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Pronouncing French names in New Orleans

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ABSTRACT

This article, based on 984 interviews with bearers of French names in the city of New Orleans, investigates the use of the notion of pronunciation as a device by which speakers manage their talk. The investigation proceeded primarily by eliciting ways in which people employ devices for talking about talk in everyday communicative interactions, as a means to manage various types of communicational phenomena and to deal with communication difficulties emerging from a clash of phonetic traditions. The result is a definition of pronunciation in terms which are used by a majority of speakers. An appendix gives a list of names, with comments by their bearers concerning ways in which those bearers would attempt to convey to mispronouncers the correct pronunciation of their names. (Pronunciation, lay metalanguage, folk-linguistics, phonology, phonetics, New Orleans, French names)*

We aim here to extract some general conclusions from a body of data concerning (a) pronunciations and mispronunciations of French names in the city of New Orleans, (b) remarks by their bearers on their attitudes toward these latter, and (c) bearers' various ways of correcting interlocutors. (Details on certain names, given in boldface type, can be found in the Appendix.) The data were gathered primarily by telephone interviews. The tasks of the interviewer were: (i) to inform name-bearers of the nature of the project, described as a study of the pronunciation of French names in New Orleans; (ii) to ask bearers if they would be willing to have their names included in the study; (iii) in case of an affirmative response, to ask bearers (a) how they pronounce their names, (b) if they ever hear mispronunciations of their names, (c) if yes, whether they correct people who mispronounce, (d) if they do correct, how they might go about doing so; and (iv) again to ask bearers if they mind their names being used in the study.

An initial question arose as to the criteria for a French name. The initial answer to this was an informal one: if the name looked obviously French, it was placed in the list. Usually, this could be justified by appeal to the

name-ending; certain endings are French from a historical-linguistic point of view, thus *-elles*, *-ard*, *-eau*, *-ieu*, *-ain*, *-ault* etc. Sometimes mistakes were made, and these were corrected by the bearers: e.g. *Auld* and *Buie* were claimed to be Scottish, *Crossin* Irish, *Buitron* Spanish, *Guitart* Catalan, *Burlet* and *Dussel* German, and *Zatarain* Basque. In these cases, bearers' word was taken, and no attempt was made to "argue them out of" the belief in a national affiliation. However, this sometimes made it hard to determine the affiliation of a name with a nation – most clearly in cases where the bearer's family came from a border region like Alsace, where a bearer might claim that a "French" name was "German," or vice versa – or where the name had been taken into another country (*Orillac*), sometimes early on (*Bayard 3*).¹ It also happened that the bearer was not aware that the name was French; and this raised ethical issues, e.g. in cases where the bearer was African-American and retained an ambivalent, or possibly hostile, attitude about any claim to the name which could recall the past.

Thus the Frenchness of a name was potentially a problematic notion. Yet it was not necessary to arrive at a hard and fast definition, since subjective attitudes toward names came into account at all levels when determining them. It might have been possible to rely on the definitions "statistically common in France" (e.g. found in a certain percentage of French telephone books), or "was considered French by the bearer when introduced into New Orleans." But in fact the Frenchness of the name was treated, for the purpose of the interviews, as a working hypothesis which might later be shown to be unwarranted. Very often the name was "clearly French"; i.e., it looked French, could be found in numerous French telephone books, was taken as French by the bearer, and posed pronunciation difficulties consonant with a clash of different phonetic traditions. In other cases – and perhaps ultimately – whether the name was in fact French or not was secondary to whether it posed pronunciation problems for the bearers and/or the interlocutor; "French" was merely a convenient label. In short, if the interviewer and/or the bearer thought it was French, or thought it might be French, and no reasons could be found for excluding it from being French, then it was treated as French.

One primary concern of this article is to take an initial look at the terms in which name-bearers manage the pronunciations of their names. Given that the pronunciation of French names poses frequent problems in New Orleans, bearers are often faced with the task of correcting people who mispronounce, and of conveying what they believe is the correct pronunciation of the name. Such a situation provides an example of a case in which everyday language needs to be referred to, so that it can proceed in its communicational role. One result is what may be called a "lay metalanguage," i.e. terms and concepts used by persons who are not professional linguists, to refer to and to manage the language which is their daily communicational vehicle.

As a preliminary to a survey of concepts of lay metalanguage, we can turn our attention to two examples of concepts of metalanguage as used by professional linguists, to provide a point of comparison for the subsequent discussion.

TWO THEORETICAL DISCUSSIONS OF PRONUNCIATION

Some useful reflections on the notion of pronunciation of items initially foreign to the phonetic habits of a given group of speakers are offered by Martinet 1977. Martinet considers the conditions under which French speakers pronounce foreign words which have been taken into French. One of Martinet's first points is that monolingual French speakers take their pronunciations of these words not directly from the foreign model, but rather from those French speakers who have some knowledge of the foreign language which provides the model, and who have already adapted that model to French phonetic habits. One example of this is the English word *laser*, taken into French not as [laze], which would conform to such French words as *jaser*, *baser*, and *raser*, but as [lazer], which follows rather the pattern of *ver*, *mer*, *fier*, and *amer*. Martinet makes a related point concerning the (Parisian) French pronunciation of foreign words containing the cluster *nd*. He says: "In Parisian French, the cluster [nd] is perfectly pronounceable between vowels ... But [nd] does not exist word-finally. A realization such as [wikend] is thus a distortion of French phonology by those who have at least some knowledge of English" (1977:81).

Three phrases are particularly revealing with regard to the boundary between phonetics and phonology: "perfectly pronounceable," "non-existent word-finally," and "a distortion of French phonology." "Perfectly pronounceable" is opposed phonetically to "perfectly unpronounceable," e.g. by the "law of three consonants" in French which prohibits clusters of more than three consonants. Thus, in *rien de spécial* [ʀjɛ̃dspesjal], *dsp* is "perfectly pronounceable"; whereas in *quatre de spéciales* *[katdspesjal], the *tdsp* would be "perfectly [i.e. physically, articulatorily] unpronounceable."

"Non-existent word-finally" is not relevant to the same order of constraint, for there is nothing articulatorily difficult about pronouncing a word-final *nd* in French – as evidenced by the widespread pronunciation of *weekend*. Now, this is either because the French don't like to have [nd]s at the end of their words, or IT JUST SO HAPPENS that *nd* does not occur word-finally, in which case it is a historical accident. But in either case there is nothing preventing the French from introducing [nd] word-finally, if they wish – indeed, they have now done so.

Finally, "a distortion of French phonology": this also may mean one of two things. A final *nd* might be a statistical aberration in French, or it might offend "the sense of the language." In the statistical interpretation, it may

be that statistics should be taken to exercise a certain power over the language. In the second interpretation, speakers themselves have power over their language, for an offensive arrangement will be consciously avoided. An interesting point of comparison here would be that of the pronunciation of French [y] and [ʀ] by English speakers. Would their introduction into English be ARTICULATORILY unpronounceable? Is their absence merely an historical accident, with no implication about their pronounceability by speakers? Or would their introduction offend against our sense of English?

Martinet's reflections are useful in that they help us more clearly to separate the phonetic from the phonological, and to clarify what we mean by both these terms. We seem to be presented with a spectrum: at one end is a physical impossibility (or improbability), such as an apico-laryngeal consonant; at the other end is a set of subjective impressions, with a large number of historical accidents ranging over the middle. Often it is uncertain – as in a visual spectrum – whether there are boundaries between these divisions.

A second view, this one incorporating reflections on the influence of spelling on pronunciation, is provided by Kökeritz 1964. Here we face the specific issue of the relationship, if any, between a given pronunciation and a written form. An example of a "spelling pronunciation" is provided by the word *falcon*. The traditional pronunciation of this word, as Kökeritz notes, is ['fɒkən] or ['fɔlkən]. In the 1950s, the Ford Motor Company introduced a new car and called it the *Falcon*. In cases like this, the introduction of a new product on the market commonly necessitates, if the word for it is unfamiliar, a marketed pronunciation decided upon by the company (cf. *Hyundai*, *Croissanwich*). In the present case the decision was to call the car the ['fælkən], which Kökeritz calls "an obvious spelling pronunciation." What does this mean?

To speak of "an obvious spelling pronunciation" seems to imply that the spelling *alc* somehow naturally entails the pronunciation [ælk]. Here we think, as Kökeritz notes, of the words *balcony* and *talcum*. (One also hears the pronunciation ['tɒlkəm], but perhaps this is a non-spelling pronunciation.) It is an interesting fact also that the words which contain *alc* come for the most part from Latin words which were once pronounced [ælk] (or [alk]; cf. It. *balcone*, *falcone*). So one thing we could say is that one "standard English pronunciation" of *alc* is the result of an historical accident. However, if this is true, then – and here the case recalls Martinet above – it cannot be said that *alc* ENTAILS the pronunciation [ælk], but that it merely SO HAPPENS THAT those words have retained their historical pronunciation. Now it also happens that, as Kökeritz points out, the word *falcon* was pronounced ['fɒkən] or ['fɔlkən] before the advent of the car. If so, then this in itself would prove that *alc* does not entail the pronunciation [ælk]. But there is a further fact of interest. When an advertising representative of the company was asked why the new pronunciation was being introduced, the answer was that

['fælkən] "appears in larger sections of the country, and by virtue of its common usage is more identifiable" (Kökeritz, 137). We might ask, if ['fɔkən] or ['fɔlkən] is the pronunciation of people who also read, what makes ['fælkən] a spelling pronunciation?

According to Onions 1966, *falcon* entered the language in the 13th century in the form *faucon*, a form clearly Anglo-Norman in spelling and doubtless in pronunciation ([fɔk-]). The word was re-spelled in the 15th century on the Latin model. Later, *talc(um)* was taken over from either French *talc* ([talk]) or Medieval Latin *talcum* (doubtless the English pronunciation was, as it still is, ['tælkəm]) in the 16th century, and *balcony* from Italian *balcone* ([bal'kone]) in the 17th. One question then is, if the Anglo-Norman pronunciation [fɔ-] was retained when the spelling *falcon* was adopted, why did ['fɔlkən]/['fɔkən] not become the spelling pronunciation of *falcon*, and why were the pronunciations of the later words (-[al]-) not considered aberrations? On the other hand, if the motor company representative is right, and ['fælkən] was a widespread pronunciation at the time of the introduction of the Ford Falcon, then it is tempting to assume that the pronunciation ['fælkən] came into England along with the re-spelling, and that the older pronunciation was only retained in a deliberately conservative manner by people who would be likely to engage in falconry. But if this were the case, then ['fælkən] would not have been a spelling pronunciation originally, since the pronunciation came with the spelling (and had existed as such for centuries); and ['fælkən] would not have been a spelling pronunciation later, since the assumption is that the pronunciation was not remodeled on the spelling, but was already in place.

In another example, Kökeritz states (138–89):

Not a few words and groups of words can be shown to have acquired their present pronunciation through the influence of the spelling at some time in the past both in British and American English. We may point to the reappearance of [t] in *pestle*, *often* or of [n] in *kiln*, the use of [l] in British *solder* ...

Once again the consonants in question here were originally pronounced: La. *pistillum*, *solidare*, OEng. *oft*, *cylene* < La. *culina*. Second, it is of interest that, in all these words, the consonants were later suppressed for reasons having nothing to do with spelling – showing that it was possible to change the pronunciation of a word quite apart from considerations of spelling. That is, one could see the consonant in the word and still "leave it in silence." Therefore, at no time, apparently, was one obliged to follow the spelling. In this connection we may ask, why is the *t* pronounceable in *pestle* but not in *castle*, in *often* but not in *soften*, the *l* in *solder* but not in *folk*, *balm*, *talk*, *walk*? It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the criteria for spelling pronunciation are not at all obvious; for there is evidently no possibility of

telling when a pronunciation is “following” spelling, and when it just coincidentally appears to parallel it. Part of the reason for this is that we do not know what “following a spelling” or “pronouncing a spelling” really means. Rather, these phrases tend to beg the question of what the “pronunciation” of a spelling is. Why should *pestle* and not *castle* be the model for a certain pronunciation? It could just as easily be the case that the “correct” pronunciation of *t* is in fact silence. It is well known, for example, that *h* cannot be pronounced in French. Would, then, the French spelling pronunciation of *hibou* ‘owl’ be [hibu]?

An irony here is that it has been clear for centuries that no precise correspondence exists between English spelling and pronunciation. The Great Vowel Shift wrought havoc; and after that, spelling reformers bravely but futilely sought to rectify the situation. Yet if this was known, and if one encountered a word whose pronunciation one did not know, it would be risky, not to say contradictory, to believe it reliable to base a correct pronunciation on the written word. Rather, the required strategy would be to seek the help of someone who seemed to know how to pronounce the word. The conclusion is that it may seem that one can “pronounce letters”; but one knows that a given letter is pronounceable only because the pronunciation exists already, quite apart from any written form. Thus a pronunciation would appear to be based not on letters, but rather on a tradition of pronunciation. It is for this reason that a so-called spelling pronunciation of words like *pestle* cannot be a coherent notion unless an accepted pronunciation is already in place. But this pronunciation itself would, *ex hypothesi*, not be based on spelling.

FIELD OBSERVATIONS OF SPEAKERS’ REMARKS ON PRONUNCIATION

To these deployments of theoretical metalanguage, in trying to clarify what is involved in pronunciation, we may add another set of notions which emerge from problems of pronunciation in actual communicational exchanges. These are notions on which lay speakers have been observed to draw in the management of their daily communication. A fertile ground for doing this is provided by the city of New Orleans – in which, because of its French heritage, a large number of people have French names. However, because a knowledge of French phonetic habits has virtually disappeared there (though it has not among the Cajuns who live in the country), there is often room for confusion about how to pronounce a given name. Consequently, there is a frequent need for strategies to solve the communicational problem of how to pronounce a name which is either aurally or visually unfamiliar.

The general problem: Pronunciation of unfamiliar written forms

A number of pronunciations of French names in New Orleans follow what appear to be "spelling pronunciations"; i.e., there seems to be a conscious attempt to represent certain letters by corresponding sounds. Hence one mispronunciation of **De Gruy** is [də'grui]; an attempt to cover every letter of **Dubuisson** is evident in ['dubwɪsən]; and one pronunciation of **Jambon** is ['dʒæmbən]. But this principle is inconsistently followed in **Andrieu** (['ændru]), **Catoire** ([kætɹwæ]), **Credeur** ([krə'dur]), **Dupleix** ['duplɛks]), **Ecuyer** ([ekwiʒ]), **Laguaite** ([lə'get], mispronounced [lə'gwat]), and **Quezergue** ([kə'zɛr], [kr'zɛr], mispronounced ['krɪzəre], [krə'vergi], ['kezər], [kə'zerki]). In these cases, even if one desires to follow the spelling, it is not necessarily clear how to do so. At the other extreme, in cases where the pronunciation of a name shows a consciousness of French tradition, it may happen that the spelling is not appealed to as a model for the oral form, but may be ignored. For example, although one mispronunciation of **Duquesnay** ((du'kezne)) does attempt to follow the *s*, there is no apparent anxiety about the *qu*, universally [kw] in English, and the pronunciation ['dukəne], as well as one other mispronunciation ([duken]) betray no constraint imposed by the spelling. Moreover, any systematic theory of spelling pronunciation will encounter formidable obstacles when attempting to account for the articulatory solutions to the unfamiliar pronunciations of a majority of French names which are considered by their bearers to be unsuccessful, such as **Andrepoint** (['ændrəpɔ̃nt]), **Ardenaux** (['ɑrsəno]), **Areux** (['æro]), **Bayle** (['beli], [bɔ̃l], [baɪl], ['bali], [bel]), **Bourquard** (['bugard]), **Courvoisier** ([kəvəzɪr]), **Dusaules** ([də'sæl]), **Faucheaux** ([fotʃeks]), **Geathreaux** (['gəθraks]), **Orgeron** (['ɔrəɡən]).

Given these examples, any attempt to explain the phenomenon of pronunciation needs to take into account the relationship among (a) spelling, (b) oral performance of what is taken to be spelled, (c) aural (or cognitive) experience of that performance, (d) visual experience of spelling, and (e) the experience of having to perform something unfamiliar.

Categories of non-bearers' experience of names

To begin from the point of view of the person who does not bear the name, but must pronounce it, the perceptual field is divided into SOUND, WRITING, and RELATIONSHIP between the two. The pronouncer is also faced with the evident requirement to pronounce; however, this is not so much perceived as entered into as an act which, once begun, must take care of itself for better or worse (see below).

As for SOUND, the (English-speaking) hearer may recognize a sound as a familiar name, e.g. [smɪθ]. This will generally be regarded as posing no barrier to producing the name when required. However, the hearer may not rec-

ognize the sound, as hypothetically in the case of the French pronunciation of the name **Argeanton** ([aʁʒɑ̃tɔ̃]). The [aʁ], [ʒɑ̃], [tɔ̃] may not be recognized at all by a monolingual English speaker – or, if minimally recognized, may be felt to be so foreign that the effort to repeat it has little chance of success. If, moreover, the speaker has little concept of spelling, then the forced result will be able to rely on few cues as crutches.

As for WRITING, quite apart from heard sound, readers may recognize a written form, say *Smith* (or *Jones*); if so, they will be able to produce a pronunciation without problem. Or readers may not recognize the form; an extreme example would be a name in a foreign script, but even a name like **Cuiellette** or **Calongne** would serve. Potentially, the scope for visual confusion might appear to be greater than that for aural confusion; however, in French names usually no more than one unfamiliar vowel- or consonant-cluster is present, and it can frequently be passed over. Indeed, a frequent strategy in this case is to ignore what is unfamiliar, to substitute something familiar, and to press ahead with the rest, hence [kju'let] or [kə'lon] for the above names. An unfamiliar foreign script would, of course, provide no basis for performance.

The case of RELATIONSHIP is *prima facie* more complex. First, hearers/readers may recognize a written form and a sound as going together (the written form as the spelling of the sound, and the sound as the pronunciation of the written form), and they can pronounce accordingly; thus **Hebert** ['eber] (in New Orleans this can be taken as known; see below). Second, hearers/readers may recognize the sound but not the written form. (Frequently this would mean that hearers/readers do not recognize the sound and the written form as going together; however, *ex hypothesi*, they take the forms as related in such a case.) Hearers/readers have two choices: (i) to produce the familiar sound, and either ignore the written form, or revise the interpretation of it; or (ii) to ignore the familiar sound, and attempt to match the written form. Readers of **Jacques**, for example, may be familiar with the pronunciation [ʒak], but may nonetheless say [ʒaks] or [dʒaks], perhaps interpreting the familiar pronunciation as defective. Third, hearers/readers may recognize the written form, but not recognize the sound taken to go with it. Take the example of **Aucoin**, pronounced ['okwɛ̃] by its bearer (here hypothetical for the sake of argument). In this case, hearers/readers may try to match the bearer's pronunciation (and pronounce, e.g. ['okwæn]), ignoring their own previous pronunciations ([okwin]) of the written form, possibly re-interpreting it as mistaken. Or the written form may be pronounced as recognized ([okwin]), ignoring what was heard. Finally, hearers/readers may be presented with a written form and a spoken sound, neither of which provides a recognizable basis for assured pronunciation. Examples might be the names of the French cities Rouen ([ʁwɑ̃]) and Niort ([njɔʁ]). Imagine a situation in which the written name occurs in a list; the bearer points out the

name in the list, and utters it. Readers/hearers would be facing a written form and the pronunciation simultaneously, but recognize neither. In this case hearers/readers may try to match the sound, and ignore the written form; or they may ignore the sound as hopeless, and attempt to pronounce the written form. There are two final strategies: Hearers/readers can negotiate the form (ask for a repetition, make attempts at it, ask for help etc.); or they can seek a way to avoid the issue and be silent.

The above offers an informal framework of ways in which non-bearers experience names they may have to pronounce. Pronunciation, however, must also be approached from the viewpoint of the bearer who, if the name is unfamiliar (as is often the case with French names in New Orleans), is in a position of either ignoring the situation entirely – which, for practical reasons, may not always be possible – or of having to manage the public use of the name.

Bearers' attitudes toward the pronunciation and mispronunciation of their names

There are numerous aspects of the public management of name pronunciation. One of the first issues to face is the bearer's relationship to the name and/or its pronunciation. For example, it can happen that, if a wife is asked how she pronounces her name, she will say that the name is "really her husband's"; it cannot be assumed that they will pronounce it the same way. (It was a matter of public knowledge that a former mayor of New Orleans, Sidney Barthelemy, said [bar'θələmi], whereas his wife said [bar'θələmi]. His was virtually the universal public pronunciation of the name, yet one news anchorperson always used the wife's pronunciation.) One wife (**Alexcee**) said that her husband pronounced the name better than she did; another (**Lepree**) called into the background: "Honey, how do you pronounce our name?"

Another thing which cannot be assumed is that every bearer is committed to one, or any, pronunciation. Some bearers actually avoid committing themselves to a pronunciation – waiting, e.g., to see how the interlocutor will pronounce it. In the case of **Credeur**, a bearer said, "I'm not really sure what the correct pronunciation is, to tell you the truth." A bearer of **Durocher** said, "I use it the way people say it." Occasionally, as in the mayor's case, different pronunciations will exist within a single family. According to one *Fouquet* bearer, "Half the family says ['foke], half ['fuke]." Distortions of any adopted pronunciation are a chronic phenomenon in New Orleans, and it can happen that the bearer will adopt the distortion (this happens also in cases of distorted spellings). **Bressard** was for one bearer *Bessard* before he went into the armed services. Also there, one bearer of **Catron**, a captain, adopted the pronunciation ['ketrən] because ['kæptən 'kætrən] caused too much confusion. It can also happen that a bearer is unable to prevent or avoid a par-

ticularly unlucky distortion, but is unable to adopt the distortion, and is thus forced to abandon the name. Virtually all two-syllable names in New Orleans beginning with *Fag-* (e.g. **Faget** ([fɑ'ʒe]) or *Faug-* (e.g. **Faugeaux** ([fago]) will be pronounced ['fægət] at one time or another, sometimes consistently, producing a difficult situation for the bearer. The situation became so serious for one bearer of what was spelled **Fagout** in the telephone book, but which turned out to be correctly spelled **Fagot**, that the family decided to have the name legally changed to the husband's grandmother's name (Santos).

Other bearers have varying attitudes toward what they regard as mispronunciations of their names. Quite frequently, the bearer does not mind mispronunciations and ignores them. Although **Bazile** is mispronounced "plenty a' times" (often [brə'zil]), one bearer "mostly just lets 'em go on with it." The bearer of **Petitpain**, who claimed to hear "everything but 'petty larceny'," seemed resigned to mispronunciations. The bearer of **Lalande** said she was too old to care ("I'm 97 years old and I don't let little things upset me.") The bearer of **Laguaite** was extremely accommodating: "I tell them I'll answer to *L* if they get that much!" Other bearers do mind mispronunciations, but ignore them anyway. A bearer of **Buffet** accepts what he gets, but prefers [bʌfət] because people tend to make fun of [bʌ'fe].

Sometimes a bearer seems to be unaware of mispronunciations. The bearer of **Houin** claims the pronunciation ['hjuɪn], but was initially called [huē] by the interlocutor; when asked if her name was ever mispronounced, she said no, the interlocutor had pronounced it correctly. The wife of a bearer of **Maureau** said, "I'll let you talk to my husband – he's the ['mɔro]." The husband claimed the pronunciation ['moro]; but when asked if he ever heard the pronunciation ['mɔro], he said no. Conversely, some bearers may refuse or fail to answer to mispronunciations of their names. A bearer of **Dejoie**, while in the Navy, would amuse himself by refusing to answer to frequent mispronunciations of his name during roll call; then, when roll was finished, he would object to not having been called. A more serious case was that of a bearer of **Voisin**. Having spoken only French until age 10, and having only heard the French pronunciation [vwazē], he entered the Army. After some weeks, he asked a friend when his name would be called in roll. The friend replied it had been called all along. The man subsequently learned that he had been declared AWOL.

Some bearers, by contrast, will explicitly claim that one pronunciation is right, and will cling to it. In most cases they will correct people who mispronounce. Many, however, will not always correct. A bearer of **Dureau** "wouldn't correct anyone socially, but [would] if it were business or legal." A bearer of **Orgeron** only corrects "if they say 'Oregon'." A bearer of **Buisson** candidly admits: "I do it for different purposes, and what effect I can get; for clout." The implication is that many bearers are conscious of interlocutors' feelings when faced with correcting them. This is evident in cases

like **Brulet**, whose bearer admits: "I say, 'It's pronounced [bru'le],' and they're usually insulted." A **Brugier** bearer corrects only if it's important: "Mostly people you'll never see again, so why make them miserable?" However, correction is not a guarantee of altering the interlocutor's pronunciation. Some may adhere to a mistaken pronunciation through strength of preconception, or through inattention to the correction. As a bearer of **Fryou** said, "I correct it but it don't do any good. I just tell 'em it's ['friju] and they go right back to ['fraju]."

Two final categories of speaker are sheltered from problems concerning mispronunciation of their names. One includes speakers who are publicly known. In two cases this concerns sports celebrities, e.g. the New Orleans Saints' former quarterback Bobby **Hebert** ([ˈɛbɛr]; see above), whose name was frequently pronounced [ˈhibɛrt] by sportscasters before he became well known. The other case is the news anchorperson Margaret **Dubuisson** ([ˈdubɪsɒn]), who had much trouble until her name came to be pronounced correctly twice a day on prime-time television, in the introduction to the evening news, as well as in advertisements for the evening news at other times during the day and night.

The other category includes the rare bearer who finds the entire notion of mispronunciation offensive, and finds anyone who would bring it up offensively intrusive. One bearer of **Dutreix** objected to being asked if anyone mispronounced his name, and said: "If they make a mistake, they make a mistake. Don't worry about it!"

Bearers' strategies for managing public pronunciation of their names

Depending on bearers' attitudes toward the (mis)pronunciation of their names, they will inevitably be faced with having to put those attitudes to practical test. When this occurs, and assuming that the bearers do not simply ignore the situation, they will accordingly have recourse to various ways of conveying the pronunciation of the name. A vast majority of speakers proceed on the assumption that the, or a, pronunciation of their name can be conveyed to an interlocutor if they choose to convey it, whether to correct or simply to inform; a number of devices are revealed as being available for this purpose. Perhaps the most evident of these is the device of utterance or repetition. That is, the bearer takes it that the pronunciation can be learned or conveyed by the interlocutor's or bearer's saying it or repeating it. This can be done spontaneously. Or it may be done in response to the interlocutor asking for help (**Jacquillon**: "Most people don't even try to pronounce it, but will ask what it should be.") Finally, it may be done in response to an unsuccessful attempt at the name by the interlocutor. Thus **Duquesnay**: "They are usually struggling to pronounce it, and are happy for my assistance."

For some names, it is possible to adduce a homophone or a rhyme for all or part of the name. One way of proceeding is to mention the homophone(s) or rhyme(s) which cover(s) the entire name. For example, **Argeanton** can be covered by “*ar* like *car*, *gin*, *ton* like a *ton of coal*.” Others: **Barre**: “It’s like ‘Green Beret’.” **Cresson**: “You know Lee Press-On Nails? It sounds like that.” **Faugeaux**: “I tell them to say [sings] *do-re-mi-fa-go*, or sometimes tell them it’s a lot like [‘fargo], as in *Wells Fargo*.” (A well-known visual case of this is the refrigeration company **Robert**, whose logo, painted on company trucks, is a picture of a bear rowing a boat.) The homophone or rhyme can also be alluded to without mentioning it, as in **Bourdeu** (“like the city”), **Brou** (“like beer”), **De Gruy** (“it’s just like the temperature”). A homophone or rhyme may cover part of the name, and the rest be adjusted by mentioning letters: **Avril** (“Take *April*, take away the *p* and put the *v*, and you have it.”), **Huguet** (“Drop the *h* and ‘you get’ out of town.”). Or the homophone or rhyme may cover part of the word, whereas the rest is assumed to become clear, without further device: **Barilleau** (“You know the singer Barry Manilow?”), **Dejoie** (“It’s a little like *days*, and then the end.”), **Jambon** (“It’s just like jam that you eat, and then *bon* could be either [ban] or [bon].” Or it may happen that the bearer has only a homophonous scrap to cling to, as in one example of **Deroche**, where the bearer will say simply “Shhh.”

A third device used by bearers is spelling. Some consider that the pronunciation can be conveyed merely by virtue of the interlocutor’s seeing the spelled name. A name such as **Duthu** or **Faucheaux** is taken by its bearer to be “pronounced just like it’s spelled.” Or the bearer will actually spell out the name, thereby “conveying” the pronunciation, as in **Viger**: “*v* as in *victory*, *i-g-e-r*.” Or the bearer, aware that the spelling of the name is not a sure guide to its pronunciation, will spell not the name but the name’s envisioned pronunciation: **Dupuy**: “It’s spelled *d-u-p-u-y* but pronounced *d-u-p-w-e*.” Letters, however, can also be more consciously used as metalinguistic devices, instead of as mere items in spelling recitation. For example, the bearer of **Casteix** tells people, “The *i* is silent.” If an interlocutor makes **Castillon** into a four-syllable name, the bearer will point out: “There is no *i* [after *ll*] in the name.” Finally, the bearer may refer to the homophonous part of another word whose spelling is analogous to the corresponding part of the name, as in the case of **Casbergue**, whose bearer tells people it is “like *catalogue*: the *g-u-e* is [gə].”

Often the entire problem of finding devices can be sidestepped by using a language-name as a metalinguistic term. Thus the pronunciation of **Hezeau** can be conveyed merely by saying, “It’s a French name with a French ending.” This is sometimes enough to ensure understanding. Another way of alluding to, and thereby conveying, the correct pronunciation is to eliminate a better-known but mistaken rival that sounds like it, as when the bearers of both **Ardenaux** and **Ardeneaux** say, “It’s not *Arceneaux*.”

TOWARD LAY METALANGUAGE

The lay metalinguistic devices sketched briefly above form an initial framework for comparison with linguists' discussions of pronunciation. Two points may be made:

(a) Monolingual speakers do not seem to conceive of pronunciation problems in such terms as "physical/articulatory barriers." Such barriers only appear to arise in "pedagogical" contexts in which interlocutors are being "taught" the correct French pronunciation of a name. Only in such a context would interlocutors "discover" that they "could not say" a French *r* or a French *u*. Outside these specialized contexts, speakers seem directly to target sounds which "will do," as in the case of **Calongne** ("standard" French pronunciation [kalɔ̃n]), pronounced [kəlɔ̃n]. With regard to phonotactics, this moves into the issue of subjective attitudes and "the sense of the language." For example, it is a fact that English words do not end in [ɲ]; but speakers are not physically prevented from pronouncing [ɲ] at the ends of words (it would be possible to end an utterance of *onion* at *ni*). Rather, they may sense that it is "not right" to do so, hence they will tend to substitute a sound that is familiar – [on], [ɔ̃n]. It is in these terms that speakers approach "the phonology of the language."

(b) It is clear that bearers' pronunciations of their names, the spellings of those names, and those names' mispronunciations by others are interrelated in very diverse ways. There can be no direct correlation between pronunciation and spelling, because the importance which bearers accord to the oral vs. written tradition of their names is never constant. It not only changes from speaker to speaker, but (as we have seen) can vary for a single speaker depending on circumstances. One bearer will count as a correct pronunciation what another bearer of the same name will count as a mispronunciation (**Amedee** ['æməde]/['æmədi], **Dauzat** ['dozɑ]/['dozæt]); but they may change their views of this in some contexts.

Given these considerations, we may tentatively define pronunciation as a notion which is used by speakers in daily communicational interaction: Pronunciation is a mode of utterance mediated for the speaker or the hearer by (i) the notion "how an item sounds" in conjunction with the notions "correct" and "incorrect," "good" and "bad"; and by (ii) the ways in which such a mode of utterance can be publicly managed.

Such a definition emphasizes that pronunciation is a normative concept – in which a certain category of physical activity is mediated by notions which speakers carry around with them, and in terms of which they interpret their experience. This is related to the Saussurean point that there can be no raw speech sound conceived apart from a conceptual level, since speech sound can only be delineated in terms of such a level; but there can be no raw con-

ceptual level apart from sound, since it is in terms of sound that the concepts themselves are delineated (Saussure 1922:155). Thus pronunciation becomes a focus of interrelated notions which speakers use to solve certain types of communicational problems. That network of notions can be informally reduced to some basic types, of which the following are central:

First, the notion "pronunciation" is itself a notion which speakers use to manage communication. Whether with respect to names or to words in general, it is a device which concerns the public nature of communicational units, and the importance to speakers of those units. The vast majority of people interviewed understood something by this term. What varied was what bearers understood by "mispronunciation"; often they would include intentionally frivolous (or malicious) distortions of their names, interpreting the request for information as a prompting for a personal revelation, as opposed to a report of failed attempts based on ignorance or lack of skill. But, in one way or another, pronunciation is a concept they all use.

A second device used by speakers is the alphabet. This is a prime example of a lay metalinguistic device, because it provides a manageable set of objects with which most people are familiar, by virtue of an education which has taught them this set precisely in terms of its connection to oral speech. Thus the alphabet emerges as an entirely separate domain of metalinguistic devices which appear inherently to include the notion of an essential connection between speech and writing. The objects have a convenient "order"; they can be "recited" in a completely conventional and universally recognizable manner; and they each have names that allow them to be referred to, and which thus give them an extra dimension of manipulability. The alphabet gives speakers an easy set of tools for directly managing speech.

A third concept is a kind of loosened and expanded version of the alphabet, the strictly visual form of which is the rebus. Here, instead of the restricted set of alphabet letters, we have at our disposal the entirety of things and concepts for which there are words. Here, by contrast with the alphabet, there is no conventional order or homogeneity of visual form; however, the notion of similarity of sound between metalinguistic object-name and pronounced item in the language is fundamental. Whereas the stringing together of homophonous items is a kind of "spelling," the items which spell are designed to be in a relationship of identity with what is spelled. The success of this device depends on familiarity with the meaning attaching to the sound of the metalinguistic object-name. Thus it is useless to adduce the sound of *beret* if interlocutors have never heard of one; they will need directions how to pronounce that word as well.

A fourth concept available as a metalinguistic device is that of norm. Without a norm ("If they make a mistake, they make a mistake. Don't worry about it!"), anything people say – which will then be regulated for purely practical reasons – will be accepted without comment, and there will remain

nothing "linguistic" to talk about. Without the "tyranny of the alphabet" (Harris 1986, Ch. 2), it may be that the mere oral imitation of others would provide a sufficient basis for successful communication. That is, the ability and propensity to imitate or repeat the sound of what someone has uttered would be taken as a linguistic universal (cf. Love 1990:99 ff., who makes a slightly different point). Perhaps it is only when speakers are distracted by the question "How would that be spelled?" that their confidence in their purely oral ability is shaken. Be this as it may, it remains the case that we operate verbally with constant appeal to a norm; hence we conceive of what people say, and how they say it, as "right" or "wrong," "good" or "bad."

A fifth useful concept is that of silence – which in many cases, can be used as a way of managing communicational exchange. In the case of an ignored mispronunciation, silence can serve to further the communication by preventing it from being disrupted. Or silence may be used in another way, as goading an interlocutor into self-correction. Silence can communicate assumptions, as when an unforthcoming but expected response prompts a re-evaluation. Silence can protect. In the case of names, silence can also be used as an index of failure; a lack of response may mean a failed pronunciation.

The above discussion is designed to provide evidence that pronunciation embodies the action of uttering sound as mediated by an interrelated network of normative concepts in the possession of speakers. The interpenetration of the subjective with the objective informs every aspect of the study. There was no possibility of treating bearers as "neutral agents of information," or interviews with them as a kind of ore from which we could separate out the pure metal of scientific fact from the slag of informants' views about their own linguistic behavior. Rather, the facts were in part constituted by bearers' views of their own and others' linguistic behavior. Here the situation is the reverse of Labov's "observer's paradox," according to which one expects knowledge to be gained by observing certain facts, while in reality any knowledge of those facts is taken out of the realm of accessibility precisely by virtue of their being observed (Labov 1972:61–62, 209). For us, by contrast, the facts are constituted in and by the process of observation, and by virtue of the interaction between interviewer and bearer, as between bearer and interlocutor generally. In a sense, they are negotiated; but more than this, they are created in and by communication itself, involving as they do the network of concepts by virtue of which people communicate.

NOTES

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¹ Boldface type indicates that the name can be found in the Appendix. Both in the text and the Appendix, when a stress mark is missing from the phonetic transcription, this means that the placement of stress in the pronunciation could not be determined.

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APPENDIX: SELECT LIST OF NAMES WITH NOTES
ON COMMENTS BY THEIR BEARERS

The following is a list of names referred to in the main body of the text. It consists of a representative sample from a larger data base of 984 interviews, conducted almost all by telephone, in the city of New Orleans (Orleans and Jefferson Parishes; see Bocquillon et al. 1994). In the list, IPA transcriptions in parentheses represent pronunciations which bearers consider to be mistaken.

- Alexcee** [ə'leksi] ([ə'leksis]). Said her husband pronounces it better than she does.
- Amedee 1** ['æməde] ([ʼæmədi]).
- Amedee 2** ['æmədi] ([ʼæməde]).
- Andrade 1** [æn'drədi] ([ʼændred], [an'dred]). "I tell them, 'That's not how you say it,' and then have them say it after me."
- Andrade 2** [æn'drədi] ([ʼændred], [ʼændrədi], [æn'dred]). She doesn't bother to correct. Expressed strong irritation that a good friend of hers who is well educated can't seem to get the pronunciation of her name right.
- Andrepoint 1** ['ændrəpant] ([ʼændrəpɔ̃nt]). He breaks it into syllables and gets people to pronounce it syllable by syllable.
- Andrepoint 2** ['ændrəpant] ([ʼændrepant], [ʼændrəpɔ̃nt]). Spells it for them and pronounces it again.
- Andrieu 1** ['ændru] ([an'dreju], [ʼandre]). Just tells them it's ['ændru].
- Andrieu 2** ['ændru] ([ʼandrej]). "I tell them the mispronunciation is a whole different name. My name is just like Landrieu except you drop the *L*. Most people have heard of [former New Orleans mayor] Moon Landrieu."
- Andrieu 3** ['ændru]. Many mispronounce. Never just says the name, always says it then spells it. "You would think in New Orleans people would know how to say it, but they don't. It's not all that common a name, with street signs or anything. We've given up on the real pronunciation a long time ago. Still, people have to hear it or they never say it right. That surprises me since this is New Orleans."
- Antrainer** ['æntrenər]. Spells it. Tells people to think: first name is *Ann*, last name *Trainer*.
- Ardeneaux** ['ardəno] ([ʼarsəno]). Says the name is not *Arceneaux*.
- Ardeneaux** ['ardəno] ([ʼardəneks], [ʼarsəno]). Says the name is not *Arceneaux*.
- Areaux** ['ærio] ([ʼæro]). "I laugh at them."

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- Areaux** ['ærio] ([l'æro]). "It's the same as *Breaux*, only *Breaux* has a *B*."
- Argeanton** ['ardʒɪntən]. "It's easy to pronounce: *ar* like *car*, *gin*, *ton* like a *ton of coal*."
- Armingeon** ['armɪŋdʒən] ([l'arməndʒən], ['armɪŋdʒən]). From Alabama; he said that one of his relatives changed the name to Armington; often he would begin to spell the name, get to *ge*, and people would automatically finish it with *ton*.
- Aucoin 1** ['okwæn] ([l'okɔjn], ['okɔjn]).
- Aucoin 2** ['okwæn] ([l'okɔjn], ['ɔkɛ], ['okɔjn], ['ɔkwɛ]).
- Avril 1** ['evrəl], ['evrɪl] ([l'ævrɪl]). She says ['evrəl], then spells it. Says it is mispronounced as if spelled *Avrille*.
- Avril 2** ['evrəl] ([a'vrɪl]). "Do you repeat it?" "I do sometimes but they can't get it right; sometimes I spells it. I say, "Take *April*, take away the *p* and put the *v*, and you have it."
- Barilleau** ['bærələ] ([l'bærəlu], ['bærəli]). She corrects by saying, "You know the singer Barry Manilow? ..."
- Barre** [bæ're] ([l'bæri], [bar], [bær]). To correct, she says, "It's like *Green Beret*."
- Barrosse** ['barɔs] ([bə'rɔsi]). He says it is said [bar] like *bar* and [rɔs] like *Ross*.
- Bayard 1** ['bajard], ['bejard] ([l'bajard]). When they lived in the country, they went by ['bajard]. In the city they normally go by ['bejard]. The husband works for an oil company, and he couldn't get them to use ['bejard], so they let it go. They can still tell they are getting a call from New Iberia if someone asks for ['bajard].
- Bayard 2** ['bejard] ([l'bajard]). "I just tell them to say *bay* and then *yard* like in your yard. It's easy and people get it."
- Bayard 3** ['bajard] ([l'bajard]). He doesn't mind if people don't get it right; it is often mispronounced. He knows his name is not the normal French pronunciation. His family was "part of the 1066 invasion of England." They settled in Ireland for several centuries before coming to America. He considers himself more Irish than French.
- Bayle** [bel] ([l'beli], [bɔj], [baj], ['bali], [bɛ]). He usually just has them repeat the name. "I have used *bale of hay* or *bale out*."
- Bazile** [bə'zil] ([l'bɔ'zil]). The name is mispronounced "plenty a' times. I mostly just lets 'em go on with it."
- Benoit** ['benwa] ([bə'nɔjt]). He breaks it into syllables, then uses exaggerated mouth movements.
- Berteau** ['bɛrtə] ([l'bɛrtəw]). He breaks it into *bear* and *toe*.
- Bourdais** ['bɔrdez]. "*Bore days*."
- Bourdeu** ['bɔrdo] ([l'bɔrdy]). "It's like the city."
- Bourquard** ['bɔkard] ([l'bugard]). He tells people to use *q* instead of *g*. He says the French say [burkward].
- Boutillier 1** [butəli] ([bəntili], [butiɛr]). He tells people to say [but] as in *boot*, and to add *illier*."
- Boutillier 2** [bu'tilje] ([butiliɛr]). Just makes them repeat, or doesn't say anything.
- Bouzon** [buzən] ([buzæn]). "It depends on whether or not they need to get it straight." Claims that, when people spell her name, they tend to change the *o* to an *a*.
- Bressard** [brə'zard] ([bə'sard]). When her husband went into the service, they changed his name to *Bressard* from *Bessard*. Her husband never changed it back to the original form.
- Brossard** ['brasərd] ([l'brusard], [brə'sard]). "I'll say, '*Broussard*, and leave out the *u*'."
- Brou** [bru] ([l'bræw], [bro]). "It's [bru] like *you* or like beer."
- Brouillette** [bru'jet], [bru'let]. Doesn't like to correct. She asked how the interlocutor would pronounce it; the interlocutor said that's what he was going to ask her. She said, "They'll say [bru'jet], [bru'let]; I like [bru'jet]." Her notion of the pronunciation of her name seemed entirely dependent on how others pronounce it.
- Brugier** ['bruʒje] ([l'brugər], ['bɜgər], ['brudʒɪr]). Corrects "only if it's really important; mostly people you'll never see again, so why make them miserable?"
- Brulet** [bru'le] ([l'bru'let]). "Like a silent *t*. I say 'It's pronounced [bru'le],' and they're usually insulted."
- Buffet** ['bafət] ([bə'fe]). Doesn't correct. Prefers ['bafət] because people think [bə'fe] is funny and make jokes.
- Buisson** ['bjusən], ['bwisɔ] ([l'busən], ['busiən]). "To someone who does not know New Orleans culture, I say it's either one or the other. I do it for different purposes, and what effect I can get; for clout."
- Calongne** [kə'lɔrn] ([kə'lɔn]).

- Casbergue** ['kæsbərg] ([kæsbərgu]). Corrects by saying it's like *catalogue*: the *gue* is [gə]."
- Casteix** ['kæsteks] ([kæstet], [kæstɪn], [koteks], [kæstə]). "I tell them the *i* is silent, then it is easy to pronounce."
- Castillon** [kæst'itlən], [kæstələn] ([kæst'etlo], [kæst'itlən]). "If people are having a hard time with [kæst'itlən], I use the simpler [kæstələn]. But if they make it a four-syllable name, I say there is no *i* in the name."
- Catoire 1** [kætwa] ([kətəri], [kætəren]). Usually just lets it go. "After all these years, it doesn't bother me anymore."
- Catoire 2** [kætwa] ([kə'təri], [kætəri], [ketwæ]). "Imitate the pronunciation."
- Catron** ['kætrən], [ketrən] ([kætrə], [ketron]). When her father was in the service, he began to use the alternate form because people would get tongue-tied trying to say *Captain* ['kætrən]. He became Captain ['ketrən].
- Champagne** [ʃæmpən]. No mispronunciations: "It's just *Champagne*, *c-h-a-m-p-a-g-n-e*."
- Courvoisier** [kur'vwasjə] ([kəvəzir]). "Most of the people get it right down here. They butcher the spelling more than the pronunciation. I usually repeat by pronouncing the name correctly. I say the name, and they say, 'Whoa, you better spell that'."
- Couvillon** ['kuvian] ([kə'vilən]). "Pronounce it as if it was spelled *Couvion*. That's how we learned it in school, like when you had to break it down into phonics. You can spell it quicker if you write it down instead of thinking. It's the *ls* that throws it off." Both parents spoke Acadian French.
- Crais** [krez]. "If they spell it, they'll put a *g* on the end. It's pronounced as it looks."
- Credeur** ['kredər], [krədʊr]. Also legitimate are [kredər], [kredɛr]. Didn't correct people in the Service. "I'm not really sure what the correct pronunciation is, to tell you the truth. I tell everybody it's ['kredər]; then I'll tell 'em how to spell it. In Lafayette the old people who still speak French call it [kredər]. Younger people who don't speak French say ['kredər]. It's [kredɛr] in real French."
- Cresson** ['kresən]. "Just ... you know Lee Press-On Nails? It sounds like that."
- Cuiellette** [kju'let]. "Think of [dʒu'let] [Gillette] razor blades; instead of [dʒu'let] it's [kju'let]."
- Danjean 1** [dændʒin] ([dāʒā]). "The pronunciation is [dāʒā], but here in the city they go by [dændʒin] ... A lot of people mispronounce the name as [dɛʒən], which is a common name around Lafayette."
- Danjean 2** [dāʒā]. "Most people in the city when they see it, pronounce the New Orleans way. When people hear [dændʒin], they think it is two words, with a hyphen." He retains [dāʒā] even though it is universally pronounced [dændʒin] in New Orleans.
- Dauzat 1** ['doza] ([dɔzæt]). Repeats.
- Dauzat 2** [dozæt] ([doza]).
- De Gruy 1** [digru] ([digri], [digre]). "Just say it; if they hear it, they got it."
- De Gruy 2** [dægri] ([dægri], [dægaj], [də'gri], [dægri]). "It's just like the temperature."
- De Gruy 3** [degri] ([dægri], [dægri], [də'gre], [dægri]). To correct people, she pronounces it clearly, but sometimes they still don't get it. She says she thinks it's a mind-set that tries to deal with the spelling, but doesn't know how.
- De La Houssaye** [də'ləhuse] ([dɛləhusi], [dɛləhæwsi]). "I just repeat it."
- Dejoie 1** ['dɛʒwa] ([dɛdʒɔj], [dɛdʒən], [dɛdʒɔjs]). He tells people to pronounce three letters at a time. He had a hard time, especially with the phone company, to correct their mistake of wanting to make two words of the name, capitalizing the *j*.
- Dejoie 2** [dɛʒwa] ([dɛdʒui], [dɛdʒɔj], [dɛdʒo]). When she corrects people, they will often remark: "But it doesn't look like that." She tells them to look again. "It's a little like *days*, and then the end."
- Dejoie 3** [dɛʒwa] ([dɛdʒɔj], [dɛdʒɔj], [dɛdʒən]). He said he had a lot of fun with his name while in the Navy. During roll call, he would refuse to answer to frequent mispronunciations; and then when the roll was finished, he would object to not having been called.
- Deroche** [dəroʃ]. Says, *Shhh*.
- Dubuisson** ['dubɪsən] ([dubwɪsən], [du'bɔjsən], [dubəʃən], [du'plantie]). Many people ask her to pronounce it for them. She simply repeats. The spelling problem is worse.
- Duplantier** [duplāʃe], [duplātje] ([dɛpləntɪs], [dɛplɛsɪs], [duplɛntər]). "I just tell them it's [duplāʃe] or [duplātje]."

PRONOUNCING FRENCH NAMES IN NEW ORLEANS

- Dupleix** ['dupleks] ([dupli], [du'pleksis]). "I say my last name is not [dupli] or [du'pleksis], it's Juliette ['dupleks]."
- Dupuis** [du'pwi] ([dupis], [dupri]). Does not usually correct unless they ask. Repeats, usually. "It's like *p-w-e* ..."
- Dupuy** [du'pwi]. "It's spelled *d-u-p-u-y* but pronounced *d-u-p-w-e*."
- Duquesnay** ['dukəne] ([du'kezne], [duken]). "They are usually struggling to pronounce it, and are happy for my assistance."
- Dureau** [də'ro], ['djuro]. "Some family members say ['djuro] like *bureau*, others have a more French accent like [də'ro]. [də'ro] is how I say it. Almost no one gets it correct. Over the telephone I'll say, 'This is Mrs. [də'ro].' Socially I wouldn't correct anyone. But if it were in business or in legal ..."
- Durocher** [dəro'ʃe], [də'rofər]. "The pronunciation is [də'roʃe]; other people say [də'rofər]. I use it the way people say it. The latter is a lot more common here. I just tell them how it's said." He was from Thibodeaux, and had a Cajun accent. Avoided answering the question how he pronounces the name.
- Dusaules** ['dusəlz], [dəsəlz] ([də'sæli], [də'sæli]). "The Americanized way? It's ['dusəlz] or [dəsəlz]. That's our pronunciation. I think it used to be [də'sæli], [də'sæli], something like that. They tend to spell it with *De*." Corrects: "In a polite way. If they tore it up, it's ['dusəlz]. Without being ugly about it."
- Duthu** ['duθu] ([dudu], [dudi]). "I tell 'em it's pronounced just like it's spelled."
- Dutreix** ['dutre]. "If they make a mistake, they make a mistake. Don't worry about it!"
- Ecuyer** [ekwije] ([ekwiji]). Usually people who telephone for the first time say, "*E ... E ... E* ..." and he pronounces it. This doesn't bother him.
- Faget** [fəʒe] ([fægət]). Repeats it. If someone still can't understand [fəʒe], she will use [fəʒet] to see if that helps.
- Faggard** ['fægərd] ([fægət], [fə'gard]). Just lets it go. Sounded as though it was slightly frustrating to have it pronounced [fægət], but would not say how much.
- Fagout**. This was misspelled; it is really **Fagot**. They just changed it, since it has been mispronounced so often as [fægət]. Did not want her children to have to live with all the bad jokes. Now their name is Santos, her husband's grandmother's name.
- Faucheaux 1** ['foʃe] ([fəfo]). Says it's pronounced just like it's spelled, so not too many people mispronounce it. If they do say it wrong, she spells it and says it for them.
- Faucheaux 2** ['foʃe] ([fəfoʃeks]). Says she has more of a problem with people misspelling her name. The two most common examples are *Fouchay* and *Fouche*.
- Faucher** ['foʃe] ([fəwtʃər], [fə'kər]). "Just pronounce it right. It's easy once you hear it. Some people want to make the soft *ch* into a hard *k* sound."
- Faucheux** ['foʃe] ([fəfoʃeks], [fəfo]). Grew up in St. John Parish, where she spoke French before she spoke English. Name used to be pronounced [fəfo]. Some of her husband's family have settled on [fəfo]. It doesn't bother her if people mispronounce the name; but it does upset her husband, who corrects people with a clear pronunciation.
- Faugeaux** [fəgo] ([fə'go], [fə'fargo], [fə'gies], [fəgo], [fə'gət]). "It's like in the jingle that most people know from 'The Sound of Music'. I tell them to say [sings] *do-re-mi-fa-go*, or sometimes tell them it's a lot like [fə'fargo], as in *Wells Fargo*."
- Foucheaux** ['foʃe] ([fəfo]). Doesn't correct. The son lives out of town and says [fəfo].
- Fouquet** ['foke] ([fuke]). "Half the family says [foke], half [fuke]."
- Fryou** ['friju] ([fə'raju]). Gets pronounced "on account of the spelling of it. I correct it but it don't do any good. I just tell 'em it's [friju], and they go right back to [fə'raju]."
- Geathreaux** ['goθro] ([fə'goθraks]). "I tell people it's like, *Go throw the ball*."
- Hebert** ['eber] ([hə'bert], [hə'bərt]). Depends on whether he sees the person more than once. If it's a waiter or in a department store, he doesn't bother correcting.
- Hezeau 1** ['hezo] ([fə'hozo], [fə'izo]). Tells people who mispronounce that it's a French name with a French ending.
- Hezeau 2** ['hezo] ([fə'heksən]). Most of the time people have a hard time pronouncing it when they see the spelling, when they see *h*, *z*, and *u*.
- Houin** ['hjuin]. Interlocutor pronounced it [huē]; when the bearer was asked if her name was ever mispronounced, she said no, the interlocutor had pronounced it correctly.

- Huguet 1** [juget] ([hə'gwet]). "Drop the *h* and 'you get' out of town."
- Huguet 2** [juget]. "Pronounce like *you* and *get*."
- Jacque** [dʒak] ([ˈdʒækju]). "It's pronounced like *jock* or as in Jacques Cousteau."
- Jacques** [ʒaks] ([ʒakə], [ˈʒake], [ʒakes]). "I tell them to think of someone they've probably heard of, [ʒaks] Cousteau."
- Jacquillon** [ˈʒakliɔ̃] ([dʒə'kwiljən]). "Most people don't even try to pronounce it, but will ask what it should be. It helps to tell them the *ls* have the same sound as in *court-bouillon*."
- Jambon** [dʒæmban], orig. [ʒābɔ̃] ([ˈdʒænbən], [ˈdʒæmsən]). "It's just like jam that you eat, and then *bon* could be either [ban] or [bon]. We like [ban]."
- Jaquillard 1** [ˈdʒækwilard]. "They have all kinds of ways to say it – almost anything with an 'ard' or 'nard'. Most people want to put a *c* in it." She said she couldn't give specific errors. She spells it for them, pointing out the *q* and the fact that there is no *c*.
- Jaquillard 2** [ˈdʒækələrd] ([dʒə'kɪlərd]). Sometimes they drop the *J* and say [ægələrd]. Her husband volunteered that often people think he is saying his name is Jack Lard.
- Laguait** [lə'get] ([lə'kwet], [lə'gwat]). "I tell them I'll answer to *L* if they get that much!" Even after she pronounces it, people still stumble around, trying to make sense of the spelling.
- Lalande** [lə'land] ([lə'len], [lə'lendi]). "I say it for them, but they sometimes still don't get it. It doesn't really bother me though. I'm 97 years old and I don't let little things upset me."
- Lepree** [lə'pri]. "Honey, how do you pronounce our name?" People get it confused and say *Dupree*. This alternate form is not treated as a mispronunciation, but as a separate form.
- Maureau** [ˈmɔro], [ˈmoro] ([ˈmiro]). "Just pronounce it." The wife answered the phone and in response to the query said, "I'll let you talk to my husband – he's the [ˈmɔro]." After talking with the husband, who said his name was [ˈmoro], the interlocutor asked him if he ever hears the pronunciation [ˈmoro]. Bearer said no.
- Mayeaux 1** [ˈmeju], [ˈmejo]. Most people pronounce it one of the two ways that the family uses. There were mistakes made on birth certificates, and the family has just lived with it.
- Mayeux 2** [mejər] ([ˈmejo]). "I tell them it's like Mayor Barthelemy."
- Mayronne** [meron], [mə'ron] ([me'roni]). Sometimes when she is shopping by phone and they can't find her name, they find it listed under the *Rs* (May Ronne).
- Orgeron** [ˈɔʒərə̃] ([ˈɔʒəgan], [ˈɔʒərəgan]). Corrects if they say [ˈɔʒəgan], not if they say [ˈɔʒərəgan].
- Orillac** [ˈɔʀələk]. Is from Panama, where the pronunciation is [ɔʀidʒak]. Here, she lets people say what they want.
- Pertuit** [pɛrtwit] ([pɛrtuit], [pɛrtu]). "I tell them it's *purr* like a cat and *tweet* like a bird."
- Petitbon** [pɛtiban]. Says it should be [pɛtibon]. Not often mispronounced. Her husband was an NFL football player, so his name is well known.
- Petitpain** [pɛtipæn] ([pɛtɪtpæ], [pɪtəpæn]). Gets "everything but *petty larceny*." Lets it pass.
- Quezergue 1** [krɛ'zer] ([krɛ'zere], [krə'vergi]). Corrects by just saying it right. Many people try to pronounce the *gue*.
- Quezergue 2** [kə'zer] ([ˈkezar], [kju], [kə'zerki]). "I write it out, and then I write out how it should be pronounced: *Ca-zair*."
- Robert** [ˈrober]. The company logo is a picture of a bear rowing a boat.
- Viger** [ˈviʒe] ([ˈviger], [ˈvajger]). Corrects by spelling: "*V* as in *victory*, *i-g-e-r*."
- Voisin** [vwazɛ̃] ([ˈvɔʒɪn], [wazɛ̃], [ˈvwazin]). Corrects by saying: "I will spell the last name for them and then pronounce it." Her husband was born in Grand Caillou, didn't speak anything but French until age ten, and hadn't heard anything but the French pronunciation of the name. He entered the Army, and after a long time said to a friend, "When are they going to call my name?" Friend said, "They've been calling it all along!" He turned out to be listed as AWOL.