughly half of the Acadian population originates from the West of France. The dialect of Acadian French is itself diverse because it changes per locality; the Acadian population is spread out across Nova Scotia, Québec, Maine, Louisiana, France, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. The immersion of Francophone Acadian populations into Anglophone communities, unfortunately, has led to the assimilation of the French speakers into the majority Anglophone linguistic community. Outside of New Brunswick and other communities with a large population of Francophones, French language maintenance has been and continues to be greatly challenged. Since there is a social, cultural and economic value of the French language, however, the language has not been completely extinguished and is on its way towards revival.

The history of Acadia is intimately tied to the value of French language as part of an ethnic identity and as part of Acadian education. Early *Acadie*, or Acadia, became a distinct nation after spending years as a collection of French colonies.² In the 15th and 16th centuries, French fishermen were fishing along the coasts of Cape Breton and Newfoundland. The growing

¹ The information in this paragraph derives from Yves Cormier. 1999. **Dictionnaire du français acadien**. Saint-Laurent, Québec : Fides..

² The information in the following three paragraphs derives from Sally Ross and J. Alphonse Deveau. 1995. **Les Acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse : hier et aujourd'hui**. Moncton, N.-B. : Éditions d'Acadie.

cod industry in France and the promise of wealth eventually lead to the desire to colonize the Atlantic region; the area is known today as the Maritimes. It is an area once solely occupied by the Mi'kmaq and Maliseet. The first colonization attempt occurred in 1604 and led to the creation of "*la Cadie*" or "*l'Acadie*." Years later, after the British established colonies in the same region and France formed new settlements, conflict ensued and Acadia would change jurisdictions at least seven times before 1710 since it was a pawn in the political war between Britain and France.

In 1713, the Treaty of Utrecht gave Acadia to England and renamed it Nova Scotia. Île Saint-Jean, known as Prince Edward Island today, and Île Royale, known as Cape Breton Island today, remained French. The Acadian population grew over the next forty years. In 1749, the British founded Halifax, and from then on continued their attempt to take control of Nova Scotia. They did not know what to do with the population of Acadians within their territory as they did not trust them. The Acadians' alliances with the Mi'kmaq and the French colony of Île Royale made Britain suspicious. The Acadians declared themselves as a neutral party wishing to co-exist peacefully with both France and England; this made them distinct from either country. By 1755, when Britain's suspicion about Acadian loyalty to France began to escalate, Chief Belcher made the decision to have the Acadians deported on behalf of England. Over the next few years, thousands of Acadian families were shipped off to Anglo-American colonies, Louisiana and France. Many Acadians returned; 70% of the Acadian population existing at the beginning of the 19th century resided in the Maritimes.

The village of Pomquet was colonized by Acadians in 1772 when Acadian families returned to Nova Scotia with Jersey Island merchants. Among the family names which appeared in Pomquet were Broussard, Duon, Doiron, Lamarre, Vincent, Landry, Boudrot, and Melanson.

Economic and cultural exchanges were made between these families and the settlements of Chéticamp, on the northeast coast of Cape Breton Island, and Arichat, reached by traveling down the Nova Scotia coast and then through the Canso strait by boat. As the nearest Acadian villages in Antigonish County – Tracadie and Havre Boucher – were located at a lengthy distance from Pomquet at the time, many Acadians were quickly assimilated into the culture of the English majority. The villagers of Pomquet were also subjected to many acts of discrimination such as having to enter a presbytery from a kitchen door while Anglophones could enter from the front door. Despite these obstacles, over the past several decades, Pomquet has seen an Acadian cultural revival. By 1995, Pomquet organized and hosted a winter carnival to celebrate their heritage and also had one of seven regional bureaus of the *Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse* present in the area.

The education of Acadians in Nova Scotia, in its beginnings, was primarily in English. Many Acadians had to fight for the right to obtain their own French language educational institutions (Mackey 1995: 224). As New Brunswick has always had a much larger population of Acadians than other provinces, it was much easier for the Acadian people of that province to win these battles (Mackey 1995: 224-225). In Nova Scotia, as early as 1766, Acadians were forbidden to construct Francophone Catholic schools to oppose the Protestant schools of the Anglophones (Ross 2001: 13). The Acadians obtained the right to build by 1786, but the schools were built very slowly as Acadians already had a lot to rebuild after the Deportation (Ross 2001: 13). A lack of educated elite, the presence of poverty and illiteracy and the fact that Acadians were often left outside of Nova Scotian socio-political structures kept schools from being built until between 1820 and 1830 (Ross 2001: 16). Missionary priests, however, were educating children when they could find the time to teach (Ross 2001: 17). The Free School Act of 1864

implemented by Charles Tupper instigated the construction of many small schools in Nova Scotia and changed public education: schools had to be free and secular (Ross 2001: 45-46). The consequential closure of Francophone Catholic schools caused an uproar in Acadian communities (Ross 2001: 46-48). A period of resistance and fighting for the right to establish French schools began soon afterwards (Ross 2001: 63-67). Although the new laws forbade the continuance of these schools, Acadian public school teachers illegally assured the survival of French language in Acadian communities (Sweet 2005: iv).

In 1826, a private convent school of the Trappistine sisters was established in Pomquet (Sweet 2005: 242). According to a letter written by Father Antoine Manseau, however, there was also a private Francophone Catholic school established in Pomquet in 1817 as well as in Havre-Boucher and Tracadie (Sweet 2005: 234). As stated in the Antigonish County Educational Reports, the Tracadie settlement was the first to obtain a public school in 1828 (Ross 2001: 35). The teacher was Francophone and was teaching 25 students (Ross 2001: 35). It was only in December of 1829 that a public school with 21 students would also be established in Pomquet (Sweet 2005: 243). At the time, the village had the most “homogenous Francophone population” in Antigonish County (Sweet 2005: 243). As this was the case in Pomquet for many years, French was used as the language of instruction by the teacher with the students on a daily basis (Sweet 2005: 179). After the previously mentioned Act of 1864, the Acadians in Pomquet could illegally continue sustaining French language education because of the prevalence of French language in the community (Sweet 2005: 196). Today, Pomquet is the only community in the area which has managed to maintain its heritage and language (Sweet 2005: 233-234).

Chapter 3 :

École acadienne de Pomquet and the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial

The host organization to which I volunteered my services is a small Francophone Acadian grade school named *École acadienne de Pomquet* (Acadian School of Pomquet). It is located in a small Acadian village outside of the town of Antigonish and within the Antigonish County of Nova Scotia. There are 242 students presently enrolled in the school. From preschool to the sixth grade, there are 167 students and there are 75 students from the seventh to the twelfth grade. Within the student population, approximately 95% of those enrolled identified themselves at the time of registration as of Acadian descent. Besides the few members of the school administration present in the school, there are at least 17 teachers involved in the education of the youth (ÉAP 2011). The *Conseil scolaire acadien provincial* (CSAP) is the Acadian and French provincial school board of Nova Scotia which maintains the quality of education in the Pomquet school as well as in the 19 other Francophone schools across the province (2011).

The CSAP was formed in 1996 (2011). It was created as an official means of expressing the right to conserve the existence and value of French language as a primary language in Nova Scotia through the establishment of an Acadian and Francophone educational system (CSAP 2011). An important feature of this conservation – essentially the school board’s mission and vision – is the development and maintenance of Acadian and Francophone culture (CSAP 2011). Knowledge of the Acadian and Francophone culture given to the students in contemporary context is necessary to promote value of the culture (CSAP 2011). Consequently, the CSAP hopes to help Francophone and Acadian communities develop in general (CSAP 2011).

The CSAP maintains a variety of specific objectives, values and programs. Along with a set of Objectives for 2010 to 2014, the CSAP provides the “*Grandir en français – accueil et*

francisation/Growing up in French – Reception and Frenchifying” program established in 2009; its focus is the preservation of French language at an early age (CSAP 2011). The program starts at the age of four (CSAP 2011). The school board also focuses upon retaining students within the Francophone and Acadian system and attracting new staff members (CSAP 2011).

Language and culture are noted throughout the entire CSAP website both as separately and inseparably relevant (2011). They each receive their own objective and value under the CSAP’s 2010-2014 Objectives:

Objectif 1: Valoriser la qualité et l’utilisation de la langue française dans les écoles du Conseil scolaire acadien provincial/ Objective 1: Give value to the quality and use of the French language in the schools of the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial.

[...]

Objectif 5 : Transmettre la connaissance de la culture des Acadiens et autres francophones et contribuer à accroître sa vitalité et ses valeurs communautaires, le tout dans un contexte contemporain/Objective 5: Transmit knowledge of the culture of the Acadians and other francophones and contribute to the increase of its vitality and community values, all in a contemporary context. (2011)

Language and culture are nevertheless explained as being both part of an identity – a linguistic and cultural identity – in a strategy of *Objectif 1/Objective 1*:

2. Mobiliser l’apprenant à vouloir améliorer la place du français dans son école afin de développer et d’affirmer son identité acadienne et francophone/ 2. Mobilize the learner to want to improve the place of French in his or her school so as to develop and maintain his or her Acadian and Francophone identity. (CSAP 2011)

The close relationship between language and identity is also expressed in the school board’s mission:

Le Conseil scolaire acadien provincial de Nouvelle-Écosse offre aux personnes d’origine acadienne et aux personnes francophones une éducation de première qualité en français langue première, incluant l’enseignement de l’anglais langue première, en tenant compte de l’identité et de la culture acadienne en Nouvelle Écosse/ The Conseil scolaire acadien provincial of Nova Scotia offers a high quality primary language French education to persons of Acadian origin and to Francophone persons, including the teaching of English as a primary language, while also taking Acadian culture and identity in Nova Scotia into account. (CSAP 2011)

The mission clearly demonstrates the complexity of French language education in these schools (CSAP 2011). The first objective – as well as the school board’s mission and vision – addresses language as a skill and competence (CSAP 2011). Language is to be used in a high quality and as a primary language alongside with English as a second primary language (CSAP 2011). The students are to develop a level of competency in both the French and English language (CSAP 2011). The recognition of English in the vision indicates that bilingualism is also important to the school board:

Le Conseil scolaire acadien provincial vise à offrir des services au plus grand nombre d'élèves admissibles et vise à assurer le développement de chaque élève, afin de former des citoyennes et citoyens fiers et engagés envers la langue française, leur culture et leur communauté, ayant le sens des responsabilités, compétents dans les deux langues officielles du pays et ouverts sur le monde./ The Conseil scolaire acadien provincial aims to offer services to the largest number of admissible students and aims to assure the development of each student, so as to form citizens who are proud and engaged toward the French language, their culture and their community, having a sense of the responsibilities, competent in the two official language of the country and open to the world. (CSAP 2011)

Schools such as École acadienne de Pomquet do not permit just any child to register as a student (CSAP 2011). According to the CSAP’s admission criteria, students who may enrol in the school are those who commit to learning French as a primary rather than as a second language (2011). Under a section entitled “*Pourquoi le Conseil scolaire acadien provincial utilise-t-il des critères d’admission?* /Why does the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial use admission criteria?,” the school board states that it limits the schools to Francophone students as the introduction of the Anglophone majority into any CSAP school to learn French as a second language could lead to the linguistic assimilation of a generation of Francophones:

Le mandat du CSAP est d'offrir une éducation de qualité en français langue première. Le CSAP assure ce mandat dans une vingtaine d'écoles sous sa juridiction en Nouvelle-Écosse. Les conseils scolaires anglophones quant à eux ont pour mandat d'assurer une éducation en anglais et d'offrir les cours d'immersion à ceux qui veulent acquérir ou parfaire leur français. La Charte canadienne des droits et des libertés prévoit que, dans

une province, les groupes minoritaires qui parlent l'une des deux langues officielles du Canada ont droit à l'éducation dans leur langue. Pour ces minorités, cela n'est pas un privilège mais bien un droit. Les écoles des groupes minoritaires n'offrent pas une programmation universelle. Cela pourrait faire en sorte que certaines écoles ayant un mandat d'éducation en français se retrouvent avec une grande majorité d'élèves anglophones ne parlant pas français, et mener tout droit à l'assimilation des francophones. /The CSAP's mandate is to offer a quality education of French as a primary language. The CSAP guarantees this mandate in the about twenty schools under its jurisdiction in Nova Scotia. As for the Anglophone school boards, they have a mandate which guarantees an education in English and offers immersion courses to those who want to acquire or perfect their French. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms foresees that, in a province, the minority groups who speak one of the two official languages of Canada have the right to education in their language. For these minorities, it is not a privilege but a right. The schools of these minority groups do not offer universal programming since this could result in certain schools with a French education mandate finding themselves with a large majority of Anglophone students who do not speak French and this could lead straight to the assimilation of Francophones. (CSAP 2011)

The CSAP, which includes École acadienne de Pomquet, bases its access limitations on Article 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms of 1982 which states that Canadian children living as a French or English linguistic minority have the right to speak the same primary language as their parents and have the right to the same publicly-funded language instruction in Canada that their parents received in their parents' language (CSAP 2011, Department of Justice Canada 2011). In Article 23 – entitled “Minority Language Educational Rights” – it states the following:

(1) Citizens of Canada

(a) whose first language learned and still understood is that of the English or French linguistic minority population of the province in which they reside, or

(b) who have received their primary school instruction in Canada in English or French and reside in a province where the language in which they received that instruction is the language of the English or French linguistic minority population of the province, have the right to have their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in that language in that province.

(2) Citizens of Canada of whom any child has received or is receiving primary or secondary school instruction in English or French in Canada, have the right to have all their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in the same language.

(3) The right of citizens of Canada under subsections (1) and (2) to have their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in the language of the English or French linguistic minority population of a province

(a) applies wherever in the province the number of children of citizens who have such a right is sufficient to warrant the provision to them out of public funds of minority language instruction; and

(b) includes, where the number of those children so warrants, the right to have them receive that instruction in minority language educational facilities provided out of public funds. (Department of Justice Canada 2011)

The CSAP, a committee and the Nova Scotia Minister of Education, however, have expanded this list of criteria to include a wider range of Francophone or potentially French-speaking students (2011). As the Charter does not address the right to language instruction for children of parents who should have had the right to have that same language instruction available to them as well, the CSAP have included the children who have at least one live or dead grandparent who could speak in French (2011). The Francophone schools also allow non-Francophone children who are living with a Francophone Canadian to be enrolled in the schools as they have the right to have the children under their care taught in the French language (CSAP 2011). The international children who speak French fluently also have a right to be enrolled in the schools (CSAP 2011). It is thought that the children's acceptance to the school is justified as long as French is being promoted in these children's homes (CSAP 2011). Interestingly, the group who made these changes have done so to perpetuate French language and Acadian culture (CSAP 2011). All of this information is present on the CSAP's website under the "*Pourquoi le Conseil scolaire acadien provincial utilise-t-il des critères d'admission? /Why does the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial use admission criteria?*" section:

C'est donc pour préserver la langue française et la culture acadienne que le CSAP a récemment adopté les critères d'admission qui entreront en vigueur le 1er avril 2000 [...] le CSAP pourra aussi admettre, sur recommandation du comité d'admission local, des enfants de l'une des catégories suivantes :/ It is thus to preserve the French language and

Acadian culture that the CSAP has recently adopted the admission criteria which will come into effect on the 1st of April 2000 [...] the CSAP will also be able to admit, by recommendation of a local admission committee, children from one of the following categories:

1. *Enfant de parents qui ne sont pas citoyens canadiens, qui parle, lit et écrit le français selon les exigences de son niveau scolaire et qui vit dans un foyer où l'on parle français (par exemple, des gens de la Belgique qui auraient été refusés auparavant).* / Child of parents who are not Canadian citizens, who speaks, reads and writes French according to the requirements of his or her school grade and who lives in a home where he or she is spoken to in French (for example, people from Belgium would have been refused before).
2. *Élève qui participe à un programme d'échange international et qui parle, lit et écrit le français selon les exigences de son niveau scolaire.* / Student who is participating in an international exchange program and who speaks, reads and writes French according to the requirements of his or her school grade.
3. *Enfant d'un parent biologique non-ayant droit vivant avec un citoyen canadien ayant droit.* / Child of a biological parent without a minority language right who is living with a Canadian citizen who has that right.
4. *Enfant de parents citoyens canadiens dont l'un des grands-parents parle français (ou le parlait de son vivant), à condition que les parents s'engagent à promouvoir activement la langue française tout au long de la scolarité de l'enfant.* / Child of parents who are Canadian citizens and has at least one grandparent who speaks French (or spoke it while living), as long as the parents engage in actively promoting the French language all along the child's schooling. (2011)

In the case of École acadienne de Pomquet, as a tool for recruitment, a child may enter the preschool if he or she has at least one great-grandparent who can be identified as Francophone. Otherwise, if the child is to enter kindergarten without entering preschool first, the Francophone in the child's family cannot be more distant in kin relationship than a grandparent, that is, a parent's parent. As long as the Acadian and Francophone atmosphere of the school is not harmed, these specific persons are allowed to become students at schools such as École acadienne de Pomquet (CSAP 2011). Be that as it may, these rules and regulations now executed in the school of Pomquet did not always exist (ÉAP 2011). Before the school became an official Francophone and Acadian school, the Francophone and Acadian atmosphere was greatly challenged (ÉAP 2011).

The building in which École acadienne de Pomquet is housed was constructed in 2000 (ÉAP 2011). This building was designed to accommodate students from Primary-12. A small preschool was also built but did not operate until later. In the early 1990s the public school in Pomquet was being run as a designated French immersion school within the Anglophone Antigonish District School Board. The rationale of this was that immersion education would provide the local Acadian community with some education in French. The old school building only had enough space for students until they reached the sixth grade. Students in Grades 7-12 attended Anglophone schools in the area. Most high school students who had attended the primary school in Pomquet went to the Dr. J H Gillis High School in Antigonish town, and certain students went to high school at Antigonish East High School. The school could not obtain the funds required to build a high school or to hire the necessary teachers. Once leaving the small immersion school in Pomquet, the students would be placed in a French immersion program at the Anglophone schools – that is, if they could manage to get signed up in time. Parents would line up for hours as there were a limited number of children of any linguistic background who could be part of the program. At this time, French language was a privilege and not a right of particular students.

The battle for the right to have a Francophone elementary and high school as opposed to an immersion version became much more fervent and subsequently more effective in 1992. Although the desires for a Francophone school started forming in the 1980s under the leadership of parents Lorraine and Mike Fennell, the pinnacle of the force of the organization and confrontation took place in 1992 (Ross 2001: 131-132). The group of parents lead by the Fennells did not succeed in getting a Francophone school because the overseeing school board at the time refused to recommend the recognition of an Acadian school to the Minister of Education

(Ross 2001: 131-132). The Mahé et al. versus Alberta ruling which occurred in the Supreme Court on the 15th of March, 1990, two years prior to the confrontation in Nova Scotia, served to enliven the battle as it showed that having a Francophone school in a bilingual country was not a privilege but a right (Ross 2001: 149). The presiding judge concluded that the number of students in the school and the number of Francophones in the community did not matter, when it came to deciding which communities should have access to a Francophone school. The government of Nova Scotia followed the flux of change lead by the Alberta government and adopted a similar view in July of 1992 (Ross 2001: 149). Previously, the Nova Scotia government's continuous refusal to establish a new school was consistently based on numbers: there simply were not enough 'French' individuals in the community to make a Francophone community and to have a school.

There were many meetings and discussions about a generation of parents having been immersed into Anglophone culture and the possibility of future generations being immersed as well (ÉAP 2011). The fear was that the future generation, like their parents, would lose the opportunity to live in French (ÉAP 2011). A group of parents and teachers gathered to confront the Conservative Nova Scotia government to gain the right to manage the business and finances of their own educational system (ÉAP 2011). Guy LeBlanc, a member of the provincial government and who had formerly been the Minister of Education and Acadian Affairs in Nova Scotia at the time, would push for the establishment of the Acadian school and later also for the foundation of the CSAP (EAP 2011). Being the Minister of Acadian Affairs, LeBlanc managed everything related to Acadian culture, development of Acadian communities, and Acadian and Francophone education. Consequently, immense pressure was placed on the Nova Scotia government. The conjunction, in 1992, of the Alberta ruling, the organized group and the

presence of a strong voice advocating for Acadian rights in government resulted in the community gaining the right to have a Francophone school with an Acadian status (ÉAP 2011). It can be assumed that the Acadian status also meant a Francophone status as the school calls itself Francophone and welcomes both Francophones and Acadians (ÉAP 2011). This right was nevertheless met with contention. Before the existence of the above-mentioned admission restrictions based upon the CSAP's use of the 1982 Charter, the Anglophone parents who had children enrolled at the previously French immersion school were afraid that their children would lose their English language as the school was now conducted completely in French.

After this long struggle, the battle was still not yet over. The movement of parents and teachers had to meet with the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial to get the actual school built. They had to battle within the CSAP and the provincial government to make the school in Pomquet a first priority for funding. The official funding would reinforce the justification for the existence of a Francophone Acadian school in Pomquet. It would subsequently reinforce the idea that the maintenance of French language and Acadian culture are deemed as officially important in mainstream Canadian society. By using the term "officially," I am referring to the reinforcement of the authenticity of the French language and Acadian culture as social and economic capital for social and economic power in mainstream Canadian society. I will address this idea in the next chapter.

The school was initially set to be built sometime between 2004 and 2006; after much pushing, it was agreed that it would be built in 2000. The decision was made because it was apparent that Pomquet needed an actual physical school and not simply renovations. The seventh and eighth grade students were being housed in portable structures as the Strait Regional School Board would not house the CSAP high school students. The decision was also made because the

collection of parents and teachers had consulted a lawyer who helped them write a letter to the provincial government about filing a lawsuit since the government refused to fund the construction. The day that the group was supposed to sign a document stating that they were going to go to court for a ruling, the provincial government called and told them that it would give them the school if they would stop the ruling and the lawsuit. The legal process was then halted, and the provincial government as well as the federal government through the *Patrimoine Canadien* funded the construction of the school.

The new school building was constructed in 2002 and opened its doors to students in September of that year. The first graduating class received their diplomas in 2004. On average, since 2004, the school has had between 5 to 10 graduates. This year, the school will have 13 graduates – a large increase! Unfortunately, throughout these years, the majority of the students continued to leave after grade 6 as they had done in the past. This withdrawal occurred because it was then difficult to provide the necessary courses to graduate and pursue particular fields of study. The lack of courses was due to the lack of students and teachers. Furthermore, fewer extra-curricular activities such as sports and music were offered at the school compared to the local Anglophone schools. The Acadian Francophone school does, however, offer music, sports and other valuable programs such as the *Jeux d'Acadie/Acadia Games*. The latter consists of the meeting of Acadian schools across the Maritimes to compete in sporting events.

These Francophone extra-curricular activities are crucial for the maintenance of a lived Francophone experience for the students at École acadienne de Pomquet. The majority of these students do not live as Francophones at home. I personally witnessed the transition from hearing only English to hearing French when the children left the school bus and entered the school. It is far easier to speak English in a province so clearly dominated by an Anglophone community.

The children speak English outside of the school because their parents are part of a generation which understood English to be a more valuable skill. The parents consequently lost the French language as they did not learn French at school and learned very little French at home.

Francophone and Acadian identity in Nova Scotia was also viewed negatively for an extensive period of time, as exemplified by the discriminatory acts mentioned in Chapter 2. This makes it particularly difficult for teachers and administrators at the school in Pomquet today to enforce the use and value of French language when the children who should know French as a primary language have difficulty grasping it. These difficulties are further discussed in Chapter 7. In my experience of participant observation, I had to provide French words to the children on numerous occasions when they could not think of them. I often heard English conversations taking place among students in the hallways when students were not being closely monitored by teachers. The challenge of enforcing the use and value of French language is particularly poignant in Pomquet as it is an isolated and small community. The school cannot easily interact with Francophone CSAP schools which are primarily located in southern Nova Scotia. The community and school in Pomquet are thus much more susceptible to linguistic assimilation.

Part 2

The Value French Language

Unquestionably, the ultimate goal of any school is to have its students graduate. This is what students, parents, administrators and teachers strive to achieve. While writing the first draft of this thesis, however, I noticed something peculiar when re-visiting the school's website to confirm facts. The official vision of the school differed greatly from the vision of the *Foyer-École* or Home and School Association as stated in their constitution. The Foyer-*École* stated that its vision is to make sure that children of Francophone and Acadian parents receive a primary language French education so that the children can speak French successfully and can develop a sense of pride and belonging to the Acadian and Francophone community (L.R.N.-É. 1989: 9). The school's vision statement says that it hopes to have each student feel a sense of success and belonging throughout their education so that they each become a responsible and respectful bilingual citizen who is ready to contribute to the society of tomorrow (ÉAP 2011). These two different aspirations are quite remarkable, particularly considering that the Home and School Association relies upon the participation of parents **and** school staff (ÉAP 2011). It is also remarkable that the parents who do not speak French find value in it as a marker of Francophone and Acadian belonging while the vision of French-speaking teachers and administrators asserts the importance of bilingual citizenship. It is clear that the role of this Francophone Acadian school is about much more than matter-of-factly teaching various individuals to speak French. In this case, it is teaching an entire generation not only how they should communicate in French but also why they should do so.

A question I often posed at many of the interviews and focus groups addressed what the participants personally thought was the ideal objective of the school. After having pointed out a poster on a nearby wall, Marguerite, in Focus Group 1, told me that the poster articulated the school's vision. Marguerite was in a focus group that contained only teachers. Prompted by the

written vision statement, I asked Marguerite what the vision meant to her and she replied:

“C’est de devenir un citoyen bilingue, responsable, qui peut contribuer à la société... lorsqu’ils terminent la douzième année./ It is to become a responsible, bilingual citizen, who can contribute to the society... when they finish grade twelve.”

However, when I asked why it is important to learn to speak, write, and read in French, Marguerite declared that, according to her, French was an identity. She wanted her child to be able to learn the same thing. French could be beneficial everywhere and with everything, including identity.

The values of French language – that of French being an Acadian identity marker and that of it being a commodity – frequently coincide in this research. The values piggyback upon one another. This has made it quite difficult to distinguish any difference in how each value is presented and understood by the teachers and administrators, particularly for those who identify as Francophone or Acadian. The majority of the participants I have interviewed identified as Francophone, either Acadian or Québécois. Some even identified as Francophile; a person who has an affinity for France, its language, its culture, its people and its landscape (Le Dictionnaire 2011). No matter what their cultural and linguistic background, the teachers believe that opportunities exist for people who can communicate in French. For many, being Acadian means being Francophone, and being Francophone means being fortunate economically and socially. If one were to follow the logic behind these conclusions, being Acadian should also be linked to the idea of being fortunate economically and socially.

Chapter 4:

A Post-Structuralist Theoretical Perspective: The Symbolic Power of Language

The theoretical perspective which frames my study originates from Monica Heller's use of sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's notion of language being equivalent to social capital (Bourdieu 1977: 646, 648-649, Heller 2003: 474). In her theory, Heller explains that globalization has transformed the French spoken by various Canadian Francophone minorities into a valuable commodity (Heller 2003: 474). Conceptualizing language as a commodity means that it becomes a resource to be valued, devalued, bought, sold, gained and lost (Bourdieu 1977: 646, 648-649, 662; Heller 2003: 474). Bilingualism in Canada and multilingualism in the global world has turned particular linguistic skills into valuable commodities (Heller 2003: 473-474). Consequently, as I will soon further explain, individuals who have these skills have both economic and social power (Bourdieu 1977: 653; Heller 2010: 102-103, 108).

Although I agree with Heller that the French language is a commodity to sell in the Canadian economy, I do not believe that this commodification of language is separate from any commodification of authentic identity (Heller 2003: 474-475). Language is valuable and marketable as an authentic sign of a commodified national identity within the context of the bilingual Canadian state and society. Official bilingualism, the knowledge and use of both French and English, rather than monolingualism in either French or English, has been highly valued in Canada since the federal government began to counteract Québec nationalist aspirations to create a unilingual Francophone nation in Québec through official bilingualism policies (Heller 1996: 139-140). State endorsement of bilingualism made French an official language and made the mastery of French “what counts as competence, as authenticity” and as superior in worth in Canada (Heller 2003: 474). French became a language that is given an

official right to dominate as the norm, and to be universally produced and distributed by the ruling state (Bourdieu 2001: 70-71). When a language becomes highly valued, obviously the case with a language endorsed by the state as an “official” language, it becomes a form of capital. It becomes linguistic capital, a resource and a skill which can be measured (Bourdieu 1977: 646, 648-649, 662).

Language becomes a commodity when it is understood as being both a valuable technical skill and a desired authentic linguistic symbol in particular markets (Heller 2010: 102-103, 108). Language can be considered an authentic identity marker in that language is a sign which signifies regional, ethnic or cultural identity (Bourdieu 2001: 281-283). As French becomes a valuable competence that can be sold in Canada, it gives the user economic power since it is a form of economic capital (Heller 2003: 474; Heller 2010: 102-103, 108). By saying that French is economic capital, I mean that knowledge of French is a skill which can lead to economic benefits (Heller 2010: 102-103, 108). In Canada, for example, an individual may receive higher rates of pay for being able to provide bilingual services. In today’s global world, which includes Canada, employment opportunities are greater in the service industries than in physical and labour-intensive heavy industries and a person skilled in communicating with a wider range of individuals is therefore an economically valuable and powerful person (Heller 2003: 474, 478; Heller 2010: 102). Users of languages which have legitimacy are actively sought out. Language competence becomes a means of gaining economic power for its user, so the language can be said to have economic power and to be a form of linguistic capital and social capital (Heller 2003: 474; Heller 2010: 102-103, 108). French as linguistic and economic capital gives the user social capital; a resource with social benefits linked to social power (Heller 2003: 474). Social power allows an actor to manipulate social relations and interactions with other actors in

Canadian society to his or her advantage (Bourdieu 1977: 654-655, Heller 2003: 474-475).

Through these series of linkages, we can see the value in Canadian society of being a competent, fluent Francophone. The ability to speak, read and write French—linguistic capital—translates into linguistic power, economic power and social power.

Bourdieu sees schools as institutions that produce linguistic capital and reproduce legitimate linguistic capital users. His theory, therefore, is useful when analysing the value of language maintenance at École acadienne de Pomquet (1977: 651-652). Bourdieu argues that to defend a particular form of linguistic capital whose value and, consequently, whose existence are being threatened, the institution from which it comes, the education system, must be defended (2001: 87). The political and social conditions surrounding the production of producers and consumers of that linguistic capital must be defended to preserve the social value of these legitimate linguistic capital users (Bourdieu 2001: 87). In this case study, the preservation of the social value of French is linked to maintaining the language's economic **and** cultural value.

In this research project I emphasize both the economic and the cultural value of the French language. I do so because I want to see how these values—economic and cultural coexist. I have discussed the economic value of French in an officially bilingual Canada above. When thinking about the cultural value of French in Canada, I take into account new global and national spaces for social organization and the available supra-national private rights mentioned by Heller which allow minority schools, like the Ecole acadienne de Pomquet, to exist, produce and reproduce (Heller 1996: 142; Heller 2003: 473-474). Cultural and social organization in these globally and nationally acknowledged and supported Francophone spaces in an Anglophone-dominated world allow for cultural survival and reproduction in the face of assimilation (Heller 1996: 142). According to Heller, an identity marker as Francophone,

Anglophone or as bilingual is related to the setting and securing of group boundaries, in-group and inter-group interaction, and shared understanding of experience inside school and outside school (Heller 1984: 1). It is through social interactions and sharing understandings at a face-to-face level that French language and culture are established as a linguistic and cultural identity (Heller 1984: 2-3). Constitutionally defined linguistic rights in the 1982 Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms were crucial in protecting French linguistic minorities by making these boundaries clear at an official level. In this way, constitutional rights allowed for the perpetuation of the value of linguistic and subsequently of cultural identity markers within Francophone schools (CSAP 2010, Department of Justice Canada 2011). Nevertheless, as Heller tells us, these legally defined rights are only part of the picture. Constitutional rights built the school and helped define the policies of the CSAP, but it is in the day-to-day social interactions within the school—between teachers, administrators, students and parents, that members of the community either continue to sustain or allow to wither away their individual and collective linguistic and cultural identities.

Regarding cultural identity markers, it is also relevant to note that Bourdieu's post-structuralist model allows for an in-depth observation of the interactions between both structure and acting agents (2001: 187-188). I contend that this is relevant to the understanding of the value of French language as both an identity marker and as a commodity because the value of French language education in Acadian schools is not simply influenced by the dominant formalized symbols and rules legitimized by Canadian socio-political and economic structures (Heller 2003: 473-475, Perry 2003: 119). The value of French language is also influenced by the agency behind the everyday choices and actions of individuals and groups of individuals (Perry 2003: 119).

Chapter 5:

Methodology

This is a small scale research project. One reason I chose to do a small scale study was time and resource constraints; however, I also believe that everyday choices and actions at the micro level are the basis for the implementation, maintenance and change of values. My research project is focused upon an Acadian school in a particular community of Nova Scotia. As for more specific methodology, I conducted participant observation in a classroom setting, focus groups and individual interviews with teachers and members of the school's administration, and completed a literature review.

During the fall term, I primarily reviewed relevant literature and actively observed the interactions occurring within the school. As I volunteered my services to École acadienne de Pomquet through a Service Learning course (IDS 306: Service Learning: Theory and Practice), I was able to conduct participant observation in the school's environment while completing course-related tasks. The Service Learning program thus served as a point of entry to the rich social and cultural context of the school. The provision of services also allowed for the development of rapport with the teachers and students. I was placed within a Third Grade classroom as a teacher's aide. I helped the students with their oral, writing and reading language skills. My position at the school was accepted as I had spoken to the school's principal and the school board, received ethical approval from the Anthropology Department and completed an RCMP Criminal Records Check form and a Nova Scotia Child Abuse form. Given that this participant observation research posed no risk to the students, I did not ask for parents to sign a consent form; rather I sent a letter in French and English home with the students in the Grade 3

class explaining my project and informing them that I would be helping in the class and observing the use of language in the school. In my research, I am focusing on the classroom conduct in general. I did not interview the children.

Throughout the later months of 2010 and into January of 2011, I organized three focus groups with teachers and members of the school's administration. I also conducted individual interviews with five individuals based on the knowledge I gained through participant observation and focus groups. These interviews and focus groups were recorded on a digital audio recorder. The questions and dialogue were in French. I have transcribed the quotes and translated them myself. A small form asking for basic information was handed out to teachers and administrators by e-mail prior to the focus groups and interviews. It consisted of questions asking about subjects and grades taught by the individual, sex, whether or not he or she grew up in a Francophone environment, whether or not he or she always had Francophone schooling, and whether he or she identifies as Acadian, Québécois or any other Francophone identity. The majority of the interview question lists were provided to the participants beforehand, when possible. I also conducted an interview with a parent with children studying at the school who was involved in getting the school built in Pomquet. None of these individuals' names will be included in this thesis so as to protect their identity. I will instead be using pseudonyms. All forms, letters and questions are attached as appendices.

Throughout my research project, I have made a valiant effort to remain aware of a critical ethical problem: my inherently biased perspective. I identify as Acadian and Francophone. It is possible that my previous attendance of Acadian and Francophone schools and my perceptions of Acadian identity and French language may skew my observations of École acadienne de Pomquet and of its community's perceptions of Acadian identity and French language. I will

attempt to minimize these issues in this paper by acknowledging my biases, remaining aware of the particular context of the school and working through the biases to the best of my ability.

Chapter 6:

French Language as Commodity

Odette, a second participant in Focus Group 1, spoke up soon after Marguerite's first comment and said that learning French would open doors for students who graduated and were starting something new. She also thought that they would already be ahead of others in being able to speak, understand and write in two languages. Odette suggests that the bilingual student would be ahead of others in qualifying for careers or jobs. When asked what sorts of doors were opened, she clarified with examples such as jobs and traveling to other Francophone countries. Anita, another member of Focus Group 1, agreed with Odette about the benefits of knowing French when visiting French places. The knowledge that a student can use their French language as a functional tool in an exterior location as opposed to their local environment in which the minority language is a less functional tool demonstrates the impact of globalization upon minorities such as the Acadians (Heller 2003: 473-474). The mobility of individuals does not limit graduates of Pomquet to the largely homogenous Anglophone environment of Antigonish County, of Nova Scotia or even of Canada. The existence and survival of minority languages is in part dependent upon their connection with the international world (Heller 2003: 473-474). The ability to communicate with other Francophones via telephone or via various types of online communication on the Internet and to have access to Francophone resources and media via telephone, television, radio and the Internet is rapidly developing in the twenty-first century (Heller 2010: 109). The technological advancements in communication have created a wider transnational pool of opportunities for Francophones, whether or not they are part of a local majority or minority. The ability to accept jobs in foreign Francophone areas or even across the

Canadian nation creates economic advantage and power for those who speak French. This is particularly so in a bilingual country like Canada which is in great need of bilingual workers in the growing service industry (Heller 2003: 474, 478; Heller 2010: 102).

In December of 2004, the French Language Services Act (FLS Act) was established by the Nova Scotia government to make sure that the government would be able to provide effective French language services to Francophone and Acadian communities of Nova Scotia (Acadian Affairs 2009: ii). A recent study on the utilization of French services by the Acadian and Francophone public in general conducted by Kenneth Deveau, Rodrigue Landry and Réal Allard showed that roughly nine out of ten participants in the research would not ask for service in French (Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities 2010: 5-6). These nine individuals would only use the service if the offer was made to them directly or if bilingual advertisements were prominent (Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities 2010: 5-6). According to the FLS Act, the Acadian Affairs Office must ensure that there are services to aid in the development and implementation of French language services, programs and policies in various public institutions (Acadian Affairs 2009: 4). This is to keep the institutions mindful of the communities they serve (Acadian Affairs 2009: 4). Acadian Affairs states that it is done in recognition of the social and economic wealth which Francophone and Acadian communities present to the province (2009: 4). The progress and achievements concerning French language services throughout various public institutions are noted in annual progress reports (Acadian Affairs 2009: ii). The government even encourages increasing the representation of Acadians and Francophones in government so that they may become more involved in important province-wide decision-making (Acadian Affairs 2009: 21). It is clear that the government, in designating an entire department for Acadians and Francophones and in directly stating their social and

economic worth, gives the opportunity for much social and economic power to these communities. It is giving them the public identity and status of potential power. Essentially, the highest form of provincial authority has given Acadians a symbolic social and economic power through a commodified language by having designated the French language as a desirable and profitable authentic official standard. Nevertheless, Acadian students and other members of Acadian communities may not take advantage of these economic and social uses and powers of French language.

Separate individual interviews with a teacher, Sylvie, and an administrator, Alphonse, included a question asking if they knew whether students who graduated from the school and chose to go to a postsecondary institution, such as a university or a college, chose to study in English or French. Both of them said that most students chose to go to English-language postsecondary educational institutions. When asked why, Sylvie ventured that it could be because there was an Anglophone university nearby and that there were so few Francophone colleges and universities situated close to the community. When each university and college specializes in particular subjects such as sciences and when there are so few institutions nearby and consequently more affordable, it can make it hard to choose a Francophone post-secondary educational institution over an Anglophone institution. It is especially difficult when a student desires a career path which is not available or thorough in those few Francophone postsecondary schools available nearby. The University of Saint Anne and the University of Moncton are the only two Francophone universities in the Maritimes and were both mentioned in the interviews; the College of Acadie and a Francophone community college in Arichat were also mentioned in the interviews. College of Acadie formerly had a branch in Pomquet until it closed a decade ago. After using the Google search engine, it is apparent that there are only a few other institutions

which are well-advertised and available in the Maritimes.

Alphonse believed that finances played a vital role in the decision to go to postsecondary school in English. It is easier to go to the Anglophone universities and colleges which are close to Pomquet such as St. Francis Xavier University so that the students can live with their parents and avoid increased living expenses they would have to pay if they went to a postsecondary institution outside of the region. Out of fifteen students who have pursued a postsecondary education, Alphonse knows of three students who chose to go to a Francophone postsecondary institution.

An executive summary prepared by individuals writing for the Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities confirms the lack of Francophone postsecondary education close to the homes of young Francophone high school graduates (2009: 1). According to the sample of grade 12 students in Francophone schools in the Atlantic provinces other than New Brunswick, only 35.6% of students seek a postsecondary education in French (Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities 2009: 10). In 2005, “the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages recommended that the Government of Canada establish a pan-Canadian system of postsecondary education in the French language” to show that “access to postsecondary education in French is crucial” in ensuring that Acadian and Francophone communities can develop (Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities 2009: 1). The direct implication of this recommendation is that the availability of French postsecondary education is indeed a problem. The executive summary confirms Alphonse’s belief that finances contribute to the inability to leave the Atlantic provinces for a Francophone education. The report also demonstrates that the socio-economic status of the families living in the Atlantic provinces are lower than families in Ontario and in the North and West of Canada (Canadian

Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities 2009: 8).

Yvonne is a teacher who was asked the same question about the choice of postsecondary institutions; she agreed with Alphonse and Sylvie that students chose English schools. Yvonne later spoke about how graduates also chose the more widely available English jobs; this would explain the graduates' choice of postsecondary institution:

La majorité, si pas plus que la majorité, je dirais peut-être 95% - je ne suis pas certaine des statistiques – choisis une école [post-secondaire] anglaise [...] Ça dépend de tes intérêts pis qu'est-ce qu'est ta carrière. Alors, comme je t'ai dit à tantôt, si mes deux garçons vont aller pour choisir un métier... N'importe quel métier, pour eux, je ne peux pas voir – peut-être que je vais me tromper-là – mais je ne peux pas voir que, au niveau de leur travail, que ça va être très très important de savoir la langue française. Surtout s'ils habitent à Antigonish. Peut-être s'ils iront au Québec ça serait un autre cas, mais pour ici à Antigonish, est-ce qu'ils vont s'en servir au travail? Possiblement, mais probablement pas [...] Si c'est comme de l'enseignement, oui, ils vont l'utiliser beaucoup. Surtout si c'est pour enseigner dans une école française. Mais, disons que tu gradues avec un Baccalauréat en juste les arts ou un Baccalauréat en Business [...] si [l'emploi] est fédéral, okay, si ce n'est pas fédéral, je ne dirais pas qu'ils vont l'utiliser [le Français] beaucoup./ The majority, if not more than the majority, I would say maybe 95% - I am not certain of these statistics – choose an English [postsecondary] school [...] It depends on your interests and what is your career. So, as I told you earlier, if my two boys go to choose a trade... any kind of trade, for them, I cannot see – maybe I am mistaken – but I cannot see that, at the level of their work, that it will be very very important to know the French language. Especially if they live in Antigonish. Maybe if they go to Québec it will be another case, but as for here in Antigonish, will they use French at work? Possibly, but probably not [...] If it's like teaching, yes, they will use it a lot. Especially if it's for teaching in a French school. But, let's say that you graduate with just a Bachelor of Arts or with a Bachelor of Business [...] if [the job] is federal, okay, if it's not federal, I would not say that they will use it [French] a lot.

Yvonne thought that the choice of an Anglophone postsecondary institution was especially the case if they came from the region around Antigonish. Maybe if they lived in Quebec or chose to live there, she speculated, it would be another case. But as for living in Antigonish or even in Nova Scotia, she could not see that even her own children would use the language at their workplace. Unless it is a federal government job, an Arts or Business Bachelor's degree obtained in the French language would not be used a lot. It is intriguing that she did not mention the

provincial government as making use of the French language, particularly considering the above-mentioned FLS Act giving official commodified value to the French language skill. When asked about how an Acadian identity might cause advantages or disadvantages when applying for jobs, Yvonne does appear to view French as a commodity and not simply an identity marker when she says: “*Comme je dis, non, ça ne peut pas causer du tort parce que ... à l'école, on parle le Français standard. On ne devrait pas parler [le français] Acadien.*./Like I am saying, no, it cannot cause any harm because... at school, we speak the Standard French. We should not speak the Acadian [French].”

The quality of French being taught and emphasized at the school – a Standardized French – can be thought of as a demonstration of the legitimization and commoditization of French linguistic capital. Yvonne states that the Standard French is accepted and recognized everywhere and that this is why it should be the only French taught in schools. She illustrates her point in the following example:

Um, c'est bien beau que, si qu'ils sont capable de communiquer ici, um, avec un accent et tout cela. Mais quand même, disons qu'ils reçoivent un emploi plus tard, disons à Vancouver, pis ils ont besoin de leur langue française. Alors, le Français standard, c'est ça qui sera – qu'est reconnu partout. Alors c'est pour ça qu'il faudra qu'ils soient capable de, dans n'importe quelle région, être capable de communiquer dans, avec le Français standard. Pis, c'est pour ça qu'on devrait éduquer les enfants pour qu'ils soient capables à communiquer avec le Français standard. / Um, it is very nice that, if they are capable of communicating here, um, with an accent and all of that. But even though, let's say that they receive a job later, let's say in Vancouver, and they have a need for their French language. So it's for that reason that they will need to be capable of, in any region, to be capable of communicating in, with the Standard French. And, it's because of that reason that we should teach the kids so that they will be capable of communicating with the Standard French.

It is clear that the legitimization of Standard French in Canadian society is intimately tied to the commodification of the language. The teacher acknowledges that standardized French must be taught in schools because it is what is required everywhere – including in the job market. The

school's current goals consist of enhancing the French oral and writing abilities of their students in this Standard French (CSAP 04/2010). Yvonne stated in her interview that a reason that students chose to not go to Francophone schools was because they did not feel prepared for the required level of French. She felt that they worried about not being able to succeed with the French language. During her interview, she said that the worry exists because students have so few chances to use, practice and master the language outside of school hours. According to Yvonne, practice is what helps these students be able to communicate in a way that she feels is better and appropriate.

Speaking French is understood as work. In the school, according to Valérie, a teacher from Focus Group 2, French is perceived by students as a subject; it is understood as a part of daily work to be done in order to graduate. In this sense, the learning of French language is work similar to any other subject; it is work to acquire a skill which can be used in Canadian society. The materialist language such as “work” and “skill” used by myself and the teacher in Focus Group 2 gives shape to a process of commodification of the French language. In this case, the school is very much like Bourdieu’s institution which produces and reproduces legitimate linguistic capital users (1977: 651-652). Once they acquire the skill or linguistic capital and leave the school, the students will be able to sell themselves in a job market which values standardized languages and bilingualism.

The qualification for jobs is a crucial part of the commodification of French language in the school. Language qualification requirements were specified by a participant in Focus Group 1 as a reason for students wanting to learn French. Alphonse, a member of the administration, thinks that it is important to obtain a job which requires competence in French, particularly regarding the increasing availability of these jobs. He said that there is more of a diversity of

bilingual careers now because the bilingual government needs bilingual people; these positions must be filled. If the government offers certain programs in English, they must also have French employees to communicate with the French clientele in the French language. There are fewer candidates competing for those jobs, and there is therefore a better chance of getting into certain bilingual domains. In other words, the required candidates are rare commodities. Alphonse also acknowledged that jobs which require bilingualism have nice pensions since they are often in the public service. He stated that obtaining a good pension is of importance. The jobs are also demanding as opposed to being trivial. A position in society which is neither minor nor commonplace designates an individual with a valuable social status. Therefore, the ability to speak French is equivalent to social capital in that it can give a person a position of social power.

Alphonse's ideas are echoed in the words of other research participants. Odette thinks that the children are placed in the school by their parents because the kids will have the opportunity to go to Francophone postsecondary educational institutions and will also consequently have better employment options. She believes that learning French is important for the future because you can obtain jobs while others may struggle with obtaining them. In her situation, she has a nearly permanent job while some of her friends with which she graduated live day by day. In Focus Group 2, the value of bilingualism and its link to opportunity came up because it was thought that there is a plethora of opportunities in having a bilingual diploma because of living in a bilingual country. It is also inseparably linked up to an idea of national and bilingual identity (see Chapter 7). Gérard, a parent and teacher, and Sylvie sum it up with the following:

Gérard : Je veux que mon fils soit capable de parler les deux langues, et qu'une éducation de qualité soit offerte autant en Anglais qu'en Français. C'est quelque chose de très important pour moi; je ne veux pas qu'il perde ça [...]ça démontre un petit peu qu'on peut vivre des deux bords et être encore Canadien. Nous sommes Anglophone ou

Francophone; on est tous les deux citoyens du même pays [...]J'en parle souvent les opportunités que ça va offrir aux élèves[quand] ils sortent avec un diplôme bilingue. Ça ouvre plusieurs portes. I want my son to be capable of speaking the two languages, and that a quality education be offered in English as much as in French. It is something that is very important for me; I do not want to lose that [...] It shows a little bit that we can live on the two sides and still be Canadian. We are Anglophone or Francophone; we are both citizens of the same country [...] I frequently talk about the opportunities that it will offer to my students [when] they leave with a bilingual diploma. It will open many doors.

[...]

Sylvie : En termes de... les emplois, [...] les occasions de voyager, d'interagir avec d'autres personnes.../ In terms of... the jobs, [...] the occasions to travel, to interact with other people...

In Sylvie's individual interview, it became apparent to me that the acquiring of multiple languages can lead to economic and social power and opportunity in multiple locations in a global world as well as in Canada. According to Sylvie, bilingualism is important and she wishes that each province would be bilingual – unfortunately, they are not. She believes that the provinces should be bilingual because it is her understanding that both languages founded the country and that there are many Francophones who are an asset to the country. The authenticity of these languages as part of a nation's history should reflect in its spread across each province. She compared Canada to countries and peoples in Europe where there are many who speak two or three languages:

Encore à ça, [le Français] est une langue qui est très vivante partout dans le monde, et puis c'est quelque chose que, pour l'économie globale et toute ça, c'est quelque chose que vraiment est important. Puis, si qu'on peut avoir deux langues, c'est bien, si qu'on peut en avoir trois, c'est bien. Puis le plus qu'on connaît, le plus qu'on est exposé à différentes choses, le mieux que c'est. /Again here, [French] is a language which is very much alive everywhere in the world, and it is something that, for the global economy and all that, it's something that really is important. And, if we can have two languages, it's good, if we can have three, it's good. And, the more we know, the more we are exposed to different things, the better it is.

Sylvie concluded that to contend that we can live in today's world with one language is not as realistic because it is less advantageous in today's global economy. In her opinion, it is better to

learn more languages. In other words, languages are commodities to be gained.

The economic value of language as a commodity is not given by the school itself but by the provincial and federal governments. The Provincial Department of Education's policies directly affect the school's management system and, consequently, the school strives to meet these standard and official educational policies set by the government. It is these standards which define the economically valuable French language skill levels and differentiate them from less economically valuable French language skill levels. The school administration is given the responsibility by the provincial government through the CSAP to maintain standards of French language instruction. As Yvonne was quoted saying above, Standard French is valued over Acadian French. Standard French is also valued over broken French.

Alphonse, as a member of the administration at *École acadienne de Pomquet*, informed me of the administrative organization, objectives and projects at the school. During every school day in a five-day week, he visits a number of classrooms in the morning and the personnel in charge of each class. According to this weekly plan, he observes the classroom affairs to ensure that the required educational results are being taught; this requires that the teachers be on task and that they be engaged with the students and the subjects being taught. He describes it as mostly being a follow-up with the teachers and a means of expressing appreciation. The visits also mean that the teachers are aware of the observation; Alphonse states that they will often organize their teachings well as they know that he does come for a visit.

There are also meetings of the *Comité d'apprentissage professionnel/ Committee of Professional Learning* which occur every Thursday among the school's personnel. These meetings include teachers. Those who participate in the meetings examine the students' academic results and discuss how they could meet the needs of classrooms or particular students

to increase their success. Minutes are taken during these meetings. The personnel are all divided into separate groups. The music teachers are grouped together. The kindergarten teacher and the first to third grade teachers meet together. The fourth to the sixth grade teachers form a group and the high school teachers make up another group. This weekly routine is part of an enforcement of a standardized French language education. The school is following educational statutes implemented by the school board. The school must also prepare for standardized French literacy tests administered by the provincial government. There are certain expectations and statistics to submit to the government and the school board. The students must make the necessary course choices and get the necessary grades to graduate, receive a French language diploma and become a dynamic candidate in the French language job market. The diploma is a physical symbol of the considerable power that French language gives to these graduates in the job market and in the social world.

During my participant observation, I witnessed a standardized provincial French literacy test for the elementary school students in the Third Grade. The test was spread out into parts over a number of days. That Wednesday, the students were completing two components. In the first segment, the students were asked to read an invitation to a birthday party. They then had to answer questions pertaining to the specifics of the party and had to identify the various parts of an invitation letter. In the second segment, the students were asked to read a set of questions and a text about penguins and another similar bird to test their reading comprehension and ability to find and differentiate information in a text. There were a number of students who struggled, particularly as they did not have French spoken at home because of above-mentioned past assimilation; a few were brought to the point of tears of frustration and said that they could not understand what was written. One girl nearly gave up answering altogether in frustration until

she was encouraged to try again. The success rate of students at a provincial level, I would soon learn, was an issue to be confronted by the school and school board in administrative projects. Students had to succeed as legitimate French linguistic capital users in a Canadian society which gives social and economic value to a commoditized Standardized French and which consequently also gives its users social and economic power. Students are encouraged to succeed on many levels; successful students from Francophone schools even have access to more scholarships – economic resources – than students from Anglophone schools.

As for specific administrative projects regarding a standardized French language education at the school, according to Alphonse, there are retention and recruitment plans, a literacy program, and a five-year plan of improvement. The retention and recruitment of students is a plan implemented in all of the CSAP's schools across the province. It is intended to keep students from transferring out of the French CSAP system to the French immersion or unilingual English schools. The plan involves discussions with parents and active organizers within the communities so as to see what can be done to keep students. The five-year improvement plan outlines two principle objectives: to improve the level of communication among the staff and to improve the level of success of students. The literacy program was created explicitly to attain the latter. The focus of the program is on the writing abilities of the children; it provides students with the ability to auto-correct. The plan begins in kindergarten. It is a process of verification with a rubric: students might begin by looking out for capital letters at the beginning of sentences and for punctuation at the end of the sentences. From there, students eventually begin looking out for verbs and nouns.

The idea of positive effective behaviour, which is to encourage certain behaviours such as using French instead of English on the school grounds, is another type of program being used at

the school. There are assemblies to congratulate students for their success in using the French language inside and outside of the classroom. These assemblies occur every six weeks in the school's gymnasium. This is done instead of punishing the students for speaking English, which is considered an undesirable behaviour. In kindergarten, English is used in the classroom during the first semester since most of the children come from Anglophone homes and must learn basic French vocabulary and grammar. By the second term, once children begin to understand French, it becomes the only language of instruction. To create an entirely Francophone atmosphere, the kindergarten teacher has put in place a system of medals to encourage compliance in speaking only French at school. By the end of each day, if a child has mostly spoken in French, they can take a medal home. The positive effective behaviour support program is an effort to help the children speak as well as think in French. It is to incite pride in being able to speak French.

Regarding the text manuals and books used, the school acts in accordance with the Province of Nova Scotia Department of Education Book Bureau managed by the Minister of Education. As the Department knows about the programs which must be administered, it orders the books and manuals from the companies. The school administration makes three orders every year from the bureau after consultation with the teachers through e-mail about what manuals are needed. After receiving the orders, the Minister in turn orders the books with a budget called Minority Funds deriving from both federal and provincial governments with the explicit intention of providing funds for a school population consisting of a legitimate minority group. The Acadian population is easily recognizable in Nova Scotia as an existing minority with rights to these funds; they even have their own department to manage their affairs so that they may not be overlooked by the majority. The school does not often make any book orders directly with companies. The Book Bureau provides lists of available and acceptable books and manuals. The

majority of the books come from Québec and Ontario. As for specific locations, Ottawa, the national capital, was mentioned. Québec and Ontario are two provinces which are incredibly embedded within the history of Canada. Previously, they had been Upper and Lower Canada. They were physically divided by a difference in language: French and English. This is why Sylvie had mentioned previously that the languages had founded the country and it is why the languages dominate today. Ontario became the physical, social, economic and political centre of the newly unified country. Ottawa, as the national capital, also takes on this image whether or not it is physically in the exact geographical centre of the nation. It is crucial to understand that the fact that the majority of École acadienne de Pomquet's public school books come from these founding provinces expresses the dominating presence of the legitimization of French, and of national and bilingual identity in all provinces of Canada. As for Acadian companies, the school has previously bought books from visiting Acadian authors. The difference in availability of these books as well as the complexity of Acadian and Canadian identity at the school is palpable.

Chapter 7

French Language as Marker of Francophone, Acadian and National Bilingual Identity

Bilingualism and nationalism are part of the key motivations in teaching students French language at the school. In Focus Group 3, including teachers and administrators, a participant stated that the school's mission is the production of bilingual students:

L'emphase n'est pas sur les activités acadiennes parce qu'on est un Conseil... Oui, c'est un Conseil acadien, mais la mission du CSAP, c'est les enfants bilingues [...] c'est plutôt les enfants acadiens francophones, et qu'ils soient bilingues. The emphasis is not on the Acadian activities because it is a school board... yes, it is an Acadian school board, but the mission of the CSAP, it's the bilingual kids [...] it's rather the children who are Acadian Francophones, and they have to be bilingual.

The emphasis on bilingualism in this quote, however, also inherently comprises an emphasis on Francophone-ness accompanied with Acadian-ness. The interaction between Acadian, Canadian and Francophone identities makes it apparent that French language is not valued in a simple manner. French is an Acadian identity marker, and it is also a marker of a national bilingual identity and a local and global Francophone identity. When I am using the term Francophone, I am referring to a group of individuals from various localities linked by the sharing of a language and place of origins: French and France. This connection can also be referred to as *Francophonie*. The national bilingual identity refers to an identity as a Canadian who speaks both English and French. The Acadian identity in Pomquet is a local identity; those who share it also share an understanding of history and experience, beliefs, practices and traits.

The children enrolled at the school are referred to in this quote as bilingual Acadian Francophones. The local, national and international contexts come together within the CSAP mission and in the values and understandings of French language and identity at École acadienne de Pomquet. Although a Standard French – associated with bilingualism and national identity –

is enforced at the school, it is also associated with Francophone-ness as French is the connection between Francophones. This ties both a Francophone identity with a national Canadian identity. In turn, both French identities are associated with Acadian French identity in that the latter can consist of a Standard French and is indubitably Francophone as well. Each form of identity at the school is inseparably valued as they are all linked.

Bilingualism is clearly identifiable in the above quote and in the CSAP and the school's mission and vision; it is relevant to the understanding of the value of French. In Focus Group 3, the teachers' ideal objective of the school is to help students become people who are responsible citizens who will continue the Canadian society. This was specified as being an objective of all schools. It was also emphasized by two focus group participants that responsible Canadian citizens should also be bilingual: a citizen of Canada should have to be able to communicate in French as well as in English. Yvonne affirmed the relevance of bilingualism in the school in her interview by saying that the ideal objective is to ensure that students, once done grade twelve, are completely bilingual in the English and French language at the written and oral level.

The previously mentioned French language educational standards set by the provincial government not only impose an economic and social value on a particular level of French language skill at the school but also impose a set cultural, social and political definition of a national Canadian identity. This set Canadian identity includes the establishment of a Standard French and English: the bilingual citizen. In this sense, bilingualism not only incorporates two languages but two identities which were mentioned by Gérard in the previous chapter: Francophone and Anglophone. The mixing of identities such as Canadian national identity and global and local Francophone identity is obviously inevitable. It is important to keep this mixture of identities and the economic and social value placed on the French linguistic skill associated

with said identities in mind. The commoditization of the French language skill is evidently linked to the mixture.

In an Acadian school, it is also impossible to not have the national and international identities associate with a local Acadian identity. In Focus Group 2, I asked the teachers whether they thought that French language was important in terms of being Acadian. One of the teachers who responded to the question was Gérard. He did not identify with Acadian heritage. It is important to note that, although many of the teachers do identify with a Francophone identity, not all of the teachers identify as Acadian. This excerpt from the focus group demonstrates the relation of Francophone identity to Acadian identity and how both are important in the value of French language:

Gérard : Pour moi, étant – j'ai pas de racines acadiennes, mais disons que, un des critères, selon moi, comme voyant ça de l'extérieur, c'est la Francophonie. Faut parler Français pour être Acadien. Et la relation, elle est évidente, selon moi. Faut parler Français pour être Québécois, selon moi. Au moins, faut être bilingue, au moins. Pas seulement le Français, et c'est la même chose ici./ For me, in being – I do not have Acadian roots, but let's say that, as one of the criteria, according to me, as seeing it from the outside, it's the Francophonie. You have to speak French to be Acadian. And the relation, it is evident, according to me. You have to speak French to be Québécois, according to me. At least, must be bilingual, at least. Not only the French, and it's the same thing here.

Camille : Une grande partie./ A big part.

Gérard : Une grande, grande partie, absolument, on ne peut pas s'échapper de la Francophonie si on veut s'identifier comme Acadien, selon moi, qui n'est pas Acadien./ A big, big part, absolutely, you cannot escape from the Francophonie if you want to identify yourself as Acadian, according to me, who is not Acadian.

Although he agreed with French being an important part of Acadian identity as it is a Francophone identity, it is interesting that he thought that one must at least be bilingual to be an Acadian and also Québécois. We are now clearly mixing a national Canadian bilingual identity with both the local Acadian identity and the global Francophone identity. I understand that if one is an Anglophone or a Francophone, it is essential to at least learn the other language and become

bilingual. It is at once an idea of functionality and social, cultural and political identity. If one is Francophone in a largely Anglophone context, it is inevitably necessary to become bilingual to interact with the majority of the population. In the case of provinces with an English majority, if a person speaks French, it is automatically assumed that he or she also speaks English and is bilingual. The French-speaking Acadians of Pomquet who are living in this context are thus automatically identified as bilingual. In this case, the national bilingual identity as a citizen of Canada is one of the prevalent identities marked by French language in the school. To identify as a French-speaking Acadian in Nova Scotia is to identify as a bilingual person. As bilingualism is an official Canadian trait, to identify as French-speaking Acadian in Nova Scotia is to identify as a Canadian. The ties between the local, national and global French identities are conspicuous.

Gérard's comment about how speaking French is one basis of identifying Acadians is also interesting. It suggests that French is a visible marker of Acadian identity which distinguishes Acadians from the various members of the Anglophone majority. An Anglophone unilingual Acadian may not be distinguished as Acadian as easily. Although he advocates bilingualism and may consequently value French as part of a Francophone Canadian identity and as a national commodity, I believe he also sees a socio-cultural value to speaking French for those who seek an Acadian identity marker.

With the necessity of teaching bilingualism and the struggle for the maintenance of the French as the primary language of the minority school, there tends to be a heavier concentration on French-related activities as opposed to traditional Acadian activities. Nevertheless, even with emphasis on bilingual citizenship, the value of French language as one of many valued Acadian traditions does not dwindle at the school. Acadian culture is not felt as lost as the language is not felt as lost:

Si tu imagines, comme, une culture sans langue... Ça ne pourrait pas exister parce que lorsque tu perds la langue, tu perds les traditions [...] c'est une identité, quand tu perds l'identité, tu perds la culture. /If you were to imagine a culture without language... it would just not exist because when you lose the language, you lose the traditions [...] it's an identity. When you lose the identity, you lose the culture.

These statements were made in Focus Group 1 by Mireille, a teacher. Her view on French language and its relationship with Acadian culture is reflected in the statements made by many of the participants of the focus groups and interviews. It is also reflected in a new administrative project concerning Acadian identity. It is a new goal for the French school board's schools; a strategic plan regarding the cultural identity of students. The school board hired a person to address issues related to the maintenance of a sense of belonging to a cultural identity. At the school, according to Alphonse, the sense of belonging to *Acadie* or Acadia has been lost because students' parents did not communicate this belonging to their children. Activities need to be held at the school to give value to all parts of Acadia, including language. The grandparents are the only ones who have kept the language. Cultural transmission of Acadian ways of life could not be done by parents as they had lost the practices and language themselves, as mentioned in Chapter 3. It is evident that in this Francophone Acadian school, the teachers do feel that it is important to teach French language skills for reasons beyond economic benefit. This does not mean, however, that the economic benefits are not welcome!

In Focus Group 2, a participant noted that she witnessed the beginnings of new generations of Acadians passing through the school system; children of children she had previously taught were attending the school. She understood the reason for this continued enrolment as not necessarily being based solely on a desire for Acadian-ness, but that it was more about a pride of their French language and also a pride of being bilingual. The French language is clearly important to self-identification. It is difficult to clarify, however, whether she

understood this pride as being a pride of being a bilingual citizen or a pride of being a bilingual Acadian. It is difficult because French language is tied at once with Acadian, Francophone and national identity. The pride can indeed relate to a mixture of Canadian bilingual, Acadian and Francophone identities. The pride can also relate to the economic and social benefits of the language associated with this combination of identities which in turn increases the economic and social power of these identities. As speaking French is economically and socially valuable, being able to identify as any of these identities associated with the language is economically and socially valuable.

Learning the French language, however, is not only beneficial socially and economically but also culturally, as evidenced in Mireille's statement. In Focus Group 3, the immediate response to the question asking why learning French is important was the following stated by H  l  ne: "*Bien, il faut garder notre langue. Tu ne veux pas perdre la langue qui...   a fait partie de leur h  ritage.* / Well, we have to keep our language. You do not want to lose the language that... it is part of their heritage." H  l  ne does not identify as Acadian, much like G  rard in Focus Group 2, and yet her feedback indicates that learning French is central to the maintenance of the cultural heritage of Acadians. A lack of connection with the cultural group does not seem to impact the manner in which teachers speak about language maintenance with cultural benefits. In the same focus group, when asked whether speaking French is important in terms of being Acadian, Jean-Guy, the first to answer, said that French is a big part of being Acadian because French is a part of culture. Jean-Guy has both Acadian and Qu  b  cois heritage; these are both localized French communities connected through Francophonie. Alongside with a value of French as an Acadian cultural identity marker, Jean-Guy also appears to value French for being part of a Francophone-ness which includes both his Acadian and Qu  b  cois heritage. The

cultural value of French language at the school is complex in itself without the incorporation of the economic and social values.

When asked the same question which H  l  ne answered in the previous paragraph, Rose, a teacher, answered with the following during an individual interview:

Bien,   a c'est la langue.   a c'est notre langue. Les Acadiens parlent Fran  ais. Um, aujourd'hui, pas aussi tant parce que les personnes qui   taient envoy  s par les   tats – ces personnes-l   y sont Acadiennes, mais ils parlent pas en Fran  ais parce qu'ils sont dans les   tats o   la plupart des personnes parlent en Anglais. Alors,   a c'est difficile, mais quand on est dans une classe o   on est capable de parler Fran  ais, pourquoi pas?   a c'est notre langue. C'est suppos   d'  tre notre langue, et moi je trouve que c'est tellement important. / Well, that's the language. That is our language. The Acadians speak French. Um, today, not as much because the people who were sent towards the States – those people are Acadian, but they do not talk in French because they are in the States where the majority of the people speak in English. So, that is difficult, but when we are in a class where we are capable of speaking French, why not? It is our language. It's supposed to be our language, and I find that it's so important.

Rose is a teacher who identifies as Acadian and therefore understands the value of French language as being a marker of Acadian identity. She relates it to a specific group of people who she acknowledges as having a shared past. This is observable in her description of certain Acadians having been sent to the United States and having lost the French language and a connection to Acadian-ness after having been assimilated into Anglophone culture. She also refers to the language with a collective possessive pronoun: “our.” Rose’s view of the French language is summed up in her response to a question asking what she thought was the ideal objective of the school:

“Bien, je crois qu'ils ont – euh – l'objectif que moi je crois c'est que on grandit en fran  ais, on grandit dans la culture, on,   a c'est suppos   d'  tre notre – je crois que c'est notre grand objectif... de grandir en notre culture acadienne. Je crois que c'est   a./ Well, I think that they – euh – the objective that I believe is that we grow up in French, we grow up in the culture, we, that's supposed to be our – I believe that it is our big objective... to grow up in our Acadian culture. I think that it's that.”

Local Acadian identity can clearly take on immense importance in the learning and teaching of

French language. Later on in the interview, Rose states that she believes in the continuation of the French language so that parents can yet again be able to speak to their children in French. If the students become parents and send their kids to the same school, French will yet again be spoken in the household. The desire for a Francophone household speaks to the desire for a Francophone identity as well as an Acadian identity.

Similarly, Alphonse believes in the continuation of Acadian-ness and Francophone-ness. He said that parents choose to enrol their children in the school because they want the French language to stay in the family and because it is a small and secure school in which the children can rebuild their Acadian belonging. When asked why he thought learning French is important, he stated that it is important to keep the language from being completely lost. It is important because of the language's association with *Acadie*. It is important to bridge the generation gap and make sure that the children are able to speak French like their grandparents. According to Alphonse, it is a cycle which must continue to keep the culture moving. These ideas also appear in Focus Group 2 as well as in others. A participant in Focus Group 2 emphasized the necessity to keep the culture rich and alive by reintroducing French language to the students so that they keep it on a long-term basis.

A prevalent topic in all of the interviews and focus groups is that it is difficult to reintroduce French to the younger generations of Acadians, particularly in the case of older high school students, because it is “not cool” to speak in French. Consequently, the teachers and administrators spend much of their time stressing the values of speaking French to the students. The only exception to this negative student perception of French language is if the students are with others and they do not want certain friends to know what they are talking about with their Francophone friends. It is only if it is convenient that the older students will talk in French. It is

only then that it is given any sort of value; it is an example of French acting as social capital. French gives social power to those who know it by allowing them to use it to their advantage in a situation. Otherwise, it is easier to speak in English because of its dominance in popular culture and in Nova Scotia.

In her interview, Yvonne stated that students do not want to practice speaking French, particularly outside of school hours. Some children, including her own, tend to refuse to listen to it or speak it at home, even if their parents **can** communicate with them in French. For example, when she speaks to her child at home, her child is prone to respond with “Mom, no French here.” Unfortunately, according to certain Focus Group 2 participants, it is only when the children get older and more mature that they see that it is really a good thing. Yvonne thinks that the children in elementary school, however, express a desire to speak in French and seem to lose it on the way to graduation. She does not know why this occurs in the majority of cases, but she states that the school finds that the French language education goes well until the sixth grade. Afterward, it is like the children are losing their ability to express themselves in French. It has been observed that students of the sixth grade are better able to express themselves than students in the twelfth grade. From the 6th to the 12th grade, there is a loss of vocabulary and a loss in the verbal communication because the students are not as motivated to express themselves in French. This is because speaking French is not cool.

Yvonne believes that this notion of ‘uncool’ may be the influence of their friends and their environment. Among the youth, the ability to speak French does not consistently represent social or economic power. All extracurricular activities are in English, and the students will go visit Antigonish with their Francophone and Anglophone friends on Friday nights. It is not that the students are incapable of expressing themselves in French; it is because it is easier to express

themselves in English. In other words, it is easier to assimilate if you are a teenager who does not want to differentiate from your friends.

In Focus Group 3, the idea of ‘uncool’ is a topic which is discussed as well by H el ene and others:

H el ene: *Pis, aussi, mon exp erience, c’est que les  l eves qui peuvent parler une meilleure langue [fran aise] souvent ne le font pas parce que c’est pas cool* / And, also, in my experience, it is that the students who can speak a better [French] language often will not do it because it is not cool.

Simon : *Il y a presque une honte*/ There is almost an embarrassment.

[...]

H el ene : *Ils ne veulent pas parler un bon Fran ais parce que leurs paires vont se moquer d’eux*/ They do not want to speak a good French because their pairs will make fun of them.

[...]

Jean-Guy : *Je pense que c’est   cause que leurs paires – leurs copains/copines- ne peuvent pas comprendre*./ I think that it is because their pairs – their friends – cannot understand.

H el ene: *Oui,  a, cela a un effet, aussi*/ Yes, that, that has an effect, too.

Jean-Guy : *Bien, je dis qu’ils vont dire des b tises parce que... ils ne comprennent pas la langue plus riche. C’est pas comme... ah, ah, tu utilises la langue [fran aise] tr s sophistiqu e! C’est parce que, honn tement, ils ne comprennent pas*/ Well, I say that they will tease because... they do not understand the richer language. It’s not like... ah, ah, you’re using the sophisticated [French] language! It’s because, honestly, they do not understand.

H el ene recognizes that even the students who can speak French well will often choose to not do so because it is not cool. There is an embarrassment. Their peers will make fun of them for speaking in French in public. As not all of the friends understand the meaning of a richer form of French language, they will tease. The child of a teacher from this focus group gets angry at the parent for speaking in French at the mall, particularly if the Anglophone friends are around. It was clear in Focus Group 3 as well that as the children got older, the less cool speaking French became. It was still noted in Focus Group 3 that not all of the students feel such an embarrassment and will openly speak in French.

The ‘uncool’ characteristic given to French language by students is a key issue that the

teachers believe hinders the continuance of a French-speaking Acadian generation. Teachers want to break the social and cultural stigma of speaking French. They want to re-instil value to the French language as a marker of identity so that the children will be able to live as Francophone Acadians without stigma. In Focus Group 2, as also mentioned in Chapter 3, it was said that the Acadian community of Pomquet is a minority area and thus often faces the process of assimilation. The parents' loss of language is an evocative example highlighted by the focus group. A part of the atmosphere of assimilation experienced by the parents' generation beyond not having access to a Francophone school is the exposure to a sentiment and attitude that they, as Acadians, were 'less good' because they spoke French. Acadians were subjected to name-calling because of their use of French or even of a French accent. The 'uncool' characteristic given to French by the students suggests that the social and cultural discrimination and stigma still exists.

Sylvie, who identifies as an Acadian and took part in Focus Group 2, revealed a few anecdotes of her own personal experiences in Antigonish. When she first arrived, she and her husband were speaking in French in public and someone took the opportunity to tell them to speak in English. Another time which also took place in public, when she and her husband were in line to pay at the grocery store, someone they knew was in line behind them and told them that they do not "speak French here." She then turned around and told the person that she will speak in French if she so desires. If people are to speak French in Antigonish at a normal vocal volume, people are immediately aware of it as it is not as common as if a person was living in the bilingual city of Moncton, New Brunswick. It is consequently difficult to avoid comments such as Sylvie experienced.

Even as Acadian teachers working prior to the existence of the Conseil scolaire acadien

provincial, when pedagogical days were spent with teachers in Anglophone schools, they were subjected to differential treatment. Some of the teachers were criticized and mocked for the way they pronounced words; you were essentially treated as if you were possibly not as intelligent because you had an accent. Sylvie's anecdote about the days prior to the creation of the Conseil was met with the agreement of other teachers in the focus group who kept adding comments like "oui/yes" here and there. Valérie's comment after Sylvie's anecdotes encapsulates the cultural issue at hand pertaining to the 'uncool' characteristic given to French usage by students at the school: "...*imagine les jeunes; c'est pas drôle!* ... imagine the young; it's not funny."

Although French language may have been given a commodity value to the extent that there have been French immersion schools dotted across the country along with fully Francophone schools, it is obvious that there are limits to the obtainable social power gained by economic benefit. In this case, the Acadian cultural identity marker impacts and has impacted the social power of both the young and the old.

A lack of practice of the language is a result influenced by the cultural and social stigma and diminished social power; it is also often influenced by the primary language used in the modern home. In many cases, children cannot speak it in the home because their parents speak solely in English. The primary language within the home may also be English because one parent of two cannot speak French. Inter-marriage between French-speaking Acadians and English-speaking individuals plays a vital role in the Anglicization of the household and the bilingualism of French-speakers. The reality is that many of the children have last names like MacDonald and MacIsaac, and those with Acadian names like Benoit may still be primarily English-speaking due to inter-marriage. The introduction of Scottish cultural traditions such as Highland dancing within the household supported by the public domains of Antigonish make it even more difficult to

create a space for Acadian or Francophone culture. Yvonne admits that having an Anglophone husband affected the language and traditions practiced in her household. It is why she enrolled her children in École acadienne de Pomquet: she wants them to learn the French language so that they may at least maintain that part of the Pomquet Acadian culture in which she was raised.

A participant in Focus Group 3 stated that it is difficult to teach and transmit cultural traditions to students because they have not lived it. According to a participant in Focus Group 2, traditional Acadian culture simply existed naturally as a part of the region. Acadian culture had an inherent meaning and was simply lived. There were women who visited classrooms to show children how to knit and make carpets and rugs. There were also traditional costumes worn on occasion in celebration of a traditional identity. When the school was smaller and not an official Francophone school, the students sometimes went to school dressed in traditional Acadian clothes similar to those of Évangéline. It does not currently happen because the elementary school children do not really know who Évangéline and Gabriel are and what they represent, do not own the costumes and perceive the characters as ‘uncool.’ The students do not witness dishes like *râpure* and *pâté*, the violin music or the hooked tapis of Chéticamp. The children spend a lot of time doing Anglophone activities on a global scale through various forms of media and popular culture. A participant in Focus Group 3 specified it is much more interesting to play X-Box video games for three hours than to go listen to your grandmother’s stories. He feared that the children would reach their adulthood without having talked to their grandparents or listened to the music or learned how to cook traditional meals. The access to a diversity of Anglophone activities and the ‘uncool’ characteristic of traditional Acadian-ness inevitably leads to the disinterest of the youth in such Acadian traditions.

The school and the community do not appear to implement traditional Acadian activities

outside of a few activities which primarily occur during the Winter Carnival or *Carnaval d'hiver*: an Acadian festival which began in the community of Pomquet and continues today at the school. The activities are mostly secular, but some involve cultural markers of identity. This year, the students are having a semi-formal dance and are going on a ski trip. There is a cultural day during the school week for the elementary school and a night of outdoor activities for the community. A participant in Focus Group 1 declared that the Winter Carnival touches Acadian-ness, but does not talk about the history and the customs to a great depth. The carnival was initially created and run by a committee and involved people of all ages in the Pomquet community. The committee disbanded as there was not as many people getting involved and the festival came to be part of the school. However, the activities have maintained a neutral tone as Acadian culture is not celebrated as much as cultural and social diversity. Activities such as sliding down snow banks and building snow sculptures take place in these informal situations involving the community and English is the spoken language. This is because English takes up such a dominating position considering that the majority of parents cannot speak French.

The cultural and social diversity promoted at the school speaks to the dynamic interplay of values and identity taking place. The mixture of Acadian activities with secular activities and Francophone-ness with Anglophone-ness at the Winter Carnival demonstrates the diversity of values and identities. According to a participant in Focus Group 2, the promotion of French language conversations and life in the school and in extracurricular activities is considered as being the first step toward re-routing students back to Acadia and an Acadian identity marker. The school also accepts and promotes bilingualism and national harmony as Canadians at its Winter Carnival as well as in its previously-stated vision. What is thought as being unique to the school's environment is that once the students enter the building, particularly during class hours,

they are to speak in French. It is a Francophone environment where everyone is connected by language and a Francophone identity. In class and while walking to the cafeteria, they socialize in French. If this school was an immersion school, there would not be this lived French that the school can offer. The previously discussed restrictions in the admission to the school allow for this lived French. A participant in Focus Group 3 stated that the last hope for the instilment of the value of French in students is really the school. The teachers and administrators are very much aware of their role in the instilment of values; they juggle them every day. The value of French language being taught by teachers and administrators at École acadienne de Pomquet is quite complex as it involves a social, cultural and political relationship between three forms of identity marked by the French language and also marked by the economic value of the linguistic skill itself.

Chapter 8:

Conclusions

The teachers and administrators at École acadienne de Pomquet consider French valuable as commodity, as it is linguistic capital, **and** as a cultural marker of identity. French is understood and taught as being useful for students in the workplace since they will be able to use their language skills to obtain good jobs and other economic benefits. The data has also shown that French language as a cultural identity marker in the school is quite complex. The complexity of identity was unexpected as I had not been looking for it specifically, but is very much relevant regarding whether French is considered as a commodity or cultural marker of identity. The complexity of identity is intimately tied to the commodification of the French language; this is the case as French language cannot be separated from any of the identities which it marks. It can therefore be said that these identities can be commodified in their association with an economically and socially valuable linguistic skill and capital. Monica Heller's notion of the commodification of language is not lost but made even more complex. Language is valued socially, economically, politically and culturally.

The teachers and administrators discussed three ways that French marks identity at the school: local Acadian minority, national bilingual citizen, and local and international Francophone. In the case of local Acadian minority, French is a marker of a local community identity. The teachers and administrators expressed the existence and value of this identity marker quite clearly; for the most part, they shared an understanding of history and experiences, practices, beliefs and traits, as well as a desire to transfer this understanding to the younger generations of Acadians. It has social, cultural and political meanings associated with being part

of an Acadian community in Nova Scotia. In the case of the local and international Francophone, French is an identity marker which connects local and global Francophone communities. It is “*la Francophonie*,” this means that local communities, such as Pomquet which have their origins in France, are culturally, socially and politically linked to a global community of Francophones. This idea was not quite as prevalent in the data, but it did make its appearance. Many of the teachers and administrators expressed that a benefit to being Francophone was that you could travel to foreign countries and interact with other Francophone people. In the case of the national bilingual citizen, French is a social, cultural and political marker of Canadian national identity. Students, teachers and administrators in École acadienne de Pomquet all understand English as they live in Nova Scotia – a province with a large Anglophone majority. Consequently, the ability to communicate in French means that the individual is a bilingual Canadian person. These identity markers are all inextricably linked.

French language and its accompanying identities at the school are indeed impacted by the commodification of the skill in Canadian society. This becomes apparent in how the teachers and administrators emphasized an official and standardized language instruction at the request of the school board and provincial government. The teachers and administrators also expressed interest in motivating students to becoming competent in French so that they can become responsible bilingual citizens; here, the commodification of language and identity collide. Students at the school are being taught to value a bilingual identity and not simply a French language skill. As a bilingual person, one can obtain non-trivial jobs which would give them a higher social status. To identify as a Francophone in Nova Scotia also automatically means that you are bilingual and valuable in that you own French linguistic capital. An Acadian identity in Nova Scotia, when associated with French language as it is done, is valued for its economic benefits as well. The

social and economic value of Acadian identity and its accompanying French language is blatantly apparent when you examine the Office of Acadian Affairs.

When asked whether she thought indicating an Acadian identity would cause harm or good when it comes to applying for a job, Sylvie epitomizes the idea that the commodification of language gives value to Acadian identity when she said that she imagined that Acadian identity would be an asset when it comes to applying for a job. It would be an asset because it shows that it is someone who is bilingual and can speak both English and French in a multicultural country. The employment of an Acadian, according to Sylvie, would enrich the job market as an Acadian would have more experience and contact with different cultures and cultural values. Another teacher stated that she realized at the university level the reason why her other Acadian friends in university felt so much pride; it was because of how they grew up in a French Acadian community as she had, and that they would have a job almost immediately. The cultural, economic and social values of language as a skill cannot be separated from the cultural, social, and economic values of identity.

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Appendix A – Form for Basic Information on Teachers and Administrators

Projet de recherche – thèse d'honneurs
Enquêteuse: Carole L. Perry

La Francophonie de l'Acadie: La langue française étant un produit ou marqueur d'identité dans une école acadienne

Questionnaire

1. Encerclez : Homme Femme

2. Quel(s) niveau(x) enseignez-vous ?

3. Quel(s) sujet(s) enseignez-vous ?

4. Est-ce que vous vous identifiez comme Acadien/Acadienne? Comme Francophone (exemple : Québécois/Québécoise, Français/Française)?

5. Est-ce que vous avez grandi dans un milieu Francophone ?

6. Est-ce que vous étiez inscrit(e) dans une école primaire/secondaire/universitaire Francophone ?

Appendix B – Bilingual Letters Sent to Parents

Honours Thesis Research
Letter of Information and Consent

La Francophonie de l'Acadie: French as Commodity or Marker of Identity in an Acadian School

Thesis Supervisor: Clare Fawcett, Ph.D.
Student Researcher: Carole L. Perry
Anthropology Department at St. Francis Xavier University
Thesis Supervisor's phone number:
Office: (902) 867-2129
Student Researcher's phone number:
Home: (902) 735-2793
Cell: (902) 968-0074

Dear parents of Mme. Leanne Carter's third grade class,

My name is Carole Perry, and I am a fourth year honours student currently enrolled at St. Francis Xavier University. For my Honours Thesis project in the Department of Anthropology, I am conducting a research study aiming at understanding the relationship between French language and Acadian identity in École acadienne de Pomquet. The research question which I hope to answer is the following: do the teachers and administrators at École acadienne de Pomquet believe that speaking, reading and writing in French is important because it gives students economic benefits or because it is part of an Acadian identity?

The goal of my project is to enhance the ability of the school and the CSAP to provide students with an education in the French language by better understanding the perceptions teachers have of the role the French language has in the lives of the children they teach. As of late September, I have been doing volunteer work through a university Service Learning program with the school in Mme. Leanne Carter's third grade class. I will continue my Service Learning work until December. My role in the classroom is as an assistant and an anthropologist observing classroom and school culture; I am not interested in noting the actions of individual students or teachers. I have been helping the children with their French language skills, particularly with their reading comprehension. As I am a volunteer working with children, I have gone through a

RCMP Criminal Records Check and have received documentation from the Province of Nova Scotia that I am not on the Child Abuse Register.

I have consulted with my thesis supervisor, Dr. Clare Fawcett, and Dr Jane McMillan, the Ethics Officer for the Department of Anthropology about my research plans. Both have concluded that my research poses no risk to the children, so I do not need to get formal permission from parents for this participant observation. Both thought, however, that it would be courteous to tell parents that I am doing research in the school and to invite their questions and comments. This is the reason I am sending you this letter.

Once the research is complete, I will send a digital copy of the thesis to Ecole acadienne de Pomquet. To the best of my ability I will also present a summary of my results in April 2011 to teachers and administrators of École acadienne de Pomquet as well as other participants and parents. You are invited to attend the presentation, but are not obligated to do so.

If you have any questions about this study you may contact my thesis supervisor, Dr Clare Fawcett, Department of Anthropology StFX (867-2129; cfawcett@stfx.ca) or the Department of Anthropology's Ethics Officer, Dr Jane McMillan(867-5021; ljmcmill@stfx.ca).

Sincerely,

Carole Louise Perry

Projet de recherche – thèse d'honneurs

La Francophonie de l'Acadie: La langue française étant un produit ou marqueur d'identité dans une école acadienne

Surveillante de l'enquête : Clare Fawcett, Ph.D.

Enquêtrice: Carole L. Perry

Département d'anthropologie à l'université de St. Francis Xavier

Numéro de téléphone de la surveillante:

Office: (902) 867-2129

Numéro de téléphone de l'enquêtrice:

Maison: (902) 735-2793

Cellulaire: (902) 968-0074

Cher parents aux élèves de la classe de la troisième année à Mme. Leanne Carter,

Je m'appelle Carole Perry, et je suis une étudiante d'honneurs en train d'accomplir ma quatrième année à l'Université de St. Francis Xavier. Je mène un projet de recherche avec le Département d'anthropologie à l'École acadienne de Pomquet pour ma thèse d'honneurs concernant la liaison entre la langue française et l'identité acadienne. La question de recherche dont je demande est la suivante: est-ce que les enseignants(es) et les membres de l'administration de l'École acadienne de Pomquet pensent que parler, lire et écrire en Français sont important car les étudiants(es) s'en profitent de façon économique ou car la langue fait partie de l'identité acadienne?

Le but de mon projet est d'améliorer la capacité de l'école et du CSAP à fournir aux élèves une éducation de la langue française en éclaircissant les perceptions d'enseignants(es) du rôle de la langue française dans la vie des enfants qu'ils (elles) enseignent. Depuis la fin du mois de septembre, je fais du bénévolat à l'école avec le programme de Service Learning de l'université. Je vais continuer mon travail avec Service Learning jusqu'au mois de décembre. J'ai été placée dans la classe de troisième année à Mme. Leanne Carter. Mon rôle dans la salle de classe est comme assistante et anthropologiste qui observe la culture de la classe et de l'école ; je ne suis pas intéressée à noter les actions individuelles des élèves ou des enseignants(es). J'aide

les élèves avec leur maîtrise de la langue française, particulièrement avec la compréhension pendant la lecture. Puisque je fais du bénévolat avec des enfants, j'ai obtenu une attestation de vérification de casier judiciaire. J'ai aussi reçu un document de la Province de la Nouvelle-Écosse qui atteste que je ne suis pas sur le registre pour abus d'enfants.

J'ai consulté la surveillante de l'enquête, Dr. Clare Fawcett, et Dr. Jane McMillan, l'Officier d'éthiques du Département d'anthropologie à propos de mes plans de recherche. Elles ont tous les deux concluent que ma recherche ne pose pas de risque aux enfants. Alors, je n'ai pas besoin d'avoir une permission officielle des parents pour observer en participant en salle de classe. Cependant, elles ont pensé qu'il serait courtois de ma part de vous informer que je suis en train de faire ce projet de recherche à l'école et de vous inviter à poser des questions et faire des commentaires. Voici la raison que je vous envoie cette lettre.

Lorsque ce projet de recherche sera terminé, je vais envoyer une copie électronique de la thèse à l'École acadienne de Pomquet. En avril 2011, je vais faire de mon mieux afin de présenter un sommaire de mes résultats aux enseignants(es), aux membres de l'administration de l'École acadienne de Pomquet et aux autres participants(es). Vous êtes invité à la présentation, mais vous n'êtes pas obligé d'être présent.

Si vous avez des questions à propos de ce projet, vous pouvez vous mettre en contact avec la surveillante de l'enquête, Dr. Clare Fawcett, Département d'anthropologie StFX (867-2129; cfawcett@stfx.ca) ou avec l'Officier d'éthiques du Département d'anthropologie, Dr. Jane McMillan (867-5021; ljmcmill@stfx.ca).

Merci beaucoup,

Carole Louise Perry

Appendix C – Invitation for Teachers and Administrators to Participate in the Study

Invitation à participer

La Francophonie de l'Acadie: La langue française étant un produit ou marqueur d'identité dans une école acadienne

Surveillante de l'enquête : Clare Fawcett, Ph.D.

Enquêteuse: Carole L. Perry

Département d'anthropologie à l'université de St. Francis Xavier

Numéro de téléphone de la surveillante:

Office: (902) 867-2129

Numéro de téléphone de l'enquêteuse:

Maison: (902) 735-2793

Cellulaire: (902) 968-0074

À qui de droit,

Je m'appelle Carole Perry, et je suis une étudiante d'honneurs en train d'accomplir ma quatrième année à l'Université de St. Francis Xavier. J'aimerais de mener un projet de recherche à l'École acadienne de Pomquet pour ma thèse concernant la liaison entre la langue française et l'identité acadienne. La question de recherche dont je demande est la suivante: est-ce que les enseignants(es) et les membres de l'administration de l'École acadienne de Pomquet pensent que parler, lire et écrire en Français sont important car les étudiants(es) s'en profitent de façon économique ou car la langue fait partie de l'identité acadienne? Pour que ma recherche se développe, votre permission est requise pour que je mène des discussions thématiques avec vous et possiblement aussi des entrevues individuelles. Le but de cette lettre est de vous présenter avec toute l'information que vous auriez besoin pour comprendre les idées qui fondent ma recherche et pour que vous puissiez décider si vous voulez participer.

Le but de mon projet est d'améliorer la capacité de l'école et du CSAP à fournir aux élèves une éducation de la langue française en éclaircissant les perceptions d'enseignants(es) du rôle de la langue française dans la vie des enfants qu'ils (elles) enseignent. Depuis le mois de

septembre, je fais du bénévolat avec le programme d'apprentissage par service communautaire de mon université. Je vais continuer mon travail avec le programme jusqu'au mois de décembre. J'ai été placée dans la classe de troisième année à Mme. Leanne Carter. Mon rôle dans la salle de classe est comme assistante et anthropologue qui observe la culture de la classe et de l'école ; je ne suis pas intéressée à noter les actions individuelles des élèves ou des enseignants(es). J'aide les élèves avec leur maîtrise de la langue française, particulièrement avec la compréhension pendant la lecture. Je ne vais pas mener d'entrevues ou d'observations individuelles avec les élèves, mais je vais utiliser mon expérience de bénévolat pour composer un contexte général de l'atmosphère de l'école. Pendant que j'ai fait mon bénévolat à l'école, j'ai réalisé que la culture de l'école est très riche et qu'elle devrait être notée. Puisque je fais du bénévolat avec des enfants, j'ai obtenu une attestation de vérification de casier judiciaire. J'ai aussi reçu un document de la Province de la Nouvelle-Écosse qui atteste que je ne suis pas sur le registre pour abus d'enfants. J'ai envoyé une lettre aux parents des élèves avec qui je fais du bénévolat pour qu'ils puissent savoir ce qui se passe.

Je souhaite pouvoir mener des groupes de discussion thématique avec des enseignants(es) de l'École acadienne de Pomquet. J'aimerais de pouvoir superviser au moins deux sessions avec des enseignants(es) qui enseignent les élèves du primaire et du secondaire. Par la suite, après ces groupes de discussion thématique, je vais approcher quelques participants(es) et des membres de l'administration et du Conseil scolaire acadien provincial pour des entrevues individuelles. Ces entrevues individuelles devraient se produire en décembre. Je demanderais des questions concernant des sujets comme l'utilisation de la langue française dans l'école, l'importance de parler en Français et les objectifs qui soutiennent les politiques et les programmes de l'école. Ces sessions seront enregistrées électroniquement. Les groupes de discussion thématique dureront environ 45 minutes par session. À un temps qui leur convient, ceux qui participeront aux entrevues individuelles seront demandés de participer à nouveau pour environ 30 à 60 minutes.

Si vous décidez que vous voulez participer, vous devez signer un formulaire qui me donne la permission d'utiliser l'information recueillie comme données pour ma thèse d'honneurs. Toutes informations recueillies aux entrevues resteront confidentielles. Lorsque j'utiliserai l'information pour ma thèse et pour autres travaux scolaires, je ne vais pas utiliser de noms et je vais présenter l'information d'une manière qui protégera votre identité. L'information sera prudemment gardée sur mon ordinateur. Après avoir fini avec ma thèse d'honneurs, je vais

conserver les observations de base recueillies pendant les entrevues pour des travaux scolaires dans le futur.

S'il-vous-plaît, notez que votre participation à ce projet de recherche est volontaire. Vous n'êtes pas obligé de participer aux entrevues ou aux groupes de discussion thématique. Vous pouvez retirer votre participation aux groupes de discussion thématique et aux entrevues individuelles à n'importe quel temps. Il n'y aura pas de conséquences négatives. Mais si vous retirez votre participation, l'information recueillie jusqu'à ce temps sera retenue.

Lorsque ce projet de recherche sera terminé, je vais envoyer une copie électronique de la thèse à l'École acadienne de Pomquet. Je vais faire de mon mieux afin de présenter un sommaire de mes résultats aux enseignants(es), aux membres de l'administration de l'École acadienne de Pomquet et aux autres participants(es). Vous êtes invité à la présentation, mais vous n'êtes pas obligé d'être présent.

Si vous avez des questions à propos de ce projet, vous pouvez vous mettre en contact avec la surveillante de l'enquête, Dr. Clare Fawcett, Département d'anthropologie StFX (867-2129; cfawcett@stfx.ca) ou avec l'Officier d'éthiques du Département d'anthropologie, Dr. Jane McMillan (867-5021; ljmcmill@stfx.ca).

Merci beaucoup,

Carole Louise Perry

Projet de recherche – thèse d'honneurs
Enquêteuse: Carole L. Perry

La Francophonie de l'Acadie: La langue française étant un produit ou marqueur d'identité dans une école acadienne

Formulaire

J'ai lu la lettre d'accord et d'information. Le projet de recherche m'a été profondément expliqué, et maintenant, j'ai bien compris le but de la lettre. En comprenant le projet, le fait que je resterai anonyme, le fait que l'information que je donne à l'enquêteuse restera confidentielle et le fait que je peux me retirer de ce projet de recherche à n'importe quel temps, je suis donc en accord de participer à ce projet.

Signature: _____

Nom en lettres détachées: _____

Date: _____

Signature de l'enquêteuse: _____

Nom en lettres détachées: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D – Discussion Questions for the Focus Groups and Individual Interview
Questions for Rose

Projet de recherche – thèse d'honneurs
Enquêteuse: Carole L. Perry

La Francophonie de l'Acadie: La langue française étant un produit ou marqueur d'identité dans une école acadienne

Discussion thématique : thèmes et questions

A) Les objectifs de plans et programmes de l'école.

- Selon vous, quel est l'objectif idéal de l'école?
- Quel est le processus d'admission à l'école?
- Décrivez une journée régulière à l'école.
- Est-ce que vous diriez que l'école d'aujourd'hui est très différente de celle que vous avez vécue?

B) L'utilisation de la langue française à l'école et à l'extérieur de l'école.

- Quand est-ce que les élèves utilisent la langue française à l'école?
- Est-ce que les élèves veulent parler en Français?
- Pour les élèves, est-ce que le Français est la langue parlée à la maison? Pourquoi?
- Pensez-vous que la qualité de la langue utilisée est bonne?
- Pourquoi pensez-vous qu'apprendre la langue française (parlée, écrite et lue) est important?

C) Activités culturelles et la compréhension de la culture acadienne à l'école et à l'extérieur de l'école.

- Selon vous, qu'est ce qu'être Acadien veut dire?
- Est-ce que vous pensez que les enfants se voient comme Acadien? Pourquoi?
- Est-ce que parler en Français est important/n'est pas important/est le plus important/est le moins important concernant être Acadien?
- Si un élève était intéressé à participer aux activités parascolaires de l'école, que devrait-il faire?
- Est-ce que l'histoire des Acadiens enseignée dans les écoles d'aujourd'hui est traitée d'une manière différente de lorsque vous alliez à l'école?

- Il y a des personnes qui disent que les écoles acadiennes se concentrent trop sur la culture acadienne dans les activités scolaires, particulièrement puisque la population des écoles est Francophone mais n'est pas entièrement Acadienne. Quel est votre avis?

Appendix E – Sylvie's Individual Interview Questions

1. Décrivez une journée régulière à l'école (pour vous).
2. Quand est-ce que les élèves utilisent la langue française à l'école?
3. Est-ce que les élèves veulent parler en Français?
4. Pensez-vous que la qualité de la langue utilisée est bonne?
5. Dans l'élémentaire, combien de temps est dévoué aux cours de Français? Au secondaire?
6. Que sont vos pensées à propos du Français (parlé, lu, écrit) utilisé dans les cours autre que le cours de Français?
7. Quels sont les programmes (en classe), cours et sujets offerts à l'école?
8. Quelles sont les activités parascolaires et programmes offerts à l'école (hors de classe)?
9. De ce que vous savez, d'où viennent les manuels, films et livres de l'école? (par exemple : compagnie, endroit, etc.; Québécois, Acadien)
10. De ce que vous savez, d'où viennent les fonds pour l'école?
11. Quels sont les projets administratifs qui se produisent dernièrement à l'école?
12. Quels sont les projets de développement et d'éducation de la langue française qui se produisent dernièrement à l'école? De l'identité acadienne?
13. Quels sont ceux du passé? Est-ce qu'ils étaient des réussites? Pourquoi?
14. Quel est le processus d'admission d'élèves à l'école?
15. À votre avis, pourquoi est-ce que les parents choisissent d'inscrire leurs enfants à l'école?
16. De ce que vous savez, est-ce que la plupart des élèves qui vont à une école postsecondaire choisissent une éducation en Français ou en Anglais? Pourquoi? (Est-ce que l'école se tient au courant du montant d'élèves qui étudient en Français?)
17. Quelles sortes de carrières ou d'emplois Français sont offertes dans le marché du travail?
18. Que pensez-vous de ces carrières et emplois?
19. Est-ce que c'est important d'avoir une carrière ou un emploi en Français? Pourquoi?
20. Est-ce que c'était important d'avoir une carrière ou un emploi en Français dans le passé? Pourquoi?
21. Quelles sont vos pensées à propos du marché du travail?
22. Quelle est la qualité de langue parlée, écrite et lue qui est requise par le marché du travail?
23. De ce que vous savez, est-ce que les gradués de l'école obtiennent des emplois ou des carrières où ils peuvent utiliser leur Français? Pourquoi?
24. Lorsque vous enseignez vos élèves, est-ce que vous pensez à propos de préparer vos élèves pour un emploi qui exige la connaissance de la langue française?
25. Est-ce qu'indiquer une identité Acadienne cause du tort ou du bien lorsqu'une personne applique pour un emploi (Anglais ou Français)? Pourquoi?
26. Selon vous, qu'est ce qu'être Acadien veut dire?
27. Est-ce que vous pensez que les enfants se voient comme Acadien? Pourquoi?
28. Est-ce que parler en Français est important/n'est pas important/est le plus important/est le moins important concernant être Acadien?

Résumé

Pourquoi pensez-vous qu'apprendre la langue française (parlée, écrite et lue) est important pour le futur?

Appendix F – Alphonse's Individual Interview Questions

1. Décrivez une journée typique à l'école (pour vous).
2. Quel est le processus d'admission d'élèves à l'école?
3. À votre avis, pourquoi est-ce que les parents choisissent d'inscrire leurs enfants à l'école?
4. Quel est le processus d'embauchage d'enseignants?
5. Quels sont les projets administratifs qui se produisent dernièrement à l'école?
6. Quels sont les projets de développement et d'éducation de la langue française qui se produisent dernièrement à l'école? De l'identité acadienne?
7. Quels sont ceux du passé? Est-ce qu'ils étaient des réussites? Pourquoi?
8. Selon vous, quel est l'objectif idéal de l'école?
9. Combien d'élèves sont Acadien? Québécois? Autochtone? Autre Francophone?
10. Combien d'élèves ont quelqu'un qui parle Français à la maison?
11. Combien d'élèves y a-t-il au secondaire? À l'élémentaire?
12. Quel est le nombre moyen de diplômés?
13. Quels sont les programmes (en classe), cours et sujets offerts à l'école?
14. Quelles sont les activités parascolaires et programmes offerts à l'école (hors de classe)?
15. De ce que vous savez, d'où viennent les manuels, films et livres de l'école? (par exemple : compagnie, endroit, etc.; Québécois, Acadien)
16. D'où viennent les fonds pour l'école?
17. Quand est-ce que les élèves utilisent la langue française à l'école?
18. Est-ce que les élèves veulent parler en Français?
19. Pensez-vous que la qualité de la langue utilisée est bonne?
20. Dans l'élémentaire, combien de temps est dévoué aux cours de Français? Au secondaire?
21. De ce que vous savez, est-ce que la plupart des élèves qui vont à une école postsecondaire choisissent une éducation en Français ou en Anglais? Pourquoi? (Est-ce que l'école se tient au courant du montant d'élèves qui étudient en Français?)
22. Quelles sortes de carrières ou d'emplois Français sont offertes dans le marché du travail?
23. Que pensez-vous de ces carrières et emplois?
24. Est-ce que c'est important d'avoir une carrière ou un emploi en Français? Pourquoi?
25. Est-ce que c'était important d'avoir une carrière ou un emploi en Français dans le passé? Pourquoi?
26. Quelles sont vos pensées à propos du marché du travail?
27. Quelle est la qualité de langue parlée, écrite et lue qui est requise par le marché du travail?
28. De ce que vous savez, est-ce que les diplômés de l'école obtiennent des emplois ou des carrières où ils peuvent utiliser leur Français? Pourquoi?
29. Est-ce qu'indiquer une identité Acadienne cause du tort ou du bien lorsqu'une personne applique pour un emploi (Anglais ou Français)? Pourquoi?
30. Selon vous, qu'est ce qu'être Acadien veut dire?
31. Est-ce que vous pensez que les enfants se voient comme Acadien? Pourquoi?
32. Est-ce que parler en Français est important/n'est pas important/est le plus important/est le moins important concernant être Acadien?

Résumé

Pourquoi pensez-vous qu'apprendre la langue française (parlée, écrite et lue) est important pour le futur?

Appendix G – Individual Interview Questions for Yvonne

1. Selon vous, quel est l'objectif idéal de l'école?
2. Décrivez une journée régulière à l'école (pour vous).
3. Est-ce que vous diriez que l'école d'aujourd'hui est très différente de celle que vous avez vécue?
4. Quand est-ce que les élèves utilisent la langue française à l'école? Pourquoi?
5. Est-ce que les élèves veulent parler en Français?
6. Pensez-vous que la qualité de la langue utilisée est bonne?
7. Dans l'élémentaire, combien de temps est dévoué aux cours de Français? Au secondaire?
8. Que sont vos pensées à propos du Français (parlé, lu, écrit) utilisé dans les cours autre que le cours de Français?
9. De ce que vous savez, d'où viennent les manuels, films et livres de l'école? (par exemple : compagnie, endroit, etc.; Québécois, Acadien)
10. De ce que vous savez, est-ce que la plupart des élèves qui vont à une école postsecondaire choisissent une éducation en Français ou en Anglais? Pourquoi?
11. Quelles sortes de carrières ou d'emplois Français sont offertes dans le marché du travail?
12. Que pensez-vous de ces carrières et emplois?
13. Est-ce que c'est important d'avoir une carrière ou un emploi en Français? Pourquoi?
14. Est-ce que c'était important d'avoir une carrière ou un emploi en Français dans le passé? Pourquoi?
15. Quelles sont vos pensées à propos du marché du travail?
16. Quelle est la qualité de langue parlée, écrite et lue qui est requise par le marché du travail?
17. De ce que vous savez, est-ce que les gradués de l'école obtiennent des emplois ou des carrières où ils peuvent utiliser leur Français? Pourquoi?
18. Lorsque vous enseignez vos élèves, est-ce que vous pensez à propos de préparer vos élèves pour un emploi qui exige la connaissance de la langue française?
19. Est-ce qu'indiquer une identité Acadienne cause du tort ou du bien lorsqu'une personne applique pour un emploi (Anglais ou Français)? Pourquoi?
20. Selon vous, qu'est ce qu'être Acadien veut dire?
21. Est-ce que vous pensez que les enfants se voient comme Acadien? Pourquoi?
22. Est-ce que parler en Français est important/n'est pas important/est le plus important/est le moins important concernant être Acadien?
23. Si un élève était intéressé à participer aux activités françaises parascolaires de l'école, que devrait-il faire?
24. Est-ce que l'histoire des Acadiens enseignée dans les écoles d'aujourd'hui est traitée d'une manière différente de lorsque vous alliez à l'école?
25. Il y a des personnes qui disent que les écoles acadiennes se concentrent trop sur la culture acadienne dans les activités scolaires, particulièrement puisque la population des écoles est Francophone mais n'est pas entièrement Acadienne. Quel est votre avis?

Résumé

Pourquoi pensez-vous qu'apprendre la langue française (parlée, écrite et lue) est important pour le futur?

Appendix H – Individual Interview Questions for Odette

Français

1. Est-ce que les enfants de la maternelle connaissent la langue française?
 - Lorsqu'ils arrivent en septembre (pourquoi?)
 - Lorsqu'ils ont fini (pourquoi?)
2. Est-ce que les enfants apprennent la langue française en maternelle?
 - Est-ce que vous enseignez la langue aux enfants?
 - Comment?
(comment présentez-vous la langue au début)
(de façon formelle ou informelle)
(parler, écrite, lu)
3. Est-ce que les enfants veulent apprendre la langue française? (Pourquoi?)
4. Est-ce que les enfants utilisent la langue française?
5. Pourquoi pensez-vous que les enfants sont placés à l'École acadienne de Pomquet?
6. Pourquoi pensez-vous qu'apprendre la langue française est important pour le futur?

Acadien

1. Selon vous, qu'est-ce qu'être Acadien veut dire?
2. Est-ce que vous pensez que les enfants se voient comme Acadien? Pourquoi?
3. Est-ce qu'il y a des activités acadiennes pour les enfants à l'école? Lesquelles?
 - *Si non, pourquoi?*
4. De ce que vous savez, est-ce qu'il y a des activités acadiennes pour les enfants à la maison? Lesquelles?
 - *Si non, pourquoi?*
5. Est-ce que parler en Français est important concernant être Acadien?
 - *(plus ou moins ou pas)*

Appendix I – Individual Interview Questions for Parent Involved in Establishment of the School

1. Pourquoi étiez-vous intéressé à participer dans la lutte pour avoir une école acadienne à Pomquet? Étiez-vous intéressé dans l'identité acadienne ou francophone de l'école?
2. Est-ce que vous identifiez avec la partie acadienne de cette lutte? (famille)
3. Depuis quelle année demeurez-vous à Pomquet/Antigonish?
4. Pour combien de temps est-ce que l'École acadienne de Pomquet existait sous l'Antigonish District School Board?
5. Est-ce que EAP était une école elle-même, même si elle était placée dans une école anglaise? Pouviez-vous graduer d'EAP? Que se passait-il au Canada pendant ce temps?
6. Quand est-ce que l'EAP était établie?
7. Dans quelle école anglaise était placée EAP? Où était située l'école anglaise?
8. Quelles cours étaient offertes en Français (lorsque l'école était une école d'immersion)? En Anglais?
9. J'ai entendu que l'EAP était une école d'immersion pendant ce temps. Qu'est-ce que ça veut dire? Comment est-ce que cette philosophie d'école d'immersion se compare avec la philosophie d'avoir une école francophone?
10. Combien d'élèves étaient inscrits à l'EAP pendant ce temps?
11. Est-ce que n'importe qui pouvaient s'inscrire à l'EAP pendant ce temps?

« Suite à une série d'événements qui nous présentait plusieurs défis et obstacles incontournables, un groupe de parents et d'enseignant(e)s ont lutté contre le gouvernement afin de pouvoir gérer ses affaires académiques et financières. » (EAP website)

12. Quelle était la série d'événements (obstacles et défis) qui semble avoir causer la lutte pour le droit de pouvoir gérer les affaires académiques et financières de l'école?
13. Quand est-ce que cette lutte à commencé? Que se passait-il au Canada pendant ce temps?
14. Qui était impliqué dans cette lutte? Comment on-t-ils (chaque personne/groupe) participé dans la lutte?
15. Comment se sont-ils organisés?
16. Qui est Guy Leblanc? Quelle était son rôle dans cette lutte?
17. Qu'est-ce qu'est «Acadian Affairs » (du gouvernement de la Nouvelle-Écosse)?
18. Qu'est-ce qu'est la Loi de la communauté de Pomquet?
19. Quel amendement était fait à cette loi?
20. Quand est-ce que l'EAP a devenu partie du CSAP? Comment?
21. Quand est-ce que l'école (EAP) a été construite?

22. Pourquoi est-ce que l'école a été construite? Quel était le but d'avoir cette école? Est-ce que le but était d'avoir une école acadienne ou francophone? Comment sont-elles différentes? Est-ce que la communauté de Pomquet aurait supporté l'idée d'avoir une école francophone au lieu d'une école acadienne?
23. Quelles étapes ont été prises pour que l'école soit construite? (Financières? Politique?)
24. Qui était impliqué dans la construction de l'école? Comment on-t-ils (chaque personne/groupe) participé dans la construction de l'école?
25. Comment se sont-ils organisés?
26. Est-ce que n'importe qui peut s'inscrire à l'EAP?
27. Qu'est ce que « ayant-droit » veut dire?
28. Pensez-vous que les élèves qui ne sont pas des ayant-droits, des enfants de parents non-Francophone qui étaient dans les programmes d'immersion et voulaient se joindre aux programmes du CSAP, par exemple, devraient être admis à l'école?
29. Pourquoi pensez-vous qu'apprendre la langue française est important pour le futur?