

Intersectionality, Lost in Translation? (Re)thinking Inter-sections between Anglophone and Francophone Intersectionality

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Abstract

Inspired by the intersectional formulation “All the Women are White, All the Men are Black,” this paper suggests that “all feminist intersectional analyses are Anglophone and all Francophone feminists are cisgender” to highlight the exclusion of language issues in Anglophone intersectional analyses and of trans issues in their Francophone counterparts.

Résumé

Inspirés par la formulation intersectionnelle « Toutes les femmes sont blanches, tous les hommes sont noirs », cet article suggère que « toutes les analyses féministes intersectionnelles sont anglophones et toutes les féministes francophones sont cisgenres » pour souligner l'exclusion des problèmes de langue dans les analyses intersectionnelles anglophones et des problèmes « transgenre » dans leurs homologues francophones.

Intersectionality, Lost in Translation?

The title of this article could have been, “All feminist intersectional analyses are Anglophone, all Francophone feminists are cisgender, but some of us are brave,” in homage to Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith’s (1982) celebrated collection, *All the Women are White, All the Men are Black, But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women’s Studies*—the title of which has become one of the most popular formulations of intersectionality in the decades since its publication. Although intersectionality has since become a veritable “buzzword” (Davis 2008) across disciplines, its history, significance, and use vary from language to language. Questions of language power relations, however, remain almost entirely absent from Anglophone feminist intersectional analyses. Kimberlé Crenshaw’s (1991) initial theorization of intersectionality denounced monolingualism as a significant barrier for many non-Anglophone American women and, yet, her invitation to theorize language has not been taken up in the development and institutionalization of intersectionality in the last twenty-five years. With the rare and notable exceptions of non-American authors like Ann Denis (2008), Marie-Hélène Bourcier (2011), Helma Lutz, Maria Teresa Herrera Vivar, and Linda Supik (2011), and Chantal Maillé (2012, 2014), linguistic power relations have attracted little attention in English-language conferences and publications in feminist and gender studies where intersectional approaches are the norm. I call the combined institutionalization and Anglicization of intersectionality the “institutio-anglicization of intersectionality.” This phenomenon has both allowed intersectionality to take hold in the academy and normalized it through a distinctly Anglophone understanding.

In non-Anglophone milieus, particularly in the Francophone communities that are the focus of this article, intersectionality initially received a chilly reception. I will show that Francophone feminists’ resistance to intersectionality is due, in part, to institutio-angli-

cization. Despite its initial failure to gain ground in Francophone circles, intersectionality has become a “hit concept” (Dorlin 2012) over the last five years. Major French-language journals in feminist and gender studies, political science, social work, and the social sciences and humanities have recently published their *first* special issues on intersectional analyses (original translations of special issue titles provided): *L'Homme et la Société* (2011, “Feminist Prisms: What is Intersectionality?”); *Politique et Sociétés* (2014, “Intersectionality: Domination, Exploitation, Resistance, and Emancipation”); *Nouvelles pratiques sociales* (2014, “Intersectionality: Theoretical Reflections and Uses in Feminist Research and Intervention”); *Interrogations? Revue pluridisciplinaire de sciences humaines et sociales* (2015, “Thinking About Intersectionality”); and *Recherches Féministes* (2015, “Intersectionalities”). While Francophone academics who use intersectionality are more likely to discuss language issues than their Anglophone counterparts, Anglophone intersectional analyses are increasingly more likely to problematize other topics and axes of oppression, such as transphobia (or cisnormativity) as yet completely absent from Francophone intersectional analyses. For example, as I will show, in a sample of 15 key Francophone texts on feminism and intersectionality, only one makes a single mention of trans issues amidst lengthy enumerations of other oppressions. Simply stated, Anglophone feminists seem to forget that they have a language (English) and Francophone feminists seem to forget that they have a gender identity (cisgender, i.e. non-transgender).

As with other ideas, theories, and political tools, “intersectionality travels” (Crenshaw 2011, 221-223). In its travels, intersectionality encounters varying degrees of enthusiasm in different national, linguistic, cultural, and political contexts; meets with resistance; adapts and is adapted; alters and is altered; and transforms and is transformed, particularly through the processes of linguistic translation, but also via social, cultural, and political translation. As Patricia Hill Collins (2012) asks: “What, if anything, has been lost in the current translation [of intersectionality]? What, if anything, might be gained via a new translation?” (n.p.). Inspired by these two theorists and using the analogy of intersectionality’s travels in Anglophone and Francophone communities, I ask the following

question: What are the limits and potentialities of the translation and inter-sections (understood as both interconnections and sections/divides) of Francophone and Anglophone feminist intersectional analyses? I propose an analysis of these limits and potentialities guided by an intersectional formulation in which “all feminist intersectional analyses are Anglophone and all Francophone feminists are cisgender.” This intersectional “analytical tool” is useful to “amplify and highlight specific problems” (Crenshaw 2011, 232) that are the central concern of this article: the exclusion of language issues in Anglophone intersectional analyses and of trans issues in their Francophone counterparts. I hope not only that pointing out the “failures” of these communities’ intersectional analyses will enrich their approaches, but that it will also permit us to (re)think solidarities between the communities themselves.

To do this, I combine critical genealogy, deconstruction, and auto-ethnographic methodology. The first of this article’s three sections addresses the absence of problematization of Anglonormativity and language issues in feminist intersectional analyses in English. The second, after briefly considering factors that have hindered the popularization of intersectionality in Francophone feminist circles until recently, including Anglonormativity, shows that Francophone feminists disregard trans issues, currently a central topic in many intersectional analyses in English. The third section, based on an auto-ethnographic analysis inspired by my experience as a transgender, Francophone man, sketches a possible future for those “brave” trans Francophones at the crossroads of these inter-sections. To conclude, I invite a (re)thinking of possible alliances suggested by the inter-sections between Anglophone and Francophone intersectional analyses.

“All Feminist Intersectional Analyses are Anglophone”

The occasion for this article was a two-day seminar on the subject of ‘intersectionality’ that I recently gave during a visiting stint at a university in Germany. To my surprise, the seminar...drew interest from Ph.D. candidates and colleagues from cities throughout the region, all prepared to sacrifice their weekend and put aside their language difficulties (the seminar was in English) in order to participate. (Davis 2008, 67)

Although Kathy Davis (2008) uses neither the expression “*institutio-anglicization*” nor “*institutionalization*” in her discussion of intersectionality, her article is dedicated to understanding the growing popularity of this concept within Anglo-American contexts and a wide variety of other national contexts. She states that this seminar was given in Germany in English. What is interesting about this is how Davis, like many Anglophone theorists and despite their best intentions, presents language as an individual problem (“their language difficulties”) and not as a consequence of linguistic power relations and systemic social and political dynamics. This is an excellent example of Anglonormativity. Inspired by terms like “heteronormativity” and “cismodernity,” which refer to cissexual/cisgender (i.e. non-trans people) norms by which trans people are judged (Baril 2015), Anglonormativity is a system of structures, institutions, and beliefs that marks English as the norm. In Anglonormative contexts, Anglonormativity is the standard by which non-Anglophone people are judged, discriminated against, and excluded (Baril 2016a). To better illustrate the subtle Anglonormativity underlying Davis’ statement, I present an example drawn from Disability/Deaf Studies. If a seminar for Deaf people were held without sign language interpreters, stating that “their language difficulties” could hinder participation, it would erase audist/oralist norms and structures (Samuels 2013). Interestingly, the absence of interpreters for languages other than English in a variety of situations, like the aforementioned seminar, summer schools, conferences, and other events often in English (Ventola, Shalom, and Thompson 2002), is not seen as a systemic accessibility issue the way it is for disabled or Deaf people. However, as Ellen Samuels (2013) and Eleanor Rose Ty (2010) point out, insufficient English skills in Anglonormative contexts can be a serious accessibility problem for immigrants. A person who does not master English may experience difficulties or be unable to access services like health care, find housing or a job, or simply manage the numerous forms of communication that are part of daily life. Instead of interpreting immigrants’ limited participation in Anglophone contexts as “language difficulties” and leaving it up to them to learn to understand and speak English with more ease, fluidity, and rapidity, we need to reflect critically about how institutions, structures,

and social organizations might be rethought in ways that take a variety of people’s language skills into consideration.

A significant obstacle to recognizing that non-Anglophone people’s language “difficulties” are societal is the fact that Anglophone identity, like many other dominant identities, is unmarked and remains invisible to the Anglonormative gaze. Despite the extensive problematization of the global dominance of English in economic, political, cultural, and academic spheres (Ventola, Shalom, and Thompson 2002) as “linguistic imperialism” (Phillipson 1992) or the “hegemony of English” (Descarries 2003, 2014), these analyses have most often been put forward by non-Anglophone academics. Furthermore, critical analyses of Anglonormativity have been limited to the fields of sociology and sociolinguistics and have rarely attracted the attention of Anglophone scholars in anti-oppression fields like feminist, gender, queer, or trans studies. For example, while the terms “Anglo-normativity” and “Anglonormativity” produce 352 hits in Google searches (performed on May 22, 2015), similar terms, such as “heteronormativity” (370,000 results), “homonormativity” (49,600 results), and even “cismodernity” (12,100 results) produce considerably more results. This clearly demonstrates that Anglonormativity is currently neither discussed nor recognized in English-speaking social movements and related disciplines. In addition to the term Anglonormativity not being used, language issues in general are not considered as I will show below. Indeed, Anglophone feminist intersectional analyses concerned with many dimensions of identity and axes of oppression have thus far failed to address Anglonormativity.

Crenshaw (1991) is one of the first and only English-speaking authors using feminist intersectional approach to denounce what she calls “monolingualism.” She presents the case of a Latina woman whose husband threatened her life and who was denied shelter services explicitly because of her limited English-language skills and the shelter’s lack of bilingual personnel. Crenshaw reminds us that this is not an isolated case. In fact, in shelters in the United States serving a large number of immigrant women, language barriers are often the most significant obstacles to receiving services. Crenshaw questions the logic of seeing language non-accessibility as an individual issue, a perspective that leads fem-

inist groups to fault specific women (victim-blaming) instead of perceiving the systemic obstacles preventing these women from accessing the same support and services as others:

Here the woman in crisis was made to bear the burden of the shelter's refusal to anticipate and provide for the needs of non-English-speaking women. [...] The specific issue of monolingualism and the monistic view of women's experience that set the stage for this tragedy were not new issues in New York. Indeed, several women of color reported that they had repeatedly struggled with the New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence over language exclusion and other practices that marginalized the interests of women of color. (1264)

Despite significant intersections between linguistic and racial identities, Crenshaw's (1991) call to problematize monolinguist attitudes in Anglonormative contexts has not been taken up by other feminists who use intersectional analyses. This is still more surprising given the central concern of intersectional analysis is the experiences of women of colour, many of whom are not only racialized, but non-native English-speaking as well. Indeed, in the last twenty years, the most significant feminist texts on intersectionality either neglect to mention language issues (reflected in the absence of the terms "English," "Anglo-Saxon," "Anglonormativity," "language," and "linguistic" in these texts), as is the case in Avtar Brah and Ann Phoenix (2004), Leslie McCall (2005), Ann Phoenix (2006), Ange-Marie Hancock (2007), and Sylvia Walby (2007) or the texts mention these words very briefly without offering an analysis of language power relations, as is the case in Floya Anthias (1998), Patricia Hill Collins (1998, 2000), Helen Meekosha (2006), Nira Yuval-Davis (2006), Kathy Davis (2008), and Jennifer Nash (2008). The absence or, in some cases, cursory mention of these issues is both troubling and revealing of the work required to deconstruct Anglonormativity. In Yuval-Davis' (2006) review of dimensions other than sex, race, and class considered in intersectional analyses, language is absent once again:

Other feminist theorists add other dimensions, such as age...; disability...; sedentarism...or sexuality...One of the most comprehensive attempts to include additional axes of social divisions is that of Helma Lutz...(Lutz,

2002: 13). Her list includes the following 14 'lines of difference': gender; sexuality; 'race'/skin-colour; ethnicity; nation/state; class; culture; ability; age; sedentariness/origin; wealth; North-South; religion; stage of social development. (201-202)

It could be argued that language is implicitly included in the categories of race or ethnicity. I see two problems with this argument. First, as Baukje Prins (2006) notes, racial, ethnic, and linguistic identities, despite being interlocked, are different and not interchangeable. Second, the "implicit" inclusion of language in ethnicity or race categories tends to subsume language issues within racial or ethnic issues, which can be very different. In the case cited by Crenshaw (1991), the woman was denied access to the shelter not because of her skin color, but because of her language skills. New immigrants in the United States or Canada provide another example. Not only do they face racism in their job searches, but their English language skills can make the difference between job searches that are relatively easy, difficult, or sometimes nearly impossible. In other words, linguistic power relations are different from, intersect with, and transform ethnic and racial power relations. As a result, the experience of racism and immigration can vary greatly according to language skills.

In order to develop an ethics of responsibility and accountability toward non-Anglophone people who suffer discrimination, stigmatization, exclusion, and social and institutional violence due to Anglonormativity and linguistic colonization, these injustices must be identified as resulting from linguistic power relations rather than as secondary effects of racism. As Yuval-Davis (2006) observes, "While all social divisions share some features and are concretely constructed by/intermeshed with each other, it is important also to note that they are not reducible to each other" (200). A non-reductive feminist intersectional perspective may allow us to recognize both the irreducibility of linguistic oppression and its interlocking relations with other forms of oppression. As demonstrated here, the institutionalization of intersectionality in the academy, and more specifically in gender and feminist studies, is inseparable from its Anglicization. Not only do language issues in general, and the omnipresence of English in particular, remain under-theorized, but the reception of intersectionality in the academy has been less posi-

tive in non-Anglophone contexts such as Quebec and France (Maillé 2014).

“All Francophone Feminists Are Cisgender”

One could even say that intersectionality is the most important theoretical contribution that women’s studies, in conjunction with related fields, has made so far. (McCall 2005, 1771)

The above statement accurately reflected the Anglo-American context when McCall’s (2005) text was written. Indeed, in 2005, the popularity and institutionalization of intersectionality differed in other national contexts (Lutz, Vivar, and Supik 2011), including in Francophone communities. I would like to specify that this article focuses on Francophone communities in Quebec and, to a lesser degree, France. It should also be noted that many of the reflections presented below reflect Canada’s bilingual status in which Francophones constitute a linguistic minority.

Then as now, strong critiques of intersectionality abound in Francophone feminist communities. Other concepts that promote similar ideas regarding the co-construction of oppressions, like coextensivity or “consubstantiality” (Kergoat 2001; Galerand and Kergoat 2014), have been proposed and used by Francophone feminists (Juteau 2010). Many authors note the historical lag between the popularization of intersectionality in Anglophone and Francophone communities and the intense resistance it has sometimes encountered in France (Poiret 2005; Bourcier 2011; Dorlin 2012) and French Canada (Denis 2008; Bilge 2010). In fact, Quebec and France have only recently taken the intersectional turn (Maillé 2012, 2014). Denis (2008) writes: “In contrast [to Anglophone communities], intersectional analysis is in its infancy in France, and to a lesser degree in French-speaking Canada/Québec” (682).

Authors like Denis (2008), Dorlin (2012), and Maillé (2014) explore various factors contributing to the “lag” in interest for intersectionality in French: specifically, a French republican tradition that erases identity differences in the name of abstract universalism and some Quebec feminists’ lack of interest in theorizing race until quite recently. As Maillé (2012, 2014) contends, although we must recognize that Canadian Francophones have been colonized, have struggled, and

continue to fight to protect their cultural and linguistic identities, this battle has too often overshadowed their own role as colonizers of Indigenous peoples. Maillé (2012) writes: “Quebec’s national narrative rests on one central historical element: the 1763 conquest, when descendants of French settlers were conquered by Britain. But the conquest of indigenous populations by French white settlers gets completely erased from this history” (68).

The paradoxical status of Quebec and Francophone populations in Canada as both minoritized/colonized and settler colonizers of Indigenous peoples bears closer examination in order to develop greater accountability toward Indigenous populations and nurture alliances between these communities and other linguistic minorities in Canada. However, this article is instead interested in the fact that many authors in Quebec and France have been and remain very critical of American exceptionalism and colonialism in the economic, political, social, and cultural, not to mention academic, spheres (Descarries 2003, 2014; Dorlin 2012; Maillé 2014; Pagé 2014). Put differently, the fact that intersectionality, a concept of Anglo-American origin, is currently conquering feminist studies in many national contexts is an important component of certain feminists’ rejection of intersectionality who perceive it as an *institutio-anglicized*, Anglo-American, colonial notion. As noted by the *Fédération des femmes du Québec/FFQ* (2013), the leading non-profit feminist organization in Quebec, some feminists in Quebec considered intersectionality a “threat to the movement” (original translation). This resistance prompted the FFQ to conduct Quebec’s first large-scale quantitative and qualitative study of the understanding and reception of intersectional analyses by Francophone feminists. Geneviève Pagé and Rosa Pires (2015), the report’s authors, note:

However, use of [the intersectional] approach is not unanimous and has caused dissent within the movement, specifically during the general assemblies [États généraux] on feminist analysis and action...and the FFQ’s general meeting...FFQ authorities are convinced of the potential of this approach...Nonetheless, despite several attempts to make it more accessible and provide more information...resistance to the approach remained. The FFQ’s leadership and research group were left with many questions and saw

the need to reopen the discussion with its members. (7; original translation)

Although the report indicates that less than 10% of Quebec feminists demonstrate strong resistance, resentment, or anger toward intersectional analysis and see it as a threat to the movement, the resistance that led to this empirical study is illustrative of the chilly, and late, reception of intersectionality in some non-Anglophone circles. Pagé and Pires' (2015) report shows not only that an increasing number of feminists (a majority) are now open to intersectional analyses, but also that intersectionality is seen as an important tool to establish more equitable relationships between women from different backgrounds.

As a Francophone feminist working on trans issues, I am struck by the growing number of French-language texts on intersectionality that, unlike their English-language counterparts, list linguistic identities and language power relations (Corbeil and Marchand 2006; Bilge 2010; Juteau 2010; Harper and Kurtzman 2014; Pagé 2014; Pagé and Pires 2015), but remain silent on trans identities and cisnormativity. With the exception of the special issue of *Recherches Féministes* (2015), which includes one of my texts on the connections between feminist and trans issues, not one of the Francophone journals' special issues on intersectionality mentioned in the introduction addresses trans issues. In the most recent and most often cited Francophone feminist texts on intersectionality, trans issues are not only never discussed in depth, but they are not mentioned at all (demonstrated by the systematic absence of the terms "trans," "transsexual," "transgender") (Kergoat 2001; Poiret 2005; Corbeil and Marchand 2006; Delphy 2006; Bilge 2009, 2010, 2014; Juteau 2010; De Sève 2011; Dorlin 2012; Fédération des femmes du Québec/FFQ 2013; Galerand and Kergoat 2014; Harper and Kurtzman 2014; Pagé 2014; Pagé et Pires 2015). Of these 15 texts, Dorlin's (2012) is the only one that makes a single mention of trans issues. This despite the fact that these texts generally present long lists of identities/oppressions that include sexism, racism, classism, settler colonialism, ageism, ableism, sizeism, English colonialism, and more. However, the notions of gender identity (cis/trans) and transphobia/cisnormativity are never identified as this excerpt from the FFQ (2013) report shows: "Reflecting the society in which it evolves, the women's movement tends to reproduce racism, classism, ableism,

homophobia and heterosexism, audism, and the marginalization of certain women. As a result, we feel that the feminist movement must position itself against each of these forms of oppression" (n.p.; original translation). It must be noted that trans women's inclusion/exclusion was a subject of much debate in more than one FFQ working committee. The authors of the FFQ report apparently did not consider cisnormative oppression worthy of inclusion in its list of oppressions. Pagé and Pires' (2015) most recent extensive report on intersectionality reveals much the same story: almost every other form of oppression is either discussed in depth or briefly mentioned. Although a participant in this empirical study raised the issue of the discrimination of trans women in Quebec's feminist movement twice, the oppression these women experience is not once mentioned in the report. Although Francophone authors who discuss the intersections between feminism and trans activism, including Maud-Yeuse Thomas, Noomi Grüsig, and Karine Espineira (2015) and Bourcier (2011), use intersectional analyses in their work, their texts are not primarily dedicated to intersectionality nor are they recognized as key authors in French on the topic.

French-language articles, books, and reports are not the only places silence reigns on trans issues. As I have demonstrated elsewhere (Baril 2016b), the leading international conference in Francophone feminist studies and research also completely invisibilizes trans people and issues. The call for proposals and website for the 7th International Conference of Feminist Research in the Francophonie (*Congrès international des recherches féministes dans la francophonie*, Montreal, August 2015) exclusively uses feminized language. Conference documentation therefore explicitly refers to women professors, researchers, students, and so on (CIRFF 2015). Organizers argue that this feminized language includes the masculine, but this seems insensitive to the many identities that do not fit into these binary categories, including those of some trans, intersex, queer, genderqueer, and non-gendered people. Furthermore, differences between women in terms of race, class, age, sexual orientation, etc. are repeatedly mentioned throughout the conference's documentation, but trans issues are never discussed. This particular conference is but one example among many. Indeed, the erasure of trans issues is a reality in many Francophone events and Francophone feminist studies programs in Quebec. For example, in

Quebec, two Francophone universities offer programs in feminist studies: Université du Québec à Montréal and Université Laval.¹ Considering the recent creation of new courses and changes to their feminist studies programs, it is both surprising and disappointing to see that none of the official course titles includes the words “queer,” “genderqueer,” “trans,” or similar terms and that none of the official course descriptions mentions trans people.

Given that a high-profile Francophone feminist like Christine Delphy publicly depicts trans claims as a personal matter, this silence is not surprising. Delphy recently stated in an interview that, by engaging with trans issues, “we lose sight of the feminist fight for the eradication of gender...[it] is not a political battle, in the sense that it does not propose changing societal structures” (Merckx 2013; original translation). Certain Francophone feminists’ resistance to trans issues and sometimes violent reactions to trans people’s demands are beyond the scope of this article. Instead, my goal is to highlight the serious lack of discussion, problematization, theorization, and politicization of trans issues by a majority of Francophone feminists with the exception of those listed above and despite the fact that many of these feminists have adopted intersectionality. This is particularly troubling given that gender identity and the fact of being cis/trans are profoundly enmeshed with other experiences of oppression, including but not limited to racism, classism, sexism, and ableism (Baril 2015). As I will now show, the experience of transness is also influenced by linguistic identity, an intersection thus far neglected by Anglophone and Francophone feminists.

“But Some of Us Are Brave...”: Being Trans and Francophone

As a Francophone scholar, the lack of problematization of language power relations in Anglophone feminist intersectional analyses is disappointing. As a trans man, I am similarly disappointed by the absence of trans issues in Francophone feminists’ discussions. Inspired by the intersectional argument made by Black women that the anti-racist movement inadequately considers sexism and the feminist movement inadequately considers racism, I argue that Anglophone feminist analyses of language power relations and Francophone feminist analyses of cisnormativity are both insufficient.

By repurposing the phrase “but some of us are brave...,” which highlights the experience of Black women at the intersection of sexism and racism, I hope to stimulate critical reflection on the concrete repercussions felt by some of us who are both trans and Francophone by offering an auto-ethnographic perspective on these intersections in my own life. My goal is not to generalize about how intersections between gender and linguistic identities work, but rather to share my own experience and living archive in order to illustrate the complex entanglements between transness and language that remain invisible in the two literatures analyzed above.

Because I am an academic, the realization that I wanted to transition was immediately followed by the instinct to gather as much information as possible about hormones, surgeries, and so on. I was shocked to discover how little information was available. I was puzzled by the lack of online resources on transgender issues in 2008, until I realized my search terms were in French. As a scholar working on gender, queer, trans, and disability issues, I am accustomed to searching in English; most material relevant to my work is in English. However, when dealing with such deep, emotional, personal issues, default behaviors often reassert themselves, language skills among them. A person’s first language arises “naturally” in difficult situations, moments of crisis, and extraordinary circumstances. Because my linguistic identity is Francophone, I first conceptualized my awakening trans consciousness in French. Five years later, in 2013, I underwent surgery in a country where neither English nor French is widely spoken. Imagine my surprise when I was informed that, semi-conscious after general anesthesia, I spoke to the medical team in English. So internalized was the idea that receiving appropriate care after surgery meant speaking English that I spoke English from the moment I woke up, apparently overriding my first language instincts in an exceptional situation.

Placed side by side, these two experiences provide an interesting starting point for reflection on how the linguistic dimension intersects with trans embodiments and identities. This may help us to think critically about how language power relations and Anglonormativity affect non-Anglophone people’s lives, particularly those already marginalized, including poor and working-class people, immigrants, and others. I examine the case of trans and Francophone peo-

ple to argue that Anglonormativity places a burden on trans people for whom English is not a first language, a burden I call “trans-crip-t time” (Baril 2016a). This concept is inspired by the concept of “crip time” (Kafner 2013, 25–46) that refers, among other things, to the “extra” time disabled people often require to perform certain tasks and the temporal burden they experience in ableist societies not adapted to their abilities. I developed the idea of “trans-crip-t time” to extend these reflections to trans people (trans time) and linguistic minorities (non-Anglophones in Anglonormative contexts who experience “transcript/translation time”). The following example is a useful illustration of this temporal burden.

The Internet is undoubtedly a powerful tool capable of empowering and providing access to information for many marginalized communities, including trans communities. However, the consequences of the ubiquity of the English language for people who do not speak it or for whom English is a second, third, or fourth language must be considered. I wish to demonstrate that non-Anglophone trans people attempting to access relevant information, health care, and other services experience an additional, transition-related burden in terms of time, energy, and sometimes cost (for translation services). My own experience as a Francophone trans man seeking medical information online is used to shed light on these issues. I am very conscious of my many privileges as a white, middle-class, well-educated trans man; it is not my intention to complain. However, I do wish to make visible what is normally invisible to an Anglonormative gaze, specifically the unpaid (or costly) work that non-Anglophones, including myself, must perform in order to function in ways similar to native English speakers in an Anglonormative world (and Internet).

As a Francophone Canadian, I took English classes in elementary and high school, but this is rarely sufficient to become bilingual. Although largely invisible, considerable work is required for a non-Anglophone to successfully navigate the social, economic, academic, virtual, and other spheres of an Anglophone world (Descarries 2003, 2014). The time it took to learn English while writing my Master’s and PhD theses represents hundreds of hours. I have also dedicated considerable time to improving my English skills, including a summer immersion session and private lessons. These

activities consume not only time and energy, but are also expensive. For example, the cost of private lessons varies from \$35 CAD to \$100 CAD an hour. Translation fees for an article of this length (7000 words) are often between \$1,200 CAD and \$2000 CAD. Without a tenure-track job to cover professional expenses, these fees, up to several thousand dollars every year, must be paid out-of-pocket. The extra time and energy required to function in a second language are particularly problematic when it comes to realities poorly documented in languages other than English (French-language recipes are easy to locate, French-language information on marginalized sexualities and identities less so).

A Google search (performed on May 24, 2015) for the term “transgender” produced 497,000,000 results while its French equivalent, “transgenre,” produced 520,000 results. The term “phalloplasty” produced 261,000 results in comparison to 20,700 results for “phalloplastie” in French. This difference is more than obvious; it is exponential. In addition to being more rare, French-language information on these topics is also less recent, less frequently updated, less accurate, and often less relevant than what is available in English despite the fact that French is a very common (colonial) language. I scarcely dare to imagine the dismal results produced by searches on these subjects in less common languages, such as some Indigenous languages and sign languages. For all of these reasons, Anglonormativity can have a profound impact on the temporality of non-Anglophone trans people who must translate and understand words, concepts, theories, and medical terms in a language other than their first language. Whereas more privileged trans people have the financial, educational, and social opportunities to learn a second language, many trans people who suffer from bullying at school and are forced drop out to protect themselves, are fired because of their gender presentation or trans status, or are incarcerated do not have access to the same resources and privileges. Together, these factors make it more difficult to learn, improve, or master a second language and decrease linguistic mobility. In spite of all my privileges, the difficulties I encounter using the Internet in English have nonetheless had an impact on my transition process.

The energy required to search in a second (or third, or fourth) language when complications, infections, medication side effects, or other problems arise

after surgery can present a significant problem. At this vulnerable, challenging time, finding the right information in a first language can be difficult enough. Having to redouble these efforts in order to translate specific vocabulary can make the difference between optimism and abandoning the search and waiting for the courage to start over. How do trans people find peer support in the trans community when no support groups exist in their first language? How do they find the information, time, and energy required to participate in discussion groups in another language and understand a variety of linguistic codes, abbreviations (e.g., UL for urethra lengthening), and cultural referents? How do they find information about surgeons in their own country, province, or state if no one posting relevant information or pictures speaks their language or lives in their region? This is the essence of “trans-crip-t time” (Baril 2016a), the linguistic and cultural transcript-ion/translation work non-Anglophone trans people must perform in order to access English-language information about transitioning, hormonal treatments, surgeries, health care, and so on.

This kind of work is not unique to trans people, of course. People with marginalized identities and those functioning in environments where their first language is not spoken face similar issues. In addition to denouncing sexism, racism, classism, ableism, heteronormativity, cisnormativity, and other forms of oppression reproduced within social movements, trans communities must also begin thinking critically about language power relations and their impact on specific groups. This is part of what Mauro Cabral means by “decolonizing transgender studies” (Boellstorff et al. 2014). Because the Internet is primarily an English-speaking environment to which the term institutio-anglicization also applies, my experience of information access, health care choices, and peer support (online groups and forums), the construction of my trans identity, and the development of theoretical and political perspectives related to my transition would have been very different were I an Anglophone. In this Anglonormative context, it is fair to say that my transition consisted not only of masculinizing my body, but also, in a way, of Anglicizing my identity and language. Although I am very satisfied with my trans journey and improved English skills and am proud, as a Francophone trans man, to “bravely” point out certain limits of Anglophone and Franco-

phone feminist intersectional analyses, this “bravery” often comes at a cost. Indeed, those of us who are brave bear the burden of educating peer activists, colleagues, and relatives and the urgency to fight for social justice at multiple levels at the same time. (Re)thinking these under-theorized inter-sections is therefore an invitation to share the cost of this bravery, a call to everyone to be brave and cultivate accountability toward marginalized groups.

(Re)thinking Inter-Sections between Anglophone and Francophone Intersectionality

Often the intersectional subject gets tokenized or manipulated as a foil such that the presence of this subject actually then prohibits accountability toward broader alliances. Such approaches produce these intersectional subjects from which people can disavow their responsibility and implicated interface while maintaining that the representational mandate for diversity has been satisfied—in other words, a gestural intersectionality that can perform a citational practice of alliance without actually doing intersectional research or analyses. (Puar 2014, 78)

Jasbir Puar is not alone in warning us against tokenism and the superficial use of intersectionality sometimes prevalent in analyses that fail to recognize the co-constitution of identities and lived oppressions. Crenshaw (2011) and other authors, including Sirma Bilge (2014) and Gudrun-Axeli Knapp (2011), also denounce politically correct applications of intersectionality that name oppressed groups without serious discussion of the issues they face. As this paper demonstrates, the infrequent treatment of language power relations in Anglophone feminist intersectional analyses and the rare mention of trans issues in their Francophone counterparts, if in fact they are mentioned at all, suggests that “a gestural intersectionality” is at work. It would seem that Anglophone feminists have disregarded their language (English), Francophone feminists have disregarded their gender identity (cisgender), and each of these groups has disregarded the possibility of enriching their analyses by engaging with the other. These omissions overlook crucial questions about the co-construction of gender identity and language²: How do specific languages and related gender codes influence the construction of gender identity? How

could specific languages be used to deconstruct gender identity or make gender self-identification easier or more difficult? What impact does gender identity have on language use? How does gender identity influence, or even determine, the linguistic communities we decide to live in (many Francophone genderqueer people I know have decided to live in Anglophone provinces or countries because more non-gendered options are available in English than in French) and, by extension, affect our social relationships, professional decisions, nationality, and more? Beyond issues of the influence gender and linguistic identities exert on each other, as illustrated in these questions and which future articles could investigate, examining their intersecting oppressions is crucial. As Crenshaw (1991) rightly points out, language power relations can have life and death consequences for people already marginalized and discriminated against, as in the case of the Latino woman denied shelter services because of her language skills; the same is true for gender identity. Trans women (and trans people in general) are turned away from women's and other shelters because Quebec has no official policies regarding the inclusion of trans people (ASTTEQ 2012) and many feminist organizations and women's shelters have yet to deconstruct their cisnormative practices.

I believe it is crucial to develop an ethics of responsibility that will help us (re)think intersections and solidarities between Anglophone and Francophone feminists. It is time for Anglophone feminists to recognize Anglonormativity, as well as its many consequences for non-Anglophone people (Lutz, Vivar, and Supik 2011, 6), and (re)conceptualize language-based communication difficulties not as the linguistic minority's problem, but instead as resulting from the linguistic majority's systemic monolingualist perspective, norms, structures, and institutions. I invite Anglophone feminist communities to cultivate a deep understanding of the positive and negative impacts of linguistic, cultural, social, and political translation and develop a respectful and accountable response to linguistic minorities. I think it is also time for Francophone feminists to recognize cisnormativity and the impact it has on trans people's daily lives. I would like to invite Francophone feminist communities to start discussing trans issues in ways that avoid further stigmatizing and discriminating against trans people and begin developing respectful, accountable responses to this marginalized group.

According to Crenshaw (2011), "That it is easier to call for intersectional analysis rather than to perform it is not a failing of the concept but a recognition that performing intersectional analysis is neither a simplistic symbolic signifier nor is it a paint-by-numbers analytic enterprise" (231). I believe, like Crenshaw, that despite the institutio-anglicization and sometimes questionable uses of intersectionality and notwithstanding its past, present, and future "failures," this tool, like many other political and conceptual tools, has the potential to shed light on some of our social movements' less-examined realities and improve solidarities between marginalized groups.

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Endnotes

¹ Concordia University and McGill University, both in Quebec, offer courses on or including trans issues, but both are Anglophone universities offering courses in English. The University of Ottawa offers bilingual programs in feminist and gender studies, but only one course that includes trans issues. However, the University of Ottawa is in Ontario, a province with an Anglophone majority and, currently, the majority of faculty members and students at the Institute of Feminist and Gender Studies are Anglophones.

² Work in the field of translation studies, which I cannot address here due to space limitations, has shown the impact of language on gender identity. It would be relevant to complexify the notion of gender identity by including trans identity as well.

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