

métalinguistiques du temps, ce qui montre que la variation est encore largement à l'œuvre (voir par exemple la remarque *S'il faut dire pluriel ou pluriel* p. 234 et s.). Le XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle apparaît donc comme une période encore ouverte, plurielle, tâtonnante dans laquelle le ciseau de la norme est loin d'avoir effacé bien des variantes. Mais les notes indiquent déjà une direction qui va s'imposer, notamment en citant abondamment les grands dictionnaires du temps. Moins mondaine et parfois moins tranchée que celle de ses contradicteurs, cette œuvre perspicace et souvent nuancée sera éclipsée par celle de Vaugelas qui fera figure de référence.

Ce volume fait honneur à son éditeur, à cette série, et surtout à un auteur d'une culture, d'une érudition et d'une sagacité remarquables.

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Ashby, William J. *On Spoken French: An Ashby Reader* (edited and translated by Bonnie B. Fonseca-Greber). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2023. xiv + 548 pp. ISBN: 978 90 272 1289 4 (hardcover).  
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This substantial volume will be a welcome addition to the libraries of all universities where research or teaching about French Sociolinguistics is conducted – indeed, it would be an excellent acquisition for *all* departments of Linguistics. Nearly all the chapters are in English, including two translated from the original French. (The exception is a 1999 article on the functions of subjects, objects and presentative structures.) William Ashby has devoted his academic life to the study of sociolinguistic variation (and change) in metropolitan French, especially the grammar, and Fonseca-Greber has lovingly assembled here an exhaustive collection of his articles and chapters, produced between 1974 and 2003. Alongside Pierre Encrevé and Bernard Laks, Ashby was a pioneer in the 1970s of the application of Labovian variationist methods to the study of metropolitan French.

The book is divided into eight main sections, corresponding mostly to different periods in Ashby's career. Each section is introduced by an Editor's note and closes with suggestions for further reading. The sections also correspond largely to the principal corpora used by Ashby: Malécot's 1967 corpus of upper-middle class

Parisian speech, then the corpus of sociolinguistic interviews that Ashby himself collected in Tours in 1976, and finally the second Tours corpus gathered in 1995–1997 with the express purpose of discovering whether ‘apparent-time’ changes observed in 1976 were confirmed as changes in ‘real-time’.

Fonseca-Greber’s contributions to the book include introductions to each section, numerous footnotes, the translation of two pieces originally written in French, and an Appendix listing many other corpora of spoken French. Her Introduction to the whole volume presents its scope and organization, but also traces Ashby’s academic career and aspects of his life outside academia. In the same chapter, Fonseca-Greber discusses Ashby’s contribution to ‘historical linguistics within the space of a lifetime’, along with the issues of whether corpora are to be made public or to remain private, and whether it is appropriate to describe French society as diglossic. In ‘A data-driven glossing philosophy of Spoken French: Variable, radical prefixal glossing’, Fonseca-Greber adapts the Leipzig Glossing Rules to examples of spoken French quoted in the chapters by Ashby that constitute the main part of the book. Her motivation for this decision appears to be twofold: firstly, to emphasize many of the ways in which spoken French differs from the written language (e.g. how preverbal clitics can be interpreted as prefixes rather than independent words); and secondly, to enable readers without a knowledge of French to appreciate more fully the morphosyntax of the language.

Turning now to the essence of the book, the various studies by Ashby cover a wide range of points of socio-stylistic variation in French. In phonology, there are chapters on the rhythm group, the elision of /l/, and three on liaison, the most recent of which is the text of a conference paper given in 2003 (published here for the first time). In the last of these, Ashby compares data from his two Tours corpora, with the aim of demonstrating the decline of optional liaisons between 1976 and 1995–97. In morphosyntax, three other chapters comprise variationist studies of the omission of *ne*, in the last of which, Ashby again seeks to present evidence of change in the 21 years following 1976. As in nearly all his work, he examines not only interpersonal variation (and potential change), but also the linguistic constraints influencing the choice of one or other variant. Two studies in this volume are devoted to variation between *on* and indefinite *vous* (or occasionally *tu*) in the 1976 Tours corpus, and the use of diverse interrogative structures in Malécot’s Paris corpus. In a cluster of later articles, his focus is on dislocation and presentative structures, part of his motivation being to test hypotheses of the late 1970s that the basic word order of French is ‘drifting’ away from SVO and towards VOS, via right-dislocation of subjects. Two chapters are co-authored: ‘Preferred Argument Structure in spoken French and Spanish’ (with Paola Bentivoglio) and ‘Remodelling the House: The Grammaticalisation of Latin *casa* to French *chez*’ (with Annette R. Harrison).

Ashby meticulously follows a variationist methodology, quantifying the use of variants deemed to be equivalent, coding all tokens of these variants, and employing statistical techniques (notably with Varbrul or Goldvarb) to test the relative effects of various factors (linguistic and non-linguistic) and the significance of the differences that emerge. In keeping with Fonseca-Greber’s wish to present an all-round picture of Ashby’s career, the final chapter is on

the College of Creative Studies at Santa Barbara, which he led in his later years there. All in all, this volume is a valuable compendium of the collected works of a major figure in the study of variation in French, and a fitting tribute to Ashby's scholarship and his generosity towards other researchers and generations of students.

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Gasquet-Cyrus Médéric, *En finir avec les idées fausses sur la langue française*. Paris : Éditions de l'atelier, 2023, 158 pp., ISBN : 978 2 7082 54 06 0.  
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L'ouvrage de Médéric Gasquet Cyrus, *En finir avec les idées fausses sur la langue française*, paru en 2023 aux Éditions de l'atelier, comporte 158 pages. Il se développe en trois parties. La première est intitulée : *Le français est en danger*, la seconde : *Le français est une langue pure et unique* et la troisième : *Bien parler français, c'est respecter les normes*.

L'ouvrage aborde d'emblée les discours déclinistes des puristes, en dénonçant d'abord les idées reçues et les stéréotypes nombreux que ces derniers développent autour de la décadence du français et des menaces de tous ordres censés, non seulement affaiblir son statut *d'objet de musée*, mais aussi entraver la transmission d'une langue qu'il convient avant tout de protéger en la rendant imperméable au changement linguistique et au processus variationnel qui affecte toute langue. Médéric Gasquet-Cyrus (désormais MGC) s'emploie prioritairement à contrer cette vision pessimiste en mettant en évidence les nombreux indices de la vitalité du français dans le monde, langue officielle de treize pays, langue co-officielle de seize autres et langue d'enseignement pour quatre-vingt-treize millions d'élèves (p. 21–22). Il souligne en particulier les insuffisances des arguments relatifs aux dangers représentés par certaines pratiques langagières, brandies comme autant d'épouvantails par les déclinistes, parmi lesquelles figurent notamment et pêle-mêle l'écriture inclusive, les parlers jeunes, l'écriture SMS (p. 20), l'invasion du français par les anglicismes (p. 33) ou par l'arabe (p. 49) ou encore les accents ethnicisés (p. 51), lesquels altéreraient la pureté de la prononciation traditionnelle du français. Les principes de la défense de la langue française portés par les puristes se résument essentiellement au *respect* qu'il faut accorder à une langue française non seulement homogène et inaltérable (p.22 ; 59) mais aussi *magnifiée* et sacrée (p. 58–59), à la défense d'un monolinguisme exclusif en français même dans des villes plurilingues depuis l'Antiquité comme Marseille (p. 26), et enfin à la condamnation clivante de formes dénoncées comme populaires rassemblées dans