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Turn-taking and gaze behavior among Cajun French and Cajun English speakers in Avoyelles Parish

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TURN-TAKING AND GAZE BEHAVIOR AMONG
CAJUN FRENCH AND CAJUN ENGLISH SPEAKERS IN AVOYELLES PARISH

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

in

The Department of French Studies

by
Andrew Mandell Rivière
B.A., Louisiana State University, 2006
May 2009

In memory of my uncle, Glenn A. Chesné.

In memory of my grandfather, Floyd A. Chesné.

In memory of a great man and friend of the family, Sidney Gauthier.

In memory of Sister Marissa Ricci, OLS of which I gratefully give thanks to her for the start of my linguistics career.

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Next, special thanks go to my committee members, Professor Sylvie Dubois and Professor Hervé Cassan. Additional thanks goes to my previous instructors: Professor Lucie Brind’Amour, Mme Cathy Luquette, and Mme Amanda LaFleur for their support and guidance in my French career. In the summer of 2004, Professor Caroline Elisa Nash would have never thought I would be what and where I am today. Without the help and encouragement of Professor Nash, I would have absolutely no clue as to where I would be in life today. She has equipped me with the linguistic, French, and teaching skills that I possess today.

Lâche pas la patate!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	vi
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Background of Avoyelles Parish.....	2
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	6
2.1 Language Drift Versus Culture Drift.....	6
2.2 Cultural Maintenance.....	8
2.3 Language and Culture.....	9
2.3.1 What Is Language?.....	9
2.3.2 What Is Culture?.....	11
2.3.3 Language Versus Culture.....	12
2.4 Turn-Taking.....	14
2.5 Gaze Behavior in Turn-Taking.....	17
CHAPTER 3: METHODS.....	20
3.1 Methods of Studying Gaze Behavior.....	20
3.2 Participants.....	21
CHAPTER 4: TURN-TAKING STRATEGIES.....	24
4.1 Turn-Taking Patterns in French.....	24
4.2 Cajun French.....	24
4.3 Cajun English.....	26
4.4 Mixed Dyad (CE and SAE).....	30
4.5 Southern Alabama English.....	33
4.6 Summary.....	36
CHAPTER 5: GAZE BEHAVIOR PATTERNS.....	37
5.1 Gaze Direct and Mutual Gaze.....	37
5.2 Gaze Direct.....	41
5.3 Gaze Avert.....	45
5.4 A Modified Model of the Gaze Behavior Pattern.....	50
5.5 Summary.....	51
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION.....	52
6.1 The Primacy of Culture.....	52
6.2 Culture Drift or Culture Shift.....	53
6.3 Future Research.....	54
REFERENCES.....	55

APPENDIX	
CONSENT FORM.....	58
VITA	59

ABSTRACT

Languages are the verbal and non-verbal codes of a culture. A culture houses a language(s) and is comprised of the gaze and distance/use of personal sphere. Linguists and anthropologists have long since argued over which takes priority: culture or language. French and Louisiana are synonymous: it is unimaginable to picture Louisiana without French because French constitutes the culture in Louisiana. Since linguists have debated the priority of language or culture, looking at Louisiana within the confines of this debate proves informative.

The language shift forced upon the residents of South Louisiana by the 1921 State Legislature made English the sole language of the state. This study will examine the possibility of a culture shift brought about by the language shift. If the previous culture was assimilated into the new language, researchers could infer that culture precedes language.

The purpose of this pragmatic study was to analyze the gaze behavior patterns in turn-taking among speakers of Cajun English in Avoyelles Parish, Louisiana. By analyzing these behaviors, precedence of culture over language can be inferred. The study consisted of ten participants: seven were from Avoyelles and the other three constituted a control group.

According to the data, the Cajun English participants exhibited the gaze behavior patterns demonstrated by French speakers as described by Nash. The Cajun English participants did not show the same patterns as speakers of Standard American English and/or Southern Alabama English, strengthening the argument that culture constitutes language and is more primitive. The results show that culture precedes language in the pragmatic realm of language.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Being a native Louisianan who participates in, respects, and loves the Cajun French culture and language, it is devastating to watch a precious variety of French gradually cease to exist as older generations pass away. Hearing parents and children say that they would rather learn another language, such as Spanish, because French is no longer important devastates me. Louisiana and French are synonymous; to imagine the state without her heritage is impossible because this totality constitutes our identity. My analysis of the gaze behavior patterns during turn-taking in Cajun French and Cajun English serves to further document these varieties. Building on prior research, my study suggests that the progression of culture is from the French of France to Cajun French to Cajun English. In hopes of preservation, this study will serve as a record of this cultural and linguistic heritage.

Linguists and anthropologists have long argued over which is prior: does language precede culture or does culture precede language? Some scholars have even argued that culture and language are equal. In syntax, morphology, and phonetics/phonology, Noam Chomsky has argued that language, grammar, and phonetics are innate in humans, meaning that these concepts or structures are hardwired in their minds at birth. This theory suggests that culture is learned after language because language rules are pre-programmed. As a result, this innate framework would make culture secondary to language. However, I do not think that any option is entirely correct: the perspective from which a researcher examines either language or culture will determine the priority.

From the pragmatic perspective, I assert that culture precedes language. Culture is the dominating factor over language. Due to the fact that culture changes, the language will in turn change to account for the accommodating needs of the speakers of a particular society or culture.

For example, in the case of Academic French and Cajun French, research shows that turn-taking patterns are the same in both varieties, thus rendering culture dominant over language. French divided into different language varieties that still share the same culture. My research verifies that Cajun English shares this same culture as well. Viewed in this light, French language/culture remained the same despite the language shift from Cajun French to Cajun English.

Cajun English (henceforth referred to as CE) is a dialect spoken in southern Louisiana, mainly in the Acadian Triangle. The Acadian Triangle is composed of 22 parishes in South Louisiana where people, to this day, speak both Cajun English and Cajun French (henceforth referred to as CF). While many people draw a connection between CE and CF, I maintain that this link is motivated by cultural similarities. With the growing preference of CE in the Acadian Triangle, CF began to diminish.

In this thesis, I will demonstrate, through the analysis of gaze behavior patterns during turn-taking, that culture can cross linguistic barriers. The results from my study on gaze behavior patterns as turn-taking strategies provide evidence that, from the pragmatic perspective towards a language, culture precedes/dominates language. I plan to show that my data on Cajun English and Cajun French and the France continental data collected by Nash (2007) coincide regarding the gaze behaviors in the turn-taking sequences, thus proving that culture persists through language changes and that culture does not shift when a language changes.

1.2 Background of Avoyelles Parish

The Avoyels Indians first settled Avoyelles Parish, formerly *Avoyels*, around 300 B.C.E. Residents of this parish call themselves coonasses¹ or Cajuns. Coonass is a term often thought to

¹ There are some Cajuns who refer to themselves as Coonasses; however, the term, used by other Cajuns, is considered extremely vulgar. On the other side of the spectrum, some Cajuns consider the word to be a term of endearment. (cont'd page 3)

be offensive to Cajuns. The term Cajun is a variation from the Acadian French *Cadien* which derives from the term *Acadien*. Residents of Avoyelles Parish speak a variety of French (CF) and a variety of English (CE). Avoyelles Parish is the northernmost parish in the Acadian Triangle. The Acadian Triangle is composed of parishes whose residents often speak various forms of French in addition to CE.

Some Cajuns refer to CF as “the broken French” or “the bad French”. Such an attitude towards CF can be attributed to the law banning French as a recognized language of state in Louisiana². However, CF is merely a dialect of French just like Acadian French, Québécois French, or Belgian French. Growing up in a Cajun household, the CF language was further broken down along regional lines: Cajuns from the northern half speak “Prairie French” while Cajuns from the southern half speak “Bayou French”. Further distinctions in CF exist but are not of import due to this study’s focus on residents of Avoyelles Parish.

Avoyelles is surrounded by seven parishes: Rapides, Catahoula, La Salle, Concordia, Point Coupée, St. Landry, and Evangeline. Of these seven parishes, four parishes share a significantly large border with Avoyelles: Rapides, Evangeline, St. Landry, and Point Coupée. Two rivers separate the parish borders: the Red River is the northern border which divides Avoyelles Parish and Rapides Parish, and the southern border is the Atchafalaya River which divides Avoyelles Parish and Point Coupée. The eastern border of Avoyelles is separated from other parishes by many tributaries of the Mississippi River.

According to the 2000 census, Avoyelles has approximately 42,000 residents and of those residents, 17.64% claim to speak French³ in the household (“Avoyelles Parish, Louisiana”,

Such as the case in Avoyelles Parish where “coonass” is used without the usual negative undertones found elsewhere.

² Louisiana French in the State Constitution will be further discussed in 2.1.

³ The French claimed in the census is presumed to be Cajun French, however could be another variety.

2008). Approximately 68.47% of the population is Caucasian and 29.49% is African American. The remaining 2% of the population consists of Native Americans and Asians.

Two figures follow (Fig. 1.1 and Fig. 1.2). The first is an image of the state of Louisiana. In the red highlighted area, Avoyelles Parish is situated in the middle of the state, and the second image highlights Avoyelles Parish with its villages, towns, and cities.



Figure 1.1 Louisiana with Emphasis on Avoyelles Parish, taken from “Avoyelles Parish, Louisiana” (2008).

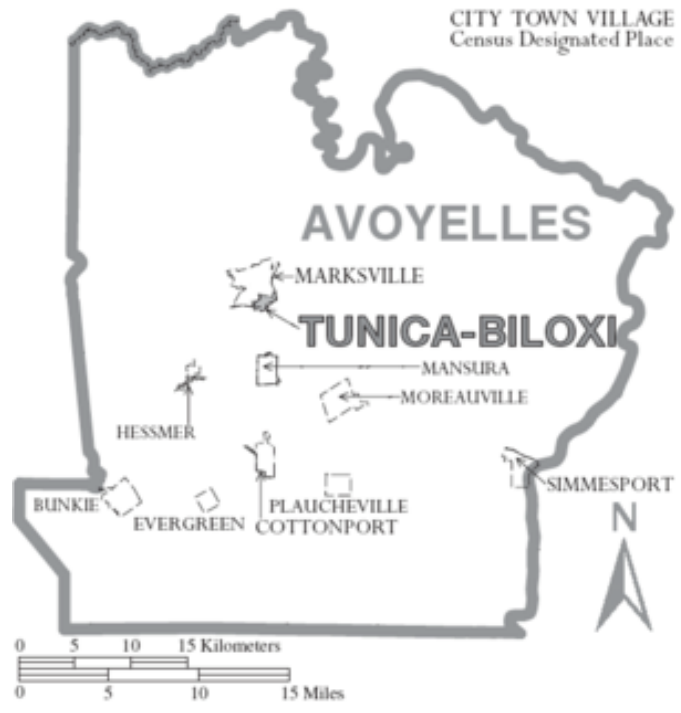


Figure 1.2 Avoyelles Parish, taken from “Avoyelles Parish, Louisiana” (2008).

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Language Drift Versus Culture Drift

According to Carl Blyth, language drift⁴ poses a problem for both CF and Creole French (Valdman, 1997). Although language drift is a normal process that languages undergo, it is rather the effects of language drift that are problematic. In other words, the language drift would be loss of the language. In 1921, the Louisiana state legislature passed a law enforcing English as the sole language of the state. This reform was not the sole regulator to the language change enforcing when and where French could be spoken. Though, as a result, schools could no longer conduct its classes in French. Previous to this law, French was widely used by Cajuns and Creoles for both official and non-official correspondence such as school instruction, church, and as the language of specific speech communities.

However, after 1921 the use of French in these types of situations drastically diminished. This catalyst for language drift can be marked by the termination of the French language in Louisiana as well as eliminating French in church and school (Valdman, 1997). For instance, CF families could no longer attend school in a language they could understand which in this case was the variety of French spoken in Louisiana. Furthermore, if a family only read and spoke French, the speakers were now officially illiterate. This amendment to the Louisiana Constitution prohibited the use of French in schools and politics, ultimately rendering CF and Creole French dead languages in the eyes of the state. Dubois and Melançon (1997) mention that Cajuns began to view speaking French with negative attitudes. Cajuns now were being oppressed because there was no further point to continue to speak CF in the home (Dubois *et al.*, 1997). The transition from CF to English was a way to remove the stigma attached to the CF culture from themselves and their children (Dubois *et al.*, 1997).

⁴ “Language drift is the loss or partial loss of a language due to an event or a consequence” (Valdman, 1997).

Due to the fact that Louisianans were prohibited, in these situations, from speaking CF and Creole French, the rate of language attrition increased greatly. It is therefore my opinion that CF will cease to be spoken within the next fifty to seventy-five years. Due to the state's actions and its ensuing repercussions, it is clear that language drift has occurred. The focus of this study, however, is not to analyze language drift but rather to analyze culture drift.

While French could no longer be used for official state purposes, the language did not cease to be spoken entirely. According to Blyth, the use of CF or Creole French depended on the situation of conversation (Valdman, 1997).

The only areas that saw a greater amount of Cajun or Creole being spoken was when Cajun and Creole speakers would speak with their friends, parents, or spouses. To their children or in language contact situations outside the home, Cajun and Creole speakers usually used English (Valdman, 1997).

Blythe further argues that attitudes of CF and Creole French speakers affected the language shift by reducing the amount of conversations held in the two dialects (Valdman, 1997). Students developed negative attitudes towards their own language. Speaking French quickly became a punishable taboo outside of the home.⁵ This negative attitude also affected schoolteachers: they developed feelings of embarrassment and inadequacy, as they could no longer conduct classes in their native language (Valdman, 1997), which led the CF teachers to think that they were not qualified enough to teach French in the school systems. Although in later years, teachers from Belgium and France were being brought in (Valdman, 1997) as part of the increased awareness of French in Louisiana as well as the Cajun renaissance taking place, their lack of understanding of Louisiana dialects only helped maintain the language drift already set in place by the state in 1921. According to Dubois and Melançon (1997), CODOFIL and the elite promoted

⁵ My parents and grandparents and friends' parents French usage in their homes ceased due to the punishments received at school.

the French cultural aspects rather than the Cajun cultural aspects. Since members of CODOFIL were of the elite, Academic French was implemented into this new system (Dubois *et al.*, 1997). CODOFIL's action of executing Academic French into the system "insulted or alienated a considerable segment of the [CF] population" (Dubois *et al.*, 1997:82). This might have seemed like an excellent idea; however, this idea excluded Cajun French culture. The decision to not employ speakers of CF in the school system only mirrored the state's continuing refusal to recognize the natural and linguistic ability of its citizens. In all likelihood, there were many CF speakers qualified to teach French in Louisiana schools.

The research described shows that language drift has occurred to some extent in the Acadian triangle with respect to CF. Therefore, if language drift has occurred and shifted languages (from CF to CE), then one may expect or surmise that the culture shifted as well. The shifting of cultures would mean that the cultural practices of the first culture will be the same in the new culture. Maintaining the French culture also requires the realization of being Cajun (Dormon, 1983), which continues into the next section.

2.2 Cultural Maintenance

Following the law banning French in the schools and other official venues in the early 1920's, Cajuns developed negative attitudes towards speaking CF (Valdman, 1997). Therefore, Avoyelles residents, in addition to other Cajuns, shifted away from using their first language (L1), CF, and started using their second language (L2), CE. However, Avoyelles residents still today demonstrate CF culture (C1) rather than another culture (C2) such as that of Alabama, Texas, or any other region of South Louisiana. An embodiment of the C1 in CE would be the use of *le regard français*, which is a very intense look between the speaker and the listener of

France French. Dressler (1988) and Fishman (1964) state, a basic assumption that language shift is the predecessor to language extinction. According to Reverend Jules Daigle (1993), when Cajuns were exiled from Canada, they spoke French; however, their vocabulary was not acceptable for life in Louisiana, and a new variety must be created. While the French language brought by the Acadians from Canada was eventually replaced by English, the aspects of French culture were not. In short, while a new language had to be learned, a new culture did not; thus, the culture was maintained.

In Dubois and Melançon's (1997) study regarding Cajun identity, they state that Cajuns, in the aspect of being Cajun, were distinct from other Anglo-Americans in several ways: religion, language, cuisine, and pastimes. A majority of the Cajun population is Catholic in addition to speaking CF (Dubois *et al.*, 1997). The cuisine is the same as Acadian cuisine, however adjusted for the harsh Louisiana environment (Dubois *et al.*, 1997). Lastly, the pastimes such as the *fais do do* (Dubois *et al.*, 1997) and *une boucherie* were involved in the Cajun identity. Dubois and Melançon (1997) give a hypothesis that if members of the Cajun community who do not speak CF do not consider it an aspect of identity. Furthermore, they state that if this hypothesis was, in fact, correct that the preservation of the actual language is not necessary to the existence of the culture.

2.3 Language and Culture

2.3.1 What Is Language?

Language is a way in which speakers convey messages (Yule, 1996). According to Myers-Scotton (2006), two ways to classify a language are by structural or by socio-political criteria. Defining language based on the notion of structural criteria could be based on the differences in grammatical structures (Myers-Scotton, 2006). For example, in an English

sentence, a subject is positioned first then a verb and then an object (SVO). In a Japanese sentence, the subject is still placed first, but an object pronoun would precede the verb (SOV). Languages can be distinguished by differences in phonology, syntax, morphology, and lexicon (Myers-Scotton, 2006). If speakers are not following the rules to create a well-formed sentence, then he/she is not speaking the language. The second categorization of a language is by socio-political criteria (Myers-Scotton, 2006). Swedish and Norwegian are considered different languages based on this criterion even though they are, in fact, dialects of the same language.

In 1996, Brown and others state that there are three uses of a language: linguistic competence, communicative competence, and sociocultural competence (Riley, 2007). Linguistic competence is the acquisition and production of correct grammar of a language according to Chomsky's view (Riley, 2007). The communicative competence is Dell Hyme's 1970 approach to describe the use of the rules in a society (Riley, 2007). Lastly, the sociocultural concept of language puts both the linguistic competence and communicative competence together (Riley, 2007).

In other words, a language is a means of conveying information. This information may be conveyed by its speakers through a verbal or nonverbal code. The verbal code consists of the physical production of language through the vocal folds or, in a special case, through sign. The nonverbal code is comprised of the gestures and, more specifically, the gaze behaviors exhibited by speakers. In addition, languages are spoken by people in a particular society or culture, thus making languages regional. Depending on where a speaker lives, he/she might speak a certain style (Myers-Scotton, 2006). Myers-Scotton classifies a style as a sub-category of a dialect in a more specific region. Ultimately, the primary purpose of language is to communicate among speakers of a particular community, society, or culture. As Dorian (1981)

notes, a relatively large amount of languages have been threatened by extinction, however managed to survive and become a national language: Czech, Finnish, Turkish, and Latvian.

Gleason (2008) states that a society speaks a language among its people. Furthermore, people who are capable (physically and physiologically) of acquiring language will learn it from their society who speaks it to him/her (Gleason, 2008). This statement is an acceptable definition the linguistic competence and communicative competence, but it does not account for the sociocultural competence that Riley (2007) mentioned previously.

2.3.2 What Is Culture?

My first noticeable cultural experience involved an interaction with a friend at a McDonald's. We were entering the parking lot when I asked if we were going to "get down". It seemed like a perfectly normal question to me. I had grown up all of my life asking my friends and my family if we were going to "get down" at McDonalds. The question had always meant, "were we going to get out of the car and go into McDonald's and eat?" My friend had absolutely no clue as to what I was talking about. She was under the assumption that I was asking her to dance, which stemmed from the 1975 KC and the Sunshine band's song "Get Down Tonight". The meaning that I had intended to convey originates from the French word *descendre* meaning to 'get down from' or 'get out of'. After clarifying what I had meant, I realized that it is not until we experience something outside the norm of our own culture that we will detect a difference in our own culture.

The word culture is being used more and more not just in academia but also in the discourse of social realms (Riley, 2007). Defining culture can be a daunting task. To most people, the characteristics of culture involve: sports, gastronomy, politics, age, and economic-class (Riley, 2007). Culture is not merely the various ways in which people in countries cook

food or dance or the way they dress. Hofstede (1991) gives a rather broad definition of culture as the program of the mind which makes a distinction between the members of a group. Yule (1996:246) gives another broad definition of culture which is “socially acquired knowledge”. We are not taught culture consciously, but rather by immersion in life experiences; therefore, cultural distinctions are not noticed until we are presented with cultures that are dissimilar to our own. Because we acquire culture in this manner, I believe that language and culture are not innate. The gestures, gaze behavior, turn-taking patterns, and the usage and distance of the personal spheres of our own cultures are acquired subconsciously. Therefore, from this point forward, culture will be understood to include the use of gestures, gaze, and the use or distance of personal sphere.

2.3.3 Language Versus Culture

There is much debate over the relationship between language and culture in the field of linguistics and anthropology. It is my opinion that culture precedes language. Although one culture can be comprised of speakers who speak many different languages, language reflects the interactional needs of the speakers of a particular culture. Speakers can communicate more effectively when there is a common culture. For example, if a CF speaker from Avoyelles Parish was speaking to a Créole English speaker from Point Coupée, it would be easier to establish successful communication than it would be for a Cajun from Avoyelles speaking to someone from Texas because their cultures are similar. It is easier for a Créole English and Cajun English speaker to establish successful communication due to the similarities in the languages and/or culture. The aforementioned *le regard français* that Cajun and Créole speakers employ during communication enables less hesitation during a conversation; whereas, there would be more hesitation when speaking with a Texan because he/she will not be employing this

intent glare during a conversation. This would then render feelings of interference to a Texan and feelings of rudeness to the Créole speaker. It is for this reason that I find that culture precedes language.

Linguistic determinism is the idea that language determines thought. According to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, the Hopi Indians make a distinction between animate and inanimate objects (Carroll, 1956). In other languages, such as English, this distinction is not made. For example, in French, the word for door is feminine *la porte* when in English it is simply the door—no distinction of gender made. Benjamin Whorf and Edward Sapir concluded that the Hopi Indians viewed the world differently because of their language (Carroll, 1956). This view would tell language learners that the French's view is different from the American's view. This scenario is not totally the case. From taking introduction level French courses as undergraduate, I found it very simple to learn *l'imparfait*. I knew that I had a French background, so I assumed that was the reason behind the simplicity. According to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, my language made up my worldview, which made it easier to learn this aspect of French. When I began teaching French, I realized that my culture, not my language, led to my worldview of thoughts. My French culture was worked in my brain so that it was easier for me to learn the aspect. It was a different case for my students. Their cultures were wired differently than mine was wired. My culture was different from theirs. It is culture that determines thought, not language.

The structure, as a whole, of linguistic, communicative, and sociocultural competences are put best in organization by Riley. He states that these categories are assembled like a Russian doll, sitting inside of each other (Riley, 2007). The linguistic competence (grammar) sits inside of the communicative competence (use of language by the speaker), which sits inside

of the sociocultural competence (Riley, 2007) which encompasses the culture as a whole. From my study, I conclude, in the pragmatic perspective, that culture precedes language.

Like Riley's (2007) example of the Russian doll, culture (behaviors) encompasses the subculture (variations) which houses the language (grammar). Example Fig. 2.1, below, is an image of the French culture with embedded languages. This image does not represent all varieties of French which share the same culture. It is merely a depiction of varieties of French subsumed under the umbrella of culture. The diagram of culture is analogous to a biological cell. Inside of the cell, the individual languages act as the strands of DNA. Without culture (the cell), the languages (DNA strands) would not be able to survive. Granted, I am not denying the existence of subculture within each language.

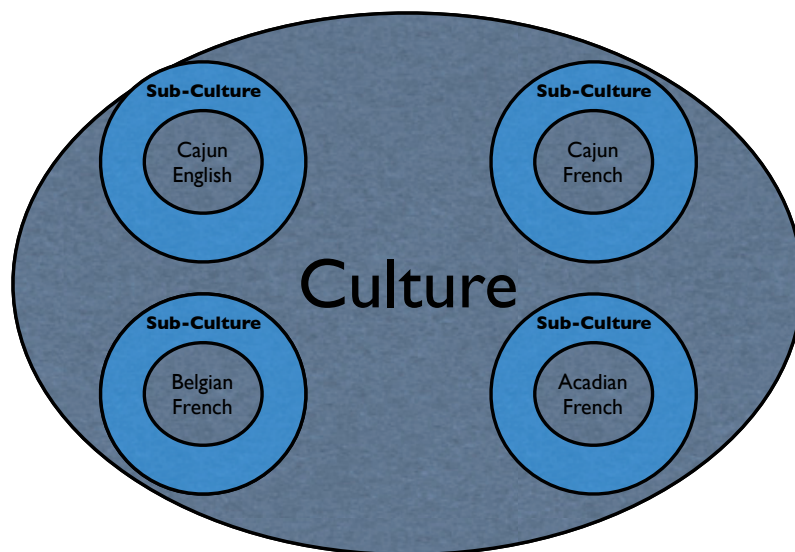


Figure 2.1 French Culture and some of its languages

2.4 Turn-Taking

Studies in dialogue analysis incorporating the nonverbal component reveal important facts about the relationship between language and culture. We cannot interpret what is actually

said without interpreting the gestural activity in conjunction with the verbal utterances since much of our “communicative intent” is revealed through our body language. Hence, gestures play a crucial role in accounting for those mechanisms that are employed in communicating more than is actually said. The use of gestures in a natural and interactive conversation requires observable contextual phenomenon as well as assumptions or inferences about the speaker’s beliefs and intentions (Nash, 2007).

The well-known studies of nonverbal behavior in linguistics have been in the area of conversation analysis, focusing primarily on negotiating the turn in the talk-interaction. Duncan and Fiske (1977, 1985) identify the “speaker gesticulation signal” performed during the speaker turn to maintain the turn and the “speaker state signal” performed at the beginning of a speaker turn. Lindenfield (1971:231) reveals body movement bridging a syntactic boundary as a means of maintaining speaker turn at a possible turn-transition place (transition relevance place (TRP) as defined by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974)).

Goodwin (1981:2) defines a turn in turn-taking as “the talk of one party bounded by the talk of others constitutes a turn, with turn-taking being the process through which the party doing the talk of the moment is changed”. This does not account for the fact that certain people involved in the talk may not be the upcoming speaker of the conversation. This is a contradictory statement to this basic definition and is out of the scope of this experiment. During a conversation, speakers and addressees do, in fact, take turns despite the fact that in certain cases people do have one-sided conversations. Within the conversation, there are certain patterns, markers, and/or regulators that aide in the transfer from the speaker to the addressee (now speaker).

Deborah Schiffrin (1987), for example, shows that regulators⁶ are used in pragmatic and conversational analysis. More specifically, Fraser (1996) indicates describes pragmatic markers. These markers are cues within the conversation that express the speaker's intentions. Fraser defines four categories of pragmatic markers within a conversation: basic, commentary, parallel, and discourse markers. According to Manoliu (1999), another category to pragmatic markers can be added, conversation markers. These markers function in the organization of the talk and include the roles of negotiating the turn, controlling the addressee's attention and understanding, accepting or rejecting the speaker's topic, and confirming the speaker's hypothesis about the addressee's background knowledge through tag questions. As Nash (2001) states, regulators are best classified under the category of conversational markers.

At first glance, turn-taking appears to be a natural and superfluous process in conversation. This assumption is not case, however. There are, in fact, inherent guidelines specific to each culture to which turn-taking must adhere. For example, the well-adjusted conversationalist does not use overt cues such as "I'm done" or "I'm finished" to indicate the yield of a turn. Sacks and others (1974) developed the so-called "traffic signal approach" which utilizes the analogy of "a car accelerating in the merging lane to enter the freeway at rush hour." In other words, a listener must to jump into the conversation if he/she desires have a turn at speaking (Sacks *et al.*, 1974). Sacks' explanation does not fully account for the effects of nonverbal communication. Duncan (1972) offers an alternate account that provides for the inclusion of nonverbal communication in conversation. In this alternative approach, Duncan (1972) describes several cues in conversation that yield turn-taking: verbal cues (utterance completion), intonational cues (rising or falling intonation), and one nonverbal cue (gesture

termination). Gesture termination includes but is not limited to: hand gestures, posture, head movements (nods), and gaze.

2.5 Gaze Behavior in Turn-Taking

Exhaustive studies have been done on gaze behavior and on the role of “gaze” in its dialogic function in the talk-interaction and the nature of its behavior in the “turn” of turn-taking in American English (Duncan and Fiske, 1977, 1985; Goodwin, 1981; Kendon, 1967, 1990; Schefflen, 1964; Schegloff, 1984). Certain findings on gaze behavior have been reported such as the notion that the display of addressee aversion of gaze indicates lack of interest or disapproval of speaker topic (Argyle and Cook, 1976:121) and that mutual gaze lasts less than one second (Beattie, 1978b, 1979:28). In recent years, we have seen a decline in studies in mutual gaze behavior patterns outside the realm of psychology (i.e. interpreting social emotions such as in the work of Adams and Kleck (2003)).

Kendon (1967) proposed that the speaker begins to gaze towards the addressee while yielding the turn to the addressee. His study shows that gaze direct functions yield a turn, whereas gaze avert holds the turn after it has been established⁶. Below is the model that Kendon (1967) proposed.

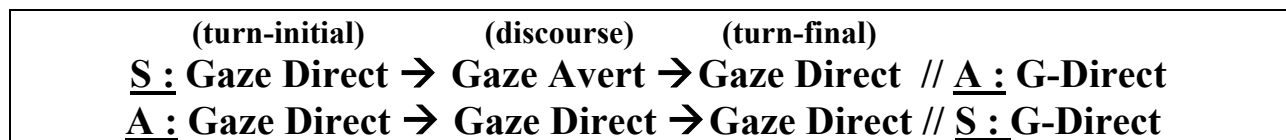


Figure 2.1
Kendon’s Model of the Turn

From the model, the exchange of turns from the speaker to the addressee (now speaker) are established according to Kendon (1967).

⁶ Here and after, let the arrow stand for “yields”.

Two types of back-channeling occur within a conversation: positive back-channeling and negative back-channeling (Nash, 2001). Positive back-channeling is continuously spoken with gaze direct (Nash, 2001); whereas, negative back-channeling is associated with gaze avert (Nash, 2001).

The expression of disagreement and negative attitude can also be viewed as departure or detachment from the mutual engagement and from the progression of the topic. As such, gaze avert functions in a similar manner to digress from the here-and-now with the intent of cooperating in the natural course of the conversational exchange in order to arrive at a resolution or conclusion of sorts. Thus, the detachment from the mutual engagement and the digression from the here-and-now – this discourse feature is manifested by the aversion of gaze (Nash, 2001).

This explanation of gaze avert considered a negative back-channeling process to remove the speaker’s gaze from gaze direct from the here-and-now and further discussed in Chapter 5.

Nonverbal behaviors were once thought to be universal or have some system of universality (Argyle 1967, Sacks et al. 1974, Duncan 1972). The non-universality between Standard American English (SAE), Japanese, and French was discovered later (Nash, 2007). The data collected by Nash (2007) shows that the original hypothesis was not correct. Mutual gaze to gaze avert does not universally yield a turn (contra Kendon, 1967). In the case of French, Nash (2001) found Gaze Direct^{adv} → Gaze Direct^{ret} in the turn-taking process and modified Kendon’s model of the turn. Below is Nash’s model of the turn.

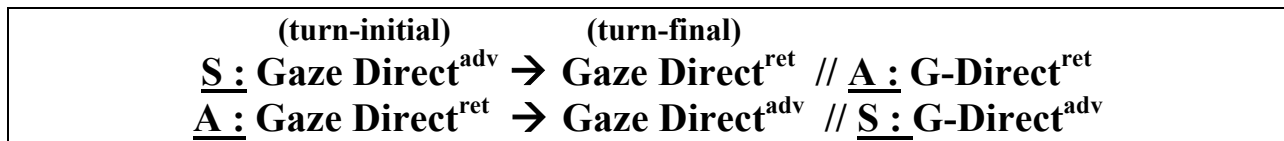


Figure 2.2
Nash’s French Model of the Turn

Although studies on gaze behavior describe observed patterns of predominantly American subjects, studies on culture-specific gaze behavior have been conducted since the early

20th century that reveal distinct cross-cultural differences in certain patterns of gaze behavior between interlocutors engaged in interactive conversation. Most notably, Whiffen (1915), who conducted studies on gaze behavior of American Indians, attested that Indians do not look at each other while speaking – neither the speaker at the listener, nor the listener at the speaker (p.254). LaFrance and Mayo (1976) and Erickson (1979) also conducted comparative studies in conversational gaze behavior of African-Americans and Anglo-Americans. The reported findings for African-Americans are the reverse of those that have been reported for Anglo-Americans, i.e., African-American speaker-gaze is higher than addressee-gaze. Hence, differences in gaze behavior patterns are attributed not to language, but to cultural differences. Yet, ethnocentric studies still dominate kinesic research and the constructed models and postulated rules for American English gaze behavior patterns are often generalized to apply to the social behavior and organizational structure across languages and cultures (Nash 2007).

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

3.1 Methods of Studying Gaze Behavior

In dealing with gaze behavior, Beattie (1983) questioned if it was even possible to analyze such behaviors in conversation. Beattie further described that it is in fact possible, but such an analysis can be a difficult process. This explanation, while appropriate in 1983, is no longer satisfactory due to advancements in today's technology. New technology such as high-definition cameras and the multimedia for PC or Mac make it much easier to record natural conversations, run the clips in slow motion, pause and capture frames, thereby providing an effective, efficient, and accurate means of analyzing natural speech in conversation. Multimedia programs today even allow a researcher to capture frames of an entire clip with only the click of a button. For this study, I used a Sony digital hard drive camera to record the conversations. I used iMovie, a program for Macintosh computers, to view, transcribe, and capture.

The participants were recorded in dyads (a total of five dyads) seated next to each other approximately three feet apart so as to be comfortable in their own personal spheres. The settings of the conversations were in stress-free environments (i.e. four different homes of the participants) while engaged in natural conversations at a crawfish boil or while visiting with an old friend. The topics ranged from the dislike of Wal-Mart, to recounting stories from the past, to the differences in "true" French (the participants stated that CF was not "true" French because they do not believe that their French is adequate compared to other varieties of French. During the filming, the two CF participants called CF *le français cassé*.) The CF and two CE speak two languages: CE and CF.

The first dyad was conducted in CF and the following two in CE. The fourth was a mixed dyad--a conversation between a CE and SAE speaker. The fifth dyad was a control group

that was comprised of two speakers of Southern Alabama English. Five 3-minute excerpts were randomly extracted from the transcripts of each dyadic interaction.

3.2 Participants

In this study, there are ten participants. All of the participants are IRB⁷ exempt. Seven of the participants were from Avoyelles Parish, two were from Selma, Alabama, and one participant nomadic. The purpose of the control group is to provide a source of comparison for the patterns of CE and CF. The control group data will be compared to Nash’s findings in Standard American English (SAE). I grouped the participants into five different dyads according to their age and educational backgrounds. Two of the participants did not finish high school, and these participants were of the advanced age group (70+). Table 3.1 depicts the social statistics of the participants at the time of the study.

Table 3.1
Participant Statistics

<i><u>Participant</u></i>	<i><u>Age (years)</u></i>	<i><u>Maternal Language</u></i>	<i><u>Education (years)</u></i>	<i><u>Sex</u></i>
P1	83	CF	10	Female
P2	70	CF	10	Male
P3	54	CE	12	Male
P4	54	CF	12	Male
P5	52	CF	12	Female
P6	51	CE	16	Female
P7	35	CE	16	Female
P8	36	SAE	12	Male
P9	18	SAE	12	Male
P10	18	SAE	12	Male

Participant 1 (P1) is an 83 year-old female from Moreauville, Louisiana. She spent several years living in New Orleans only to return home and live in Moreauville in order to get

⁷ Internal Review Board at Louisiana State University.

married and raise a family. P1's first language is CF. It was not until she was 6 years old that she learned to speak English. However, she continues to speak French at home. P1 did not graduate from high school but obtained a GED to later work as a nurse's aide.

Like P1, Participant 2 (P2), a 70 year-old male from Moreauville, Louisiana, did not graduate from high school and learned to speak English at the age of 6 when he started school. He worked as a television repairman for many years. Although his wife never ceased speaking French, he, on the other hand, started to speak French less and less in the home as his children were born. However, he did maintain his competency in French and still speaks French to his family and friends today.

Participant 3 (P3) and Participant 4 (P4) are 54 year-old men who both graduated from high school. P3 was born and raised in Moreauville, Louisiana. P4 was born and raised in a small community called Hamburg, which is approximately three miles outside of the corporation limits of Moreauville. Both have ability in French. P3 can be classified as a passive bilingual while P4's more advanced production allows for him to be classified as a semi-speaker. According to Myers-Scotton, a passive bilingual is a person who can understand a language but cannot produce the structures (2006). Dubois and others state that a semi-speaker is a speaker who is capable of constructing utterances but not able to convey these utterances in real life experiences (1997). P3 is a welder, which is the second most common occupation in Avoyelles Parish, and P4 is a farmer, the most common occupation in Avoyelles Parish. These two participants did not obtain any degree past high school.

Participant 5 (P5) is a 53 year-old woman from Hamburg, but after she was married, she moved to Moreauville. P5's first language was French, and she learned English as she started elementary school. P5 graduated from high school and attended some college. Midway through

her nursing school career she withdrew to raise a family. She regularly uses French with family and friends as a bilingual speaker of CF and CE.

Participant 6 (P6) is a 52 year-old woman from Moreauville. She obtained a Bachelor's of Science in Business at Loyola University in New Orleans, Louisiana. After she was married, she relocated back to Moreauville to raise her family. She, unlike the rest of the participants, can only understand basic French expressions and would be classified as a near-passive speaker. A near-passive speaker can grasp and produce certain words, but cannot construct complete sentences (Dorian, 1981).

Also from Moreauville, Participant 7 (P7) is a 35 year-old woman who obtained a Bachelor's of Science in Nursing at Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, Louisiana. After she was married, she moved to Baton Rouge for seven years but then relocated back to Moreauville to raise a family. Additionally, P7 can be classified as a near-passive speaker.

Participant 8 (P8) is a 36 year-old man from Moreauville. He spent the majority of his youth living on Air Force bases throughout the United States (mainly in Colorado) and moved to Moreauville in high school. He obtained a post-high school certificate in welding. He moved to Baton Rouge after he was married and returned to Moreauville to raise a family. His linguistic ability in CF is similar to that of P7, i.e., a near-passive speaker.

Currently residing in Moreauville, Participant 9 (P9) and Participant 10 (P10) are both 18 year-old males from Selma, Alabama. After graduating from high school, they moved to Louisiana to obtain a post-high school certificate in welding and to seek employment. They have no French ability.

CHAPTER 4: TURN-TAKING STRATEGIES

4.1 Turn-Taking Patterns in French

According to previous research, gaze behavior is the most important regulator in the turn-taking sequence. Applying this model to French, however, is problematic. Gaze direct refers to the gaze of the speaker toward the addressee and/or the addressee toward the speaker. Due to the fact that mutual gaze direct is high throughout a conversation in French, there are, therefore, other models which account for the turn-taking patterns in French. As Nash (2007) found in the case of French speakers, there are other strategies employed to take and relinquish the turn. Physical advancement or retraction of the body, i.e. gaze direct with advancement (Gaze Direct^{adv}) and gaze direct with retraction (Gaze Direct^{ret}), and the gestural display of the hand are used by French speakers to gain control of the floor and hold the speaker turn. Often, the hand gesture penetrates into the addressee's personal sphere. These patterns are observed in the turn-taking strategies used by CE and CF speakers as illustrated in the following sections.

Although the participants were seated next to each other approximately three feet apart so as to be comfortable in their own personal spheres, this arrangement did not prevent the Cajun participants from entering into each other's personal sphere, contrary to the behavior patterns observed in the conversations of other American English speakers.

4.2 Cajun French

The following image sets were conducted in CF between the two participants (P1 and P2). P1 and P2 demonstrate Gaze Direct^{adv} and Gaze Direct^{ret} in regulating their turn during the conversation. Hand gestures penetrating into the other participants' personal sphere are also seen in regulating the turn.

Image 4.1



P2: (a.) *Ça parle en français, et Holly parle en français....*
P2: (a.) They speak in French, and Holly speaks French...

P1: (b.) *Oh...*
P1: (b.) Oh...

In 4.1a, P2 (on the right) opens the conversation by discussing French speakers in Louisiana. At the beginning of his utterance, he initiates his turn by displaying a hand gesture which penetrates P2's personal sphere in order to signal to P2 that he now has the floor. After he states that his daughter is the only one of five children that can actually speak French, in 4.1b, P1 interjects with a hand signal (left hand/arm) to take her speaker turn.

Image 4.2



P2: (a.) *Alle a venue, et quand il a rentré dans mon chambre, j'ai dit, « qui c'est mon tracasse, mon vieux. ?» Les yeux a fait grosse comme ça. Il a dit, troubles, old man?»* His eyes got big like this. He said, “you speak French, « tu parles en français, mon cher? » *Oh, ouais, je parle français!* mon cher?” Oh, yeah, I speak French!

P1: (b.) *Là, c'était alright !*

P1: (b.) That, that's alright!

In Image 4.2a, P2 has the floor again as he talks about his daughter accompanying him to the doctor. He states that he and the doctor spoke in French, and after he states that he did, in fact, speak French with the doctor, in 4.1b, P1 then takes the floor by using yet another gesture of the hand. The index finger display is a very common gesture used by native French speakers to hold the speaker turn.

4.3 Cajun English

The following two segments were conducted in CE between the participants (P3 and P4) and (P5 and P6).

Image 4.3



P4: (a.) I never (b.) seen one like that. I bet I bought ten of [th]em since I got married and every time we used it... opp, the battery's dead!

In Images 4.3a and 4.3b, P3 is located on the left, and P4 is located on the right. P4 starts by giving a description of the video camera used in the filming process. As seen in 4.3b, as P4 makes the statement about the camera, P4's posture changes as he leans toward P3 displaying the Gaze Direct^{adv}.

Image 4.4

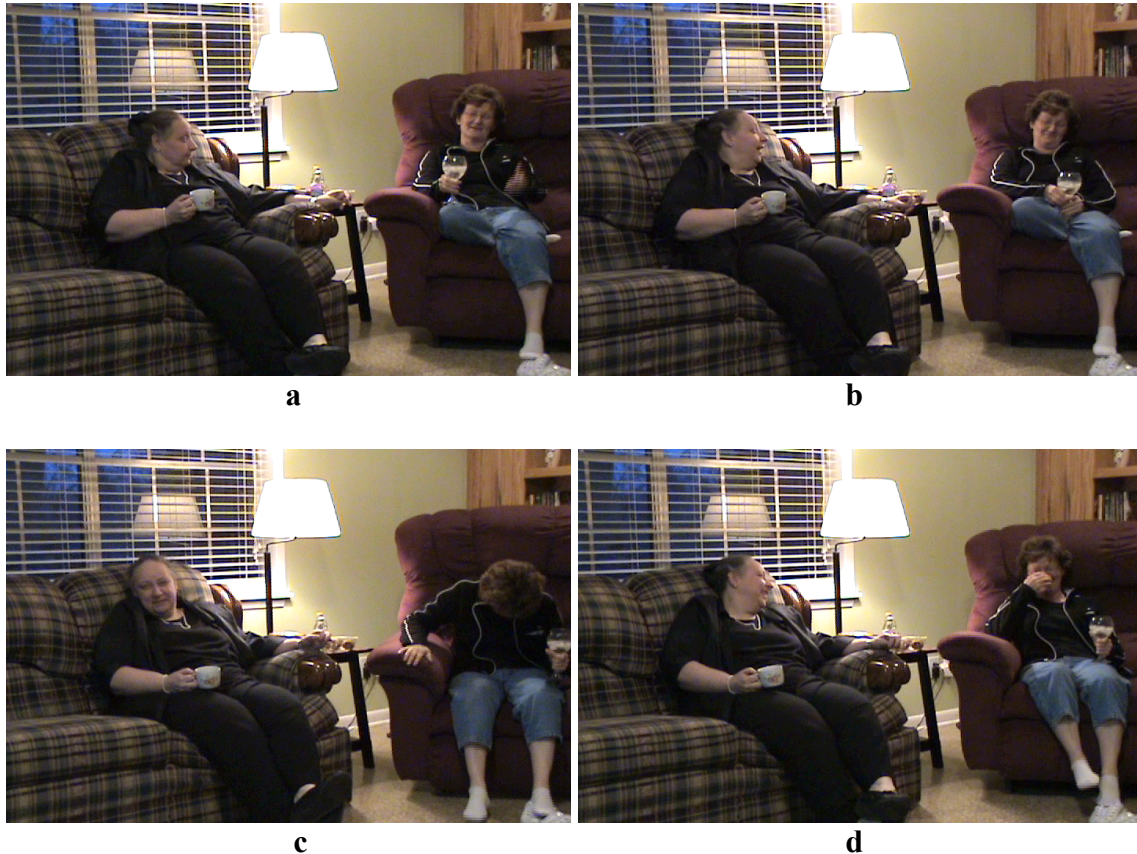


P3: Veta came by my (a.) office. [P4: Veta...] (b.) Poor David (Gaze Direct^{ret}).
P4: (c.) (Gaze Direct^{adv}). I saw them the other night...Veta. Let me not say the other night about October, November. She was (d.) (Gaze Direct^{ret}). right here.

In Image 4.4, the posture change is observed throughout both turns. In 4.4a, P3 (on the left) begins the utterance by displaying a hand gesture to indicate that he is taking and holding the speaker turn. Still in 4.4a, P4 starts advancing to take the turn and utters “Veta” however he

is not successful in maintaining his speaker turn as can be seen by the advance posture of P3 who continues to speak. Hence, in 4.4b, P4 retracts his body position as P3 continues his speaker turn. In 4.4c, P3's posture retracts thereby relinquishing the turn to P4 who now displays Gaze Direct^{adv}, advancing his posture as he takes the speaker turn and continues his turn in 4.4d.

Image 4.5



P5: When we had...the first time we went to Paris...poor (a.) Andy. We were gonna have dinner with the prof..you know, his professors, and uhm...(b.)[P6: laughter].

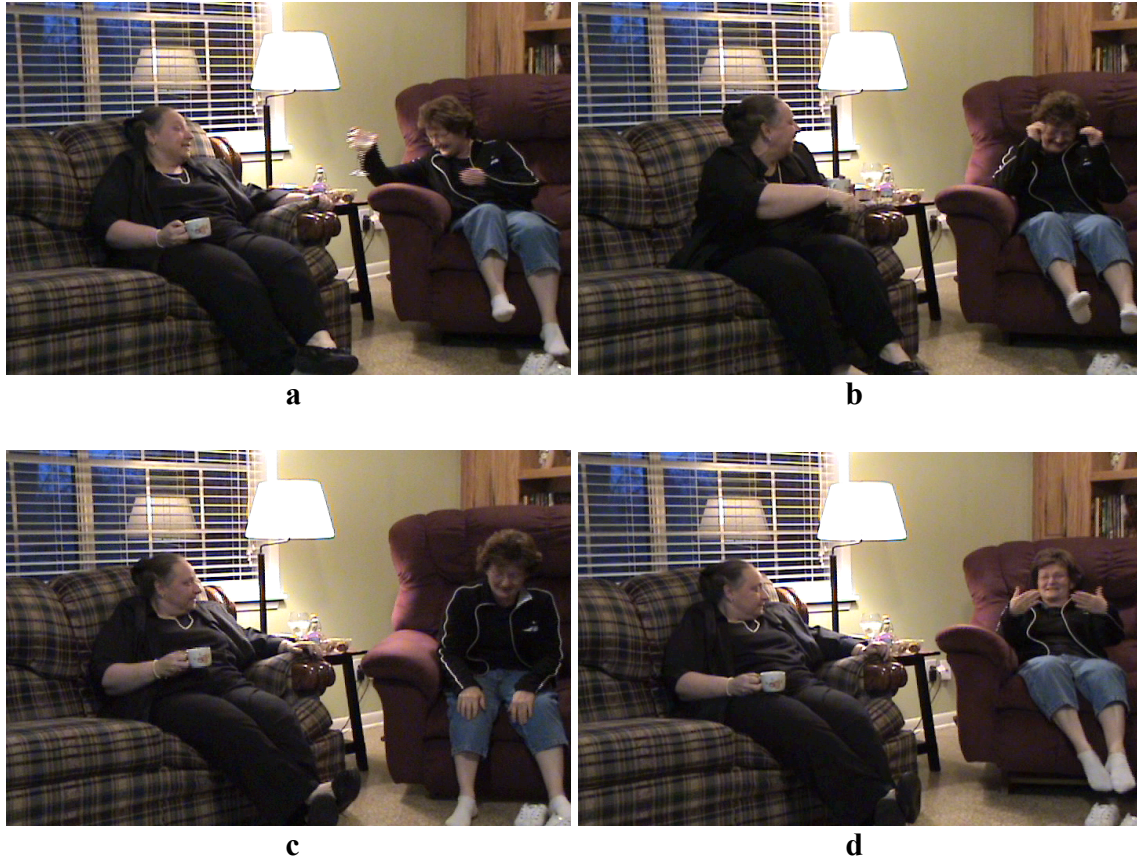
P6: Don't tell me you got drunk!

P5: (c.) No! [laughter]. I had I had (d.) jet lag.

Image 4.5 depicts another example of posture change as a regulator in turn-taking. P5 is located on the right with P6 on the left. As the utterance starts, P5 talks about a trip to Paris.

She is describing the trip when P6 interrupts in 4.4b. When in 4.5c, P5 advances to regain her role as the speaker. As she terminates her utterance, she retracts her body as seen in 4.5d.

Image 4.6



P6: (a.) I'm sure they were impressed. This poor boy! He's fighting an uphill battle. Let's just (b.) (Gaze Direct^{adv}) give him an "A" (Gaze Direct^{ret}).

P5: (c.) Well, I...we had just got in the restaurant, and in Paris, you either on the street, or you in the basement, or you in the attic (d).

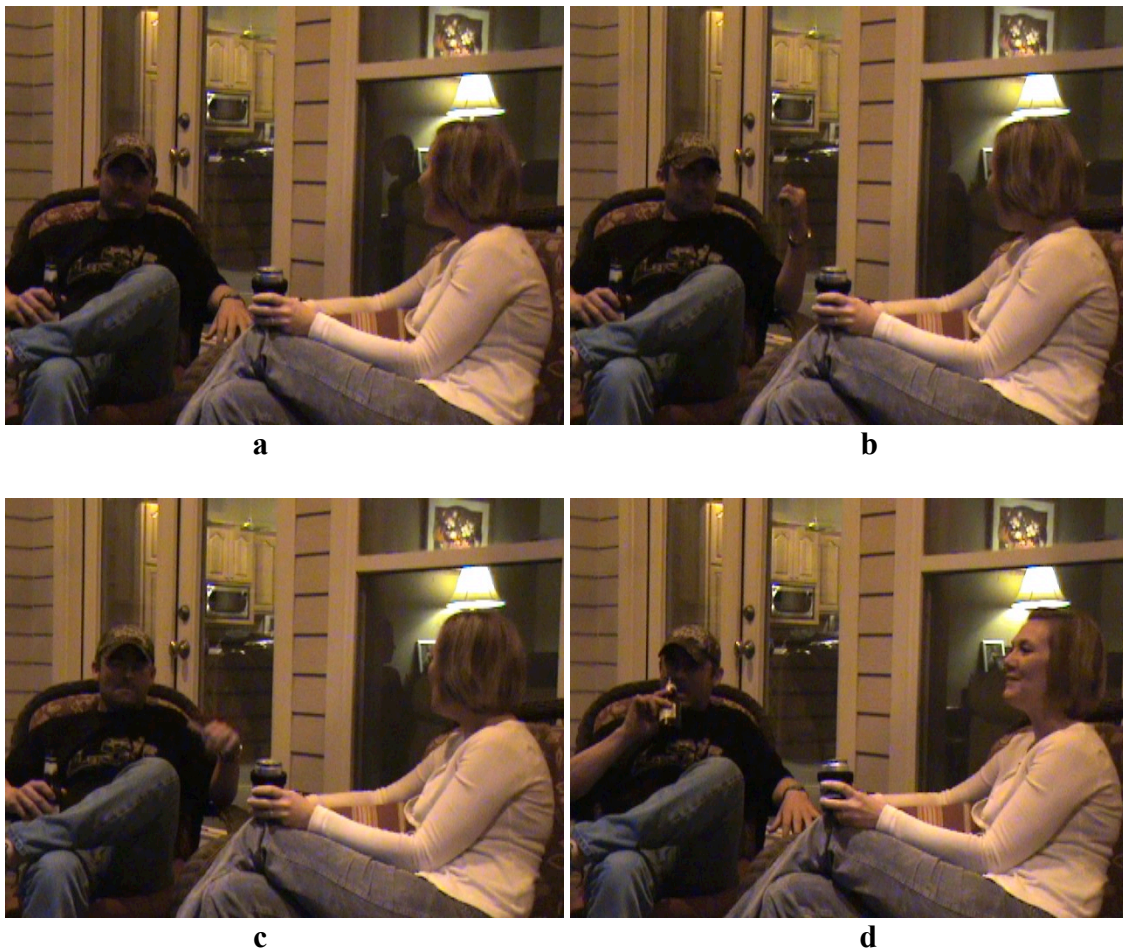
In Image 4.6, the participants continue their conversation regarding the trip to Paris. In 4.6a, we see P5 (right) in the middle of an utterance. At the same time, P5 places her drink down to facilitate the advancement of her posture for the role as the speaker. P6 notices that this is occurring, so she responds by advancing her posture to let the addressee know that she is not finished with her role as the speaker. By 4.6c, P5 is fully advanced and begins her role as the

speaker. In 4.6d, as she terminates her utterance and speaker turn, P5 retracts her body posture. The advancing and retracting of these two participants illustrates signals not only the beginning of a turn but also a reluctance to relinquish a turn already occurring, i.e. to hold the speaker turn.

4.4 Mixed Dyad (CE and SAE)

The following two image sets are of a mixed dyad. The two dialects in this dyad are CE and SAE. P7 is a CE speaker, and P8 is a speaker of SAE. In the image sets, P8 does not utilize the same patterns as that of CF and CE. During the conversation P7 does, in fact, demonstrate the use of Gaze Direct^{adv} and Gaze Direct^{ret}. This dyad was chosen to see if, in fact, CE speakers applied CF turn-taking strategies with other speakers.

Image 4.7



(4.7 cont'd)

P7: (a.) They came in this morning and told Katelynn...uhh...if Scott was gonna be over here because two girls were coming to eat breakfast. [P8: (b.) Over here?]

P7: (c.) Yeah! Was Scott gon[na] be here? 'Cause I didn't want him picking on them (d.).

In Image 4.7, the conversation starts out by P7 (on the right) speaking of her husband's two cousins who are having two friends over for breakfast. P7 is in the relaxed position in the middle of her turn (4.7a) until P8 tries to interject by asking if the two friends were coming to eat at P7's house. P7 was not finished with her turn as the addressee and initiated in Gaze Direct^{adv} (4.7b). During the Gaze Direct^{adv} of P7, P8 finished with his turn, and P7 did not complete a full advancement feature like found in the previous examples. 4.7d shows P7 back in her relaxed position while continuing her utterance. Despite slight change in the angle of P7's head, the advancement feature is found even in a mixed dyad and exhibits the use of the Gaze Direct^{adv} as a regulator in turn-taking.

Image 4.8



(4.8 cont'd)



c

d

P7: Two girls were coming, and Matt was head over heels for one of them. They...the girls put in their order. They wanted chocolate chip pancakes, bacon, and scrambled eggs. I got all of it ready for them, so all they had to do was put it on the griddle. (a.) So Scott and I left...

P8: (a.) Where'd y'all go? They never came? [P7: (c.) No! They never came!]

P7: And I even (d.) put out some nice glasses.

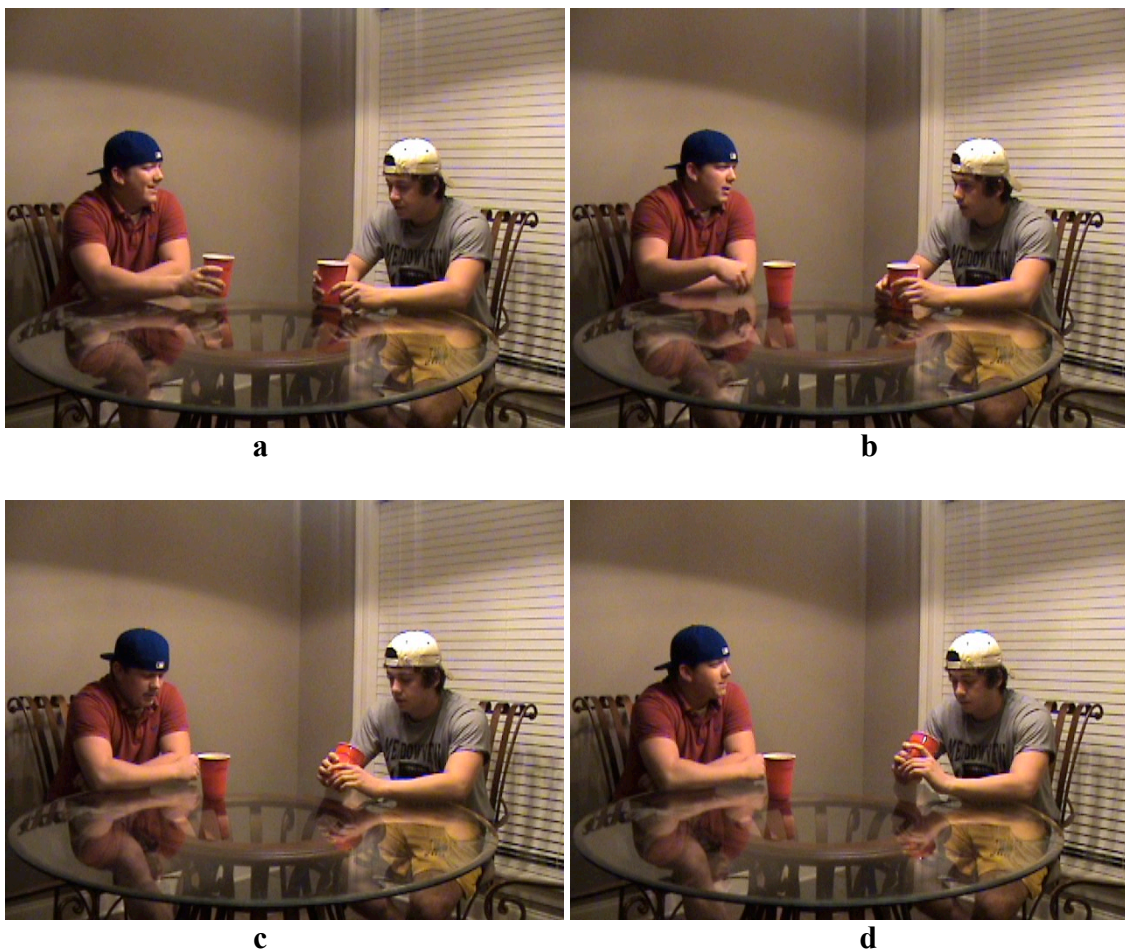
In the conversation, the participants continue to talk about P7's (on the right) husband's cousins and their two friends who are coming to eat at their house. P7's first utterance starts out by talking about what the boys wanted her to make for their friends. As soon as P7 said that she and her husband left, still in 4.8a, P8 interjects with "Where'd y'all go? They never came?". In 4.8b, P7 displays Gaze Direct^{adv} to regain her role as the speaker. Once P7 has gained full control over the floor again, she utters "No! They never came!" and begins Gaze Direct^{ret}, in 4.8c.

From the two previous image sets, CF patterns are still exhibited in CE even in a mixed dyad. P8 did not use the same CE patterns as P7; however, these patterns are still observed in P7. The repetitive use of the CF patterns in CE show a direct link that these patterns are, not cross-linguistic, but, cross-cultural.

4.5 Southern Alabama English

The following two image sets are from the control group. Southern Alabama English is spoken between the two participants (P9 and P10). The two participants do not exhibit the use of the French gaze behavior patterns, i.e., high mutual gaze. Their turn-taking patterns conform to Kendon's (1967) model of the turn-taking sequence whereby the speaker averts the gaze as he begins the turn at talk all the while the addressee gazing at the speaker, and redirects the gaze toward the addressee upon terminating his turn at talk thus relinquishing the turn to the addressee.

Image 4.9



P10: (a.) You going (b.) hunting tomorrow?

(4.9 cont'd)

P9: (b.) Probably.

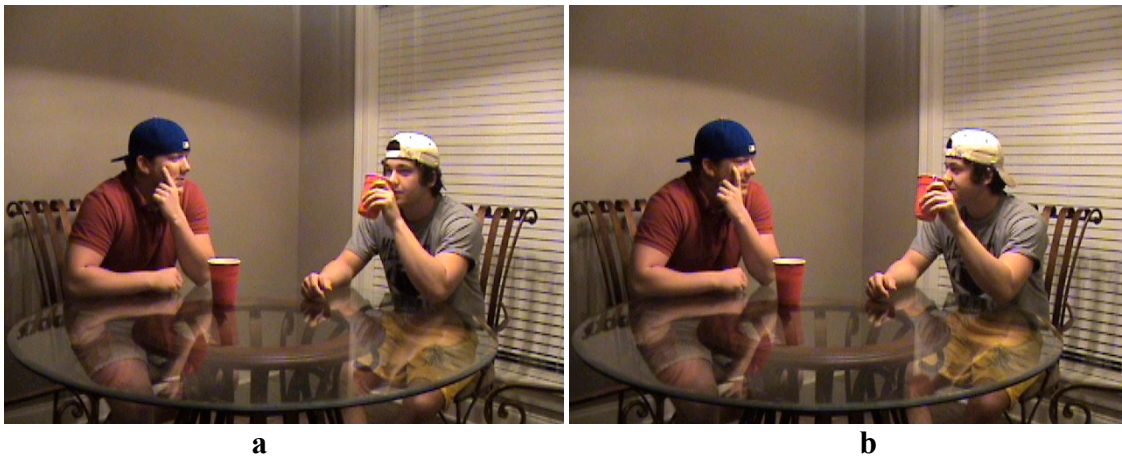
P10: (b.)What did Alan's dad say (c.)?

P9: (c.) He said he was probably gon[na] kill me or something [if he did not go hunting].

P10: (d.) You need to ask him if I can come.

In Image 4.9, P9 (on the left) and P10 (on the right) are talking about an upcoming hunting trip. Image 4.9a starts out with P10, who has the speaker turn, demonstrating gaze avert. As soon as he obtained the role as speaker, he averted his gaze while P9, the addressee, was exhibiting gaze direct. In 4.9b, P10 then changes his gaze to gaze direct thereby relinquishing his turn to P9. In 4.9c, P9 averts the gaze as he is holding the turn until 4.9d when he redirects his gaze to relinquish the turn to P10 once again.

Image 4.10



(4.10 cont'd)



c



d



e



f

P9: (a.) What about Alabama this year? (b.)

P10: (c.) They're horrible!

P9: (d.) They really ain't that horrible.

P10: (e.) They lost another conference game.

P9: (f.) So...they'll be back next year though.

P10: For about 10 seconds. [P9: No.]

In 4.10, the participants are talking about two rival football teams. In Image 4.10a, P9 (on the left) initiates the turn while directing the gaze because he is posing a direct question to his addressee. At the end of his question, P10 changes from gaze avert to gaze direct to take the turn. In 4.10c, P9 has the role of the speaker and is utilizing gaze avert while holding his turn.

The gaze changes to gaze direct by the end of his utterance in 4.10d. Also in 4.10d, P10 takes the role of speaker and demonstrates gaze avert in 4.10e and then gaze direct in 4.10f to relinquish his turn.

In the previous two image sets, the two participants have demonstrated patterns of the turn which relate to Kendon's (1967) model, i.e. Gaze Direct → Gaze Avert → Gaze Direct. There is a clear difference between this dyad and dyads with either CF or CE speakers.

4.6 Summary

Culture shift in the case of CF and CE can clearly be seen in the analysis of the above conversations. The advancement and retraction patterns remain the same throughout each of the (five) conversations despite only one of these actually taking place in CF. Knowing already that Gaze Direct^{adv} and Gaze Direct^{ret} occur as turn-taking regulators in French, it comes as no surprise that these features appear in the CF conversation. However, the use of these same patterns in the CE conversations directly demonstrates that culture precedes language. More specifically, it is because these features are present in both CF and CE, which proves that the culture has remained the same despite a drastic language shift having already occurred.

CHAPTER 5: GAZE BEHAVIOR PATTERNS

5.1 Gaze Direct and Mutual Gaze

The gaze behavior patterns exhibited by CE and CF speakers are similar to the patterns found by Nash (2007) for speakers of French. Table 5.1, below, shows the percentages of the mutual gaze, speaker gaze during the speaker turn, and addressee gaze during the speaker turn.

Table 5.1 Percentages of Gaze Behaviors in the Conversation.

	Mutual Gaze	Speaker Gaze	Addressee Gaze
SAE	24%	47%	50%
French	51%	67%	85%
Cajun French	57.4%	77.8%	97.7%
Cajun English (I)	42.46%	59.8%	91.9%
Cajun English (II)	51.67%	79.76%	66%
Mixed Dyad (CE)	28.88%	88.5%	65%
Mixed Dyad (SAE)	28.88%	15.9%	28.8%
Southern Alabama	33.33%	46.3%	48.99%

Table 5.1 contains the totals of the percentages from the data that I have collected as well as the data previously gathered by Nash (2001, 2007). The mutual gaze was computed by the dividing the total duration of the gaze direct (between the speaker and the addressee) (in seconds) and the total duration of the clip (in seconds). The speaker gaze was calculated by dividing the duration of the gaze direct of the speaker during the speaker turn (in seconds) and the total duration of the speaker turn of the specific speaker (in seconds) (i.e., $(\text{Gaze Direct of } s^l) / \text{Duration of turn of } s^l)$). The addressee gaze was determined by dividing the total duration of the addressee gaze direct (in seconds) by the total duration of the speaker turn (in seconds) (i.e., $\text{Gaze Direct } a^l / \text{Duration of } s^l$).

Nash's data consists of statistics regarding Northern California English and French. A comparison of those percentages to my data illuminates the differences in gaze behaviors in the respective languages studied. One may notice that there are two CE dyads. These are two

different groups, and I did not want the data to be combined. Due to the fact that in one dyad, one of the participants was not displaying consistent addressee gaze because he was attentive to his food. When comparing the four groups of my data (excluding Southern Alabama and Mixed Dyad [SAE]), one can see that they are comparable to those Nash calculated for French (2001, 2007).

In regards to the Mixed Dyad, the percentages of mutual gaze are lower than expected. This dyad had 28.88% of mutual gaze during the conversation. Since P8 was not a CE speaker, P7's *regard français* was so intense that P8 could not bear to engage in the mutual gaze and averted the gaze very frequently. P7's addressee gaze was comparable to Nash's 67% of speaker gaze (2007) at 88.5% of the conversation. Since this percentage is extremely high, it gives reason as to why all of P8's gazes were lower than expected.

The Southern Alabama English group's results differ slightly than Nash's SAE results. Nash's SAE data came from California. Alabama English and California English could have separate cultures. The percentages from Southern Alabama English could be lower because California English and Alabama English might be two separate cultures. The key factor in this study was to make certain that the Southern Alabama English and the CE and CF statistics were not the same.

Figure 5.2 shows the combined percentages of the data that I collected and that of Nash (2007). The dyads that were collected are shown in groups of three. The figure shows the combined percentages of the data that I collected and that of Nash (2007). Each dyad has three associated columns. The left-most columns in light blue are the percentages of mutual gaze during the conversations. The middle columns, in red, display the percentages of speaker gazes

during the conversations. Lastly, right-most columns of each dyad, in green, are the percentages of addressee gaze in the conversations.

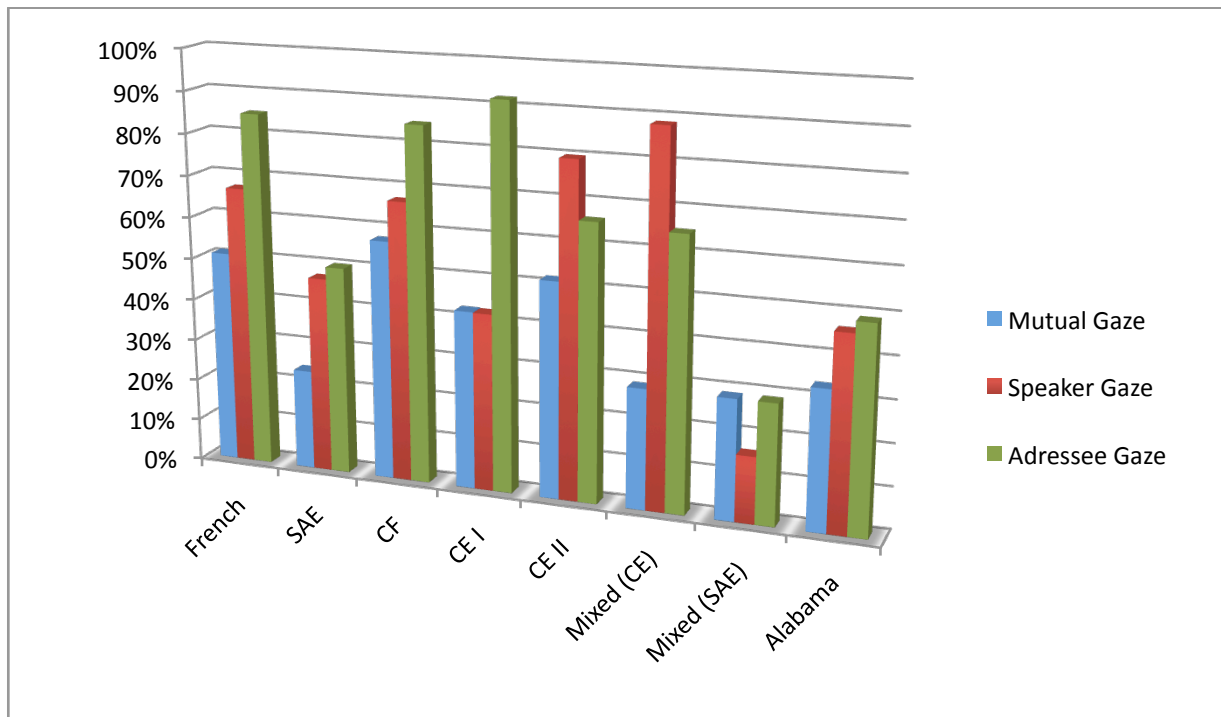


Figure 5.2 Percentages of Gaze Behaviors in the Conversation.

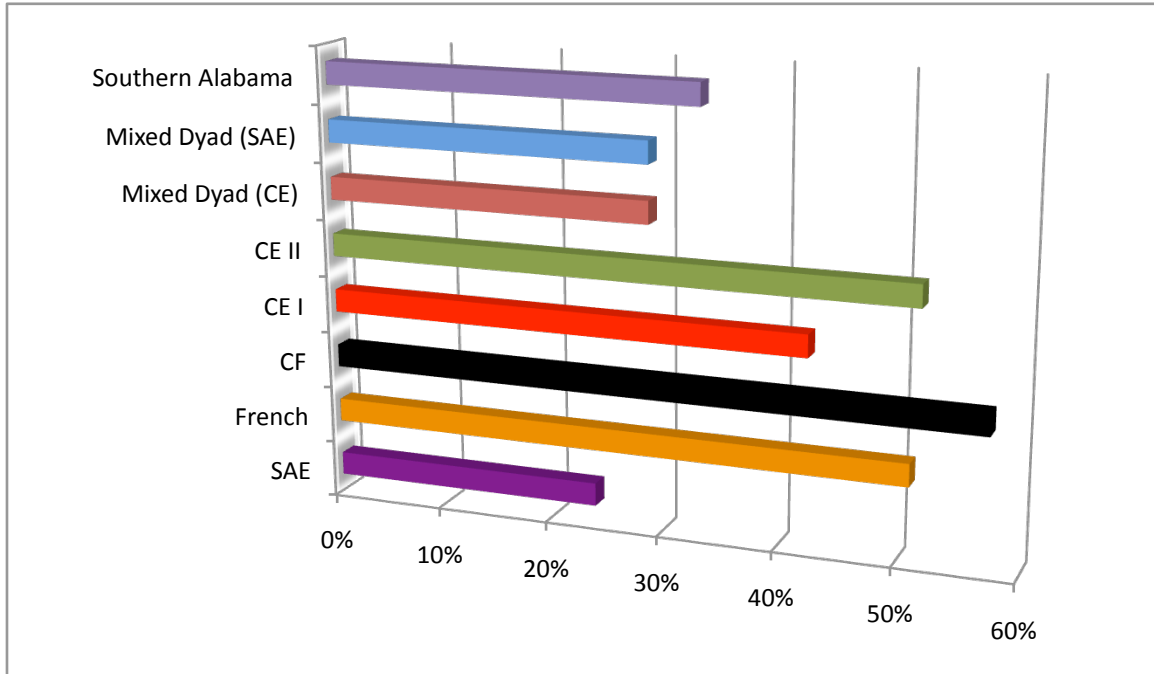


Figure 5.3 Percentage of Mutual Gaze During the Conversation.

Figure 5.3 illustrates the percentages of mutual gaze direct during the three-minute clips for each of the five dyads that were collected. As previously estimated, both CE groups and the CF group are parallel with the French group, and all groups exceed the SAE group. The black bar illustrates CF speakers having a percentage of approximately 57% of mutual gaze direct in the conversation. The red and green bars illustrate CE having a percentage of mutual gaze direct of approximately 42% and 52% of the conversation. The data revealed that Southern Alabama English speakers exhibit mutual gaze of approximately 33.33% during the conversation.

In the study, the mixed dyad exhibited mutual gaze of 28.88% which was abnormally low. Since P7 is a CE speaker, her gaze behavior patterns exhibited during the study are the same as if she was communicating with another CE speaker. P7's speaker gaze and addressee gaze were very intent. She exhibited *le regard français* even in CE. Even though this behavior was appropriate for P7, P8 did not engage in mutual gaze but for more than a couple of seconds. Despite the low percentage of mutual gaze in this dyad, the results, exhibited by P7 the CE

speaker, were in accordance with that of Nash's results (2001, 2007). This strengthens the argument that if these gaze behaviors from French are exhibited in CE that culture shifted and precedes language.

From the previously discussed data, we can see that since there is a high amount of mutual gaze with French and CE speakers, there will be a change in posture or gestural change in order to denote a gain or yield in the turn. This gaze direct can be labeled as "advancement" or "retraction" of a gesture, posture, or head movement. The gaze avert is placed in parentheses within the captions because it is noted very frequently in CF and CE. However, it does not regulate the turn. It is only used in instances where a story is being recounted, and this will be discussed further in a different section. This thesis does not include the analysis of hand gestures nor head movements, but simply how they contribute to turn-taking by acting as regulators.

5.2 Gaze Direct

After mutual gaze was recorded, gaze direct by speaker and addressee during the speaker turn was analyzed in the study (The percentages are noted in Table 5.1 above.). Fig. 5.4 shows the percentages of Gaze Direct exhibited by the speakers of each dyad.

In Figure 5.4, the chart illustrates the speaker gaze during the turn. This chart shows that two out of the three dyads from this study exceed that of French collected by Nash (2001). All CF and CE dyads percentages of speaker gaze exceeded the percentages of speaker gaze determined by Nash's SAE. It may be noticed that CE I is lower than for the other CF and CE dyads.

As seen in Fig. 5.5 above, CE I is closer to the percentages of addressee Gaze Direct in Nash's (2007) French than they are to her SAE sample. CE II, however, has a significantly lower percentage than SAE and CE I. The correlation between Nash's data and my own again suggests

that the gaze behavior of CE speakers is derived from their French cultural heritage and not from their adoption of the English language.

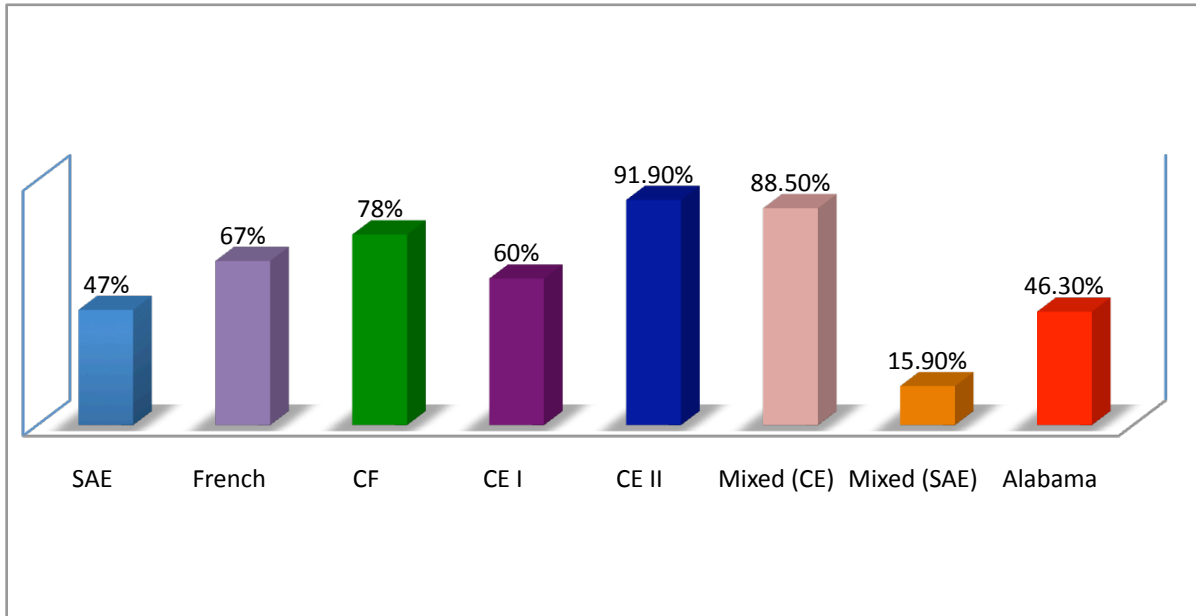


Figure 5.4 Percentage of Speaker Gaze during the Speaker Turn.

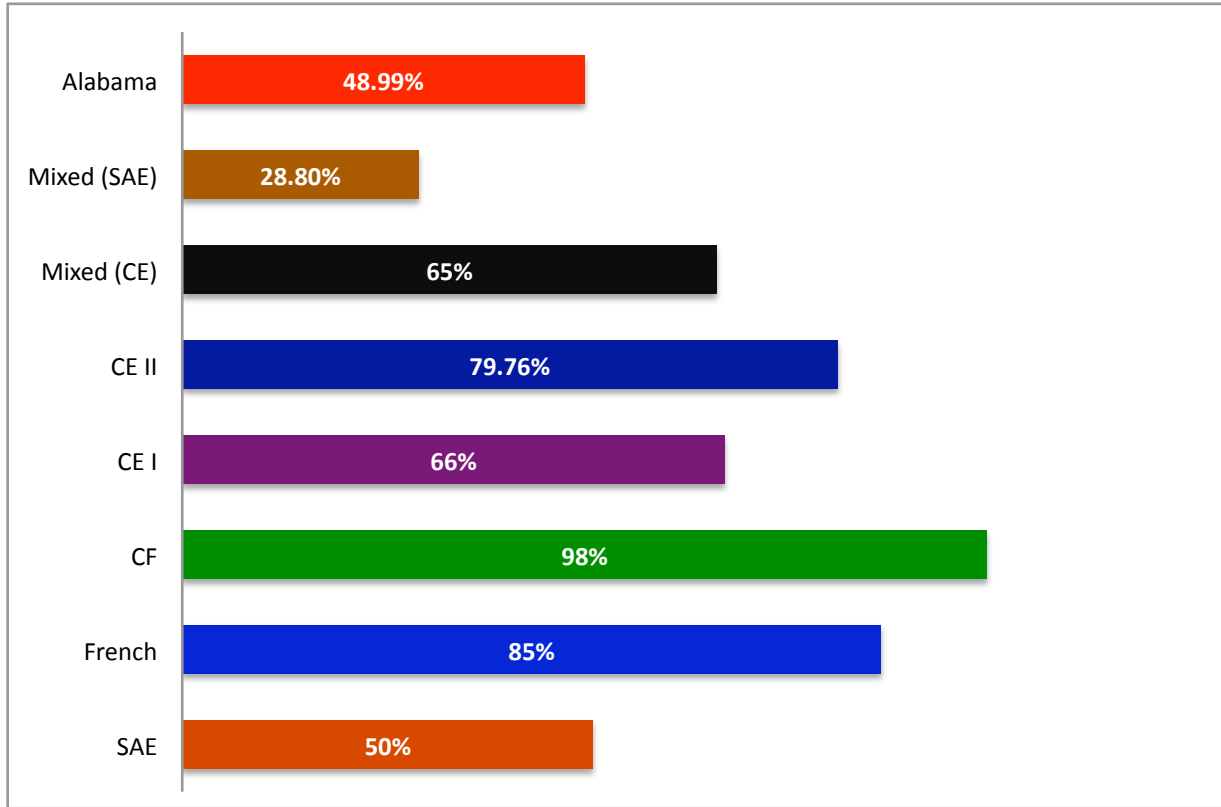


Figure 5.5 Percentage of Addressee Gaze Direct during the Speaker Turn.

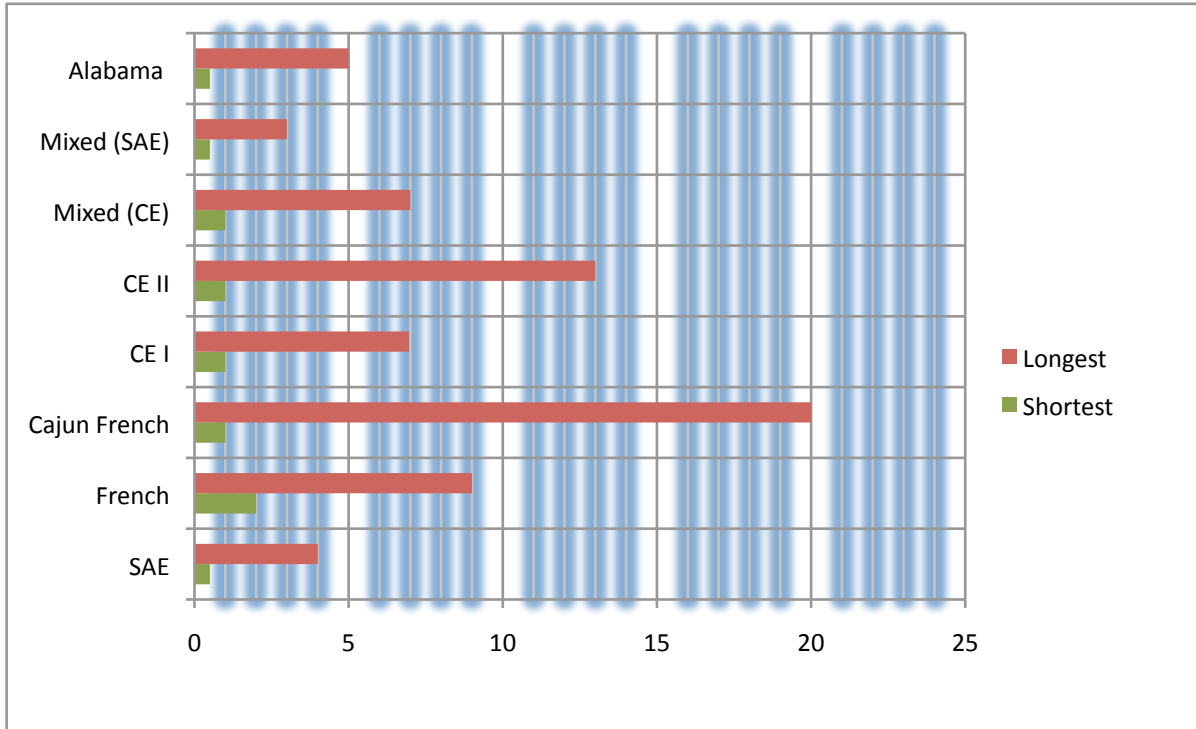


Figure 5.6 Duration of Gaze Direct during the Conversation (in seconds).

Figure 5.6 above shows the duration of Gaze Direct from the corpus that was collected for this study and the data that were collected by Nash (2007). The dark pink bars illustrate the longest duration of gaze direct while the green bars illustrate the shortest duration of gaze direct. One can see that when compared to SAE, CE and CF are more comparable with French than SAE. The longest duration in gaze direct in Nash's (2007) SAE collection was approximately 4 seconds and in Nash's French collection was approximately 9 seconds. The data that were collected with this study showed a substantial difference with CF. CF's longest duration in gaze direct was approximately 20 seconds. The first group was CE II. CE II had its longest duration of 13 seconds. The second group was CE I. CE I had its longest duration of 7 seconds. CE, CF, Mixed Dyad, and Southern Alabama English exhibited the shortest duration of 1 second compared to 2 seconds from Nash's French data and 0.5 from Nash's SAE data.

5.3 Gaze Avert

In the case of French, it seems that there is a great deal of gaze direct as compared to SAE. However an account needs to be given for the examples of Gaze Avert in French. Nash (2009) concluded that one function of gaze avert is to decline the turn by the addressee. According to Nash, another function of gaze avert is to leave the present “here-and-now” world of the discourse to go to another universe of discourse such as when recalling facts, retrieving vocabulary, recounting past experiences, predicting future events, in conjunction with conditional clauses, and in uttering someone else’s direct discourse (as opposed to the direct discourse of the speaker which is uttered with gaze direct). I find that CE and CF speakers avert the gaze to leave the here-and-now when recounting a story that occurred in the past (i.e., story telling) as illustrated in the following examples.



Image 5.1

P2: (a.) (Gaze Avert) *Le docteur a compris comment ça se fait.*

P2: (a.) (Gaze Avert) The doctor understood what happened.

P2: (b.) (Gaze Direct) *Eh j vas expliquer ça au docteur...a dit...a dit go ahead.*

P2: (b.) (Gaze Direct) I was going to explain that to the doctor...I said...I said go ahead.

Image 5.1 demonstrates an example of Gaze Avert, a pattern commonly used in French to decline a turn (Nash, 2009). In the entire clip, there were several examples of gaze avert during the speaker turn. These examples of gaze avert were not intended to decline a turn, yet this behavior was used to leave the here-and-now. In 5.1a, P2 is talking about a life experience not in the present, but in the past tense. After P2 finishes his utterance regarding the past, he redirects his gaze towards his addressee. Gaze avert is a very common occurrence in the data collected in this study: every time the speaker used the past tense or imperfect aspect, he/she demonstrated the gaze avert behavior as if he/she was replaying that scene in his/her mind. This behavioral pattern is found throughout the rest of the sample and further examples will be shown.

Image 5.2



P1: (a.) (Gaze Direct) *J'ai pas eu trop quand j'ai été en France, mais je peux comprendre un [pe]tit brin, mais* (b) (Gaze Avert) *c'est quand j'ai appliqué pour mon job à l'Alexandrie pour Rapides Home Health.*
 P1: (a.) (Gaze Direct) I didn't have many [problems] when I went to France, but I could understand a little bit, but (b.) (Gaze Avert) it's when I applied for my job in Alexandria for Rapides Home Health.

Image 5.2 shows the same behavior as Image 5.1. In this instance, P1 (on the right) was talking about her life experience in France, in Image 5.2a, of being able to understand “a little bit” of French. Speaking French did not become important until she applied for a job and

realized the significance of her bilingualism. When she starts to recount a story from the past, she uses the Gaze Avert behavior to do so. This behavior is shown in 5.2b.

Image 5.3



P3: (a.) (Gaze Avert) When they were growing up, we got one of them (b.) big Sears'. (c.) We paid it by the month. I paid for (d.) twenty years. I think that thing cost 15 thousand dollars.

In Image 5.3, gaze avert behavior during the speaker turn is also seen in CE speakers when used to recount stories from the past. P3 (on the left) is recounting a story from twenty years ago. Images 5.3a and 5.3b demonstrate the same behavior of gaze avert when leaving the here-and-now as he speaks in the imperfect aspect and past tense. One must notice that he was speaking in the imperfect aspect and past tense when gaze avert behavior is exhibited. We

therefore see gaze avert patterns in both CF and one CE dyad thus establishing a pattern with gaze avert.

In the next image, the speaker is recounting a story from even further in the past.

Image 5.4



P4: [To P0] (a.) (Gaze Direct) You making a hundred or not...or a zero? We never did too good. [To P3] Hey Donnie, you remember that (b.) (Gaze Avert) old white station wagon. When we popped them holes in the muffler? We jacked it up on the old side. It was that old '58 with the pipes on the top...

In Image 5.4a, P4 (on the right) begins by gazing at the camera man (P0) towards the camera man (P0). In the next frame (5.4b), P4 averts the gaze to remove himself from the present and recount his life experience about a car that the two participants worked on together forty years. Not only does P4 avert the gaze from P0, but he also averts the gaze from P3 when shifting to the past tense. Here once again, CE speakers exhibit gaze avert behavior when referencing the past.

Image 5.5



P5: (a.) (Gaze Avert) He had an uhm...welding supply, and he can't order...uhm
(b.) (Gaze Direct) make a burner or order one.

Image 5.5 demonstrates another example of gaze avert during the speaker turn. In this example, P5 (on the right) is talking about her husband having a welding supply company, but at the same time he was not able to get the part for the burner to be able to cook dinner for the evening. While she is talking about him having the business (5.5a), she is demonstrating gaze avert behavior because she is removing herself from the here-and-now. P5 then refocuses her gaze to gaze direct (5.5b) when she switches to the present tense.

Image 5.6



P5: (a.) (Gaze Avert) Was it true? (b.) (Gaze Direct) I don't know.

Image 5.6 is the previous example of the behavior of gaze avert while removing oneself from the here-and-now. After the topic was switched, P5 (on the right) started talking about a life experience and questioned if it was true or not. She returns to the here-and-now in 5.6b. Once again, the speaker returns the Gaze Direct toward the addressee when the utterance in the past is complete.

Image 5.7



P7: (a.) (Gaze Direct) I expected them to at least still be here. [P8: That's funny!]

P7: (b.) (Gaze Avert) And the glasses were still turned upside down.

P7 (on the right) averts the gaze and demonstrates the removal from the here-and-now while telling a story from a situation which occurred a couple of days earlier. In 5.7a, P7 is continuing her story; by 5.7b, she is recounting a story in the past while displaying gaze avert.

5.4 A Modified Model of the Gaze Behavior Pattern

The above examples provide evidence that the speaker removes himself/herself from the here-and-now. Therefore, I am proposing a newly revised model of the turn during the speaker role. Figure 5.7 illustrates this model.

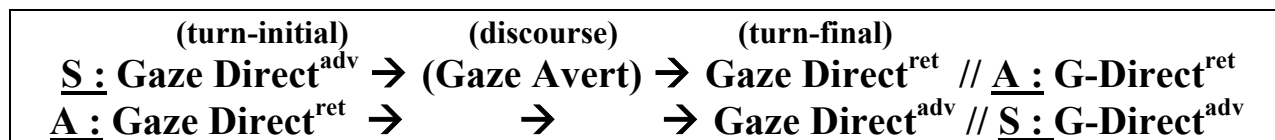


Figure 5.7
Gaze Behavior Patterns in the Turn Taking Sequence.

Although Nash asserts that the speaker does exhibit gaze avert to perform specific functions that are, in fact, universal (based on her findings in French, American English, and Japanese speakers), her model does not account for the gaze avert behavior during the speaker turn.

Therefore, neither Kendon’s (1967) nor Nash’s (2001) models are sufficient in explaining the actual gaze behavior patterns exhibited by speakers in French or English. The above model that I propose includes the specific gaze avert behavior demonstrated that is a crucial component in the turn-taking behavior patterns of French, CF, and CE speakers. To further explain this model, the speaker begins with some sort of advancement during gaze direct, followed by a sort of retraction during gaze direct. During the turn, when the speaker leaves the here-and-now, he/she exhibits the obligatory gaze avert. When returning to the here-and-now, he/she resumes the gaze direct behavior until the end of the speaker turn at which time the addressee-turned-speaker utilizes the same model for his/her turn.

5.5 Summary

Based on this evidence, it is plausible to state that culture is the sole relevant factor for determining gaze behavior. Although the corpus contains both a variety of French, CF, as well as a variety of English, CE, the results mirror that of Nash’s French data. Since the gaze behavior patterns of SAE stem from a separate culture, it comes as no surprise that the resulting percentages differ from that of both Nash’s French data and my own corpus.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.1 The Primacy of Culture

At the beginning of this study, I questioned whether or not CE and CF practiced the same pragmatic principles with regards to gaze behaviors and the turn-taking sequence as that of French found in Nash's (2001, 2007, 2009) studies. After analyzing the data in this study, the research indicates that, yes, CE and CF are uncannily similar to French and drastically different from other American English speakers. It was not until my research was concluded that I could notice the cultural differences in what constitutes conversational patterns. The two control participants explained that they did not like the intense look that other Cajun English speakers employed while talking with them, indicating that such an intense look was not a normal feature in their culture.

To review the findings, the results from this study show that there is a high amount of mutual gaze involved in the conversation between CE and CF speakers especially when compared to French. Within these CF and CE conversations, there is a high amount of addressee gaze during the speaker turn as well as a high amount of speaker gaze during the speaker turn. CE speakers exhibit approximately 42% and 52% of mutual gaze during the conversation while CF speakers exhibit approximately 57% of mutual gaze. These percentages are much higher than those of SAE speakers which was 24%. Further and most crucially, the percentages are in alignment with those of French speakers at 51% of mutual gaze (Nash, 2007).

The statistics of gaze direct during the speaker turn were as follows: CE 60%, 80%, and 65% and CF 78%. The results were comparable to French (Nash, 2007), which was 67%. When looking at the transcripts and the other data, gaze avert was not used to negotiate the turn in CE or CF. However, there was an underlying feature found with gaze avert. The study concluded

that just like Nash's sample of French (2007), there is a removal from the here-and-now universe of discourse to another universe of discourse when the speaker averts the gaze.

Due to the high amounts of mutual gaze found in French, CE, and CF, other strategies in turn-taking are necessary to negotiate the turn. The results mirror Nash's (2001, 2007) findings: there is an advancement and retraction technique involved in conjunction with gaze direct. The use of this regulator is found in both CF and CE. Therefore, unlike gaze avert, gaze direct (advancement and retraction) plays a crucial role in negotiating the turn. Gaze direct is the primary strategy used in the turn-taking sequence in conjunction with the underlying features of advancement and retraction of the speaker and the addressee, often with advancement into each other's personal spheres. These features include but are not limited to posture change from a right angle to acute or obtuse and gestures into the interlocutors' personal sphere. My findings led me to modify the Kendon (1967) and Nash (2001) models. The results indicate that gaze direct is a major regulator in CE, CF, and French but not SAE, specifically, Southern Alabama English.

6.2 Culture Drift or Culture Shift

After the major change of CF to CE in the early 1920s, Cajuns were forced to learn English as their official language of the state, and one would expect their gaze behavior patterns to have changed with the language. This drift would indicate that the gaze behavior patterns would be different from the ones already in practice (more similar to SAE). However, this change in behavior did not occur as evidenced by my research which demonstrates that speakers of CE and CF retained the French culture in spite of the language reform. Therefore, this study concludes that culture drift did not occur in parallel fashion to language shift.

Despite the language shift in the Acadian Triangle, the branched languages contain the same cultural aspects of the first language, i.e., CF. Speakers of CE maintain aspects of the French culture, hence French is their C1. With regards to gaze behavior and turn-taking patterns, there is no evidence of a C2, i.e., SAE. Culture, not language, is the determining factor in gaze behavior patterns in turn-taking. Since the CE and CF speakers share the same culture, they demonstrate the same turn-taking and gaze behaviors as the French. In the case of turn-taking and gaze behaviors among speakers of CF and CE, culture precedes language in the pragmatic realm of language.

6.3 Future Research

A potential future study could analyze the next generation of CE speakers under the age of 35, and if the same techniques in gaze behaviors in turn-taking are discovered, then my conclusion that culture does precede language extends to speakers for whom CF was not their first language. To expand the research further, one could study speakers of CF and CE in different parishes. Such a study could analyze gaze avert patterns on a more thorough level and determine whether or not gaze avert is used in declining a turn. Because many CF and CE speakers in Avoyelles Parish know each other, these speakers tend to reminisce regarding life experiences. Therefore, it would be helpful to study younger speakers or casual acquaintances so that there will be more instances of other functions of gaze avert, as the topic of conversation of these speakers would most likely not be predominantly about life experiences in the past.

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APPENDIX
CONSENT FORM

1. Study Title: Turn-taking and Gaze Behavior among Speakers of Cajun French and Cajun English in Avoyelles Parish.
2. Investigators: The following investigators are available for questions about this study from: **Monday – Thursday (8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.)**.

Andrew Rivière (225) 939-8640
Professor Caroline Nash (225) 578-6708

3. Purpose of Study: The purpose of this research study is to compare Language and Culture in Cajun French and Cajun English.
4. Subject Inclusion: Individuals over the age of 18 who reside a majority of his life in Avoyelles Parish, Louisiana.
5. Study Procedures: Participants will spend approximately 20-30 minutes talking about life experiences.
6. Benefits: Participants will be contributing to the preservation of Cajun French/Culture and Cajun English/Culture.
7. Risks: There are no known risks.
8. Privacy: This study could be anonymous, and if chosen could not be linking data to the study.
9. Right to Refuse: Subjects may choose not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefit to which they might be otherwise entitled.
10. Signature: The study has been discussed with me and all of my questions have been answered. I may direct additional questions to study specifics to the investigators. If I have questions about the subjects' rights or other concerns, I can contact Robert C. Matthews, Institutional Review Board, (225) 578-8692, irb@lsu.edu, www.lsu.edu/irb. I agree to participate in the study above and acknowledge the investigator's obligation to provide me with a signed copy of this consent form.

Subject Signature: _____

Date: _____

VITA

Andrew ‘Andy-Rooney’ Rivière was born in October 1984, in Moreauville, Louisiana. He attended Avoyelles High School. At Louisiana State University, he majored in Communication Sciences and Disorders and received a minor in French. During his junior year of undergraduate studies, he was introduced to and became very interested in linguistics. In August of 2006, he was awarded a Bachelor of Arts from Louisiana State University A&M in Baton Rouge. After completion of his master’s degree at LSU, he plans on furthering his career in education. Currently, he is an instructor of French at Archbishop Shaw High School on the West bank of New Orleans. As a commitment to himself and to his family, Mr. Rivière will continue to reside and to teach Cajun French in the great state of Louisiana!