In her book *Voices in the media: Performing French linguistic otherness*, Gaëlle Planchenault explores the representation of French linguistic otherness in different media, and she discusses the ideologies related to the manner of language use. Linguistic otherness, in this monograph, can be manifested in the French language spoken by “the others” such as the others in terms of region (e.g. suburban and rural communities), gender (e.g. transvestites) and ethnicity (e.g. African French communities), or it can be manifested in French or French-accented English used in English contexts. The examples examined in this book include both voices in the literal sense of the word (e.g. spoken French in films), and the metaphorical “voices” in written language. Planchenault’s study covers many different media formats such as film, webpage, and restaurant menu.

This book includes two main parts, an introductory chapter, a concluding chapter, and Chapter 1, which presents key literature and concepts. Part I (Chapters 2–4) focuses on the French language and Part II (Chapters 5–7) on French-accented English. It also has an appendix providing a brief framework for analyzing voices in the media.

In the introductory chapter, Planchenault defines key terms and discusses their relationships before proposing the research questions of the book. Based on Bauman (1975), she defines a performed voice or a performance of voice as a way of language use that is “created during the artistic performance of an actor as well as, if more unconventionally, a performance of voice that take place in the written media (the press and the Internet)” (p. 1). Planchenault argues that “media performances of voices function thanks to a complex interplay between linguistic structure, socio-cultural knowledge and language ideologies” (p. 11). Language ideologies are defined as beliefs and notions about language. The author specifically introduces four ways in which language ideologies are realized in media performances of voices. Language ideologies can be shown in performed voices through (i) “social representation”, namely the representation of social classes, gender, ethnic groups, etc.; (ii) “register”, i.e. varieties of language; (iii) “performed voice” or the act of speaking; and (iv) “exchangeable commodities”, which refer
to language as a symbolic capital that can be used to negotiate power relations. The introductory chapter concludes with a list of research questions that are to be explored in later chapters.

Combining the discourse analysis of media texts and the anthropological analysis of language ideologies, the author aims to address a series of questions and issues relating to four aspects: (i) the form of language performance, (ii) the role and agency of performers, (iii) the performer-audience interaction, and (iv) the functions of voice performance in society (p. 12).

In Chapter 1, Planchenault reviews key literature on the study of media language and discourse, and then discusses some theoretical background that is important for the research on media language and performance in this book. The author first gives a brief review of literature on language use in print, broadcast, and new media. The review particularly accentuates the literature on the performance of voice in the media, e.g. stylization of dialects and ethnics, accents that index identity, and polyphony and heteroglossia. After this review, the author presents two groups of theoretical concepts. The first group includes genre, style, and stylization. She argues that different speech genres or styles are embedded in media genres. The most significant point that the author covers about style of media performance might be her discussion about styling and stylization. In film discourse, for example, styling can be “understood as the design of character in terms of language style, … [while] stylisation captures the cinematic moments when characters step out of their ordinary voice and into adopting a different voice” (Androutsopoulos 2012: 151). As Coupland (2004) argues, stylized utterances are “bound moments when others’ voices are, in somewhat more literal sense, displayed and framed for local, creative, sociolinguistic effect” (p. 249). Planchenault in this chapter further emphasizes that stylized voices have ideological connotations. The second group of concepts is about performance, including the performer, the audience, and the performance itself. Planchenault illustrates that language in performance is (i) “staged”, that is, consciously designed; (ii) “mediated”, which refers to the fact that the reception of performance is delayed and can be repeated; (iii) “entextualized” (entextualization here is used to refer to the displacement of a discourse from its original contexts and/or media formats into new contexts and/or media); and (iv) “commodified”, namely “negotiated between a producer and a consumer” (p. 37).

Chapters 2 to 4 focus on the performances of linguistic otherness of French in the media of varied forms. In these chapters, Planchenault relates performed voices (e.g. non-standard French) to social discrimination against and stereotypes about certain regional, sexual and ethnic groups. She argues that performed voices in the media construct and disseminate ideologies and prejudices, and yet meanwhile “media [also] have the potential to subvert dominant stereotypes” (p. 44).
Chapter 2 explores the display and stylization of French regional dialects in two films, *L’Esquive* (‘Games of Love and Chance’, 2004) and *Bienvenue chez les Ch’tis* (‘Welcome to the Sticks’, 2008). The former represents the non-standard or “accented” French spoken by a group of high school students living in a Parisian suburb that is known for its ethnic diversity and low socioeconomic status. The latter portrays the accented French in Nord-Pas-de-Calais in the North of France. The author in this chapter argues that the accented French in both films is a kind of stylization, no matter whether the film directors aimed at a realistic presentation of accented French or a comic effect; and that the language stylization reflects dominant ideologies about particular social groups, although the directors might be aware of this and tried to reframe stereotypical ideas.

The next chapter discusses the construction of feminine voices by members of a website for transvestites. Planchenault focuses on the data of presentations of self, that is, a section of this website called “text of introduction”, which consists of words of newcomers introducing themselves. The author investigates how the website users perform “textual voices”, namely how they, through written language, construct their feminine identity, construct group identity (presenting themselves as a member of the virtual community), and establish female-coded politeness (e.g. avoiding rudeness).

Chapter 4 is entitled “Performances of ethnic voices in French films”, and focuses on Caribbean- or African-accented French that is stylized in films. By surveying the stylization of black French varieties, the author finds that non-native accents are still downplayed in films. She also tries to illustrate that race is a discursive construct, and it is negotiated, stereotyped, and commodified as a culturally constructed product.

The second part of the book (Chapters 5 to 7) shifts the focus from accented French to French-accented English. In this part, Planchenault examines the linguistic features of French used in English contexts and code-switching in bilingual situations, and explores the ideologies relating to Frenchness and French culture as well as the role of the media in maintaining these ideologies.

In Chapter 5, Planchenault investigates French-accented English in Hollywood films. She presents the types of French characters in Hollywood films, and then explores the linguistic features of the French-accented English that these characters speak, including phonological, syntactic, lexical and pragmatic features. Finally, she carries out a detailed analysis of the French-accented English spoken by Inspecteur Clouseau, the protagonist of the “Pink Panther” film series. This chapter also illustrates that French-accented English in Hollywood films is often stereotypically associated with some characteristics of French culture, e.g. romance and romanticism.
Chapter 6 is an in-depth case study of the voice of Agatha Christie’s character Poirot in a television series. Poirot is a well-known detective in Agatha Christie’s fiction, and his stylized French and French-accented English has been depicted on radio and television as well as in films. In this chapter, Planchenault analyzes an episode of the British television series *Poirot*, examining Poirot’s accent, code-switching, and lexical and syntactic features. It is concluded that Poirot’s lexical and syntactic features contribute to portraying this character, that the French words used in the televisual dialogues do not hinder comprehension, and that the symbolic meaning of these French words is more important than their referential meaning. This chapter also demonstrates the construction of foreignness through accented voices and how these voices convey ideological messages.

In Chapter 7, the author analyzes the use of French in the online menus of French restaurants in Vancouver, a city in which English is dominant. The use of French in menus is viewed as a linguistic practice that is associated with “ideologies related to food, language and culture” (p. 140). Planchenault examines the structure, meaning, and use of French in menus for English-speaking customers. She argues that it is the symbolic rather than referential meaning of French used in these menus that matters. “By using French, restaurants display a posture of authority in gastronomic culture and prompt their clients to a feeling of belonging: not to a linguistic or social group, but rather to a community of taste” (p. 140).

In the concluding chapter, Planchenault offers a very brief summary of the book, and proposes an agenda for future research. One recommendation for further research is to examine polyphony, a concept from Bakhtin (1981), i.e. the many voices in media discourse. Another is to explore the relationship between dominant ideologies and individual agency in the performance of voices in the media.

To sum up, this book provides its readers an in-depth and insightful study of the performances of voices in different media and language ideologies behind the performances of voices. By doing so, it demonstrates a new approach to linguistic and discursive analysis of performed voices in the media. Since it focuses on the voices of the minorities, the book has implications for the studies of the represented voices of the others, whether ethnic, racial, gendered or regional, in media discourses. This volume also offers a framework for researching voices in the media. In this framework, not only the performance and performers are accounted for, but also the audience, context, genre and ideology.
References


