



# RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE

## **M.Ed. In TESL Program Language Group Specific Informational Reports**

Produced by Graduate Students in the M.Ed. In TESL Program  
In the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development

Language Group: French  
Author: Lisa Placido

Program Contact Person: Nancy Cloud ([ncloud@ric.edu](mailto:ncloud@ric.edu))

# FRENCH



*A Brief Overview of Common Issues*

*Lisa Placido*

*TESL 539*

*Spring 2010*

# French Culture

- *Independence is extremely important*
  - *This is instilled in young children very early on*
- *Privacy is another important element*
- *Individualism is praised*
- *French people are extremely proud of contributions made by French throughout history*
- *France has influenced Western culture in areas such as art, literature, and philosophy*



# Communication Style

- *Physical contact is common throughout conversations*
- *A certain amount of formality is used when conversing with a new person*
- *Non-Verbal Communication*
  - *Brief eye contact is appropriate*
  - *Shaking hands is considered part of a greeting*
  - *Kissing on both cheeks is normal between close acquaintances as a greeting or parting*
- *Verbal Communication*
  - *Two forms of the personal pronoun for “you”*
    - *Familiar “tu” – used for family members, close friends, fellow students, etc.*
    - *Formal “vous” – used for everyone else; always use this form when uncertain*
  - *Titles are used widely*
    - *Monsieur – for man*
    - *Madame – for woman or Mademoiselle – for young woman*



# History of the French Language

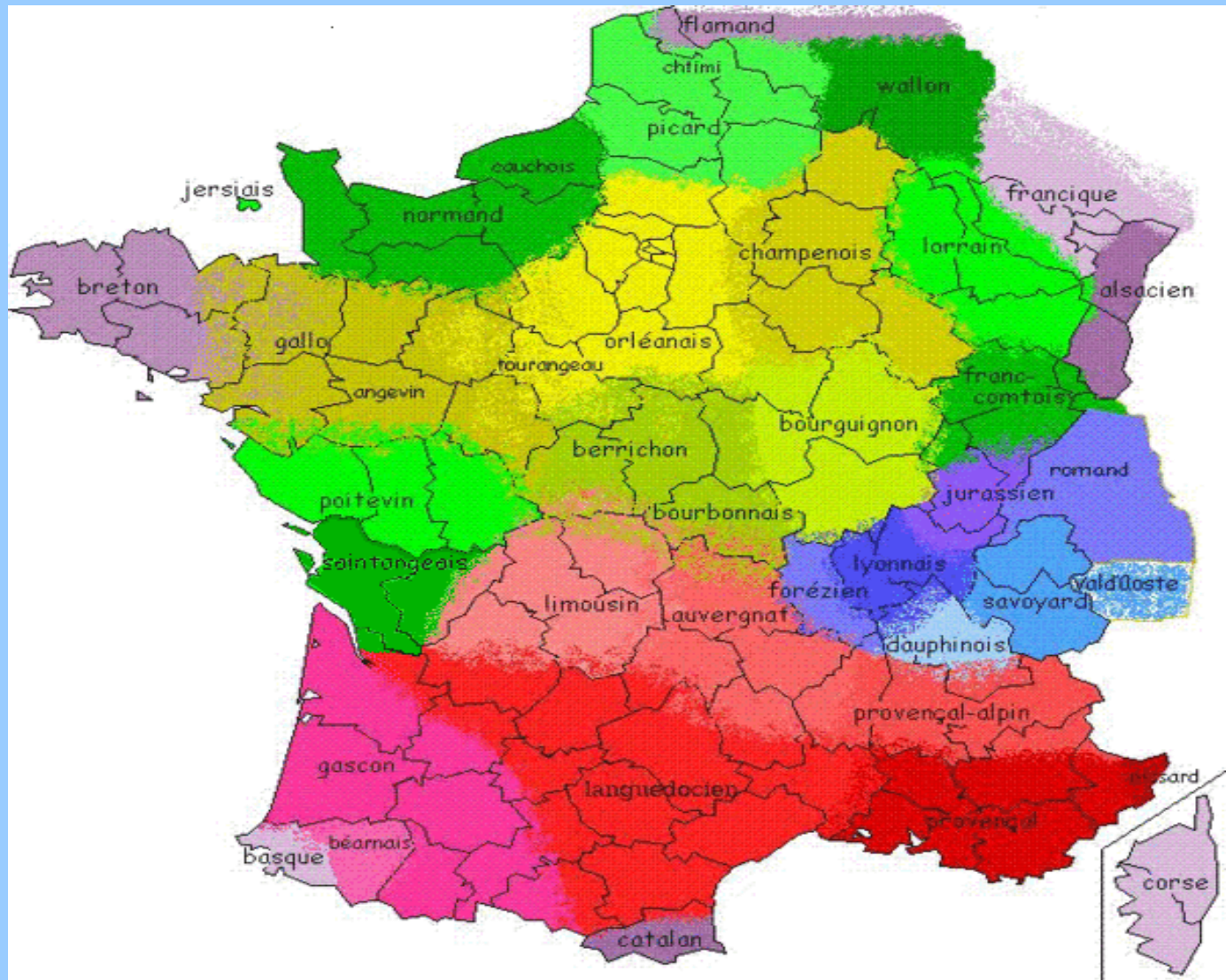
- *Until the late 1800s, the French population did not speak or understand much French*
  - *Each region of France spoke it's own language*
- *Currently French is understood by about 90% of its citizens*
  - *About 10% of the population still understand a regional language in addition to French*
- *Today controversy still exists over the teaching of regional languages*





# Languages of France

The map indicates the variety of languages spoken in France.



(<http://www.kwintessential.co.uk>)

Lisa Placido

# French Dialects

- *Metropolitan French*
  - *Spoken in Paris and considered standard French*
- *Meridional French*
  - *One of the regionally used dialects*
- *Outside of France*
  - *Belgium*
  - *Canada*
  - *Switzerland*
  - *Haiti*



# French Alphabet

*Same 26 letters as English alphabet, pronounced differently*

Letter	Pronunciation	Letter	Pronunciation
A	ah	N	en
B	bay	O	op
C	say	P	pay
D	day	Q	koo
E	uk	R	ehr
F	ef	S	es
G	ghay	T	tay
H	ash	U	oo
I	ee	V	vay
J	jhay	W	doo-blaw-vay
K	ka	X	ex
L	el	Y	ee-grek
M	em	Z	zed

Lisa Placido

([http://www.france-property-and-information.com/french\\_alphabet.htm](http://www.france-property-and-information.com/french_alphabet.htm), 2008)

Click to hear French Alphabet





# Similarities Between French & English

- *Syntax & Vocabulary*
  - *Derived from the same roots*
  - *More intellectual or technical the word, the more common in both languages*
- *Phonological Characteristics*
  - *Pronouncing English consonants*
- *Spelling*
- *Intonation*
- *Punctuation conventions*
- *Grammatical Systems*
  - *Parts of Speech*
  - *Word Order*



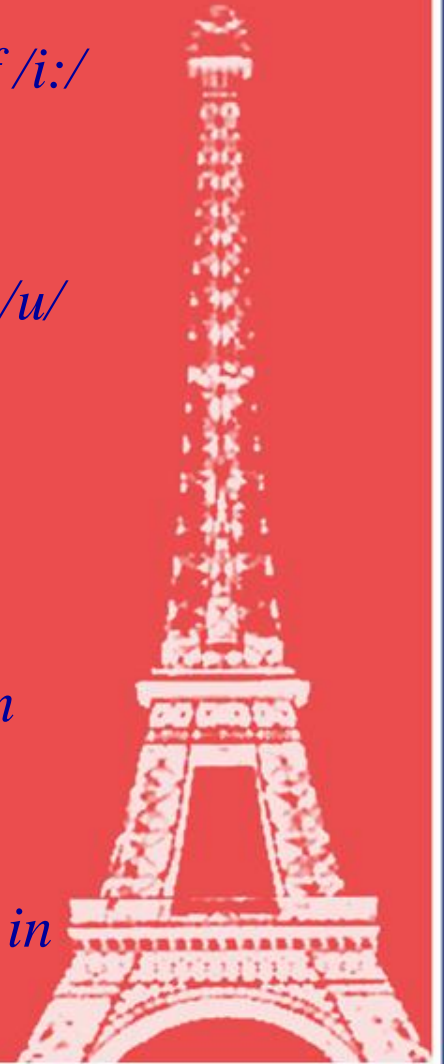
# Differences Between French & English

- *Word stress & rhythm are very different*
- *Agreement (hardest aspect of French)*
  - *Correspondence of gender, number and/or person*
- *Articles*
  - *Most nouns in French have an article in front*
- *Accents*
  - *4 French accents for vowels*
    - *acute, grave, circumflex, dieresis*
  - *1 French Accent for consonant*
    - *cedilla*



# Phonological Issues

- *Vowel sounds are problematic*
  - *e.g. French has only one sound in the area of /i:/ and /I/*
    - *Confusion between live and leave*
  - *e.g. French has only one sound in the area of /u/ and /u:/*
    - *Confusion between pull and pool*
- *Word stress & rhythm*
  - *Word stress is placed on the last pronounced syllable in French; this is somewhat weaker in English*
  - *Vowels that are not stressed retain their pronunciation in French; these are weakened in English*



# Phonological Issues (continued)

- *Consonants*

- *English lengthens vowels in stressed syllables before final voiced consonants*
  - *e.g. sat and sad; pick and pig*
- *When pronouncing English words with the /ch/ sound, it becomes /sh/*
- */h/ is often dropped in French pronunciation*
- */r/ is pronounced in French with the back of the tongue*

- *Consonant Clusters*

- *Consonants followed by /z/ do not occur normally in French words*
  - *French speakers drop this –s after voiced consonants*
- *French speakers have tendency to stress multisyllabic words on the last syllable*
  - *e.g. creating pronunciations such as “terribull” and “littull”*



# Grammar Issues

- *Difficulty learning to put –s endings on third person singular present tense verbs*
- *“Do” has no equivalent in French*
  - *Causes problems forming interrogatives*
- *In French, present tense is used for actions or states that began in the past but continue in present*
  - *e.g. I work in Paris since August.*
- *French has no present progressive tense*
- *In French, the present tense is used to express a decision at the moment*
  - *e.g. I’m phoning her.*





# Grammar Issues (continued)

- *French speakers commonly use the to infinitive with English modals*
  - *e.g. I can to swim.*
- *French speakers use a present tense in the place of shall*
  - *e.g. I set the table?*
- *French has no equivalent for –ing ending*
- *In French, adverbs are placed between verb and its object*
- *In French, quantity comes before past participle*
  - *e.g. I have too much eaten.*
- *French uses no article before names of professions*
  - *e.g. Sarah is teacher.*
- *In French, the indefinite article can be omitted after prepositions*
  - *e.g. Did Tom go out without hat?*
- *In French, nouns are masculine or feminine*



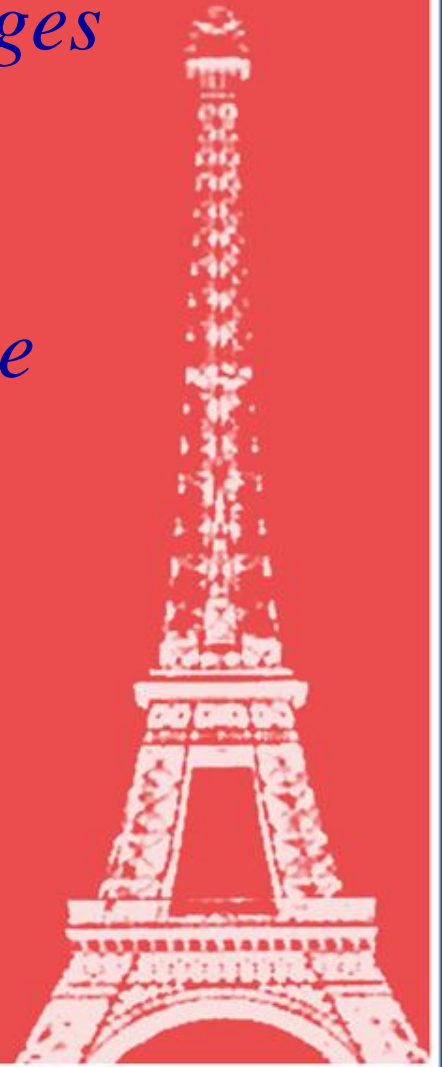
# Grammar Issues (continued)

- *Plural nouns in English are sometimes singular in French*
  - *e.g. a jean, a short, a pajama*
- *English noun+noun word structures*
  - *e.g. teethbrush; a shoes shop*
- *In French, adjectives generally follow the noun and for two or more adds “and”*
  - *e.g. a short and red dress; she is the woman most beautiful*
- *English expression is not structured with the same expression used in French*
  - *e.g. discuss of a solution*
- *French uses articles before days of the week or parts of the day*
  - *e.g. It’s very quiet here the night.*
  - *I usually see him the Tuesday.*



# Orthography and Punctuation

- *Days of the week, months, languages and national adjectives are not capitalized in French*
- *Commas are used in French where they wouldn't be in English*
- *Inverted commas are written differently in English*



# References

## Books

Roseberry-McKibbin, C. (2002). *Multicultural Students with Special Language Needs: Practical Strategies for Assessment and Intervention*. Academic Communications Association.

Swan, M., & Smith, B. (2001). *Learner English : A teacher's guide to interference and other problems*. Second edition. New York: Cambridge University Press.

## Images

FPSi: Specialist in French property. (2008). French alphabet and pronunciation of French language [Image], Retrieved from: [http://www.france-property-and-information.com/french\\_alphabet.htm](http://www.france-property-and-information.com/french_alphabet.htm)

Kwintessential Ltd. (2010). Map of languages in France [Map], *Kwintessential*. Retrieved from: <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk>



# Internet Resources

## Internet Sites

FPSi: Specialist in French property. (2008). *French alphabet and pronunciation of French language*. Retrieved from: [http://www.france-property-and-information.com/french\\_alphabet.htm](http://www.france-property-and-information.com/french_alphabet.htm)

Kwintessential Ltd. (2010). France : Culture, customs, etiquette and business. *Kwintessential*. Retrieved from: <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/france-country-profile.html>

Lawless, L. K. (2010). *French accents: Do accents in French really mean anything?* Retrieved from: <http://french.about.com/od/pronunciation/a/accents.htm>

Lawless, L. K. (2010). *French articles: Introduction to French articles*. Retrieved from: <http://french.about.com/od/grammar/a/articles.htm>

Lawless, L.K. (2010). *Accord: French Agreement*. Retrieved from: <http://french.about.com/library/weekly/bl-agreement.htm>





M.Ed. in TESL Program  
Nancy Cloud, Director  
Educational Studies Department  
Rhode Island College, HBS 206 #5  
600 Mt. Pleasant Avenue  
Providence, RI 02908  
Phone (401) 456-8789  
Fax (401) 456-8284  
ncloud@ric.edu

The M.Ed. in TESL Program at Rhode Island College  
is Nationally Recognized by TESOL and NCATE



REACH  
INSPIRE  
CONNECT