

Les Accents: a lesson plan on recognizing linguistic diversity and fostering intercultural competence

Theme/ Topic: Through the exploration of French and English accents in Canada and around the world, students engage in insightful discussions, learn vocabulary and phrases to navigate misunderstandings in conversation, and create posters advocating for linguistic equality.

Grade level and FSL program: Core French, Grade 9, Open

CEFR level: A1/A2

Suggested duration: two classes (one for engaging with the lesson resources and discussion, another for poster making and presentation)

Language learning component: Conversation vocabulary

Professional development component: Through this lesson, teachers will develop the tools to help students foster intercultural competence, recognize and respect linguistic diversity, particularly regarding accent variation

Keywords: Grade 9, Core French, A1/A2, French Accents, linguistic equality

Mots clés: neuvième année, français cadre, A1/A2, accents français, égalité linguistique

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Defining Intercultural Competence and Awareness

Intercultural competence is "the ability to function effectively across cultures, to think and act appropriately, and to communicate and work with people from different cultural backgrounds – at home or abroad" (Monash Intercultural Lab, 2021). Not only does this competence encourage one to acknowledge the diversity that exists between and within cultures (distinguishing personal, cultural and universal behaviours, traditions and beliefs), it further encourages one to relativize and decentre their own perspectives, beliefs, behaviours and values. It encourages our students and teachers to eliminate the "us and them" narrative and promotes empathy, respect, critical analysis and curiosity for better understanding the diversity of the world we live in.

According to McKinnon (2013), the four pillars of Intercultural competence are:

Skills: the ability to listen, think critically, observe, and analyse.

Attitudes: the ability to be open, curious and respectful towards other cultures and to discover our world's diversity.

Culture: the combination of one's identity, beliefs, values, and the self-awareness of one's own culture.

Communication: The ability to use non-verbal behaviour, literacy, dialogue and one's language(s) to effectively communicate.

Milton Bennett (2004) describes becoming interculturally competent as movement from Savoir to Savoir Faire:

Savoir (acceptance): awareness and information concerning another's culture

Savoir apprendre (adaptation): observing and learning about other cultures

Savoir être (integration): being able to move beyond a personal perspective to view others non-judgmentally

Savoir faire (Intercultural worldview): being able to interact proficiently

Framing Intercultural Competence (IC)

Generally, students benefit from the understanding that their life experiences hold an important role in their education. Students connect what they are learning at school to their life experiences in order to make sense of the world around them. Therefore, the inclusion of life experiences in the classroom is a key factor in the learning process as it validates the students' values and perceptions of the world

Acknowledging and integrating students' life experiences in the learning process is the first step to the development of IC. The three approaches listed below develop both the affective and the cognitive domains, which have the potential to help students learn and value what is being taught. Main (1993) divides instruction for affective outcomes into two areas: (1) instruction where the subject matter itself is principally **concerned with changing student values**, beliefs, and attitudes (e.g., intercultural competence), and (2) teaching which addresses **how the learner feels about the subject** being learned. These approaches help students develop empathy, which, in the context of IC, is the ability to understand language, gestures, preferences, cultural beliefs and to negotiate behaviours.

- **Interdisciplinary teaching** is the teaching of two or more subjects together. In FLS, it can integrate aspects of students' experiences with the help of another subject in order to develop additional aspects of the curriculum alongside language.
    - E.g., Teaching about the weather - if there is a student in class born in a country close to the equator, explore the differences between the local weather, and the weather from those countries.
- **Cooperative learning** "is an instructional method in which students work in **small groups** to accomplish a common learning goal under the guidance of the teacher" and has been shown to be linked to academic achievement, social relationships, and self-esteem (Rigacci, 2020). Cooperative learning activities are particularly suited to providing opportunities for students to learn while improving their interpersonal skills and navigating relationships (positive or negative) with others.
    - E.g., Think-Pair-Share: the teacher asks a question to the class and allocates time to allow for students to reflect individually before discussing the question with a partner. Following this, some or all of the pairs are asked to share their discussions with the class in order to explore how their combined perspectives answer the question posed.
    - https://www.teacheracademy.eu/blog/cooperative-learning-strategies/#:~:text=is%20CooperativG"Ge%20Learning%3F-,Cooperative%20Learning%20is%20an%20instructional%20method%20in%20which%20students%20work,the%20guidance%20of%20the%20teacher.
- **Project Based Learning (PBL)** is a teaching method in which students learn by actively engaging in real-world and personally meaningful projects
    - E.g., Teaching about the weather. Students will learn about the weather in diverse areas of the planet and work on a project showing differences and similarities of weather patterns.
    - For further examples: https://www.powerschool.com/blog/project-based-learning-benefits-examples-and-resources/#:~:text=Project%2Dbased%20learning%20(PBL),face%20in%20the%20real%20world.

A general guide for teachers to integrate intercultural awareness in their teaching

Teachers can follow this guide when they first start integrating intercultural awareness (IA) in their teaching. This tool will help you begin to introduce IA when planning lessons. A guide for teachers to integrate IA in their teaching.

Lesson plan "*Les Accents*: a lesson plan

on recognizing linguistic diversity

and fostering intercultural competence”

Grade level: 9 - FSF1D/FSF1O

Competency level: Core French - low previous knowledge base

Learning Goals

Overall Expectations:

- **A1. Listening to Understand**
- **A3. Intercultural Understanding (Listening)**
- **B3. Intercultural Understanding (Speaking)**
- **D1. Purpose, Audience, and Form**
- **D3. Intercultural Understanding (Writing)**

Teacher prompts and instructional tips relevant to this lesson plan have been pulled from the Revised Ontario FSL Curricula (2013/2014) in order to provide teachers with relevant suggestions and guidance. It should be noted that the list of teacher prompts and instructional tips provided below are not exhaustive and that teachers should further reference the curriculums in order to best adapt this lesson to the expectations of the course they’re teaching and to the needs of their students. **The Ontario Curriculum: French as a Second Language Core French Grades 4 to 8, Extended French Grades 4 to 8 and French Immersion Grades 1 to 8** and **The Ontario Curriculum: French as a Second Language Grades 9 to 12** can be accessed using the following links respectively:

- http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/fsl18-2013curr.pdf
- http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/fsl912curr2014.pdf

Specific Expectations:

A1.1 **Using Listening Comprehension Strategies:** identify a range of listening comprehension strategies, and use them before, during, and after listening to understand oral French texts (FSF1O)	
Grade 9, Open	Teachers can ask students to listen for subject pronouns (i.e., “je”, “tu”, “il/elle/on”, “nous”, “vous”, “ils/elles”) to help them distinguish between singular and plural (e.g., “je finis”, “nous finissons”) and for agreement of a noun and its adjective (e.g., “Pour 15 dollars, on a un repas complet avec une entrée italienne, un plat et un dessert canadien”) to help

	them consolidate basic vocabulary and learn the correct gender of nouns. Teachers can suggest that students listen for French words that have been absorbed into the English language (e.g., “un restaurant”, “un croissant”, “un chocolat”, “une baguette”, “une boutique”). “Pourquoi est-il important de visualiser ce que tu entends?”

A3.1 **Intercultural Awareness:** using information from oral French texts, identify French-speaking communities in Africa and Asia, find out about aspects of their cultures, and make connections to personal experiences and their own and other communities	
Grade 9, Open	“Qu’est-ce qui constitue l’identité canadienne?” “Quand tu entends un clip audio ou tu visionnes une vidéo décrivant une communauté francophone au Canada, qu’apprends-tu à propos de ta propre communauté?”

B3.1 **Intercultural Awareness:** communicate information orally about French-speaking communities in Africa and Asia, including aspects of their cultures and their contributions to *la francophonie* and the world, and make connections to personal experiences and their own and other communities (FSF1D)	
Grade 9, Open	Teachers can post a lexical bank that students can refer to when communicating about everyday life in different cultures (e.g., adjectives and adverbs for description, and nouns for places and housing).

D1.1 **Identifying Purpose and Audience:** determine their purpose in writing and the audience for the French texts they plan to create	
Grade 9, Open	Teachers can clarify the writing task for students by asking them to consider the audience and the purpose for writing and to generate questions that will guide them in focusing their writing. The purpose

	for writing will affect the selection of content, language, and form.

D3.1 **Intercultural Awareness:** in their written work, communicate information about French-speaking communities in Africa and Asia, including aspects of their cultures and their contributions to la francophonie and the world, and make connections to personal experiences and their own and other communities (FSF1D)	
Grade 9, Open	"Quelles informations vas-tu inclure dans [ton affiche]?"

D3.2 **Awareness of Sociolinguistic Conventions:** identify sociolinguistic conventions associated with a variety of social situations in diverse French-speaking communities and use them appropriately in their written work (FSF1D)	
Grade 9, Open	Teachers can suggest that students use a variety of expressions…

Intercultural competencies:

- I can identify and respect different accents of French (English is used as a more familiar example to help students better understand that all languages have variation and that the concept of linguistic equality does not simply apply to French)
    - Québécois, Parisien, etc.
    - Toronto English, Newfoundland English, etc.

Overall expectations:

- Students will be able to identify and respect various accents of French and English (English is used as a more familiar example to help students better understand that all languages have variation and that the concept of linguistic equality does not simply apply to French)
- Students will be able to identify various reasons for accent diversity (social, geographical, etc.)
- Students will be able to develop a respect for all ways of speaking
- Students will become aware of prejudice and biases towards certain ways of speaking and understand that no one way of speaking is better than another
- Students will create posters to raise awareness of glottophobia

Intercultural:

- Students will explore various French and English accents of different countries and regions using the KWL chart on pp. 13 - 15
- Students will reflect upon what they think the “standard” French accent is, and if they carry a similar bias to one form of English

Linguistic:

- Students will learn phrases to help facilitate communication and navigate misunderstandings in conversation

Interdisciplinary activity:

Art:
→ designing an infographic to stand up against glottophobia
→ making sure the key message is displayed in a format that is impactful and easy to read
Geography:
→ learning the areas of the world where French is spoken in the world (as well as where English may be spoken differently to the students)

Background Knowledge and Teacher Preparation

Accent vs. Dialect vs. Language Vs. Variety
https://blog.duolingo.com/dialect-vs-accent-definition/
https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/language
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Variety_(linguistics)

- **Accent:** refers particularly to pronunciation

- **Dialect:** refers to a whole group of language features, including pronunciation, but also differences in vocabulary, grammar, and how the language gets used (like the rules of what counts as polite). Dialects are typically associated with the geographic location in which these linguistic features are used. This term can have a negative connotation, as it can be seen as undermining the status of a language variety.

- **Language:** A system of communication consisting of sounds, words and grammar. This term is often associated with the prescribed standard forms of languages, often being differentiated from informal, non-standard forms of a language.

- **Variety:** The use of the word "variety" to refer to the different forms avoids the use of the term language, which many people associate only with the standard language, and the term dialect, which is often associated with non-standard varieties thought of as less prestigious or "correct" than the standard.

Teachers are advised to watch the videos linked in the resource section found above to be familiar with the examples that will be used during the lesson. This will further give teachers the opportunity to pick videos other example videos should they wish, or to make their own example videos.

Glottophobia/Linguistic Discrimination/Languicism/Languagism
https://www.theweek.co.uk/97272/what-is-glottophobia-and-should-it-be-illegal-in-france

- Discrimination on the basis of the language variety that one speaks (i.e. their language, their dialect, their accent, etc.).

Resources for the Lesson

Engagement

KWL Chart for the accents from each video (pp. 13-15)

Vocabulary list for navigating misunderstandings (pp. 16-17)

Videos to use for the KWL Chart:

Note: you may need to see the videos more than once to fill out the KWL chart

1) Newfoundland Accent (skim through the three different examples)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qT13Z_gLze0

2) French language in different accents
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wv36Jer7NgM

Reflection

3) Discuss KWL chart results (pp. 13-15)
E.g.,
   - *Do you think this accent sounds like you and your friends?*
   - *Do you think you would be able to understand this accent more than another?*
   - *What does this accent make you think of?*
   - *What surprised you?*

4) Langues et discrimination : de quoi parle-t-on ?
https://dulala.fr/video-langues-et-discriminations-de-quoi-parle-t-on/

5) Awareness posters for glottophobia (Canva, other online resources to make posters OR paper and craft supplies)

Example phrases to use on the posters:
- **Le langage appartient à tous**
- **On parle tous une langue parfaite**
- **Il n'existe pas une langue laide**
- **Je parle parfaitement**

Activation

(15-20 mins)
Use these questions to start the discussion:

1) What languages do you know how to speak?
2) Which English do you speak?
3) What languages can you understand but not speak?

If there is time:

4) How do you think others perceive your language/way of speaking? (and culture?)

Engagement

- Videos showcasing English and French accents
- KWL chart
- Glottophobie video
- Creation of Posters (Add key statements)

Reflection (as a class or in small groups with class discussion)

1) Are there any accents in the video that you had trouble understanding?
2) Do you think some accents are considered better/more proper than others?
3) Have you ever experienced/witnessed glottophobie? (on tv/in movies/heard jokes/been discriminated against, speaking French, English, other languages?)
4) Why is it important to not make judgements
    a) Everything is relative (prestigious here but not there, etc.)
    b) Immigration changing perceptions
    c) Speech impediments/ticks, etc.

Modifications/accommodations to meet diverse learning needs

- Captions for hard-of-hearing students (on all videos shown)
- Students can make their poster digitally or by hand
- Students can present their work in private upon request/submit a recording

KWL Chart

	S - Qu'est-ce que je sais déjà ? - *Penses-tu que cet accent est semblable au tien ou celui de tes amis ?* - *Penses-tu être capable de comprendre cet accent plus qu'un autre ?* - *À quoi penses-tu en écoutant cet accent ?*	**V** - Qu'est-ce que je veux savoir de plus ? - *As-tu des questions après avoir vu la vidéo ?* - *Est-ce qu'il existe d'autres accents dans ces régions ?*	**A** - Qu'est-ce que j'ai appris ? - *Qu'est-ce qui t'as surpris ?* - *Cet accent, comment est-il différent du* tien ?
Accent	**K** - What I know - *Do you think this accent sounds like you and your friends?* - *Do you think you would be able to understand this accent more than another?* - *What does this accent make you think of?*	**W** - What I want to know - *What questions do I still have after watching the video?* - *Are there any other accents in these areas?*	**L** - What did I learn *(please note what you learned from this video here)* - *What surprised you?* - *How is the accent different from your own?*
English (Newfoundland)			

"Standard/Neutral" French			

French (Québec)			
French (Belgique)			
French (Suissee)			
French (Sénégal)			

French (Marseilles)			

Vocabulary Sheet: Navigating Misunderstandings	
Can you repeat?	**Pouvez-vous répéter?**
Can you speak slowly?	**Pouvez-vous parler doucement?**
Did you understand what I said?	**M'avez-vous compris?**
Don't worry!	**Ne t'en fais pas!**
Excuse me? (i.e. I beg your pardon?)	**Pardon?**
How do you say X in French?	**Comment dit-on X en français?**
I don't know!	**Je ne sais pas!**
I don't understand!	**Je ne comprends pas!**
I need to practice my French	**Je dois pratiquer mon français**
Is that right?	**C'est correct?**
Is that wrong?	**C'est faux?**
Mistake	**Erreur / faute**
No problem!	**Pas de soucis!**
Quickly	**vite / rapidement**
Slowly	**lentement**
Sorry (to apologize)	**Pardon/désolé(e)**
To speak	**parler**
What does that word mean in English?	**Que veut dire ce mot en anglais?**
What is this?	**Qu'est-ce que c'est?**
What should I say?	**Qu'est-ce que je devrais dire?**

What?	**Quoi?**
Write it down please!	**Écrivez-le, s'il vous plaît!**