

CHAPTER 11

Sociolinguistic Heterogeneity The Franco-Ontarians

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1. INTRODUCTION

A recent volume (Chaudenson, Mougeon, & Beniak, 1993) pointed out that French is spoken in many different national or regional settings that range from situations of (quasi-)monolingualism to bilingualism or multilingualism or from situations with high levels of institutional support for French to areas where such support is virtually nil. The authors argue that these widely different settings offer linguists a unique opportunity to carry out panlectal comparative sociolinguistic research and that such research should not only broaden our view of *la francophonie* but also improve our knowledge of the role of external factors in variation and change in French.

In contrast to the broad worldwide perspective adopted by Chaudenson et al. (1993), this chapter will focus only on a single French-speaking community, namely, the French-speaking minority of Ontario. This study will show, however, that within this particular community there are sizable intergroup differences in patterns of French language learning, in the use of French in the different domains of society, and in types and levels of French language competence, and that such differences can also be the object of profitable sociolinguistic comparative research. Among the socio-historical factors that account for these differences are variation in the demographic strength of Francophones at a local or regional level, intergenerational differences in level of contact with English, rising linguistic exogamy, a growing trend to abandon French at home, and the fact that Franco-Ontarians have only

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recently won the right to French-medium instruction. Now, many of these factors apply to the French-speaking community of Louisiana, the focus of this volume. It is therefore hoped that this chapter will provide a useful basis of comparison for ongoing and future sociolinguistic research on the language behavior of Louisiana's French-speaking community.

This study will be divided into three main parts: a historical, sociological, and political overview of the Franco-Ontarian community (Section 2); an overview of census and sociolinguistic survey data on the differences in French-language learning, use, and competence observable within the community (Sections 3–6); and a concrete illustration of interindividual differences in spoken French via an examination of excerpts of taped interviews carried out with Franco-Ontarians of different sociolinguistic profiles (Section 7).

2. THE FRANCO-ONTARIANS

Ontario's French-speaking community is the result of several migratory waves that originated mostly from the Province of Québec and to a lesser extent from Acadia. Although the first wave of French-speaking settlers goes back to the period of French colonization in North America (there are still, notably, descendants of the French pioneers in Windsor, near Detroit), the bulk of French-speaking immigration took place from 1830 to 1930. It was triggered by overpopulation and economic underdevelopment in several of the rural regions of Québec and Acadia. The French-speaking communities that go back to this period are found in southeastern Ontario (a farming region) and along the main rail lines and highways of central and northern Ontario that were built during the growth of the forestry and mining industries (see Figure 1) that today are still major providers of employment. A smaller migration started toward the end of the 1950s and has continued with more or less vigor until the present. It generally includes people of urban origins and of a variety of social backgrounds who come mostly from French-speaking Canada, but also from other French-speaking communities in the world. They settled primarily in the major urban centers of southern Ontario, where they found jobs in the industrial and public sectors.

According to the Canadian census of 1991, Ontario's population included 521,795 people who claim French as their mother tongue. In absolute numbers, this community of roughly half a million individuals ranks first among Canada's French-speaking minorities. It must be pointed out, however, that it makes up only 5% of the total population of Ontario. In 1991, this province had 9,977,055 inhabitants, who were for the most part English-speaking. Over the last three decades or so, Ontario has undergone significant economic growth and thus has become a major locus of immigration. More and more, Ontario's immigrants originate from non-English-speaking countries, and thus Franco-Ontarians have become a minority among other minorities.

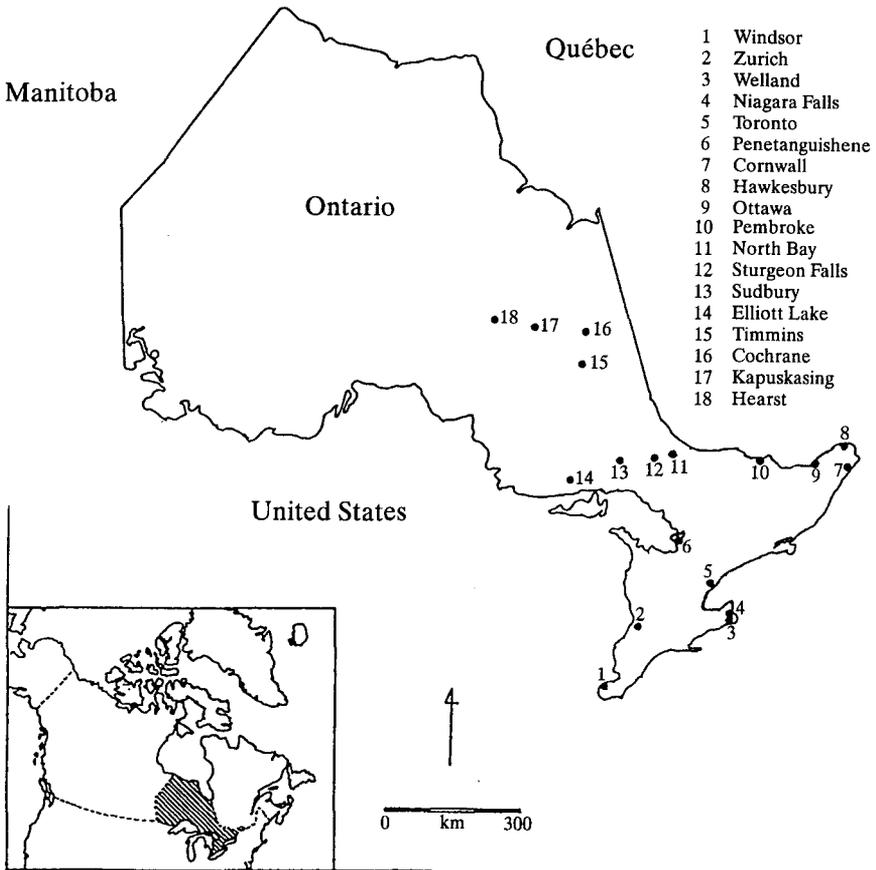


Figure 1. Map of Ontario, Canada, showing localities with Francophone concentration

An examination of previous censuses reveals that Franco-Ontarians have always been a small minority. This explains in part why they have never been able to secure linguistic rights like those enjoyed by the Acadians of New Brunswick, who number only 250,000 but who make up over 34% of the total population of that province. In fact, during the darkest period of Franco-Ontarian history (the first 25 years of the 20th century), Ontario's Francophones bore the brunt of the government's assimilationist policies, which notably featured a total ban on French-medium schooling in the province. In addition to this, many of Ontario's French-speaking immigrants settled in localities where Anglo-Ontarians held much of the local political and economic power. Thus, one can understand why, over the years, Franco-Ontarians have acquired, out of sheer necessity, a good knowledge of English. According to the 1991 Canadian census, 86% of Ontarians with French as

their mother tongue were bilingual in French and English. The importance of English in Ontario and the minority status of Franco-Ontarians have done more than just bring about their bilingualization; they have also triggered a process of language shift to English that has been increasing steadily over the last decades (Mougeon & Beniak, 1994).

The first measures against linguistic assimilation were taken in the 1960s. More steps favorable to the status of French and Francophones in Ontario were taken in the 1970s and 1980s. Although, overall, these measures do not go as far as those that have been taken in favor of French and of the Acadians in New Brunswick during approximately the same period, they nonetheless constitute significant linguistic rights that many linguistic minorities in the world would probably regard with envy.

Let us briefly review the most significant measures favorable to French that were taken in Ontario over the past 25 years: extension of the French language CBC radio and TV networks to most of Ontario's localities; creation of a system of French-medium schools, at the elementary, secondary, and postsecondary levels;¹ establishment of a full-fledged French-medium educational TV network and, more recently, provision of some services in French in the provincial government ministries or agencies (including the provincial court system) and in those institutions that receive much of their funding from the provincial government, for example, hospitals. Some of these steps are the direct result of federal legislation on official bilingualism; others are the fruit of a long-standing fight on the part of Franco-Ontarian political leaders for recognition of the special status of Franco-Ontarians by the Ontario government.

3. VARIATION IN THE DEMOGRAPHIC STRENGTH OF LOCAL FRANCO-ONTARIAN COMMUNITIES

If Franco-Ontarians are only a small minority at the provincial level, their concentration varies considerably at the local level, ranging from as few as 1% of the local population, for example, in London or Toronto, to more than 85% of the local population, for example, in Hawkesbury or Hearst. The local level of French-speaking concentration exerts a determining influence on several aspects of the sociolinguistic behavior of Franco-Ontarians. For instance, in localities where Franco-Ontarians make up a strong majority, it is possible to communicate in French outside the home, in the public sector (i.e., in the local institutions that fall under the jurisdiction of the municipal, provincial, and federal governments), and even to a certain extent in the private sector (especially in, for example, the stores and factories that are owned and operated by French-speaking Ontarians).

By contrast, in localities where Franco-Ontarians constitute only small minorities, the possibility of communicating in French in those domains is very low. Also in such localities, nearly all members of the Franco-Ontarian community are bilin-

gual in English. For instance, in the small Francophone minority of Pembroke, 97% of Franco-Ontarians are bilingual. In localities where Franco-Ontarians are more numerous, the proportion of bilinguals is significantly lower. For instance, in the strong-majority Franco-Ontarian community of Hawkesbury, 44% of Franco-Ontarians are monolingual in French. Finally, the Canadian census reveals that in those localities where Franco-Ontarians are largely outnumbered by Anglophones, a non-negligible proportion of the French-mother-tongue population reports communicating in English in the home. In contrast, in the strong-Francophone-majority communities, shift to English at home is virtually nonexistent.

4. VARIATION IN PATTERNS OF FRENCH-LANGUAGE LEARNING

Chaudenson (1991) and Chaudenson et al. (1993) argued that in order to account for the various ways in which French is learned in childhood throughout the French-speaking world, it is necessary to distinguish at least five different possibilities: (1) French as the sole mother tongue (F_1); (2) French as a primary mother tongue (F_1/L_1) (L_1 = another mother tongue); (3) simultaneous and balanced childhood learning of French and of another language ($F_1|L_1$); (4) the reverse of (F_1/L_1), that is, (L_1/F_1); and finally (5) learning of French in childhood (typically in school), but after early childhood acquisition of another language (L_1/F_2). All of these patterns of language learning can be found among Franco-Ontarians. Thus, according to the Canadian census of 1986, the 533,230 Ontarians who claimed French as a mother tongue (mother tongue being defined as the first language learned during childhood and still understood) included: 422,770 individuals who declared French as their sole mother tongue, 96,910 who reported having learned French along with English during their childhood (dual mother tongue), 3,700 who reported having learned French along with a nonofficial language in their early childhood (another case of dual mother tongue), and 9,850 who reported having learned it along with English and a nonofficial language (triple mother tongue!).

These data can be compared with other data gathered in the 1991 census. Such a comparison is particularly interesting, since in 1991, a stricter definition of mother tongue was used, one that specified the locus of learning (at home) and the time of learning (before going to school). This new definition had a dramatic impact on the number of Ontarians who declared dual or triple mother tongues. In 1991, the total number of Ontarians having French as their mother tongue was almost the same as in 1986; however, only 31,395 respondents reported French and English as mother tongues and 5,005 reported French and a nonofficial language or French, English, and a nonofficial language as mother tongues. Such a sharp decrease suggests that childhood learning of English by Franco-Ontarians takes place not in the home, but primarily outside the home (probably in the immediate neighborhood).

Although the question on mother tongue used by the 1986 and the 1991 censuses represents a considerable improvement over previous ones that forced

respondents to declare only one mother tongue, it still lacks precision because it assumes that a respondent who declares two or three mother tongues is equally competent in both or all. However, the results of a survey carried out in the early grades of several French-language schools (Mougeon, Brent-Palmer, Bélanger, & Cichocki, 1982) revealed that the frequency of use of French by parents with young children at home varied considerably (from categorical to almost nil). It is therefore quite conceivable that there are interindividual differences within the subsets of dual- and triple-mother-tongue respondents that are similar to the ones suggested above (i.e., F_1/L_1 , $F_1|L_1$, L_1/F_1 , etc.).

As indicated earlier, within the Franco-Ontarian community, there are also individuals whose acquisition profile is of the L_1/F_2 type. They are individuals who were brought up in a home where one or both of the parents are of French mother tongue, but who were not exposed to French by their parents even though the parents elected to send them to a French-medium school. In other words, such Franco-Ontarian parents relied on the Franco-Ontarian schools to ensure the transmission of French to their offspring. The existence of L_1/F_2 Franco-Ontarians was attested by several surveys carried out in a sample of elementary and secondary Franco-Ontarian schools. The surveys revealed that these schools include a sizable number of students of Franco-Ontarian extraction who never communicate (or communicate infrequently) in French at home. As a matter of fact, together with those students who reported communicating about as often in French as in English (or another language), they were found to outnumber the students who reported French as a primary or sole language of communication.

Still on the topic of the dual role of the school and the home in linguistic reproduction among Franco-Ontarians, another type of F_1 speaker should be mentioned. It corresponds to French-mother-tongue speakers who were primarily or entirely schooled in English. There are many such speakers among the older Franco-Ontarian generations, since Ontario's system of French-medium schools was not established until after 1968. Like the L_1/F_2 speakers mentioned above, these latter speakers of French exhibit an "unbalanced" French-language-acquisition profile that is characterized by a lack of continuity and complementarity between home and school. We will see later that such discontinuity has a definite impact on the development of stylistic and linguistic competence in French.

5. VARIATION IN LANGUAGE-USE PATTERNS

In addition to differences in the patterns of French-language learning, one can also observe sizable variation in the use of this language among Franco-Ontarians. In the 1991 Canadian census, for instance, 56% of the French-mother-tongue Ontarians reported communicating only in French at home, 38% reported communicating only in English in this societal domain, 5% in both French and English, and the remaining 1% in one (or several) nonofficial language(s) with or without French or English.

One important aspect of the statistics on home language use is that, in combination with the statistics on mother tongue (first language learned at home), rates of retention (or loss) of French at home for the various subgroups of French-mother-tongue Ontarians can be calculated. All of these rates underscore that, contrary to what was the case in the early stages of the history of Franco-Ontarians, French language loss at home is now advanced. For instance, fully 37% of the Ontarians who learned French as a sole mother tongue communicate in a language other than French at home (in most cases in English), and 61% of the Ontarians who learned French and English as mother tongues communicate in a language other than French at home (again most of the time in English).² Several studies (Castonguay, 1979; Mougeon & Beniak, 1991) showed that the process of shift to English at home revealed by these rates is largely related to linguistic exogamy (marriage between a French speaker and an English speaker). More specifically, it has been shown that the rate of linguistically mixed marriages has been rising constantly in recent decades and that in 90% of the exogamous marriages, the French-speaking spouse reports communicating in English at home (the rate of shift to English found for the linguistically endogamous couples—marriages between French speakers—is much lower, only 17%).³ The rise in the proportion of linguistic exogamy among Franco-Ontarians may be looked upon as an indication that, within that community, there is now a growing and significant trend to integrate the English-speaking Ontarian majority (and that there is no obvious opposition to such an integration on the part of the majority). Furthermore, such a rise does not augur well for the long-term survival of French in Ontario, since we have just seen that the great majority of the French-mother-tongue spouses of linguistically exogamous couples fail to communicate in French at home and hence are unlikely to transmit French to their offspring.⁴

Variation in the use of French is not limited to the home (the only societal domain taken into consideration by the Canadian census). A survey among Franco-Ontarian adolescents attending French-medium schools in four localities (Mougeon & Beniak, 1991) revealed sizable interindividual differences in relation to, for instance, the use of French with siblings and friends outside the home. In fact, such differences range from exclusive to no use of French. In a related vein, through a survey of adult Franco-Ontarians in three localities, Bernard (1977) also discovered interindividual differences of the same magnitude in relation to communication outside the home, for example, communication with the neighbors, store owners or employees, one's employer, health professionals, and municipal, provincial, or federal civil servants.

6. VARIATION IN FRENCH-LANGUAGE COMPETENCE

This section will be limited to making several general observations on the dual issue of the influence of different patterns of French language learning and use on competence in French (e.g., vocabulary knowledge, mastery of morphosyntactic

difficulties, range of sociostylistic repertory) among members of the Franco-Ontarian community. Some of these remarks will be elaborated upon and made more concrete in Section 7, which will present excerpts of taped interviews with Ontarian speakers of French.

With this question on the respondents' capacity to hold a conversation in the official languages of Canada (French and English), the Canadian census provided some data on the linguistic competence of Franco-Ontarians. Although these data are both limited and imprecise, they nonetheless allow us to distinguish three groups within the French-mother-tongue population of Ontario. In 1991, this population included 86% individuals who had the capacity to converse in both official languages, 10% who could converse only in French, and 4% who could converse only in English. In other words, the Canadian census revealed that Ontarians of French mother tongue include: (1) a small group of individuals who are monolingual or quasi-monolingual in French; (2) an even smaller group of individuals who are almost monolingual in English, as their competence in French is only passive (see the definition of mother tongue in Section 4); and (3) a large group of undifferentiated individuals who may be looked upon as bilingual because they can minimally hold a conversation in both French and English. We have earlier alluded to some of the reasons for the advanced nature of bilingualization among Franco-Ontarians. It is interesting and encouraging to note that the factors that have brought about widespread bilingualism have not yet produced a significant loss of productive skills in French among Franco-Ontarians, since only 4% of the French-mother-tongue population of Ontario exhibits such a loss. In the other French-speaking minorities of North America that are further advanced on the path of linguistic assimilation, loss of productive skills in French among the French-mother-tongue population has been found to be much higher than in Ontario (Veltman, 1987).

Although the Canadian census does not allow us to distinguish various levels of bilingualism in English and French, findings from sociolinguistic surveys carried out in specific Franco-Ontarian communities suggest that among the large group of Franco-Ontarians who can converse in both English and French, there is a sizable range of variation in bilingual competence. In a survey of Franco-Ontarian adolescents in four Franco-Ontarian communities, Mougeon & Beniak (1991) found that at least three levels of competence in spoken French can be distinguished: (1) French-language dominance (better speaking skills in French than in English), (2) equal competence in spoken French and spoken English, and (3) English-language dominance (better speaking skills in English than in French). These findings are not surprising, as we have already pointed out that these same adolescents display sizable interindividual differences in the extent to which they communicate in French and English in various situations. A sociolinguistic survey of the French-speaking minority of Welland (Beniak, Mougeon, & Valois, 1985) revealed similar findings, with one notable exception: Among the older generations, there were some individuals whose skills in English were quite limited, that is, individuals who are comparable to those that are classified by the Canadian census as able to converse only in French.

It is also worth pointing out that differential competence in French and English among Franco-Ontarians was found by several authors to relate to differences in identity. Thus, Heller (1989) notes that young balanced bilingual Franco-Ontarians have a deep feeling of dual linguistic and cultural allegiance (see also Clément, Gauthier, & Noels, 1992) and will often resort to code switching (a type of communicative behavior in keeping with their identity). Finally, it has also been found that as a whole, and in comparison with French Québeckers, Franco-Ontarians have a more positive view of bilingualism and a less negative perception of several of the linguistic consequences of bilingualism targeted by language purists, for example, English borrowings and code switches (see Poplack, 1989).

Beyond these very general differences in expressive skills in French and English revealed by the Canadian census and by sociolinguistic surveys, corpus-based studies of the spoken French of Franco-Ontarians have revealed more specific differences in relation to the lexicon, morphology, syntax, and phonetics of Ontario French. They are briefly summarized here.⁵

6.1. Standardization

Not all French-speaking communities in the world can avail themselves of the right to French-medium schooling. When such right is granted and when education is provided in a standard variety of French, it often plays a key role in the diffusion of this variety of French in the community. Over the last 20 years or so, Franco-Ontarians have had such a right (see Section 2), and that right has also had a standardizing effect on the local French. Although such an effect is still observable chiefly in the speech of younger generations, it is particularly evident in the French of Franco-Ontarians who are or were schooled in French but who rarely communicate(d) in this language in the informal domains of society, for example, the home. The Franco-Ontarian community is not the only French-speaking minority in North America for whom some form of French language instruction is provided while maintenance of French at home is very much on the decline.⁶ One can also expect to find speakers of French who are more or less “cut off” from the vernacular in such communities (see, notably, Valdman, 1994).

Various studies have documented the standardization of the speech of L₁/F₂ Franco-Ontarians who are schooled in French but who use this language infrequently in the informal domains of society. In Mougeon and Beniak (1991), the possessive preposition *à* was found to be entirely replaced by its standard counterpart *de*, for example, *le frère à/de ma mère* in spoken French. Tennant (1994) found that these same speakers deleted the phoneme /l/ significantly less frequently than their counterparts who maintained French in such societal domains (/l/ deletion in personal pronouns and articles, e.g., *l' travaille dans 'a cave*, is a typical feature of vernacular varieties of Canadian French). A similar trend was found by Thomas (1988/1989) in relation to the use of vernacular /we/ for standard /wa/ in words that include the graphemic sequence *oi*, for example, *moé* for *moi*, and by Nadasdi (1994) in relation to subject doubling, for example, *Les Fran-*

çais i' sont tout' bilingues for standard nondoubled subjects, *Les Français sont tous bilingues*.

6.2. Speech of the Older Generations

In contrast to the speech of the younger generations, the spoken French of older Franco-Ontarian generations is much less standardized. In fact, these generations include individuals whose speech has probably remained closer to the vernacular than that of same-age Québeckers. This phenomenon is due to several factors: (1) Most of the forebears of the older Franco-Ontarians and even some of the older Franco-Ontarians themselves came from the poor rural regions of Quebec; (2) until the early 1970s, French-medium schooling was at best embryonic; and (3) the expansion of French in some of the official domains of society alluded to earlier was late in coming. In other words, many members of the older Franco-Ontarian generations have been minimally exposed to Standard French (SF). One of the most striking outcomes of this situation is exhibited by older Franco-Ontarians who have attained a high level of education but who received such education primarily or entirely in English. They tend to speak a variety of French that makes them sound, to an outsider, less educated than they really are. As a matter of fact, their English is probably a better indicator of their social standing than their French (see Mougeon & Beniak, 1995).

6.3. Morphosyntactic Simplification

Several studies centered on the morphosyntax of Ontarian French have documented a dual trend: (1) preferential recourse to forms or to morphosyntactic rules that stand as unmarked or more regular alternatives to exceptional or irregular forms or rules and (2) omission of redundant or predictable function words. Thus, Mougeon (1981) documented a tendency to omit the reflexive pronouns before pronominal verbs, for example, *Je (me) souviens de ça*. Mougeon and Beniak (1991, 1995) found a tendency to use default third person singular regular forms instead of the irregular third person plural verb forms in the indicative present and future, for example, *Les enfants veut pas communiquer avec leurs parents*. Nadasdi (1994) found a tendency to regularize the morphosyntax of object clitic pronouns (use of strong forms of these pronouns after the verb), for example, *La pollution commence à détruire nous autres* as well as the tendency to altogether eliminate object clitics, for example, *Ils ont pris la fille, pis ils étaient pour (la) donner à King Kong pis après, il a venu (la) chercher*.

Franco-Ontarians who were found to exhibit such tendencies were individuals who communicated infrequently in French. This finding underscores that restriction in the use of French militates against mastery of the more difficult or marked aspects of the morphosyntax of this language. It should be pointed out that as far as the Franco-Ontarian community is concerned, restriction in the use of French is exhib-

ited by two main groups of individuals. The first consists of the L_1/F_2 type of speakers alluded to in the preceding sections, that is, Franco-Ontarians who are or were schooled in French but who rarely communicate(d) in French outside the school (even in domains where they could do/have done so, e.g., the home). The second group includes Franco-Ontarians who exhibit the reverse sociolinguistic profile: They are or were schooled in English and their use of French is chiefly restricted to the home domain. Studies that have documented the phenomenon of morphosyntactic simplification were centered exclusively on the first group of Franco-Ontarians. It is true that among today's younger Franco-Ontarian generations, the first group largely outnumbers the second one. Nevertheless, it is hoped that the second group will be included in future research on this topic. Unlike the first group of speakers, they mostly use a vernacular variety of Ontarian French, and they have received only a limited amount of formal instruction in French. Thus, an investigation of their French may reveal patterns of simplification that are more advanced than the ones that have already been documented.

6.4. English-Language Transfer

Earlier it was seen that within the Franco-Ontarian community, bilingualism in English is very much advanced, that it is an important component of group identity, and that, overall, it is perceived in a favorable light. In addition, many members of the Franco-Ontarian community often communicate in English in their daily life; for a significant number of Franco-Ontarians, English is indeed their chief language of communication. One can add that despite its improved status, French is still regarded as a lower-status minority language (both within and outside the community). It is clear, then, that among Franco-Ontarians, there are several key conditions that are favorable to various forms of transfer from English into French.

The English-language transfers that have been found in Ontarian French can be subsumed under two main structural categories: (1) words of English origin (often referred to as English lexical borrowings) that form part and parcel of the lexicon of speakers of Ontarian French⁷ and (2) French words the syntagmatic distribution or meaning of which has been influenced by equivalent English words (this form of transfer is an indirect manifestation of the influence of English). Following are a few examples of the first type of transfer: English conjunction *so*, which functions as a variant of *ça fait que* or *alors* either as an interclause logical connector or as a discourse marker (Mougeon & Beniak, 1991) *Il est trop jeune so il peut pas conduire l'auto*; the word *high school*, a variant of *école secondaire*; and the word *fridge*, a variant of *frigo* or *frigidaire*.

The second type of transfer is demonstrated by the following examples: use of preposition *sur* (as a variant of preposition *à*) before words like *radio* and *télévision* or the names of TV networks or TV and radio stations, for example, *J'ai vu ça sur la télévision, sur CJBC* (Mougeon & Beniak, 1991); use of the copula *être*, rather than *avoir*, before words like *faim*, *peur*, or phrases that refer to quantified personal

characteristics (e.g., age, height, weight), for example, *Je suis peur, Je suis 25 (ans), Il est six pieds* (Mougeon & Beniak, 1991; Mougeon, Heller, Beniak, & Canale, 1994); and use of restrictive adverb *juste* in preverbal position: *Non, on juste commençait pis j'ai tombé* (Nadasdi, 1994).

Some of these indirect transfers from English are particularly widespread in the spoken French of Franco-Ontarians who communicate frequently in English.⁸ This is true, for instance, of *sur* instead of *à* and of *être* instead of *avoir*, mentioned above.

Other types of transfers from English are typical of the spoken French of Franco-Ontarians who in terms of language use and language skills can be looked upon as French-English balanced bilinguals. This is true, for instance, of the conjunction *so*. We pointed out elsewhere (Mougeon & Beniak, 1991) that such transfers are not the result of an imperfect mastery of the French lexicon—they are used chiefly by fluent speakers of French, and their French equivalents are basic elements of the vocabulary of French—but markers of the bilingual or bicultural identity of their users.

Finally, there are some transfers from English that are widely diffused in Ontarian French and hence do not seem to be associated with preponderant use of English or bilingual identity. This is true, for instance, of the word *high school*, which was (and still is) frequent in the speech of older Franco-Ontarians, no matter how bilingual they are. Such transfers compete with French words that are linked with domains of Ontario's society where (almost) only English is or was used. This greatly reduces the availability of the French terms and in turn favors a rapid and massive entry of their English equivalents into the lexicon of Ontarian French.⁹ For instance, the entry of *high school* in Ontarian French is chiefly attributable to the fact that before the early 1970s, in Ontario, there were no such things as French-language secondary schools, only English high schools.

To end this section on English-language transfers, we note that all the transfers we have exemplified so far are innovations that have arisen in Ontarian French. As such, they should not be confused with a subset of English-language borrowings that is also found in the lexicon of Ontarian French and that is made up of the stock of older borrowings that are integrated in the lexicon of Québec French and that must have been brought over by the previous waves of French Québeckers who emigrated to Ontario. These English borrowings made their way into the lexicon of Québec French when this language was dominated by English, that is, from about 1830 to the 1960s. Following are a few examples of such older borrowings: *factrie* < *factory*, a variant of *usine* or *manufacture*; *tough*, a variant of *dur*; *runner*, a variant of *gérer* or *diriger*; *anyway*, a variant of *en tout cas* or *de toute façon*; and *truck*, a variant of *camion*. Such borrowings are usually typical of the informal registers of French or of working-class speech (Mougeon & Beniak, 1989; Poplack, Sankoff, & Miller, 1988). In Ontarian French, they have been found to be inversely correlated with bilingualism in English and restriction in the use of French: Franco-Ontarians who evidence high levels of French-language-use restriction and English-language

dominance use such borrowings least frequently. Such a finding underscores that these older English borrowings are truly part and parcel of vernacular Ontarian French.

7. TAPED INTERVIEW EXCERPTS

In order to render more concrete the differences in French-language competence discussed in the preceding sections, excerpts from taped interviews will be examined below. In these excerpts, speakers of Ontarian French recount a moment of their life during which they experienced intense fright (a topic that was intended to elicit a more natural and spontaneous variety of spoken French).

The first excerpt is taken from an interview conducted with a male member of the French-speaking community of Welland, an industrial city of 50,000 inhabitants located in the Niagara Peninsula (southern Ontario). Welland's Franco-Ontarian community represents 16% of the local population. At the time of the interview, this man was 61 years old and employed as a factory worker. He was raised on a family farm in a small locality, on Frontenac County, in the Province of Québec. His mother tongue is French. He received his formal education in Québec (six years in all and provided in French). He left Frontenac County with his wife in 1945 to settle in Welland. At that time, Welland was undergoing an economic boom that provided work opportunities that overpopulated and rural Frontenac county did not offer.

When this speaker was interviewed, he did not have a good knowledge of English; that is, he was definitely dominant in French. On this topic, he pointed out that he was thinking about going back to Québec: . . . *mais que j'seye retiré* [retajre] (meaning *quand je serai à la retraite*) [. . .] *pour l'amour du langage* (meaning *pour l'amour du français*) [. . .] *parce qu'ici, moé, j'comprends pas assez, t'sais . . . d . . . timber* (meaning *tomber*) *tout seul là, je serais pas capable de faire mon affaire . . . là, ben . . . ça fait, on l'a les enfants* [. . .] *eux autres, i'parlent bien anglais astheure . . . quand on est mal pris, ben on va trouver les enfants* [laughs]. This speaker of French is typical of the subgroup of Franco-Ontarians who are quasi-monolingual in French and whose speech is very close to the vernacular (see Section 6.2.).

The kind of broad orthographic system used to transcribe the interview excerpts presented in this section aims at conveying the chief morphophonetic characteristics of the subjects' spoken French (e.g., reductions, metatheses, sound substitutions). The English loanwords included in the excerpts were transcribed phonetically so that one can get a sense of the extent of their phonetic integration (or lack of it). Commas indicate brief pauses, ellipses indicate longer pauses, and [x] indicates an unclear utterance.

INTERVIEWER: *Pis, contez moi comment c'est arrivé.*

SUBJECT: *Ah! Pour moé ça l'a été heu un défaut heu de . . . du char . . . pis y a queque chose qui a arrivé dans une roue du char. On s'en allait heu à peu près à*

cinquan . . . à soixante milles à l'heure, soixante, soixante et cinq . . . tout d'un coup ça a paru pa'eil comme si y a'ait eu un flat [flat] . . . ça fait qu'j'ai dit à ma femme: "Modère, on l'a un flat [flat] pour moé" . . . pis là, a l'a ôté l'ped d'd'ssus l'gaz . . . pis là, l'char s'est mis à branler d'un bord à l'autre . . . pis là [x] était pus capab' d'conduire dans l'chemin . . . ça fait qu'moé, ben quand j'ai vu ça, a mettait pas heu . . . les . . . a pas voulu met' les brakes [bre:k], a disait qu'a l'avait appris des heu des bons des maîtresses pour appren . . . apprendre à driver [draive] de pas met' les brakes [bre:k] après avoir un flat [flat] . . . ça fait qu'a l'a fait 'ien qu'ôter l'gaz . . . a l'a pas mis 'es brakes [bre:k] . . . là ben y'est venu un temps, ben qu'a était pus capab' d'conduire . . . pis là, ben, la peur nous a pris, nous autres en arrière, su' l'siège en arrière, hein? . . . on s'est levé pour aller essayer d'pogner la roue pour i aider . . . pis en se l'vant d'bout, a l'a . . . on l'a viré assez vite . . . ça a viré pis on l'a faite deux . . . fois l'tour . . . pis heu . . .

I: *Vous avez dû avoir peur!?*

S: *Là, j'ai eu peur, oui, après . . . un r'coup qu'y'ont eu été re . . . sortis du char, mais l'char a r't . . . a reviré, y'a faite juste un tour, y'a revenu s'es roues . . . pis on était remonté la . . . la tête au . . . au . . . el derrière du heu . . . du char dans l'fossé, nous-autres on était el devant su' l'bord du chemin.*

I: *Vous auriez pu tous vous tuer, là.*

S: *Ben oui.*

I: *Seigneur!*

S: *On aurait ben pu nous tuer.*

I: *Vous-êtes vous blessés?*

S: *Pantoute, on a pas eu d'mal ni un ni l'autre.*

This speech excerpt includes the following chief characteristics of vernacular Québec/Ontarian French: frequent morphophonetic reductions, for example, *s'es roues* for *sur les roues*; use of the old dialectal pronunciation *timber* [tɛ̃be] for *tomber*; use of nonetymological "liaison" sound [l] after pronouns like *ça* or *on*, for example, *ça l'a été* for *ça a été*, *on l'a un flat* for *on a un flat*; use of *moé* for *moi*, *ben* for *bien*, *el* for article *le* (metathesis); retention of final /t/ in the masculine past participle of *faire*, for example, *on l'a faite deux fois l'tour*; use of /a/ for subject clitic *elle* and of /i/ for strong pronoun *lui*.¹⁰

To these characteristics may be added several phonetic features that could not be rendered with a broad orthographic transcription: (1) backing and diphthongization of /a:/ in words like *gaz* and *char* ([ga^wz] and [ʃa^wr]); (2) use of closed vowels [ø:] and [e:] in words like *peur*, *arrière*, and *siège* [pø:r; arje:r; sje:ʒ] (these pronunciations are typical of older speakers of the vernacular; younger speakers use diphthongized vowels [œ^w] and [aⁱʒ]); and (3) use of [h] for [ʒ], for example, in *j'ai eu* pronounced [hey].

In addition to these various morphophonetic characteristics, one finds the use of auxiliary *avoir* in the compound past with verbs that take auxiliary *être* in SF, for

example, *queque chose qui a arrivé*; the use of prepositional adverb *dessus* for preposition *sur*, for example, *oté l'pied d'd'ssus l'gaz*; use of a dative object clitic with verb *aider*, for example, *pour i aider*; use of *pantoute* (<*pas en tout*) for SF *pas du tout*; systematic use of *pis* (<*puis*) where SF would use *et* or *et puis*; and categorical use of (*nous autres*) *on* as the first person plural subject personal pronoun.¹¹

If we turn now to lexical usage, one can mention the use of five words or phrases of English origin: *retiré* [retajre] (<“to retire”) for *prendre sa retraite*, *driver* [draive] (<“to drive”) for *conduire*, *mettre les brakes* [bre:k] (<“to put on the brakes”), *flat* [flat] [<“flat” (tire)], and *gaz* (<gas) for *accélérateur*. It can be pointed out that the last three English loanwords can also be heard in vernacular Québec French, but not the first two. The latter are probably cases of English borrowings that are typical of Ontarian French or at least of Welland French and are the result of the preponderance of English in certain domains of society (see above) rather than the outcome of a high level of bilingualism in English (the reader will recall that the user of these loanwords has a poor knowledge of English). As concerns [draive], it is noteworthy that the speaker uses this word only when he talks about “driving instruction” (a type of instruction that in Welland is available only in English) and that he uses *conduire* when he wants to communicate the more general sense of this verb. As for the verb [retajre], its use by our subject may be due to the fact that during his working life in Welland he held jobs in English-speaking factories (milieus in which one is most likely to talk about *la retraite*). Concerning the use of French lexemes, one can mention, among others, use of *astheure* < *à cette heure* (for *maintenant*), *char* for *auto(mobile)*, *être capable de* for *pouvoir*, *ôter le gaz* for *lever le pied de l'accélérateur*, *pogner* for *prendre/saisir*, and *roue* for *volant*.¹²

The second excerpt is taken from an interview conducted with another member of the Welland French-speaking community. This female speaker was 57 when interviewed. She is originally from Orléans (a small locality in a predominantly French-speaking region of southern Ontario). She came to settle in Welland at age 22. She received 14 years of schooling (mostly in French) at the nuns' school in Orléans and in a Canadian French convent located in the region. She was a housewife at the time of interview, but before had worked as an elementary-school teacher in a French school. Though she evaluates her communicative skills in French as better than in English, she also rates her spoken English as good. At home, with her husband (an M.D.) and her children, she always communicates in French. Given her educational and professional background, this second speaker provides us with a good illustration of the standardized variety of Ontarian French.

S: *Une peur . . . ben j'avais . . . j'ai dû avoir quatorze quinze ans dans c'temp-là . . . pis, heu nous étions couchés en haut, nous étions dans notre heu popa avait son magasin général dans c'temps-là, pis moman pis, pis popa avaient leur chambre en bas, pis nous autres les enfants nous étions en haut, pis t'à coup nous*

nous sommes éveillés et puis nous avons entendu quelqu'un tirer du fusil . . . alors ça, ça j'me rappellerai tout l'temps d'ma vie . . . nous avons eu . . . j'pense qu'ça faisait un mois qu'c'était passé ça, p'on dormait pas, personne dans maison encore . . . on . . . y était . . . y faisait clair là le matin quand on tombait endormi.

l: *Oui, oui.*

S: *C'est que, les gens . . . les . . . y avait quat' voleurs qu'étaient venus durant la nuit, pis c'était au début de mars, pis y avait une p'tite neige qui avait tombé puis l'auto était arrêtée à quelques maisons de chez nous pis . . . y avait le chauffeur qu'était resté assis dans l'auto puis y avait celui qui faisait la ronde autour de l'auto p'y avait deux voleurs qui étaient rentrés par le magasin en arrière . . . qui avaient pris une barre de fer là pis qu'avaient ouvert la porte et puis y avaient endormi l'chien probablement parce qu'on avait pas entendu l'chien . . . pis le chien là . . . après c'temps-là, le chien a toujours été comme endormi, y a jamais eu d'vie.*

l: *Ah, il l'avait drogué!?*

S: *Probablement queque chose comme ça, alors sont entrés là, pis là sont venus pour probablement faire ouvrir le coffre-fort à moman, t'sais, et puis moman, elle, elle a entendu quelque chose p'a a dit à popa a dit: "Arthur y a quelqu'un dans l'magasin" [whispered] fait qu'popa, lui, c'tait pas la première fois qu'y entendait moman dire ça, fait que, "Ah," i' dit "J'pense pas" a dit "J'te l'dis," alors popa s'est levé puis en se l'vant fallait qu'i' traverse la salle à dîner, pis dans la salle à dîner, y avait une tab' là, pis s'est frappé su la tab' and pis ça a faite du bruit, alors celui qui était d'l'aut' côté d'la porte là. . . .*

To start with morphophonetics, it can be pointed out that, overall, this second subject's speech exhibits relative rather than categorical differences in comparison to that of the first speaker. For instance, whereas the first speaker uses *nous autres on* in the first person plural, the second speaker starts her narration with *nous* and switches to *nous autres on* (without returning to *nous*) when she starts to relive the frightening event and lapses into a more informal speech register. Likewise, whereas the first speaker uses coordinating *pis* systematically, the second speaker uses *pis* (or *p'* before a vowel), but also *puis* and *et puis*. Further, whereas the first speaker uses *a* for subject clitic *elle*, the second speaker uses *a* but also *elle*. It can also be pointed out that the second speaker does not refrain from using phonetically reduced lexemes. For instance, the excerpt includes several cases of words the final consonant clusters of which have been simplified, for example *quat'*, *tab'*.

Turning to lexical usage, the second speaker's French also exhibits only a relative level of standardization. For instance, whereas the first speaker uses consecutive interclause connector (*ça*) *fait que* systematically, the second speaker uses this latter word, but also the more standard connector *alors*. In a similar vein, the second speaker generally uses auxiliary *être* with the verbs that take this auxiliary in SF, but uses *avoir* with *tomber* (a verb that is highly favorable to the use of regular auxiliary *avoir* in spoken Ontario and Québec French). Finally, to designate the concept of

voiture (“automobile”), the speaker uses *auto*, rather than *char* (but not *voiture*, a relatively rare and formal word in both Ontario and Quebec French).

The third excerpt is also taken from the Welland French corpus. It examples the speech of a 17-year-old female informant who was born in Welland and who was educated entirely in French. Her father is a self-employed craftsman and her mother a housewife. Our informant reports communicating in both French and English at home (mostly in French with her mother, in English and French with her father, and mostly in English with her siblings and friends; interestingly, she reported as well that she occasionally engages in code switching with the latter).

She assesses her verbal skills as equal in both French and English. It can be said, then, that this speaker is a good example of a balanced bilingual, balanced in terms of language skills, language use, and also probably in terms of identity [in her ethnographic research on Franco-Ontarian students, Heller (1989) found a strong association between code switching and a bilingual identity].

S: *Mais j'ai jamais eu peur dans ma vie, except,¹³ ben une fois j'ai, comme j'ai dit à la femme¹⁴ que, mon père y'avait un gros camion, un Bell là . . .*

I: *Oui.*

S: *Pis, heu, c'était heu, t'sais, la veille de Noël ou m'en rappelle pus, c'tait à [x] pis on était su mon mononcle, heu Lu, Lucien Demers pis Laurent . . .*

I: *Oui.*

S: *Pis heu, les autres i', y'ont parti y'étaient quoi, six heures du matin, pis moi j'voulais marcher avec mon cousin, pis, so [so], j'ai marché avec mon cousin, voulaient qu'j'embarque dans le truck [tʁʉk] mais j'voulais pas, j'ai marché a'ec mon cousin, pis les aut' s'en v'naient, pis y'avait un char qu'était mal parké [pɑkε], dedans l'milieu d'la rue pis les autres l'ont frappé . . .*

I: *Ah!*

S: *Pis l'camion était toute fini, y'avait rien qui restait d'sus, comme, ma mère était à travers . . . d'la vit', pis les bucket seats ['bʉkεt 'si:ts] là, sontaient pas collés sur la, si peut-être s'ces sièges là étaient, y'auraient été collés . . .*

I: *Ouais.*

S: *A aurait pas r'volé dans la vit', so [so] heu, toute heu . . . son cou était toute coupé pis, heu s'son bord d'la porte était toute percée, on dirait [xxx] son bord à elle était fini . . .*

I: *Ouais.*

S: *Pis heu, l'moteur c'est là moé j'massis toujours, y'une place là, pis l'moteur . . . l'moteur y'était toute renversé de même, pis . . .*

I: *Ah!*

S: *Moé, j'ai commencé à pleurer pa'ce j'ai eu peur, t'sais?*

I: *Ouais.*

S: *J'pensais si j'aurais été là j'aurais eu, t'sais, mes jambes auraient été finies, j'm'aurais faite couper les jambes, so [so], hein?*

[. . .]

I: *Pis, ta mère a as-tu été pas mal blessée?*

S: *Ben, a a été voir à l'hôpital t'suite, heu . . .*

I: *Ouais.*

S: *Avec un taxi, était juste coupée, comme, des places dans le cou, mais c'tait pas sérieux, on, elle, a pensait qu'a s'avait coupée une veine ou . . .*

I: *Ouais.*

S: *Quelque chose mais . . .*

I: *T'sais, juste le sang fait peur, hein?*

S: *Ouais, so [so] . . .*

I: *C'est une providence.*

S: *Oh, là, là, j'ai toujours peur dans un char!*

I: *Oui.*

S: *Quand mon, quand mon ami conduit, j'sais pas heu, t'sais, j'ai déjà conduit l'char, comme heu avec mes [x] pis j'sus toujours après peser su le, les brakes [bœ:ks], comme, quand que j'vois que . . .*

I: *T'es nerveuse?*

S: *Ouais, j'ai peur, j'ai ben peur dans l'char.*

This excerpt illustrates two main trends: (1) an obvious preservation of the vernacular and (2) relatively frequent use of transfers from English. The first tendency may be ascribed to the fact that this subject hails from a lower-middle-class background and that although she often communicates in English, she learned French at home and has not stopped using this language in this domain. As for the second trend, it may be attributed both to her social background and to bilingualism. In fact, this speaker uses both older English borrowings—vernacular traits—and borrowings that are typical of Ontarian French—innovations that, overall, are associated with high levels of bilingualism and lower-class background (see Mougeon & Beniak, 1989).

We can first review briefly the vernacular features that were previously mentioned when the preceding excerpts were examined: *moé* for *moi*, *ben* for *bien*; retention of final /t/ (here in function word *tout* [tut]); systematic use of *pis*; use of /a/ for *elle*, of a prepositional adverb for a preposition (here *dedans* for *dans*), of *avoir* (categorical use) with verbs that take *être* in SF (including the pronominal verbs), of *char* for *auto* and of *brakes* for *freins*. This said, it can be pointed out that some of the more “archaic” or socially marked vernacular features observed in the French of the first speaker are not found in the speech of the third informant. She pronounces /e:/ and /œ:/ with open allophones, for example, *sièges* [sj:ʒ] and *moteur* [mɔtœ:ʁ] and /r/ with a backed fricative allophone [ʁ], and she diphthongizes [ɑ:] much less frequently than the first speaker, for example, *char* [ʃɑ:ʁ].

We can now briefly point to the vernacular features that are found only in the speech of our third informant: use of preposition *su* for *chez*, for example, *su mon mononcle*; of *mononcle* for *oncle* (which features an agglutinated possessive adjective)¹⁵; of *sontaient* for *étaient* (a vernacular variant or a fossilized feature of child French?); of a pluperfect conditional for a pluperfect indicative in an “if” clause; of

après + infinitive to express a continuous aspect; of *j'm'assis* for *j'm'assois*; of *de même* for *comme ça*; of *place* for *endroit*; of *peser* for *appuyer*; and finally, *que* deletion, for example, *c'est la moé [que] j'm'assis toujours, pa'ce [que] j'ai eu peur*.

Turning now to English transfers and beginning with older-English borrowings, in addition to the use of *brakes* noted earlier, the older loanword *truck* (which alternates with *camion*) can be seen. The reader will probably have noticed that *brakes* was used with a plural English affix *-s/*. Such a pronunciation is rare, if not unknown, in Québec French (see the pronunciation of this word by the first speaker). It can be seen as an extension to morphology of a trend to (re)-Anglicize the phonology of older English loanwords previously observed by Mougeon and Beniak (1989) in the speech of the highly bilingual members of the Welland French-speaking community. The informant also uses English loanwords that are typical of Ontarian French. One is the conjunction *so*, which she uses frequently (not only as a consecutive interclause connector, but also as a speech-turn-yielding signal or as a shifter). In the spoken French of French-dominant or monolingual Franco-Ontarians, *ça fait que* or *alors* rather than *so* can be found in such contexts (Mougeon and Beniak, 1991).

The loanword *so*, as well as the loanwords *but* for *mais* and *sure!* for *certain(ement)!* (these two loanwords are used elsewhere in the interview), are good examples of structurally "gratuitous" English loanwords, because they compete with basic French function words that a balanced bilingual would not normally ignore. It is therefore plausible to hypothesize that they function as symbols of the bilingual identity of this speaker. Myers-Scotton (1992) would also hypothesize that they have entered the lexicon of this informant and, more generally, of Ontarian French, via the route of code switching (the reader will recall that this informant resorts to this form of communication).¹⁶

We have pointed out earlier, however, that certain English loanwords that are observed only in Ontario French serve the purpose of filling lexical gaps (be they momentary or idiosyncratic, or experienced by many speakers). The excerpts include one example of such loanwords: *bucket seats*. It can be pointed out that this word is also used with affixes *-s*¹⁷ and that it is followed by discourse marker *là*, a form of "flagging" that indicates to the interviewer that the interviewee is conscious of resorting to an English word—presumably because she can't find the "right" French term.¹⁸ The use of *parké* (with a French affix *-é*) for *stationné* may be yet another example of a gap-filling English-language loanword.¹⁹

Finally, we can point out that the third speaker frequently resorts to two uses of conjunction *comme* as a discourse marker: (1) use of *comme* as a shifter, that is, to introduce an idea, for example, *Pis l'camion était toute fini, y'avait rien qui restait d'sus, comme, ma mère était à travers . . . d'la vit' . . .*; and (2) use of *comme* as a pause-filler (in such a context, other speakers might use, for instance, *t'sais* or *là*), for example, *Ben, a a été voir à l'hopital t'suite, heu [I: Ouais] Avec un taxi, était juste coupée, comme, des places dans le cou, mais. . .* Mougeon (1993b) showed

that such uses of *comme* are on the rise in the speech of the younger Franco-Ontarian generations in Welland.²⁰ It is probable that these two discourse-marking uses of *comme* are partly attributable to the influence of corresponding uses of *like* in English (such uses of *like* are quite frequent in the spoken English of the third speaker).²¹

The last excerpt to be examined is taken from an interview with a young woman in the French-speaking community of Pembroke, a small locality northwest of Ottawa. In Pembroke, Franco-Ontarians make up only 8% of the local population. They also exhibit a high level of linguistic assimilation (Mougeon & Beniak, 1991).

Our subject is a 15-year-old girl who has attended the local French-medium schools. Her father holds a position of postmaster and her mother a managerial job in the regional branch of the local telephone company. Both at home and away from home, this speaker always communicates in English with her friends and siblings. With her parents (two bilingual Franco-Ontarians who communicate with one another chiefly in English), she speaks English most of the time (sometimes French), even though they have elected to send her to French-medium schools (elementary and secondary). Thus, this speaker is a good example of a member of a younger Franco-Ontarian who was only marginally handed down French at home, tends to confine her use of French to the school context, and hence, who, overall, exhibits significant restriction in the use of that language.

In the following excerpt, the speaker narrates the abduction of her sister. The very length of this narration emphasizes that while this speaker is a restricted user of French, in comparison to the previous speakers, she can communicate in that language with enough fluency to recount a story. Her speech tempo is relatively fast, and her discourse does not include too many hesitations.²² We will see in the analysis, however, that her underuse of French has had a definite impact on the way she handles certain aspects of the morphophonetics, morphosyntax, and lexicon of Ontarian French.

At the beginning of the excerpt, the speaker has reached the frightening point in her story where she tells the interviewer that her sister (designated in the narration by *elle* [a] or [ɛl]) is now in the car of the kidnapper (designated by *il*), who pretended that he was going to drive her to her home.

S: [. . .] *après a dit: "O.K., tournez ici," puis il a pas écouté, pis a commencé à êt' très, sévère, puis heu comme, fâché, puis il commence à heu, comme, dit des méchants mots à elle, puis, après est allé dans un, un lieu, puis heu c'était comme un, forêt, puis y'avait pas trop, trop de, d'autos pis heu c'était comme . . . toute heu noir parce qu'était à peu près neuf heures, puis alors il a dit à elle de sortir de l'auto, puis en arrière il a pris un heu sac de heu poubelle, comme un, garbage bag [ˈgɑːɪbɪdʒ bæɡ], puis il a pris des bouteilles, comme, de liqueur, je sais pas qu'est-ce qu'il voulait faire avec ça mais, heu après il a dit de sortir, puis elle a sorti, puis l'homme a comme, t'allé sur l'aut' côté de l'auto, puis l'a pris heu, sa, son bras puis, il a commencé à tirer dans le forêt, puis elle a commencé heu à*

com, à batailler avec lui, puis, elle avait juste des, comme des clogs [klɔgz], t'sais, puis elle a, elle a pris ses ongles puis est allée dans l'homme, puis heu, il est allé: "Oh!" comme ça, pis heu elle a commencé à courir, puis après l'homme a couru après elle, mais l'a enlevé ses, ses clogs [klɔgz] qu'elle a pris, pis c'était comme un rue heu de gravel ['grævəl] pis c'était dur su' ses pieds pis un, un auto venait comme ça, comme sur le rue, puis elle a allé sur l'auto puis c'était encore en mouvement, puis elle a entré dans l'auto, puis elle a fermé, puis elle a tombé sur des cadeaux, je sais pas, comme, y'avait toute des cadeaux en arrière de l'auto, pis elle a commencé à crier heu j'sais pas mais: "Il veut, il veut me tuer," pis toutes ces choses, alors il a, apportée à Waltham, pis ça c'est où il demeurerait pis là, c'est là où elle nous a appelé.

l: Est-ce qu'y ont attrapé l'aut' bonhomme?

S: Heum, heum.

l: Heum, heum?

S: Comme heu elle heu était en huitième année, je pense, pis à l'école Sainte-Jeanne d'Arc aussi . . .

l: Heum, heum.

S: Puis, ils heu les policiers ont v'nu pour le chercher de l'école, puis ils l'ont apportée à un heu comme heu une place où y'avait beaucoup d'autos, puis il a dit²³: "Est-ce-que tu peux heu, donner comme des heu idées sur heu quoi l'auto regardait, puis si tu peux trouver l'auto, dans, avec, dans tous les autos ici" [. . .].

The structural and discursive consequences of this subject's restricted use of French can be regrouped under five headings: (1) morphosyntactic simplification and morphological errors, (2) approximative lexical usage, (3) omission of predictable or redundant elements, (4) standardization, and (5) English-language transfers.

Examples of the first category included in the excerpt are: (1) use of a strong dative form of the object pronoun after the verb—the regular syntactic position for object complements in French—instead of a weak dative form before the verb, for example, *Il a dit à elle de sortir de l'auto, puis après l'homme a couru après elle* for *Il lui a dit* and *l'homme lui a couru après*; and (2) errors in gender marking—a masculine determiner or a masculine or neutral pronoun is used instead of a feminine determiner or pronoun, for example, . . . *dans le forêt, . . . comme un rue, . . . les policiers ont venu pour le chercher* (*le* refers here to the speaker's sister), . . . *puis c'était encore en mouvement* (*c'* refers to *auto*—in this particular context, one would have expected a personal pronoun, that is, *elle* rather than the neutral pronoun *ce*).

Turning to the second category, the following examples can be mentioned: *elle est allée dans l'homme* (for *elle s'est jetée sur l'homme?*), *ses clogs qu'elle a pris* (for *l* qu'elle avait pris or *qu'elle a pris dans ses mains?*), *comme un rue heu de gravel* (for *un chemin/une route*), *elle a allé sur l'auto* (for *elle est allée vers?*), *ont*

venu pour le chercher de l'école (for *sont venus la chercher à l'école?*), *si tu peux trouver l'auto, dans, avec, dans tous les autos* (for *parmi toutes les autos?*).

The third category includes various cases of omission of the direct or indirect clitic object pronouns and of the reflexive pronoun, for example, *il a commencé à (la) tirer dans le forêt pis elle a commencé heu à com, à (se) batailler avec lui après; il (lui) a dit de sortir; elle a rentré dans l'auto pis elle (l') a fermé; il (l') a apporté à Waltham*. It can be pointed out that wherever these pronouns are omitted in the excerpt, they can in fact be deduced from the context. In other words, their omission is unlikely to have a strongly negative impact on communication. This being said, that they are omitted is in keeping with the regularizing of their morphology and syntax. Both processes are symptomatic that the object clitics are a problem area of French morphosyntax and that restriction in the use of French inhibits their complete mastery (see Section 6.3).

With respect to standardization, note the almost systematic use of full forms of the subject clitics *il(s)* and *elle*, retaining /l/, can be mentioned. In contrast, in the three excerpts examined above (including the one taken from the interview with the former schoolteacher), one finds categorical use of these two clitics without /l/ (/j/ before a vowel and /l/ before a consonant) and quasi-systematic use of the reduced form of *elle*, that is, /a/ before a vowel and a consonant. Even considering that this speaker's parents hail from the upper-middle class, it is probably the case that the rarity of /l/ deletion in *il(s)* and *elle* in her speech is largely attributable to her rare use of French in the informal domains of society and hence is more directly affected by the standardizing influence of the school.²⁴ The same factor probably also explains why this speaker almost always uses a nonreduced form of *puis* [pɥi] (in contrast to the previous speakers, who use [pi] almost exclusively). With respect to lexical usage, it can be pointed out that this speaker uses *auto* systematically in the excerpt (the previous teenage speaker used *char*) and that she uses *demeurait* rather than *habitait* or *restait*. Again, although these uses can be looked upon as a confirmation of the trend toward standardization, the influence of the speaker's background (upper middle class) cannot be entirely ruled out. In any case, any standardization exhibited by this speaker's lexical usage is relative. In other words, the speech of this speaker is not devoid of lexical elements that are typical of the vernacular: For example, she uses *puis* rather than *et (puis)*, *qu'est-ce que* rather than *ce que*, *liqueur* rather than *boisson gazeuse*, *y avait toute des cadeaux* rather than *y avait un tas de cadeaux*, and *une place où* rather than *un endroit où*.²⁵ This is not surprising; although this speaker's use of French tends to be confined to the school, she is nonetheless exposed in this setting to the spoken French of Franco-Ontarians (staff members and fellow students) who maintain the use of French in the informal domains of society.²⁶

As regards transfers from English, the following can be mentioned: (1) cases in which the subject uses an English word to fill a gap in her vocabulary, for example, "clogs" for *sabot*, "gravel"²⁷ for *gravier* or *gravelle* (the latter is a vernacular variant), or when she is not sure she has used the right word (e.g., "garbage bag" for

sac à déchets); and (2) cases of indirect transfers, for example, frequent use of *comme* as a discourse marker, that is, as a shifter or as a pause-filler (in the latter case it is often associated with a hesitation); use of *sur l'autre côté* for *de l'autre côté* ("on the other side"), of *il est allé* for *il a dit* or *il a crié* ("he went"); use of *regarder* for *ressembler/avoir l'air*, for example, *sur quoi l'auto regardait* for *de quoi l'auto avait l'air* or *à quoi l'auto ressemblait* ("what the car looked like")²⁸; and (3) several phonetic features that are indicative of a slight Anglicization of her pronunciation and that are not indicated in our transcription, since the latter is orthographic. For instance, some of her voiceless prevocalic consonants are slightly aspirated (e.g., *auto* = [ot^ho]).

8. CONCLUSION

To conclude this sociolinguistic overview of the Franco-Ontarian community, the following summary points can be made. Unlike what prevails in majority or "monolingual" French-speaking communities, the Franco-Ontarian community: (1) exhibits sizable variation in its demographic strength at the local level and hence in the frequency of opportunities to use French at such level; (2) includes subgroups of speakers who differ from each other in relation to the way they learned French; and (3) evidences marked interindividual differences in relation to the use of French (in terms of both frequency and domains of use).

As can be seen from Sections 6 and 7, it is possible to relate the aforementioned differences—as well as differences related to sociological factors (e.g., socio-economic status, age)—to differences in spoken-French competence. On this last point, it is worth bearing in mind that the four speakers whose speech has been briefly examined represent points on the large continuum of French-language competence that is observable in the Franco-Ontarian community and only a small sample of the different combinations of language use and language learning patterns and sociological characteristics that could be found at the level of individual speakers. Whereas in monolingual or majority French-speaking communities, such patterns and characteristics are usually both constant and intertwined for most individuals—for example, French is the language of the home, of the local community, of school, of the work world, for middle-class and working-class speakers alike—in a bilingual French-speaking community such as the Franco-Ontarians, they are neither constant nor necessarily intertwined. Thus, the very heterogeneity of the Franco-Ontarian community offers an opportunity to broaden our view of French-language competence and to sharpen our understanding of the individual contribution of the external parameters of variation in such competence. Since Louisiana's French-speaking community also features a continuum of French-language competence and French language use, it is hoped that this overview of sociolinguistic research on French in Ontario will be useful for future research on French in Louisiana.

NOTES

1. French-medium elementary and secondary schools are available in most localities where there are Franco-Ontarians. At the postsecondary level, complete French-medium education is offered by four *collèges communautaires* (applied arts and technology colleges), and programs of French-medium courses are available in three bilingual universities (a full-fledged French-medium university has yet to be established).
2. The rates of French language loss at home found for the other two subgroups of French-mother-tongue respondents [French and one or several nonofficial language(s) and English, French, and one or several nonofficial language(s)] are, respectively, 63% and 74%.
3. Given that only a small proportion of the English-mother-tongue Ontarians are bilingual in French, many Franco-Ontarians who marry English speakers must, by necessity, communicate in English with their spouse at home, at least initially. Shift to English at home by two bilingual Franco-Ontarians is more the result of a deliberate choice.
4. Shift to English at home on the part of a Franco-Ontarian spouse who is married to an Anglo-Ontarian does not necessarily mean, however, that the offspring of such a marriage will be completely assimilated into the English-speaking community, because the parents can choose to send their children to a French-medium school. As a matter of fact, the French-medium schools include a significant number of students whose parents are linguistically mixed couples. Such students, however, are almost always dominant in English.
5. The reader is referred to Chaudenson et al. (1993) and Mougeon (1993a) for a more detailed presentation of the results of these linguistic studies and of the theoretical issues that they raise.
6. When French-language instruction is provided by schools that are administered by the English-speaking majority, for example, Canada's French-immersion programs, the "devernacularization" of the French of the L₁/F₂ speakers who are enrolled in such schools is probably even more pronounced since, traditionally, North America's Anglophones have favored international French over local French in their FL₂ programs (Bibeau & Germain, 1983; Fox & Charbonneau, 1994; Valdman, 1983).
7. These English words are different from English words that can be found in English-language utterances (individual words, phrases, or sentences) that can be observed in the French discourse of Franco-Ontarians and that fall under the category of code switches (see Heller, 1989; Poplack, 1989). The latter English words have not made their way into the vocabulary of Ontarian French.
8. Earlier, we emphasized that such speakers underutilize French. The terminology here serves to underline that contact with English, as opposed to restriction in the use of French, is the external source of transfers.
9. This third type of loanword is reminiscent of the category of "cultural" loanwords (see, among others, Weinreich, 1968): words from language B (the donor language) that refer to sociocultural entities that are typical of the language B community and hence that fill gaps in the lexicon of language A.
10. Most of the characteristics mentioned here and later have been attested in (socio)linguistic studies devoted to the varieties of Canadian French (notably Québec and Ontarian French), or even in studies centered on "popular" or regional varieties of European French. For the sake of brevity, we will present the characteristics without citing the studies that have shown them to be typical features of vernacular varieties of French.
11. The use of *on* or *nous autres on* as a first person plural subject pronoun is quite common in Welland French. This is an aspect of the verb morphology that Ontario French shares with varieties of popular European French and that sets it apart from Acadian French, which has still largely preserved the use of *je* in the first person plural coupled with ending *-ons*, for example, *Je comprenons point*.
12. A case of indirect transfer from *wheel*?
13. An unexpected truncation of *excepté* or, more likely, the borrowing of *except*?
14. This speaker was also interviewed in English. cursory evaluation of the English interview confirms that the speaker's competence in this language is native-like.

15. Both *monocle* and *matante* have been attested in several French-based Creoles and metropolitan dialects.
16. One interesting finding of Heller's research on the linguistic behavior of Franco-Ontarian adolescents is that they have often been found to switch to English while engaged in conversation in French, in order to (re)assert their bilingual identity.
17. Poplack (1989) would conclude from the presence of affix *-s* that the instance here is one of switching rather than one of borrowing. Had *bucket seats* been used without the plural affix, she would interpret it as a case of borrowing. Myers-Scotton (1988), on the other hand, would claim that the presence or absence of affixes on individual transfers, or the degree of phonetic integration of individual transfers, is irrelevant in distinguishing switches from borrowings, because in situations of advanced bilingualism, loanwords that form part and parcel of the lexicon of the borrowing language can undergo morphophonetic "disintegration." According to her, only frequency is a safe criterion for making this distinction. The more recurrent the transferred lexical item in a given idiolect or dialect, the more likely it is to constitute a borrowing.
18. In her corpus, Poplack (1989) also reported many flagged gap-filling switches. The reason may be that both her subjects and mine were expected to speak French during the interview. In situations in which language choice is less constrained and other bilinguals from the community are present, these same subjects should also produce smooth unflagged code switches (Romaine, 1994).
19. Unlike European French, Québec French does not use *parquer* in the sense of *stationner*. Thus, the use of *parker* by our informant is a case in which Ontario French diverges from the mother dialect. Instead of analyzing *parké* as a case of loanword, one might think of interpreting it as a case of indirect transfer (transfer of a meaning of the English verb *park* to the French verb *parquer*). This explanation is not very likely, since the French verb *parquer* is rare in Ontarian French.
20. The use of *comme* as an exemplifier, for example, *T'sais j'ai déjà conduit l'char, comme heu avec mes amis*, another discourse-marking function filled by *comme*, is probably not attributable to English-language transfer. Vincent (1992) attested such usage in Montreal French. One could probably also attest it in European French.
21. I have observed these two uses of *comme* many times in the speech of my son, who is also a balanced bilingual Franco-Ontarian adolescent. In fact, I recall one instance when after having used *comme* twice as a pause filler in the same sentence, he said, as a sort of aside to himself (or to his interlocutors?), *comme, like, comme, like*, thereby showing that he was aware of a diasystemic correspondence between these two words. It is therefore quite plausible that such uses of *comme* may be, like *so* or *but*, also emblematic of a bilingual identity.
22. There are restricted users of French within the same age group who speak French more slowly and hesitantly than this adolescent.
23. Does *il* refer to *les policiers* or to one of them? If the referent is *les policiers*, then the use of *a* is yet another case of morphosyntactic simplification, namely, leveling of the third person singular/third person plural distinction (see Section 6.3). Clear cases of such leveling can be found elsewhere in the interview.
24. In his study of */l/* deletion in North Bay French, Tennant (1994) proposed a supplementary explanation for the retention of */l/* by restricted users of French, namely, that some of them speak French at a slower tempo: The slower the tempo, the less frequent the occurrence of morphophonetic reduction.
25. The reader may wonder why we did not include the use of auxiliary *avoir* rather than auxiliary *être* in our list of vernacular uses found in the excerpt. The reason for not including it is that the status of the use of *avoir* in the French of this speaker is not clear. Is it the result of a process of analogical regularization, or does it reflect the fact that this speaker is not entirely shielded from exposure to the vernacular? Our feeling is that it is probably both. For instance, while the lone use of *avoir* with *aller*, for example, *elle a allé*, is a clear case of simplification—use of *avoir* with *aller* is nonexistent in the vernacular—the use of *avoir* with *venir* or *entrer* could very well be the partial result of exposure to the vernacular—use of *avoir* with these two verbs has been attested in several descriptive studies of vernacular Québec and Ontarian French.
26. These vernacular features and other features of the vernacular are unlikely to be found in the French

- of English-speaking students who learn French as a second language in Canada's English-medium schools. Although the spoken French of the restricted users of French enrolled in the Franco-Ontarian schools exhibits a trend toward standardization, it cannot be equated to the French of second-language learners of that language (Beniak, 1984).
27. The English word "gravel" is in fact a borrowing from Old French (*gravelle*).
28. This speaker uses another calqued construction with the same meaning, namely, *comment NP regarde*.

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