Variation in the use of discourse markers in a language contact situation

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ABSTRACT

Use of discourse markers by 17 speakers of Anglophone Montreal French (AMF) showed great variation in individual repertoires and frequency of use. Only five subjects manifested rates of usage comparable to those of native speakers or to their own L1 usage in English. In decreasing order of frequency, the speakers used *tu sais* 'y'know'; *là* 'there' (the most frequent among L1 Montreal French speakers); *bon* 'good', *alors* 'so', *comme* 'like', and *bien* 'well'; and the local discourse conjunction *fait que* 'so'. The subjects occasionally made use of the English markers *you know, so, like*, and *well*. Québécois French markers with no English equivalent were used by the speakers who had been exposed to French in their early childhood environment. The one marker that showed influence from English was *comme*, apparently calqued on English *like*. Overall, frequent use of discourse markers correlated only with the speakers' knowledge of French grammar — evidence that a higher frequency of discourse marker use is the hallmark of the fluent speaker. As a feature that is not explicitly taught in school, mastery of the appropriate use of discourse markers is thus particularly revealing of the speakers' integration into the local speech community.

Rapid assimilation of immigrant groups has been characteristic of Anglophone North America for the past three centuries. Immigrants learned the local form of English through the normal social contacts of everyday life, a process known as "picking up English." Attending English-medium schools, their children acquired native local competence in English, largely from social

contact with English-speaking children on the playground and in the streets. English monolingualism came to be the norm, and subsequent generations have learned languages other than English, insofar as they have, through foreign language instruction in schools or colleges. It is therefore unsurprising to find that, in English-speaking North America, learning "second" or "foreign" languages is generally viewed as problematic. A long tradition of research on bilingualism has tried to account for such problems by studying second or foreign language acquisition in a formal educational context. Another tradition of research on bilingualism, however, is rooted in the idea that speaking more than one language might constitute a normal state of affairs. Weinreich and Gumperz, the two scholars responsible for establishing this tradition of research on "languages in contact," looked to the multilingual societies of Europe, Asia, and other parts of the world as the ordinary result of language contact. In studies of bilingual Swiss villagers (Weinreich, 1951), trilingual inhabitants of Kupwar, India (Gumperz & Wilson, 1971), bilingual Hungarian Austrians (Gal, 1980), and multilingual residents of the Vaupés region of Colombia (Sorensen, 1967), there is little attention given to acquisition, and no sense that the acquisition of several languages is problematic.

The difference between these two research traditions appears to rest on culturally derived presuppositions about what leads a person to learn more than one language. If indeed the learning of second languages is entirely school-based, it makes sense to study the relative success of students in this as in all other subjects they are taught. In other cases, however, second languages are entirely learned (from the learners' perspective) the way first languages are — as an unplanned consequence of ordinary social interaction. In societies where school is (or was) not a factor, as in the Vaupés, students of the bi- or multilingual situation have taken acquisition to be no more problematic than have the bilinguals themselves. Authors have stressed the historically derived and socially motivated reasons for language contact and have usually described the people in the situations as taking them for granted, even where conflict is a factor.

In the past, it might have been the case that the Montreal[1] English-speaking community did not take bilingualism for granted, despite its minority status in a French majority environment. Indeed, there have always been publically supported English schools, as well as French schools. Furthermore, in certain parts of the city including the downtown business area, English tended to prevail over French. As a consequence, bilingual Montrealers were mainly found among the French-speaking majority (Lieberson, 1965).

In our view, the Montreal English speakers of the 1990s, who are the focus of our current research, have accepted the bilingual nature of their community. They feel that it is normal to speak "both," or "*les deux*" as one of our interviewees put it. The very fact that they talk about the speech community in this way, without specifying that *les deux* means French and English, bears witness to the fact that bilingualism is coming to be taken for granted. This does not mean that there is no resentment for having to learn the language

of the other group, but that contact between French and English is accepted as a fact of life.

Anglophones growing up in Quebec over the past thirty years have experienced first-hand the results of language policies that have given French a much more prominent place in public life than was the case for their parents' generation. The adoption of Bill 22 in 1973 made French the sole official language of Quebec, with a consequent increase in the use of French by the Anglophone minority. The passage of Bill 101 in 1977 made French the mandatory school language for all Quebecers who are not of Anglophone origin. In the face of the major social changes that followed the passage of this legislation, many young Anglophones have left Quebec. But for the many who have stayed, there is widespread acknowledgement of bilingualism as a fact of their own lives and as something they want for their children. And if competence in French as well as English is a normal fact of life for Montreal Anglophones, can we say that Anglophone French is integral to the linguistic repertoire of this community, rather than constituting an individually based, late acquired, special cultural accomplishment for the educated, a sign of the polish or culture that foreign language competence tends to constitute in Anglophone North America?

The very nature of the linguistic system of native Anglophone French speakers should provide useful insights in answering this question, and this is one of the major objectives of our study. If Anglophone Montreal French (AMF) is something more than the result of successful school-based learning, it should show properties of the local vernacular. A corollary of this would be that, to the extent that AMF shows properties of Québécois French, its speakers must have acquired it through a process of vernacular transmission.

We hypothesize that, overall, a greater degree of social integration into the Francophone speech community leads to greater linguistic integration as well. What we need to find out is what kind of "social integration," at what periods of speaker's life, leads to linguistic assimilation. It is thus crucial for us to examine the different types of exposure to the second language and the various modes of acquisition that the speakers in our sample have experienced.

In this article, we report on the discourse markers used in the spontaneous speech production of young Anglophones in conversational registers in interviews conducted in French. Discourse markers are of particular interest because they constitute an aspect of the language not taught in school. Because they are not subject to explicit instruction, they are likely to be an accurate indicator of the extent to which a speaker is integrated into the local speech community. That is, only L2 speakers with a high degree of contact with native speakers will master the use of discourse markers. We seek to establish whether fluency can be achieved by L2 speakers in this domain and to discover which aspects of the speakers' backgrounds appear to be influential in promoting successful acquisition.

We explore not only the rate of usage of the discourse markers, but also the patterning and the choice of markers: for example, whether they are of English or French source, and how they compare with the usage of native

speakers. In explaining their distribution, we investigate social factors such as degree of French in the speaker's past and current environment (at school, in the home, in the neighborhood, and at work), amount of education in French, sex, and age. We also examine one other aspect of the L2 speakers' knowledge of French: proper gender allocation to nouns in their spontaneous use of the language. Quantitative analyses are used to discover which factors best account for the variation in marker choice and frequency.[2]

In interpreting the significance of our results, we are fortunate in being able to situate them with respect to similar aspects of the linguistic competence of related groups of speakers. The many systematic studies of Montreal French that have been carried out over the past twenty years serve as an important template against which AMF can be measured. Major descriptive work on the speech of native French Quebecers from various social categories has been based on data collected in the Sankoff–Cedergren corpus (Sankoff et al., 1976) and the Montreal '84 corpus (Thibault & Vincent, 1990). In addition, a major study of the syntax of working-class adolescents was carried out by Lefebvre (1982). Discourse markers were the particular focus of studies of Montreal French by Vincent and Sankoff (1992) and by Vincent (1993).

At the same time, there is a large body of work on the bilingualism of Anglophone children in Montreal (Genesee, 1987; Lambert & Tucker, 1972). One important outcome of the research on the effects of L2 acquisition has been to demonstrate that studying in a second language does not interfere with the acquisition of a first language, nor with progress in other academic subjects (Genesee, 1987:44). However, it has been shown that an immersion program alone is not sufficient to provide a speaker with nativelike levels of proficiency in a second language, either in production or comprehension, at least for language competence as measured in an academic setting (Genesee, 1987:46; Harley, 1992; Wesche, 1992). Systematic analyses of the French used by L2 speakers outside of an academic context are noticeably lacking in the literature.

A third important body of work with which we can compare our results is the research on bilinguals from French minority communities in Ontario and New Brunswick. Mougeon and Beniak (1991, 1995), Mougeon and Nadasdi (1995), and Roy (1980) all reported on some of the discourse markers studied in this article.

In systematically analyzing the spontaneous use of discourse markers, an aspect of linguistic competence largely outside what is explicitly taught in the classroom, we hope to find out the extent to which AMF has become a vernacular, rather than simply remaining a product of successful academic learning.

THE SPEAKERS

The data presented here were taken from a subset of the sociolinguistic interviews we recorded with young adult Anglophone natives of Montreal in 1993

and 1994. The goal of the project was to study the generation born between 1960 and 1975: that is, since French immersion schooling became possible.[3] Some speakers, from many areas of Montreal, were recruited through a newspaper advertisement for bilingual subjects; a few others were recruited through personal networks of members of the research team. A third set of speakers comprised a cohort sample; all the members of a graduating class from a Montreal-area high school were asked to participate in interviews. This high school, situated on the border between an Anglophone and a bilingual neighborhood, has received an influx of Francophone speakers in the past several decades. It is an English-language high school with two levels of French immersion as well as regular French classes for those least advanced in French. Some of the speakers now live and/or work in predominantly Francophone environments.

A total of 17 interviews were carried out in French[4] with 9 women and 8 men, all between the ages of 20 and 34. All but two were born in Montreal, and all of them currently live in the Greater Montreal area and speak English with their parents. (Joanie was the only speaker in this sample who has a native Québécois parent, her mother; however, Joanie went to English-medium schools all her life and considers herself an Anglophone.) The speakers differed in their mode of acquisition of French: some attended a French school, some attended an English school with an immersion program, and some attended an English school without an immersion program but with French classes. Speakers also varied according to the type of exposure they had had to French as children: through family networks, at school, in extra-curricular or community activities, or in their neighborhood. As young adults, they varied greatly in their degree of contact with Francophones, socially as well as in the workplace and in the degree to which they used French in their daily lives. Basic social data about the individual speakers are presented in Table 1, which also contains the indices used as independent variables in the study.

THE DISCOURSE MARKERS

Our definition of discourse markers and our identification of the discourse markers used in this study follow the analyses of discourse markers used by native speakers of Montreal French carried out by Vincent (1993) and Vincent and Sankoff (1992). As lexical items that relate to discourse rather than to syntax or semantics, discourse markers are of three major types: discourse coordinators, interaction markers, and punctors. Because of the internal diversity of the overall category, it is not possible to supply a conjunctive definition that would not admit of exceptions or grey areas. However, discourse markers tend to have the following properties.[5]

1. They do not enter into construction syntactically with other elements of the sentence. This criterion excludes even sentence adverbs like *malheureusement*

TABLE 1. *Independent variables considered in the analyses*

Speaker	Age	Formal Acquisition Scale				French Environment Scale				Current Orientation Score	Grammar Score
		Elementary School	High School	College	Total	Childhood	Adolesence	College	Total		
Peter	20	1	1	0.5	2.5	0	0	2	2	1	65
Donald	34	1	1	0	2	0	0	1	1	1.5	75
Mike	23	1	1.5	0	2.5	0	1	1	2	2	75
Kurt	22	1	3	0.5	4.5	0	2	2	4	2	80
Tony	26	1	1	0	2	0	0	2	2	2	75
Joan	30	1	1	0	2	1	1	3	5	2	85
Greg	24	1.5	2	0	3.5	0	1	1	2	2	75
Jack	33	1.5	1	0	2.5	0	1	0	1	1	65
Glenda	22	1.5	2	0	3.5	1	1	2	4	1	85
Tammy	24	2	3	0	5	2	2	2	6	3	75
Louisa	24	2	1	2	5	1	2	1	4	1	95
Janet	21	2.5	2.5	0	5	2	1	1	4	1	90
Liz	23	3	3	2	8	3	3	1	7	1	100
Gloria	30	3	1	1	5	3	1	1	5	1	95
Joanie	21	3	2.5	0	5.5	3	2	1	6	1	95
Sandra	24	3	2	0	5	3	2	1	6	1	100
Ted	23	3	3	1	7	3	2	2	7	3	95

Note: Higher numbers reflect greater contact with French. Scoring on the formal acquisition and French environment scales, the current orientation scale, and the grammar score is explained in the text.

'unfortunately', which, although not entering into construction with any elements of the sentence, nevertheless has scope over the entire sentence and cannot be used with moods other than indicative. It also excludes conjunctions used with their original semantics (e.g., *alors* 'then'), but does allow discourse marker uses of such forms.

2. The propositional meaning of the sentence does not depend on their presence.
3. They are subject to semantic bleaching as compared with their source forms.
4. They undergo greater phonological reduction than their source forms.
5. They are articulated as part of smoothly flowing speech production. This criterion excludes the hesitation forms *uh* (with English pronunciation) and *euh* (with French pronunciation) that generally signal word searches. Though our speakers differed as to which of these hesitation forms they used, we did not include them here, reserving their study for future work on the notion of "accent."

We illustrate these points with an initial example containing *bien*, a discourse marker that has as its source the adverb *bien* 'well', and *bon*, whose source is the adjective *bon* 'good'. Generally, when used as a discourse marker, *bon* is not part of a noun phrase, and *bien* is not connected to a specific verb or adjective.

(1) *Bien* mon copain il vient *bon* il vient de, de la Colombie-Britannique. [Liz]
    '*Well* my boyfriend comes — he comes from British Columbia.'

In this example, neither *bon* nor *bien* is syntactically related to any element of the sentence, as they would be if *bien* were functioning as an adverb (as in *j'ai bien travaillé* 'I worked well') or if *bon* were functioning as an adjective (as in *un bon garçon* 'a good boy'). The sentence would mean exactly the same thing, "my boyfriend comes from British Columbia," whether they were present or absent. In this usage, *bien* and *bon* are desemanticized: neither carries the semantics of 'well', 'very', or 'good'. Indeed, although English has a discourse marker analogous to *bien* (*well*, also usually reduced to [wəl] as a discourse marker), there is no English analogue for the discourse marker *bon*. [bjɛ̃] is reduced to [bɛ̃], and they are fluently produced as part of the stream of speech.

Desemanticization and not entering into a syntactic construction were also criteria in distinguishing the discourse marker *là* from the deictic *là*. Cases where *là* was clearly deictic, generally in opposition to *ici* in Quebec French, were excluded from our study, as were all demonstrative expressions, such as *ce(tte) X-là, celui(celle)-là*, and so on. Uses of *comme* as a conjunction were also excluded from the analysis. Finally, we had to distinguish the discourse marker usage of verbal expressions whose source is in the embedding of propositional attitudes and which consist of a subject clitic, a verb of knowing, thinking, or feeling, and a complementizer: *je veux dire que* 'I mean that', *tu sais que* 'you know that'. As discourse markers, all of these expres-

sions are found in contexts other than sentence-initial. To qualify as discourse markers, *que* had to have dropped, and whenever the expressions occurred at the beginning of a sentence, there had to be evidence that no acknowledgment on the part of the interlocutor was required or given in response to the statement.[6]

We classified the variety of discourse markers used by our subjects into three major types, on the basis of a criterion that we hypothesized would be relevant to L2 speakers — their relationship to English markers. French markers with an English equivalent would, we thought, be easier for Anglophones to learn because loan-translation would be an effective strategy in this case. Sentence-initial *bien*, as in (1), is an example of this type. An English speaker could very likely have produced *well* at the beginning of the expression of this information in English. On the other hand, French discourse markers with no exact equivalent in English might be harder to acquire, since Anglophones could not produce them simply by calquing on an English model. In (1), *bon* is of this type (cf. the infelicitous **good he comes from B.C.* as compared with the felicitous *well he comes from B.C.*). Lastly, our speakers used English discourse markers in French discourse, though to a very slight degree.

In addition to *bien*, markers of this type include the frequently used *comme* 'like', *tu sais* 'you know', and *alors* 'so', illustrated in (2) through (4).

(2) Ah oui on était *comme* un des seuls, on était peut-être cinq dans mon année
    qui parlaient les deux langues, puis c'était *comme* "Wow" *tu sais*. [Joanie]
    'Oh yeah we were *like* the only ones, there were about five of us in my year
    that spoke both languages so it was *like* "Wow" *y'know*.'
(3) C'est un petit peu plus *comme* . . . juste, difficile, les-, le-, la-, l'accent c'est
    difficile de, de le comprendre. [Greg]
    'It's a little bit more *like* . . . just, difficult, the, the, the, the accent, it's hard
    to understand.'
(4) Il y en avait pas assez *alors* ils ont fermé après mon première année. [Glenda]
    'There weren't enough [students in the school] *so* they closed after my first
    year.'

The second type of markers, those with no English equivalent, include *bon*, discussed in connection with (1); another example is found in (5). This excerpt also contains an instance of *là*, a discourse marker very common in Québécois French.[7] *Là* is also illustrated in (6).

(5) La professeure va dire "OK tout le monde on va dormir" puis *là bon* tu regardes
    et tu fais qu-est-que les autres ils font *tu sais*. [Ted]
    'The teacher will say, "OK everybody time to sleep" and – – you look and you
    do what the others are doing *y'know*.'
(6) Quand j'ai commencé mes cours de natation synchronisée *là*, j'ai trouvé il-y-
    avait plus des, des, des francophones. [Tammy]
    'When I started my synchronized swimming classes – , I found there were more
    French speakers.'

A last marker in need of some explication is one without a one-to-one semantic equivalent in English, though there is a function in common. This is *fait que* 'it follows that,' which, like so many of the other markers, is desemanticized in its discourse function. We follow Dessureault-Dober (1974) in distinguishing its use as a logical connector, where the following proposition is a logical consequence of the one that precedes it, from the discourse function use, which is illustrated in (7).

(7) Mais je pense que c'était comme l'appréciation de l'art. *Fait que* c'est ça.
    [Sandra]
    'But I think it was like art appreciation. *It follows that* [=so] that's it.'

As a discourse marker, *fait que* shares with French *alors* and English *so* the property of being a desemanticized logical connector, and therefore it could be said that, from a functional point of view, *fait que* has an English equivalent. The reason we grouped it in the "no exact equivalent" category is, first, because there is no possibility of arriving at *fait que* by calquing on English and, second, because as a nonstandard form it would be impossible to learn it other than from native speakers. *Alors* and *fait que* are semantically and pragmatically equivalent. Used recurrently at the beginning of statements that are clearly not a consequence of the previous statement, both forms are desemanticized discourse markers and, as such, were included in our analyses. Each is socially marked: among native speakers, they are used by different people, with *alors*, a standard written conjunction, being preferred by speakers who are higher on the social scale. On the other hand, the use of *là*, by far the most frequent punctor in Montreal French, is not restricted to any particular social class (Vincent & Sankoff, 1992:212).

The Anglophones we interviewed also occasionally used discourse markers of English origin while speaking French. In order of frequency, these were *you know, so, like,* and *well*. The latter two were used by only 3 speakers, but *you know* and *so* were used by a total of 9 speakers, attesting their much wider use in the French discourse of Anglophones. Both of these markers occur in (8), along with *comme*. Note that, in this example, *so* like *fait que* in (7) is used completely outside of any relation of logical consequence between the propositions it links. Understanding each other is in no way a consequence of being 10 or 11 years old.

(8) C'est *comme, you know* on était des jeunes, on avait dix ans onze ans, *so* on
    se comprenait un petit peu *comme*. . . [Gloria]
    'It's *like, y'know* we were young, we were about ten eleven years old, *so* we
    understood each other a bit *like*. . .'

Our speakers were also interviewed in English, and we will make reference to the distribution of the markers they used in English for comparative purposes. The discourse markers used recurrently by the same speakers in the English interviews were *I mean, like, so, well,* and *you know*.

METHODOLOGY

The interview

After a speaker agreed to participate in our study, we scheduled an individual interview in French. This interview had two aims: to learn as much as we could about the relevant aspects of the speaker's social background and history, focusing on his or her experience with the two languages, and to elicit a conversational register that would provide us with a sample of that person's ability to express himself or herself in French. The questions asked of each speaker were drawn from interview modules dealing with their linguistic history, family, friends, school, childhood, and current activities.

A follow-up interview in English was scheduled several weeks after the French interview. These questions required more in-depth answers, elicited more information on the background and schooling of the subjects, and delved into their political and social views of the Francophones in Montreal.

Each interview was tape-recorded, and the French interviews were transcribed in their entirety. Initial transcriptions were checked by a second researcher. For the English interviews, all discourse markers from a 15-minute segment of speech were transcribed. These data allowed us to explore the use of discourse markers in the spontaneous speech production of the same speakers in both their first and second languages. Rates of marker usage for each speaker were calculated for a 15-minute period of speech from both the French and English interviews.

Independent variables

The sample of speakers who took part in our study were fairly homogeneous with respect to social class; most were classified as lower middle class or middle class. Their ages ranged from 20 to 34 (see Table 1). Along with the sex of the speaker, age was included among the factors that might influence the production of discourse markers. We developed three different scales to reflect the subjects' differential experience with French, to be used as independent factors in the analysis.

Two scales were designed to measure the exposure to French our subjects had had over the course of their lives: the environment scale and the formal acquisition scale. As far as formal acquisition is concerned, French immersion programs in the English school system replicate the French school, to the extent that all school subjects are taught in French. However, as most of our interviewees readily acknowledged, students in these programs do not use French outside the schoolroom: their peers in immersion programs are mainly L1 English speakers, and the classes are located in schools where there are usually many more nonimmersion students than immersion students. This means that Anglophones who attend French elementary school are exposed to the casual French speech of their native-speaking peers, whereas their counterparts in immersion programs normally are not.

The two scales we developed take these differences into account. For example, although the formal acquisition scale attributes the same score to being in an immersion program and being in a French school, a child in a French school would score higher on the environment scale. For each scale, we divided the life history of the speaker into three stages: childhood, adolescence, and adulthood.

On the formal acquisition scale, the childhood score was determined for each speaker based on elementary school experience. Those who attended French or immersion elementary school received a score of 3, whereas those who went to English school with French as a subject received a score of 1. In between are those who attended French or immersion classes for only a few years (a score of 1.5 for one to two years; 2 for three to four years; 2.5 for post-immersion starting in the fifth grade). Similar scores were allocated for high school and then for CEGEP (junior college) and university studies.

The environment scale estimated the time spent in a French-speaking setting. Students who attended a French school in childhood were distinguished from those who attended an immersion school. A French school pupil would receive a score of 3, as opposed to a score of 2 for an immersion class pupil. English schooling with French as a subject would yield a score of 0, unless the child had been involved in extracurricular activities mainly conducted in French or reported friendships or family relationships in which French was the language of communication. Scores were calculated in a similar manner for adolescence and adulthood.

Scores on both scales are given in Table 1, which also includes the current orientation score and the grammar score established as an independent measure of French competence. Speakers are ordered by their elementary school scores on the formal acquisition scale. In the case of a tie, speakers were ordered according to the overall number of discourse markers used. For example, the six speakers with a score of 1 in elementary school ranged from 2.2 discourse markers over 15 minutes (Peter) to 13.9 (Joan), as shown in Table 2.

Some of the speakers acknowledged a fairly recent tendency, as young adults, either to move away from or come closer to the French-speaking community. For others, such an orientation could be deduced from their current activities and physical surroundings. Those who appeared to be mainly oriented towards English were given a score of 1 (see Table 1); those who were oriented towards both communities received a score of 2, and those who clearly had a French orientation were given a 3. One speaker, although living in a mostly English environment, reported always using French in his public interactions and seemed very eager to do so; therefore, we assigned him a score of 1.5.

As an independent measure of competence of the speakers in French, we counted the number of errors in gender marking on nouns made by each speaker in the first 20 non-ambiguous utterances of nouns in the French interview.[8] This grammar score for each subject is simply the percentage correct; these percentages ranged from 65 to 100%.

TABLE 2. *Frequency of discourse markers in the French interview*
(markers of both French and English origin)

Speaker	comme	like	alors	so	bien	well	tu sais	you know	fait que	là	bon	Total French only	Grand Total/ 15 min.
Peter	0.3	–	1.2	–	0.3	–	–	–	–	0.5	–	2.2	2.2
Donald	2.5	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2.5	2.5
Mike	0.9	–	0.6	0.3	0.6	–	1.7	–	–	0.3	–	4.1	4.4
Kurt	2.4	–	1.9	–	1.0	0.5	–	–	–	–	–	5.3	5.8
Tony	0.9	–	0.2	–	4.1	–	0.2	–	–	0.9	1.6	7.9	7.9
Joan	0.8	–	–	–	5.1	–	3.7	0.5	1.4	2.3	–	13.4	13.9
Greg	1.2	–	4.0	–	–	–	1.7	1.7	–	–	–	6.9	8.6
Jack	–	–	0.5	–	5.1	–	3.7	0.5	–	2.3	–	11.7	12.2
Glenda	9.1	–	9.7	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.5	–	19.3	19.3
Tammy	0.2	–	0.6	0.2	0.8	–	0.4	–	–	1.2	–	3.2	3.4
Louisa	8.5	–	9.4	–	–	–	34.9	1.9	–	2.2	0.3	55.4	57.3
Janet	5.2	0.5	5.7	–	1.5	–	0.5	–	–	0.5	–	13.4	13.9
Liz	–	–	3.9	–	5.9	–	0.4	–	–	7.0	2.3	19.5	19.5
Gloria	8.7	–	10.2	2.0	3.6	–	0.5	3.6	–	10.2	–	33.2	38.8
Joanie	6.4	–	4.6	1.0	6.4	–	7.7	–	–	12.5	2.3	39.9	40.9
Sandra	4.6	–	2.5	–	8.0	–	22.6	–	1.5	25.6	0.5	65.5	65.5
Ted	3.3	–	–	1.7	11.5	0.4	16.5	11.1	2.8	15.2	48.2	97.5	110.7
Total	54.9	0.5	55.0	5.3	53.9	0.8	95.2	19.3	5.7	81.3	55.3	400.8	426.7

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Total scores for French and English markers

The French interviews were transcribed and studied in their entirety, whereas a 15-minute sample from the interviews in English served as a basis for comparison with the subjects' French speech. In analyzing and reporting the results here, we normalized marker use in both French and English interviews to a 15-minute period. Table 2 gives the rate of use of each marker by all of the individual speakers in the French interview, and Table 3 gives the same data for the English interview.

In the English interviews, an average of 65.3 discourse markers were used per 15 minutes (i.e., more than 4 per minute), whereas in the French interviews these same speakers used only 24.5 per 15 minutes. However, the averages are not the most helpful indicator of what is going on, as there is extreme variation across individuals. English rates are plotted against French rates for each individual in Figure 1, which clarifies the fact that for most speakers the frequency range in each language is quite separate.

In English, 16 out of 17 speakers occupy the range between 38 and 114: that is, they used about 3 to 8 markers per minute on the average, with one outlier, Ted, using 149. Only five speakers had a comparable rate of marker use in French: occupying the roughly 40+ range are Gloria, Joanie, Louisa,

TABLE 3. *Frequency of discourse markers in English interviews*

Speaker	*I mean*	*like*	*so*	*well*	*you know*	Total/15 min.
Peter	3	9	10	13	18	53
Donald	1	34	10	5	6	56
Mike	2	14	17	11	7	51
Kurt	1	22	21	3	29	76
Tony	3	14	5	10	20	52
Joan	8	30	7	1	27	73
Greg	7	38	21	5	43	114
Jack[a]	10	10	10.7	2.6	5	38.3
Glenda	5	15	17	6	4	47
Tammy[a]	0	39.6	4.7	2.3	–	46.6
Louisa	1	23	12	6	14	56
Janet	7	27	21	4	32	91
Liz	4	24	21	6	12	67
Gloria	4	2	16	2	24	48
Joanie	4	3	11	7	18	42
Sandra[a]	1	13.2	6.5	3.1	26.6	50.3
Ted	0	9	30	4	106	149
Total	61	326.8	240.9	92	391.6	1110.2

[a]All occurrences of the discourse markers in this speaker's interview were counted. They were then normalized to correspond to the 15-minute count of the others.
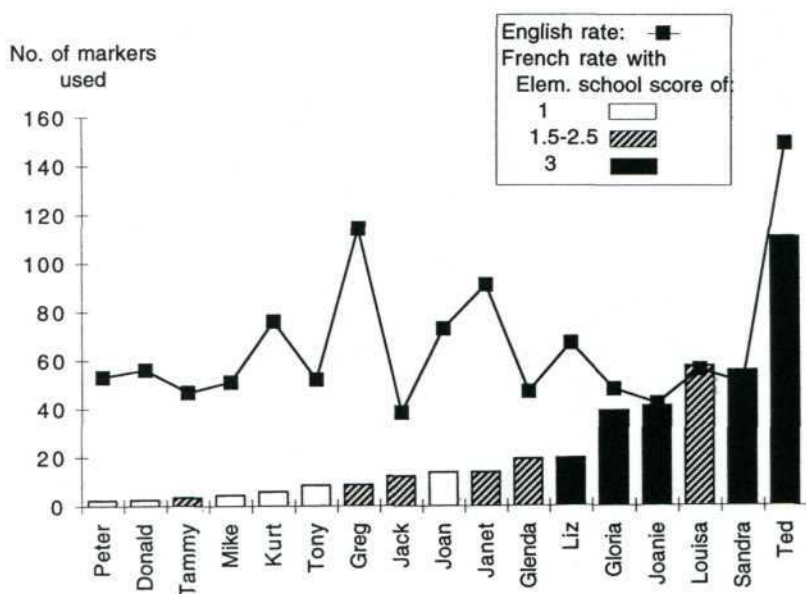

FIGURE 1. Frequency of use of markers by individual speakers in English and in French, according to three degrees of exposure to French in elementary school.

Sandra, and Ted. These speakers showed very similar rates in their two languages. Only two other speakers, Glenda and Liz, used a rate of more than 1 per minute. Without going so far as to say that normal speech production is necessarily accompanied by some particular rate of discourse marker use, it is nevertheless clear that speakers producing less than 1 marker per minute are so far below their range in their native language and so far outside of the range of native speakers (Thibault & Daveluy, 1989) that they must be rated as having a distinctive — we would say, clearly less colloquial — command of the language.

Next we explored how our speakers' differential ability to use discourse markers related to the independent variables under consideration. In order to do this, we submitted all the independent factors, including scores on the grammar test, to stepwise regression analyses in order to determine which best accounted for the rate of use of discourse markers in French L2 speech. In the first run, we tested aggregate scores on both the formal acquisition and environment scales. Then separate runs were done with childhood, adolescent, and adulthood scores on each scale.

Our first regression analysis, using the total number of French markers as the dependent variable, showed the rate of correct gender marking (our independent measure of linguistic competence) to be the only significant factor selected ($p < .01$).[9] This result confirmed our view that very low-frequency use of discourse markers is a signal of lesser overall linguistic competence, whereas higher frequency is the hallmark of the fluent speaker.

When we substituted childhood environment scores for the total scores, childhood environment itself was the only factor selected ($p < .01$). However, when childhood scores on both environment and formal acquisition replaced the two combined scores, formal acquisition in elementary school ($p < .01$) overrode the effect of childhood environment and accurate gender use with nouns. Other stages of the speakers' environment and L2 acquisition personal history did not affect their production of discourse markers in French.

In Figure 1, the speakers' formal acquisition scores for elementary school, indicating their amount of early French schooling, are shown by crosshatching on the bar graph. Those speakers with the lowest scores on elementary education are clustered to the left of the graph, whereas those speakers with the highest formal acquisition scores in elementary school are clustered at the right. Only one speaker of the middle range (Louisa) used a high number of discourse markers.

Use of specific markers

Tables 2 and 3 show the total use of discourse markers in the speech of our 17 speakers, normalized to a 15-minute interview segment. Not surprisingly, *you know* and *tu sais* had the highest occurrence in both languages. The most striking differential ranking of French and English equivalent markers was

comme and *like*. Whereas *like* was the second most frequently used marker in English, *comme* was only the fifth most[10] frequent in French.

Comme. Vincent (1992) described the major use of *comme* in Montreal French — apart from its standard function as a comparative conjunction — as that of an exemplification marker. According to her, this use of *comme* is on the rise in Montreal French and is replacing *par exemple* 'for example' and *disons* 'let's say'. Although such a use is semantically derived from the conjunction, its syntactic distribution is different. In example (9), for instance, *comme* starts a sentence, rather than linking two phrases as a conjunction would.

(9) Qui il a travaillé . . . *Comme* au début tous les bureaux même pour les acheteurs c'était dans le magasin là-bas. [Glenda]
'Yes he has worked . . . *Like* in the beginning all the offices even for the buyers they were in the store there.'

Whereas the use of *comme* as an exemplification marker might seem the discourse use most closely related to its use as a comparative adverb, *comme* has also developed into a modal adverb meaning 'rather' or 'approximately'. In (10) it modifies a noun phrase, and in (11) it modifies an adjective.

(10) Je dirais même *comme* cinquante pourcent de nos membres sont anglais. [Joanie]
'I would even say *like* fifty percent of our members are English.'
(11) Il y a deux rivières — un est, est *comme* brun. [Louisa]
'There are two rivers — one is, is *like* brown.'

This development, apparently similar to that of American and Canadian English 'like', is nevertheless attested in Québécois French of more than 60 years ago, as illustrated in example (12), taken from a glossary originally published in 1930. The meaning given in the glossary is that of *environ* 'approximately'; *comme* is seen to modify a temporal adverbial expression.

(12) Il a *comme* vingt-cinq ans. [La Société du Parler français au Canada, 1968:217]
'He's *like* twenty-five years old.'

Among our English L2 French speakers, however, the most frequent use of *comme* was as a desemanticized punctor (see Table 4). This usage is exemplified in (13).

(13) Comment est-ce que je peux *comme* prendre un petit promenade après? [Louisa]
'How can I *like* take a little walk afterwards?'

TABLE 4. *Use of* comme *as a discourse marker by the*
L2 speakers from our sample

Speaker	Punctor	Exemplification	Modal Adverb		Quotation Marker	Total N
			rather	*more or less*		
Peter			1 100%			1
Donald	6 100%					6
Mike			1 33.3%	2 66.7%		3
Kurt				4 80%	1 20%	5
Tony					5 100%	5
Joan	1 33.3%	1 33.3%			1 33.4%	3
Greg	1 50%	1 50%				2
Glenda	5 31.2%	5 31.2%	1 6.3%	3 18.8%	2 12.5%	16
Tammy	1 100%					1
Louisa	10 37%		2 7.4%	3 11.1%	12 44.5%	27
Janet	7 70%		2 20%	1 10%		10
Gloria	6 37.5%	1 6.2%	3 18.8%	6 37.5%		16
Joanie	12 50%		4 16.6%	4 16.7%	4 16.7%	24
Sandra	5 55.6%	1 11.1%	3 33.3%			9
Ted	6 31.6%	10 52.6%	1 5.3%		2 10.5%	19
Total N	60	19	18	23	27	147
Average	35.0%	10.8%	14.2%	14.2%	14.0%	

Note: Two speakers, Liz and Jack, did not use *comme* as a discourse marker.

Among Vincent's requirements for punctors are recurrence in discourse and absence of stress. Table 5 shows all occurrences of *comme* in the speech of the 12 youngest speakers (aged 15 to 25) of our Montreal '84 corpus, representing only native Québécois L1 speakers. At least one speaker (Speaker 122) definitely met these criteria in his use of *comme*. At 15, he was one of the youngest in our Montreal '84 corpus. Most of the time, in his speech, *comme* followed an occurrence of *tu sais* 'you know', a widespread punctor in Montreal French. With 116 instances of *comme* in his interview, he alone was responsible for almost half of the 251 tokens of *comme* from these speakers,

TABLE 5. *Use of* comme *as a discourse marker by 12 young French speakers interviewed in 1984*

Speaker	Age of Speaker	Punctor	Exemplification	Modal Adverb		Total N
				rather	*more or less*	
121	20		1 100%			1
122	15	88 75.8%	23 19.8%	4 3.4%	1 1%	116
123	18	2 14.3%	10 71.4%	2 14.3%		14
124	20		9 100%			9
125	22	1 6.7%	13 86.7%	1 6.6%		15
126	17		10 91%	1 9%		11
127	17		7 100%			7
128	22	7 43.8%	7 43.8%	2 12.4%		16
129	15		2 66.6%		1 33.4%	3
130	25	2 8%	21 84%	1 4%	1 4%	25
131	15	1 4.2%	20 83.3%	1 4.2%	2 8.3%	24
132	16		10 100%			10
Total N		101	133	12	5	251
Average		12.7%	78.9%	4.9%	3.9%	

and 76% of his use of *comme* was as a punctor. One other speaker in the sample had a high rate of *comme*-punctor use, at 44%, but averaging over the 12 speakers, the percentage of discourse marker *comme* as a punctor was only 12.7%, as compared with 35% for the L2 speakers of Table 4. In view of the fact that the comparison group of young native speakers was sampled in 1984, whereas the L2 speakers were recorded in 1993–1994, it is possible that the use of *comme* as a punctor may be increasing among native speakers, as was indeed suggested by Vincent and Sankoff (1992). For the young L1 speakers of 1984, however, *comme* was mainly used to introduce an example (78.9% of all occurrences), as in (14).

(14) *Comme* j'ai des amis français que, bon ils vont aller dans un dépanneur. [Ted]
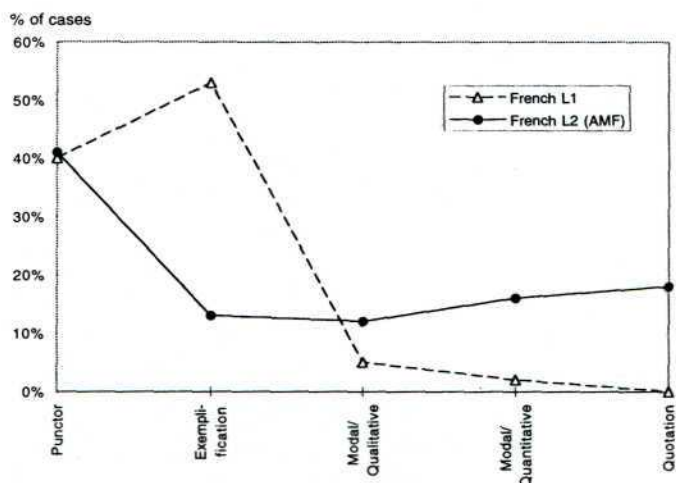   '*Like* I have French [=from France] friends that, –, they would go to a convenience store.'

FIGURE 2. Use of *comme* according to discourse function for French L1 and L2 speakers.

As shown in Table 4, only 10.8% of the occurrences of *comme* in the L2 speaker interviews were of the exemplification type, as opposed to 35% use as a punctor.

Another interesting comparison relates to the use of *comme* as a modal adverb. Table 5 shows that the L1 speakers' use of *comme* as a modal adverb represented less than 10% of their usage, whereas the L2 speakers of Table 4 used *comme* in this way almost 30% of the time (14.2% 'rather' and 14.0% 'more or less').

English speakers have another usage for *comme* in French: that is, as an introducer of reported speech. This is a recent feature in American English (Blyth, Recktenwald, & Wang, 1990). It accounted for 18.4% of the use of *comme* in L2 speech.

Among the markers with equivalents in both English and French, *comme* was the only one that displayed differences in use for L1 and L2 speakers. This differential pattern is illustrated in Figure 2. Two speakers, Liz and Jack, did not use *comme* at all, and only one L2 speaker (Ted) showed a profile of *comme* use similar to that of the French speakers.

Since the L2 speakers did not appear to use *comme* in quite the same way as the French L1 speakers, it was not surprising that no independent factor proved to influence the occurrence of this marker in L2 speech. Regression analyses showed that only proper gender use was significantly associated with the use of *comme* ($p < .02$), a tendency that matched the overall use of French discourse markers. One explanation for the heavy use of *comme* as a punctor might be that these L2 speakers were influenced by their L1 use of *like*. Indeed, as we noted in Table 3, *like* was a very frequent marker in the

English speech of these young adults. Although we did not carry out a quantitative analysis on their English speech, a marker showing the very high frequencies we observed with *like* (on the average, 1.3 per minute) was typically used principally as a punctor. Transfer to the use of *comme* in French is thus a highly likely explanation for the patterns we observed.

Tu sais. This marker stands out as the preferred marker of our sample of speakers. Used by 13 of our 17 speakers, its total use over the normalized 15-minute segment was 95.2, or an average of 5.6 times per speaker. Of the speakers observed not to use it, Peter, Donald, and Kurt were among those who had had the least exposure to French and who were indeed the least fluent speakers, using the fewest number of markers. The other speaker who did not use *tu sais*, Glenda, was a middle-range speaker who had participated in an immersion program at various stages of her school career and currently uses French in her part-time job as a sales clerk in a large department store. It seemed anomalous to us that Glenda did not use *tu sais*, until we looked at her pattern of address terms to the interviewer. Glenda was one of seven speakers who managed not to use either *tu* or *vous* to the interviewer. Although *tu sais* as a discourse marker (along with the generalized *tu* used for *on* 'one' in Quebec French) does co-occur with *vous* as a term of address among native speakers (Laberge, 1977), we felt that Glenda might not have viewed *tu sais* as a frozen form, and that she might have felt inhibited in using it with an interviewer old enough to be her mother.[10] Though this may indeed account for Glenda's behavior, the fact remains that we do not know whether *tu sais* as a discourse marker is part of a repertoire she might deploy on other occasions. In addition, other speakers who avoided the choice of *tu* or *vous* as an address term nevertheless used *tu sais* as a discourse marker. These included Janet, Liz, Greg, and Louisa, our most frequent users of *tu sais*.

When stepwise regression analyses were performed on the use of *tu sais*, the grammar score based on correct gender allocation appeared to be the only significant independent factor selected ($p = .054$) — a result which adds more weight to our hypothesis about the association of fluency with discourse marker use in L2 speech.

Là. The only other marker with a total exceeding 80 occurrences in the summed 15-minute segments, *là*, has no English equivalent. It is, however, the most frequently used by French-speaking Montrealers.[11] It was used by all but three of the Anglophones studied in this article. Presumably, the only way for Anglophones to acquire it would be through exposure to the oral French of native speakers. Thus, if the environment scale were to have a strong effect in any of our data subsets, we would expect it to manifest itself in the use of *là*. This was confirmed in the initial stepwise analysis using five independent variables (sex, age, gender allocation, acquisition scale, and environment scale). The environment scale was the only factor selected ($p < .01$).

When childhood scores for the two scales were used, the environment in childhood was again the only factor selected ($p < .001$). As the most impor-

tant marker with no English equivalent, *là* is clearly learned from experience in the Francophone community; this result confirms the importance of social contacts in childhood for acquiring local patterns. Neither adolescence nor adulthood scores on the scales were selected. Correct gender marking appeared to be the only other significant factor affecting the use of *là* ($p < .01$).

Bien. Although *bien* does have an English equivalent, it is similar to *là* in that its use seems to be influenced by the speaker's linguistic environment and sex ($p < .02$ for the combined effect of the two factors). Men tended to use *bien* more than women. The same factors were selected when childhood scores were substituted for total scores on both scales ($p < .01$), but no factor was selected for the analyses involving adolescence and adulthood. This result would seem to indicate that men who have been exposed to a French environment during childhood tend to use *bien* more than other speakers; however, we must be cautious in this interpretation. Only one male speaker in the present subsample had a score higher than 0 on childhood environment: Ted, who scored 3, a score achieved by four female speakers (Liz, Gloria, Joanie, and Sandra). Ted used *bien* more than these young women, but he exhibited the highest marker use overall. The skewing of the data may account for the apparent gender effect in this result.

There is at least one aspect of the use of *bien* that testifies to its acquisition through interaction with native speakers rather than by exposure to formal instruction: that is, the pronunciation [bẽ]. Checking on the pronunciation by the 13 speakers who used it, we found that, except for Jack (with only 1 token), all of them used the colloquial pronunciation [bẽ] for *bien* as a discourse marker (as opposed to the [bjẽ] pronunciation when *bien* is functioning as an adverb, as in the expression *très bien*). This reinforces our interpretation that the use of *bien* as a discourse marker results from interaction with native speakers and gives us an explanation for the childhood environment effect.[12]

Bon. Like *là*, *bon* has no English equivalent marker. It differs from *là* in that only six of our speakers were observed to use it (cf. Table 2), and so we must conclude that it is somehow less accessible to L2 speakers. The first stepwise analysis performed using *bon* as the dependent variable showed a combined influence of current linguistic orientation and amount of formal French acquisition ($p < .02$). A tentative interpretation of this result would be that those with more formal French training tend to use *bon*, a typically French marker, more than the other speakers, particularly if they are currently more oriented towards French.

The breakdown of the acquisition and environment scales into the three stages gave uniform results as to the influence of current linguistic orientation. Matched with adolescence and adulthood scores, it was the only independent factor selected; however, when matched with childhood scores, three factors were selected ($p < .01$): namely, current orientation, formal acquisition, and sex of speaker. The initial analysis showed a sex effect favoring

men, but this result was again an artifact of the presence of one male speaker (Ted) who was a frequent user of *bon*. Of the *bon* users, four were women and two were men. As a statistical result, the favoring influence of being male disappeared when total scores were taken into account.

Alors and *fait que*.   Used as discourse markers, both *alors* and *fait que* are functionally equivalent to English *so*. *Fait que*, however, is not part of standard French, nor does it have an English translation. *Alors*, on the other hand, does have an English equivalent (*so*), and as a conjunction it is found in written French and would certainly occur in the school French to which L2 students are exposed. Two studies on this alternation in L1 Montreal French (Dessureault-Dober, 1974; Thibault & Daveluy, 1989) have shown a clear social class division: *alors* is favored by speakers occupying higher positions on the social scale, whereas *fait que* tends to be used by working-class speakers. Indeed in Dessureault-Dober's study of two groups of 12 speakers at the social extremes in the 1971 Montreal corpus, there was a complementary distribution between the two forms according to the social status of the speaker. Speakers of intermediate status used both (Thibault & Daveluy, 1989), but the social class correlation among native speakers was clear.

The L2 speakers in our current sample ranged from lower middle class to middle class. Most of them had had at least some college education. If they were L1 speakers, they would be expected to be *alors* users. The data match this expectation fairly well: only 3 of the 17 speakers used *fait que*, whereas 14 used *alors* (Donald was the exception, with no occurrence of either *alors* or *fait que*).

There were not enough tokens of *fait que* to perform stepwise regressions on its use, but it is worth looking more closely at the three individuals who did use it. Both Ted and Joan used *fait que* to the exclusion of *alors*. Ted was in many ways the most vernacular speaker of the group. With a total of 97.5 French discourse markers in his normalized 15-minute segment, he was far and away the greatest user of discourse markers in general (cf. Table 1). His social network includes many Francophones (e.g., he plays in a rock band with Francophone and Anglophone musicians). Clearly he had adopted *fait que* from social interaction with peers, who are users of this form. This was also the case with Joan, who, at 30, is married to a Francophone and speaks French with both family and friends. Sandra, the only speaker in our sample to use both *fait que* (1.5) and *alors* (2.5), grew up in an urban area where she spoke French with children in the neighborhood. If she acquired *fait que* through participating in the neighborhood vernacular, she would have been exposed to *alors* in the French Catholic schools she attended.

As we did for all the other markers, we submitted the use of *alors* to several regression analyses. Results were consistent throughout. Two factors were selected as influencing the data: current linguistic orientation and sex of speaker ($p < .01$). Contrary to the results obtained for *bien* and *bon*, the values of these factors that favor the use of *alors* appear to be orientation

TABLE 6. *Use of* alors *by current orientation and sex of speaker, for 15 speakers*

	Male Speakers		Female Speakers	
	Mean *alors* Score	Number of Speakers	Mean *alors* Score	Number of Speakers
Current orientation 1	0.85	2	6.57	7
Current orientation 1.5–2	1.3	5	1.4	1

Note: The one male and one female speaker whose current orientation was scored as 3 are not included in this table; the male speaker was one of the two categorical *fait que* users.

towards English and female sex. Looking at the data more closely, however, we found that these results were entirely attributable to a cluster of seven female speakers, all of whom scored only 1 on the current orientation factor. The *alors* scores of these young women ranged from 2.5 through 10.2, whereas of the 10 speakers outside of this group only one had an *alors* score within this range. These results can be seen in Table 6, which includes only the 15 speakers whose current orientation scores were between 1 and 2. Only two speakers scored 3 on current orientation; one (Ted) was a categorical user of *fait que* rather than *alors*, and the other (Tammy) had an *alors* score of 0.6, typical of those outside of this group of seven. It is clear from Table 6 that male and female speakers were distributed very unevenly according to current orientation. Our view is that further interpretation of these results will require a larger sample of speakers with a more even representation of both sexes across the other relevant social categories.

Use of markers typical of spoken Montreal French

We have seen that the speakers' use of the various markers differs. In many cases (especially *comme, tu sais, bien*, and *alors*), we assumed that the ready equivalence between these forms and analogous English markers would facilitate the use of the French markers. However, in the case of other markers (*bon, là, fait que*), neither English equivalents nor classroom learning seemed a possible source for L2 speakers. In order to test whether the use of markers specific to L1 French vernacular usage would yield results different from those obtained when all markers were taken into account, we grouped all occurrences of *là, bon*, and *fait que*. When we used the total scores on both formal acquisition and environment scales, the latter was selected along with sex of the speaker ($p < .001$). That is, those who had been most exposed to a French environment, and especially the men, were more likely to make use of the local discourse markers. The same factors were selected when we used childhood scores. When we used adolescent and adulthood scores, however, sex of speaker and correct assignment of grammatical gender were selected ($p < .05$).

Use of English markers in French discourse

Although code switching per se is not the topic of the current article, we observed that only two of the speakers studied here, Louisa and Ted, exhibited code switching during their French interview (i.e., interspersing phrases, clauses, or sentences in English). Many of the speakers did, however, make occasional use of English discourse markers within otherwise French discourse; an example of the use of both *so* and *y'know* in an otherwise French sentence appears in (8). Table 2 indicates that these were the only two English markers used with any degree of frequency in French discourse; *so* was used occasionally by five speakers, and *y'know* by six speakers.[13] All were used only occasionally, as can be seen by comparing the two rightmost columns of Table 2. Although we did not perform regression analyses on the English markers, they did not seem to be concentrated in the usage of the less fluent speakers. In other words, these two discourse markers in no way supplanted the use of the French markers for any speaker, and their use seemed to constitute an occasional supplementary resource for a minority, albeit a sizeable minority. Further work is needed to understand the influence of English in general on the French of speakers at different levels of fluency.

CONCLUSION

In surveying the global distribution of discourse markers among our speakers, we were initially struck by two observations. First, we noted a great discrepancy between the frequency of discourse markers in our speakers' use of their native language and in their second language, a ratio of about 3:1 for most speakers. Second, we observed extreme variation in our speakers' French, from those who used only 2 or 3 discourse markers over a 15-minute stretch of conversation to those who used more than 40. It is clear from the results on the overall use of markers that the least fluent, least competent L2 speakers used almost no discourse markers, and those who did not use discourse markers often produced speech that was in other ways disfluent. Whereas native-style markers seemed to trip off the tongues of fluent speakers in the midst of effortlessly produced clauses, the discourse of nonfluent speakers was punctuated by the *ums* and *uhs* of filled pauses, which betoken word searches, hesitations, and the quest for a means of expression. We were left with the view that the more successful L2 speakers were those who could control native discourse markers in a nativelike fashion.

Next, we examined the speakers' preference for the individual markers. Five markers were used by 13 or more of our 17 speakers. Of these markers, the use of *comme* and *tu sais* correlated only with overall fluency as established by the grammar scores, although in the case of *comme* we noted some apparent interference from the English use of *like* as a discourse marker. *Bien* and *là* correlated strongly with the influence of the speakers' environment — particularly childhood environment. It seems that early exposure outside of

school was the main way a speaker acquired a marker like *là*, which has no English equivalent and is not part of the written language. And although *bien* seems to have an English equivalent (*well*), we observed in the way speakers pronounced it (as [bɛ̃] rather than [bjɛ̃]) that this form was also learned in early interaction with native speakers outside of a school context. *Alors* was apparently preferred by female speakers who had had a reasonably high level of school exposure to French and who seemed to be less favorably oriented toward the local speech community. Preferred by educated, middle-class, native speakers in careful speech, *alors* is the type of marker one would expect to be preferred by young L2 women who had acquired good school French.

The overall picture that emerges from our analysis is that the ability to express oneself fluently and confidently in a second language entails the use of those discourse markers that native speakers produce so effortlessly. Speakers who have been exposed to the second language early in life, in a context of everyday social interaction with native speakers, have a clear advantage in their ability to produce cohesive discourse. Their nativelike use of discourse particles is one manifestation of this ability.

Until the massive social changes of the 1960s and 1970s, the favored economic and political position of the English-speaking minority in Montreal allowed bilingualism in French to remain a matter of personal cultural distinction rather than socio-economic necessity. The language policies that have been in place for the past twenty-five years have been highly effective, altering the linguistic balance of power so that learning French has become a major asset for Montreal Anglophones. Unlike the French-speaking minorities elsewhere in Canada (Heller & Lévy, 1992; Mougeon & Beniak, 1991), Montreal Anglophones have experienced very little pressure towards language shift. Whereas minority French speakers typically watch movies and television in English and do some English reading, many of our interviewees admitted that they seldom, if ever, go to see a French movie or read a French book or newspaper (Thibault & Sankoff, 1993). The position of English remains strong because of its world status and because of the numerical preponderance of English speakers in North America.

There has ensued a growth in bilingualism among Montreal Anglophones, and we are witnessing the development of stable bilingualism rather than assimilation in this community in the 1990s. Further, we see a transition from a situation where middle-class Anglophones thought that if they were going to learn French it would have to be the proper variety (Parisian French) to one where they find it more appropriate to learn the local vernacular. Whereas yesterday's parents were nervous about their children acquiring a Québécois accent, the most severe criticism that today's young adults have about their French education is that they were not exposed to the variety of French that they need in order to function in society. Paradoxically, our results show that, as far as discourse markers are concerned, the educational system alone cannot supply children with these resources. As a vernacular feature, the appropriate use of discourse markers requires exposure to the ver-

nacular. If French bilingualism indeed becomes normal for Anglophone Montrealers, we can expect vernacular competence to increase.

NOTES

1. It is a testimony to the bilingual nature of this community that we have not been able to standardize to either the French or the English spellings of Montreal-Montréal and Quebec-Québec in this article. Nouns like Montrealers and adjectives like Québécois require either the English or French versions of the place names. In general, our practice has been to use the English version of both names throughout except when citing from French or using French adjectives.

2. It is particularly important to study frequencies and distributions because, in any particular instance, the use of a discourse marker is optional. Compare the exchanges between the interviewer (Marie-Odile) and Liz:

M.-O.: Est-ce qu'avec elle tu parles en français ou en anglais?
'With her do you speak in French or in English?'
Liz: Avec elle je parle en anglais, c'est drôle.
'With her I speak in English, it's funny.'

M.-O.: Où est-ce que tu as appris le français?
'Where did you learn French?'
Liz: *Bon, bien* moi je suis née à Québec, la ville de Québec.
'—, *well*, me, I was born in Quebec, Quebec City.'

The fact that Liz did not use *bon* or *bien* in sentence-initial position in our first example in no way makes her sentence odd or infelicitous. She could just have soon have said, "*Bon, bien* avec elle . . ." The fact that she did not is not remarkable; it certainly does not have the effect of branding her as a non-native speaker. This last observation leads us to the crucial point: insofar as we seek to understand what is nativelike or non-nativelike in speakers' use of markers, we are forced to study distributions and frequencies and to compare them with those of native speakers.

3. In the current phase of the project, we have decided not to study the population known in Quebec as Allophones: speakers from immigrant families who have languages other than French and English in their family background (i.e., those who under the language laws must attend French-language schools).

4. Fifteen of the current subjects were interviewed by native speakers of French (Lucie Gagnon and Hélène Blondeau, speakers of Québec French, and Marie-Odile Fonollosa, a speaker of French French); two were interviewed by Gillian Sankoff. Subsequently, they were interviewed in English by a native speaker of English (Naomi Nagy), but these interviews are used only for comparative purposes in the current article.

5. *Comme*, one of the markers included in our study, qualifies as a discourse marker in L2 speech according to these properties. In contrast, *comme* is not a discourse marker for most Francophone native speakers.

6. As a discourse marker, *tu sais* is almost categorically reduced to [tse] in the speech of native speakers. Such is not the case in AMF, but the alternation between the full form and the reduced one is not taken into account here. The alternation between [bjɛ̃] and [bɛ̃], however, is socially meaningful; therefore, it is studied here.

7. Alice Goffman (personal communication) observed the analogous use of *there* in the English of six or seven high school students of her acquaintance at a French private school in Montreal in 1993–94. These included French-dominant, English-dominant, and bilingual adolescents (who felt they were equally competent in both languages). Discourse marker *there* in English is clearly a calque from French.

8. Although there are a few loan words in which the gender assigned in Quebec French differs from the gender they have been assigned in European French and which the Anglophones might have encountered in books (e.g. *la job* (QF) vs. *le job* (EF)), no examples of this type occurred in the 20 nouns we rated for each of our subjects.

9. We used the standard criteria for stepwise regressions set in Statview 4.01 from Abacus Concepts. Although the environment combined scores had a $p < .02$ and the formal acquisition a $p < .02$, they were excluded at step 1 of the regression along with sex and age. Note that grammar score, environment, and formal acquisition were strongly correlated: grammar score/

environment, $R = .752$; grammar score/formal acquisition, $R = .723$; environment/formal acquisition, $R = .826$.

10. Glenda and Tammy were the two speakers interviewed by Gillian Sankoff in French.

11. In Vincent's study of punctors (1993), she analyzed 12 different markers. The occurrence of *là* corresponded to 37% of the total. *Tu sais* came second, with 21%.

12. Some middle-class native speakers tend to avoid the [bɛ̃] pronunciation altogether, but among the majority of native speakers, the adverbial and discourse uses are clearly distinguished phonologically.

13. It is interesting to note that *so* is used extensively among French minority speakers in Ontario (Mougeon & Beniak, 1991) and in New Brunswick (Roy, 1981). Poplack (1985) and Poplack, Sankoff, and Miller (1988) also noted the use of *you know* in the French spoken in the Hull–Ottawa region.

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