

The uses of *voilà* in Cameroonian and Ivorian French: Between discourse structuring and interactional anchoring

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This study explores the various ways in which the discourse marker *voilà* is used in spoken French in Côte d'Ivoire and Cameroon. Drawing on the framework of variational pragmatics (Schneider and Barron 2008; Drescher 2014), we aim to understand how this linguistic element adapts to different geographical and sociocultural contexts, considering the influence of local languages and the specific interactional dynamics of each country. Our analysis is based on a corpus of spontaneous conversations recorded in diverse social settings (family, friends, professional interactions), providing real-life observations of *voilà* in use. Preliminary results reveal notable differences: in Côte d'Ivoire, *voilà* is primarily used to conclude a speech turn, reinforce an obvious fact, or draw attention to a significant event. In Cameroon, it is more commonly employed to structure discourse, emphasize a statement, or reformulate an idea. Beyond these variations, we will also examine how speakers perceive *voilà* themselves. Can it be considered an identity marker that reflects the discursive particularities of each linguistic community? Through this analysis, we highlight the effects of language contact and how everyday interactions shape the use of discourse markers in African varieties of French.

References

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