A French Spoken Norm under the Radio-Canada Spotlight: Verbal Negation and Quebec Cultural Elites

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Abstract

Several studies have analyzed sociolinguistic variation in Quebec French (QF) vernaculars, but few have examined more careful QF speech. This paper examines verbal negation and the variable use of the negative clitic *ne* in the speech of 32 members of Quebec's cultural elites during recent (2003–2011) televised sit-down interviews. As a subset of our sample is interviewed in two different settings, one which deals with emotional personal narratives (Un Train corpus) and another in which speakers talk about a more objective topic (Le Point corpus, see Bigot 2008), the comparison between corpora further assesses the status of the negative particle as a stylistic marker. For instance, our analysis of both corpora reveals rates of *ne* use far superior to those observed in QF vernaculars, as well as a significant effect of address pronoun (formal 2s *vous* or informal *tu*) and age. We also show that operative linguistic constraints in our careful QF data are similar to those described in the literature on colloquial French (e.g. effect of collocations and subject type), and remain stable across speaker groups and interview settings. These results indicate that although speakers are aiming towards an elusive 'standard Quebec French' (SQF), they are constrained by a cohesive mental grammar even in careful speech. In short, this study fills a gap in the literature by using comparative sociolinguistics methods to provide a more nuanced description of verbal negation in 'standard Quebec French' (SQF), one which measures the relative effect of social, stylistic and linguistic factors.

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1 Introduction

Spoken Québec French (thereafter QF) remains the object of stigmatization in part from commentators who equate it with popular or colloquial spoken forms, deemed too far removed from a mythical idea of 'standard French'. Some still question the very existence of a 'standard QF' oral norm due to a shortage of strong empirical evidence for socio-stylistic variation in careful speech. Indeed, while several studies have documented QF vernacular speech from the 20th Century (Poplack 1989 for Ottawa–Hull; Sankoff et al. 1976, Thibault and Vincent 1990, and Vincent, Laforest, and Martel 1995 for Montréal; Deshaies 1981 for Québec City), only a handful describe contemporary QF in more spontaneous but formal conversation settings or *situations protocolaires* (Zribi-Hertz 2011). To reconcile with spontaneous speech patterns and enhance public discourse about QF, we must document and better understand socio-stylistic variation beyond the vernacular. But while two recent examinations (Reinke 2005, Bigot 2008) have provided a glimpse into spontaneous formal QF speech, both fail to finely weigh the relative effect of linguistic and social constraints on the various attested forms.

The Standard Québec French (SQF) project aims to document careful but spontaneous QF and provide a model of a descriptive QF spoken norm that takes into account the effect of internal and socio-situational factors (e.g. social category, conversational context) on linguistic behaviour. In turning to comparative sociolinguistics to conduct this study of Québec cultural elites in televised interviews, we fill a gap in the literature by measuring the relative effect of several factors on morphosyntax and phonology variation in SQF. Based on this finer description, we hope to distinguish mere quantitative differences in frequency (e.g. different variant rates) along a social or stylistic continuum from sharp qualitative contrasts between discrete systems (e.g. different linguistic constraints, different constraint ranking) across speaker groups or conversation settings.

In this paper, we focus on verbal negation and the variable use of the negative preverbal clitic *ne* along with negative adverbs and quantifiers (cf. 1).

(1) *j'*   *ai*   ***pas***   *mangé* *de*   *dessert* *je*   ***n'***   *ai*   ***pas***
      I   Ø   have   not   eaten of   dessert I   NEG   have   not
      mangé   *de*   *pain*   (Un Train, Lisa F., 17)[1]
      eaten   of   bread
      'I did not eat any dessert, I did not eat any bread'

2 Careful spoken Québec French (QF) in the media

As Canada's French-language public broadcaster, Radio-Canada is widely viewed as a linguistic model of careful French speech; the network even has its own linguistic adviser (Remysen 2010). In a 2003 report, Radio-Canada referred to the variety of French that is broadcast on-air and online as "le français correct en usage au Canada", or 'correct French in use in Canada' (Radio-Canada 2004: 14). Francophone Canadians generally argue that this norm emanates from news readers, journalists and other crown corporation employees (Gendron 1990, Bouchard and Maurais 2001). Yet, while it offers a description of careful pronunciation, the oral production of on-air news readers (Cox 1998, Reinke 2005), essentially *écrits oralisés* 'oralized written French', reveal nothing about spontaneous careful speech and its morphosyntax.

2.1 The televised interview: a representation of careful speech

Corpora of spontaneous televised interviews offer an empirical source of a more careful

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[1] Examples are identified by corpus (Un Train or Le Point), speaker, and transcription line number.

speech style. In Reinke's (2005) analysis of Radio-Canada television samples from 1999–2000, she found that interviews with general interest television programs included more colloquial variants than information programs, but fewer than game shows. For example, the use of the negative clitic *ne* decreased from 79.8% in information programs to 35.7% in general interest programming and to 21.2% in entertainment programs. She argues, unlike Ashby (1988), that the absence of *ne* is not necessarily a more common phenomenon in Québec, but is a matter of style. On the basis of her analysis of mostly phonological or phonetic dependent variables (e.g. /l/ or schwa deletion in subject pronominal clitics, simplification of consonant clusters), Reinke (2005: 26) concludes that variation on Québec television reflects social and linguistic diversity.

A few years later, Bigot (2008, 2011) analyzed interviews recorded as part of the *Téléjournal Le Point* (henceforth Le Point) news broadcast, a corpus comparable to "information programs" in Reinke's study. Bigot's Le Point corpus represents the discourse of Québec's cultural elites (Barbaud 1998), namely academics, politicians, artists and business leaders in a more formal context. In light of his statistical analysis of various informal forms (e.g. negative concord with *personne* 'no one' or *rien* 'nothing', non etymological /l/ after *ça* 'it', realization of final /t/ in the past participle *fait* 'done'), Bigot concluded that the spoken norm in QF largely conforms to the rules described in *Le bon usag*e (Grevisse and Goosse 1993). He also found that, for several dependent variables, women and older speakers use more normative forms than their male and younger counterparts.

However, the statistical methods used by these two researchers (i.e. relative frequencies, chi-square tests) measure the absolute effect of individual social and linguistic factors, but fail to capture their relative effect, as Bigot (2011:13) admits : "une analyse de type Goldvarb (Tagliamonte 2006) ou régression multiple permettrait de rendre compte de l'importance de chaque facteur externe dans la variation des phénomènes observés."[2] The Standard Québec French (SQF) project aims to move these issues forward by analyzing a set of televised interviews with members of the cultural elites using the comparative methods of variationist sociolinguistics. Through this investigation, we begin to answer the following research questions: In what proportion do colloquial variants appear in QF careful speech styles? How do social, situational and linguistic factors influence the choice of a prestige variant over a so-called colloquial variant?

2.2 The *Un Train–Le Point* Radio-Canada corpus

The *Un Train–Le Point* Radio-Canada corpus comprises the main source of data for the SQF research project. It consists of a collection of televised sit-down interviews which aired on Radio-Canada between 2008 and 2013. These interviews are divided into two sub-corpora: a main corpus of 32 individual interviews with Québec public figures from *On prend toujours un train* (henceforth Un Train), a television program hosted and co-produced by Josélito Michaud which deals with highly emotional personal narratives (grief, serious illness, trauma, etc.), and a secondary corpus of individual Le Point interviews (see Bigot 2008 for a detailed description), in which a subset of eight Un Train speakers are interviewed on a more objective or professional topic. The comparison between the two contexts allows for an assessment of individual stylistic variation. Each Un Train interview lasts between 13 and 25 minutes; each Le Point interview lasts between 8 and 10 minutes. For each setting, we only selected interviews in which the interviewee is sitting one-on-one with the interviewer.

	Pre-Révolution Tranquille (1946–1960)	**Post-Révolution Tranquille** (1961–1974)
Women	8	8
Men	8	8

Table 1: Cultural elite speakers in the Un Train corpus (2008–2011).

The speakers selected for the Un Train corpus are equally distributed between women and

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[2]'A GoldVarb-type analysis or multiple regression would take into account the importance of each external factor in the variation of the phenomena observed.' (my translation)

men and across two groups: 16 adults born between 1946 and 1960, and 16 born between 1960 and July 1974, when Canada's Official Language Act, or Bill 22, was adopted (Bourhis and Landry 2002). This means that the youngest group entered the school system at the beginning of Québec's cultural revolution, or 'Révolution Tranquille', whereas the older group's schooling occurred prior to this turning point in Québec's history. The Révolution Tranquille was chosen as the threshold because of its impact on the popular conception of language and on the normative discourse of linguistic commentators (Remysen 2011); this allows us to test the potential effect of a cultural change on linguistic behaviors. The other independent social variables considered in the analysis are the speaker's professional category (artists, politicians, radio/television hosts, etc.), an adaptation of Bigot's (2011) classification, and region or origin (Montreal, Québec City or other).

3 Verbal negation and the use of *ne* in careful QF spontaneous speech

In this article, we examine verbal negation, focusing on the variable use of negative clitic *ne*, perhaps the sociolinguistic variable par excellence in contemporary French (Coveney [1996] 2002) as evidenced by a great number of studies on this variable since the mid-20th century (see Gadet 2000 for an overview of the literature). Sociolinguistic studies of European varieties report rate of *ne* use that range from 55.8% in 1960s Paris (Ashby 1976) to less than 20.0% in 1990s surveys (Ashby 2001, Hansen and Malderez 2004, among others).[3] While the use of preverbal *ne*, the prestige variant, has decreased in spoken French since at least the 19th century (Martineau and Mougeon 2003), it remains relatively productive in some varieties: rates of use still hovered around 10–15% in 1990s Europe. In North American usage, however, *ne* has virtually disappeared: according to studies of QF varieties, it represents less than 1% of all verbal negations. Despite such low rates, it appears to remain productive in QF, specifically as a marker of formality. The formality of *ne* use appears established today, both in European and in Canadian varieties: the more careful the speech situation, the more likely *ne* is to occur.

Several researchers have examined the role of social and linguistic constraints on verbal negation. In his longitudinal study of Continental French, Ashby (1981, 2001) showed that females and older speakers are more frequent *ne* users than males and youth, which supports the hypothesis according to which *ne* is still undergoing change in Europe. In QF, it appears that this change is close to completion: *ne* use now appears limited to formal conversation topics such as religion and education (Sankoff and Vincent 1977, Poplack and St-Amand 2007). Other operational constraints include negative adverb and subject type (Ashby 1981, Armstrong and Smith 2002, Dufter and Stark 2007): the clitic appears more likely be absent with *pas* 'not' than with other negative adverbs and quantifiers, and it is more likely to be present with full noun phrases (NPs) and relative *qui* 'who, that' than with pronominal clitics.

3.1 Methods

3.1.1 The variable context and exclusions

In this study, we define the variable context as all occurrences of verbal negation (cf. 2). As is customary, we exclude utterances that do not represent spontaneous speech, such as song excerpts and reported speech, as well as tokens where the [n] liaison between the pronoun *on* 'one, we' and a following vowel-initial verb or object clitic (cf. 2) creates an ambiguous context.

(2) *si on*   [n]   *a*   *pas*   *une*   *envie*   (Un Train, Marie L., 47)
    if we   have   not   a   desire
    'if we do not have a desire'

Collocations are also excluded, as they (quasi-)categorically disfavor *ne* in European and Canadian varieties (Moreau 1986, Coveney [1996] 2002, Martineau and Mougeon 2003). This effect is also evident in the Un Train corpus: Table 4 indeed shows that four frequent expressions stand out by the (quasi-) categorical lack of negative clitic (p≤.001). Therefore, following

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[3]The wide range reported from the 1950s to the 1990s may reflect methodological differences. For instance, including collocations can inflate the rate of *ne* absence, as we show in section 3.1.1.

Villeneuve and Auger (2013), we excluded these lexicalized or pragmaticalized expressions from the main corpus in order to measure truly variable *ne* use more reliably.

Constructions	% *ne*	N
ce/ça ÊTRE 'it BE'	0.0	224
il y AVOIR 'there BE'	0.0	85
il FALLOIR 'there must'	0.0	20
je (ne) sais pas 'I don't know'	1.2	83
other constructions	10.4	1,543

Table 2: Negative *ne* in collocations and other constructions.

3.1.2 Social, stylistic and linguistic constraints

Social factor groups analyzed include sex, age (pre- or post-1960) and "professional category" (artists, politicians, etc.). We also coded for "address pronoun" as the form used by the interviewer with each interviewee (2s informal *tu* or formal *vous*). This socio-stylistically meaningful factor in French (Dewaele 2004) may serve as an indirect measure of both social variation and level of formality established by the interlocutors. Independent linguistic variables include negative adverb and subject type, two constraints reported in the literature on European French. The factor group "negative adverb" distinguishes *pas* 'not' and *p(l)us* 'no longer' from other adverbs. "Subject type" is divided into three categories: full NP, pronominal clitics, and relative *qui*, as shown in 3a–c.

(3) a. **mon** **père** *ne* *reviendrait* *jamais*   (Un Train, Yves D., 17)
         my   father   NEG   return-COND   never
         'my father would never return'
     b. *un* *deuil* **qui** *finira* *jamais*   (Un Train, Dan B., 15)
         a   grief   that   finish-FUT   never
         'a grieving that will never end'
     c. **tu** *es* *jamais* *prêt* *à* *ça*   (Un Train, Denis B., 63)
         you   Ø are   never   ready   to   this
         'you are never ready for this'

Although we also coded for verb mode (imperative, infinitive or other) initially, a sharp pattern emerged: infinitives (cf. 4) strongly favors the use of negative clitic *ne* (34.0%, N=53) and imperatives (cf. 5) quasi-categorically prevent it (10.0%, N=20).[4] Given this effect, infinitives and imperatives are excluded from the remainder of the analysis.

(4) *pour* *ne* *pas* *être* *déçu*   (Un Train, Gilles P., 302)
     for   NEG   not   be   disappointed
     'to not be disappointed'
(5) *achale* *-moi* *pas* *avec* *tes* *questions*   (Un Train, Ginette R., 93)
     bother   1s   not   with   your   questions
     'do not bother me with your questions'

All remaining tokens were submitted to a multivariate analysis using GoldVarb X (Sankoff, Tagliamonte, and Smith 2005). Results are presented in the following section.

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[4]Imperatives that include pronominal clitics highlight this disfavouring effect. While colloquial QF uses the same order in positive and negative imperatives, Continental French has postverbal clitics in positive polarity but preverbal clitics in negatives. The use of *ne* clause-initially appears to trigger standard word order.

3.2 Results

The analysis of the Un Train data reveals a rate of *ne* use of 9.6%, as shown in Table 3, indicating that the negative clitic is rare, even in careful speech. Of the 32 speakers in the sample, five never use *ne* during their interview (N = 216); these data are excluded from the multivariate analysis, resulting in an overall 11.3% *ne* use (N=1,251). Due to strong interactions with other social factor groups, "professional category" was not included in the analysis.

Variants	%	N
Ne present	9.6	141
Ne absent	91.4	1,326
TOTAL	100.0	1,467

Table 3: Distribution of negative *ne* in *On prend toujours un train* (Un Train) corpus.

The results of the analysis of the social and linguistic conditioning on *ne* selection are presented first, followed by a discussion of stylistic variation in section 3.2.3.

3.2.1 Social conditioning

Focusing first on social factors, we see in Table 4 that the address pronoun used by the interviewer and the speaker's age group have a significant effect on *ne*. The widest factor range (i.e. 32 versus 18) shows that *vouvoiement* is the strongest predictor of *ne* use: those whom the interviewer addresses with formal 2S *vous* strongly favour *ne* while those addressed with informal 2S *tu* disfavour it, as indicated by weights of .76 and .44 respectively. This finding is consistent with the higher level of formality associated with both 2sg *vous* and negative *ne*. Age group, the weaker constraint, shows that being born between the end of World War II and Québec's Révolution Tranquille has a slight favouring effect on negative *ne* whereas younger age has a disfavouring affect; cross-tabulation confirms that this effect is independent from *vouvoiement*. If we posit that the *ne* is a stable variable, this result can be interpreted as a diachronic shift in targeted linguistic norm rather than actual usage. Sex was not selected as a significant factor group.

Total N			1,251
Factor groups	Weight	% *ne*	N
Address pronoun			
Vouvoiement	.76	28.6	210
Tutoiement	.44	7.8	1,041
RANGE	32		
Age Group			
Pre-Révolution Tranquille	.58	15.4	695
Post- Révolution Tranquille	.40	6.1	556
RANGE	18		
Sex			
Men	[.55]	11.8	576
Women	[.46]	10.8	675

Input: .09; Log likelihood = −403.419

Table 4: Social factors affecting negative *ne* in *On prend toujours un train* (Un Train) corpus.

3.2.2 Linguistic conditioning

Turning to linguistic conditioning, after excluding imperatives and infinitives in section 3.1.2, we were left with two linguistic factors: negative adverb and subject type. Due to the strong effect of *vouvoiement* described above, we performed separate analyses for speakers addressed with *vous*

and for those addressed with *tu*.

An initial analysis of linguistic factors indicated that the apparent effect of negative adverbs (*pas*, *plus*, other) may in fact be an artifact of *plus* 'no longer, anymore'. Indeed, *plus* is itself subject to variable /l/ deletion in French varieties, with the full form *plus* [ply] as the apparent prestige variant.[5] Thus, we discuss *plus* data (N=137) and the main data set (N=1,114) separately.

	Vouvoiement		*Tutoiement*		
***Plus* realization**	*% ne*	N	*% ne*	N	
Full form *plus*	76.2	21	44.0	25	.038
Reduced form *pus*	9.1	11	0.0	80	.101
Two-tailed Fisher *p*	.002		.000		

Table 5: Negative *ne* and *p(l)us* 'anymore' in two speaker groups (Un Train corpus).

Looking first at the *plus* results in Table 5, we note that *ne* is likely to co-occur with the full form *plus* (58.7%; N=46 overall), and it is attested only once (cf. 6) with the reduced form *pus* [py]. But while the effect of *p(l)us* is highly significant for both speakers groups, as ($p \leq .005$), the *vous–tu* distinction only holds for *plus* ($p \leq .05$), not for *pus*. The seemingly contradictory co-occurrence pattern in (6) is extracted from a passage where a former judge recounts how the grief from the death of a loved one highlighted her growing disillusion with the legal system. A preliminary explanation for the co-occurrence of seemingly contradictory forms can see it as a reflection of the speaker's ambiguous emotional state.[6] However, the absence of *vouvoiement* effect for *pus* suggests instead that the reduced form may be the sociolinguistically unmarked pronunciation. These findings confirm the status of *plus* as a marker of formality.

(6) *je   n'   y   croyais   pus*   (Un Train, Andrée R., 176)
     I   NEG   in-it   believed   anymore
     'I didn't believe in it anymore'

In the main data set, presented in Table 6, the only significant factor group is subject type: full NPs and relative *qui* strongly favor *ne*, as indicated by factor weights .94 and .85, while pronominal clitics slightly disfavor it. These results appear to support Dufter and Stark's (2007) hypothesis of a decline in *ne* which targeted pronominal subjects from the 17th century. But our data show no effect of *pas*: once *p(l)us* data are removed, the negative adverb constraint fails to materialize. The shared constraint ranking further suggests that the despite frequency differences (.24 in *vous*, .06 in *tu*), both speaker groups are constrained by a shared linguistic system.

	Vouvoiement			*Tutoiement*		
Total N			178			936
	Weight	*% ne*	N	Weight	*% ne*	N
Subject Type						
Full NP and Relative *qui*	.94	81.8	11	.85	26.4	91
Pronominal clitic	.46	20.6	165	.45	5.0	837
RANGE	*48*			*40*		
Negative Adverb						
Others	[.53]	25.0	24	[.61]	11.5	131
Pas	[.50]	24.0	154	[.48]	6.8	805

Vous: Input: .24; Log likelihood = −89.702. *Tu*: Input: .06; Log likelihood = −229.783.

[5] In a study of Picardie French, Villeneuve and Auger (2013) showed that *ne* is likely to occur with *plus* and to be absent with *pus*; the other two combinations are rare. Although in line with the diglossic hypothesis (Massot 2010), this pattern also shows that the co-occurrence of variants with seemingly contradictory values is indeed attested. Discussion of the diglossic hypothesis is, however, beyond the scope of this paper.

[6] Further analyses by conversation topic may shed light on productive *ne* use in QF data from the 2000s.

Table 6: Linguistic factors affecting negative *ne* in two speaker groups (Un Train corpus).

3.2.3 Negative *ne* and sociostylistic variation

Turning now to the analysis of eight speakers interviewed in both Radio-Canada interview contexts allows us to test whether the interviewer or the setting, i.e. an artist manager interviewing in a moving train versus a journalist interviewing in a television studio, may play a significant role in stylistic variation. Do individual speakers style-shift between settings, and if so, is the group's shift merely quantitative or does it also involve a shift in linguistic conditioning? Since the address pronoun is formal 2s *vous* in all Le Point interviews, is there a more significant shift in one group over the other? We expect a stronger stylistic effect in the *tutoiement* group, since the difference in setting and interviewer from Un Train to Le Point is compounded by the additional difference in address pronoun from informal 2s *tu* to formal *vous*. Table 7 indeed shows an overall *ne* increase in the Le Point corpus ($p \leq .001$), up by as much as 54.6% for Marie L., a writer from the informal *tutoiement* group. This quantitative shift, statistically significant for half of the speakers appears to provide evidence for the stylistic marker status of negative *ne*. As for the four speakers who show no significant shift, we plan to investigate their stylistic stability in future research.

One last question remains, however: does the overall increase in *ne* also involve a qualitative shift in its linguistic conditioning? In other words, is the same mental grammar presumably under the spotlight in both interview settings? To address this question, we performed a final multivariate analysis on Le Point data, applying the same method described in 3.2.2. The higher input value of .32, shown in Table 8, confirms the increase in *ne*, and the Le Point constraint ranking suggests the same linguistic conditioning uncovered for Un Train data: full NP subjects and relative *qui* maintain their favouring effect on *ne*. Thus, despite a quantitative increase in *ne* use as the formality of the interview setting increases, the linguistic conditioning remains stable.

Un Train address pronoun	Speaker	Un Train		Le Point		Two-tailed Fisher *p*	
		% *ne* use	N	% *ne* use	N		
Vous	André B.	36.7	49	66.6	9	.142	
	Mario D.	**0.0**	57	**21.4**	14	**.006**	.004
	Michelle C.	16.7	66	50.0	6	.083	
Tu	**Liza F.**	**16.0**	50	**60.0**	15	**.002**	
	Dan B.	5.6	54	0.0	26	.547	
	Ginette R.	5.5	55	4.3	23	1	.000
	J-François C.	**8.0**	25	**41.2**	17	**.019**	
	Marie L.	**13.8**	80	**68.4**	19	**.000**	
	OVERALL	**12.8**	**436**	**32.6**	**129**	.000	

Table 7: Negative *ne* in two corpora (Un Train vs. Le Point).

Total N			116
	Weight	% *ne*	N
Subject Type			
Full NP and Relative *qui*	.74	57.9	19
Pronominal clitic	.46	28.3	92
RANGE	28		
Negative Adverb			
Others	[.44]	26.7	15
Pas	[.51]	34.7	101

Input: .32; Log likelihood = −71.118

Table 8: Linguistic factors affecting negative *ne* in Le Point corpus.

4 Discussion and Conclusion

Our analysis appears to confirm the status of the negative clitic as a social and stylistic marker (Poplack and St-Amand 2007) while also showing that the distinction between colloquial QF and careful QF is quantitative but not qualitative.

First, the proportion of *ne* in our Un Train corpus of televised interviews—8.3% globally (N=1,955), 10.4% after excluding collocations (N=1,543)—is clearly superior to the less than 1% observed in QF vernaculars. Since our corpus is comprised of speakers who are members of the cultural elites in a televised interview setting, this quantitative difference may be interpreted as either social or stylistic. However, a future study of the lay portion of the Un Train televised interview, one which involves a sample of non-celebrity speakers (i.e. members of the public interviewed about similar personal narratives, by the same interviewer, in the same setting as our current elite corpus) will help tease apart the social from the stylistic. Second, the address pronoun used by the interviewer, namely *vous* or *tu*, establishes the level of formality for the duration of the exchange, offering additional evidence of socio-stylistic variation in careful QF. We saw that speakers who are subject to *vouvoiement* in the Un Train corpus favor the use of the negative clitic over those subject to *tutoiement*. But when presented with an increase in the formality of the form of address in their Le Point interview, the latter group showed a greater increase in the use of *ne*. A third piece of evidence resides in the fact that *ne* tends to co-occur with other known formal variants such as the full form of *plus*, as was shown in our analysis. Thus, despite its quasi disappearance from vernaculars and its lower use by speakers born after Québec Révolution Tranquille, the negative clitic does seem to remain productive as a resource available in a speaker's linguistic repertoire for style shifting.

The analysis of linguistic factors further attests to the disfavouring role of collocations documented in the literature; these "preformed sequences" (Coveney [1996] 2002) provide no syntactic slot for the negative clitic *ne* to intervene between the subject clitic and the verb. A similar explanation can be posited for the co-occurrence of *ne* with full NPs and relative *qui*, and its absence with pronominal subjects clitics: both NPs and qui allow for intervening elements (cf. 7–8), including the negative clitics, but pronominal subjects do not, especially if they are analyzed as preverbal agreement markers (Auger 1994). What is striking, however, is the stability of this linguistic conditioning across speaker groups (e.g. speakers addressed by *vous* versus those addressed by *tu*), and interview context (e.g. Un Train versus Le Point).

(7) *le Québec **par-exemple*** *n'* *adopte* *plus* (Le Point, J-François C., 39)
the Québec for-example NEG adopt anymore
''Québec does not adopt anymore

(8) *des* *gens* [...] *qui* ***eux*** *savaient pas* (Un Train, Pénélope M., 30)
some people who them knew not
'people who, themselves, did not know'

In short, the comparative methods used in this study uncovered a cohesive verbal negation system in careful QF, one which is constrained by subject type, a linguistic factor shown to be operative in French varieties where *ne* has greater productivity. We showed that, despite its apparent disappearance from QF vernaculars, in careful speech, the negative particle displays systematic variation patterns that can be accounted for by factors shared among community members.

	Un Train (8 speakers)		Le Point (8 speakers)		Two-tailed Fisher *p*
Sentential polarity	% IF	N	% IF	N	
Affirmative	14.3	112	34.7	101	.040
negative without *ne*	89.5	19	60.0	5	.179
negative with *ne*	100.0	3	100.0	2	1.000

Table 9: Negative *ne* and future temporal reference in two corpora (Un Train vs. Le Point).

In future research, we may be able to provide a more nuanced model of careful QF by examining co-occurrence patterns more closely, as we did for *p(l)us*. For instance, by comparing the interaction between future temporal reference and variable *ne* in two interview contexts, as shown in Table 9, we may better assess the role of sentential polarity on the use of the inflected future (IF) as a stylistic marker (Wagner and Sankoff 2011). Specifically, the lack of statistical difference in the co-occurrence of the IF with or without *ne* across speech contexts implies that the stylistic role of the IF is limited to affirmative context, where its use is more salient.

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