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### French in Madagascar: A Colonial Language After Independence

Christopher Roehrer-MacGregor  
*Syracuse University*

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# French in Madagascar

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## A Colonial Language After Independence

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*Abstract*

The French first landed off the south-eastern coast of Madagascar in December of 1648. A little over two and a half centuries later they would land troops, marking the beginning of sixty years of colonization. The groundwork for government and education set during these years continues to the present day, including the use of the French language. In this study I look at the role of the French language in modern-day Madagascar. Using interviews from two major urban centers, I argue that French has a dualistic role, both as an opportunity for self-advancement for a select few, while also as an oppressive force for many others.

*Pour Madame Jo*

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## Purpose of Study

This study attempts to determine the role of French, the colonizing language of Madagascar from 1894 to 1959, in Malagasy life. According to L'Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), of which Madagascar is one of 53 member states, 5% of the Malagasy population can be said to be francophone, while a further 15.4% can be considered partial francophone (L'Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, 2011). Despite this, INSTAT, Madagascar's governmental statistical bureau, currently keeps no statistics on the number of French speakers in the country. How prevalent, then, is the French language, and what is its place in contemporary Madagascar? Do or don't the Malagasy consider themselves francophone, and to what extent?

With a better understanding, quantitatively, of French in Madagascar, the study then attempts to uncover the effect French has had on Malagasy national identity. For over 60 years the French language was the language of colonization, of oppression. Since independence from France, however, the language has remained that of government, business, and most importantly, education. How do the Malagasy people today view the French language in regards to their own identity? What is the role of the colonizing language in a post-colonial nation?

## Previous Studies

The field of Francophone Studies is a topic of much research and literature. The OIF, in addition to promoting the French language, also monitors its growth and proliferation. French Africa became a popular issue in the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century, as Negritude authors challenged the authority of colonialism.

Rhetoric of liberation from France during De Gaulle's republic spread out from France, throughout the francophone world. Today compilation works such as *Francophonie et identité culturelles* (Albert, 1999) explore the effect of French language on francophone communities and vice versa worldwide. Unfortunately Madagascar, having relatively few French speakers in comparison to other francophone nations, is often marginalized in these studies. Accordingly, I supplemented my own research with studies on post-colonial use of colonizing languages in other parts of the world.

### Context of Study

The fieldwork upon which this study is based was conducted from late October to the end of November 2011. With the exception of three interviews, two conducted in Mahajanga and another in Secteur, all primary sources are from the Antananarivo, capital of Madagascar. Historically populated by the Merina ethnic group, Antananarivo now represents, to at least a small degree, all of the ethnic groups of Madagascar, in addition to more recent immigrants from Europe, Asia, and Africa. Examples of colonial architecture can be easily found throughout Antananarivo, some still inhabited by the families of French colonists, and others by Malagasy families who may have profited under colonial rule. In addition to being the capital, Antananarivo is Madagascar's largest city and its cultural, educational, fiscal, and geographical center. The average education level as well as financial standing of those living in the city is significantly higher than for those in most other parts of the country. As a result of these factors the number of French speakers in Antananarivo is greater than the rest of the country.



My personal connection to Madagascar is the result of my study abroad program, in the fall of 2011, with the School for International Training (SIT). More specifically, I participated in the SIT program, “Madagascar: National Identity and Social Change”. One of the key features of any SIT program is the home-stay. A home-stay consists of living with a local family during your studies. Over the three and half months I spent in Madagascar, I had the opportunity to live with three different families in Antananarivo, Mahajanga, and Sectar. Roughly the first six weeks were spent living with my host-family in Antananarivo. I would end up returning to the capital city during my month long period of independent research, and chose to live with my family for another two weeks.

The second family I stayed with was in a small village called Sectar, in the Sakay region, a few hours outside of Antananarivo by car. I would only be with my “village-stay” family for a week, but it proved to be one of the best weeks I spent abroad. While the people of Sectar, like those of Antananarivo, were part of the Merina ethnic group, they led a vastly different life. Those who sought secondary education had to commute over an hour by taxi-brousse, and the primary occupation was cultivation of large terraced rice paddies.

My final home stay was with a host family in Mahajanga, the western port city of Madagascar. Not only was the climate vastly different from the highlands, but so are the people. While the Merina made up the majority of people in Antananarivo, Mahajanga was the historical capital of the Sakalava nation. In addition to following a different king, there is a strong Islamic presence not seen

elsewhere on the island. The pace of the city is much slower than that of Antananarivo, but the few weeks I spent there seemed to fly by.

Naturally my host families have had a great influence on the way I approached my research. Learning from them I was better able to approach situations with a cultural knowledge not often available to a *vazaha* (foreigner, of European descent). Through them I was also granted access to aspects of Malagasy life that might have otherwise been withheld from me. While I cannot claim to have a native knowledge of Madagascar, I feel that through the help of my host families I have been able to research and analyze through an appropriate lens.

All the participants for this study, with the exception of Joseph, speak French at a conversational level. Joseph, like many others from Secteur, had never received any training in French. Of the others, the majority interviewed could be said to be fluent in the language; only a small number of those showed any level of discomfort with the language. French speakers do not represent the majority of Malagasy; however, as the focus of the study was French language in Madagascar, it makes sense that they might be the majority of the participants. While it would be interesting to uncover the sentiments towards French language and culture of non-French speaking Malagasy, the time and resources of this study did not permit such.

This study, then, does not represent Madagascar in its entirety, but rather a specific population of two urban centers, Antananarivo and Mahajanga, with the focus clearly being the capital. The findings and analysis which result from this

study cannot be said to speak for all, or even most, Malagasy people. With over 1.8 million people, though, Antananarivo composes nearly a fifth of the entire population, and while French fluency is still far from the majority, exposure to the language and culture is a given within the city limits.

### Difficulties & Nuances of Research

Although the politics in regard to the French language have remained relatively unchanged since the beginning of the Third Republic of Madagascar, the same cannot be said of the government itself. The time period during which this study was conducted saw certain political instability as the HAT (*Haute Autorité de Transition*, the 2009 self-appointed transitional government) issued a new “*feuille de route*”; the result of this new “road map” for the nation is yet to be seen more than a year later, but it can be said that changes, if only superficially, have taken place. Andry Rajoelina, the president of the HAT, was allowed to address the United Nations at its headquarters in New York City (inexplicably, he was several days late), and a new prime minister was appointed to the transitional government.

The topic of my research did not prove to be controversial for those who took part in it. Small misunderstandings, however, did cause some minor tension. Upon hearing the topic of my research a few participants believed that I was doing a study on Malgachisation, a Malagasy language program explained later on, and Didier Ratsiraka’s government. Before clarifying that I was studying French language in today’s Madagascar they seemed more timid in their

agreement to be interviewed. As soon as I explained the actual focus of my research, though, they were much happier to be a part of it. Clearly Ratsiraka's legacy was not forgotten by the older generations.

Occasionally when performing interviews I would detect a subtle air of disgust towards the French people and/or government. While this certainly was not a universal sentiment, it did present itself on more than one occasion. In participant and nonparticipant observation, though, I frequently witnessed less than pleasant views of the French that ranged from a mild dislike to full blown disdain. This never directly impacted my research as I was able to easily explain that I was not French if the question was brought up, although my American accent typically took care of that for me. As a result, however I did choose to approach certain questions of culture more gingerly with some participants.

### Research

One of the most time-consuming activities during this study was reading texts and literature on the topic. Much of the history of Madagascar, as well as French language and culture in Madagascar is owed to two particular sources, *Madagascar: A Short History*, by Solofo Randrianja and Stephen Ellis (2009), and *The Sacrificed Generation*, by Lesley Sharp (2002). Randrianja and Ellis' definitive work outlines the human history of Madagascar, from settlement to the election of Marc Ravalomanana in 2002. Sharp's *The Sacrificed Generation* takes a critical look at the period of time known as *Malgachisation*. Her research would uncover the true cost of Didier Ratsiraka's nationalist programs.

## Interviews

The majority of research performed for this study was ethnographic. As a result, it was dependent on the assistance of several participants. These participants came from an array of socioeconomic backgrounds, yet French language played a key part in each of their lives. Through their stories I was able to better understand the role of a colonizer's language after colonization had come to an end. In this section I will introduce the participants in my research. First are the members of my host-families whom I interviewed, with the proceeding presented in chronological order.

### *Armand –Host Father Antananarivo*

Armand is my host father in Antananarivo. Naturally we spent a significant amount of time together, and he, along with the rest of my host family, shaped how I look at Madagascar. Dinner would prove to be one of the most enlightening parts of each day, as we could get together as a family and discuss a multitude of topics. For the most part, though, the conversation was lighthearted.

Speaking with Armand one-on-one, however, we could be much more serious, especially in regard to politics. At dinner the family might joke about how Armand needed to finish quickly so that he could listen to Ravalomanana's podcast from South Africa, but we would not delve into the political crisis. It was during these more formal conversations, then, that I learned how Armand saw the world, and which I used in my research.

*Hanitra and Jean de Dieu – Host Parents Mahajanga*

Hanitra and Jean de Dieu are my host parents from my homestay in Mahajanga. As with the case of Armand, most of the time we spent together had little to do with my actual research, but their influence had a clear affect on me. I was only in Mahajanga for a few short weeks, but I wanted to make sure that I got the chance to understand the role of language outside of Antananarivo. Hanitra is the only Sakalava that I had the chance to interview during my research. Her husband Jean de Dieu is actually Merina, although he too had grown up in Mahajanga. Speaking to them helped to bring to light much of what Sharp had discussed in *The Sacrificed Generation*, and greatly improved my understanding of Malgachisation.

In addition to our everyday conversation, I did take the opportunity to perform more formal interviews with my host parents. These interviews were done separately so that I could focus on their individual stories as best as possible. Despite this my host father would occasionally call in my host mother when he felt unsure of something. While this was sometimes related to the fact that his education in French was not to the same level as hers and he was unsure of a particular word or phrase, it was more often the case that the story had reached a point where they were then together, and he did not want to say anything wrong.

*Joseph – Cultivator*

Joseph is my village-stay grandfather, that is to say the father of my village-stay father. Although Josehp and his wife did not live in the same house as my village stay family, we saw them each day. Secteur being a village of less than

five hundred people, it is hard not to see everyone of the village each day, and their house was only a couple hundred yards away. They would often visit during the day, and on more than one occasion I, along with my host brothers, would go see Joseph while he was working on his rice paddies.

The interview with Joseph, unlike the others, was performed in Malagasy, and to an extent, pantomime. At the time of the interview I had limited ability to converse in Malagasy, and so there was a great deal of conferring to French-Malagasy dictionaries. As the particular interview focused on family history, we also utilized kinship diagrams. My village host mother, along with Joseph's wife, both kept a close eye, often interrupting to correct any perceived mistakes.

Despite the obvious obstacle of language, I feel confident that the information recorded is highly accurate. In addition to the extra watching eyes, I spent time with a FJKM representative who was fluent in French confirming my findings.

*Christelle Ramanandraitsiory and receptionist – L'Institut Français*

Ms. Ramanandraitsiory works in the communications department of l'Institut Français, a public cultural organization that collaborates with the French government. In a sense, Ms. Ramanandraitsiory is a public relations manager. She explained l'Institut and its programs at great length, but limited her personal views. None the less I gained a better understanding of the promotion of French culture. While at l'Institut, I was also able to conduct an interview with a front desk receptionist. She was able to give a better profile of those who frequently visited l'Institut as well as her reasons for working there. Citing company policy, she asked to remain unnamed.

*Aïna – Hotel Owner*

Aïna owns a hotel, Chez Aïna, in the Antanimena district of Antananarivo. Her involvement in my research was first accidental, as I happened upon her hotel walking down a small side street. Deciding to take advantage of the relative calm of being off the main road I ordered a drink and sat out in the small garden. Shortly thereafter Aïna came out to introduce herself to me and another student. Ultimately we would talk for sometime as she asked about our studies and how we found life in Antananarivo to be. It quickly became evident to me that Aïna would be of great help in my work, and I asked if she would be willing to give an interview.

Our interview took place several weeks after our first meeting, in the morning at Chez Aïna. After catching up on each other's lives we began the interview. Aïna speaks impeccable French, as a result of her upbringing, as well her frequent contact with tourists. Along with our relative familiarity with one another, this led to particular ease with the interview.

*Prof. Bodo Ramangason – Professor of Francophone Studies, University of Antananarivo*

I was lucky to have Professor Moxe of the University of Antananarivo as an advisor for my research. It was he who directed me to Professor Ramangason, a professor of Francophone Studies. In her own studies Prof. Ramangason had worked with notions of identity before, especially in regard to French colonization. As is typically the case at the university level, Prof. Ramangason's



classes are taught in French. With students coming from across, and sometimes beyond Madagascar, French serves as a lingua franca.

Navigating the halls of the University of Antananarivo was, to be honest, somewhat daunting. It is hard enough finding a classroom or office in a school with which you are familiar, let alone one you have barely stepped foot in on the other side of the world. Getting the chance to speak with Prof. Ramangason, though, was personally one of the most insightful moments of my research. More so than with any of the other participants, she would articulate the varying roles of French in Madagascar, as well as the conscious/unconscious decisions people made while speaking the language. This was to a great extent her own field, and so Prof. Ramandason was extremely comfortable speaking at length of the role of language in Madagascar as well as elsewhere in the francophone world.

#### *Zo Randrianoelison – Alliance Francaise*

Similarly to l'Institut Français, the Alliance Francaise's goal as an organization is to promote the French language and francophone culture. Whereas l'Insitut's main focus is cultural exchange, though, the Alliance's most prominent program is its French language classes. While the Alliance does offer lectures and cultural activities, its language classes are most well known. For those looking to continue their education at the university level, or would just have a more thorough ability of the French language, the Alliance offers classes of a higher quality than those of most schools (including all public schools) with a native speaker. These classes come at a nominal fee which also grants members access to the Alliance's book and media libraries.

Zo Randrianoelison had been working at the Alliance in Antananarivo for just about a year at the time of our interview. He was clearly excited to have the job, and strongly believed in the mission statement. In addition to speaking at length about the history and goals of the Alliance, Mr. Randrianoelison explained his own thoughts on development, education, and culture. In his mind, his personal dreams for Madagascar as a nation were, in many ways, supported by the Alliance.

*Zo Rakotoseheno – Chief Editor of Midi Madagascar*

I first had the chance to meet Mr. Rakotoseheno when I, along with the other students in my program, went to the Midi Madagascar headquarters. It was there that we heard the chief editor of one of the most successful newspapers, written in French or otherwise, in Madagascar speak about its history and its mission. As I began researching I immediately realized the value in talking to someone such as Mr. Rakotoseheno, who works with language each day.

I was fortunate enough to have a contact who had Mr. Rakotoseheno's personal phone number, and after a quick call was able to schedule an interview. In the 30 years since its creation, Midi Madagascar grown to become one of the most successful newspapers in the country. Having worked with Midi since the beginning, Mr. Rakotoseheno was able to offer a full story of the company. He is acutely aware of the politics of language, and was able to offer me a greater insight into the institutional aspect of French in Madagascar.

*Nagibe Radjabaly – Hotel/Restaurant Owner*

Mr. Nagibe was unique of all the people I interviewed in that he is not ethnically Malagasy, but rather Indian. As a result of some legislation shortly after independence, this also means that he's not legally considered a citizen either, despite being born and raised in Madagascar. Mr. Nagibe is a fairly successful businessman, owning two hotels and a restaurant all in more expensive sections of Antananarivo. I first met Nagibe as I walked to and from class during the week as his newest hotel was nearby my host family's house. During the first few months I was in Antananarivo the furnishing had not yet been completely installed, and Mr. Nagibe was often onsite supervising. I would ultimately end up staying in the hotel for a short period during my field research, and then took the chance to interview Mr. Nagibe.

My interview with Mr. Nagibe stands out from the others in a few ways. First off, I, along with another student, interviewed him together. Although our research was on different topics, there seemed to be enough overlap in the case of Mr. Nagibe to work together. Secondly, the interview jumped languages with some frequency. Mr. Nagibe is fluent in French as well as English in addition to Malagasy. Although we started off our questions in French, he would go back and forth between French and English, eager to show his command of the languages. He would also occasionally use Malagasy words and phrases. It seemed that he did so when highlighting his relationship with the country and his understanding of daily Malagasy life.

*Stephen Daniel Randriantsoa – Hotel Front Desk*

Mr. Randriantsoa worked at the front desk of one of the hotels owned by Mr. Nagibe in the Isoraka district of Antananarivo. After interviewing Mr. Nagibe, I asked him if I might be able to speak to members of his staff as well. As long as they were comfortable doing so, he said that I had his blessing. I had talked to Mr. Randriantsoa several times before, and had mentioned the research that I was working on. Later asking him if he might allow me to interview him, he quickly agreed to offer his opinion of the French language and culture. His own French during the interview was very deliberate, but confident.

Unlike several others of the participants, Mr. Randriantsoa went to public schools in Antananarivo. Although he did well in school, achieving a relatively high level of French, it was with him that I saw the strongest resentment to the remainders of colonial rule. Clearly the ability to speak French had profited Mr. Randriantsoa, and he insisted of its importance in urban settings such as Antananarivo. He made a clear distinction, though, between what is Malagasy, and what is French.

Participant/Nonparticipant Observation

Between the interviews and research that I performed each day, I lived in Antananarivo. One of the advantages of my particular study topic is that French is a very much present aspect of everyday life there. As a result, I would without fail find myself doing participant, or nonparticipant, observation countless times each day, even when I had not meant to be doing so.

As a *vazaha* the majority of my interactions with the Malagasy people were in French, even if I had started them in Malagasy. Occasionally I would get a smile and “*Miteny Malagasy ianao?*” (You speak Malagasy), to which I would respond “*Miteny kely kely aho*” (I only speak a little) after which the conversation typically defaulted to French. While most such interactions were of little if any consequence to my research, the sheer number of them which took place would prove extremely useful in the process of preparing for interviews, and then analyzing them.

Every so often these daily interactions would give me an insight into my research. In particular the reactions I received when people realized I was American rather than French. Having been fortunate enough to have traveled to many parts of the world, I was amazed at how being American was something to be proud of. Here, though, people were excited that I wasn't French. Many held strong prejudices against that French, that they did not care about the Malagasy culture, that they didn't try to learn the language, that they saw Madagascar as an adventurous vacation and nothing more. While many of my participants spoke proudly of their ability to speak French, it was during my everyday interactions that I had the chance to see a stronger opposing view of the language.

## French Language in Madagascar: Pre-Colonialism to Post-Malgachisation

### *Introduction*

To better understand the role of the French language in post-colonial Madagascar, we must first look back at the history of the language on the island. In December 1648 Etienne de Flacourt landed in Fort Dauphin as part of a French

mission to establish a permanent presence in Madagascar (Randrianja & Ellis, 2009, p. 77). While the main objective was an attempt to replicate the success the Dutch had achieved with Indian Ocean trade, it also marked the beginning of the proliferation of the French language. Catholic missionaries aboard Flacourt's vessel worked diligently to translate the Bible into Malagasy to save the souls of the population, before the London Missionary Society (LMS) could achieve the same task (Randrianja & Ellis, 2009, pp. 86-89,123-125). While the current day population shows a near equal success rate for these two Christian institutions, it would be France who ultimately colonized the island two and half centuries later. Already firmly under the French sphere of influence, Madagascar would become a truly Francophone nation, as all levels of government and society fell under France's control. These close ties would continue beyond independence a century later, and into the First Republic. Only in the 1970s under the popular support of Ratsiraka and the Second Republic would the French language begin to lose prominence. Even then, however, it would continue to persist.

Building on well-developed histories as well as first-hand accounts of life under Ratsiraka, a fuller understanding of the role of language in the story of Madagascar is achieved. Those whose interviews are used in this section lived through the Second Republic under the rule of Didier Ratsiraka. The majority of those interviewed were also members of what has been called the Sacrificed Generation, the generation of Malagasy who received their education from the grossly incompetent Malgachisation school system (Sharp, 2002, pp. 4-5). Despite the strong anti-colonial sentiment that characterized the beginning of the

Second Republic, however, each participant managed to continue to learn and practice French to such a level as to be able to have abstract conversation with only minimal difficulty. No matter the sentiments it may have faced throughout its existence in Madagascar, the French language has had an undisputable role in Malagasy life.

### *Beginnings of French in Madagascar*

French missionaries went to great length to create an accurate Malagasy translation of the Bible to bring Catholicism to the masses. In addition, prayers and hymns were written in Malagasy to reflect those found in French. With the blessing of the regional kings, several mission schools were set up around French settlements (Randrianja & Ellis, 2009, p. 148). Ever known for their promotion of scholarly advancement, Jesuit missionaries offered western style education to the Malagasy elite, including French language, before becoming overshadowed by their LMS equivalents under Radama I's rule (Randrianja & Ellis, 2009, pp. 123-127). For a period of time the French seemed to lose the upper hand in the politics of Madagascar.

Radama I was the son of Andrianampoinimerina, who was considered by some to be the first king of the island of Madagascar as a whole. Like his father before him, Radama I used trade with European nations to acquire weapons, such as firearms, which in turn allowed him to subjugate ethnic groups outside Imerina. In 1817, Radama signed a treaty with the Crown of England, recognizing him as the ruler of all of Madagascar (Randrianja & Ellis, 2009, p. 124). This treaty

allowed the LMS to gain a foothold in Antananarivo, the capital of Imerina, and the de facto capital of the island. The influence of the LMS in Antananarivo can still be seen today in the Malagasy language, for example, the word “Bible” is pronounced the same way in both languages. With Radama I’s death, though, the English, and indeed all outside forces were forced to watch as the ports of Madagascar were closed off by authority of Queen Ranaivalona I (Randrianja & Ellis, 2009, p. 276).

Outside of the Merina, one of the largest groups in Madagascar is the Sakalava. They represented perhaps the only true threat to Imerina before colonization. The French used this rivalry in an attempt to wrestle power away from the English in the Indian Ocean, although they never supported the Sakalava due to their slavery policies (Randrianja & Ellis, 2009, pp. 138-140). Catholic missionaries thought much the same, trying to convert the Sakalava nation before the Protestants could have the chance (Sharp, 2002, pp. 43-47). Oddly enough French missionaries would end up using translated versions of the King James Bible to help in their efforts of creating an appropriately Catholic version of the Malagasy Bible. While the Sakalava would ultimately fall to the Merina, their French connections would resurface during the colonization.

### *Colonization of Madagascar*

On December 12, 1894 French forces landed in Tamatave, three days later additional forces landed on the western coast in Mahajanga, and by September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1895 French troops walked the streets of Antananarivo (Randrianja & Ellis,



2009, p. 155). Often demoralized and occasionally corrupt, the Malagasy army put up nearly no resistance. Telling is the fact that the majority of Algerian and West African troops who lost their lives serving France on the island did so due to disease rather than combat (Randrianja & Ellis, 2009, p. 155). Upon conquest, the French dissolved the Malagasy national government, choosing to restructure it to reflect their own national institutions.

France dealt with resistance in the same manner as the Merina had during their conquest of the island. To prevent regional flare-ups troops were stationed at various points throughout the country (Randrianja & Ellis, 2009, pp. 155-159). In addition to quelling any attempts at rebellion, these troops helped to spread French language and culture. While French had long been present in the city by way of the elites, it now began to spread throughout the backcountry and bush as well. This proliferation would be furthered by development projects initiated by the colonizing power.

To France, Madagascar represented the opportunity for a model colony. In addition to vast natural resources, the substantial population meant significant potential growth of the Francophone world. To best cultivate its newest acquisition, France went to great lengths to develop and modernize the island (Randrianja & Ellis, 2009, pp. 156-167). This led to the creation of roads and bridges, railroads, power stations, and most importantly, schools.

The education system in Madagascar was modeled directly on the French system. Schooling began with *maternelle*, followed by *collège*, and ending with *lycée*. At the end of *lycée* was the *baccalauréat* exam, or “*le bac*” (Sharp, 2002, p.

12). Students who passed the bac could continue on to university, either in the capital of Antananarivo, or potentially, abroad. As Madagascar was considered an overseas department, classes, as all official government business, were conducted in French. Those who wished to receive an education had to do so in French.

While colonization reached the majority of the island, certain rural sections managed to elude French influence. One such place was the village of Secteur in the Sakay region, where I interviewed Joseph. While the young Malagasy in and around cities learned of their “ancestors the Gauls” (Sharp, 2002, p. 58), Joseph, who grew up during colonial rule, learned *miasa tany*, cultivation, from his father. While he was aware of the French, his village was too remote to have regular interaction with them. The few of his community fortunate enough to receive any formal education did learn in French, but often only completed just a few years of schooling before having to return to their families’ paddies. As a result it is rare to this day for anyone in the village to have more than a cursory knowledge of the French language (Joseph, 2011).

### *Independence*

By the mid-1940s Madagascar had been a French colony for nearly half a century. The Malagasy people had fought in two world wars for France, were educated in the French language, sent their wealth to France, and yet were still treated as secondary citizens. 1947 saw uprisings by numerous political parties headed by Malagasy locals, with brutal retaliation by French troops. By the end of the year, and estimated of tens of thousands of Malagasy had been killed

(Randrianja & Ellis, 2009, pp. 174-177). Feeling the pressure of the international community, France offered Madagascar the opportunity to vote on its preferred status, an overseas territory of France, a department of France, or an independent nation. Voters overwhelmingly chose independence, and on May 1<sup>st</sup> of 1959 Philibert Tsiranana became the president of the First Republic of Madagascar, although the date of independence is often considered June 26<sup>th</sup> of 1960 (Randrianja & Ellis, 2009, pp. 177-182). Despite this newfound independence, ties to France continued to remain strong.

Under the presidency of Philibert Tsiranana, Madagascar experienced little change from its colonial past. Although he had a past of progressivism, once being a member of a communist youth group as well as the French Social Democratic Party, Tsiranana had trouble breaking away from his French connections. Even as Madagascar entered the United Nations as an independent country, Tsiranana was a member of the French delegation: “[Tsiranana] still held the title of Minister-Counsellor of the French Community, and he served as a member of France’s delegation to the United Nations in 1959” (Randrianja & Ellis, 2009, p. 180). Whereas the international community recognized the sovereign nation, the ties between Madagascar and France were clearly still strong. While suggesting that Tsiranana represented a puppet government may be overly critical, it is evident that France still held significant power in Malagasy politics. Many of the “elected” positions throughout the country were held by former French colonists, France had multiple military bases across the island, and foreign policy was dictated around maintaining relations with France.

During this time period, the Malagasy school system continued to mimic the French system. Students spent twelve years of class working towards one of three series of the bac. Those who passed the bac could then go on to university. Classes continued to be taught in French, and many of the upper level professors were indeed French: “Although the French trained accomplished Malagasy as schoolteachers, the majority remained confined to primary and middle schools” (Sharp, 2002, p. 33). Lesley Sharp argues that this led the Malagasy to question their own intellect. Why is it that at the highest levels of education one would only find the French? This view was reinforced by another participant in my interviews.

Armand was only a child when the revolt of May 1947 took place. Despite his young age, he vividly remembers the events that would drastically alter his life. A testament to this hangs in his house: a diploma which officially recognizes his contributions towards the independence of Madagascar that year and the years that followed. He is immensely proud to have participated in the birth of his nation. Despite this fact, though, he is equally proud that he, his children, and his grandchildren speak French. In Armand’s mind, to speak French is to be a member of the elite. Growing up he worked very hard to overcome rural poverty, and provide a relaxed lifestyle for his family. One of the key identifiers of his wealth is French. Anyone can speak Malagasy, but the upper class speaks French. This comes as little surprise, as the elites of the Malagasy people long shared privileged status with the French. As I will show later, however, this pride in

language ability does not extend any further in regard to respect to the colonizing power, and Armand was not alone in his disgust (Armand, 2011).

In the early 1970s the uprisings began to recommence, as increasing numbers of people became frustrated with what appeared to be the continued colonial rule of France. Peaceful, student-led protests brought Antananarivo to a standstill, and quickly spread across the island after a student died while in police custody. The youth of the nation spoke out against what they saw as an oppressive regime, and garnered the support of the ecumenical churches of Madagascar. Ultimately Tsiranana would step down, leading to multiple transitional leaders and an assassination before a young Didier Ratsiraka stepped up and seized power (Randrianja & Ellis, 2009).

### *Malgachisation*

Ratsiraka's ascent to power marked the beginning of Madagascar's Second Republic. Presenting himself to onlookers as a staunch socialist, Ratsiraka wasted little time reworking the entirety of Madagascar (Randrianja & Ellis, 2009, pp. 193-194). Many large companies deemed to be of grave importance to the people were nationalized, an official Malagasy language was developed, and French lost its place as the language of education (Randrianja & Ellis, 2009, p. 197; Sharp, 2002, pp.36-40). For many outside the highlands, though, one oppressor was seemingly replaced with another.

One of Ratsiraka's more ambitious aspects of Malgachisation was the creation of a national, "Official Malagasy" (Sharp, 2002, pp. 41-43). Although

only one language existed on the island, the varying dialects and accents made completely mutually intelligible dialogue between Malagasy of different ethnic groups difficult. This new, universal Malagasy would seek to change that, by incorporating the various backgrounds of Madagascar into one Malagasy. Furthermore, official Malagasy would be the language of education in Madagascar, and offer an element of unity throughout the population. The outcome, however, was growing frustration from the periphery towards the government, and in particular, towards the highlands people.

Despite Ratsiraka's own coastal origins, his official Malagasy would greatly reflect the language variety of the highlands (Hanitra, 2011; Sharp, 2002, pg. 42). The Merina had been one of the most successful groups in Madagascar, and with the national capital located in Antananarivo and the Merina language seemingly becoming the national language; it was as if a new colonial power had replaced the French. The ethnic Merina disputed the claim that official Malagasy was the same as their own language, but perception proved more important than reality.

Speaking with an ethnically Sakalava woman raised in Mahajanga, I was able to come to a better understanding of the transition from the First Republic to the Second. Hanitra had just started middle school when Ratsiraka came to power. Although she attended private schools her entire life, the excitement towards Malgachisation was such that her school decided to change the language of instruction to official Malagasy, as to be in line with the public schools. She still took French as a language class, but all others were strictly in official Malagasy.

Hanitra personally agreed with the sentiment that the official Malagasy was the same as the language of the Merina, but did not feel any resentment as a result. She felt that all dialects are similar enough so as to be able to quickly learn their intricacies (Hanitra, 2011).

Hanitra's husband, Jean de Dieu, being the same age as his wife, experienced similar changes associated with Ratsiraka's becoming president. The notable differences are that he is ethnically Merina, and attended public schools. Throughout elementary school, Jean de Dieu's classes were taught in French. In middle school, however, the language of instruction was, as we have heard, switched to official Malagasy for all public schools. Although himself ethnically Merina, many of Jean de Dieu's teachers represented other groups. As a result, many had trouble with the transition of languages, having never before spoken the Merina dialect. A certain number of more courageous teachers withstood the change, and continued to teach in French. This small level of defiance, however, was short lived as the teachers were offered the option of learning official Malagasy or being replaced (Dieu, 2011).

Both Hanitra and Jean de Dieu were very excited with the onset of Malgachisation. Like many others their age, they felt that colonization had been allowed to continue under an oppressive Tsiranana government. Despite this, they claim to have harbored no hard feelings towards the French language or culture. While they sought to be a sovereign nation, French represented an undisputable aspect of their individual identities. For this reason, they sought out other opportunities to learn and practice French. Hanitra was able to study French in her

private school. For Jean de Dieu this was not readily an option. He would eventually go to a commercial high school, though, where he was able to continue his French studies as well (Dieu, 2011; Hanitra, 2011).

### *The End of Malgachisation*

By 1990, population growth was overtaken by that of the economy for the first time since Didier Ratsiraka had taken power over Madagascar. Even rigged elections, however, could not hide the growing discontent among the Malagasy people. The promised socialist Madagascar had never materialized, and the calls for change grew ever louder. Seeking to intervene on behalf of the entire nation, the Council of Christian Churches, FFKM, called for a conference to bring together the “*forces vives de la nation*” (Randrianja & Ellis, 2009, p. 201). Led by their president, Zafy Albert, the Forces Vives challenged the authority of Ratsiraka’s continued rule.

Feeling the strain of dissent, Ratsiraka dissolved his government, appointing the mayor of Antananarivo the president of a transitional government. This act did little to mollify the Forces Vivre, who created their own government in response. Tensions continued to escalate between the parallel governments, ending bloodshed. On August 10<sup>th</sup>, 1991, in front of the Presidential Palace located in the outskirts of Antananarivo, presidential guards opened fire on demonstrators, killing an unknown number of people (Randrianja & Ellis, 2009, pp. 201-202). A new transitional government, whose key positions were made up of FFKM members, quickly formed, and a new constitution was adopted by



referendum a year later. In the elections that followed, Zafy Albert easily defeated Ratsiraka in the second round of voting. Ratsiraka's Socialist Madagascar, and along with it, Malgachisation, had come to an end (Randrianja & Ellis, 2009, pp. 202-205).

### *Post-Malgachisation*

Even under the full force of Malgachisation, the French language never disappeared from Madagascar. While Malagasy pride peaked, French continued to enjoy its status as the language of higher education, a mark of honor for the elite. Whereas official Malagasy was forced onto the public schools, the majority of private schools, in addition to the public universities, kept French as their language of instruction (Rakotoseheno, 2011). Unfortunately this would result in a generation whose level of schooling paled in comparison to that of their parents and children; what Sharp has termed a "sacrificed generation".

However, with the commencement of the Third Republic under the guidance of then-president Zafy Albert, French was again given center stage. Not only was it made an official language of the nation, but also the main language of instruction in schools across Madagascar (Sharp, 2002, pp. 82-83). Through the continued turmoil of the nation, the re-election of Ratsiraka, the creation of the Fourth Republic under Marc Ravalomanana, and the current transitional government of Andry Rajoelina and the HAT, French has remained omnipresent. French nationals easily make up the majority of foreign, western residents in Madagascar, while France continues to be one of the nation's most prominent

trade partners, representing over 45% of foreign trade in 2008 and over 26% of trade in 2010, as well as a source of foreign aid (United Nation Statistics Division, 2011; CIA, 2011).

### Promotion of French Language and Culture in Madagascar

Today in Madagascar there are 29 Alliance Françaises throughout the country, L'Institut Français in Antananarivo (Tana), as well as several periodicals, such as *Midi Madagascar*, which are published in French. Needless to say a significant amount of effort, from a range of different organizations, is put into the promotion of both French language and culture to the Malagasy people. While the French government is partnered with certain institutions in Tana, many more are Malagasy administrated and run.

#### *L'Institut Français*

In Analakely, along the Avenue de l'Indépendance, in the former Albert Camus center, is l'Institut Français. Its three floors are made up of a full theatre, a media/print library, and administrative offices. Plastered along its exterior walls and glass front doors are posters advertising the various events hosted by l'Institut; behind the front desk sit two Malagasy secretaries, both of whom speak impeccable French. Reaching the second floor one finds an impressive library that is tended to by a small troupe of Malagasy. It is not until the third floor that any *vazaha* presence is really felt. Here, in the administrative offices, French nationals are mixed in with the Malagasy.

In 1964 the French government founded *le Centre Culturel Albert Camus*. In 2008 the Centre was move to Analakely, the city center, and in 2011 it

officially became known as l'Institut Français. Since its conception l'Institut has held close ties with the French Embassy, and is today under the direction of Philippe Georgais, a Frenchman. Ms. Christelle Ramanandraitsiory, a Malagasy woman, works in the Communications department of l'Institut.

The goal of l'Institut Français, as told by Ms. Ramanandraitsiory, is to “provide a source of French culture for the citizens of Madagascar” (Ramanandraitsiory, 2011). L'Institut seeks to achieve this goal by providing events, such as performances by various artists, movie screenings, and conferences on French culture. The common thread running through these events is francophone, but that is not to say, French. The artists who are exhibited at l'Institut come from throughout the francophone world, in addition to Madagascar itself. While they can all be considered francophone, they display widely diverse backgrounds and cultures.

Every other month l'Institut puts out a program guide of coming events. Glancing through, one can find art exhibits, cinema, musical performances, and even science seminars, to name a few. Looking more closely at the events from September to December of 2011 it quickly becomes apparent that the majority offered are Malagasy specific. Malagasy artists easily outnumber those from any other country while the programs seem decidedly designed for a Malagasy audience. For example, l'Institut offers many scientific presentations. Some of the more prominent ones include an exhibit on mangroves, another on baobabs, and a health seminar on malaria. While all of these topics may draw spectators anywhere in the world, they are clearly catered to the Malagasy people. (Copies

of posters and pamphlets advertising various events at the l'Institut Français can be found in the appendices.)

As has been mentioned, l'Institut tries to offer a truly francophone atmosphere. In the same program guides, in addition to the numerous Malagasy artists, there are several foreign performances. It must be said that most of the non-Malagasy exhibits are indeed French, which may in part be due to the relative ease with which French artists can travel abroad, particularly to somewhere such as Madagascar, as compared to the rest of the francophone world. Along with the French performers, though, there are two groups from Reunion. When it comes to cinema there typically is a more diverse selection, as shipping a film poses far fewer difficulties than shipping, for example, an ensemble. Indeed the films shown come from even beyond the francophone borders, having been dubbed into French for the audience. Such countries represented through cinema include France, the United States, Norway, Japan, and South Korean (l'Institut Français, 2011).

France, to a great extent, has accepted its checkered past in the colonization of Africa and, more pertinently, Madagascar. Such became apparent in 2005 when former French Prime Minister Jacques Chirac made an official apology to, then Malagasy President, Marc Ravalomanana and the entire nation of Madagascar. Through French government sponsored programs such as l'Institut Français, it is the hope that a mutual respect can be forged despite a difficult shared history. Without question l'Institut is a French language based entity, however, it seemingly makes a valiant effort to represent a francophone, rather

than French, community. The next question, then, is who is it that goes to l'Institut, and why?

To become a member of l'Institut Français you have to be a resident of Madagascar. That is not to say that you have to be Malagasy, or even a Malagasy citizen, but you must have a permanent address within the country. According to Ms. Ramanandraitsiory, the majority of people who go to l'Institut are students. She believes that the majority do so to use the media library, as it is free to all members. She then added that after the media library, younger students most often come to watch films and performances, many of which are free to not just members, but the public as well. When speaking to a receptionist at l'Institut, many of these sentiments about the nature of visits were reiterated. The one main point that she wanted added was that kids came to l'Institut to just hang out (Ramanadraitsiory, 2011; Receptionist, 2011).

There is an undeniable academic interest that brings people to the l'Institut, a curiosity towards the francophone world. While a library, especially a media library as offered by l'Institut will always draw students, this particular one will attract students who study French. That is not to say that only a French student could find something interesting or useful at l'Institut library, but the simple fact is that the vast majority of what it holds is in French. With this in mind it is safe to conclude that most of those who frequent l'Institut have some level of desire to learn about French language and culture throughout the world.

This conclusion is further supported by the number of people who attend the cultural events offered at l'Institut. Certainly students might enjoy going to

see a film for free, regardless of who screens it, but again it has to be remembered that everything shown is in French, suggesting at the very least a knowledge of French, if not an interest. Exhibits on music, art, and science, though, presumably attract a more intellectual audience. These visitors come to l'Institut to learn about, experience, and interact with the greater francophone world. Of course a city as large as Tana could be expected to have groups of people with every imaginable interest, but how does the greater public view l'Institut and the people who frequent it?

Perhaps amazing, considering the circumstances, l'Institut Français remained open to the public during the presidency of Didier Ratsiraka. While Ms. Ramanandraitsiory was only a child during the period of Malgachisation, to the best of her knowledge l'Institut existed without any significant hurdles. Today, she insists, l'Institut is well received by the general public. They have a strong, extensive membership, and have not had any issues related to civil unrest (Ramanandraitsiory, 2011).

L'Institut Français is a cultural center, and as such may not be subjugated to the same feelings directed towards say, the French government or people. It does, however, at least in part represent the francophone community. Thus the fact that, as an institution it respects the Malagasy people likely facilitates the reciprocity of sentiment.

#### *Alliance Française*

The roar of traffic never fades from the main road along Ampehifloa Taxi-be route 119. A Taxi-be is similar in idea to a bus, but in reality is a small van,

often packed with up to 30 people. The 119, which is constantly filled beyond capacity with students headed to and from the university, has several stops along the quartier. Crossing just into the next quartier of Andavamamba, stand two large, identical brick buildings, joined by a glass atrium. Off to the side, along a covered path, is a smaller building, of the same design. Inside are the administrative offices and library of the Alliance Française of Antananarivo.

The Alliance Française is a global organization, founded in 1883. First hosted by French schools of Madagascar in 1888, the Alliance would officially open its door in Tana in 1947. Today there are Alliances in 29 different cities in Madagascar. As of 2010 around 800 people are employed by the Alliance in Madagascar (Alliance Francaise, 2010). Mr. Zo Randrianoelison works in the communication office of the Alliance Française of Tana.

As Mr. Randrianoelison explained the mission of the Alliance Française. The main goal of the Alliance is the promotion of French language and culture in Madagascar. They have three main sections, French courses, lectures, and cultural activities. The Alliance is a strong supporter of cultural diversity and understanding, and hopes to connect their members with the rest of the francophone world (Randrianoelison, 2011).

The Alliance tries to share the French language and culture with its members in various ways. The most prevalent method is through their language classes. They also have extensive media and written libraries. Their members can find audio and video from the francophone world in addition to text and literature. The Alliance hosts a large number of expositions. The artists featured are both

local, and from the francophone world abroad. Finally, they offer various cultural activities to provide entertainment as well as education (Randrianoelison, 2011).

A specific example of a cultural activity offered by the Alliance is the *Concours National de la Chanson en Français*, a national singing competition. Any member can enter as a solo act, or as part of a group. Participants compete at their local Alliance, with the winners moving on to regionals, followed by the finals in Tana. The overall winner gets an all-expense paid trip to France. The one catch of this whole event, of course, is that it is entirely in French (Alliance Francaise, 2011).

Looking at the mission of the Alliance, it is clear that they have one overriding priority, education. Be it through language or culture, they look to offer their membership the opportunity to learn. This is readily apparent in their most popular and extensive program, language classes, as well as in their lecture series, but can also be found in the cultural events offered. With the example of the *Concours de la Chanson*, the rules clearly state that one of the key factors in the selection process in addition to level of performance and potential is the ability with the French language. While the Alliance hopes to provide a source of entertainment and amusement, they also hope to encourage the practicing of French outside of the classroom.

The Alliance Français is an official association in Madagascar. Although it is also a global organization, Mr. Randrianoelison explained that the administration of the Alliance in Madagascar is Malagasy. The head of the Alliance is French; however, the board of administration is composed of 14



Malagasy. Mr. Randrianoelison also made it very clear that the association itself has no ties with any religious or political organizations (Randrianoelison, 2011).

With a better understanding of the structure of the Alliance, I asked Mr. Randrianoelison why he chose to work with them.

Mr. Randrianoelison has worked at the Alliance Française for the past year. He chose to work there because he feels strongly about the need for development of education and cultural diversity. In his mind, working at the Alliance offers him the greatest opportunity to do so. The Alliance has native speakers teaching French classes, guest lecturers and performers, and an extensive library. By being a working for the Alliance, Mr. Randrianoelison feels he contributes to the education of all members. (Randrianoelison, 2011).

It is significant that the Alliance Française of Madagascar is, in part, Malagasy administrated. While the organization itself is of French origin, how it operates within the country is determined by actual citizens, actual Malagasy. So rather than the forced assimilation to French language and culture through colonialism, the Alliance promotes francophone while respecting Malagasy identity. Certainly it could be argued that those who work at the Alliance are, to a large extent, Francophile; Mr. Randrianoelison, however, reminds me that they are first and foremost Malagasy. Perhaps that distinction facilitates the good standing that the Alliance has with community.

Mr. Randrianoelison acknowledges that associations such as the Alliance Française had obvious difficulties existing under Ratsiraka and Malgachisation. Today though, he insists that no measureable level of animosity towards the

Alliance. Anti-colonialism is not as prevalent as it once was in Madagascar, and any dislike felt towards France does not directly translate to a dislike of the French language or culture (Randrianoelison, 2011).

### *Midi Madagascar*

Easily visible from the street, with Midi Madagascar largely displayed in black and red paint on its side, is the headquarters for one of the most successful newspapers in Madagascar. Everything is found on site, from the office of the editor, the archives with every issue ever printed, to countless secretaries madly typing away, with the hum of the press running early in the morning.

Midi Madagascar was founded in 1983 by Willy and Marthe Andriambelo. From the start it sought to promote French language in Madagascar. Mr. Zo Rakotoseheno, currently the chief editor, worked at Midi from the beginning. He was originally drawn to Midi because of his training in journalism rather than its ideals. He does consider himself, however, to be francophone, and potentially Francophile. Mr. Rakotoseheno would estimate that roughly 50% of Madagascar's urban population can read French (Rakotoseheno, 2011).

At first glance Midi does not share much with organizations like l'Institut Français or the Alliance Française. Midi is a for profit business, whose main concern is getting the next big story before it gets broken by L'Express. From the very first issue, though, there was the conscious decision to print the paper in French. The truth is that the vast majority of Malagasy cannot read French. The staff at Midi, however, recognizes that French, for better or worse, is the language of education and administration in Madagascar, and that Malagasy cannot reach

beyond the borders. With French, Midi can reach past the Indian Ocean, to Africa, to Europe, and beyond.

*The World at Large – American Embassy*

When looking at the languages of Madagascar, it is interesting to note how the outside world chooses to interact with the Malagasy government and people. The following example of the United States Embassy's policy on language is not true of all nations, nor is it true of all American programs within the country of Madagascar. It does, however, offer a brief glimpse into the political realm of language in Madagascar.

All State Department officials who work in Madagascar have to "speak" French. This entails several months of intensive language training in DC, with a test at the conclusion. Upon completion the State Department considers your language skills proficient for life. Surprisingly, there is no requirement to learn any Malagasy whatsoever to be stationed in Madagascar. In fact the embassy workers with whom I spoke had only limited knowledge of the Malagasy language. The simple fact being that Malagasy government officials almost always speak French and it is easier to find native French speakers than it is to find native Malagasy speakers.

French Language and Individuals in Madagascar

Today French is one of the official languages of Madagascar. In public and private schools alike it is the language of education. For business, administration, and government it is the language of communication. As I have

already shown, there are several institutions which promote the French language in Madagascar. Clearly, then, speaking French is important for many Malagasy.

*Evolution of Identity – Aïna*

Aïna owns a small hotel, Chez Aïna in Antanimena. Growing up she went to private schools, which she feels were some of the most prestigious in Tana at the time. These schools were French expression schools, which is to say that all of her classes were taught in French. Her family also attended French expression schools, and as a result is also completely fluent in the language (Aina, 2011).

The majority of Aïna's clients are either French, or francophone. As a result she generally speaks French with them. She does also receive a few Anglophone patrons, meaning that she occasionally speaks a limited amount of English. With her staff Aïna speaks Malagasy, although members of the staff have a limited knowledge of French, it simply makes more sense to speak in their native language. When speaking with her family she switches between the Malagasy and French (Aina, 2011).

It would appear then, that for Aïna, language is most prevalent as a business tool. As the owner of a hotel that attracts foreign tourists, she has to be able to communicate in more than one language. Due in large part to Madagascar's colonial past, the majority of her clients speak French. With the ever growing role of English, however, it also helps to have a basic knowledge of relevant English phrases. Now clearly this is not the line of thought of children in primary school French classes; they learn French because they are told to do so by their teachers. As Aïna explained, however, ability with language needs to move

beyond the classroom, as something more than just Malagasy in today's Madagascar.

Aïna makes a point to clarify that she does not marginalize the importance of Malagasy. In her mind, it is important for the Malagasy to speak their own language proficiently, as well as another language. While historically this secondary language has almost always been French, it does not necessarily have to be so today. As Malagasy is restricted to Madagascar, however, it is important to have a second language (Aina, 2011).

Again Aïna supports the idea that language is a powerful tool. However, its role in identity also begins to become apparent. At no point does Aïna suggest that another language can replace Malagasy. In fact, as previously mentioned, she says that the Malagasy must “speak their own language proficiently” (Aina, 2011) in addition to another. With this in mind it appears that one's birth language is what effects identity. While it is possible that secondary languages can play a role in how one is viewed by others, it does not affect the sense of self.

In Madagascar French appears to be experiencing an evolution of sorts. For an extended period of time it represented a colonial power, a potentially oppressive force. Now, however, French can represent a multitude of possibilities for a Malagasy. With French the Malagasy can pursue higher education, either at the Universities of Madagascar, or abroad. Even completing university level schooling, speaking French can also open up numerous working possibilities otherwise unattainable.

*Two Madagascars – Stephen Daniel Randriantsoa*

Mr. Stephen Daniel Randriantsoa works at the Hotel Raphia in Isoraka. He went to public schools in Tana, where he learned French. His reason for learning French was simply because it was a requirement in school, which he believes to be a vestige of colonialism (Randriantsoa, 2011).

Speaking with Mr. Randriantsoa about French language in Madagascar, one can detect a certain level of disgust. He readily makes it apparent that, if he had been given the choice, he would have never studied French. To say that Mr. Randriantsoa dislikes the idea of France, and everything that came with it during colonialism, would put matters lightly. In the same breath that he snarls at the French, however, he speaks of the necessity for those living in the capital to learn the language.

For Mr. Randriantsoa it is important for the Malagasy in Tana to learn French. Without the ability to read and write in French, daily life becomes very difficult. Many jobs require a basic knowledge of French, if not full fluency. French tends also to be very important in the technological world. Much of the new technology to arrive in Madagascar comes by way of the capital. By knowing French it becomes much easier to learn the significance as well as application of new technologies. In the country, by contrast, Mr. Randriantsoa argues that there is not really a need for French. Overall there is a much lower level of education, and thus less exposure to the French language. Whereas the inability to speak French in Tana would be seen as a detriment by many, in the countryside it is simply a fact of life (Randriantsoa, 2011).

With Mr. Randriantsoa, we again see this idea of the French language simply as a tool. For while he clearly holds certain negative sentiments directed towards the French people, he does not have those same feelings about Malagasy who speak French. In fact he sees the ability to speak French as a boon. Very clearly then, the acquisition and use of this second language, in the mind of Mr. Randriantsoa, does not reflect on the individual's identity. The "vraies Malgaches", as he says, retain their Malagasy culture; they do not "give it up" for French culture (Randriantsoa, 2011). Those who profited from French colonialism might have incorporated French culture into their lives, but Mr. Randriantsoa feels that they are no longer Malagasy.

*Outside Looking In – Nagibe Radjabaly*

Mr. Nagibe Radjabaly is the owner of the Raphia Hotel and its Annexes. His great grandfather emigrated from the Gujarat region of India at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His family first landed in the south of Madagascar, although he himself was born in Tana. Despite being part of the third generation of his family born in Madagascar, Mr. Radjabaly is not a Malagasy citizen, but rather French. When Madagascar received independence from France, Mr. Radjabaly's family was given the opportunity to retain their French citizenship. Knowing that they would not receive Malagasy citizenship, they chose to do so (Radjabaly, 2011).

Although Mr. Radjabaly is not officially considered Malagasy, he would very much like to be so. As a foreigner in his own country, he does not even have the right to vote, despite being an active participant in the community. Rather than having birth rights to citizenship, Madagascar demands blood right; as Mr.

Radjabaly's ancestors are not part of the *razana* (term for ancestors, both individual as well as national and directly related to burial practices) he cannot be Malagasy (Radjabaly, 2011). Having lived in Madagascar his whole life, though, he understands the importance of the French language for the Malagasy people.

Mr. Radjabaly believes that French, as a language, is very important to Malagasy families. As the language of education, parents who want their children to continue their studies to the furthest levels possible greatly encourage speaking French. In some upper class families the importance of speaking French is so great, Mr. Radjabaly claims, that the children speak very little if any Malagasy. For the richest Malagasy families there exists the possibility for their children to study at universities in France. While this is not possible for the middle classes, French is also the language of the universities in Madagascar, requiring a high level of ability with the language. All this contributes to the notion of French being a status symbol. For the Malagasy, the ability to speak French means a certain level of education, and as a result, a certain social status (Radjabaly, 2011).

It is easy to imagine that speaking French is a status symbol in Madagascar. As the language of education, there tends to be a direct correlation in language ability and socio-economic standing. The wealthiest send their children to the best schools, where French is instilled into their minds from a young age. Later those who can afford to do so send their children to study abroad. In a country where the majority of families can barely afford to send their children to primary school, fluency in French separates the rich from the huddled masses.



*Francophone and Language – Professor Bodo Ramangason*

Ms. Bodo Ramangason is a professor at the University of Antananarivo, where she specializes in francophone studies. In her opinion the word francophone means a certain language, that is to say French, along with a set of values and culture. Those who are francophone are people whose personal experiences are in line with francophone. They currently or previously studied the French language, share values with the rest of the francophone world, and as a result share common aspects of a cultural identity (Ramangason, 2011).

When asked about the importance of the French language in Madagascar, Professor Ramangason identified the possibilities it can bring for those who speak it. French is a “langue d’ouverture”, “notre clé” (Ramangason, 2011) to the rest of the world. For the effects of globalization (of which Professor Ramangason sees as a positive) to be felt in Madagascar the population needs to use a language found beyond its own borders. On a more individual level, speaking French is often seen as a status symbol for the Malagasy. Although not as prestigious as speaking English, it still represents a certain level of affluence (Ramangason, 2011).

Professor Ramangason’s comments continue the trend of viewing the French language as a tool. For many Malagasy, the idea of globalization has a different connotation than it often does in the United States. Rather than representing the act of homogenizing, of putting up a McDonald’s in every city across the globe, globalization is seen as becoming connected. By virtue of being an island, Madagascar is physically isolated from the rest of the world, a trait

further accentuated by the fact that Malagasy is spoken nowhere else in the world. The historical key to the outside world, due to colonialism, is the French language. Today other languages, such as German and English, are becoming popular in Malagasy academia, but for many, French still offers the best chance of accessing the world.

Professor Ramangason believes that the French language can have an influence on Malagasy identity. How a Malagasy, who speaks French, approaches certain situations, may be very different than how a Malagasy, who does not speak French, approaches the same situation. French represents an international language, a language which allows the Malagasy to integrate themselves into a larger community. However, Professor Ramangason feels that there is no conflict in being both Malagasy as well as francophone. She is foremost Malagasy, but that does not restrict her from being francophone as well. In her mind, each has its place. When in the classroom she speaks French. The language of education in Madagascar is French, and her students, although not all from Madagascar, all speak French; to teach in any other language would not make sense. When speaking with friends she uses a mix of French and Malagasy. Depending on the context or situation, one language may fit better than the other. Finally, when she speaks to people who come from the rural countryside, she only speaks in Malagasy, because it is unlikely that the other speaks French. In her mind, one speaks the language that is appropriate for the setting. You respect your audience by not “displacing” them through your choice in language (Ramangason, 2011).

*Conduit of the West – Zo Rakotoseheno*

Mr. Rakotoseheno, the editor in chief of Midi Madagascar, was previously self-identified in this study as both francophone, and perhaps Francophile. This identification, though, is directly related to his choice to work with a French speaking newspaper. Despite this apparent relationship with French language, Mr. Rakotoseheno feels that there is very little in common between his native Malagasy culture, and the culture in which he has emerged himself.

“Malagasy culture does not have very many similarities with the French culture” (Rakotoseheno, 2011). As a result of colonization there exist certain influences on the culture as well as language, (for example, the abundance of French-style baguettes sold on the streets of Tana as “*mofo pain*”, or the Malagasy word for soap “*savony*”, borrowing from the French “*savon*”) but they are not truly Malagasy in nature. French culture proves to be more of a conduit for Westernization and Western culture more than anything else. Through French culture the Malagasy can reach beyond their own borders, and even beyond the borders of Africa to Europe, and further to the United States (Rakotoseheno, 2011).

Similar in the way that many Malagasy see French language as a tool, Mr. Rakotoseheno seems to suggest that French culture can be seen as a tool as well. As the world becomes ever more interconnected, experiencing cultures different than your own becomes much easier. As a former colony of France, however, much of the outside world that Madagascar experiences is still through the lens of its former colonizer. Hollywood, Bollywood, and Hong Kong cinema alike are

dubbed and subtitled into French rather than Malagasy. Local news agencies retrieve stories from Canal+ Studios, and then broadcast them in both French and Malagasy throughout the nation. Even if they do not realize it, much of the worldwide culture that the Malagasy can readily access has a French flare. For Mr. Rakotoseheno, though, this is simply a fact of media no matter where you are.

When speaking on the subject of being multicultural, Mr. Rakotoseheno expressed that it is “of course possible to be both Malagasy as well as francophone” (Rakotoseheno, 2011). Much of the educated population of Madagascar can be said to be francophone because of their language skill and knowledge of francophone culture. Despite this, though, one has to remain Malagasy first and foremost. Even if the education the Malagasy receive is in French, they remain Malagasy (Rakotoseheno, 2011).

### Conclusions

Looking back at the interviews I conducted, two distinct roles of the French language stand out. For those who have the opportunity to learn the language, French can be a powerful tool; not only allowing Malagasy to network beyond Madagascar, but also allowing them to achieve greater success within the country’s borders. For the majority who do not speak it, however, French continues to represent a level of oppression. Not only does it mark socio-economic background, but the language limits levels of education and professions obtainable.

With the exception of one participant, Joseph, all those with whom I interviewed had a relatively strong ability with French. Accordingly, each had

used this skill, with varying degrees of success, in their professional lives.

Professor Ramangason says “C’est notre clé” describing the French language (Ramangason, 2011). Aïna embodies this notion, using her mastery of a language to create, in her hotel, an atmosphere in which French tourists feel comfortable, closer to home. It is certainly true that some tourists choose to “live on the edge,” but the majority will end up staying in a hotel where French is spoken.

With Mr. Radjably we see much of the same. Not only does he have a strong command of French, but English as well. Today he owns two hotels along with a restaurant, and most of his patrons are French nationals. Both Aïna and Mr. Radjably are immensely hardworking and determined, in all likelihood they would have succeeded in any number of fields, yet both acknowledge the advantage that speaking French gives them. Unfortunately much of the wealth in Madagascar comes from foreign investment, and to take advantage of it the Malagasy need to speak the right language.

The ability to speak a colonizer’s language is often associated with upward mobility. Frantz Fanon, the negritude writer, allowed that learning the language of the colonizer was key to self-advancement: “historically the Negro wants to speak French because it is the key that can open doors which were still barred to him fifty years ago” (Fanon, 1967). Armand, my host-father, started off as a cultivator. While being a strong supporter of independence, he worked hard to learn how to speak French, and sent his children to private schools where they would study in French. To this day, he harbors strong feelings against France, but at the same time recognizes and embraces the power of speaking the language.

There is sometimes the urge to correlate language with culture. Here I agree with Jinadu's criticism of Fanon's ideas of culture and language:

Part of the problem is that of assigning meanings to 'language' and 'culture'. Vocabulary, i.e. the list of words to be found in a language, is one aspect of language that Fanon himself identifies.

Another aspect he identifies is the mode of inflection as well as the syntax, that is the manner of sentence formation of a language...

The question of what constitutes a culture is, however, a much more vexed one. To raise it is to enter a thicket of anthropological and social psychological controversy. Although it may be easy to study language and its structure with some precision, it is a much more formidable task to define culture, study its structure and delineate its content. (Jinadu, 1976, pp. 607-608)

While language is certainly an aspect of culture, language and culture are not coterminous. This was revealed in the interview with Mr. Rakotoseheno, the editor of *Midi Madagascar*, and the interview with Mr. Randriantsoa, when each adamantly denied any assimilation of French and Malagasy culture, despite the use of a colonizer's language.

Unfortunately, French does not provide the same opportunities to everyone. The vast majority of the Malagasy population has little to no schooling in French, leading to minimal, if any, ability with the language. For this majority, French serves as an oppressive force, creating a barrier to education, limiting attainable jobs, and serving as a socioeconomic status marker.

Of all those I interviewed, only Mr. Randriantsoa, who works at the Hotel Raphia, made a point to say that he had not wanted to learn French. The language was forced upon him, both by the education system, as well as by the reality of the workplace in Antananarivo. Rather than focusing on how he benefited from his ability with the language, he pointed to how others suffered. This was also the case with Armand. While he pushed his children and grandchildren to study French, he was disheartened by the need to do so. He very strongly supported the idea of changing the language of the Universities of Madagascar to Malagasy. It would take a great deal of effort, but in his opinion the education system should serve the people rather than divide it.

By its role in Madagascar, the French language creates distinct socioeconomic levels. Although focusing on countries in mainland Africa, Jinadu highlights a significant aspect of language and social structure:

First, it can be argued that the acquisition and mastery of the languages of the colonizing powers have created a form of social stratification or class system based on one's ability to communicate in French or English. Thus it can be argued from a Fanonian standpoint that a crucial criterion used by the colonizing powers in deciding which group of Africans to hand over power to, was fluency in English or French. (Jinadu, 1976, p. 612)

This was clearly the case in Madagascar. Although officially independent in 1959, the government of the First Republic, under the presidency of Philibert Tsiranana remained very much in line with French policy. As has been already addressed,

many of the supposedly elected positions remained in the hands of former French colonists, while Tsiranana served as a member of France's United Nations delegation. French language remained the language of the government, and most importantly, education did as well, a legacy that continues to the present day.

When considering language use amongst the majority of Malagasy, it is perhaps best to look at the instances when French is used by those who least often speak it. In Maurice Bloch's short article, "Why Do Malagasy Cows Speak French?" he addresses two instances where people whom he never witnessed speaking French on a daily basis used the language:

It was therefore extremely surprising to find that these same peasants always addressed their cattle in French. When driving herds to pasture, using cattle for ploughing... Why suddenly switch to a little known and hostile language when talking to animals? Perhaps the answer will become clear when we look at the few other contexts when French was used in villages... When drunk, usually on market days or on family ceremonies, people I had never thought could say a single word in French would suddenly launch into long tirades addressed to me or to other villagers.

(Bloch, 1998, p. 193)

In this brief, and somewhat comical, passage we see a very profound point. When speaking to cattle, or drunkenly boasting, the villagers were exhibiting power over their audience; a position of domination. The fact that they chose to use French in these instances clearly indicates that for these villagers, and I argue for the vast



majority of Malagasy who do not speak French at a high level, that the language can be one of oppression.

When looking at French language in Madagascar, it ultimately comes down the fact that it serves different roles for different people. Those who participated in my research represent a minority of Malagasy people, and it is highly likely that further interviews would result in an array of different experiences. Despite this, these two roles of the language stand out. For those fortunate enough, French can be powerful tool, but at the same time, for many others it can prove to be an insurmountable barrier to education and the workplace.

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## Appendices

### *Primary Sources*

Interviews: The most productive method of gathering information for this study was that of interviewing. Before performing these interviews, my research topic was first approved by the SIT IRB. The majority of interviews conducted were formal, structured interviews. That is to say that they were scheduled with the participant in advanced, and that I used previously prepared questions which functioned, if not solely as a springboard for discussion, then as the main director of conversation. Each set of questions was designed with a certain interviewee in mind, however many of the same questions were asked to multiple people so as to be able to obtain varying accounts and opinions. I typically stated the interview in the direction of a life story. I chose to do this to better understand the personal use of language. A summary of questions used for each interview can be found in the appendices.

I took field notes during each interview, recording key points voiced by the interviewee along with the general direction/sentiment of thoughts. Afterwards I used these notes to supplement my memory while writing up field journals. While there are no complete transcripts for any of these dialogues, the field journals have paraphrasing as well as several direct quotes which, I feel, accurately portray each interview.

Before any interview was conducted I took several steps to explain its purpose, and gain permission to use information from it in my study. With each participant I first introduced myself as well as my project. I explained that I was a

student who was studying French language and culture in Madagascar. I would then show an *Attestation* sheet provided by SIT to give the participant a further understanding of and justification for my project. If this led to any further questions I answered them to the best of my ability, which proved sufficient in the case of all the interviews I would end up using in this study. With the reason for my study apparent, I asked each participant to review and sign a *Formule de Consentement* (this was not the case for my host parents in Mahajanga nor with Joseph in Secteur as I did not yet have a *Formule*, however, consent was still given to use both the information they gave along with their names) allowing me to use the information gained through the interview process for my study. Only after the completion of each interview did I ask the participant if I might use their true name in my paper. I chose to do this instead of asking before starting because I felt that the interviewee might be more comfortable in making a decision after they had the chance to see the results of their participation. Copies of both the *Attestation* sheet as well as the *Formule de Consentement* can be found below.

*Summary of Interview Questions*

Institutions:

- Qu'est-ce que c'est l'institution?
- Quand était l'institution fondée ?
  - Par qui ?
- Quelle est le but de 'institution ?
- En général, qui vient à l'institution ?
  - Pourquoi ?
- Pour combien de temps avez-vous travaillé à l'institution ?
- Pourquoi avez-vous décidé de travailler à l'institution ?

General Questions:

- Ou avez-vous appris la langue française?
- Pourquoi avez-vous appris français ?
- Pensez-vous que c'est important pour les Malgaches d'apprendre la langue française ?
  - Pourquoi ?
- Pensez-vous que la langue qu'on parle est important pour s'identité ?
- A votre avis, quelle est l'importance de la langue français pour les Malgaches ?
  - Est-ce que c'est une langue d'oppression ?
  - Est-ce que c'est une marque d'honneur ?
  - Est-ce que c'est un fait de la vie ?
- Est-ce qu'il y a des similarités entre la culture française et la culture malgache ?
- Qu'est-ce que c'est francophone ?

- Est-ce que c'est la langue, la culture ?
- Est-ce que c'est possible d'avoir une identité francophone ?
- Est-ce que c'est possible d'être malgache et francophone aussi ?

## Formule de Consentement

La participation à cette entrevue est entièrement volontaire. Lisez les informations ci-dessous et posez des questions sur les choses qui ne sont pas claires, avant de décider si vous voulez bien y participer.

But :

Le but de cette étude est de mieux comprendre

---

Cette étude essaye aussi de comprendre

---

Confidentialité :

Les informations que vous donnez seront publiées mais votre identité sera protégée, à moins que vous choisissiez d'être révélé. Seul l'enquêteur saura les informations sur votre identité personnelle.

Critère :

Vous pouvez participer à cette étude si vous avez 18 ans ou plus, habitant à \_\_\_\_\_ et étant malgache.

Rémunération :

Vous ne serez pas payé pour votre participation à cette étude.

Retrait :

Vous êtes libre de vous retirer de cette étude à n'importe quel moment.

La participation est volontaire. Vous pouvez refuser de répondre aux questions ou rompre votre engagement à cette étude à n'importe quel moment sans aucune pénalisation. Votre signature ci-dessous indique que vous avez lu les informations dans cette formule de consentement et que vous avez eu la chance de poser des questions concernant cette étude.

Signature de l'intéressée \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



Advertisements/Program Guides: When looking at institutions which promote the French language and culture in Madagascar you can find a significant amount of visual media. To be able to spread a language and culture you first need people to be aware of your program. As a result countless pamphlets, posters, program guides and more can be found at such places as the *Institut Francais* and the *Alliance Francaise*. The *Institut*, for example, puts out a program guide each month which previews coming events and exhibitions they will be offering. How this media is presented can help to better explain the institutions which create it. Some examples of visual media I looked at during my study can be found in the appendices.

## Visual Media

INSTITUT FRANÇAIS  
MADAGASCAR

musique / danse / vidéo **blueline**

mois de la SCIENCE

VENDREDI 25 NOVEMBRE 2011 À 19H

**ARTISTS FOR A CAUSE**  
[ Work in Progress ]

danse, expression corporelle & chorégraphie : **Dinirina & Garango**  
création musicale : **Dadee Andrianaivoson**  
performance sonore : **Tams**  
installation vidéo & art visuel : **Loobrik**

Institut Français de Madagascar / Ambassade de France  
à Madagascar / 14 Avenue de l'Indépendance / BP 488  
Antananarivo 101 / Madagascar / Tél (261 20) 22 213 75  
Info@institutfrancais-madagascar.com  
www.institutfrancais-madagascar.com

TARIF ADHÉRENTS : 4 000 ar  
NON ADHÉRENTS : 6 000 ar

SALLE DE SPECTACLE

Figure 1 Artists For A Cause – Multi Expression Performance

**INSTITUT FRANÇAIS**  
MADAGASCAR

blueline

MUSIQUE DU MONDE  
B.O. du film « Baobabs entre ciel et terre »

**Talilema**

mois de la SCIENCE



**MERCREDI 23 NOVEMBRE À 19H** SALLE DE SPECTACLE

Institut français de Madagascar / Ambassade de France à Madagascar  
14 Avenue de l'indépendance - Bp 488 - Antananarivo - 101 Madagascar  
Tel (261 20) 22 213 75 / info@institutfrancais-madagascar.com  
www.institutfrancais-madagascar.com

**ENTRÉE LIBRE** [ dans la limite des places disponibles ]

cirad

Figure 2 Talilema - Musical Performance

**INSTITUT FRANÇAIS**  
MADAGASCAR

blueline  
**NOUVEAU CIRQUE**

**Linea...**

Tournée internationale

**Cie Sens  
Dessus  
Dessous**  
(France)

**VENDREDI 18 NOV 2011 À 19H**

SALLE DE SPECTACLE  
TARIF ADHÉRENT : 4 000 ar  
NON-ADHÉRENT : 6 000 ar

Institut français de Madagascar / Ambassade de France à Madagascar  
14 Avenue de l'indépendance - Bp 488 - Antananarivo - 101 Madagascar  
Tél (261 20) 22 213 75 / info@institutfrancais-madagascar.com  
www.institutfrancais-madagascar.com

En 2011, la programmation internationale de l'IfM est parrainée par Air France Madagascar.

**AIRFRANCE**

**INSTITUT FRANÇAIS**  
LES NOUVELLES

Figure 3 Linea... - Acrobatic Performance

*Secondary Research*

Electronic Sources: Further background information which could not be easily obtained from primary sources or printed secondary sources were obtained online. This is the case for the majority of statistics provided in this study. For although Madagascar has a statistics bureau, INSTAT, they had little relevant information to offer, and acknowledged the level of levels of inaccuracy associated with their own work at this current time. Electronic sources also proved to be useful while researching French promoting institutions in Madagascar. When interviewees at such institutions were unsure of aspects of their history or felt they did not have adequate time to properly and fully speak to a matter they often directed me to their websites.

### Summary: French Language and Madagascar

The French first landed at Fort Dauphin, on the south-eastern coast of Madagascar, in 1648. For the first two centuries of French-Malagasy relations, there was little interaction outside of the governing elite of the Merina and Sakalava ethnic groups. In 1894, however, French troops landed in the coastal city, marking the beginning of colonization that would last until independence in 1959. As a colony of France, French became the official language of government and education in Madagascar, a legacy that continues to the present. In this project I sought to better understand the role of a colonizer's language in a post-colonial nation.

I begin this project with a short history of the French language in regard to Madagascar. To understand the roles that language plays today we must first address the historical context. Madagascar was only a colony of France for just over a half-century, but the relationship between the two nations is far more extensive. In more recent history I look at some of the politics in regard to language since independence. In a relatively short period of time Madagascar has experienced multiple governments with a wide range of policies. Most recently, the country has been in a state of crisis resulting from a coup d'état in 2009.

I was in Madagascar from late-August to mid-December of 2011. During these months I lived with three different host-families in Antananarivo, Secteur, and Mahajanga. My host-families were easily the most important part of my being in Madagascar, giving me the chance to better experience the life of a Malagasy person, rather than a *vazaha* (foreigner). While I was performing my research the

country was experiencing a heightened level of political crisis, as the people became increasingly impatient with the self-appointed transitional government. Despite these increased tensions, I was still able to work with minimal trouble.

Keeping history in mind, I sought to look at the role of French language, today in Madagascar. The vast majority of my research performed was through the use of interviews, and participant observation. Most of the interviews were performed in Antananarivo, the modern day capital of Madagascar, as well as the historical capital of the Merina ethnic group. Mahajanga, the historical capital of the Sakalava ethnic group, was another site where I performed interviews. The two cities are unique in the sense that a significant percentage of their populations have at least a conversational level of French, while the vast majority of Malagasy have little ability with the language, despite the fact that it remains the language of education. My research, then, does not speak for the entire Malagasy population, but a somewhat select group.

Before performing interviews my project was first approved by the School for International Training's IRB, a necessary step in performing any research. Upon approval I performed roughly two dozen interviews, of which I would use fourteen in my capstone. With two noted exceptions, all of the interviews were performed in French. In addition to having studied French for a number of years, I lived with Malagasy host-families during my time in Madagascar, where French was the primarily spoken language. I, along with those I interviewed, felt very confident in our language abilities, and as such I never used a third-party translator, all quotes in my capstone I translated myself.

Before I could perform any interview I first explained what exactly I was researching, as well as the goals of my project. I was fortunate to have an overall very enthusiastic response from the participants, making the process more informative as well as enjoyable. During these interviews I asked the participants about the role of French language in their lives. We often talked about educational background, professional life, and day-to-day interactions, in addition to how they thought about language and culture.

In addition to speaking to people about their personal use of language, I spoke to three institutions found in Antananarivo which promoted the use French language and Francophone identity. Often those who worked at these institutions were, in fact, Malagasy. Speaking to them I asked about their affiliation with French programs, and why they chose to work with them.

While analyzing my research I found two distinct roles of the French language in Malagasy life. The first was one of opportunity. By learning French many Malagasy were able to continue their education to the university level, and obtain better jobs. They were also able to network beyond Madagascar, within the substantial Francophone world, offering them further opportunities.

For others, however, French continued to be an oppressive force. While it offered the chance for a better education to those who were able to speak it, it also limited the level and quality of education available to those who cannot. The ability to speak French is very much a status symbol, readily identifying those who are affluent, from the impoverished and marginalized.