MODO-TEMPORAL MICRO-SYSTEMS IN CONTEMPORARY ORAL FRENCH

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The ability to use verbal modes and tenses in spoken French differently from standard French is undeniably a phenomenon that is part of social usage, especially among young people. Indeed, faced with a great variety and complexity of modes and tenses in written French, the speaker will tend to use in his speech only grammatical forms strictly necessary for immediate communication. This article is based on a survey carried out over a period from 2005 to 2010, put into understanding with another independent oral corpus, in order to better underline the contrasts. The resulting cross-analysis shows not only the evolution of the language as a sociolect, but also the ability of some speakers to adapt their speech to the minimalist need for interlocution. First, it focuses on the opposition between the modal-temporal organization of written French and of contemporary spoken language. In a second step, it characterizes in this field the differentiation of use in "standard" oral French and in "spontaneous" oral French, to end up delineating the modo-temporal architectonics of the latter. By highlighting the fact that the variations and the trends identified are a social trait and are part of the vitality of the language, thus, this study contributes to a more precise definition of "spontaneous" oral French as a social language and is intended to be an illustration of the contemporary socio-pragmatic use of the French language.

Keywords: *written French, oral French, verbal mode, verbal tenses, socio-pragmatic*

МОДАЛЬНО-ВРЕМЕННЫЕ МИКРОСИСТЕМЫ В СОВРЕМЕННОМ ФРАНЦУЗСКОМ РАЗГОВОРНОМ ЯЗЫКЕ[1]

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Различное употребление наклонений и времен в разговорном французском и стандартном французском языках, несомненно, представляет собой феномен, вписывающийся в социальную норму, в частности, в язык молодежи. Так, несмотря на разнообразие и сложность системы наклонений и времен в письменном французском языке, в устной речи говорящий субъект зачастую использует лишь те грамматические формы, которые необходимы исключительно в конкретной ситуации общения. Настоящая статья опирается на данные исследования, проведенного в период с 2005 по 2010 гг., которые представлены в сравнении с другим, независимым, речевым корпусом, для лучшей интерпретации выявленных контрастов. Результаты такого компаративного анализа свидетельствуют не только об изменениях языка как социолекта, но и о способности некоторых говорящих субъектов адаптировать

свою речь к минималистским потребностям межличностного общения. В статье, во-первых, говорится об оппозиции между модально-временной организацией письменного французского и современного французского разговорного языков. Во-вторых, в ней демонстрируются различия между «стандартным» разговорным французским и «спонтанным» разговорным французским с точки зрения вариативности употребления тех или иных форм. Затем определяется модально-временная архитектоника «спонтанного» разговорного французского языка. В выводах указывается, что выявленные тенденции и отклонения от нормы имеют социальное происхождение и связаны с витальностью французского языка, дается более четкое определение «спонтанного» разговорного французского языка как языка социального. Само же исследование, в целом, призвано проиллюстрировать социопрагматические нормы современного французского языка.

Ключевые слова*: письменный французский язык, разговорный французский язык, наклонение, время, социопрагматика*

If the term sociolinguistics covers extremely diverse research, as P. Encrevé noted nearly half a century ago [Encrevé, 1977: 3], the real use of modes and tenses in spoken French is indeed a phenomenon that is part of social use, especially among young people. Indeed, faced with a great variety and complexity of modes and tenses in French, the speaker will tend to use in his oral speech only the grammatical forms necessary for immediate communication. Thus, this perfectly illustrates the Law of the economy of language for social purposes.

In fact, this study belongs to several "Labovian areas": discourse analysis, social stratification of language, linguistic variation, and, to a lesser extent, relation to language. In this, the article aims to show over a period of five years, not only evolution, but also an aptitude for certain speakers to adapt their speech to the minimalist, but effective need of communication, and to be in a more precise definition of "spontaneous" oral French as a social language.

The investigation conducted during this period (2005-2010) was carried out through a live audio socket with a lapel microphone hidden in public or semi-public places. It is put into perspective with another independent oral corpus, in order to better analyze the contrasts. If it invalidates the Chomskyan conception of a monolectal language, the resulting cross-analysis is intended, above all, to be an illustration of the contemporary socio-pragmatic use of the French language.

The idea of linguistic evolution is not new, and the question of variation has long interested linguists, see A. Meillet [Meillet, 1921] and J. Aitchinson [Aitchinson 1991]. Many of these variationalist approaches focus on spoken language and changes in the use of certain tenses relative to other languages. However, a look at the whole of modal-temporality in oral French proves decisive to better grasp one of the aspects of the "revolution" of the French linguistic system, see G. Guillaume [Guillaume, 1990: 323].

The goal of this paper is to show the fundamental link that exists between the morphology and the evolution of tense use, a link that seem to clarify the variations of use observes in contemporary spoken French, see H. Halonen [Halonen, 2007: 26-28].

Above all, this study will be synchronic, pulling from the *FF* (French francophone) corpus from the Elicop *LANCOM* project (CL), composed of transcribed video recordings, and from two personal corpora made from audio recordings of impromptu conversations in two distinct environments: the Parisian metro (CM) and the recess yards of three primary school in Reims

(France) (CR).

In the first section, the study will analyze the opposition between the organization of tense in written French and that in contemporary oral speech.

Then, the distinctions in this category between "standard" oral French and "spontaneous" oral French will be characterized, with the goal being to show in what way the whole contextualizes "spontaneous" oral French's minimalist modo-temporal architecture, and show that the variations and trends identified are a social phenomenon and a part of the vitality of the language.

1. Written French *vs* "standard" spoken French: a modo-temporal reorganization

For oral French, one should speak of a well and true reorganization of modes and tenses, rather than pure and simple elimination of certain ones.

Instead of the categorical future (FC), in tangible regression since the 1950s, spoken French more or less substitutes [Jeanjean, 1988] a periphrastic future (FP), formed from the verb *aller* (ENG: to go) conjugated in the present tense, with a subducted value [Guillaume, 1939: 47-56], followed by the infinitive of the relevant verb. From a diachronic point of view, this "composed future" is an ancient innovation, but it does not really appear as a grammatical category until the 17th century, in Maupas's *Grammaire* [Maupas, 1625: 187-188], see also M.L. Wales [Wales, 1982]. It was in the 18th century that the totally inadept term "*futur prochain*" (ENG: soon or next future) was introduced. Certain contemporary school grammars refer to it as "*futurproche*" (ENG: near future) or "*futur de proximité*" (ENG: future of that which is in proximity), or even "*future 2*" (ENG: future 2) [Genouvrier and Gruwez, 1987] [Dupré and al., 1995]. Whatever the case, the statistics established by the elaboration of "elementary French" haveshown that already in the 1950s, the circumlocution *aller + infinitive* took the place of the simple future over a third of the time [Gouhenheim& al., 1956].

Likewise, to express the immediate past or a past action that has turned into the present, oral French uses a periphrastic past (PP), formed from the present tense of the verb *venir* (WASV) and followed by, as in the previous case, the infinitive of the relevant verb:

(1)   [CL] FF026_0-26-3
    – <Bnr=34>   alors euh on compte bien sur votre votre originalité
    – <Fnr=35>   <unclear> je tâcherai <unclear> il y a pas <intonation> de
                 problème<{rires}>
    – <Bnr=36>   par exemple ?
    – <F nr=37> mais moi je suis je c'est ce que je **viens de** vous dire je suis pas <intonation> là
                 pour proposer euh pourl'instant des actions je veux d'abord euh je je cherche
                 à àpromouvoir euh les usagers donc <pause> des projets […]
        English Gloss:
    – <Bnr=34>   so, um, we're of course counting on your, your [formal] originality
    – <Fnr=35>   <unclear> I'll try <unclear> there's not <intonation> a problem <laughs>
    – <Bnr=36>   for example?
    – <Fnr=37>   but personally, I am, I it's what I **just** told you, I'm not <intonation> here to
                 suggest uh for right now, actions I want to first uh I I'm looking to promote
                 uh the uses and so <pause> the projects […]

When it comes to the simple past (PS), it is only ever occasionally encountered in spoken language, in chosen speeches, presentations, narratives directing inspired by certain types of

texts that use an alternative of IP/PS. Its near extinction is essentially due to its absence in situations of enunciation, but also due to its specific plural desinential morphemes. Although, its relative use in the speech of children (5–12 years old) is symptomatic of the period during which school readings and writings are focused on fables and fairytales. Still, studies have shown that its usage declines with age (also see *infra*).

Due to the fact of the weakening of its extensive aspect[2], the anterior past (PA) has disappeared, sometimes in favor of the *plus-que-parfait* (PQP) conditioned by IP, and more generally by PC.

From a strictly morphological standpoint, PC is a "composed present" tense, and since it is employed for an action whose consequences are felt in the present and persists in real time, it is constantly linked with the present tense (a generic tense for conversation): PC thus acquires, in spoken French, the status of a past tense. In another vein, the extension of PC's realm of use allows it to easily take the place of PS, see M. Wilmet [Wilmet, 1997: 369] and M. Antiniou [Antiniou, 2005]:

(2)   [CL] FF027_14-27-32
   – <L nr=1>   alors tiens t'as vu le dernier film de Spielberg là Jurassic Park ?
   – <F nr=2>   oui j' <intonation> ai vu je suis allé le voir il y a pas <intonation> longtemps il y a deuxjours
   – <L nr=3>   ah il y a deux jours ben moi je suis allé le jour de la sortie là levingt
   – <F nr=4>   ouais moi ce que j'ai bien aimé c'était euh quand le dinosaure **a commencé** à avec éternuer la fille là <intonation>

English Gloss:
   – <Lnr=1>   so here you've seen that latest Spielberg movie Jurassic Park ?
   – <Fnr=2>   yes I <intonation> have seen I went to see it not too <intonation> long ago, two days ago
   – <Lnr=3>   oh two days ago well I went the day of the premier, the twentieth
   – <Fnr=4>   yeah, what I really liked was uh when the dinosaur **started** with sneezing that girlthere

Oral French thus aptly expresses, first off, present, past, and future temporalities with forms constructed on a single and morphologically simple principle, the paradigm of the present[3]:

		aux.	*rad.-	*- dés	aux.'
PR	*je marche*	–	+	PR	–
PC	*j'ai marché*	PR	+	QN acc. = Part.ps.	–
FP	*je vais marcher*	PR	+	QN ina. = Inf.	–
PP	*je viens de marcher*	PR	+	QN ina. = Inf.	–

Tab. 1

However, this first organization does not allow the speaker to express neither the time of imagination nor that of memory; this means that the system completes itself by creating a

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[2]   The fact that PA is no longer felt as a "tense" allowing a forward aiming past reality is perceptible since Middle French [Wilmet, 1970 : 365-366].

[3]   The use of the past participle in PC and INF for FP is explained by the fact that for the former, the quasi-nominal mode (QN) is the expression of the accomplished, and for the latter, the unaccomplished. The unaccomplished QN used for PP is justified, however, by the diathesis made by the preposition and who has the function of reconstituting an element of the subducted verb's results.

categorical future (FC) and a hypothetical future (FH) based respectively on the paradigm of the present and the imperfect, to which is added IP and complementarily, PQP:

		aux.	*rad.-	*- dés.	aux.'
FC	*je marcherai*	–	+	QN ina. = Inf.	PR
FH	*je marcherais*	–	+	QN ina. = Inf.	IP

IP	*je marchais*	–	+	IP	–
PQP	*j'avais marché*	IP	+	QN acc. = Part.ps.	–

Tab. 2

Since this constructs an image of inversed time towards an expecting future, the need to express something imaginary in strict conversation is not in fact an absolute necessity, although still felt; nevertheless, the speaker clearly uses the two prospective tenses. Though, their "values" are diminished in written French.

When considering the realm of the probable, the use of FC – while restricted in oral speech – is justified because it remains strictly back-to-back from the future part to the present, even if FC by nature refuses the possibility to accomplish this. In oral speech, FC is the expression of what is possible within a predetermined future:

(3)   [CL] FF019_1-19-1

–<N nr=6>   bon je dis euh je te remercie de m'avoir invité pendant les vacances <pause> c'est super

– <Vnr=7>   ah, mais c'est normal un copain comme toi on n'en voit pas tous les jours <pause>

– <Nnr=8>   bon si alors j'**arriverai** le le trois février euh à à quinze heures heures mais alors je te demande comment on fait pour arriver chez toi de de la gare ?

English Gloss:

– <N nr=6>   Well I say uh thanks for inviting me over vacation <pause> it's awesome

– <Vnr=7>   Ah, but it's only normal a friend like you we don't see one another everyday <pause>

– <Nnr=8>   Well so **if I arrive** on the the 3rd of February un at at 3PM but so I ask you how can one get to your house from the train station ?

FC may be confined to certainties, to the point where easily alternates with FP:

(4) [CL] FF019_1-19-7

– <Nnr=11>   t'es enrhumé ? où est-ce que tu as attrapé ça?

– <Mnr=12>   ben c'est hier dans le train […]

– <Nnr=13>   écoute c'est pas <intonation> grave il y a un excellent médecin à côté de chez nous on te **fera** des tisanes et tout ce qu'il faut on **va** te **soigner**

English Gloss:

– <N nr=11> You have a cold? Where'd you catch that?

– <M nr=12> Well, it's yesterday in the train […]

– <N nr=13> Listen, it's not <intonation> a big deal there's an excellent doctor next to out house we **will make** you some herbal tea and all that it takes we **will heal** you

However, unlimited on the future side of things [Moignet, 1981: 81–83], FH finds its reason for use as a future tense interior to the present [Guillaume, 1939: 185]. Whether its uses are

confined by a limit separating PR from the past as the future in the past, or classified under PR as a prospective imaginary tense, FH remains relatively rare. Moreover, oral speech does not make use of all the effects achieved by the decline in level. FH is essentially confined in a modal value of eventuality:

(5) [CL] FF100_100-2

– <Mnr=65> <M regarde sur son ordinateur> ah les vols effectivement i/l y a vraiment aucun problème et l'hôtel <pause> ouais ben en fait il est en demande en dans tous les types de chambres

<Enr=66>   d'accord

<Mnr=67>   donc honnêtement ça m'**étonnerait** qu/e ça passe

English Gloss :

– <M nr=65> <M looks on his computer> ah the flights, right, there's really no problem and the hotel <pause> yeah well actually there's a lot of demand for all types of rooms

– <E nr=66> Okay

– <M nr=67> So honestly it **would surprise** me i/f it works out

The use of oral IP is justified inasmuch as it is a past that embraces the development of the verb [Guillaume, 1929: 67-70], which can be conceived as the transposition in the past era from the image of PR, as noticed by H. Fan [Fan, 2005: 11]. For that matter, it is for that reason the speaker, considering that the protease of the hypothetical situation indicates a conditional modality as shown by the initiator *si* (ENG: if), that then substitutes or the prospective FH, while the IP actually translates the logical anteriority that exists between the hypothesis and the outcome:

(6) [CL] FF034_1a-34-3

– <Gnr=25> […] notre fils euh Lucien qui a douze ans <pause> euh revient de l'école vers vers dix-sept heures quinze dix-sept heures trente <pause> donc si vous **pourriez** arriver vers cette heure-là ce serait très bien c'est possible pour vous ?

English Gloss:

– <Gnr=25> Our son uh Lucien who's twelve years old <pause> uh gets home from school around five fifteen, five thirty <pause> so if you **could** arrive around that time, that would be great is that possible for you?

The fact that IP consists of the past tense mentally constructed from the present, that it is interpreted not only as a time excluded and unrecognized [Moignet, 1981: 74], but indirectly it entails the diminishing of its "values" of oral use; *cf*. J.L. Bybee& O. Dahl [Bybee and Dahl, 1989: 74], and J.L. Bybee [Bybee, 1990: 11]. When it strictly represents the past, it associates the unaccomplished (perspective tense) and the accomplished (retrospective tense), but contrary to the four uses possible in written French, only the first two spontaneously appear in spoken French. The third, equivalent to PS, and the fourth uses are substituted by PC:
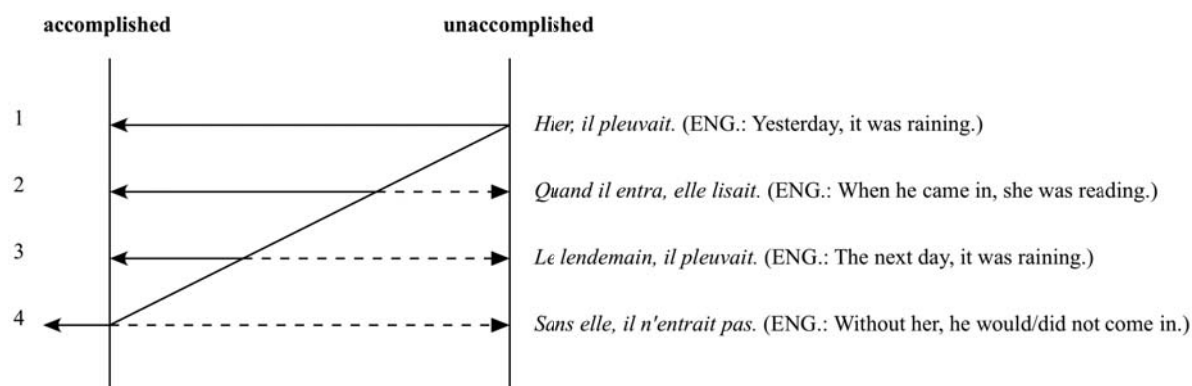
Fig. 1 (from G. Moignet [Moignet, 1981 : 79])

The meanings come together when the part to accomplish is null, (see for example, [CL] FF019_1-19-7):

(7)   [CL] FF019_1-19-13
 – <E1 nr=3> ben moi dans l'ensemble j'ai bien aimé ça retrace bien l'histoire des mineurs
 – <E2 nr=4> ah bon ben justement moi je **trouvais** que c'**était** un film euh un peu moyen je ne l'ai pas trop aimé moi je trouvais qu'il ne **retraçait** pas tellement ce qui se passait avant enfin surtout dans dans la scène où il y a la fille qui se lave devant tout le monde qu'est-ce que t'en as pensé toi ?

English Gloss :
 – <E1nr=3> Well for me overall I quite liked that it tells well the history of miners
 – <E2nr=4> Ah well in fact, I **found** that it **was** a uh a little average for a movie I didn't really like it I found that it didn't tell really what happened before well especially in the scene where there's that girl who washes herself in front of everyone what did you think of that huh?

And since it is a distancing past tense, whose use is shown in the firstvalue, in the measure that the speaker, while using IP in place of enunciated PR, rejects his act in a finished past, not susceptible to being contradicted, as shown by occurrence (8a), in opposition to (8b) in which there is a PR and a distance-compensating FH:

(8a)   [CL] FF019_1-19-1
 – <B nr=2>   ah salut Mathieu comment ça va ?
 – <M nr=3>   ça va bien oui ben je te **téléphonais** pour te remercier pour euh ta lettre d'invitation

English Gloss:
 – <B nr=2>   Oh hi Mathieu how are you?
 – <M nr=3>   I'm fine yes well I **called** you to thank you for your invitation

(8b)   [CL] FF019_1-19-2
 – <B nr=3>   ah salut Mathieu comment ça va ?
 – <M nr=4>   ça va bien ouais <pause> ben je te **téléphone** parce que j'ai reçu ta lettre et je **voudrais** te remercier pour l'invitation

English Gloss:
 – <B nr=3>   Oh hi Mathieu how are you?
 – <M nr=4>   I'm fine yeah <pause> well **I'm calling** because I got your letter and I **want** to thank you for the invitation

The PQP appears orally essentially as a past tense to IP, that is to say as a "present of past" past tense in speech that references events that pass from one background to others (see [CL] FF027_14-27-17). On the other hand, the expression of the unreal past not being – with a few exceptions – in the realm of oral speech, it is not used for its modal qualities in the hypothetical system.

Other than the present tense, the other SUB tenses are as follows in oral French. If the use of the athematic prospective subjunctive is necessary for a speaker, it also permits the direction of conversation (or speech) to develop towards the future [Guillaume, 1947: 39-43], in a virtual dimension going from the internal limit of the possible out to the external limit of the probable. However, its usage only really concerns pre-existing verbs, whose forms are specific (*avoir, faire, pouvoir, aller…*):

(9)　　[CL] FF100_100-3
　　– <E1nr=83> j/e pense que ça doit être février janvier voilà i/l faudrait qu'à la fin on **puisse** terminer
　　– <Mnr=84> bah à la limite juste avant qu'il s'en **aille** voilà vous **fassiez** euh
　　– <E1nr=85> que vous m/e **fassiez** le r/ejoindre
　　– <Mnr=86> voilà
　　– <E1nr=87> quitte à c/e que j/e **revienne** avec sa bagnole à c/e moment-là euh <long_ pause><unclear> en fin on verrait à c/e moment-là
　　English Gloss:
　　– <E1nr=83> I think that it needs to be February January there it should be at the end that we **can** finish Bah at the very
　　– <Mnr=84> least just before he **leaves**, there, you **will/make** uh
　　– <E1nr=85> You**make** me rejoin him
　　– <Mnr=86> That's it
　　– <E1nr=87> Even if I **come back** with his car at that time uh <long_pause><unclear> well in the end we would see then

and the verbs that end in *-er*, whose forms are similar to those of the IND:

(10)　[CL] FF034_1a-34-1b
　　– <A nr=2>　allô bonjour madame ! je vous appelle pour l'annonce […]
　　– <M nr=3>　ah oui oui oui ! je suis ravie que vous me **téléphoniez** étant donné que c'est assez urgent je souhaiterais quelqu'un <pause> de disponible pour euh à partir de ce mercredi de cette semaine
　　English Gloss:
　　– <Anr=2>　Hi hello ma'am! I am calling you for the ad
　　– <Mnr=3>　Ah yes yes yes! I'm so happy that you **called** seeing as it is quite urgent I would like someone <pause> free to uh leave from this Wednesday of this week

So, in a "standard" spoken register, the prospective SUB regroups all the uses and IND

tenses, most commonly used are the PR, IP, PC, PP, FP[4], FH, and to a lesser extent, FC[5]. This is due to the fact that for PC, PP, and FP, the speaker establishes semiological links between those stated and PR. However, for FC, this link – now imperceptible because of the fully realized esoteric subduction of the auxiliary *avoir*– is much more spread out in its occurrence, or even absent entirely. So, it is thepositional links that are at play for IP (as "the present of the past") and FH (as "interior future in the present").

All in all, the principle tense modifications in personal modes between written and spoken French are as follows:

Written French			**Oral French**		
IND FC	*je marcherai*	→	IND FC	*je marcherai*	[ʒ'maʁʃ'ʁe]
			IND FP	*je vais marcher*	[ʒ'vemaʁʃe]
			IND PR = PF	*je marche*	[ʒ'maʁʃ]
IND PS	*je marchai*	→	IND PC	*j'ai marché*	[ʒemaʁʃe]
			IND PP	*je viens de marcher*	[ʒ'vjɛ̃d'maʁʃe]
IND PA	*j'eus marché*	→	IND PC	*j'ai marché*	[ʒemaʁʃe]
			IND PQP	*j'avais marché*	[ʒavemaʁʃe]
SUB Ps	*j'aie marché*	→	SUB Ps	*j'aie marché*	[ʒemaʁʃe]
			SUB PR	*je marche*	[ʒ'maʁʃ]
SUB IP	*je marchasse*	→	SUB PR	*je marche*	[ʒ'maʁʃ]
SUB PQP	*j'eusse marché*	→	SUB PR	*je marche*	[ʒ'maʁʃ]
			SUB Ps	*j'aie marché*	[ʒemaʁʃe]

Tab. 3

Further represented by the figures done by G. Guillaume [Guillaume, 1947: 22–40] concerning the architecture of personal modes in written French, the following figurescorrespond to the oral relations[6]:

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[4]   This here should also be put in relation to the "present of future" (PF) (see Guillaume, 1939: 184):
(10')   [CL] FF032_6b-32-6b
     – <P3 nr=180>   donc là vous avez un départ le quinze oui <pause>
     – <P2 nr=181>   oui le quinze c'est vendredi <pause> moi je **suis** en vacances le seize
     English Gloss :
     – <P3 nr=180>   so there you have a departure date for the fifteenth yes <pause>
     – <P2 nr=181>   yes the fifteenth that's Friday <pause> me I **am** on vacation the sixteenth

[5]   According to M. Harris [Harris, 1978, 1988] and R. Posner [Posner, 1996], the generalizing futures are today in a rivalry with the analytical futures in the spoken occidental romance languages. For J.L. Bybee& *al.* [Bybee and *al.*, 1994] and L. Emirkanian& D. Sankoff [Emirkanian and Sankoff, 1985], they are replaced. And for S. Fleischman [Fleishman, 1982], more than replaced, they are obsolete. Despite the different considerations, all consider these futures (IND FS in French) to have lost their place as a temporal operator to analytical futures (IND FP in French).

[6]   The variations are less important for the quasi-nominal mode: we note only the complete disappearance of the gerundive. As for the conversational mode, the imperative, though only its so-called "present" form, is used.
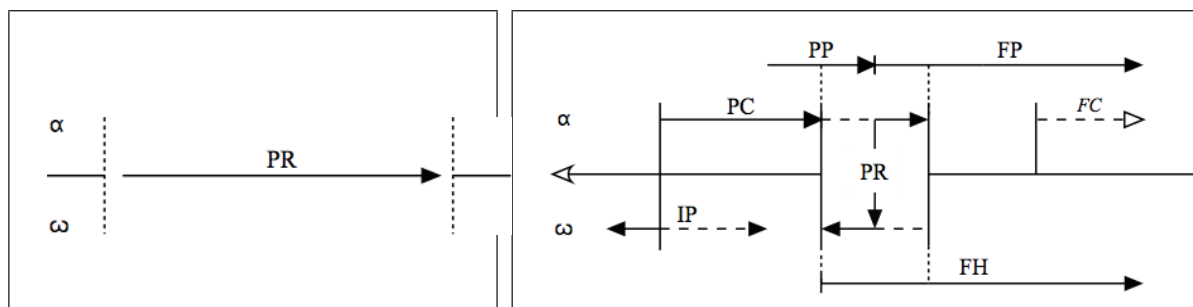
Fig. 2: SUB

Fig. 3: IND

2. "Standard" speech *vs* "spontaneous" speech: two micro-systems of oral French

Up to this point only "standard" speech was analyzed in relation to written French. Yet, it is pertinent to take into consideration the variety of registers found under the umbrella of oral speech[7]. We can state that contemporary oral French employs essentially two registers of speech[8], one that can be called "standard" and the other, "spontaneous." The distinction resides in the context of their use.

"Standard" oral French appears essentially in communication situations decided in advance, that is to say more generally when the speaker is being critically observed (either in reality or imagined) by a third person (in an informal interview, debate, assembly, meeting…), in which there are overt markers of micro-segmental hesitation that accompanies the speakers task of formulation or reformulation (see D. McKelvie [McKelvie, 1998]; M. Candea [Candea, 2000] and S. Henry, [Henry, 2005]). In contrast, "spontaneous" French is present when the speaker feels like he is on equal footing with his conversation partner or like the social game is absent or irrelevant (dialogue between pairs, child or adolescent conversation, emergency situations…). In this register no constraining factor intervenes while enunciating. The micro-segmental markers are more likely silent pauses, suspensions of speech as well noticed M.A. Morel [Morel, 2000]. What's more, they are accompanied by pronounces changes in intonation, with the function of dramatizing the start of speech.

For the SUB, "spontaneous" French does not differ from the "standard" (see *supra*). Nevertheless, in one part, it is no longer felt as a mode expressing the virtual, but is more likely induced by the *habitus* (M.-E. Damar, [Damar, 2009: 13]); in another part, once there is a doubt in the morphology (notably for "third group" verbs), there is a clear tendency that the speaker will produce a "deviant" *analogical* form, such as *j*alle, tu *pars, il *réussit, elle *voye, vous *faisez, ils *soyent*, forms that are found in the [CM] and [CR] corpora:

(11)   [CR]4_060604a
   – <E1>   euh t'étais pas là c'matin <pause> e/ pourquoi <intonation> ?
   – <E2>   i fallait qu' j'**alle** au dentiste <pause> euh j'vais <sans_liaison> avoir un appareil

English Gloss :
   – <E1>   uh you weren't there this morning <pause> e/ why <intonation>?
   – <E2>   It was necessary that I **go** to the dentist <pause> uh I'm gonna have a device [put in]

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[7]   See D. Biber&*al.* [Bilber, 1999: 24] for English and F. Luzzati& D. Luzzati [Luzzati and Luzzati, 1986] for the distinction between *oral* and *familiar*.

[8]   For the notion of *continuum* of spoken registers, see M. Arrivé&*al.* [Arrivé and al., 1986: 597], R. Ball [Ball, 2000: 4-5], A. Stein [Stein, 1998; 2007: dia. 12-14] and S. Wachs [Wachs, 2005].

(12)   [CM]7_130226t
– <E0xxx>   <confus>
– <E1>   i/l s'peut qu/e j'**pars** <sans-liaison> au ski c't'hiver
– <E2>   trop bien
– <E1>   ouais <pausette> ça l/efait.
English Gloss:
– <E0xxx>   <muffled>
– <E1>   I might be that I **go** skiing this winter
– <E2>   too cool
– <E1>   yeah <small pause> that does it

(13)   [HC Chaumont] Adult/adult 30/11/2016
– <E1>   on s'voit d'main matin en classe <pause> c'est possible <pause> pour l'analyse <pause> après <intonation> ?
– <E2>   faut que j'**voye** <[vwɑj]> <pausette> mais j'peux pas après cinq heures et quart <[A]>
English Gloss:
– <E1>   we'll see each other in class tomorrow <pause> it's possible <pause> for the analysis <pause> after <intonation>?
– <E2>   must ***seen** <pause> but I can't after five fifteen <[A]>

For IND, the speaker further restricts his range of tenses. In this way, in "spontaneous" French, three tenses share the vast majority of the past, present, and future tenses: PC, PR, and FP. This conforms to the work of S. Fleichamn (1983) who sees a correlation between the development of composed forms and the decline of simple forms[9]. This up-and-coming extreme minimal system is as follows:
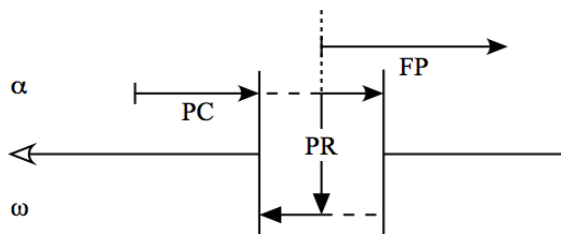

Fig. 4

One may now truly speak of "generic tenses", to the extent that their use corresponds to the effective unconscious installation of a second microsystem that, while extremely reduced, wholly satisfies the vital expressive needs of conversation[10].

The two oral corpora [CM] and [CR] support this tendency. The conversations between

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[9]   She postulates that the programmed disappearance of the IND PS will be followed by the disappearance of FS [Fleishman, 1983:203].

[10]   From a morpho-phonologic standpoint, in the face of PR, the almost "generic" use of PC and FP represents an important energy-saving technique. Indeed, the differences between *avoir*("to have", the auxiliary being generalized) and *aller*("to go") are minimal and complementary: with only four vowel and 3 consonant phonemes, "spontaneous" oral French constructs the entire minimal personal modo-temporal system.
        What's more, "spontaneous" oral French voluntarily uses the substitution of the indefinite pronoun *on* in the 4th person as well as the 1st person. We are thus approaching a near paradigmatic uniformization, undoubtably corresponding to general tendency toward constructing an opposition between *you/not-you*.

children [CR] recorded during recesses show that the three previously named verbs clearly distinguish themselves:

		2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	*Σ tps*
IND	**PR**	81	72	93	102	72	83	**503**
	PF	6	5	8	7	5	9	40
	FC	8	14	10	13	9	11	65
	FP	32	28	27	35	31	37	**190**
	FH	9	2	5	6	4	8	34
	IP	16	21	18	25	17	21	118
	PS	1	2	1	0	3	0	7
	PC	44	47	45	61	38	59	**294**
	PP	0	2	1	4	4	1	12
	PQP	0	0	2	0	3	1	6
SUB	**PR**	8	11	4	6	1	10	40
IMP	**(PR)**	7	11	13	12	9	11	63
		212	215	227	271	196	251	**1372**

Tab. 4a: Corpus Reims [CR]

		2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	*% tps*
IND	**PR**	38.21%	33.49%	40.97%	37.64%	36.73%	33.07%	**36.66%**
	PF	2.83%	2.33%	3.52%	2.58%	2.55%	3.59%	2.92%
	FC	3.77%	6.51%	4.41%	4.80%	4.59%	4.38%	4.74%
	FP	15.09%	13.02%	11.89%	12.92%	15.82%	14.74%	**13.85%**
	FH	4.25%	0.93%	2.20%	2.21%	2.04%	3.19%	2.48%
	IP	7.55%	9.77%	7.93%	9.23%	8.67%	8.37%	8.60%
	PS	0.47%	0.93%	0.44%	0.00%	1.53%	0.00%	0.51%
	PC	20.75%	21.86%	19.82%	22.51%	19.39%	23.51%	**21.43%**
	PP	0.00%	0.93%	0.44%	1.48%	2.04%	0.40%	0.87%
	PQP	0.00%	0.00%	0.88%	0.00%	1.53%	0.40%	0.44%
SUB	**PR**	3.77%	5.12%	1.76%	2.21%	0.51%	3.98%	2.92%
IMP	**(PR)**	3.30%	5.12%	5.73%	4.43%	4.59%	4.38%	4.59%
		15.45%	15.67%	16.55%	19.75%	14.29%	18.29%	

Tab. 4b: Corpus Reims [CR]

The expression of the "future" is completed by the IND FC and, to a lesser extent, by the IND PF:

(14) [CR] 1_091002m

 – <E1>   toi <intonation>, tu fais quoi <pause>, l'/ c'week-end ?
 – <E2>   j'**vais faire** d' la musique <pause> et d' la piscine <pause longue> au conservatoire
 – <E1>   avec madame [***] <intonation> ? com' moi, <pause> mais j'ai arrêté pour l' judo
 – <E3>   moi <pause longue> on **ira** à <pause> **v/va voir** mon papy

– <E1>   i/il est où ?
– <E3>   i sont à Barby <E1 + E2 {rires}> euh à R'thel <pause> enfin euh à côté
English Gloss:
– <E1>   you <intonation> you're doing what <pause> this weekend?
– <E2>   I **will do** music <pause> and swimming <long pause> at the conservatory
– <E1>   with Mrs. [***] <intonation>? like me, <pause> but I stopped for judo
– <E3>   me <long pause> we **will go** to **will see** my grandpa
– <E1>   where ishe?
– <E2>   they're at Barby <E1 + E2 laugh[11]> uh at R'thel <pause> well uh next to

While for IND FH, it is most often used to indicate detachment, notably with *falloir* ("must"):
(15)   [CR] 2_051210m
– <E1>   i **faudrait** faire un circuit avec l'alu
– <E2>   ouais mais l'alu **faudrait** qui soit comment <intonation> ?
– <E1>   sur le carton <inaudible>
– <E2>   c'est Chloé qui m'a pris le carton <pauselongue> de toute façon <inaudible>
                c'est l'alu qui est important <intonation> ?
– <E1>   l'alu c'est un métaux
English Gloss:
– <E1>   you **should** make a circuit with aluminum
– <E2>   yeah but the aluminum **should** be how <intonation>?
– <E1>   on the cardboard <inaudible>
– <E2>   Chloe's the one who took the cardboard <longpause> anyways <inaudible>
                it's the aluminum that's important <intonation>?
– <E1>   aluminum, it's ametal

The complementary usage of IND IP (8.60%) to reference the past is explained by the need to situate a playful instance in a prior narration so as to accentuate its credibility. As for PQP, it is used for an accomplished past, thus substituting for PS:
(16)   [CR] 1_091002a
– <E1>   et alors <pause> quand j'suis <liaison [z]> été à la [cantine] <inaudible >
                j'**avais vu** m'sieur [***]. I'm'**avait dit** ell'march'pas ta carte <pause> elle est
                tordue. <pause> J'lui ai dit ah non euhj'ai rien fait je jure hein
– <E2>   t/ t'as mangé <intonation> ?
– <E1>   ouais ouais /euh/ j'ai eu la trouille <pause> mais i m'a fait passer
English Gloss:
– <E1>   and so <pause> when I <liaison [z]> was in the cafeteria <inaudible> I **had
                seen** Mr. [***]. he **had told** me it didn't work his card <pause> it's messed
                up. <pause> I told him ah no uh I did nothing I swear huh
– <E2>   you ate <intonation>?
– <E1>   yeah yeah uh I was freaked out but he let me go

---

[11]   Caused by a disambiguation with Barbie doll.

(17)   [CR] 3_031508a

– <E1>   Qu'est-ce que tu peux me dire à propos de cett/e image ?

– <E2>   le chasseur, i voulait pas que sa fille alle vers le loup : i/l avait peur. Mais la p'tit' fille le soir, ell' **était sortie** quand mêm' <sans pause> pa'c/e que i/l avait froid le loup <pausette> et i/l avait faim.

English Gloss:

– <E1>   What can you tell me about this image?

– <E2>   the hunter, he didn't want his daughter going towards the wolf: he was scared. But the little girl that night, she went out anyway <no pause> because he was cold, the wolf <small pause> and he was hungry

The same "process" appears in the corpus [CM], however with several variations due to easily comprehensible factors: notably, age, the subject of conversation, and the types of interaction (man/woman), which barely appear - if at all - in [CR]:

		2005	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	*Σ tps*
	PR	102	109	121	118	135	117	**702**
	PF	2	2	4	2	3	4	17
	FC	7	9	7	6	8	7	44
	FP	38	45	43	40	52	47	**265**
IND	**FH**	2	2	1	0	2	1	8
	IP	36	33	37	30	43	35	**214**
	PS	2	0	0	1	1	0	4
	PC	57	67	71	66	79	64	**404**
	PP	7	10	8	11	9	13	58
	PQP	1	1	0	0	3	2	7
SUB	**PR**	8	5	7	10	7	6	43
IMP	**(PR)**	22	28	25	23	26	17	141
	Occ.	284	311	324	307	368	313	**1907**

Tab. 5a: Corpus Metro [CM]

		2005	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	*% tps*
IND	**PR**	35.92%	35.05%	37.35%	38.44%	36.68%	37.38%	**36.81%**
	PF	0.70%	0.64%	1.23%	0.65%	0.82%	1.28%	0.89%
	FC	2.46%	2.89%	2.16%	1.95%	2.17%	2.24%	2.31%
	FP	13.38%	14.47%	13.27%	13.03%	14.13%	15.02%	**13.90%**
	FH	0.70%	0.64%	0.31%	0.00%	0.54%	0.32%	0.42%
	IP	12.68%	10.61%	11.42%	9.77%	11.68%	11.18%	**11.22%**
	PS	0.70%	0.00%	0.00%	0.33%	0.27%	0.00%	0.21%
	PC	20.07%	21.54%	21.91%	21.50%	21.47%	20.45%	**21.19%**
	PP	2.46%	3.22%	2.47%	3.58%	2.45%	4.15%	3.04%
	PQP	0.35%	0.32%	0.00%	0.00%	0.82%	0.64%	0.37%
SUB	**PR**	2.82%	1.61%	2.16%	3.26%	1.90%	1.92%	2.25%
IMP	**(PR)**	7.75%	9.00%	7.72%	7.49%	7.07%	5.43%	7.39%
	Occ.	14.89%	16.31%	16.99%	16.10%	19.30%	16.41%	

Tab. 5b: Corpus Metro [CM]

We see that in [CM], the expression of the "future" is done primarily by IND FP (13.90%) and largely replaces the categorical (2.31%) or present (0.89%) forms:

(18)   [CM] 14_080316a
– <E1>   <E1 au téléphone> d'accord <pause> euh <pause> non non <pause> pas vr/vraiment <inaudible>
– <E2>   <{conversation inaudible}>
– <E1>   et Juju / ell' est <sans liaison> encore avec toi <intonation> ?
– <E2>   <{conversation inaudible}>
– <E1>   d'accord ok <pause> v/vous vous **allez manger** <intonation> ?
– <E2>   <{conversation inaudible}>
– <E1>   et où qu'on s'retrouve <intonation> ? <pause> pa'ce qu'i a <[ija]> <inaudible [name]> qui **vou/va v'nir** aussi

English Gloss:
– <E1>   <E1 on the phone> okay <pause> uh <pause> no no <pause> not really <inaudible>
– <E2>   <inaudible conversation>
– <E1>   and Juju, she's still with you <intonation>?
– <E2>   <inaudible conversation>
– <E1>   okay, okay <pause> you you **are going to eat** <intonation>?
– <E2>   <inaudible conversation>
– <E1>   and we meet where? <pause> because there's <inaudible [name]> who **you/ will come** too

(19)   [CM] 15_103023b
–<E1>   <E1 contrôleur dans le train> vo' titr' de transport, s'il vous plait.
–<E2>   <{conversation avec autrui}>
–<E1>   <à E2> votre billet ? Vous l'avez ou pas <intonation> ?
–<E2>   si <pausette> mais non j'sort/ j' **vais** pas **sortir** ma tarque [verlanisation of *carte* (for Navigo Card) and metathesis] <pause longue> i a pas besoin <pausette> c'est l'ouiquène

English Gloss:
– <E1>   <E1 train conductor> tickets, please.
– <E2>   <conversation with someone>
– <E1>   <to E2> your ticket? You have it or not <intonation>?
– <E2>   yes <small pause> but no I get/ I **will** not **get** out my card <long pause> there's no need <small pause> it's the weekend

Similarly, to express the past, the use of IND PC (21.19%) is supplemented by IND IP (11.22%). This larger inclination to use the imperfect is explained by the fact that the recordings were embellished with narratives; often the teenager showed the need to justify a current action with a previous situation:

(20)   [CM] 14_042366a
–<E1>   t'**as fait** quoi <intonation> ?
–<E2>   j'**ai été** voir mon reup [verlan, or inversion of the word *père*, ENG: *father*] <pause> à [***]
– <E1>   oh l'aut'

– <E2>   ben /euh/ à [***] /euh/ on **savait** pas trop quoi/ c' qu'on peut faire quoi <pause> alors on **traînait**/ on **a traîné** la journée

– <E1>   i a rien <pausette> moi si j' devrais habiter là je me tue quoi, putain <intonation> !

English Gloss:

– <E1>   you **did** (PC) what <intonation>?

– <E2>   I **went** (PC) to see my dad <pause> in [***]

– <E1>   oh the other

– <E2>   well uh in [***] uh we **didn't know** (IMP) what to really do/ we can do what <pause> so we **hung** (IMP) around/ we **hung** (PC) around all day

– <E1>   there's nothing <small pause> if I had to live there, I'd kill myself fuck <intonation>!

(21)   [CM] 9_101203m

– <E1>   hier j'**étais** en boite et j' l'**ai revu**

– <E2>   ouais <pause> alors <intonation> ! comment qu'i/l **était** <intonation> ?

<E1>   <inaudible> j' t'/l'**ai largué** ct' hamster il **était** trop mystique c'est un vrai bouffon <pause longue> comment qui s' la pète <intonation forte> !

– <E2>   j'**avais dit** <pause> j' t'**avais** bien **dit** <pause> un bolos

– <E1>   c'est clair

English Gloss:

– <E1>   yesterday I **was** (IMP) in the club and I **saw** (PC) him again

– <E2>   yeah <pause> so <intonation>! how **was** (IMP) he <intonation>?

– <E1>   <inaudible> I **dumped** (PC) him, that hamster he **was** (IMP) too mystical he's a real idiot <long pause> how to get away <strong intonation>!

– <E2>   I **had told** (PQP) you <pause> I **had told** (PQP) well <pause> a fool

– <E1>   clearly

Percentage wise, the occurrences observed in the two corpora put together gives the following values, in which – logically – IND PR, IND PC, and IND FP are clearly distinguished (<70%):

		2005	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	*% tps*
	PR	37.06%	34.27%	39.16%	38.04%	36.71%	35.22%	**36.74%**
	PF	1.77%	1.48%	2.38%	1.62%	1.68%	2.43%	1.90%
	FC	3.12%	4.70%	3.28%	3.38%	3.38%	3.31%	3.52%
	FP	14.24%	13.75%	12.58%	12.97%	14.97%	14.88%	**13.87%**
IND	**FH**	2.47%	0.79%	1.26%	1.11%	1.29%	1.75%	1.45%
	IP	10.11%	10.19%	9.67%	9.50%	10.18%	9.77%	9.91%
	PS	0.59%	0.47%	0.22%	0.16%	0.90%	0.00%	0.36%
	PC	20.41%	21.70%	20.87%	22.00%	20.43%	21.98%	**21.31%**
	PP	1.23%	2.07%	1.45%	2.53%	2.24%	2.28%	1.96%
	PQP	0.18%	0.16%	0.44%	0.00%	1.17%	0.52%	0.40%
SUB	**PR**	3.30%	3.36%	1.96%	2.74%	1.21%	2.95%	2.59%
IMP	**(PR)**	5.52%	7.06%	6.72%	5.96%	5.83%	4.91%	5.99%
	% occ.	15.17%	15.99%	16.77%	17.93%	16.79%	17.35%	

Tab. 6

By focusing on the tenses that express the past, the graphs explicitly show that:

1) The IND PS like the IND PQP is quite rare, but stays in use; the latter being employed essentially in contexts that require temporalaccordance:

(22)   [CR] 3_101011m
  – <E1>   y a pu Praline [la tortue] elle est pus <[py]> là <inaudible> <pause longue>
  – <E2>   Praline elle <liaison [z]> avait faim <pause> c'est Jérémy qui dev/ s'occupait d'elle, mais i avait pas/i savait pas qui faut qui/ qu'on/ euh donner toutl'temps de la salade <inaudible> maisla maîtresse la maîtresse elle **dit** qu/qu'Praline elle la **prendit** <sans_liaison> avec elle

English Gloss:
  – <E1>   Praline's [a turtle] not there, she's not there anymore <inaudible> <long pause>
  – <E1>   Praline she was hungry <pause> it's Jeremy that needed [shortened] to take care of her, but he didn't/ he didn't know who needed what/ that we uh constantly give salad <inaudible> but the teacher the teacher she **says** (IND PRS) that she **took** (IND PS) Praline with her

2) "Spontaneous" oral French consistently uses IND IP, even if its frequency is relatively diminished.

3) IND PC, by anchoring itself morphologically in the present, appears to be the past tense that will become the"prototype":
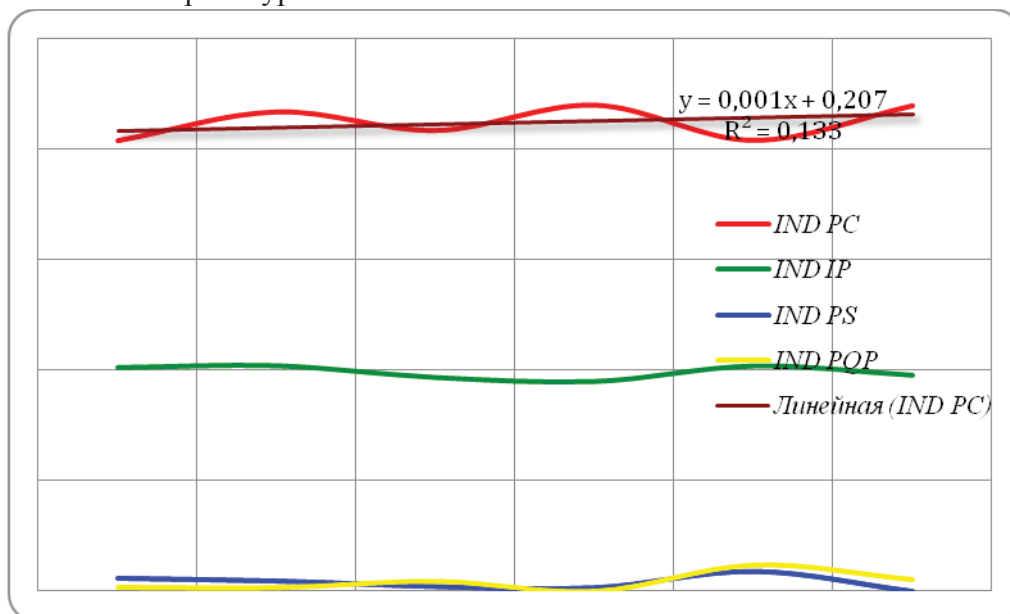

The graph contains the equation:

$$y = 0{,}001x + 0{,}207$$
$$R^2 = 0{,}133$$

Legend:
— IND PC
— IND IP
— IND PS
— IND PQP
— Линейная (IND PC)

Fig. 5 Graph of Past Tenses

Regarding the expression of the future, the two corpora allow confirming not only the pervasiveness of the IND FP, but also a subtle augmentation. Although very little used, the IND FC is maintained due to the fact that certain contexts require its use (see H.P. Helland [Helland, 1995], and P. Laurendeau [Laurandeau, 2000):
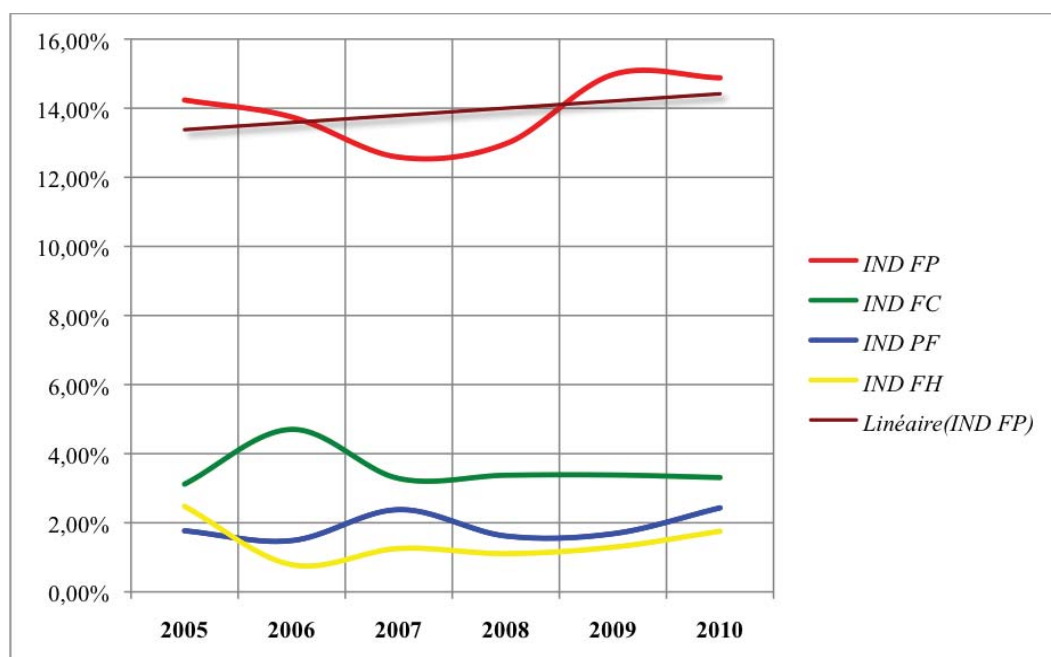
Fig. 6 Graph of Future Tenses

3. Conclusion: a modo-temporal eviction

The goal of the article was to demonstrate the necessity of considering oral French as two now distinct entities: that of the spoken "standard" and that of the "spontaneous". The marking out of the investigative field, voluntarily restricted to modo-temporal aspects, was done deliberately to try and show certain notable characteristics of contemporary oral French.

There is no doubt that spoken French is characterized by a reduction in modo-temporal varieties. This is relevant particularly for FC, as D. Maingueneau mentioned [Maingueneau, 1997: 102], but also for tenses with thematic vowels and protective suffixes. At its current extremity, "spontaneous" oral French is on the verge of the emergence of a minimalist micro-system, three-part tenses *in esse* (IND PC / PR / FP) with a unitary system in fieri (SUB PR), following G. Guillaume's concepts [Guillaume, 1945: 41]. Especially of note, the 4th person (on) is substituted for the 3rd person (*nous*) as in example 23:

(23)   [CR] 6_138147a

– <E1>   t'es allé à Verzy[12] <intonation> ?

– <E2>   **nous/ on** a pas pu les voir <pausette> i pleuvait trop le maîtr' i/l a dit qu'/que
              c'était dommage mais qu'**on** ira <inaudible>

English Gloss:

– <E1>   did you go to Verzy <intonation>?

– <E2>   **we (3PL) / we (4PL)** couldn't see them <small pause> it rain too much the
              owner said that it was a shame but that **we (4PL)** would go

This, by a reduction of the morphological variables, further limits variation:

---

[12]   A *Fau de Verzy* is a Dwarf Beech (*Fagussylvatica* variety *tortuosa*), growing in the forest of Verzy, 25 km south of Reims in France, where the world's largest concentration of dwarf beeches stands with about a thousand trees. The word *fau* designated the *beech* in Old French. This word came from the Latin *fagus*, now the French word for beech is *hêtre*.

	IND			SUB
	PC	**PR**	**FP**	**(PR)**
P1	*j'ai march-é* [ʒ e maʀʃ-e]	*je march-e* [ʒ maʀʃ]	*je v-ais march-er* [ʒ v-e maʀʃ-e]	*je march-e* [ʒ maʀʃ]
P2	*tu as march-é* [ty a maʀʃ-e]	*tu march-es* [ty maʀʃ]	*tu v-as march-er* [ty v-a maʀʃ-e]	*tu march-es* [ty maʀʃ]
P3	*il/elle a march-é* [il/ɛl a maʀʃ-e]	*il/elle march-e* [il/ɛl maʀʃ]	*il/elle v-a march-er* [il/ɛl v-a maʀʃ-e]	*il/elle march-e* [il/ɛl maʀʃ]
P4	*on a march-é* [ɔ̃ na maʀʃ-e]	*on march-e* [ɔ̃ maʀʃ]	*on v-a march-er* [ɔ̃ v-a maʀʃ-e]	*on march-e* [ɔ̃ maʀʃ]
P6	*ils/elles ont march-é* [il/ɛl zɔ̃ maʀʃ-e]	*ils/elles march-ent* [il/ɛl maʀʃ]	*ils/elles v-ont march-er* [il/ɛl v-ɔ̃ maʀʃ-e]	*ils/elles march-ent* [il/ɛl maʀʃ]

P5	*vous av-ez march-é* [vu za-ve maʀʃ-e]	*vous march-ez* [vu maʀʃ-e]	*vous all-ez march-er* [vu za-le maʀʃ-e]

Tab. 7a

	IND			SUB
	PC	**PR**	**FP**	**(PR)**
P1	øAux. *rad. - [e]	*rad. - ø	[v]Aux. *rad. - [e]	*rad. - ø
P2	øAux. *rad. - [e]	*rad. - ø	[v]Aux. *rad. - [e]	*rad. - ø
P3	øAux. *rad. - [e]	*rad. - ø	[v]Aux. *rad. - [e]	*rad. - ø
P4	øAux. *rad. - [e]	*rad. - ø	[v]Aux. *rad. - [e]	*rad. - ø
P6	øAux. *rad. - [e]	*rad. - ø	[v]Aux. *rad. - [e]	*rad. - ø

P5	[v]Aux. *rad. - [e]	*rad. - [e]	[l]Aux. *rad. - [e]

Tab. 7b

Since oral language has its own coherence and its own characteristics being speech in construction, it would be appropriate to connect its modo-temporal uses with traits of its orality (F. Gadet [Gadet, 1992: 29]), conversational words, lexical indices (M. Krieger-Pitiot [Krieger-Pitiot, 1992]), the linear aspect of speaking (J. Peytard [Peytard, 1971]), or the specific syntax of speech (F. Gadet [Gadet, 1999], and M.-Z.Kurdi [Kurzi, 2003:16-28]).

Whatever the case, the differences between conventional written, "standard" spoken, and "spontaneous" spoken language seems to well reflect the general law of the economization of the language inscribed in diachrony, considering the reconstruction of French's modo-temporal micro-system, as shown in the tables above.

Like any other language, French responds to the needs of its speakers. No matter its variations or changes, there remains stability in the linguistic system, a system that is in fact the very source of these variations and changes.

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