

The Semantics of "Tu" and "Vous"
Diachronic and Synchronic Considerations

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1. Introduction

One of the functions of language is to reveal the role relations that exist between speakers. Roles are perceived by individuals, then evaluated in order that information provided by speech acts may be appropriately interpreted by speakers. Part of each speaker's communicative competence is a sophisticated set of rules, specific to one's cultural membership, which determine one's verbal behaviour. It has been observed by various linguists that social structure and grammatical patterns are profoundly linked. With regard to personal pronouns in particular, Friedrich (1963) claims that second person pronouns link abstract properties of a basic grammatical paradigm to a second matrix of culturally specific components of major emotional and social significance. Obligatory address forms are part of a speaker's communicative competence which fuse grammar and social categories in a very interesting way.¹

It is the aim of this paper to investigate one particular set of direct address pronouns, the 'tu' and 'vous' forms in French. The first section will focus on their birth and evolution from Latin to French, and on the kinds of meaning they have conveyed from a diachronic perspective. The second section will treat recent studies in this realm of 'T/V' usage, comparing current address norms in France, Quebec, and Alberta. Finally, certain general trends will be summarized and evaluated.

2. The Historical Usage of 'tu' (T) and 'vous' (V).

The development of two pronouns of address in Europe for the second person reference evolves from the Latin forms 'tu' and 'vos'. Brown and Gilman (1960) describe in some detail how the two personal pronouns have changed in their semantic content over the centuries. Originally T referred exclusively to the second person singular, and V to the second person plural. About the fourth century B.C., however, this usage was modified when a second Roman emperor came to power: while one ruled the west, from Rome, the other's domain covered the east, from Constantinople. This situation is believed to have launched Diocletian's reform, whereby an address to one ruler implicitly included his distant counterpart. For this reason, the plural pronoun was logically employed. As it came to assume the semantic connotation of power as well as plurality, V gradually seeped into the overall social fiber, through the veins of the existing social hierarchy. According to Brown and Gilman, the use of T and V was by no means uniform within any of the European language groups until the twelfth to fourteenth centuries A.D., by which time a standard set of rules had been established. Individuals who were superior to others in terms of physical strength, socio-economic status, profession, and so on, gave T to their inferiors and were in turn given V. In a family, children were called T, though their parents were accorded V, the so-called V of 'reverence'. This power semantic is non-reciprocal or asymmetrical, since the actual pronoun chosen between speaker and addressee depends upon the

objective relation between the two. Between equals, the choice would be reciprocal; between employer and employee, on the other hand, it would be non-reciprocal. In Medieval Europe, members of the upper class exchanged V with one another, whereas lower class equals exchanged T. The reciprocal V was thought to be elegant, and was adopted by the nobility, well-bred lovers, and by parents and their grown children.

Gradually, reciprocal V came to represent a formal or distant rapport among speakers, T a more intimate one. Brown and Gilman's (ibid) 'solidarity semantic', which calls for reciprocal or symmetrical pronouns of address because speakers consider themselves or their social roles to be relatively equal, has in the past two centuries become more widely favoured, as political ideologies have stressed equality and brotherhood, and have purposed to collapse great social distance and injustice. Mutual V was considered appropriate between strangers, irrespective of their social status, and at the same time, the scope of mutual T usage was extended. Among fellow students, employees, athletes and youth, for example, this marked the solidarity established by their common membership.

The pronouns of address have in this historical overview shown a correspondence, both social and psychological, to the backgrounds of speakers. Even members of the same social class might use pronouns differently. That is, depending on their political orientation, whether radical or relatively conservative, speakers may choose to change or maintain existing norms for the system of address forms. The pronouns of address are, therefore, reflections or expressions of transient attitudes,² to be interpreted by interlocutors. It is interesting to note that the present use of pronouns of address in Europe in general favours the establishment and manifestation of solidarity among individuals, and consequently, it is T, the more 'familiar' personal pronoun, that is becoming more popular and more widely used across the various countries, within the family, at work, at school, and so on.

When we map the usage of T and V in French onto the general European picture just presented, certain patterns which exemplify their historical development will be examined. For the reader with an understanding of the semantics currently associated with T and V, it might seem odd that in Old French speakers could whimsically substitute T for V, and vice versa, when addressing the same individual, even to the point of choosing the alternate form within a single sentence. Whereas today, for example, such shifts might accompany some emotional shift, like a temper tantrum or a moment of unusual tenderness, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in France,

tout le monde, ou à peu près, s'y tutoie, ce
qui est admissible, vu les personnages, mais
tout le monde s'y dit vous également, ce qui
est déjà plus curieux. (Foulet 1963:199)

Even less consistent is the mixture of second person singular pronouns with second person plural verbs, or vice versa, which Foulet (ibid) illustrates by the following excerpt from a play entitled *Courtois d'Arras*, in which a father is speaking to his son:

Beau fils, *taisez-vous, mangez du pain et des pois,*
et *envoie* promener tes folles imaginations.³
(Courtois d'Arras 11.49-51)

Maley (1972:995-1005) concentrates on the usage of T and V through Middle and Modern French. She notes that in the sixteenth century, scholars were seeking to transform French into a literary language. Pasquier, she cites, explains that it is normal to address a single man with V, "spécialement quand il est de quelque qualité", since the established norm was to give V to nobles, and to receive T; thus V had been the designated form of address to superiors (Maley 1972:999). T was addressed asymmetrically to inferiors, and symmetrically to close friends of the same social class. In poetry, however, T was often given to a king, prince, or lord, and V was given to equals or to 'people of quality', and the latter was even given to an inferior from time to time, to show respect.

It is said that in the seventeenth century there was a crystallization of the norms of address, from which current pronominal usage is derived. The pronoun of politeness was clearly V, and that form was most often used in literature.⁴ Even if a master verbally addressed his valet with T, this would necessarily appear as V in written form (Antoine de l'Estant, 1669:57, cited in Maley, *ibid*:1000).

In speech, T was exchanged between equals as a sign of either 'amitié' or 'mépris', between common people, or when addressing oneself. It was given to individuals who were very inferior, which included members of other racial groups (Maley, *ibid*:1002).⁵ The polite form was so common that in his letters to family and friends, Racine gave V, and elsewhere,

à Port-Royal, les enfants eux-mêmes ne se tutoient pas.
C'est là toutefois une mode distinguée; dans le peuple à
l'armée, le tutoiement reste courant. (Brunot and Bruneau,
1969:232)

The French Revolution had a profound impact on various levels of the late eighteenth century status quo, and accordingly, at that time there was a movement toward the symmetrical usage of T and V. Brown and Gilman (1960) report that with the concept of 'fraternité', there was a shift from the formal V to a mutual 'citoyen' T. The upper class favoured V nonetheless, and equated the T with the 'sans culottes' of the Revolution. Meanwhile, the 'Committee for Public Safety condemned the use of *vous* as a remnant of feudalism and ordered everyone to use reciprocal *tu* on all occasions (1793)' (Maley, 1972:1002). Within a decade of the great upheaval, the V and pre-Revolutionary pronoun usage which depended upon the social status, absolute and relative, of speakers was restored.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, pronouns between parents and children were still non-reciprocal (although domestic help was accorded V), but by the end of the century, T was finally given to parents 'sous la poussée démocratique' (Maley, *ibid*:1003). Thereafter, T was more a unifier than a discriminator. In the first part of this century, T was employed with either those who were very inferior, or with very familiar addressees. In literature, it also served to honour gods and

princes. Mutual T was maintained in most families (excluding the aristocracy), between children, young students, soldiers, siblings, and between husband and wife. Mutual V, on the other hand, was employed by fiancés, a master and servant, a servant and child, in-laws, university students, and so on. It was also appropriate when addressing members of the opposite sex. In general, the degree of intimacy achieved by individuals was an underlying factor for the choice of either mutual T or mutual V.

Following World War II, the T of familiarity expanded, especially among people of the same age group, fellow employees, sportsmen, and various club members. In the French army V emerged, while in the Communist Party T was necessary. A recent development, occurring in 1967, was a decree by the Roman Catholic church in France that God was no longer to be addressed as V, as had been the case since the eighteenth century; rather, T was to be adopted in all prayers and ritual ceremonies (Maley, *ibid*:1006).

3. The current usage of 'tu' (T) and 'vous' (V)

France

J. Ford (1974) reviews the work of Brown and Gilman (1960), with particular interest in the application of the system of direct address pronouns to current tendencies in France. He specifies that T marks similar identity, and V marks reverence for power superiors. Because one does not always realize the status of individuals when first meeting them, Ford claims that a mutual V is often employed to avoid potential embarrassment at a later date. V represents good breeding, and implicitly creates a kind of barrier between interlocutors. This is because V as a concept comprises two notions or 'semantic fields' (Ford, *ibid*:1143). There is a 'power semantic', by means of which V stands for respect and/or reverence, and there is a 'distance semantic', which assumes the three features of formality, distance, and disdain. Distance is identified as a constant feature of V (*ibid*: 1144-1145).

The concept of T, on the other hand, comprises three notions: camaraderie, intimacy, and condescension. In the family, for example, both within and across generational lines there is a predominating 'solidarity semantic' at work, which interprets the degree of intimacy present into the pronoun T. Ford cites an exception to this generalization; it seems that General DeGaulle addressed his wife and son as V, which might be explained by the General's lengthy military training where the V of respect predominates (*ibid*: 1146). In other cases, some aunts and uncles might be called V if they are seldom seen, thus hardly known by their relatives.

In May, 1968, the French address dynamic was upset by a 'tutoiement sauvage' (Bustin-Lekeu 1973:774), similar to the revolution of nearly two centuries prior. Ford remarks on the closeness of the linguistic tie to the social-political situation; for example, when the pervading norms came under tension and attack, especially in student quarters in Paris, the usage of T and V was challenged. Normally, the shift from V to T proceeds as follows.

For V/V the situation may drop reverence and respect

to end up a distance-formality relation. A V/V can become a T/V relation by gradually dropping V notions and adding either camaraderie and/or intimacy, or condescension changing into disdain. The outcomes are two different T/T. The first involves reciprocal camaraderie or intimacy (or a mixture of both); the second is mutual disdain (Ford, 1974:1148).

This process was catalyzed in 1968, such that V was stripped of its power, and T took control with power. Thereafter in the French student milieu, speakers would readily 'tutoient' at their first meeting, and this was the T of acceptance. Taking into consideration the variables of age and sex, often if these differed between students, there would not be the spontaneous shift to mutual T until they got to know each other better. Since 1968, according to G. Donovan (The University of Calgary; personal communication), it is common for university students in the same academic department to exchange the reciprocal T, and this has generalized so that T is usually given to any other student. It should be mentioned that students in the faculties of law, medicine and pharmacy take exception to this observation; as they are quite probably from backgrounds where V was frequently used as a mark of social distinction, they tend to maintain a reciprocal V usage even with classmates and some friends.⁶ Professors who exchanged V with their colleagues just fifteen years ago, now too have adopted the solidary T in many areas; the same is true of high school staff. One significant condition is that the verbal encounters be between two men or between two women, because the V of distance and often respect is preserved between the sexes. In Ford's observations, students who receive T from their professors admire the concern and interest that is offered to them, and they sense that these are 'real flesh and blood' people who are teaching them (Ford, 1974:1154). Overall, Ford sees a tendency toward the T of solidarity, something Friedrich (1972) has referred to as an 'esprit de corps', which is an extension of the kinship bond.

Donovan (personal communication) summarizes the rather complex system of direct address pronouns currently in use in France as follows.

Within the basic fabric of each social class there is certain linguistic behaviour which can be expected of speakers according to their age. For example, older people retain the traditional, polite *vous*, whereas their middle-aged counterparts, who value equality with others more so than they value class distinctions, adopt a more impersonal form. Young people, on the other hand, reject what subservience they observe in their parents' speech and thus opt for a more humanized, personal *tu*.

F. Bustin-Lekeu (1973:774) captures the basics of the semantic content of the forms T and V in the following excerpt:

Le système binaire d'autrefois, fondé sur la relation d'autorité et de pouvoir (power structure), demeure sous-jacent à un autre système plus complexe -- le nôtre -- où le sentiment d'une certaine solidarité entre les locuteurs entre en ligne de compte pour déterminer si l'on usera de la forme polie (signe d'une révérence réelle ou neutralisante, en quelque sorte,

lorsqu'il n'y a ni véritablement solidarité ni autorité en jeu) ou bien de la forme familière qui, elle, sera toujours chargée de signification.

Interested in what she termed 'a polarization toward a liberating T', Bustin-Lekeu (1973) conducted a study entitled 'Toutolement et Vouvolement Chez les Lycéens Français', where she examined the T/V usage of thirty-six Grade 10 students in an urban district in the Midi of France. This sample of fourteen to sixteen year olds included twenty-two girls, fourteen boys. The questionnaires she distributed had three parts: (1) pronouns used within the family; (2) pronouns used at school; (3) students' response to the problem of direct address pronouns. A summary of the results from Bustin-Lekeu (ibid.:773 - 782) follows. Percentages are rounded here to the nearest whole number.

- (1) a. There is reciprocal T between parents, children, and grandparents.
- b. Generally aunts and uncles send and receive T; 3 informants indicate V/T; 6 say it depends.
- c. For adult cousins, male and female, pronoun choice depends on distance, age, usage imposed by parents; 7 informants favour T. (The use of V within the family originates with the upper middle class; i.e., students whose fathers are doctors, engineers, professors.)
- (2) A a. Asked how they would respond to a new student, 81% give T.
- b. Asked how they would respond to V from the new student, almost half the informants would 'react', while more than half would 'tolerate'. Of the first group, most would demand an explanation or laugh; of the second group, most would decide that the V was his business, or would consider the V 'cold'.
- c. Meeting an unknown student, in the corridor, 64% of the boys would give T (age is an important factor); 59% of the girls would give T (age and sex are the most important factors). *Immediate, reciprocal T is not (yet) universal there.
- B a. According to the school administration, students are to be given V by teachers.
- b. Teachers' usage according to subject:
Phys. Ed. 81% informants claim to receive T.
Maths/Sciences 61% informants claim to receive T.
Letters 58% informants claim to receive T.
- c. Teachers' usage according to age:
Old 42% informants claim to receive T.
Middle 70% informants claim to receive T.
Young 57% informants claim to receive T.
- d. What would motivate the teacher's shift from V to T? (36% say mid-term shift was highly unlikely)
 1. Sympathetic teachers -- 40% informants claim this would cause change.
 2. common involvement in extra-curricular activity -- 33%

3. with time -- 21%
4. academic performance -- of no significance.
- e. Regarding the importance of T:
2/3 informants say it is significant/desirable (most say it shows that the teacher is equal and thus wants to reduce social distance; others say teacher confides in students, is 'nice', or is simply interested in them).
14% (all boys) say insignificant.
Others: 4 girls say it depends mostly on particular speaker; 1 boy says even T does not necessarily eliminate distance.
- C a. 62% informants occasionally give T to teacher (but not systematically).
38% informants never give T to teacher.
(Some boys spontaneously volunteer T to nice teachers; for a girl, however, 'il est probable que ce serait dés-agreable de tutoyer un professeur'.)
- (3) a. Although they do not really like the pronominal distinction, they would not go so far as to T everyone ('la violence verbale').
- b. 70% informants would prefer reciprocal T in certain cases.
52% say this is not possible because of age differences.
(Not even 1/3 would dare take the initiative.)
- c. T from adults does not disturb informants; 78% wouldn't want V from family, teachers, friends.
- d. RECIPROCITY is the problem with using T and V:
64% say the pronouns should always be used reciprocally.
(71% boys vs. 59% girls; also, boys suggest universal T.)
- e. Asymmetrical usage (V/T) is disappearing in the following pairs:
 1. daughter-in-law/mother-in-law,
 2. workman/engineer,
 3. maid/young boss.
- f. If a pronoun were to disappear, which would you prefer to see go?
75% informants would prefer V to go.

In concluding her study, Bustin-Lekeu relates that it is not the system which bothers students, but the workings of the system; "it is so complex that dismissing or maintaining social barriers is almost oppressive" (ibid.: 782). In all, there are mixed feelings regarding either the acceptance or the changing of the present system of direct address pronoun usage.

Quebec

The old, traditional form (of direct address in France) was the *vous* to your parents, and that only very slowly broke down, and it did not break down until after the people had immigrated to Canada ... Now in Canada, for many, many people, as soon as they meet each other, they tend to go to the *tu*.

But there are 'hold-overs' -- pockets of people and their families -- who hold over the older usage. (Donovan, personal communication)

The trends toward symmetrical pronoun usage and a widening use of T have already received much attention. It is nonetheless noteworthy that substantial pockets where the traditional address system has been preserved may be found in various regions in the Province of Quebec, mostly rural, and elsewhere the T/V usage may correlate predictably with speakers' socio-economic background. Some of the studies by Wallace Lambert which pertain to this area of enquiry will be described below, and the conclusions drawn from his findings will also be reported.

A pilot study by Lambert (1963) focused on the use of T and V as forms of address in French Canada. One hundred thirty-six French-Canadian boys, sixteen to nineteen years old, who were attending a CEGEP in Quebec City, were asked to fill out questionnaires regarding their own T/V usage. They were also asked to describe their father's occupation, which helped classify them into one of three social classes: (1) Professional; (2) White collar; (3) Blue collar.

Most of the boys revealed that they give V and receive T when speaking with their grandparents; from their parents, most boys would receive T, half giving V in response, the other half giving T. Thus, regarding the students and their grandparents, aunts and uncles, there was generally far more non-reciprocal usage than students with their parents. Either it was a matter of grandparents seeking 'respect for elders', or it was the boys marking the social distance separating them from their grandparents. It was Lambert's prediction that knowledge of the boys' social class membership might help determine which pronoun would be given to parents. Questions raised considered the following possible explanations: Is middle/upper class usage more traditional so the V of formality, or perhaps respect, is accorded? Does V mark social distance, and thus prevent intimacy?

The results of his study confirm the existence of a strong relationship between socio-economic status and the forms of address used. Those families higher up the socio-economic ladder show greater tendencies of reciprocal T between parents and children, whereas their lower class counterparts tend to use T/V non-reciprocally.

Lambert encouraged further investigation into the pronouns generally used by French-Canadians, and he suggested that variables including age, sex, and social class of informants be considered.

One social-psychological aspect that Lambert considers is the conflict faced by young lower class children who must learn to use different linguistic forms than their parents, whose example of language use they are expected to acquire and follow. That is, parents will usually address each other and their children, close friends and siblings with T, but children must learn in appropriate cases, that they, unlike their parents, must address the parent, aunt or uncle with V.

Lambert's college-aged informants feel comfortable with reciprocal T between friends of either sex. With teachers, priests, and strangers, reciprocal V is most appropriate because it is a marker of social distance.

Since the variable of social status is included, Lambert claims that the rule system in French Canada is more complex than the one in France, which relies primarily upon the degree of familiarity which has been established between interlocutors.

In a study Lambert conducted a few years later (in Lambert, 1969: 86ff.), fifteen hundred French speaking students in Alma and Montreal, Quebec, filled out detailed questionnaires. Informants were from Grades 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11, and came from various schools in each city. Thirty-four possible instances of social interaction were examined, and informants were asked which pronouns would be given and received by them in each case. Family interaction was of chief interest, especially the use of pronouns between close family members versus similar behaviour with distant family members. Later the chi-square statistic correlated linguistic use and age, sex, or social setting.

As in Lambert's pilot study, where middle and upper class children directed a reciprocal T toward their parents, social class was again a very significant factor in determining the pronoun usage in similar relations in subsequent analyses.

Age

The relation between social class and the selected pronoun was greater with elementary school children than with high school students. Chi-square values ranged from 60-70, to 14 respectively. That is, about 60% of the informants used reciprocal pronouns with both parents; 40% used non-reciprocal pronouns. From a sample of Montreal students originally from France (and upper class backgrounds), 90% claimed to use reciprocal T with their parents.

Rural/Urban Differences

The results from Alma, Quebec differ from those from Montreal and Quebec City; the rural nature of the Alma area seems to reduce the importance of socio-economic status, at least as far as pronouns are concerned. Students there all received T from their parents, of course, but they seemed to be almost equally divided when addressing their parents, some using T, and others V.

In the country it is found that more non-reciprocal exchanges take place than in the urban centres. In this vein, Lambert cites examples of rural girls with their grandparents, aunts, and uncles, and rural boys with their aunts and godparents.⁷ Reciprocal usage is still greater, however, between rural children and their cousins and brothers-in-law, than for urban children.

With extended family members, social class plays a more significant role for rural, but not urban speakers. Generally, for both rural and urban, 80% would give their grandparents, aunts, uncles, and godparents V, and receive T in turn.

If one were to ask whether the solidarity semantic has replaced the non-reciprocal one, it would be fairly certain that it has not. In fact, over 40% of the informants sampled here reported non-reciprocal address

forms with their own parents; so, in much general family interaction, the majority of direct address pronouns exchanged would be non-reciprocal. The element of socio-economic status is important insofar as urban centres show a gradual movement toward reciprocal T (between parents and children) in direct relationship to movement up rungs of the socio-economic ladder. Again, rural social norms seem to operate with their rules for pronoun selection, without needing to include details of one's social class background.

An interesting point which Lambert briefly discusses is his conclusion from preliminary testing that family ties where T/V is prevalent are as strong and close as relationships defined by T/T.

Secondly, his treatment of children's evaluative reactions to T and V in family discussions has opened up another door to studies of the semantics of T and V. Briefly, when eleven year olds were played recordings of simulated parent-child interactions characterized by T/T in one case, and T/V in the other, the children judged that families whose pronoun usage was reciprocal were more respectable, with better family spirit, and were more progressive or more modern; moreover, the son using V in the conversations would have a greater chance of receiving the dog he requested in the discussion (Lambert 1969:90).

Alberta

The last section of this paper deals with the French that is spoken in the province of Alberta. Again the focus of attention is the T and V usage, and like Lambert's study, the intrafamily norms are the primary scope of our own investigation.

Method

The author chose to sample three French speech communities in Alberta, which, by means of their differing geographical locations and social characteristics might provide an interesting picture of pronoun patterns in this province. St. Paul was selected from several potential sites for this survey, to represent the northeast of Alberta; next, a district in Edmonton, in which a French college, high school, parish, and convent are located; and finally, members of a local French church in Calgary constituted the third sample. Questionnaires (after Lambert, 1963) written in French were distributed personally in each of the above communities. Informants were asked primarily to specify the form of address, either 'tu' or 'vous', they usually gave to each of twelve listed individuals, and how they in turn were normally addressed by each person. Their interlocutors were the following: (1) mother; (2) parent(s); (3) grandparents; (4) uncles and aunts; (5) brothers and sisters; (6) male friends; (7) female friends; (8) teachers; (9) priests; (10) nuns; (11) older people; and (12) strangers. In addition to their actual pronoun usage, informants were asked to specify the following: (1) sex; (2) age category; (3) mother tongue; (4) birthplace; (5) region from which their grandparents came; (6) father's occupation; (7) informant's occupation. The questionnaire was just one page in length, and was by no means complete, but was adequate for the purpose of this study. Basically, it follows Lambert's Pilot Study described already, save a few additions. The category (2), parent(s), was intentionally included in both questionnaires,

and occasionally it is found that an informant would address his/her mother with a different pronoun than with his/her 'parent' (father?). It was not the interest of this analysis to yield statistical correlations, yet these might be very significant in further work in this topic area.

St. Paul

St. Paul is a town of about four thousand inhabitants, situated to the northeast of Edmonton. Although French speakers may have been in the majority just a few decades ago, today there are almost three equal minority groups -- native Indian, Ukrainian, and French, whose common denominators might be the English language they have adopted and their common lifestyle in a fairly isolated farming community. Once-French schools, churches, and businesses have been anglicized, although some families continue to communicate in their native languages when at home. Children of even second generation St. Paul natives receive French at home, but usually respond in English. The preceding details might help explain why it was rather difficult to locate a sample of 'franco-Albertans'.

Five men and five women were asked to fill out the questionnaire; their average age would be close to forty years. (Refer to Appendix I.) All had grown up in the town speaking French; their grandparents came mostly from Quebec, and their fathers were in most cases farmers. The results of the questionnaire are very convincing of the homogeneity of the informants. Overwhelmingly, mothers, parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles were given the direct address pronoun V by informants (the sole exception, is a daughter who gives her mother T, which is perhaps the mark of solidarity established between the two as they deal with the father, who is senile -- who is given V); similarly, teachers, priests, nuns, strangers, and older people are given V, the traditional representation of respect and distance. Conversely, and actually asymmetrically, all informants received T from (1-4), and this has been seen before in certain working class or rural milieux in Quebec. Between siblings and friends the elements of intimacy and age determine the use of mutual T in every specified case. There is almost an even split between whether informants claim to receive T or V from categories (8-12). This does not seem to depend upon the age group of addressees. Do these data follow a general trend toward a universal solidary T, which is common in other parts of the French-speaking world? It would seem that in the nursing home, yes, but elsewhere, the V form is by far the preferred pronoun of address. (One informant mentioned that it had upset her to adopt the T form when addressing God the Father.)

Collège St. Jean, Edmonton

One main reason for sampling the college was to observe pronoun usage among students, who come more often from small French communities neighbouring Edmonton, as well as towns further north, and further east to Saskatchewan, Ontario, Quebec, and New Brunswick. The average age of informants was in the early twenties, though several teachers at the college also took part in the survey. There were twenty-eight who filled out questionnaires: nine males, nineteen females. All spoke French natively; most had been raised in Alberta, and their grandparents generally came from

Quebec. Regarding their fathers' occupations, an indication of socio-economic status, about thirteen were farmers, eighteen involved in trades of some sort, and two were professionals. The results indicated that over half addressed their mother/parents T -- (as far as tracing these informants to birthplace, some of them were from out of province); grandparents, however, received V far more often than T; aunts and uncles were split evenly, some receiving V, others T; a great majority of informants gave V to those occupying roles worthy of their respect (8-10), and to those from whom they were separated by age and social distance. Regarding the pronouns received from others, T definitely predominated, except when interacting with strangers, who give V. Once again, mutual T was exchanged between peers.

It was interesting to speak with the priest and several nuns in the same neighbourhood, whose usage was linguistically conservative, following traditional norms. One nun who had moved to Alberta from Brittany in 1912, was particularly helpful in elaborating upon her direct address pronouns, when and with whom a certain form was appropriate. She had exchanged mutual T with her parents, mutual V with grandparents, and with aunts and uncles, professors, priests, and so on. As for other nuns, she explained:

Je n'aurais jamais osé dire *tu* à une religieuse,
même mes soeurs qui étaient religieuses, on se
disait *vous*.

Similarly, when addressing her niece who was also a nun, she would most often use V. Instinctively, when one of her own sisters became a nun, there was a shift from T to V.

J'attacherais plus de respect à *vous* qu'à *tu*;
...je ne me permettrais pas de dire *tu* aux
personnes que je voudrais respecter.

And to God?

A Dieu je dis *tu*, dernièrement, ...je n'ai pas
toujours fait ça. Autrefois, c'était toujours
vous...je ne me serais jamais permis de dire *tu*
au Seigneur autrefois; ...il y avait une certaine
distance, le respect; mais graduellement cela a
changé.

When she explained that she still shifts from T to V with God, it seemed appropriate to ask which form would reflect which state of affairs. When asked how she addressed Him when she felt very far away from Him, it was surprising that she responded:

Je dis: "Aie pitié, Seigneur" plus de "ayez pitié,
Seigneur".

One informant at the college, filled out his form while sitting next to one of his colleagues there. The former, a man from Beaumont, Alberta, filled in categories (1-11) as received from others, with T. While thinking out loud as to how a stranger would address him, his colleague stated that in Quebec almost everyone would exchange T. Asked his

opinion of the suggestion that the French address system in Alberta would likewise shift to greater usage of T, he replied that in his very large family, the children and grandchildren of his brothers and sisters still say V to parents, and that maybe just the fourth generation would start to say T to their parents. (Note that Beaumont, recently 90% French speaking, is now an English suburb/development site belonging to Edmonton.)

Reviewing the results from the college, it again is apparent that the characteristics of speakers themselves are very important, more so than socio-economic background, in determining the selection of either T or V. Also, one perceives a standard set of norms which unite the community members, and leave less defined relations to be decided by age, roles and the sex of speakers. The importance of age was emphasized by one young student, who explained that she thinks she gives T not V to her parents because they are very young.

L'Eglise Sainte-Famille, Calgary

Although most of the twenty informants from this local parish come from towns in Quebec and Ontario, it is surprising how similar these results are when compared with those from St. Paul. On the average, the eight men and twelve women would fall into the 'middle aged' category; their grandparents came from Eastern Canada, in general; the fathers of twelve were farmers or labourers, while seven said their background might be 'white collar'. Four cases of T addressed to the mothers of informants seem to be closely linked to the informant's origin in Montreal (where T is more widespread than in the countryside). It is clearer from this sample that most of the informants would receive the V form from the priest, nuns, older people, and strangers. Again it is evident that the age variable causes this difference.

A sideline note, brought to the author's attention by the priest at this church, shows the continued respect for members of the opposite sex, through the marking of V. For at that church as in most, T would be given to God and Christ under normal circumstances, however V would be offered Mary -- in 'Je vous salue, Marie', but "que ta volonté soit faite..." to God.

Conclusion

Les notions d'autorité et de solidarité...combien l'équilibre de notre système est sans cesse à revoir et surtout difficile à maintenir, car rien n'est plus étroitement lié aux phénomènes d'évolution sociale et de transformations des mœurs qu'à la façon dont nous percevons qui sont nos pairs. (Bustin-Lekeu 1973:774)

The usage of direct address pronouns, like many social norms and institutions, is in a constant state of flux. As society and its social values change, language seeks to accommodate for this by allowing words to be emptied or revised in terms of their semantic content, and reapplied to the new situation. The changing usage of T and V through one part of European history, has shown how the birth of a second pronominal usage has triggered ensuing conflict in usage of direct address pronouns across certain social strata. Generally, the achievement of camaraderie between

speakers, a common age group and social class membership, would satisfy the requisites of the solidarity semantic, and would likely result in movement toward reciprocal T.⁸ This trend is quite prevalent, and has been encouraged by students, particularly in France. A comparable usage exists in Montreal, where a feeling of common membership or brotherhood seems to take hold. This widening of T usage, however, has not really penetrated the well-established norms for proper and respectful pronoun usage in districts of France, rural and working class Quebec, particularly "well bred districts" in France, and most areas of French Alberta. One might speculate that the over-riding tendency will affect these pockets within the next few generations, under the influence of other French and European language norms, a changing political ideology, the influence of English, and so on. Whether or not these will prove stronger than centuries-old tradition, remains to be seen.

Footnotes

¹La langue en tant que "réalité immédiate de la pensée" (Karl Marx) peut être autant plus liée à l'idéologie que la réalité reflétée par la langue ... plus fortement conditionnée par des structures sociales. Ceci est fort particulièrement valable pour la terminologie à l'aide de laquelle sont dénommées les classes d'une société donnée." (*Langue Française*, Paris, Vol. 9, 1971:105.)

²N. Dittmar (1976) mentions the concept of "Weltanschauung" or world outlook.

³*Courtois d'Arras*, ed. Edmund Faral, 2nd ed. Paris: 1922. Cited in Foulet (1963:199). The play is an adaptation of the biblical parable of The Prodigal Son. In the original text, this excerpt appears as:

Biaus fieus Cortois, car soiës choïs,
Si mangiés del pain et des pois,
Si lai ester ta fole entente. (in Foulet, *ibid.*)

⁴In the 18th century, this polite V emerged among the Russian elite, where it marked respect and formality (Friedrich, 1972). Also regarding the polite usage in France, from the 17th century, the third person singular pronoun was borrowed to show great respect for someone with whom one might usually exchange a mutual V.

⁵The question of addresses given to members of "out-groups": it seems that since 1957, T has been given to French African natives by their European superiors. Donovan explains that this non-reciprocity, or "'Tiers Monde" de l'adresse' (Bustin-Lekeu (1973)) tends to be given to the natives because they among themselves prefer this usage, and it is natural that they would attract this toward them. He adds, however, that when the T is given to blacks in France (very common practice), this is clearly a reflex of racism.

⁶The author acknowledges with thanks the helpful reflections and personal observations of Dr. G. Donovan, Department of Romance Studies, The University of Calgary, who has lived and studied extensively in French communities.

⁷It was brought to my attention by a French-Canadian classmate, that when she meets with her two sets of uncles and aunts she is often ill-at-ease at having to address one set, from the farm, with V, then turn to address the other set, equally close to her, but from the city, with T.

⁸A very interesting contribution made by Ford (p. 1156), not discussed elsewhere, is his observation of a T-V dualism in plural as well as singular addresses. When speaking informally to close friends, it seems the "T may be unconsciously borrowed from its strictly grammatical function as second person singular, and is used in expressions like "tu vois", even when referring to a specific group. There is an 'unconscious tendency to choose appropriate and fitting semantic fields, despite grammatical limitations'.

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APPENDIX I

Table I

Form of Address Between St. Paul Residents and Others*

Interaction with		'tu' sent	'vous' sent	Depends no answer	'tu' rec'd	'vous' rec'd	depends
1	Mother	1	9	0	10	0	0
2	Parents	0	10	0	10	0	0
3	Grandparents	0	10	0	10	0	0
4	Uncles, Aunts	0	9	1	10	0	0
5	Brothers, Sisters	10	0	0	10	0	0
6	Boy friends	10	0	0	9	0	1
7	Girl friends	9	0	1	9	0	1
8	Teachers	1	8	1	5	4	1
9	Priests	2	8	0	4	6	0
10	Nuns	2	8	0	4	6	0
11	Older People	1	8	1	6	4	0
12	Strangers	1	8	1	5	5	0

*Entries are actual frequencies based on the replies of 10 informants -- 5 males, 5 females. 2 (15-20 years old); 1 (21-25 years); 1 (26-35); 6 (36+ years). Most informants' fathers were farmers.

Table II

Form of Address Between Edmonton Residents and Others*

Interaction with		'tu' sent	'vous' sent	Depends no answer	'tu' rec'd	'vous' rec'd	Depends
1	Mother	17	11	0	27	1	0
2	Parents	15	13	0	27	1	0
3	Grandparents	5	22	1	25	3	0
4	Uncles, Aunts	12	13	3	28	0	0
5	Brothers, Sisters	27	0	1	28	0	0
6	Boy friends	27	1	0	28	0	0
7	Girl friends	26	1	1	28	0	0
8	Teachers	8	17	3	22	3	3
9	Priests	4	22	2	23	4	1
10	Nuns	3	22	3	17	8	3
11	Older People	0	28	(1)	20	5	3
12	Strangers	3	23	4	8	19	6

*Entries are actual frequencies based on the replies of 28 informants -- 9 males, 19 females. 12 (15-20 years old); 11 (21-25 years); 2 (26-35); 4 (36+ years). Fathers: farmers etc. 13, trades 18, professionals (engineers) 2.

Table III
Form of Address Between Calgary Residents and Others*

Interaction with		'tu' sent	'vous' sent	Depends no answer	'tu' rec'd	'vous' rec'd	Depends
1	Mother	5	14	1	17	1	2
2	Parents	5	14	1	18	0	2
3	Grandparents	3	16	1	18	0	2
4	Uncles, Aunts	4	16	0	19	0	1
5	Brothers, Sisters	18	2	0	19	0	1
6	Boy friends	19	0	1	19	0	1
7	Girl friends	18	2	0	17	2	1
8	Teachers	2	17	1	10	8	2
9	Priests	1	19	0	7	12	1
10	Nuns	2	18	0	4	15	1
11	Older People	1	19	0	9	10	1
12	Strangers	2	16	2	4	13	3

*Entries are actual frequencies based on the replies of 20 informants -- 8 males, 12 females. 1 (15-20 years old); 3 (21-25 years) 5 (26-35 years); 11 (36+ years). Fathers: farmers etc. 12, trades 7, professionals 1.