LANGUAGE USE AND LINGUISTIC VARIATIONS FOUND IN INTERACTIVE MEDIA: A CASE STUDY OF FRANCOPHONE YOUTH

By

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Abstract

The current study will explore the complex ways in which language use and linguistic variations have been influenced by online interactive media. With a primary focus on research design and techniques, this study will address some of the methodological concerns raised in previous studies. A case study will identify interlocutors participating on MSN Messenger as a small group of francophone youth. Descriptive analysis will introduce linguistic features that could be selected as a possible set of variables and/or factors suitable for the future study of French language use and linguistic variations identified within interactive written communication.

Keywords

Language, Computer-mediated communication, Internet, French language use, Francophone youth

Dedication

Je dédie ce mémoire à toute ma famille, en particulier à mes parents pour leur appui et leur amour indéfectibles, ainsi qu'à Sonnie et Sophie, mes deux plus grands amours, pour leur inspiration et leur patience.

I dedicate this work to my family, especially to my parents for their continued love and support, and to Sonnie and Sophie, my two greatest loves for their inspiration and their patience.

Acknowledgements

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1.1   Introduction

The use of computer-mediated communication has resulted in a paradigm shift in the

traditional uses of spoken and written language. New linguistic forms, conventions and

communicative practices emerge, as interlocutors engaged in online interactive written

communication adapt linguistically to the technological properties of the medium. The

interlocutors are exploring a new kind of communication as they aim to create a written language

that is as *speech-like* as possible (Werry, 1996, p. 46). This new written communication has been

defined and/or described as *written speech, electronic language, interactive written discourse,*

and *Netspeak*, to name a few (Crystal, 2001). For the purpose of the current study, the term

interactive written communication will be used.

The interdisciplinary approaches to communication studies and the contemporary

approaches to the linguistic analysis of the French language have enabled me to draw upon my

French - Canadian background to explore the relationship between language, technology and

society. A key function of language in society is that it conveys important information about its

speaker (Saussure, 1974). If we want to understand the use of language found within interactive

written communication, it is useful to identify *who* is using the language, *how* the language is

being used, and *why* there may be language change and linguistic variations. Language use and

linguistic variations associated with interactive media may reflect important information about its

'interlocutor / speaker / writer / user', who he/she is, how he/she is using language, and why

he/she may be introducing language change and linguistic variations.

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The use of interactive media data raises methodological concerns, including privacy and access, the uncertainty of the identity and the native language of the interlocutors associated with interactive media, and the issues of observers' paradox (Merchant 2001, Herring, 1996). In sociolinguistic research, the notion of observers' paradox refers to the problems of how one can observe the way people speak and/or use language when they are not being observed (Labov, 1972).

The current study will address some of the methodological concerns raised in previous studies. With a primary focus on research design / methodology, I will explore how one could study language use and linguistic variations found in interactive media – how one would conceptualize it. Multiple-methods, including a review of relevant literature, an exploratory pilot study, observational study, survey questionnaires, interviews, and transcript analysis will examine different types of data within varying technological, social and linguistic perspectives. Examining different types of data and exploring how these various perspectives intersect may be useful in an effort to establish which dataset could be most effective in future research.

Fieldwork for the current study was located in Montreal, Quebec. Montreal was an appropriate choice as it enabled me to seek out relatively unilingual French speaking interlocutors associated with interactive written communication. A *relatively unilingual interlocutor* characterizes an individual who speaks one language, having limited proficiency in a second language. A case study will identify interlocutors participating on MSN Messenger as native speakers of the language they are using online. Identifying the interlocutors as native speakers of the language they are using online may be useful, as it could help determine if the linguistic behaviours demonstrated by the interlocutors are characteristic of the intuitive linguistic behaviours of native speakers associated with interactive written communication. Descriptive analysis will introduce linguistic features that could be selected as a possible set of variables and/or factors suitable for the future study of language use and linguistic variations identified within interactive written communication.

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1.2 Literature Review

The current study will develop a theoretical framework within a Canadian perspective, through the works of Ian Angus in the Department of Humanities at Simon Fraser University, and communication scholars Harold A. Innis, and H. Marshall McLuhan.

David Crystal's work will offer insight into the effects interactive media, more specifically the Internet, is having on language. A collection of scholarly works will emphasise essential themes and/or issues relevant to the study of language use and linguistic variations found in interactive media.

1.2.1 Theoretical Framework

Traditionally, in communication and cultural studies, language is viewed as a social product of common norms, rules, and conventions shared by the members of a social group. The language system and the social conditions of a language system meet and meaning is produced by an organising system of signs articulating the knowledge and the ideas of its speakers.

Language is also identified as a social institution. As a whole, individual languages are the properties of human culture and society. Individual languages reflect the social nature and the distinct cultural identities of their speakers, social groups, and/or language communities. Exploring the social nature and cultural functions of language, and how one social group and/or language community may differ from that of another social group and/or language community, can offer important insight into human culture and society.

Angus (2000) extends the traditional definition of language. Angus claims that language should no longer be simply regarded as *representational*, reflecting the social interests, thoughts, and ideas of its speakers. Language should now be understood and/or defined as being *constitutive;* language is constructive, rather than descriptive or referential. Language is *exemplary* of social action and human thought. Once language is regarded as exemplary, its primary function is not simply to describe social action, but to constitute social action as

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meaningful (Angus, 2000). The study of language should now include the investigation of *language use* in various settings, as well as the role of language in the *construction* of social relationships.

Comparative Media Theory

Angus (2000) expands this contemporary approach to language through the notion of a medium of communication. A medium of communication does not simply transmit content, but more importantly, a medium of communication is a mode of social organisation, a *primal scene* whereby social relationships are constructed, established and instituted, defining the culture of a specific time and space. Angus (2000) refers to this idea as *comparative media theory*.

Comparative media theory explores a medium of communication as being constitutive in the perception, institution, and thought of social formations and/or social relations and their transformations. A medium of communication (re) organises human experience within newly defined perceptual, institutional, and cognitive aspects. The (re) organisation of perception, institution and thought of transformed social formations are (re) structured within the dimensions of time and space, such that a specific cultural form is given to the life world of a social group (Angus, 2000). Comparative media theory therefore, does not view a medium of communication and/or technology as simply an object used to transmit information and knowledge. A medium of communication is also the *relationship* that constitutes and/or institutes social formations within the world. Additionally, the communication act performed within a communication medium is expressed through a cultural form defined by the social identities that compose it. For example, language, defined as *representational*, is a cultural form of expression that sustains and defines the social identities and social relations of the social group. Language, now understood and defined as *constitutive*, not only expresses the phenomenon of the communication act, but also institutes the very formations of subjectivities in a culture such that transmission takes place promoting a certain view of expression (Angus, 2000).

Comparative media theory suggests that the forming influences of a medium of communication are *invisible*, as long as one lives *inside* it. Only by looking at it from the *outside* can its influences be defined. This inside / outside comparative approach could be significant in the current study, as we step outside of the medium, i.e. interactive media, and look inside to see what may be the happening relevant to the evolutionary patterns of language use and linguistic variations found within interactive written communication. Furthermore, comparative media theory views *media* and/or a medium of communication not simply as a technology, but as the social relations within which the technology develops and which are re-arranged around it. More specifically, the theory describes a medium of communication as a *mode* of social organization. Additionally, comparative media theory acknowledges that a theoretical perspective and/or analytical approach are influenced by the medium. It is therefore important to examine the ways in which the analysis interacts with the phenomenon. The influence of a medium of communication on a theoretical perspective can have a significant impact on the outcome of future study. For example, viewing language as representational may enable us to define and/or identify social relations and cultural identities by the language in which interlocutors speak and/or use. However, if we view language as constitutive, we could interpret language as the constructive force in new social formations and social transformations. For example, the language hackers' use is not only representational of the cultural identity of the user group, but more importantly, the language use and linguistic variations used by the hacker's sub-culture institutes the very formation of the community (Crystal, 2001).

H. Marshall McLuhan

H. Marshall McLuhan (1962) claimed that all media and/or technology are extensions of another medium; media are extensions of man. More specifically, media are an extension of human senses and faculties. According to McLuhan, *all* media / technology / cultural artefacts

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extend some aspect of the person, and therefore mediate human relations, making all *artefacts* media of communication (Babe, 2000, p. 284).

Relevant to the current study is McLuhan's notion that language in itself is a technology / a medium of communication and/or a cultural artefact. For McLuhan, the spoken word was the first technology by which man was able to let go of his environment in order to grasp it in a new way (McLuhan, 1962).

> Language does for intelligence what the wheel does for the feet and the body: it enables [people] to move from thing to thing with greater ease and speed and ever less involvement. (McLuhan and Nevitt, 1972, p. 82, as cited in Babe, 2000, p. 285)

Language viewed as a technology, alongside the notion that a medium of communication is a mode of social organisation, may suggest that language use and linguistic variations associated with interactive written communication could influence, construct, establish, and institute new social relations and cultural identities found on interactive media. If language is said to be reflective of an interlocutor's thoughts and ideas, this may suggest that interactive written communication could be reflective and/or representational of their thoughts and perceptions. Furthermore, to acknowledge language / a medium of communication as constitutive, defining the cultural form of a specific time and space, could also imply that language use and linguistic variations may influence the perceptions, institutions and thoughts of its interlocutors.

Comparative media theory acknowledges that a theoretical perspective and/or analytical approach are influenced by the medium. It is therefore important to examine the ways in which the analysis interacts with the phenomenon. For example, McLuhan's four laws of media may offer an interesting perspective to future study of interactive written communication found within interactive media. Babe (2000) illustrates McLuhan's four laws of media as a set of propositions and questions. For example,

- *What does the artefact enhance or intensify or make possible or accelerate?*

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If we were to view language as a technology / cultural artefact, future research could inquire into what interactive written communication may enhance, intensify, make possible or accelerate. For example, interactive media and interactive written communication as a medium of communication is said to have significantly restructured and transformed the way in which individuals communicate, technologically, socially and linguistically.

- *If some aspect of a situation is enlarged or enhanced, simultaneously the old condition or unenhanced situation is displaced thereby. What is pushed aside or obsolesced by the new organ?*

Future study could explore what is being pushed aside or obsolesced by the new organ. Preliminary observations of interactive written communication suggest that interlocutors are doing away and/or pushing aside various grammatical and/or linguistic structures, such as punctuation, capitalisation and sentence structure.

- *What recurrence or retrieval of earlier actions and services is brought into play simultaneously by the new form?*

The introduction of the printing press brought about significant changes in the writing system of language. The printing press initiated the use of capital and lower-case letters, punctuation and spacing between words were standardised, and the title page and the index were developed (Hissey, 2004). The printing press encouraged the development and standardisation of the writing system; interactive written communication may be encouraging a minimalist effect of this writing system in certain Internet-using situations.

- *When pushed to the limits...the new form will tend to reverse what had been its original characteristics. What is the reversal potential of the new form?*

Again, interactive written communication may be encouraging a minimalist effect within a standard writing system. However, this *new form* of interactive written communication has introduced new spelling conventions, non-standard spelling and/or deviant spelling.

Harold A. Innis

Increasingly, interactive media is being viewed from a social, cultural and linguistic perspective. The Internet as a medium of communication, for example, has significantly restructured and transformed the way in which individuals communicate, technologically, socially and linguistically (Crystal, 2001). Acknowledging the technological, social and linguistic impact the Internet has on society addresses Harold A. Innis's dialectic / interactive approach which suggests interdependence and an interrelationship between technology, society and in this case, language (Hissey, 2004).

Innis's work involved the influence of technology, i.e. a medium of communication, on the transmission of information and knowledge, as well as the influence of technology on social relations and social structure. For Innis, the introduction of new technology in society is a reaction and/or response to a particular social situation and/or consequence. Innis claimed that to understand the influence of technology on society and its social organisation, it is important to define how the technology is being used in society and by society. More specifically, how do specific social relations / social organisations institutionalise a medium of communication?

Social forms and/or social conditions encourage the development and the evolution of a medium of communication. The medium will respond initiating change and the (re) organisation of specific cultural forms and social conditions. For example, the Internet, as a medium of communication, has reacted and responded to the social conditions in which the medium is being used. We can assume that society's embrace of online interactive media as a new medium of communication has encouraged the significant growth of the medium as a technological, social and cultural form in our present-day society. As interlocutors adapt linguistically to the technological constraints of the medium, new linguistic forms, conventions and communicative practices emerge. This (co) evolution of new social relations, cultural identities, and linguistic varieties on interactive media are reflective of Innis' dialectical perspective.

1.2.2 "Language and the Internet"

Crystal (2001) explores the impact interactive media is having on language. More specifically, Crystal investigates the way in which the Internet is being shaped by and is shaping language and languages.

Crystal states that the electronic revolution is bringing about a linguistic revolution that will extend our traditional definitions of language. Computer-mediated communication has enabled real-time conversations to take place using written language; the sender and receiver will often write computer-mediated messages as if they were being spoken. This has encouraged innovative uses of language and linguistic variations that have provided unique opportunities for personal creativity and evolving language practices found on interactive media.

Crystal identifies specific Internet-using situations, in which he describes as each having their own linguistic features and discursive styles. They are e-mail, synchronous chatrooms, such as Web Chat and Instant Messaging, asynchronous bulletin boards, newsgroups and mailing lists, virtual worlds, and the worldwide web. All are sufficiently different that the language use and linguistic variations they contain are likely to be distinctive. Interlocutors, referred to as users and/or user-groups, are using *language varieties*, a system of linguistic expression whose use is governed by situational factors, to form their own social identities, online communities and individual language practices (Crystal, 2001, p. 6). Once interlocutors are members of a specific user-group, new and creative linguistic forms and communicative practices develop reflecting the social and cultural identity of the group, thus creating an *eco-system of subcultures* (Rheingold, 1993, p. 3, as cited in Crystal, 2001, p. 59). From a linguistic viewpoint, a subculture would refer to a speech community and/or language community. A speech community is a group of people sharing a common language and/or linguistic variety, as well as a common attitude in the way that the language is used within a given community. The language variety used within the specific language community should reflect the social and cultural backgrounds, needs, purposes, and attitudes of its interlocutors. In specific Internet-using situations, such as chatrooms and virtual

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worlds, the features of a language variety can be highly constrained by the situation: there are strict rules governing the kind of language that is used. For example, hackers are very aware of their identity and presence as members of an Internet sub-culture, expressing shared values and experiences. Not knowing the hacker language, or using it inappropriately, would define one as an outsider (Crystal, 2001).

Crystal has termed the written language found on the Internet as *Netspeak*. Netspeak is referred to and described as *speech acts in written form* (Crystal, 2001). Netspeak is a form of communication with features that are characteristic of both written language and spoken language. It is a written form of language that is non-standard, playful, highly deviant in bending the rules of language, tolerant of typographic and spelling errors, and full of new words. Features of spoken language include short and looser sentence constructions, balanced syntactic patterns, and phrasal repetitions. The innovative linguistic characteristics of Netspeak are said to evolve because of the physical absence of interlocutors during normal speech acts. Non-linguistic information is compensated for by other linguistic means.

Relevant to the current study, Crystal describes the playful, social and verbal creativeness of online *chatting*. From a linguistic point of view, language use and linguistic variations found in chatrooms demonstrate the innate ability of interlocutors to adapt to new linguistic situations. 'Almost all written language we read (informal letters aside) is interfered with in some way before it reaches us – by editors, sub-editors, revisers, censors, expurgators, copy enhancers and others. Chatting is the nearest we are likely to get to see writing in its spontaneous, unedited, naked state' (Crystal, 2001, p. 170).

The Language of Computer-Mediated Communication

Herring (1996) gathered a collection of scholarly works related to computer-mediated communication (CMC) and/or interactive media, with an overall emphasis on the language of CMC and the social interactions evolving on CMC. This collection was foundational to the

current study as it offered historical background on CMC, as well as identifying essential issues related to CMC research. I selected three articles from Herring's collection that were particularly useful to the current study.

Yates (1993) explored the differences between spoken, written and CMC discourse. Yates's study focused on the textual, interpersonal and ideational aspects of language use found within spoken, written and CMC discourse. Textuality refers to the *lexical density* of language use, such as the grammar and vocabulary interlocutors may use during their interactions. The interpersonal aspect of language use refers to the relationship between writer / reader and speaker / listener as encoded within speech and writing. For instance, during a spoken conversation a speaker and listener share a considerable amount of knowledge concerning the environment of a conversation. The speaker can monitor the effect of what he is saying and the listener is able to signal understanding (Yates, 1993, p. 33-42). The ideational factor of language use also referred to as the *modality system of language* refers to the attitude an interlocutor may have towards a statement or content of an utterance. For example, a statement may be said emphatically, spoken as a question, or said with a laugh (Hodge and Kress, 1988; as cited in Yates, 1993, p. 42).

Yates's study offered some interesting insight relevant to the current study. Yates indicated that although CMC may be more like written language on a textual level, CMC is more similar to spoken language on an interpersonal level. Yates described a corpus of data drawn from CMC as being more similar to writing because it would contain *word-processed electronic texts* as interlocutors interact by means of the written word typed on a computer keyboard. However, Yates claimed that there may be variables and/or factors other than the technical constraints of medium that may be affecting language use and linguistic variations associated with CMC. Yates claimed that a number of sociolinguistic factors, which he did not discuss, might be affecting an interlocutor's choice of words during a specific interaction and/or conversation on CMC. On an interpersonal level, Yates described CMC as being more like speech because interlocutors may be

bringing their literate production practices to an interactive, social and orally oriented interaction (Yates 1993, p. 39).

In reference to the ideational aspects of language use, Yates' suggested that it is not the technical constraints of CMC that define the relationship between interlocutors, i.e. writer / reader and/or speaker / listener, but rather the *appropriate* social practices surrounding the communication taking place. This brings us back to the notion of language register and/or language variety noted in Crystal (2000). Language variety and/or language register illustrate the differing genres of language use defined by specific social and cultural situational factors. Language variety and/or language register represent the varying differences of formal writing, informal writing, formal speech, and informal speech. What was unclear to Yates at the time of his study was to what extent interlocutors in specific social and cultural settings would develop and enhance their communication skills through the use of CMC (Yates, 1993).

Linguistic Features

Werry (1996) offered some insight in his examination of a particular form of CMC and/or interactive written communication known as Internet Relay Chat, or IRC. Comparative textual analysis detailed innovative linguistic and interactional features identified on two chat sessions, one session in English and one in French. Werry claimed that innovative linguistic features evolved in an attempt to recreate discursive properties typically associated with spoken language. The communication found on IRC is shaped at many different levels by the drive to reproduce or simulate the discursive style of face-to-face spoken language (Werry, 1996, p. 61). Relevant to the current study, Werry proposed a set of linguistic features he identified on two IRC channels. They include vowel reduplication, non-standard punctuation, capitalisation, creative phonic spelling, slang, abbreviations, brevity, syntactically reduced forms, the use of acronyms, symbols, and emoticons (Werry, 1996). Acknowledging Werry's proposed set of linguistic features should be a useful guide in identifying a set of possible linguistic features relevant to the current study.

Methodology

Merchant (2001) investigates the uses of Internet chatrooms by teenage girls. Merchant illustrates how the use of popular electronic communication is resulting in linguistic innovations within new, virtual social networks. The data illustrates how written conversations that combine features of face-to-face interactions with interactive written communication enable young people to develop *sophisticated literacy skills*.

Merchant (2001) proposes a theoretical and conceptual framework relevant to the study of language use and linguistic variation found in interactive media, in this case Internet chatrooms. The small-scale study offers valuable insight into the online behaviours, attitudes, and/or impressions of an Internet chatroom as characterised by a small group of teenage girls. Additionally, the study details preliminary observations of linguistic features identified in an Internet chatroom. The linguistic features identified are classified into four categories: use of non-alphabetic characters (emoticons), use of initial letter abbreviation, phonetic representation using numbers and letters, and phonetic spelling (Merchant 2001).

Merchant's (2001) study raises some methodological concerns relevant to the current study. These methodological concerns include privacy and access, the uncertainty of the identity of the interlocutors (also referred to as users and/or participants) and the issues of observers' paradox. Herring (1996) also discussed methodological issues related to computer-mediated communication data that are similar to Merchant's concerns. I believe that these methodological concerns are significant and should be considered in future research.

Of the three issues raised by both Merchant and Herring, the issue of observers' paradox (Labov 1972) was my most significant concern. In sociolinguistic research, the notion of observers' paradox refers to the problems of how one can observe the way people speak and/or use language when they are not being observed (Labov, 1972). The language use we want to observe is unobserved language use. Ideally, we do not want the data collection process to influence or alter the way people normally speak and/or use language. Relevant to the current

study is my concern that my observations may alter and/or influence the way interlocutors may interact and/or use language and linguistic variations on interactive media. Although I may overcome the issues of privacy and access, and identify the interlocutors online, how will I avoid the effects of observer's paradox on my data collection process?

Holmes (2000) offers an interesting methodological approach in her study, *Language in the Workplace Project.* A central aim of Holmes's project was to identify and analyze features of effective interpersonal communication in a variety of workplaces. Ideally, Holmes did not want the data collection process to influence or alter the way people normally spoke to each other at work. Holmes resolved the issue of observer's paradox by devising a way of minimizing these unavoidable effects. Holmes asked a group of volunteers from a number of workplaces to collect the data themselves. More specifically, Holmes asked the research participants in her study to tape-record their own conversations.

The methodology adopted by Holmes was designed to give research participants more control over the data collection process. Throughout the data collection process, research participants were allowed to edit and delete material they were not comfortable volunteering for the research study. Holmes claims that, over a period of time, research participants increasingly ignored the recording equipment, and that there were often comments at the end of interactions indicating people had forgotten about the tape recorder. By allowing research participants to collect the data themselves, an excellent research relationship between Holmes and the workplace participants was developed. In return for guarantees of anonymity and confidentiality, the volunteers provided a wide range of material (Holmes, 2000). I believe that the methodological approach of 'participants as data collectors' adopted by Holmes is an interesting and useful method relevant to the current study.

1.2.3 The Current Study

The current study will explore the complex ways in which linguistic variations and language practices have been influenced by online interactive media. I will apply a conceptual framework based on the three key concepts of language, technology and society.

Language will be viewed not simply as representational of its interlocutors, but as constitutive in the construction of social relations and cultural identities associated with interactive written communication. Technology will be acknowledged as an electronic medium as well as a linguistic form, based on McLuhan's notion that language in itself is a technology. The key concept of society will refer to our present day society as a whole, and to the social relations and cultural identities found in interactive media.

"Research begins with a question."

As Richards (2002) suggests above, it is important to understand the kinds of questions that can be studied and to see how they can be framed in ways that make answers possible to find (Richards, 2002, p. 3). Based on Richards's description of research, I approach the current study by dividing my research process into three categories: *exploratory, descriptive,* and *explanatory* research.

Exploratory research will involve a pilot study that will illustrate the examination of language in-use associated with interactive written communication. It should offer introductory insight that will enable me to plan a descriptive study that will begin to ask specific questions relevant to the current study.

Descriptive research should attempt to obtain a complete and accurate description of events, conditions, circumstances, processes, and relationships surrounding my research topic (Richards, 2002, p.4). My descriptive research process will include observational study and survey questionnaires.

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Richards (2002) claims that although descriptive research may tell the researcher what is happening, it will not explain the causes and/or causal relationships of anything that the researcher may find. I will approach the third phase of my research process using *explanatory* research. Explanatory research may help identify and/or explain the causal relationships associated with my research topic. For this phase of my research, I will conduct interviews and transcript analysis.

1.2.4 Hypotheses

The current study will explore the complex ways in which language practices and linguistic variations have been influenced by online interactive media. With a primary focus on research design / methodology, I evaluated research methods and/or techniques that aim to test the following three hypotheses relevant to the future study of the evolutionary patterns of language use and linguistic variations found in interactive media:

H1: The cultural identities of specific user groups developing and/or evolving in interactive media are having a formative influence, restructuring interactive media as a medium of communication.

Castells (2002) suggests that rather than simply analyzing the impact of the Internet on society, the key issue is to understand the effect of society on the Internet. Interactive media as a technology has reacted and responded to the social conditions in which the medium is being used. We can assume that society's embrace of online interactive media as a new medium of communication has encouraged the significant growth of the medium as a technological, social and cultural form in our present-day society.

H2: The interrelationship between the technology of interactive media and its interlocutors has influenced evolutionary patterns in language use and linguistic variations associated with interactive media.

Exploratory research suggests that there may be an interrelationship and interdependence, a co-evolution if you will, between technology, society and language use associated with

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interactive media. Innis's dialectical perspective describes interdependence and an interrelationship between technology and society, i.e. a particular medium of communication and its user. Social forms and/or social conditions encourage the development and the evolution of a medium of communication. The medium will respond initiating change and the (re) organisation of specific cultural forms and social conditions. Society will once again react, and the medium will respond back, and so on and so on.

The use of computer-mediated communication has resulted in a paradigm shift on the traditional uses of spoken and written language. New linguistic forms, conventions and communicative practices emerge, as interlocutors engaged in online interactive discourse adept linguistically to the technological constraints of the medium. The interlocutors are exploring a new kind of communication as they aim to create a written language that is as *speech-like* as possible (Werry 1996, p.46).

H3: The new linguistic variations and language practices found in interactive media are constitutive in the construction of social relations and cultural identities of interlocutors / user groups.

Interlocutors, referred to as users and/or user-groups, are using language varieties, 'a system of linguistic expression whose use is governed by situational factors', to form their own individual social identities and online communities (Crystal, 2001, p. 6). Once interlocutors are members of a specific user-group, new and creative linguistic forms and communicative practices develop reflecting the social and cultural identity of the group, thus creating *an eco-system of subcultures* (Rheingold 1993, p. 3). From a linguistic viewpoint, a subculture would refer to a speech community and/or language community. A speech community is a group of people sharing a common language and/or linguistic variety, as well as a common attitude in the way that the language is used within a given community. The language variety used within the specific

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language community should reflect the social and cultural backgrounds, the needs, purposes, and

attitudes of its interlocutors.

Chapter 2:   Methods

Research methods and/or techniques relevant to the current study should acknowledge the various aspects of the uses of interactive media, its interlocutors, and interactive written communication. A multiple-methods research approach, including an exploratory pilot study, observational study, survey questionnaires, interviews, and transcript analysis could enable me to view different types of data within varying technological, social and linguistic perspectives, as well as offer insight into how these various perspectives intersect.

The current study will evaluate research methods and/or techniques relevant to the future study of the evolutionary patterns of language use and linguistic variations found in interactive media. It may be useful to explore different kinds of data in an effort to establish which dataset could be most effective in future research. Additionally, this multiple-methods research approach may be useful in developing a *toolbox* of key concepts, research methods and/or techniques addressing some of the methodological concerns raised in previous studies. Silverman (2000) suggests that sometimes it is a better approach to treat the analysis of different kinds of data as a *dry run* for a main study. As such, it is a useful test of the kinds of data that you can most easily gather and analyse (Silverman, 2000, p. 50).

2.1   Exploratory Research

2.1.1   Exploratory Pilot Study

My research process began with an exploratory pilot study examining the linguistic and socio-cultural variances found in a corpus-based comparison of English and French texts drawn from similar Internet-using situations. An exploration of language in-use should identify a

possible set of linguistic features that could be selected as a set of variables and/or factors suitable for future study.

The analytical approach chosen for the pilot study was modelled after Biber's (1988) multidimensional-multi-feature (MD-MF) analysis. Relevant to the current study is Biber's analytical approach of exploratory factor analysis. Factor analysis should reduce a large number of variables, in this case, linguistic features, to a small set of derived variables and/or factors suitable for analytical study. In a comparative study of different texts, factor analysis should reveal which linguistic features co-occur and which tend to be mutually exclusive. If particular sets of linguistic features consistently co-occur in a corpus of different texts then that set of features may serve a particular communicative function (Collot and Belmore, 1993, p. 17).

The categories of linguistic features used to identify specific linguistic elements within the pilot study corpus were based on five distinctive features of language variety described in Crystal (2001). The five categories include *graphic, orthographic* (or graphological), *grammatical, lexical* and *discourse* features. Linguistic analysis of the pilot study corpus will focus on the linguistic features that 'co-occur' in both subsets of comparable data.

I view the linguistic features identified in the pilot study corpus as preliminary insight into linguistic features that could be selected as a set of variables and/or factors for future study.

2.2   Descriptive Research

2.2.1   Ethical Approval of Research

As my fieldwork would involve the distribution of survey questionnaires, interviews and transcript analysis, I was required to submit a Request for Ethical Approval of Research at the Office of Research Ethics at Simon Fraser University. The Simon Fraser Research Ethics Board, in accordance with Policy R 20.01, "Ethics Review of Research Involving Human Subjects" (Appendix A), granted approval of my ethics application entitled, *'The e-volution of Language:*

Research Methods for Analysing Language Use and Language Change on the Internet'. I have

since modified the title of the current study. It is now entitled, *'Language Use and Linguistic*

Variations Found in Interactive Media: A Case Study of Francophone Youth'.

I subsequently requested an amendment to my original application. Transcript analysis

will focus on discussion transcripts drawn from MSN Messenger. I required informed consent

from the research participants, now referred to as *interlocutors,* allowing access, as well as

permission to include the discussion transcripts in the current study. A letter of Introduction, a

Consent Form, and an Assent Form was sent to the homes of the interlocutors participating on

MSN Messenger. The Letter of Introduction, the Consent Form, and the Assent Form can all be

found in Appendix B, C, and D.

My amendment application was categorised as 'Minimal Risk' and approved by the

Director of the Office of Research Ethics on behalf of the Research Ethics Board in accordance

with REB policy.

2.2.2   Observational Study

The current study involved observational study in five randomly selected Internet cafés

and/or shops located along Ave. Mont-Royal within the Plateau Mont-Royal district in Montreal,

Quebec. My aim was to gain exploratory insight into the socio-cultural and linguistic behaviours

of unilingual French speaking interlocutors. Careful hand-written notes were taken about the

social setting and general ambience of each café and/or shop, the social interactions between the

employees and the clientele, what was done, what was said, and so on.

The Plateau Mont-Royal is a popular neighbourhood in Montreal. It is a large, residential

district with many neighbourhood restaurants and cafés. At the turn of the century, the Plateau

Mont-Royal began as a working class neighbourhood, but in the 60's and 70's, it became the

district where many writers, singers, and artists lived and worked. Its main commercial streets

include Ave. St-Denis, Ave. Mont-Royal, and St. Laurent Boulevard.

I began my observational study by simply walking along Ave. Mont-Royal, locating all Internet cafes and/or shops offering Internet services to the public. I identified five locations within a seventeen-block stretch. I introduced myself to the managers of the five locations before I began my observational study. I was granted permission to observe the various activities taking place. I assured the managers that no attempt would be made to interview the people visiting the cafés and/or shops.

2.2.3   Survey Questionnaires

During my first visit to Montreal, I recruited family members to randomly distribute survey questionnaires to their relatively unilingual French-speaking friends and colleagues who are associated with interactive media and interactive written communication. The distribution of the survey questionnaires began in January 2004 and was expanded in August 2004. Of the 100 questionnaires distributed, 56 were returned. Of these, 19 were male respondents, 37 were female respondents. The participants ranged in age from 12 to 65 years old.

The survey questionnaire provided information on basic demographics such as age, gender, location, education, and marital status. The survey questionnaires also included questions regarding language use at home, work and/or at school. A final set of questions explored patterns of Internet use at home, work and/or at school. The entirety of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix E.

2.3   Explanatory Research

2.3.1   Interviews

Interviews were completed with the owners and/or managers of five randomly selected Internet cafés and/or shops located along Ave. Mont Royal. The interviews discussed the services

offered at each location, the social interactions between the employees and the clientele, as well as to the general activities of the cafés and/or shops and its clientele.

The interview process also involved interviews with three relatively unilingual French speaking youths associated with interactive media and interactive written communication. During my fieldwork in Montreal, Quebec, I was introduced to three youths that belong to a small group of teenagers who have a daily routine of chatting on MSN Messenger. I requested interviews with each of the three youths. The interviews discussed the youths' experiences online, i.e. the types of interactivity and activities they engage in online, as well as the development of online communities within the group. The interviews also gathered information on the language use and linguistic variations developing within these online communities.

It is important to note that the interviews were conducted in French. All interviews with the owners / managers of the Internet cafés and/or shops as well as the interviews with the three francophone youths, were one-on-one, semi-structured and face-to-face. I have translated into English direct quotes and/or comments stated by the interview participants that are relevant to the current study.

2.3.2 Transcript Analysis

As part of the current study, I wanted to include illustrative data of interactive written communication found in interactive media. The textual data may demonstrate how interactive media might be influencing language use and linguistic variations associated with interactive written communication.

Preliminary observations suggest that e-mail, synchronous chatrooms, and interactive forums may be an appropriate online setting in which to gather illustrative data of interactive written communication relevant to the current study.

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2.3.3 Data

Previous studies suggest that the use of data gathered from interactive media raise methodological concerns. Some of these concerns include privacy and access, the uncertainty of the identity of the interlocutors, also referred to as users and/or participants, and the issues of observers' paradox (Merchant, 2001 and Herring, 1996).

The issues of privacy and access were addressed during my request for *Ethical Approval of Research*. The interlocutors participating in the current study granted informed consent, allowing access as well as permission to include illustrative data of interactive written communication they wrote themselves. I, in return, assured the interlocutors that the contents of the current study would be used for the purposes of academic research only, and that the information that the interlocutors provided would remain strictly confidential. Anonymity would be respected and assured through the use of pseudonyms.

Another significant concern surrounding data gathered on interactive media is that the researcher can never really be sure of who is really online, what is the true identity of the interlocutors participating online (Merchant, 2001). The interlocutors participating in the current study have confirmed that Quebecois French is their native language and that they consider themselves relatively unilingual French speaking interlocutors. Identifying the interlocutors as native speakers of the language they are using online may be useful in determining whether or not the linguistic behaviors demonstrated by the interlocutors are characteristic of the intuitive linguistic behaviors of native speakers associated with interactive media and interactive written communication. Language use and linguistic variations associated with interactive media may reflect important information about its 'interlocutor / speaker / writer / user', who he/she is, how he/she is using language, and why he/she may be introducing language change and linguistic variations.

A third methodological concern is *observers' paradox*. In sociolinguistic research, the notion of observers' paradox refers to the problems of how one can observe the way people speak

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and/or use language when they are not being observed (Labov, 1972). The language use we want to observe is unobserved language use. Ideally, we do not want the data collection process to influence or alter the way people normally speak and/or use language.

I addressed this methodological concern by applying Holmes's (2000) methodological approach of *participants as data collectors*. I asked the interlocutors participating in the current study to collect the data themselves. I requested that the interlocutors begin saving their IM discussions as Word documents. After a period of twelve weeks, I asked the interlocutors to randomly select IM transcripts of archived discussions they would feel comfortable volunteering for the current study. I assured them that the focus of the current study is not on what is actually being said during the discussions, but on *how* the language is being used and *what* linguistic variations could be identified within the discussion transcripts.

Chapter 3:   Data Analysis

3.1   Exploratory Research

3.1.1   Exploratory Pilot Study

Based on Biber's (1988) multidimensional-multi-feature (MD-MF) analysis the pilot

study corpus included two subsets of data drawn from similar Internet using situations, the CBC

Message Board and the French Radio-Canada Message Board. I collected the online message

board discussion transcripts from the CBC / Radio Canada Archived Chat web pages. Based on a

sample size of n=30, I gathered thirty message postings from the English message board and

thirty message postings from the French message board.

The English CBC and the French Radio-Canada message boards are similar

asynchronous open discussion forums. The message board discussion topics are based on a

discussion question that is posted by a CBC / Radio-Canada online moderator. The message

board participants are responding to the question, *"What is your reaction to this Federal*

Budget?"/ "Est-ce un budget à la hauteur de vos attentes?"

Socio-cultural Variances

The CBC / Radio-Canada message boards post the participants' names (often a

nickname), as well as the date and time that each message is posted. There is a significant

difference between the English subset and the French subset in the actual duration and/or period

of the message board discussions. The English subset discussion lasted thirty-eight minutes

(00:38) The French subset discussion lasted twenty-one hours and four minutes (21:04).

The English subset had an active membership of fourteen participants writing the thirty message postings. The French subset had thirty participants writing the thirty message postings, one message per participant. Within the English subset, many of the message postings were responses and/or reactions to the other participants' message postings. For example, eighteen of the thirty message postings from the English subset began with a salutation, greeting, quote and/or reference to another message and/or participant. The French subset however, did not demonstrate similar online activity. Although some of the message postings would be referring to a comment made in a previous message posting, the responses were more of an opinion rather than a reaction. Additionally, none of the thirty message postings in the French subset began with a salutation; the participants did not address and/or refer to another participant.

The English subset had a total of 1,961 words, compared to the French subset's 2,861 words. This seems to be consistent with other comparable differences between the English and French subsets. The differences in the total number of words between the two subsets could be reflective of the type of interaction and/or dialogue that was occurring within the two discussion forums. The English participants were interacting; the discussions are essentially an online conversation; eight of the fourteen participants posted more than one message; the messages are often short, brief and resembling casual conversation. The French messages are more in-depth and longer in length, stating the opinions, thoughts and ideas of the French participants. There is little evidence of any on-going discussion and/or interaction between the participants.

Linguistic Features

Linguistic analysis of the pilot study corpus began with comprehensive transcript analysis of the English subset and the French subset. The messages were colour-coded, highlighting all possible linguistic variances and/or linguistic deviancies found within the English and French message postings. The messages were also grammar-checked and spell-checked using the English and French versions of Microsoft Word 2000.

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I categorised and counted the occurrences of all linguistic variances that I identified. The categories of linguistic features were based on the five distinctive features of language variety described in Crystal (2001); *graphic, orthographic* (or graphological), *grammatical, lexical* and *discourse* features. Based on Biber's (1988) multidimensional-multi-feature (MD-MF) analytical approach, descriptive linguistic analysis and empirical observation of the pilot study corpus focused on the *graphic, orthographic* and *discourse* categories of co-occurring linguistic features identified within the two subsets of the pilot study corpus.

Graphic Features

A *graphic feature* refers to the general presentation and organisation of the written language. Examples include distinctive typography, page design, spacing, use of illustrations and colour (Crystal, 2001). Interlocutors engaged in computer-mediated communication must adapt and compensate linguistically to the technological properties of the medium of communication. For example, a set of characters on a computer keyboard determines *productive linguistic capacity,* the type of information that can be sent. The size and configuration of the computer screen determines *receptive linguistic capacity*, the type of information that can be seen (Crystal, 2001).

Within the pilot study corpus, three sub-categories of graphic features were identified; *Use of literary quotes, Use of emoticons,* and *Use of computer keyboard symbols.* Only one sub-category of graphic features co-occurred in both the English subset and the French subset - *Use of computer keyboard symbols.*

Table 3.1. Frequency of Occurrence: Graphic Features – Exploratory Pilot Study

*Note: N/A means 'not applicable'. There were no occurrences identified in the subset.

	English Subset	French Subset
Use of emoticons	N/A	N/A
Use of literary quotes	15	N/A
Use of computer keyboard symbols	5	5

Orthographic Features

Orthographic features represent the writing system of an individual language. These

features will include the use of a distinctive alphabet, capital letters, spelling, punctuation, and

ways of expressing emphasis using bold and/or italic font (Crystal, 2001).

Within the pilot study corpus, nine sub-categories of orthographic features were

identified; *Use of abbreviations, Use of bold and/or italic font for emphasis, Use of capital letters*

for emphasis, Missing capital letters, Missing accents, Spelling mistakes, Creative spelling,

Phonetic spelling, and Use of punctuation. Eight sub-categories of orthographic features co-

occurred in both the English subset and the French subset.

Table 3. 2. Frequency of Occurrence: Orthographic Features – Exploratory Pilot Study

*Note: N/A means 'not applicable'. There were no occurrences identified in the subset.

	English Subset	French Subset
Creative spelling	1	1
Missing accents	N/A	24
Missing capital letters	12	9
Phonetic spelling	8	2
Spelling mistakes	19	10
Use of abbreviations /acronyms	4	4
Use of bold / italic font for emphasis	42	3
Use of capital letters	18	28
Use of punctuation for emphasis	38	59

Discourse Features

Discourse features refer to the structural organisation of a text, in terms of coherence, relevance, paragraph structure and the logical progression of ideas (Crystal, 2001).

Within the pilot study corpus, four sub-categories of discourse features were identified; *Addressivity, Slang / informal language use, Sentence fragments / brevity* and *Run-on sentences.* Three sub-categories co-occurred in both the English subset and the French subset.

Table 3. 3.   Frequency of Occurrence: Discourse Features – Exploratory Pilot Study
*Note: N/A means 'not applicable'. There were no occurrences identified in the subset.

	English Subset	French Subset
Addressivity	20	N/A
Slang / Informal language use	38	40
Run-on sentences	2	3
Sentence fragments / brevity	10	4

On the basis of my results, I propose a set of co-occurring linguistic features (see Table 3.4 below) that could be used as a possible set of variables and/or factors in a larger corpus-based study of language use and/or linguistic variations found within a specific Internet using situation.

Table 3. 4. Co-occurring Graphic Features – Exploratory Pilot Study

- **Graphic Features**
  Use of computer keyboard symbols

- **Orthographic Features**
  Creative spelling
  Missing capital letters
  Phonetic Spelling
  Spelling mistakes
  Use of abbreviations / acronyms
  Use of bold and/or italic font for emphasis
  Use of capital letters
  Use of punctuation for emphasis

- **Discourse Features**
  Slang / informal language use
  Run-on sentences
  Sentence fragments / brevity

The results of the pilot study suggest that although there may be differences in online behavior and/or online activity, the English subset and the French subset may display similar linguistic behaviors and/or linguistic activity. The cross tabulation table below offers comparative insight.

Figure 3.1. Cross Tabulation Chart of Linguistic Features

The cross tabulation table illustrates:

- Compared to the French subset, the English subset was more likely to contain orthographic features (72.08% to 69.23%).

- Compared to the English subset, the French subset was slightly more likely to contain discourse features (27.81% to 25.38%).

- The English subset and the French subset both contain the same amount of graphic features (2.54% to 2.54%).

-

count row% col%	Linguistic Features			
	Graphic	Orthographic	Discourse	totals
English	5 2.54% 50.00%	142 72.08% 54.83%	50 25.38% 51.55%	197 53.83%
French	5 2.54% 50.00%	117 69.23% 45.17%	47 27.81% 48.45%	169 46.18%
totals	10 2.73%	259 70.77%	97 26.50%	366 100%

(Language — row axis label)

Brief Summary

The exploratory pilot study illustrated the examination of language in-use, grounded in linguistic analysis and empirical observation. The exploratory pilot study has also proposed a set of possible linguistic features that could be used as a set of variables and/or factors for future study. I consider the linguistic features identified in the pilot study as only an introduction to possible linguistic features and/or linguistic variations associated with interactive written communication.

3.2   Descriptive Research

3.2.1   Observational Study

Observational study involved repeat visits to five randomly selected Internet cafés and/or shops located along Ave. Mont Royal within the Plateau Mont-Royal district in Montreal, Quebec. In total, I spent approximately 20 hours at the various locations. I will refer to the five locations as A, B, C, D, and E.

Location A

The first location I visited was a photocopy / printing shop that offered a variety of services including Internet access. Although Location A was essentially a printing shop, there was a small area with twelve computers available for Internet access. I spent approximately five hours in Location A, observing the various activities associated with the services offered.

Location A was extremely busy with most of the activities centring on the printing / photocopy services offered. I focused my observations on the clientele using the computers. I began to gage the length of time individuals spent on the computers. On average, individuals spent approximately ten to twenty minutes at the computer stations. The individuals using the computers did not know they were being observed. It was therefore difficult for me to monitor what they were doing on the computers. I did notice that many of the activities included word processing and printing documents, checking e-mail and brief Internet searches. This may be because the general ambience was very noisy and there was very little privacy. When I spoke to the manager, he confirmed that this location was generally a quick-stop shop.

Location B

The second location I observed was Location B, a restaurant offering Internet access. There were three computers located at the back of the room. The general atmosphere of the

restaurant was very casual, cafeteria style. The owner and the employees spoke both French and English. I visited the location on three occasions, sitting at a table monitoring the activity at the computers. During my three visits, I did not witness anyone using the computers at the back of the room. When I spoke to the manager, he said that the computers were not used very often. As this was a popular neighbourhood restaurant, people would usually come with friends for a quick meal. He mentioned that he was considering removing the computers from the restaurant.

Location C

Location C was an Internet café catering to young students and teenagers. The atmosphere of the Internet café was very dark with mood lighting and music playing in the background. The employees of Location C were of Asian descent and did not speak any French. When I asked them if I could spend some time observing, they replied that their location was relatively new and that their clientele was mainly of Asian descent wanting to play virtual reality games on the Internet. I spent a short time at this Internet café. Based on its Asian clientele, I concluded that observational study of this location would not be relevant to the current study.

Location D

Location D was a graphic design / printing / photocopy shop offering Internet assess. They were five computers available. Again, most of the activities were centred on the graphic design / printing / photocopy services offered. I visited Location D on three occasions and only witnessed one person at the computers. His time spent at the computer was less than ten minutes. I decided that observational study at this location was not efficient, and therefore I did not return to the location.

Location E

Location E offered the most insight relevant to the current study. Of the five locations I observed, I spent the most time at this particular location. Location E had a very calm and relaxed atmosphere with mood lighting and soft music playing in the background. There was also an enclosed smoking section at the very back of the room. The clientele could order specialised coffees and sandwiches, which were served at their computer stations. There were sixteen computers available throughout the room.

The most significant observation was the length of time individuals spent at this Internet café. Very often, there would be a short wait for a computer station. Individuals would come in, order something to eat or drink and stay for a while. I monitored the time spent of several individuals. I calculated that on average, people would stay a minimum of thirty to forty minutes.

Again, the clientele were not aware that they were being observed. However, during my time spent at this location, I began to identify repeat customers, and they began to recognise me as a repeat customer as well. As this was a very small space and the computer stations were very close together, I was able to initiate friendly conversation with my neighbours. Throughout the ten hours I spent at Location E, I spoke to six individuals. Of the six individuals I spoke to, four were native Francophone, born and raised in Montreal.

I had assured the owner of Location E that I would not attempt to interview the clientele. However, during my conversations with my four-francophone neighbours sitting beside, I did mention to them that I was curious about the Internet activities of native francophone interlocutors. Although their responses were brief, the four individuals did confirm that their main activity on the Internet was e-mail and chatting. Two of the individuals were university students, adding that they spend a considerable amount of time doing research online. When I asked if most of their activities were done in French, they replied 'most of time, as long as it is available in French'. Although all four claimed to have a general comprehension of the English language, two did not consider themselves bilingual interlocutors.

Brief Summary

Observational study has offered insight into the social settings and social interactions of

some Internet cafes and/or shops in a small district of Montreal, Quebec. However, it did not

provide me with enough detailed information relevant to the current study. What I had hoped to

accomplish through observational study was to observe the specific uses and/or online activities

of relatively unilingual French speaking interlocutors.

I decided that perhaps a survey questionnaire might be a better methodological approach.

I designed a survey questionnaire in an effort to gather further in-depth insight / background

information on the specific uses and/or activities of relatively unilingual French speaking

interlocutors associated with interactive media.

3.2.2 Survey Questionnaires

The distribution of the survey questionnaires began in January 2004 and was expanded in

August 2004. Of the 100 questionnaires distributed, 56 were returned. Of these, 19 were male, 37

female. The participants ranged in age from 12 to 65 years old. The survey questionnaire obtained

information on basic demographics such as age, gender, education, and marital status.

Table 3.5. Demographics of Survey Questionnaire Respondents

Demographics	Gender		Total
1. Gender	Male	Female	Total
	19	37	56
2. Age	Male	Female	Total
12 – 16	6	3	9
17 - 25	4	14	18
26 - 35	2	6	8
36 - 50	6	13	19
51 - 65	1	1	2

Demographics	Gender		Total
3. Education	Male	Female	Total
Grade 1 - 8	0	1	1
Secondary School (Grade 12 or GED)	8	16	24
Technical / Professional Post-Secondary	3	13	16
Some College/University (> 2 years)	5	2	7
Some University (> 4 years)	1	2	3
University Degree (4 Years)	0	0	0
Masters / PH.D Degree	0	0	0
Did Not Answer	2	3	5
4. Currently Attending School	Male	Female	Total
Yes	10	14	24
No	9	23	32
Did Not Answer	0	0	0
5. Employment Status	Male	Female	Total
Full-time	9	22	31
Part-time	3	10	13
Currently Not Working	7	5	12
6. Marital Status	Male	Female	Total
Single	13	15	28
Married	3	18	21
Divorced	1	1	2
Separated	1	0	1
Widow/Widower	0	0	0
Did Not Answer	1	3	4

Although I requested that the questionnaires be distributed to relatively unilingual French speaking interlocutors, I was curious to know if the uses of interactive media, in this case the Internet, have encouraged French interlocutors to use another language other than the French language online. The results suggest that the interlocutors use their native language of French during their online activities.

Figure 3.2. Language Used Online
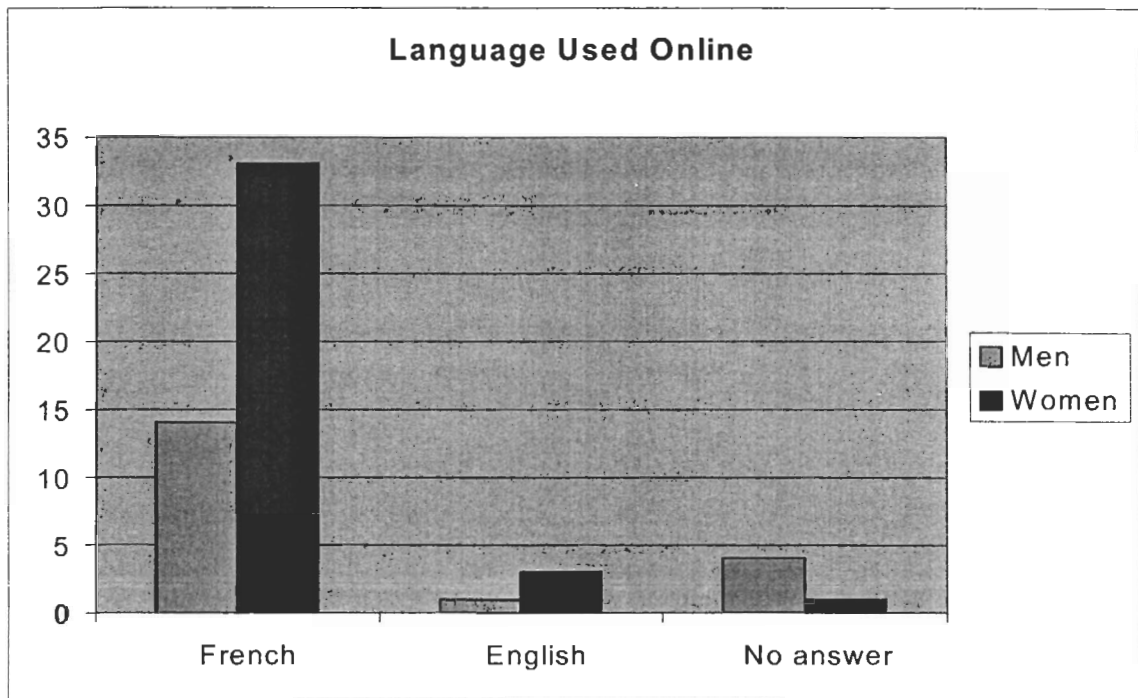
The survey questionnaire analysed the length of time and/or experience respondents have online, in this case the Internet. The survey questionnaire results suggest that most of the questionnaire respondents have been using interactive media and/or the Internet for a minimum of three years.

Figure 3.3. Length of Time / Experience Online
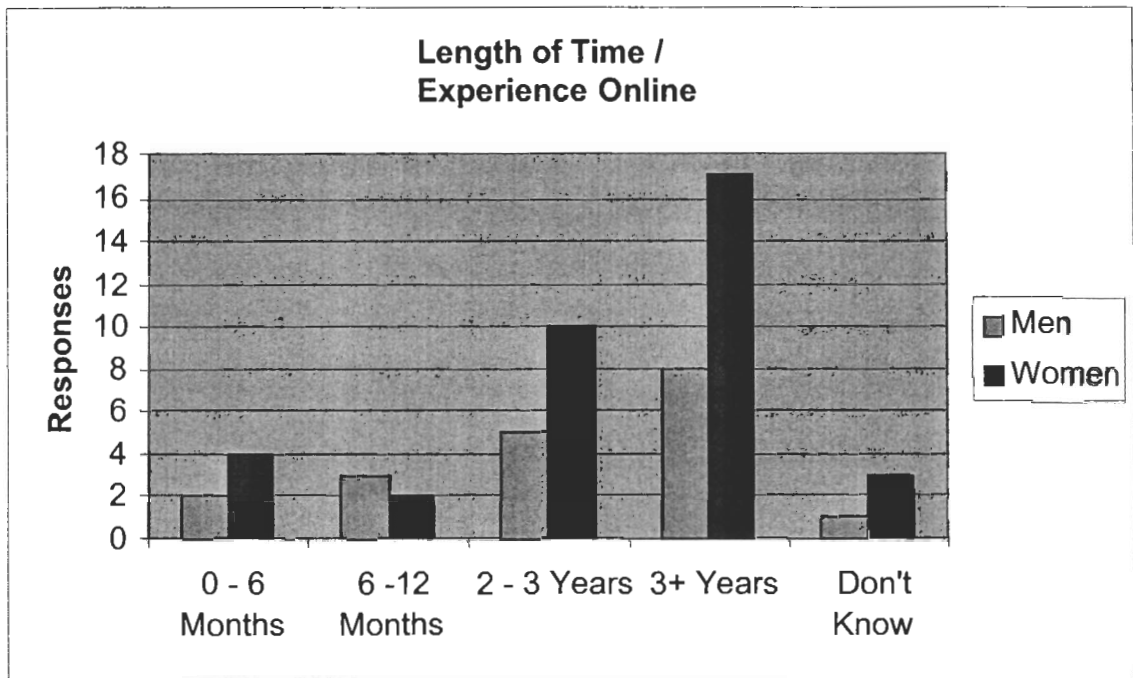
The survey questionnaire also collected information on the specifics of online activity, i.e. what the respondents did online. The survey questionnaires included detailed questions regarding the various activities available on interactive media, such as e-mail, synchronous chatrooms, such as Web Chat and Instant Messaging, interactive forums, such as asynchronous bulletin boards, newsgroups and mailing lists, virtual worlds, and the world-wide web. The survey questionnaire gathered information on the frequency of use of such online activities, as well as the respondents' time spent per week participating in the various online activities. The results of the survey questionnaire suggest that the respondents' main activities while online include e-mail, synchronous chatrooms, and asynchronous interactive forums.

Figure 3.4. Online Activities of Survey Questionnaire Respondents

Online Activities of Survey Questionnaire Respondents
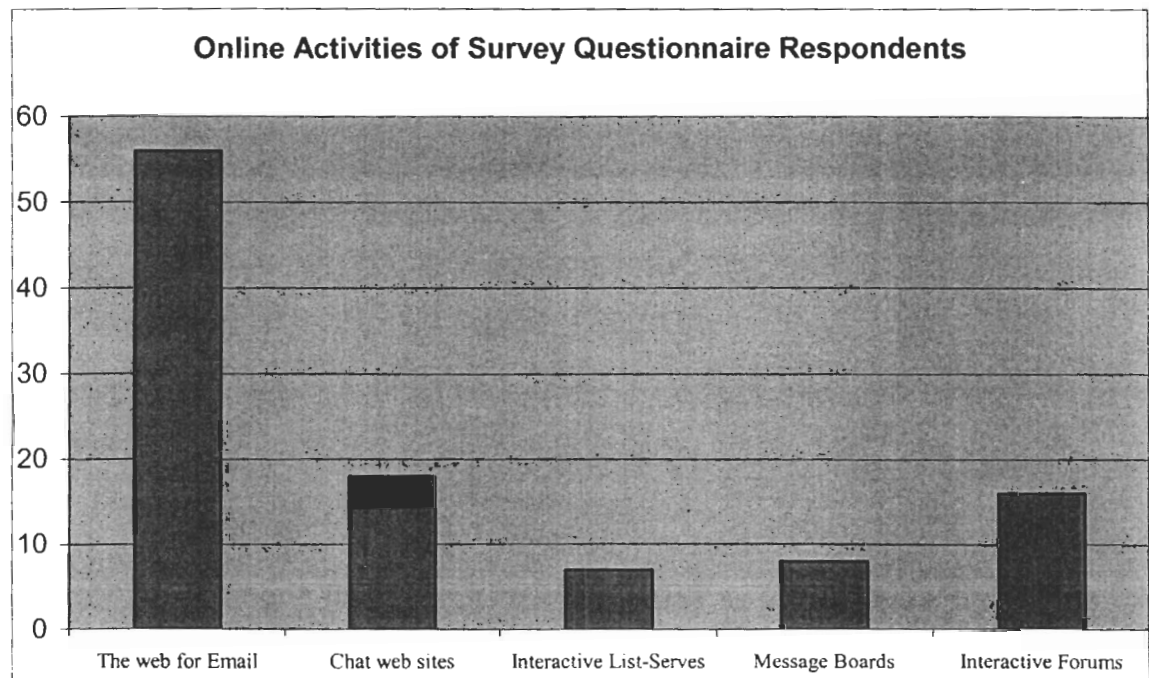
Brief Summary

The survey questionnaire has offered valuable insight into the specific uses and/or online activities of relatively unilingual French speaking interlocutors associated with interactive media. The results of the survey questionnaire suggest that e-mail, synchronous chat rooms and interactive forums are the main online activities of the questionnaire respondents.

E-mail is the more popular online activity; however gaining access to e-mail messages could be a challenge and could raise methodological and/or ethical issues related to privacy and access. Interactive forums are forms of asynchronous communication. This time-delay may affect the spontaneity and intuitiveness of the language use and linguistic variations found within these online settings. Based on relevant literature, alongside the results of the survey questionnaire, synchronous chat rooms may be the more appropriate online setting relevant to the current study.

3.2.3 Interviews

Following observational study and the distribution of survey questionnaires, interviews were conducted with the owners and/or managers of the five randomly selected Internet cafés and/or shops. The interview process also involved interviews with three relatively unilingual French speaking youths associated with interactive media and interactive written communication. All interviews were conducted in French.

Interviews with Owners and/or Managers of Internet Cafés and/or Shops

The interviews conducted with the owners and/or managers discussed the services offered at each location, the social interactions between the employees and the clientele, as well as the general activities of the clientele. I do not report the findings for each of the interviews because many of the comments suggested that a large majority of the clientele of the cafés and/or shops were not necessarily native French-speaking interlocutors. The clientele would often consist of people who do not permanently live in Montreal. Many were students and/or out-of-town visitors who needed access to a computer. If I were seeking unilingual French speaking interlocutors associated with interactive media and/or the Internet, it would be a challenge finding them at these particular locations.

The interview process however offered some valuable insight regarding the online activities of a regular clientele visiting an Internet café. For example, one of the owners suggested that many of his regular clientele would visit his Internet café in an effort to gain privacy while participating on and/or visiting various online activities. They were seeking privacy they could not find at home. When I asked him to clarify, he commented that many individuals enjoy online dating, participating in chatrooms in an attempt to meet other individuals, as well as visiting pornographic websites. These are activities that many individuals would not feel comfortable doing at home. He also confirmed that his clientele would visit his Internet café when they were having computer problems at home, such as problems associated with computer viruses, printer

problems etc. When I asked him how he could be sure of the various activities of his clientele, he mentioned that he himself conducted an informal study of the online activities of his *regular* clientele. Individuals were asked to answer a questionnaire, and employees were requested to keep a time-use / time-spent log of the clientele's visits. When I asked if I could have access to the results of his informal study, he shared his disappointment, informing me that he did not keep written records of his findings. He mentioned that he was planning to conduct another study in the very near future, as the results of the study had offered him some valuable insight into how to better serve his clientele.

Interviews with Three Relatively Unilingual Francophone Youths

During my fieldwork in Montreal, Quebec, I was introduced to three youths that belong to a small group of teenagers, age 12-16, who have a daily routine of chatting on MSN Messenger. I requested interviews with each of the three youths. The interviews discussed the youths' experiences online, i.e. the types of interactivity and activities they experience online, as well as the development of online communities within their chat groups. The interviews also gathered information on the language use and linguistic variations evolving and/or developing within these online communities.

Interviews began with questions relevant to the youths' experiences online. The youths' all confirmed that their main activity was online chatting on MSN Messenger. The youths would log on at approximately the same time everyday, around 9:00pm EST. Depending on the topic of conversation, the online discussions could take place between two interlocutors and up to forty young interlocutors participating in the same discussion at the same time.

I asked the interview participants about online communities; did they feel as if specific online communities were evolving around the members of their online chat groups? The three youths confirmed that the members of the chat groups were usually students attending the same high school; their online community was their high school community. A specific online

community would be similar to the group of friends they spend their time with at school. The youths agreed that the online chat groups were open to anyone willing to participate, however any interlocutor could be *blocked* out of the chat group for various reasons. For example:

> "If someone talks too much we will usually block him or her out" (my translation).

The youths added that the online discussion topics were usually related to their daily activities at school and/or at home.

I asked the youths why they participated in online discussions. All three confirmed that it was fun, and that it added a new social dimension to their life. When I asked them to clarify, they agreed that chatting online was something different. One youth suggested that his online chatting strengthened his friendships with his friends:

> "We know a lot more about each other now. Now, when we're online, we really take the time to talk to each other."

The second youth replied:

> "We confide a lot more with each other. We can tell each other things that we would not necessarily talk about in person, face-to-face. Now when I have something I really need to talk to someone about I can start up an online discussion and not be as nervous to talk about certain things" (my translation).

When I asked him for an example, he mentioned asking a girl out:

> "If I like a girl at school, I would feel really silly asking her out in person, now I can talk to her online and ask her out. Chatting makes it a lot easier" (my translation).

I asked the youths about the telephone. One youth explained:

> "The telephone will always have its place. Certain things are private between certain friends of mine. That is when I would call them on the telephone. For example, I would never break up with a girl online. That would not be right. Sometimes it's just easier to use the phone, like when we're trying to make plans to go out" (my translation).

The three youths I interviewed offered some interesting insight relevant to their online activities, but I was also very curious about the linguistic variations they used online. When I

asked the youths what made online chatting interesting, one youth answered that it was fun trying

to invent new words to use online.

> "I am always looking for new ways to write what I want to say. Someone will introduce a certain way of writing something and then many of us will try to improve on it" (my translation).

When I asked the youths where these new words and/or linguistic variations came from, they said

they did not know. On youth answered:

> "It just happens. It's spontaneous" (my translation).

The second youth replied:

> "I write like I speak, I don't think about the word before I type it, it just happens. It's kind of like French slang, only written down" (my translation).

The third youth responded:

> "I never thought I'd start to write like that, I just do. We write the way we do online because it's faster to write that way. It does not take as long to write down what we want to say. It reads the way it's pronounced" (my translation).

> I also asked the youths a set of questions related to the influences of interactive written

communication on their other forms of writing, i.e. schoolwork. One youth did say that

sometimes he might misspell a word and/or use an online variation of a word in his schoolwork:

> "I might make a mistake, but I can keep the two kinds of writing separate" (my translation).

When I asked him if he was concerned that interactive written communication might influence

and/or compromise his other forms of writing, he replied:

> "No, I know when I'm writing things wrong online, but who's going to correct it" (my translation).

My final question:

> "Does using interactive media, more specifically the Internet, encourage you to learn another language, mainly English?"

The three youths replied:

> "No".

One youth responded:

> "Music with English lyrics is what helps me learn English. If I really like a song, I want to know what the lyrics are saying. I'll look them up on the Internet and figure out what they say" (my translation).

Brief Summary

The interview process with the three youths was insightful. The youths' responses confirmed that their main online activity was chatting and/or Instant Messaging (IM) on MSN Messenger. They also commented that 'it was fun trying to invent new words to use online'.

Based on the youths' responses, alongside relevant literature and the results of my multiple methods, I have chosen to focus my transcript analysis on the language use and linguistic variations found in Instant Messaging (IM).

3.3   Transcript Analysis

Palfreyman and Kahlil (2003), Merchant (2001), and Crystal (2001) all claim that Instant Messaging (IM) has become a popular form of computer-mediated communication in which teenagers are particularly active. Instant Messaging (IM) is a synchronous *instant* written conversation involving two or more interlocutors. It is an online conversation that usually takes the form of interactive writing (Merchant 2001).

Willett and Green (2003), Merchant (2001), and Crystal (2001) suggest that young people and/or youth culture are the *innovators* of interactive written communication and play a key role in the language use and linguistic variations found in interactive media. The creativity of evolving language practices on interactive media is enabling youth culture to explore with language use and linguistic variations. The interactive nature of this new written communication is encouraging them to write in new ways (Merchant, 2001).

3.3.1 Data

I selected Instant Messaging discussion transcripts drawn from MSN Messenger written by a small group of nine Quebecois teenagers, age 12 – 16, living in Montreal, Quebec. The three youths I interviewed belonged to a small group of teenagers who have a daily routine of chatting on MSN Messenger. Following my interviews, I recruited six other youths belonging to the same online chatgroup. Prior to the data collection process, I was granted informed consent by parent and child, allowing access as well as permission to include the IM discussion transcripts written by the youths themselves. Additionally, the parents and youths confirmed that Quebecois French is their native language and that they consider themselves relatively unilingual French speaking interlocutors.

My primary concern with this small group of francophone youths participating in the current study was that they would become self-conscious of my observations of their IM discussions, which in turn could alter and/or affect the language use and linguistic variations they might use during their online interactions. I addressed this methodological concern by applying Holmes's (2000) methodological approach of *participants as data collectors*. I asked the youths participating in the study to collect the data themselves. I requested that the youths begin saving their IM discussions as Word documents. Once the youths had finished their online discussions, I asked the youths to *copy* the text of their discussion and *paste* it into Microsoft Word as a word document. I informed the youths that the Word documents of the discussion text would be referred to as IM discussion transcripts in the current study. After a period of twelve weeks, I collected thirty-five (35) IM discussion transcripts from the youths.

The IM transcripts are not displayed and/or formatted as they would be displayed and/or formatted during an actual online discussion on MSN Messenger, but this does not affect the current study in any way. The IM transcripts have five columns displaying information regarding the interaction. The first column states the date; column two displays the time each message is

posted; the third column is labeled as 'De' (From); the fourth column as 'À' (To); the fifth column is referred to as 'Message'.

The youths participating in the IM discussions use nicknames during their interactions online. As I have assured the parents and the youths participating in the study of their privacy and anonymity, I will not display the actual nicknames. However, I can describe the nicknames as being very creative. Many of the nicknames are short phrases, combining letters, numbers, and various symbols from a computer keyboard. An interesting observation in reference to the actual nicknames; although the IM discussions were all conducted in French, eight of the nine youths have written and/or phrased their nicknames in English.

The thirty-five IM discussions vary in the length of time and/or actual duration of each discussion, ranging from under one minute (00 mins: 23 seconds) to almost one hour (54 mins: 14 seconds). During the interview process, one youth had mentioned that he has participated in online discussions with only himself and another interlocutor, but there have been times when online discussions have involved up to forty participants at one time. However, in the thirty-five IM discussion transcripts, every discussion is between two interlocutors. An interlocutor may be chatting with various participants during a chat session, but he may bounce back and forth between one online interlocutor to another.

Empirical Observation

I began my empirical observation of the data by calculating the total number of message postings within the thirty-five discussion transcripts. There are a combined total number of six hundred and seventeen (617) message postings. The *frequency - mean* and *standard deviation* were calculated based on 617 message postings, divided by n = 35, the number of IM discussion transcripts.

Frequency - Mean = 617 / 35 = $\bar{x}$ = 17.63 message postings per discussion
Standard Deviation = s = 17.93

The results of the *frequency - mean* and *standard deviation* based on the number of message

postings per online discussion suggest that there is an average of 17.63 message postings per

online discussion.

The *frequency - mean* and *standard deviation* were also calculated based on the total

number of words, 1,918, divided by n = 617, the total number of message postings within the

thirty-five IM discussion transcripts.

$$Frequency - Mean = 1918 / 617 = \overline{x} = 3.11 \text{ words per message posting}$$
$$Standard\ Deviation = s = 18.12$$

The results of the *frequency - mean* and *standard deviation* based on the total number of the

words per message posting suggest that there is an average of 3.11 words per message posting.

3.3.2 Linguistic Features

The categories of linguistic features used to identify language use and linguistic

variations within the IM discussion transcripts were based on five distinctive features of language

variety described in Crystal (2001). The five categories include *graphic, orthographic* (or

graphological), *grammatical, lexical* and *discourse* features. Crystal (2001) identifies two other

categories I believe may be relevant to the current study. They are *phonetic* features, and

phonological features. Crystal defines the seven categories of linguistic features as follows

(Crystal, 2001, p. 7 - 9):

- *Graphic features:* the general presentation and organisation of the written language. Examples include distinctive typography, page design, spacing, and use of illustrations and colour.

- *Orthographic features:* the writing system of an individual language. These features will include the use of a distinctive alphabet, capital letters, spelling, punctuation, and ways of expressing emphasis using bold and/or italic font.

- *Grammatical features:* the many possibilities of syntax and morphology, defined in terms of such factors as the distinctive use of sentence structure, word order, and word inflections.

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- *Lexical features*: the vocabulary of a language, defined in terms of the set of words and idioms given distinctive use within a variety.

- *Discourse features:* refers to the structural organisation of a text, in terms of coherence, relevance, paragraph structure and the logical progression of ideas.

- *Phonetic features*: the general auditory characteristics of spoken language, defined in terms of such factors as the distinctive use of voice quality, vocal register, and voice modality (i.e. speaking, singing, chanting).

- *Phonological features:* the sound system of an individual language, defined in terms of such factors as the distinctive use of vowels, consonants, intonation, stress, and pause.

Based on the seven categories of linguistic features defined by Crystal (2001), a review of the relevant literature, and the results of the exploratory pilot study, I have selected twenty-three (23) sub-categories of linguistic features that could be selected as a set of variables and/or factors suitable for future study of French language use and linguistic variations identified within interactive written communication. I will refer to these sub-categories of linguistic features in my analysis of the language use and linguistic variations found in the IM discussion transcripts used in the current study.

Table 3.2.   Sub-Categories of Linguistic Features
References include Merchant (2001), Crystal (2001), Werry (1996).

Linguistic Features
- **Graphic Features**
Use of abbreviations / acronyms / rebuses
Use of emoticons / computer keyboard symbols
Use of literary quotes

Linguistic Features
- **Orthographic Features**

Creative spelling
Missing accents
Missing capital letters
Phonetic spelling
Slang / informal language use
Spelling
Use of bold and/or italic font for emphasis
Use of capital letters for emphasis
Use of punctuation / non-standard punctuation

- **Grammatical Features**

Agreement
Incorrect grammar
Missing article
Syntactically reduced forms
Use of contractions
Use of informal pronouns
Use of adjectives and adverbs

- **Lexical Features**

Anglicism

- **Discourse Features**

Run-on sentences
Salutations / greetings
Sentence fragments / brevity

The *phonetic* and *phonological* categories are not applicable / pertinent at this stage of the research process, as they are associated with spoken language.

Features of language use and linguistic variations identified within the thirty-five IM

discussion transcripts were analysed and categorised within the selected sub-categories of

linguistic features.

Graphic Features

Graphic features refer to the general presentation and organisation of the written

language. Examples include distinctive typography, page design, spacing, and use of illustrations

and colour (Crystal, 2001, p. 7 - 9).

Use of abbreviations / acronyms / rebuses

Acronyms are words that are made up and/or created with the initial letters from another word, for example URL [*uniform resource locator*]. *Rebuses* are another form of abbreviations, whereby the sound value of the letter and/or number acts as a syllable of a word. There are some uses of acronyms / rebuses found within the IM discussion transcripts.

Examples:
- 2d = today
- dn9 = *de neuf* (what's new?)

Use of emoticons /computer keyboard symbols

Emoticons / symbols are visual cues made up of computer keyboard characters used to display emotion. Facial expressions, gestures, and conventions of body posture and distance, the kinesics and proxemics of spoken language are essential in physically articulating opinions and attitudes, and visually displaying the overall tone of everyday conversations and of moderating social relationships (Crystal, 2001). Within the 617 message postings in the IM discussion transcripts, only three uses of emoticons / symbols were found.

Examples:
- :-o = represents shock, amazement
- : (= represents sadness
- :D:D:D = represents laughing

Use of literary quotes

The use of literary quotes would refer to a catch phrase and/or saying an interlocutor could post within a message. There are no literary quotes found within the IM discussion transcripts. However, there are two incidences within the data in which interlocutors post the following message.

"Today was the day when the twin towers fell. Lots of people died 3 years ago today. Put □ 9/11 □ in your name if you care. Pass this on to 7 people and you will have good luck."

Orthographic Features

Orthographic features represent the writing system of an individual language. These features will include the use of a distinctive alphabet, capital letters, spelling, punctuation, and ways of expressing emphasis using bold and/or italic font (Crystal, 2001, p. 7 - 9).

Creative spelling

New spelling conventions, non-standard spelling and/or deviant spelling have emerged in many interactive media / Internet-using situations. Some examples of deviant spelling have been referred to as *leeguage*. Ihnatko (1997) defines the term:

> 'Originally named in honour of Pamela Anderson Lee's bosom, which, like this language, is completely unnatural, constructed with tortuous effort, and conforms to some vaguely perceived standard no one comprehends' (Ihnatko, 1997, as cited in Crystal, 2001, p.).

There are numerous examples of creative spelling, new spelling conventions, non-standard spelling and/or deviant spelling found within the IM discussion transcripts.

Examples:

- chfal = *cheval* (horse)
- ds = *dans* (in)
- fo = *il faut* (have too)
- ossi = *aussi* (also)
- p-t = *peut- être* (maybe)
- tite = *petite* (small)
- tjrs = *toujours* (always)
- tk = *en tout cas* (anyways)
- toa = *toi* (you)

- jusse = *juste* (just)
- mm = *même* (same)
- pasqu = *parce que* (because)
- a cose = *à cause* (because)
- danl fon = *dans le fond* (really)
- si jpx = *si je peux* (if I can)

Missing accents

It is essential in French grammar to put accents in their proper place. An incorrect or missing accent would be considered a spelling mistake. Because of the nature of the language use and linguistic variations found within the IM discussion transcripts, analytical study of missing accents would be very difficult and possibly irrelevant. It is important to note however that accents are used within the IM discussion transcripts. Accents are used to represent and/or emphasize a certain pronunciation Accents are being used as a phonetic symbol rather than being used in their proper orthographic and/or grammatical form.

Examples:
- léqel – represents the pronunciation for *lesquels / lesquelles*
- ché – represents the pronunciation for *je sais*
- stè – represents the pronunciation for *c'était*

Missing capital letters

The use of lower-case letters would suggest that the use of capital letters is a *strong marked form of communication* found within interactive writing. In general, the Internet is not case-sensitive; interlocutors have the tendency to use lower-case letters, referred to as the *save a keystroke* principal (Crystal, 2001). The interlocutors participating in the IM discussion transcripts relevant to the current study do not use capital letters. When capital letters are used, it will suggest a *strong marked form of communication.*

Phonetic spelling

Synchronous chatrooms, such as Web Chat and Instant Messaging, and virtual worlds introduce a large number of non-standard spellings that reflect pronunciation.

Examples:

- c = *c'est* (its)
- g = *j'ai* (I have)
- t = *tu es* (you are)
- ke = *que* (that)
- kel = *quel / quelle* (which)
- koi / qoi = *quoi* (what)
- pi = *puis* (and)
- pkk = *pourquoi* (why)
- ché po pk jdi sa = *Je ne sais pas pourquoi j'ai dit ça.*
  (I don't know why I said that.)
- fodrait qej change la frase = *Il faudrait que je change la phrase.*
  (I should change the sentence.)
- k c bo = *Ok, c'est beau.* (Ok, that's fine.)
- ouais jel c = *Oui, je le sais.* (Yes, I know.)
- qes qia = *Qu'est ce qu'il y a?* (What is it?)
- stè qoi = *C'était quoi?* (What was it?)

Vowels and consonants are also used to visually imitate emotional expressions.

Examples:

- bahhhhhhh…oui = represents hesitation before answering 'Yes'
- bofff…rien toi (Oh, nothing, you?)
- euuuuu = represents dislike
- lol / lolll = represents laugh out loud

Slang / informal language use

Slang refers to an *informal* variety of language that is not used in formal speech and/or writing. It may be restricted and/or representative of a particular social group. There are several forms of slang, one could identify as spoken slang heard in French, identified within the IM discussion transcripts.

Examples:

- hey yo tu c tu sta ki ste num de tel = *Hey yo, tu sais tu c'est à qui ce numéro de téléphone?* (Hey, do you know whose phone number this is?)
- jecoute de lamuzzz = *J'écoute de la musique.* (I am listening to music)
- pi koi de new = *Puis, quoi de neuf?* (So, what's new?)
- qoi ta fa dbon 2d? = *Qu'est ce que tu as fait de bon today?* (What did you do today?)
- ta tu une pic? (Do you have a picture?)
- tu vx tu la pic dla fille? = *Tu veux tu la photo de la fille?* (Do you want the girl's picture?)
- stu lfun? = *C'était tu le fun?* (Was it fun?)

Spelling mistakes

Crystal (2001) claims that spelling mistakes found within interactive written communication and/or certain Internet-using situations do not indicate a lack of education, but purely a function of typing inaccuracy. Because of the nature of the language use and linguistic variations found within the IM discussion transcripts, analytical study of spelling mistakes might be very difficult and possibly irrelevant. Future study of language use and linguistic variations found within interactive written communication should involve the detailed analysis of new spelling conventions, non-standard spelling and/or deviant spelling found on interactive media; *what* words are misspelled, *why* words are misspelled and *how* they may be misspelled.

Use of bold and/or italic font for emphasis

The use of bold or italic font would be used in interactive written communication to emphasize a key idea, name or word, etc. Some interlocutors participating on the IM discussions have used bold, italic, and/or different coloured font as an individual stylistic form. There is no evidence within the data that bold and/or italic font is used for emphasis.

Use of capital letters for emphasis

The use of capital letters adds extra emphasis in an effort to highlight an essential idea, name or word, etc. Message postings written only with capital letters are usually considered as *a strong marked form of communication*, such as shouting. There are very few instances of capital letters used as a form of emphasis found within the IM discussion transcripts.

Use of punctuation / non-standard punctuation

Emphasis and expressions of emotion can be visually imitated using punctuation. Unusual combinations of punctuation marks occur, such as ellipsis dots (…) to express a pause, repeated hyphens (---), or the repeated uses of commas (,,,).There are various uses of punctuation identified within the IM discussion transcripts. It is important to note however that the interlocutors participating in the IM discussions relevant to the current study do not use *periods* at the end of a sentence. They will use *commas* and *question marks* in certain interactions.

       Examples:
- mais lui non plus, la connait pas = *Mais, lui non plus, ne la connaît pas.* (But, he doesn't know her either.)
- wais je lai, mais jle donne pas = *Oui, je l'ai, mais je ne le donne pas.* (Yes I have it, but I am not giving it out?)

Grammatical Features

Grammatical features represent the many possibilities of syntax and morphology, defined in terms of such factors as the distinctive use of sentence structure, word order, and word

inflections (Crystal, 2001, p. 7 - 9). Comprehensive linguistic analysis of the specific uses and/or grammatical structures associated with interactive written communication is beyond the scope of the current study. Future study of language use and linguistic variations associated with interactive written communication should include the detailed analytical study of the specific and/or distinctive uses of linguistic features. Studies could include the analysis of linguistic features such as grammatical agreements and/or errors, the use of articles, contractions, adjectives, adverbs and/or informal pronouns, to name a few.

Syntactically reduced forms

Syntax refers to the grammatical rules of a language, and in the way words are arranged to form sentences and phrases. There are several examples of syntactically reduced forms identified within the IM discussion transcripts.

Examples:

- défois jla croise danl corridor = *Des fois je la croise dans le corridor.* (Sometimes I pass her in the hall.)
- men rappel pu = *Je ne m'en rappelle plus.* (I don't remember.)
- on ni va dbonneur = *On y va de bonheur.* (We are going early.)
- sa louvre a 10h = *Ca l'ouvre à 10h.* (It opens at 10:00.)
- tu rvien tu dlécole? = *Tu reviens tu de l'école?* (Are you coming back from school?)
- tu vx tu jcontinu? = *Tu veux tu que je continue?* (Would you like me to continue?)
- ya qequn ki ma donné ste num la pi je c mm po sta ki = *Il y a quelqu'un qui m'a donné ce numéro la et je sais même pas c'est à qui.* (Someone gave me this number and I don't even know who it is.)

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Lexical Features

Lexical features represent the vocabulary of a language, defined in terms of the set of words and idioms given distinctive use within a variety of language (Crystal, 2001, p. 7 - 9).

Anglicisms

Anglicisms are words, expressions, and/or phrases that are borrowed from the English language. The interlocutors participating in the IM discussions introduce and/or use certain English words and/or phrases in some instances.

Examples:

- hey samedi prochain ta tu something? = *Hey, samedi prochain, est-ce que tu as quelque chose?* (Hey, next Saturday, do you have something to do?)
- pi koi de new = *Puis, quoi de new?* (So, what's new)

Discourse Features

Discourse features refer to the structural organisation of a text, in terms of coherence, relevance, paragraph structure and the logical progression of ideas (Crystal, 2001, p. 7 - 9).

Run-on sentences

The interlocutors participating in the IM discussions do not use *periods* at the end of a sentence. They will use *commas* and *question marks* in certain interactions. Because interlocutors do not use periods at the end of sentences, there are some instances of run-on sentences found within the IM discussion transcripts.

Examples:

- k bah chu po aller souvent a ronde pi kan jy allais ctais ac lecole fac yavait jamais full monde mais ca louvre a kel hr ca = *Ok, mais je ne suis pas allé souvent à la ronde, et puis quand j'y allais c'était avec l'école, ça fait qu'il y avait pas beaucoup de monde. Mais a quelle heure est-ce que ça ouvre ça?* (Ok, but when I went to *la ronde*

(amusement park) it was always on a field trip with my school. There were never many people. At what time does it open?)

Salutations / greetings

Salutations refer to a greeting by words and/or actions. There are several examples of salutations and end of discussion formalities / practices (i.e. goodbyes / au revoir) identified in the IM discussion transcripts.

Examples:
- Allo
- Salut
- Sup
- Wsup

Au revoir:
- A prochaine
- A dmin
- Bye
- Chw
- Ciao
- Ciao jme choop
- Ciao jme flex
- Chow
- Peace

Sentence fragments / brevity

The *frequency - mean* and *standard deviation* were calculated based on the total number of words, 1,918, divided by n = 617, the total number of message postings within the thirty-five IM discussion transcripts.

Frequency - Mean = 1918 / 617 = $\bar{x}$ = 3.11

Standard Deviation = s = 18.12

Transcript analysis and empirical observation, measuring an average of x = 3.11 words per message posting, suggest that sentence structure within the IM discussion transcripts is short and/or fragmented.

Brief Summary

Transcript analysis has explored language use and linguistic variations associated with interactive written communication, in this case IM discussion transcripts drawn from MSN Messenger. Based on a multiple-methods research approach, the current study has identified the interlocutors participating in the IM discussions as native speakers of the language they are using online. Identifying the interlocutors may suggest that the language use and linguistic variations identified within the IM discussion transcripts may be characteristic of the linguistic behaviors of relatively unilingual French native speaking interlocutors, in this case, youths, age 12-16, associated with interactive written communication.

Chapter 4:   Discussion

4.1   Exploratory Research

Relevant literature suggests that the future study of language should now include the investigation of language use in various settings, as well as the role of language in the construction of social relationships (Angus, 2000). Language is said to be reflective of the social nature and cultural identities of its interlocutors. Exploring the social nature and cultural functions of language could offer important insight into the variances and influences of language use and linguistic variations found in interactive media.

4.1.1   Exploratory Pilot Study

The current study included an exploratory pilot study examining language use and linguistic variations found in a corpus-based comparison of English text and French text drawn from similar Internet-using situations. The exploratory pilot study was a valuable exercise as it helped me fine-tune some of my key ideas regarding my research topic, as well as strengthening my appreciation in research design, methods, and techniques.

Although the exploratory pilot study enabled me to develop my analytical skills, I was uncomfortable with the results. The pilot study corpus suggests that there may be important socio-cultural variances, influences, and/or differences in the nature and/or characteristics of online behaviour and online activity between the English subset and the French subset. However, as I was unable to identify the interlocutors and/or verify their native language, I am not able to determine if the socio-cultural variances and the linguistic behaviours identified within the pilot study corpus are reflective of the intuitive linguistic behaviours and/or linguistic characteristics of

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English (Anglophone) and French (Francophone) native speakers. In-depth socio-linguistic and/or cultural analysis of the pilot study corpus could be problematic, raising methodological concerns. Identifying the native language of interlocutors associated with interactive written communication may offer better results in future study. It is important to remember that, if we want to understand the use of language found within interactive written communication, it would be useful to identify *who* is using the language, *how* the language is being used, and *why* there may be language change and linguistic variations.

Although there were methodological issues related to the pilot study corpus, I did however examine the language use and linguistic variations identified within the two subsets of data. Exploratory linguistic analysis of the pilot study corpus proposed a set of linguistic features that may be a useful guide in selecting a set of variables and/or factors relevant to the current study. I consider the linguistic features identified in the pilot study exploratory, and as only an introduction to possible linguistic features and/or linguistic variations associated with interactive written communication. However, they are consistent with linguistic features identified and discussed in previous studies. References include Merchant (2001), Crystal (2001), and Werry (1996).

4.2   Descriptive Research

The exploratory pilot study has enabled me to gather valuable insight relevant to the future study of language use and linguistic variations found in interactive media. Based on my observations, I was now able to plan a descriptive study that would ask specific questions relevant to the current study. Who is introducing linguistic variations? What is influencing language use and linguistic variations in interactive media? Where do we find them? How do we find them? How do we ask them?

4.2.1 Observational Study

The current study involved observational study in five randomly selected Internet cafés and/or shops located within the Plateau Mont-Royal district in Montreal, Quebec. My central aim was to gain background information on the socio-cultural and linguistic behaviours of relatively unilingual French speaking interlocutors. I quickly became aware of a number of methodological issues associated with my observations. I was surprised, and annoyed at myself, for not recognising that many of the people visiting these locations would not necessarily be unilingual French interlocutors. For example, many of the employees of the cafés and/or shops were bilingual, speaking both French and English. A significant amount of their interactions with the clientele were done in English.

Observational study offered useful information regarding the social settings and the social interactions of Internet cafés and/or shops located in a small district of Montreal, Quebec. However, what I had hoped to accomplish was to observe the specific uses and/or online activities of relatively unilingual French speaking interlocutors associated with interactive media. More specifically, who was doing what, when, where, why and how? My preliminary observations suggested that perhaps a survey questionnaire would be a better methodological approach.

4.2.2 Survey Questionnaires

I developed the current study with a primary focus on research design / techniques relevant to the future study of interactive written communication, how interactive written communication is being used, what linguistic features can be identified, and why interlocutors may be introducing linguistic varieties and/or linguistic change.

I designed a survey questionnaire inquiring into the specific uses and/or online activities of French speaking interlocutors associated with interactive media. During my first visit to Montreal, I recruited family members and friends to randomly distribute survey questionnaires to

their relatively unilingual French-speaking friends and colleagues associated with interactive media and interactive written communication. Based on the results, I was better able to choose an appropriate online setting relevant to the current study.

The results of the survey questionnaire suggest that the main online activities of the questionnaire respondents are e-mail, synchronous chatrooms, and interactive forums. Crystal (2001) claims that the language use and linguistic variations identified in e-mail, synchronous chatrooms, and asynchronous interactive forums should all have similar linguistic characteristics. However, e-mail and interactive forums could introduce certain methodological concerns. E-mail and interactive forums are forms of asynchronous communication; interlocutors can communicate at different times, sending, reading, and replying to messages at their own convenience. Because of the time-delay, the interactions and/or messages posted by the interlocutors may be more like written communication, affecting the spontaneity and intuitiveness of the language use and linguistic variations found within these online settings. Additionally, e-mail is considered restricted and private. Gaining access to e-mail messages could be a challenge and could raise ethical issues.

Chat groups, such as Web Chat and Instant Messaging are synchronous interactions; the interlocutors are communicating in real time, they are present in the same time and space. These interactions are more like spoken communication. There is no time delay. The speech-like qualities of these interactions are said to cause the most innovative linguistic variations found in synchronous communication. Chatting is the nearest we are likely to get to see writing in its spontaneous, unedited, naked state (Crystal, 2001, p. 170). Based on relevant literature and the results of the survey questionnaire, chatrooms may be the more appropriate online setting illustrating the language use and linguistic variations associated with interactive written communication.

The distribution of survey questionnaires was an extremely valuable and resourceful research method / technique. I believe that the current study should have included the distribution

of a second survey questionnaire related to the detailed linguistic analysis of interactive written communication. Due to time constraints and location, I was unable to distribute a second survey questionnaire.

4.3 Explanatory Research

4.3.1 Interviews

The interview process was a defining moment for me as I approached the final stage of my fieldwork. It was during this phase of my research process that I began to recognize key factors and/or variables relevant to my research topic. Based on relevant literature and the results of a multiple methods research approach, I was now beginning to identify specific questions relevant to the *e*-volutionary patterns of language use and linguistic variations associated with interactive written communication. Key questions arise. What is influencing the evolutionary patterns of language use and linguistic variations found on interactive media? Who is introducing linguistic variations? Why are they influencing linguistic change?

My preliminary interviews with the owners and/or managers of the Internet cafés and/or shops were not as relevant to the current study as I had initially thought. Following the distribution of the survey questionnaires, I was hoping to gain further insight into the online activities and to the linguistic behaviours of unilingual French speaking interlocutors. The owners and/or managers were not able to provide me with the in-depth information I was looking for. I did however gain valuable insight into some of the online activities of an Internet café's regular clientele, based on an informal study conducted by one of the owners.

I restructured my interview research process and began seeking interlocutors associated with interactive media, as well as being familiar with the creative processes of interactive written communication. Relevant literature suggests that the speech-like qualities of Chat groups, such as Web Chat and Instant Messaging, cause the most innovative linguistic variations found in

synchronous communication. Additionally, relevant literature suggests that young people are the innovators of interactive written communication and play a key role in the language use and linguistic variations found in interactive media. I requested interviews with three Quebecois youths associated with interactive media. I was introduced to the youths during my fieldwork in Montreal, Quebec. The youths belong to a small group of French interlocutors who have a daily routine of chatting on MSN Messenger.

Interviews with Three Relatively Unilingual Francophone Youths

Interviews were conducted with three relatively unilingual French speaking youths associated with interactive written communication. The interviews discussed the youths' experiences online, i.e. the types of interactivity and activities they experience online, as well as the development of online communities within the group. The interviews also gathered information on the language use and linguistic variations developing within these online communities.

I was very intrigued by the youths' responses. It was also at this stage of my research process that the association between the theoretical framework I developed for the current study and the results of my research data became more evident. For example, comparative media theory explores a medium of communication as being a constructive force in the perception, institution, and thought of social formations and/or social relations and their transformations. A medium of communication (re) organizes human experience within newly defined perceptual, institutional and cognitive aspects. The (re) organization of perception, institution and thought of transformed social formations are (re) structured within the dimensions of time and space, such that a specific cultural form is given to the life world of a social group.

During the interviews, the youths responded that their online chat groups were usually the same group of friends they spent their time with at school. The (re) organization and/or transformation of their social groups were such that Instant Messaging on MSN Messenger (i.e. a

medium of communication) *strengthened* their friendships with their friends while offline. As one

youth stated, "We know a lot more about each other. Now when we're online, we really take the

time to talk to each other". Another youth replied, "We confide a lot more with each other now

[…]".

Another interesting theoretical approach relevant to the current study is based on Harold

A. Innis's work in which he claimed that to understand the influence of technology on society and

its social organization, it is important to define how specific social relations / social organisations

institutionalise a medium of communication. The youths suggested that IM was another form of

communication similar to the telephone. They mentioned that the telephone will always have its

place, but there were certain situations and/or topics of discussion that were easier to discuss

online.

Comparative media theory described a communication act performed within a

communication medium as being expressed through a cultural form defined by the social

identities that compose it. The youths claimed that interactive written communication (i.e. a

cultural form and/or artifact) was fun and they enjoyed the creative process of making up new

words and/or linguistic codes. The linguistic variations evolving online seemed intuitive. They

were not really sure how or where these words came from, however they claimed that it was a

spontaneous process, it just happens.

Crystal (2000) states that once interlocutors are members of a specific user-group, new

and creative linguistic forms and communicative practices develop reflecting the social and

cultural identity of the group. I share my disappointment in acknowledging that the current study

should have considered this further. Although transcript analysis did indeed identify creative

linguistic forms within the IM discussion transcripts, I cannot conclude whether or not these

linguistic forms vary between different groups of interlocutors. Future study could involve a

comparative research approach focusing on age, gender, language register, discussion topic,

and/or online setting. A comparative research approach could offer valuable insight into the

socio-cultural influences and/or differences into the varying linguistic characteristics and/or linguistic practices between various groups of interlocutors.

The three interviews addressed many of my preliminary inquiries. However they have also initiated a new set of research questions that are beyond the scope of the current study. In his study, Yates (1993) questioned to what extent interlocutors in specific social and cultural settings would develop and enhance their communications skills through the use of computer-mediated communication. An interesting approach to future research could be in-depth linguistic analysis into the various processes of creating new words and/or linguistic codes associated with interactive written communication. Key questions could include; where do these new words come from? How intuitive are they? What literacy skills are involved? What are the grammatical and/or linguistic structures to interactive written communication? With these key questions in mind, I began my transcript analysis of the IM discussion transcripts I collected from the youths.

4.3.2   Transcript Analysis

Transcript analysis of the IM discussion transcripts was by far the most exciting part of my research process. A primary goal of the current study was to address some of the methodological concerns raised in previous studies, in an effort to collect illustrative data that would be reflective of the intuitive linguistic behaviors of relatively unilingual French speaking interlocutors associated with interactive written communication. I believe that my multiple-methods research approach has enabled me to accomplish this task.

Previous studies suggest that the use of data gathered from interactive written communication raise methodological concerns, such as privacy and access, the uncertainty of the identity of the interlocutors, and the issues of observers' paradox. Of the three, I believe my most significant concern was the issue of observers' paradox. In socio-linguistic research, observers' paradox refers to the problems of how one can observe the way people speak and/or use language when they are not being observed. I selected Instant Messaging discussion written by a small

group of nine Quebecois teenagers. My primary concern was that the youths participating on

MSN Messenger would become self-conscious of my observations, which in turn could alter their

IM discussions and affect the language use and linguistic variations they might use during their

online interactions. I addressed this methodological concern by applying Holmes's (2000)

methodological approach of *participants as data collectors*. The youths participating in the study

collected the data themselves.

The methodological approach of *participants as data collectors* was significant in

achieving my goals relevant to the current study. Throughout the data collection process

associated with the transcript analysis phase of my research, the youths were offered maximum

control in collecting the data. I assured the youths that the focus of the current study was not on

what was actually being said during the discussion topics, but on how the language is being used

and what linguistic variations could be identified. However, the youths were free to edit and

delete discussion material as they wished. After a period of twelve weeks, I asked the youths to

randomly select IM transcripts of archived discussions they would feel comfortable volunteering

for the current study. As claimed by Holmes (2000), I believe that *handing over control* of the

data collection process contributed to a successful research relationship between the youths and

me. Additionally, in return for my assurance of confidentiality and anonymity, the youths

provided me with numerous examples of language use and linguistic variations associated with

interactive written communication.

Linguistic Features

Based on the seven categories of linguistic features defined by Crystal (2001), a review

of the relevant literature, and the results of my exploratory pilot study, I selected twenty-three

(23) sub-categories of linguistic features relevant to the current study. I referred to these sub-

categories of linguistic features in my transcript analysis of the language use and linguistic

variations identified within the IM discussion transcripts provided by the youths.

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Transcript analysis offers preliminary insight into the language use and linguistic variations found within the IM discussion transcripts. However, a detailed examination of the specific and/or distinctive uses of the linguistic features identified is beyond the scope of the current study.

McLuhan's notion that language in itself is a technology could offer an interesting perspective to future research. Acknowledging the various technical aspects of language, based on Crystal's (2001) seven distinctive categories of linguistic features, could offer detailed analytical insight into the complex ways in which language practices and linguistic variations have been influenced by interactive media. It would be useful in future study to apply both qualitative and quantitative research approaches relevant to the linguistic and/or socio-linguistic analysis of the various linguistic features identified. Richard (2002) argues that qualitative versus quantitative research is a "false dichotomy".

> These two perspectives are complementary; they are two sides of the coin. Each one by itself is incomplete and can only give part of the picture. The prudent researcher will combine these two perspectives and produce better results (Richards, 2002, p. 13).

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The current study had three goals. The first goal was to explore the complex ways in which language practices and linguistic variations have been influenced by online interactive media. However, the use of interactive media data raises methodological concerns. I developed the current study with a primary focus on research methods and/or techniques in an effort to address some of the methodological concerns raised in previous studies. Multiple-methods, including a review of relevant literature, an exploratory pilot study, observational study, survey questionnaires, interviews, and transcript analysis have examined different types of data within varying technological, social and linguistic perspectives. Examining different types of data and exploring how these various perspectives intersect was useful in an effort to establish which dataset could be most effective in future research.

Multiple-methods have enabled me to collect illustrative data of interactive written communication found in interactive media. Descriptive transcript analysis has offered introductory insight into the language use and linguistic variations used by a small group of Quebecois teenagers. I believe that the linguistic behaviors illustrated within the data may be reflective of the intuitive linguistic behaviors of its interlocutors. As language is said to be reflective of the social nature and cultural identities of its interlocutors, exploring the social nature and cultural functions of language could offer important insight into the socio-cultural variances and influences of language use and linguistic variations found in interactive media.

The second goal of the current study was to develop a theoretical framework within a Canadian perspective, through the works of Ian Angus in the Department of Humanities at Simon Fraser University, and communication scholars Harold A. Innis, and H. Marshall McLuhan.

A conceptual framework was developed surrounding the key concepts of language, technology and society. Based on Angus's notion of comparative media theory, language was viewed not simply as representational of its interlocutors, but as constitutive in the construction of social relations and cultural identities associated with interactive media and interactive written communication. The current study viewed the key concept of technology not only as an electronic medium but also as a linguistic form, based on McLuhan's notion that language in itself is a technology. The key concept of society was viewed as society as whole, as well as to the social relations and cultural identities found in interactive media.

A final goal of the current study was to identify a set of linguistic features that could be selected as possible variables and/or factors suitable for future study of interactive written communication. As mentioned earlier, detailed analytical study of the linguistic features identified within the IM discussion transcripts was beyond the scope of the current study. However, I believe that the linguistic features identified within the IM transcripts have offered valuable insight for future study. Although I view the linguistic features identified within the current study as exploratory and as only an introduction for future study, they are consistent with linguistic features identified in previous studies.

The current study has explored the relationship between language, technology, and society. With a primary focus on research methods and/or techniques, a multiple-methods approach has been useful in developing a 'toolbox' of concepts and methods relevant to the future study of the *e*-volutionary patterns of language use and linguistic variations found in interactive media. Exploring different kinds of data, has offered valuable insight into which dataset could be most effective in future research. Silverman (2000) suggests that sometimes it is a better approach to treat the analysis of different kinds of data as a 'dry run' for a main study. As a future researcher, I look forward to the challenge.

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Appendices

Appendix A - Letter of Introduction to Participants (English)

Hélène H. Leone
M.A Candidate
School of Communication
Simon Fraser University
Burnaby, British Columbia
(604) 313-4907

My name is Hélène H. Leone, and I am a graduate student in the School of Communication at Simon Fraser University. I am completing a Master's degree under the supervision of Prof. Richard Smith, Associate Professor in the School of Communication at Simon Fraser University. My research investigates the e-volutionary patterns of language use and changes in language found on interactive media. The purpose of the research is to explore the complex ways in which linguistic variations and language practices have been influenced by the electronic media and new technologies.

This research will examine the linguistic behaviours of unilingual francophone youths and their everyday experiences of using interactive media. Similar research, to date, has been conducted from an adult-centered perspective. However, today, our youth culture appears to be playing a key role in the linguistic innovations associated with new technologies. This is an area that warrants further investigation as we enable our youth culture to share their knowledge of the new language practices, linguistic innovations and social identities evolving on interactive media and new technologies. As relevant literature illustrates, the social practices and linguistic variations that characterize young people's online interactions are of keen interest to the academic community, the media, educators, and media literacy experts.

Research questions that this study will investigate include, Is the Internet having a formative influence on language use and changes in language found on the Internet? If yes, how so? What are the e-volutionary patterns of language use and changes in language found on the Internet? What are the linguistic changes and/or language variations? What is influencing the e-volutionary patterns of language use and changes in language found on the Internet? Who is influencing linguistic change? Why?

I am seeking unilingual francophone youths to participate in this study. The participation of your child will consist of answering a survey questionnaire. Additionally, I ask permission of both parent and child of having access to archive texts of msn.com chat transcripts that your child participated on since August 2004.

The contents of this research will be used only for the purposes of academic research, including sharing with colleagues at academic conferences and in academic publications. The anonymity of parent and child will be respected. Real names will not be used in the research dissemination nor will any personal details be revealed that could compromise your identity.

You have my assurance that the information you and your child will share will remain strictly confidential. Anonymity will be assured through the use of pseudonyms in research analysis and in publications and academic presentations of this research. Data collected will be kept in a secure manner. Contents will be kept for a period of 5 – 10 years after publications and will only be available to the researcher and her supervising committee.

Any information about your rights and the rights of your child as a research participant may be addressed to Barb Ralph, Barb Ralph, Ethics Officer Office of Research Ethics, 8888 University Drive, Strand Hall 2105, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC V5A 1S6 Canada Phone: 604-291-3447 Fax: 604-268-6785 e-mail: bralph@sfu.ca

If you have any questions about the conduct of the research project, you may contact me at the School of Communication, 8888 University Drive Simon Fraser University Burnaby, BC V5A 1S6 Canada Phone: 604-291-3687 cell: 604 313-4907 e-mail: hleone@sfu.ca

Sincerely,

Hélène H. Leone

Appendix B - Letter of Introduction to Participants (French)

Hélène H. Leone
Département de Communication
Université Simon Fraser
Burnaby, Colombie-Britannique
(604) 313-4907
courriel : hleone@sfu.ca

Mon nom est Hélène H. Leone et je suis une étudiante au Département de Communication à l'Université Simon Fraser. Ma recherche examine les modèles *évolutionnaires* d'utilisation et les changements du français québécois trouvé sur des médias interactifs. L'objet de ma recherche est d'explorer les voies complexes dans lesquelles les variations linguistiques et les pratiques de langue ont été l'influencé par les médias électroniques et les nouvelles technologies.

Cette recherche examinera les comportements linguistiques des jeunes unilingues francophones et sur leurs expériences quotidiennes relatives à l'usage des médias interactifs. Aujourd'hui, notre culture de jeunesse semble jouer un rôle clef dans les innovations linguistiques associées à l'usage des médias interactifs. Nous permettons à notre culture de jeunesse de partager leur connaissance des nouvelles pratiques de langue, des innovations linguistiques et des identités sociales qui se développent sur les médias interactifs et les nouvelles technologies.

Les questions de recherche de cette étude incluent, a-t-il une influence formatrice sur l'utilisation de langue et de changement de la langue trouvée sur les media interactifs ? Si oui, comment ainsi ? Quels sont les modèles évolutionnaires d'utilisation de langue et des changements de la langue trouvée sur les médias interactifs? Quels sont les changements linguistiques et-ou des variations de langue ? Qu'est-ce qui influence les modèles évolutionnaires d'utilisation de langue et les changements de la langue trouvée sur les médias interactifs ? Qui influence le changement linguistique ? Pourquoi ?

Je cherche des jeunes gens unilingues francophones pour participer à cette étude. La participation de votre fils / votre fille consistera en répondre à un questionnaire d'enquête. En addition, je demande à la permission de parent et d'enfant d'avoir l'accès pour archiver les textes de bavardage de msn.com que votre enfant a participé depuis le mois août 2004.

Le contenu de cette recherche sera employé seulement pour les buts de recherche universitaire, incluant la division avec des collègues aux conférences universitaires et dans des publications universitaires. L'anonymat de parent et d'enfant sera respecté. Des noms réels ne seront pas employés dans la dissémination de recherche, les détails personnels ne seront révélés qui pourrait compromettre votre identité.

Vous avez mon assurance que l'information que vous et votre enfant partageront restera strictement confidentielle. L'anonymat sera assuré à l'aide des pseudonymes dans l'analyse de recherche et dans des publications et les présentations universitaires de cette recherche. Les données recueillies seront conservées de manière sécuritaire. Le contenu sera tenu pour une période de 5 - 10 ans suivant la date de publications de recherches et sera seulement disponible au recherchiste et a son comité.

Pour toute information sur vos droits et les droits de votre fils / votre fille en tant que participant aux recherches, vous pouvez vous adressée à Barb Ralph, agente au protocole pour la déontologie de la recherche, 8888 University Drive, Strand Hall 2105, Université Simon Fraser, Burnaby, C.B. V5A 1S6, téléphone : 604-291-3447 Fax : 604-268-6785 courriel : bralph@sfu.ca

Si vous avez des questions sur le déroulement du projet de recherche, vous pouvez communiquer avec la recherchiste au Département de Communication, 8888 University Drive, l'Université Simon Fraser Burnaby, B.C. V5A 1S6, téléphone : 604-291-3687 cellulaire : 604 313-4907 courriel : hleone@sfu.ca

Sincèrement,

Hélène H. Leone

Appendix C - Consent Forms

Consent Form to Parents (English)

Hélène H. Leone
M.A Candidate
School of Communication
Simon Fraser University
Burnaby, British Columbia
(604) 313-4907

I, _____, agree to allow my child to participate in the research, *The e-volution of Language*, conducted by Hélène H. Leone, M.A Candidate in the School of Communication at Simon Fraser University. The project is under the supervision of Prof. Richard Smith, Associate Professor in the School of Communication at Simon Fraser University. The purpose of the research is to explore the complex ways in which linguistic variations and language practices have been influenced by the electronic media and new technologies. The participation of my child will consist of answering a survey questionnaire. Additionally, the researcher asks permission of both parent and child of having access to archive texts of MSN Messenger Instant Messaging transcripts that the child recently participated on since August 2004.

I understand that the Researcher will use the contents of this research only for the purposes of academic research, including sharing with colleagues at academic conferences and in academic publications. Both my child's anonymity and mine will be respected. Real names will not be used in the research dissemination nor will any personal details be revealed that could compromise our identity.

I have received assurance from the researcher that the information my child and I will share will remain strictly confidential. Anonymity will be assured with pseudonyms in research analysis and in publications and academic presentations of this research. Data collected will be kept in a secure manner. Contents will be kept for a period of 5 – 10 years after publications and will only be available to the researcher and her supervising committee.

Benefits of the research: This research will examine the linguistic behaviours of unilingual francophone youths and their everyday experiences of using interactive media. Similar research, to date, has been conducted from an adult-centered perspective. However, today, our youth culture appears to be playing a key role in the linguistic innovations associated with new technologies. This is an area that warrants further investigation as we enable our youth culture to share their knowledge of the new language practices, linguistic innovations and social identities evolving on interactive media and new technologies. As relevant literature illustrates, the social practices and linguistic variations that characterize young people's online interactions are of keen interest to the academic community, the media, educators, and media literacy experts.

Research questions that this study will investigate include, Is the Internet having a formative influence on language use and changes in language found on the Internet? If yes, how so? What are the e-volutionary patterns of language use and changes in language found on the Internet? What are the linguistic changes and/or language variations? What is influencing the e-volutionary patterns of language use and changes in language found on the Internet? Who is influencing linguistic change? Why?

Any information about my rights and the rights of my child as a research participant may be addressed to Barb Ralph, Barb Ralph, Ethics Officer Office of Research Ethics, 8888 University Drive, Strand Hall 2105, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC V5A 1S6 Canada Phone: 604-291-3447 Fax: 604-268-6785 e-mail: bralph@sfu.ca

If I have any questions about the conduct of the research project, I may contact the Researcher at the School of Communication, 8888 University Drive Simon Fraser University Burnaby, BC V5A 1S6 Canada Phone: 604-291-3687 cell: 604 313-4907 e-mail: hleone@sfu.ca

_____
Research Subject's Parent's Signature

_____
Date

_____
Researcher's Signature

_____
 Date

I consent to allowing the researcher access to archived msn.com chat transcripts in which my child participated on since August 2004.

_____
Parent's initial

I do not consent to allowing the researcher access to archived msn.com chat transcripts in which my child participated on since August 2004.

_____
Parent's initial

Consent Form to Parents (French)

Hélène H. Leone
Département de Communication
Université Simon Fraser
Burnaby, Colombie-Britannique
(604) 313-4907
hleone@sfu.ca

Je soussigné(e), _____, consens à ce que mon fils / ma fille participe au projet de recherche intitulé *l'évolution de la Langue* et mené par Hélène H. Leone du Département de Communication à l'Université Simon Fraser. Le projet est sous la direction du professeur Richard Smith rattaché au département ci - mentionné. L'objet de la recherche est d'explorer les variations linguistiques et les pratiques du français québécois sous l'influence des médias électroniques et des nouvelles technologies. La participation de mon fils / ma fille consistera en répondre à un questionnaire d'enquête. Dans le cadre de ce projet, je consens à ce que mon fils / ma fille remplisse un questionnaire visant à définir leur profil sociolinguistique et à fournir de l'information relativement à leur utilisation des médias interactifs. De plus, je consens ce que Madame H. Leone utilise pour cette étude un échantillon des textes dont mon fils / ma fille est l'auteur(e) et qui proviennent de séances de clavardage effectuées depuis le mois d'août 2004 sur MSN Messenger.

Les résultats des analyses pourront être publiés dans des revues spécialisées et présentées lors de conférences mais en respectant toujours l'anonymat des sujets. (Nous aura recours à des noms fictifs pour la diffusion des recherches et on ne relèvera aucun détail personnel susceptible de compromettre notre identité.)

Les données recueillies seront conservées de manière sécuritaire. Le contenu sera tenu pour une période de 5 - 10 ans suivant la date de publication des recherches, et seuls la chercheure y aura accès.

Projet de recherche : Le projet examinera les comportements linguistiques des jeunes francophones et leurs expériences quotidiennes relatives à l'usage des médias interactifs. Nous examinerons l'hypothèse que ce groupe particulier de locuteur à un rôle clef dans les innovations linguistiques associées à l'usage des médias interactifs.

Pour toute information supplémentaire s'adresser :

a)   Barb Ralph, agente au protocole pour la déontologie de la recherche
8888 University Drive, Strand Hall 2105, l'Université Simon Fraser, Burnaby, C.B.
V5A 1S6, téléphone : 604-291-3447 Fax : 604-268-6785 courriel : bralph@sfu.ca

b) Hélène H. Leone, la chercheur
Département de Communication, 8888 University Drive, l'Université Simon Fraser Burnaby, B.C. V5A 1S6, téléphone : 604-291-3687 cellulaire : 604 313-4907 courriel : hleone@sfu.ca

_____
Signature du parent de la participant(e) à la recherche

_____
Date

_____
Signature de la chercheure

_____
Date

Appendix D - Assent Forms

Assent Form to Child, aged 12-16 (English)

Hélène H. Leone
M.A Candidate
School of Communication
Simon Fraser University
Burnaby, British Columbia
(604) 313-4907

I, _____, agree to participate in the research, *The e-volution of Language*, conducted by Hélène H. Leone, M.A Candidate in the School of Communication at Simon Fraser University. The project is under the supervision of Prof. Richard Smith, Associate Professor School of Communication Simon Fraser University. The purpose of the research is to explore the complex ways in which linguistic variations and language practices have been influenced by the electronic media and new technologies. My participation will consist of answering a survey questionnaire. Additionally, the researcher asks permission of my parent/s and myself of having access to archive texts of MSN Messenger Instant Messaging transcripts that I have participated on since August 2004.

I understand that the Researcher will use the contents of this research only for the purposes of academic research, including sharing with colleagues at academic conferences and in academic publications. Both my parent/s' anonymity and mine will be respected. Real names will not be used in the research dissemination nor will any personal details be revealed that could compromise our identity.

I have received assurance from the researcher that the information my parent/s and I will share will remain strictly confidential. Anonymity will be assured with pseudonyms in research analysis and in publications and academic presentations of this research. Data collected will be kept in a secure manner. Contents will be kept for a period of 5 – 10 years after the date of research publications and will only be available to the researcher and her supervising committee.

Benefits of the research: This research will examine the linguistic behaviours of unilingual francophone youths and their everyday experiences of using interactive media. Similar research, to date, has been conducted from an adult-centered perspective. However, today, our youth culture appears to be playing an essential role in the linguistic innovations associated with new technologies. This area warrants further investigation as we enable our youth culture to share their knowledge of the new language practices, linguistic innovations and social identity evolving on interactive media and new technologies. As relevant literature illustrates, the social practices and linguistic variations that characterize young people's online interactions are of keen interest to the academic community, the media, educators, and media literacy experts.

Research questions that this study will investigate include, Is the Internet having a formative influence on language use and changes in language found on the Internet? If yes, how so? What are the e-volutionary patterns of language use and changes in language found on the Internet? What are the linguistic changes and/or language variations? What is influencing the e-volutionary patterns of language use and changes in language found on the Internet? Who is influencing linguistic change? Why?

Any information about my rights and the rights of my parent/s as a research participant may be addressed to Barb Ralph, Barb Ralph, Ethics Officer Office of Research Ethics, 8888 University Drive, Strand Hall 2105, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC V5A 1S6 Canada Phone: 604-291-3447 Fax: 604-268-6785 e-mail: bralph@sfu.ca

If I, or my parent's have any questions about the conduct of the research project, I may contact the Researcher at the School of Communication, 8888 University Drive Simon Fraser University Burnaby, BC V5A 1S6 Canada Phone: 604-291-3687 cell: 604 313-4907 e-mail: hleone@sfu.ca

_____

Research Subject's Signature

_____

Date

_____

Researcher's Signature

_____

Date

I consent to allowing the researcher access to archived msn.com chat transcripts in which I participated on since August 2004.

_____

Parent's initial

I do not consent to allowing the research access to archived msn.com chat transcripts in which I participated on since August 2004.

_____

Parent's initial

Assent Form to Child, aged 12-16 (French)

Hélène H. Leone
Département de Communication
Université Simon Fraser
Burnaby, Colombie-Britannique
(604) 313-4907
courriel : hleone@sfu.ca

Je soussigné(e), _____, consent à participer au projet intitulé *l'évolution de la Langue* et mené par Hélène H. Leone du Département de Communication à l'Université Simon Fraser. Le projet est sous la direction du professeur Richard Smith rattaché au département ci - mentionné. L'objet de la recherche est d'explorer les variations linguistiques et les pratiques du français québécois sous l'influence des médias électroniques et des nouvelles technologies. Dans le cadre de ce projet, je consens à remplir un questionnaire visant à définir mon profil sociolinguistique et à fournir de l'information relativement à mon utilisation des médias interactifs. De plus, je consens ce que Madame H. Leone utilise pour cette étude un échantillon des textes dont je suis l'auteur(e) et qui proviennent de séances de clavardage effectuées depuis le mois d'août 2004 sur MSN Messager.

Il est entendu que mon identité restera confidentielle. Les résultats des analyses pourront être publiés dans les revues spécialisées et présentées lors de conférences mais en respectant toujours l'anonymat des sujets.

Il est entendu que la chercheure utilisera les informations obtenues uniquement à des fins de recherche universitaire. Elle pourra communiquer à ses collègues et les présenter à l'occasion de conférences universitaire ou de publication spécialisées, toujours dans le respect de l'anonymat (on aura recours à des noms fictifs pour la diffusion des recherches et on ne relèvera aucun détail personnel susceptible de compromettre mon identité).

Les données recueillies seront conservées de manière sécuritaire. Le contenu sera tenu pour une période de 5 - 10 ans suivant la date de publication des recherches, et seuls la chercheure.

Projet de recherche : Le projet examinera les comportements linguistiques des jeunes francophones et leurs expériences quotidiennes relatives à l'usage des médias interactifs. Nous examinerons l'hypothèse que ce groupe particulier de locuteurs a un rôle clef dans les innovations linguistiques associées à l'usage des médias interactifs.

Pour toute information supplémentaire s'adresser :
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b) Hélène H. Leone, la chercheur
Département de Communication, 8888 University Drive, l'Université Simon Fraser Burnaby, B.C. V5A 1S6, Téléphone : 604-291-3687 cellulaire : 604 313-4907 courriel : hleone@sfu.ca

_____
Signature de la participant(e) à la recherche

_____
Date

_____
Signature de la chercheur

_____
Date

Appendix E - Survey Questionnaire -
Utilisation de l'Internet: Questionnaire d'Enquête

1. Indiquez s'il vous plaît votre sexe ?
___ Homme   ___ Femme

2. Quelle est votre tranche d'âge ?
        ___ 12 - 16
        ___ 17 - 25
        ___ 26 - 35
        ___ 36 - 50
        ___ 51 - 65
        ___ plus de 65

3. Où êtes vous nés ?
_____

4. Quelle langue parlez-vous à la maison ?
_____

5. Parlez-vous une autre langue régulièrement à la maison ?

___ Oui   ___ Non `

6. Si oui, laquelle?
_____

7. Quelle est la première langue que vous avez apprise à la maison ?
_____

8. Parlez-vous toujours cette langue ?
___ Oui   ___ Non

9. Où vos parents sont-ils nés ?
_____Mère   _____Père

10. Quelle est la première langue de votre mère et père?
_____Mère   _____Père

11. Votre mère et père parle toujours leur première langue ?
Mère ___ Oui ___Non   Père ___ Oui ___ Non

12. Quelle est le niveau votre plus haut niveau de scolarité ou combien d'années d'études postscolaires avez-vous compléter ? (CHOISISSEZ EN UN)
    ___ aucun ou catégorie 1 - 8
    ___ école secondaire, incomplet (niveau 9 - 11)
    ___ école secondaire, (niveau 12 ou GED)
    ___ école technique ou professionnelle APRÈS école secondaire
    ___ quelques années de collège (université), (pas de diplôme de 2e année)
    ___ diplômé d'université, diplôme de 2 années
    ___ quelques années d'université, (pas de diplôme de 4e année)
    ___ diplômé universitaire, diplôme de 4 années
    ___ niveau de maîtrise
    ___ niveau de doctorat / Ph.D.

13. Êtes-vous à l'école présentement ?
___ Oui   ___ Non

14. A l'ÉCOLE, quelle langue employez-vous le plus souvent ?

_____

15. Travaillez-vous à temps plein ou à temps partiel ?
___ temps plein   ___temps partiel   ___ ne travail pas

16. Au TRAVAIL, quelle langue employez-vous le plus souvent ?

_____

17. Quelle est votre situation familiale ?
    ___ célibataire
    ___ marié
    ___ divorcé
    ___ séparé
    ___ veuf

18. Employez-vous un ordinateur à votre lieu de travail, à l'école, à la maison ou ailleurs au moins occasionnellement ?
___ Oui   ___ Non
19. Quelle langue employez-vous quand vous êtes en ligne ?

_____

20. Depuis quand allez-vous en ligne ?
    ___ dans les six derniers mois
    ___ depuis une année
    ___ depuis deux ou trois ans
    ___ plus de trois ans
    ___ ne sais pas

21. Quel genre de l'utilisateur d'Internet est vous ?
    ___ utilisateur débutant
    ___ l'utilisateur intermédiaire
    ___ utilisateur fréquent
    ___ ne sais pas
22. Comment connectez-vous à l'Internet quand vous allez en ligne ?
(INDIQUEZ TOUT CE QUI S'APPLIQUE)
    ___ à la maison
    ___ au travail
    ___ à l'école
    ___ à la bibliothèque ou au centre communautaire

___ à un café Internet

___ en employant un ordinateur ailleurs _____ (SPÉCIFIEZ OÙ)

___ en employant un téléphone portable ou d'autre dispositif

___ en employant WebTV

23. Comment souvent allez-vous en ligne de la MAISON ?

    ___ quotidiennement

    ___ plusieurs fois par semaine

    ___ plusieurs fois par an

    ___ quelques fois par an

    ___ jamais

    ___ non applicable

24. Comment souvent allez-vous en ligne du TRAVAIL ?

    ___ quotidiennement

    ___ plusieurs fois par semaine

    ___ plusieurs fois par an

    ___ quelques fois par an

    ___ jamais

    ___ non applicable

25. Comment souvent allez-vous en ligne de l'ÉCOLE ?

    ___ quotidiennement

    ___ plusieurs fois par semaine

    ___ plusieurs fois par an

    ___ quelques fois par an

    ___ jamais

    ___ non applicable

26. Combien d'heures par semaine passez-vous en répondant à votre courrier électronique / hotmail ?

    ___ moins de 5 heures

    ___ entre 5 et 9 heures

    ___ entre 10 et 19 heures

    ___ entre 20 et 29 heures

    ___ entre 30 et 39 heures

    ___ entre 40 et 49 heures

    ___ 50 ou plus heures

27. Quelle langue employez-vous en répondant au courrier électronique / hotmail ?

___ français   ___ anglais   ___ les deux   ___ autre

28. Autre le courrier électronique, employez-vous Internet ou le World Wide Web ?

___ Oui   ___ Non

29. Quelle langue employez-vous en employant l'Internet ou le World Wide Web ?

___ français   ___ anglais   ___ les deux   ___ autre

30. Ne comptant pas le courrier électronique, de combien d'heures par semaine employez-vous le World Wide Web ?

    ___ moins de 5 heures

    ___ entre 5 et 9 heures

    ___ entre 10 et 19 heures

    ___ entre 20 et 29 heures

    ___ entre 30 et 39 heures

    ___ entre 40 et 49 heures

    ___ 50 ou plus heures

31. Visitez-vous des sites de bavardage Internet interactifs ?

___ Oui   ___ Non

32. Quelle langue employez-vous quand vous les visitez ?
___ français   ___ anglais   ___ les deux   ___ autre

33. Combien d'heures par semaine passez-vous aux sites de bavardage?
          ___ moins de 5 heures
          ___ entre 5 et 9 heures
          ___ entre 10 et 19 heures
          ___ entre 20 et 29 heures
          ___ entre 30 et 39 heures
          ___ entre 40 et 49 heures
          ___ 50 heures ou plus

34. Lisez-vous seulement des messages sur des pièces de bavardage ou postez-vous aussi vos propres messages ?
          ___ lis seulement
          ___ lis et poste
          ___ ne sais pas

35. Comment souvent postez-vous des messages ?
          ___ quotidiennement
          ___ plusieurs fois par semaine
          ___ plusieurs fois par an
          ___ quelques fois par an
          ___ jamais

36. Visitez-vous des listservs Internet interactif ?
___ Oui   ___ Non

37. Quelle langue employez-vous en visitant listservs Internet interactif ?
___ français   ___ anglais   ___ les deux   ___ autre

38. De combien d'heures par semaine dépensez-vous la visite listservs ?
          ___ moins de 5 heures
          ___ entre 5 et 9 heures
          ___ entre 10 et 19 heures
          ___ entre 20 et 29 heures
          ___ entre 30 et 39 heures
          ___ entre 40 et 49 heures
          ___ 50 heures ou plus

39. Lisez-vous seulement des messages sur listservs ou postez-vous aussi vos propres messages ?
          ___ lis seulement
          ___ lis et poste
          ___ ne sais pas

40. Comment souvent postez-vous des messages ?
          ___ quotidiennement
          ___ plusieurs fois par semaine
          ___ plusieurs fois par an
          ___ quelques fois par an
          ___ jamais

41. Visitez-vous des tableaux d'affichage Internet interactifs ?
___ Oui   ___ non

42. Quelle langue employez-vous en les visitant ?
___ français   ___ anglais   ___ les deux   ___ autre

43. De combien d'heures par semaine passez-vous au tableau d'affichage ?
    ___ moins de 5 heures
    ___ entre 5 et 9 heures
    ___ entre 10 et 19 heures
    ___ entre 20 et 29 heures
    ___ entre 30 et 39 heures
    ___ entre 40 et 49 heures
    ___ 50 heures ou plus

44. Lisez-vous seulement des messages sur des tableaux d'affichage, ou postez-vous aussi vos propres messages ?
    ___ lis seulement
    ___ lis et poste
    ___ ne sais pas

45. Comment souvent postez-vous des messages ?
    ___ quotidiennement
    ___ plusieurs fois par semaine
    ___ plusieurs fois par an
    ___ quelques fois par an
    ___ jamais

46. Visitez -vous des groupes de nouvelles d'Internet interactifs ?
___ Oui   ___ Non

47. Quelle langue employez-vous en les visitant ?
___ français   ___ anglais   ___ les deux   ___ autre

48. De combien de minutes ou d'heures par semaine passez-vous aux groupes de nouvelles ?
    ___ moins de 5 heures
    ___ entre 5 et 9 heures
    ___ entre 10 et 19 heures
    ___ entre 20 et 29 heures
    ___ entre 30 et 39 heures
    ___ entre 40 et 49 heures
    ___ 50 heures ou plus

49. Lisez-vous seulement des messages aux groupes de nouvelles ou postez-vous aussi vos propres messages ?
    ___ lis seulement
    ___ lis et poste
    ___ ne sais pas

50. Comment souvent postez-vous des messages ?
    ___ plusieurs fois par semaine
    ___ plusieurs fois par an
    ___ quelques fois par an
    ___ jamais
51. Visitez-vous les forums de discussion Internet interactifs ?
___ Oui   ___ Non

52. Quelle langue employez-vous en les visitant ?

___ français   ___ anglais   ___ les deux   ___ autre

53. Combien d'heures par semaine visitez -vous les forums de discussion ?
         ___ moins de 5 heures
         ___ entre 5 et 9 heures
         ___ entre 10 et 19 heures
         ___ entre 20 et 29 heures
         ___ entre 30 et 39 heures
         ___ entre 40 et 49 heures
         ___ 50 heures ou plus

54. Lisez-vous seulement des messages sur les forums de discussion ou postez-vous aussi vos propres messages ?
         ___ lis seulement
         ___ lis et poste
         ___ ne sais pas

55. Combien de fois postez-vous des messages ?
         ___ quotidiennement
         ___ plusieurs fois par semaine
         ___ plusieurs fois par an
         ___ quelques fois par an

56. Combien de fois employez-vous un lien direct de votre page d'accueil (la page que vous voyez quand vous allez sur le World Wide Web) ?
         ___ jamais
         ___ moins de la moitié du temps
         ___ environ la moitié du temps
         ___ plus que la moitié du temps
         ___ presque toujours

57. Combien de fois tapez-vous une adresse du World Wide Web ?
         ___ jamais
         ___ moins de la moitié du temps
         ___ environ la moitié du temps
         ___ plus que la moitié du temps
         ___ presque toujours

58. Combien de fois employez-vous un moteur de recherche ?
         ___ jamais
         ___ moins de la moitié du temps
         ___ environ la moitié du temps
         ___ plus que la moitié du temps
         ___ presque toujours

59. Quelle langue employez-vous en employant un moteur de recherche ?
___ français   ___ anglais   ___ les deux   ___ autre

60. Combien de fois allez-vous d'un lien hypertexte dans un autre site que vous visitez ?
         ___ jamais
         ___ moins de la moitié du temps
         ___ environ la moitié du temps
         ___ plus que la moitié du temps
         ___ presque toujours

61. Dans les 30 derniers jours, combien de fois avez-vous visité un site Web pour obtenir de l'information financière ?

___ jamais
___ 1-2 fois
___ 3-5 fois
___ plus de 5 fois

62. Dans les 30 derniers jours, combien de fois avez-vous visité un site Web pour des sites liés à une école où vous ou vos enfants sont inscrits ?
    ___ jamais
    ___ 1-2 fois
    ___ 3-5 fois
    ___ plus de 5 fois

63. Dans les 30 derniers jours, combien de fois avez-vous visité un site Web pour d'autres sites éducatifs?
    ___ jamais
    ___ 1-2 fois
    ___ 3-5 fois
    ___ plus de 5 fois

64. Dans les 30 derniers jours, combien de fois avez-vous visité un site Web pour des nouvelles et les actualités ?
    ___ jamais
    ___ 1-2 fois
    ___ 3-5 fois
    ___ plus de 5 fois

65. Dans les 30 derniers jours, combien de fois avez-vous visité un site Web pour l'information gouvernementale ?
    ___ jamais
    ___ 1-2 fois
    ___ 3-5 fois
    ___ plus de 5 fois

66. Dans les 30 derniers jours, combien de fois avez-vous visité un site Web pour l'information politique ?
    ___ jamais
    ___ 1-2 fois
    ___ 3-5 fois
    ___ plus de 5 fois

67. Dans les 30 derniers jours, combien de fois avez-vous visité un site Web pour le voyage ?
    ___ jamais
    ___ 1-2 fois
    ___ 3-5 fois
    ___ plus de 5 fois

68. Dans les 30 derniers jours, combien de fois avez-vous visité un site Web pour les sports ?
    ___ jamais
    ___ 1-2 fois
    ___ 3-5 fois
    ___ plus de 5 fois

69. Dans les 30 derniers jours, combien de fois avez-vous visité un site Web pour la musique et les concerts ?
    ___ jamais
    ___ 1-2 fois
    ___ 3-5 fois
    ___ plus de 5 fois

70. Dans les 30 derniers jours, combien de fois avez-vous visité un site Web pour les musées d'art et d'art visuels?
    ___ jamais
    ___ 1-2 fois
    ___ 3-5 fois
    ___ plus de 5 fois

71. Dans les 30 derniers jours, combien de fois avez-vous visité un site Web pour la télévision ou les films?
    ___ jamais
    ___ 1-2 fois
    ___ 3-5 fois
    ___ plus de 5 fois

72. Dans les 30 derniers jours, combien de fois avez-vous visité un site Web pour la santé ?
    ___ jamais
    ___ 1-2 fois
    ___ 3-5 fois
    ___ plus de 5 fois

73. Dans les 30 derniers jours, combien de fois avez-vous visité un site Web relié à la religion et à l'église?
    ___ jamais
    ___ 1-2 fois
    ___ 3-5 fois
    ___ plus de 5 fois

74. Dans les 30 derniers jours, combien de fois avez-vous visité un site Web pour des jeux que vous pouvez jouer sur votre ordinateur ?
    ___ jamais
    ___ 1-2 fois
    ___ 3-5 fois
    ___ plus de 5 fois

75. Dans les 30 derniers jours, combien de fois avez-vous visité un site Web pour l'humour ?
    ___ jamais
    ___ 1-2 fois
    ___ 3-5 fois
    ___ plus de 5 fois

76. Dans les 30 derniers jours, combien de fois avez-vous visité un site Web pour des pages d'accueil personnelles ?
    ___ jamais
    ___ 1-2 fois
    ___ 3-5 fois
    ___ plus de 5 fois

77. Dans les 30 derniers jours, combien de fois avez-vous visité un site Web pour la science ?
    ___ jamais
    ___ 1-2 fois
    ___ 3-5 fois
    ___ plus de 5 fois

78. Dans les 30 derniers jours, combien de fois avez-vous visité un site Web pour de loisirs et d'artisanat ?
    ___ jamais
    ___ 1-2 fois
    ___ 3-5 fois
    ___ plus de 5 fois

79. Avec lesquels de ces groupes êtes vous en contact le PLUS souvent par Internet ?
(INDIQUEZ TOUT CE QUI S'APPLIQUE)

___ un syndicat
___ une association commerciale ou professionnelle
___ un groupe ou association communautaire local
___ un groupe pour les gens qui partagent un passe-temps particulier
___ un groupe d'appui, comme pour une condition médicale ou d'autre raison de santé personnelle
___ un groupe ethnique ou culturel
___ un groupe ou organisation politique
___ une équipe ou une ligue sportive dans laquelle vous participez
___un club de fans pour une émission de télévision, une célébrité ou un groupe musical particulier
___ un club de fans pour un sport ou une équipe de sport particulier
___ un groupe ou une organisation religieux
___ un groupe des gens qui partagent votre style de vie
___ un groupe des gens qui partagent vos croyances personnelles

80. Avez-vous appartenu à ce groupe AVANT de communiquer avec eux sur Internet ?
___ Oui   ___ Non

81. Est-ce que la communication avec ce groupe par Internet vous a permis de connaître des gens que vous n'auriez pas autrement eu l'occasion de rencontrer ?
___ Oui   ___ Non

82. Avex vous rencontrer en personne ou au téléphone un membre du groupe que vous avez connu sur l'Internet ?
___ Oui   ___ Non

83. Dans les 12 derniers mois, avez-vous employé le Web pour chercher de l'information dont vous avez besoin pour votre travail ?
___ Oui   ___ Non

84. Dans les 12 derniers mois, avez-vous employé le Web pour acheter quelque chose ?
___ Oui   ___ Non

85. Dans les 12 derniers mois, avez-vous employé le Web pour investir de l'argent dans des actions ou des fonds communs de placement ?
___ Oui   ___ Non

86. Dans les 12 derniers mois, avez-vous employé le Web pour essayer de rencontrer des gens nouveaux dans un but social ?
___ Oui   ___ Non

87. Dans les 12 derniers mois, avez-vous employé le Web pour chercher l'information sur un souci de santé ou un problème médical ?
___ Oui   ___ Non

88. Dans les 12 derniers mois, avez-vous employé le Web pour faire une réservation d'avion ou autre réservation de voyage ?
___ Oui   ___ Non

89. Dans les 12 derniers mois, avez-vous employé le Web pour trouver le numéro de téléphone, l'adresse de courrier électronique ou postale de quelqu'un?
___ Oui   ___ Non

90. Dans les 12 derniers mois, avez-vous employé le Web pour jouer un jeu avec quelqu'un sur un autre ordinateur ?

___ Oui   ___ Non

91. Dans les 12 derniers mois, avez-vous employé le Web pour chercher un nouveau travail ou explorez des opportunités de carrière ?
___ Oui   ___ Non

92. Dans les 12 derniers mois, avez-vous employé le Web pour chercher de l'information sur des questions politiques ou sociales, les actualités ou des campagnes politiques ?
___ Oui   ___ Non

93. L'utilisation de Internet vous a-t-elle encouragés à apprendre une deuxième langue ?
___ Oui   ___ Non

94. Si oui, quelle langue apprenez-vous ?

_____

95. Seriez-vous intéressés de participer de nouveau dans la recherche participatif en ligne de cette étude actuelle ?
___ Oui   ___ non

96. Si oui, incluez s'il vous plaît votre adresse électronique.

_____