



1-1-1999

Lexical borrowings from French in written Quebec English

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Lexical Borrowings from French in Written Quebec English: Perspectives on Motivation

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The purpose of this paper is to explore perspectives on motivation for lexical borrowings from French in written Quebec English. To do so, we propose first to examine factors that account for the presence and patterns of loanwords in Quebec English in general and then to identify factors that motivate the use of loanwords as code choices in individual texts.

1 Background

On the federal level, Canada is officially bilingual, the Official Languages Act of 1969 having established English and French as the two official languages of Parliament and federal government services. However, French has been and remains the language of the minority of Canadians, other than in Quebec, the one predominantly French province. In Quebec, where French is the first language of more than 80% of the population, French is the only official language of the province.

As a minority language not only within Canada but also within the whole of North America, French has for centuries been on the defensive against assimilation by English. In the last thirty-odd years, the linguistic balance of power has changed radically within the province of Quebec. The Quiet Revolution, the modernization of Quebec society in the 1960s, led to the rise of the Québécois nationalist movement based largely on the protection and promotion of French within Quebec as a means of ensuring the survival of this French-speaking community in North America. The early 1960s saw the beginning of language planning in Quebec, with the creation of the *Office de la langue française*. In 1974, the *Loi sur la langue officielle* made French the only official language of Quebec. The dominant position of French was firmly established by Bill 101, the *Charte de la langue française*, in 1977. Since then, Quebec has seen concentrated efforts and aggressive language policies to ensure the use of French in Quebec in all walks of life. On the academic level, the interest in Quebec French and the influence of English on it has been enormous. Bourhis states, "Quebec...remains the most active centre for the investigation of language attitudes in the Francophone world" (1982:35). Recent years have seen the publication of literally thousands of articles and

monographs on Quebec French, as well as various dictionaries on Quebec usage (Poirier 1985; Beauchemin, Martel and Théoret 1992).

Interest in Quebec English has been much more modest and relatively recent. Although the borrowing of French-Canadian words into Canadian English had been observed since colonial times (Avis 1978), earlier studies of English in Quebec (such as Hamilton 1958 and sections of Orkin 1971) focused mainly on the influence of British and American Englishes. In the past two decades, scholarly interest in Quebec English has grown. Articles on the topic include papers by Roberts (1982), Manning and Eatock (1982), Plaice (1984), Palmer and Harris (1990), Fee (1991, 1995), Russell (1996) and Grant-Russell (1998), as well as a monograph (McArthur 1989). Recently published reference works on the English language have acknowledged the uniqueness of Quebec English (McArthur 1992; Fee and McAlpine 1997). Less scholarly commentary on the phenomenon can be found in countless articles and editorials in the Quebec English press, as well as in publications such as *Bonjour Quebec eh?* (Keith-Ryan and McCully 1996) and the *Angloman* comic books (Shainblum and Morrissette 1995, 1996).

2 Description of Study

These findings emerge from a research project underway at the Université de Sherbrooke,¹ based on the analysis of lexical borrowings from French in a written corpus of English-language journalistic, administrative, touristic, governmental, and other non-literary texts. The findings are based on a partial analysis of an expanding corpus in an ongoing research project, and our analysis and conclusions are obviously not definitive.

The corpus analysed to date consists of three components: a journalistic corpus, a touristic corpus, and an administrative corpus. The journalistic corpus is by far the most extensive, and is composed of both electronic and paper documents. The electronic corpus analysed to date contains the 1994 and 1995 issues of *The Gazette*, the principal English-language daily of Quebec, containing 120,447 newspaper articles. We have been searching this section of the corpus electronically to ascertain frequencies of uses of loanwords, to find examples of usages, and to compile quantitative data. This electronic corpus is

1. The authors gratefully acknowledge financial support for this research in the form of grants from FCAR (*Fonds pour la Formation de Chercheurs et l'Aide à la Recherche*) and the *Fondation de l'Université de Sherbrooke*. Thanks also to research assistants Elspeth Tullock, Marielle Méné, Lucie Dubois and Nancy Wright.

supplemented by paper copies of a dozen weekly and monthly English-language newspapers from various areas throughout Quebec. The touristic corpus consists of over two hundred tourist guides, brochures, and pamphlets put out by government, municipalities, and tourist bureaus and agencies. The administrative corpus consists of some fifty documents, including annual reports and other publications, of English-language hospitals, English-language school boards, and English-language associations from throughout the province. Although we cannot provide a profile of the individual writers of these texts, we assume that they are literate, fluent speakers of English from Quebec.

Most studies of language variation have focused on spoken discourse; indeed, the dialectologists' preferred collection method is the recording of spontaneous speech, and the ideal corpus for studying variation has traditionally been the spoken vernacular, in which the minimum attention is paid to monitoring (Labov 1972:308). Thus, although the patterns and choices of lexical variants observed in our written corpus share many characteristics with those that manifest in speech, our use of a written corpus for language contact research has several important implications. First, we can expect to find a lower frequency of borrowing in our corpus than researchers would find in informal spoken discourse: informal speech reflects more interference than more formal discourse (Poplack 1983:113). Second, we can assume that the established borrowings used in the edited, published texts of our corpus have acquired a certain degree of acceptability, standardization, and authority:

"Variants which are used in written communication are much more likely to be standardized than those which are used solely in the oral modality" (Bouchard Ryan, Giles and Sebastien 1982:3). Thirdly, since written discourse is often prepared with rhetorical forethought, we assume that some of the uses of borrowings reflect rhetorical intent. Fourthly, since our corpus reflects mediated discourse from the public domain, the writer is addressing an audience that is a synthesis of a real, heterogeneous group of readers and a fictitious readership invoked by the writer (Ede and Lunsford 1984 :167).

3 Findings to Date

This paper will focus primarily on full lexical borrowings, including single words such as *dépanneur* (convenience store), acronyms and initialisms such as *cegep* (a type of junior college) and *CLSC* (a local community service centre), and collocations such as *vieille souche* (a term used to designate French Quebecers of old stock).

Because of the great difference in size of the sections of our corpus, we established separate frequency lists for each section. We have observed that the semantic fields of borrowings are highly dependent on the section of corpus as well as on the genre of the text and the subject matter of the text in which they occur.

In the journalistic corpus, we recorded 45 high-frequency borrowed forms, which we defined, admittedly arbitrarily, as those occurring more than 10 times in this section of our corpus. Over one third (35%) of such words were from the fields of language and politics and designated language and ethnic group membership or political strategies (e.g. *allophone, francize, virage, nous, anglais*, and *pure laine*). Another 16% related to government, education, health, and social institutions and services (e.g. *cegep, régime*): these two semantic fields accounted for more than half of the established borrowings. Words from the fields of entertainment and tourism (e.g. *vernissage, auberge*) accounted for 20%; food (e.g. *poutine*), for 9%; transportation and daily life (e.g., *metro, autoroute, dépanneur*), for 11%; and 9% miscellaneous. The heavy concentration of terms related to language and politics is not surprising in view of the subject matter of a journalistic corpus, containing both news stories and editorials.

In the touristic section of the corpus, almost 90% of high-frequency borrowed forms (which we defined in this much smaller corpus as those having occurred more than 4 times) were concentrated in fields directly related to tourism: food, accommodation and dining (e.g. *gîte, auberge; terrasse*), history (e.g. *intendants, seigneur*), entertainment (e.g. *planche à voile, boîte à chansons*), and terms relating to natural features, fauna, flora, camping, fishing (e.g. *ouinaniche*), and hunting (e.g. *appelant, pourvoirie*). In the administrative section of the corpus, almost all borrowings were references to Quebec government departments, agencies, programs and services (eg. *francization, classes d'accueil, plan d'action*) or references to the educational and health care systems (e.g. *cegep, CLSC, régime*).

Thus what emerges is a profile of the domain of discourse as well as of the field of borrowing. Some established borrowings were found in all sections of the corpus (*cegep, régime, autoroute, metro*); others were domain-specific, with high frequency use in specific contexts. For example, several of the most common journalistic borrowings from the field of language and politics (*pure laine, vieille souche*) were entirely absent from the administrative and touristic sections of the corpus. The occurrence of borrowings reflected not only the domain of discourse but the rhetorical or ideological dynamics of the individual text; for example, editorial-style articles and promotional writing contained

higher levels of rhetorically motivated marked borrowings than did the administrative texts.

4 Motivation: An Analysis on Two Levels

In the following pages we will first examine factors that account for the presence and patterns of loanwords in the language of the Quebec English community, and we will then describe factors that motivate the use of loanwords as discursive choices in individual texts. Lexical borrowings can be perceived and described as both part of the language code shared by a community and as components of individual discourse, of language in use. This is the classic distinction of *langue* and *parole*. Grosjean (1982) differentiates speech borrowing and language borrowing; "Speech borrowing is what an individual does; language borrowing is done by a community" (Palmer and Harris 80). Borrowings that are assimilated into the language code are generally studied within the framework of historical linguistics and sociolinguistics as elements of language shift and language change. Fully assimilated borrowings become part of the community's repertoire and their presence in discourse may be unmarked and accounted for largely by factors external to the individual speaker.

On the level of discourse, the individual's choice of code from among the linguistic alternatives available in his or her repertoire can be seen as strategic, as indicative of the communicative intentions of the writer, the writer's attitudes toward the language communities in contact, and the writer's role vis-à-vis the audience (Myers-Scotton 1998; Benveniste 1966; Gérard-Naëf 1987). In this perspective, borrowings can reflect a situational, rhetorical or ideological dynamic and can be a manifestation of the writer's social identity or discursive intent. This is especially the case when borrowings have connotative and associative meaning or are exploited for rhetorical effect. Such considerations are addressed within various theoretical frameworks, including the linguistics of enunciation (Benveniste 1966) and genre theory (Swales 1990).

5 Large-Scale Motivations for Language Change

The presence of borrowings from French in Quebec English can be seen as the result of several large-scale factors: increased bilingualism in the English-language community; casual attitudes towards gallicisms among English-speakers; unilingual French designations for many governmental and institutional realities; the increased prestige of French; and lexical need and

efficiency. These factors shape the repertoire of the common language of the Quebec English community.

5.1 Increased Bilingualism in the Host Language Community

With French being the language of the provincial government and the workplace, with the English-language school system promoting bilingualism at all age levels, and with the exodus of many of the anglophones who were unwilling to adapt to life in an officially French-speaking society, the level of bilingualism among Quebec anglophones has increased dramatically. According to Statistics Canada, English-French bilingualism among anglophones in Quebec increased from 36.7% in 1971 to 58.4% in 1991 to 61.7% in 1996. With more and more anglophones having two languages in their repertoires, borrowings from French are introduced more frequently and are spread and assimilated more rapidly throughout the community.

5.2 Attitudes Towards Borrowings

It is dangerous to generalize about Quebec anglophones' attitudes towards borrowings from French; as Crystal writes, "In an area where language attitudes are strong,...the extent to which Anglophone people are prepared to use words which are perceived to be French in origin varies greatly" (1995:343). Yet we can observe that, in contrast to the strong resistance to anglicisms in Quebec French, which Chantal Bouchard (1989) refers to as "une obsession nationale," gallicisms in Quebec English are seen as relatively benign. Although anglophones do have grave concerns about their future and their rights as a community in Quebec, the quality of the English language is not perceived to be at risk, with English-speakers having easy access to American and English-Canadian media, publications, and entertainment to support their use of standard English. Familiarity with the French language and culture are increasingly elements of the social identity of Anglo-Quebecers (see Reid 1998 for comments on the construction of Anglo-Québécoise identity in literature.) Although Roberts (1982) warns that the tendency towards *Frenghish* within the English-speaking Quebec community may be detrimental to that community's ability to communicate outside the province, the occurrence of gallicisms, particularly full lexical borrowings, has not been the subject of alarm. Interference is viewed as problematic primarily for learners of English as a second language, where it reflects a lack of competence in English. This

nonchalance reflects the relatively casual attitude of English-speaking Canadians towards their language in general. In Orkin's words:

[The] lack of concern which most English-Canadians show towards their daily speech contrasts sharply with the interest of a great many French-speaking Canadians in their distinctive variety of French.... French is the language of the minority only, with the result that the study of Canadian French has often been as much a matter of ethnic and political self-assertion as it has been of linguistic research. (1971:3)

5.3 Unilingual Institutional Designations

Most governmental, institutional, social and political entities in Quebec have unilingual French designations, creating a situation in which the referential reality is expressed only in French. All sections of our corpus contain a heavy concentration of French proper names of government departments and agencies, businesses, organizations, positions, and events. Many of these display standard French head-first word order (*Fête nationale*, *caisse populaire*). Also frequently observed is the use of acronyms (*cegep*, *ZEC*, *DEC*) and initialisms (*CLSC*, *SQ*, *PQ*, *BQ*, *OLF*) derived from French-language designations. The regular use of terms such as *régie*, *caisse*, and *fonds* in proper names has led to these terms being used generically in English as common nouns.

(1) ...they would pay for repairs only if the municipalities created a *régie* to manage the lake. (from *The Stanstead Journal*, 17/9/97, 8)

5.4 Increased Prestige of French

It has long been accepted that languages in general borrow from a language of higher socio-economic and political prestige. "The greater influence of one language over another can be accounted for by presuming a 'prestige differential' (Haugen 1969) that reflects the status of one language group vis-à-vis another" (Palmer and Harris 1990:77). English has increasingly assumed the status of a minority language within the province, leaving it more susceptible to borrowings from French. Quebec language policies have resulted not only in increased vitality, recognition and use of French as compared to English, but also in Quebec French being increasingly recognized as a legitimate and standard variety of French in its own right. Richard Bourhis observes, "The

general atmosphere in favour of French in Quebec seems to have raised the status of Québécois French relative to both the English language and standard French” (1982:59).

The semantic fields of borrowings can be indicative of social and power relations between the communities in which they occur. In a study of borrowings from Arabic in the Algerian French press, Morsly states,

L'emprunt, en situant quels objets, quelles valeurs sont adoptés ou non, deviendrait un indicateur des zones d'interculturalité et des zones de résistance. (1995:45)

The vocabulary of much of Quebec politics and linguistic debate has originated in French. Thus concentrations of borrowings are found in the fields of language and politics in Quebec English. Fee observes:

The set of words that has been integrated most thoroughly into Quebec English and even beyond into Canadian and world English is the set of words that deals with Quebec politics, especially linguistic politics. Because much of the debate over these issues has been carried out in the national media and by some of the most important public figures in the country, the words used are quickly disseminated and integrated into the domain of Canadian political discourse. (1991:17)

5.5 Lexical Need

Lexical need and lexical efficiency have been suggested as motivations for some borrowing (Weinreich 1953). Terms which fill gaps in the host language lexicon by naming new objects or concepts can be distinguished from those naming objects or concepts for which the recipient language already has words; Myers-Scotton (1997:5) distinguishes these two types of borrowings by the terms *cultural borrowed lexemes* and *core borrowed lexemes*, the latter which she calls largely redundant. The borrowed word may express a cultural reality which has no equivalent in the host language community. In Quebec English, this is the case in particular with borrowings referring to Quebec history (*seigneur, intendant*) and politics (*étapisme; la grande noirceur; le beau risque; caribou*)

(2) Bloc leader Bouchard called, in April, for a “virage” or sharp turn in sovereigntist strategy. (from Paul Wells, *The Gazette*, 10/6/95, B1)

However, not all borrowings motivated by lexical need are cultural borrowings; in some cases, a lexical gap does not indicate that a concept is culturally novel but simply that one language has a word for a specific concept where the other language doesn't. Vinay and Darbelnet examine various cases of and reasons for such gaps or lacunae as they relate to translation between French and English. "The signified may not exist or may not be acknowledged in one of the two languages; or it may exist in both but is only named independently in one of them" (1995 :65).

- (3) Next week begins what the French call "la rentrée," the return to work, school – and reality. (from Nick Auf Der Maur, *The Gazette*, 30/8/95, A2)

6 Motivation for Borrowing in Discourse

A discourse contains various marks or indices, including lexical choices, that reflect the presence of the writer. Code choices that mark the discursive fabric of a text include switches of register, shifts of style, use of regionalisms, use of jargons from other domains, as well as interlingual borrowings. A full lexical borrowing, particularly one that is not presumed to be part of the audience's repertoire, can carry more than simple referential meaning. Through such lexical choices, the writer can align himself or herself variously with the perceived audience and the language communities in contact.

Such borrowings can be a means of expressing intentionality, defined by Myers-Scotton as "the messages conveyed by utterances in addition to those which the utterances literally denote" (1998:3). Motivation for borrowings in discourse can be analysed using parameters such as the topic and genre of the discourse, the purpose of the discourse, the identity and attitudes the writer seeks to project, and his or her relationship with the audience and with the linguistic communities in contact. In this perspective, marked borrowings reflect the situational, rhetorical or ideological dynamic of the discourse and are a manifestation of the writer in the discourse.

The presence of flagging and translations, explanations, or other metalinguistic commentary is indicative of the writer's awareness of the markedness of a linguistic variety and of its effect in a certain context. We apply the term *flagging*² in written discourse to include typographic markings

2. Code-switches have been described as either *smooth* or *flagged* in studies of spoken discourse (Poplack 1993; Poplack, Wheeler and Westwood 1990).

such as italics, boldface, or quotation marks which set a word or term apart, recognizing its separate status. Typographic flagging can be purely arbitrary; in some publications, French institutional terms appear, apparently indiscriminately, in italics and roman type. But flagging also signals the writer's awareness that the borrowing is a marked choice. Quotation marks in particular are used to mark borrowings in a number of ways.³ Palmer and Harris note that that absence of quotation marks with borrowings "indicates either a high degree of acceptance of these terms or that the writers of these documents are unconscious of these as French terms" (1990:83).

It follows that many of the high-frequency terms in our corpus are unflagged. When we compared typographic flagging of the established Quebec English terms *vedette*, *poutine*, and *naive art* in *The Gazette* and in their infrequent occurrences in Canadian newspapers from outside Quebec, we found they were unflagged in *The Gazette* and flagged elsewhere, indicating an inverse relationship between flagging and frequency. Writers addressing the Quebec English community can presume that the audience is, if not fully bilingual, then at least familiar with established Quebec English borrowings (such as *dépanneur*, *balconville*, *garderie*, *vernissage*, *vedette*), which are part of a "we-code" that includes the writer and the audience and identifies with the local French community. Widely established borrowings are not necessarily consciously motivated; the more a borrowing is perceived as standard usage in the language community addressed by the discourse, the more it is unmarked and the less intentionality it conveys. "What community norms would predict is unmarked; what is not predicted is marked" (Myers-Scotton 1998:5). Myers-Scotton (1998:27) explains that speakers "know (consciously, but more often unconsciously) that the unmarked choice has occurred with more frequency than other choices in like circumstances in the community. They also have tacit knowledge that other community members share this recognition." Thus "Frequency in outcome types positively correlates with the unmarked choices" (Myers-Scotton 1998 :28).

Shared borrowings can be exploited to create complicity with the audience; borrowings in genres such as headlines, advertisements, and humour display

3. The *Chicago Manual of Style* describes the use of italics and quotation marks to achieve special effects: these include the use of italics for "isolated words and phrases in a foreign language if they are likely to be unfamiliar to the reader" (169) as well as for "key terms in a discussion, terms with special meaning, and, in general, terms to which the reader's attention is directed" (171). As well, quotation marks are used for irony and for slang, to indicate that the word is "foreign to the normal vocabulary of the speaker" (173).

such discursive intent. In such cases, borrowings can favour the establishment of a link of complicity and mutual recognition between the writer and audience.

Checri says of borrowing in the language of advertising:

“For the meaning to be understood requires a shared experience, common cultural and ideological references....it offers the potential consumer the opportunity to grasp all the nuances of meaning, thus establishing a certain complicity between speaker and audience” (Checri 1995:62, our translation).

One such example is the use of the Québécois term “Mcdo” in recent English-language advertisements for McDonald’s in Quebec.

In headlines, borrowings can be used to attract attention, arouse interest, and create complicity with the audience by inviting them to share in a humorous play on words:

- (4) To artists, *Oui* are the world
(from *The Gazette*, 5/11/95; headline of an article discussing the artistic community’s support for the yes side in the 1995 referendum)
- (5) All we are saying is give *piste* a chance
(from *The Stanstead Journal*, 10/6/98; headline of an article advocating the creation of a bicycle trail or *piste*)
- (6) *Juste pour queer*
(from *The Mirror*, 27/7/1996; headline of an article about gay humour, a reference to the Montreal comedy festival Just for Laughs/Juste pour rire)
- (7) It’s a *caisse* of misfortune
(from *The Gazette*, 22/8/81, quoted in McArthur 1989:8)

Similarly, in the comic book series *Angloman* (Shainblum and Morrissette 1995, 1996), the writer creates characters such as *Poutinette*, *Capitaine Souche*, and *Blocman*, presuming that the parodies of the political divisions in the province will be understood by the readership.

However, the writer does not always presume that all readers will understand all borrowings. When addressing an audience perceived to be mixed or outsider or when using less frequent borrowings, the writer may act as an intermediary, flagging and explaining the borrowed term for the benefit of the unilingual reader:

- (8) The new education minister, Jacques Chagnon, was considered “ministrable” – cabinet material – right from his entry into politics in 1985.
(from Don MacPherson, *The Gazette*, 15/1/94, B5)

The strategic intent may be more overt, as in the following example where the writers align themselves with the French-language community:

- (9) Or was the crisis merely a heaven-sent opportunity to cynically slip us a fast one – “un gros sapin” as we say in these parts...? (from Ed Bantey, *The Gazette*, 25/1/98, A9)
- (10) ...the idea of making a big fuss over it seems “québécois”, that wonderful Québécois expression that means something that is precisely between tacky and embarrassing. (from Natasha Gauthier, *The Gazette*, 23/3/97, D2)

In the promotional tourist literature in our corpus, in which the writer is presumably addressing an audience not from the local community, nonce borrowings are used to designate distinctive local features and attractions, and are often flagged and accompanied by translations, explanations or descriptions.

- (11) An *aboiteau* is an earthwork dike protecting the agricultural land from saltwater infiltration. (from a tourism guide)
- (12) From this point you can see how the port is protected by two piers full of “dolosses” (cement anchors which break the waves). (from a tourism guide)

Flagging is just one way in which a writer may present a term as unassimilated or unfamiliar in order to exploit its foreign status. French spelling of place names appears to be intentionally retained in tourist literature. Although Montreal and Quebec City were spelled without accents in most of the newspapers and administrative documents, *Montréal* retained its accent in 62% of its uses, and *Québec* (city), in 90% of its uses, in the touristic texts. Here the retention of the accent appears to be a rhetorical choice, designed to accentuate the exotic flavour of the destination for the would-be tourist.

Similarly, when we contrast the following noun phrases, all found in tourist brochures, we see that foreign status has been retained in (13) by retention of the head-first order of French syntax, and in (13) and (14), by retention of gender inflection.

- (13) *cuisine québécoise*
 (14) *Québécoise cuisine*
 (15) *québécois cuisine*

Stereotypical fixed expressions such as *joie-de-vivre* and *la belle province* abound in tourist literature. This value-added use of borrowings from French has traditionally been exploited in the fields of cooking, fashion, and entertainment to endow a reference with the appeal and authenticity of a culturally different experience.

But, in the journalistic section of the corpus, a very different motivation for borrowing was observed: namely, to signal an ideological distance from the donor language community. This type of discursive intent was observed with certain high-frequency borrowings – specifically, highly charged terms of political discourse. Language and ethnic group references have heightened connotative and ideological value in Quebec's national political debate, and these associations are exploited by writers in persuasive discourse. Sometimes such borrowings were flagged: we observed a high frequency of use of quotation marks with the expressions *les autres*, *les anglais*, *maudits anglais*, *pure laine*, and *francization*. In such cases, quotation marks signal ironic use; like the more explicit commentary in (19) and (20), they indicate that the writer is deriding a term or distancing himself or herself from a term by associating it with the language of “the other”.

- (16) ...the students won't be in an entirely French environment and will therefore not be “francized”... (from *The Gazette*, 7/12/95, F1)
- (17) Perhaps they also experienced what it was like to live in a society that separated the population as “pure laine” and “les autres”. (from a letter to the editor, *The Gazette*, 8/5/94, B3)
- (18) ...They derive their legitimacy from “le peuple québécois” and that is why “la démocratie québécoise” cannot be restrained by constitution or courts. (from William Johnson, *The Gazette*, 13/2/98, B3)
- (19) ...the allophones, that dreadful word for Montreal's immigrant community... (from Alan Hustak, *The Gazette*, 30/6/96, C1)
- (20) ...so-called de souche francophones... (from *The Gazette*, 30/11/94, B2)

Borrowings used in this way, whether flagged or not, are like any intralingual register shift or style shift – they are a form of variation as rhetorical strategy. The ironic use results from the fact that these borrowings represent ideological concepts with which the writer takes issue in the discourse. A borrowing cannot be isolated from its context; if it has ironic value, it is because it is associated with other indices of irony in the extended discourse. The use of borrowings with ironic or derisive intent was topic- and genre-specific in our corpus, found almost exclusively in journalistic articles and editorials on language and

political issues. So we see that the loanword *francize* and its derivatives were flagged in numerous uses in journalistic texts but were not flagged at all in the administrative corpus, indicating that the word's ideological meaning is prominent in the context of the political debate but its referential meaning prevails in administrative discourse. Similarly, terms such as "pure laine" and "de souche" are used more benignly in non-political contexts:

- (21) "When it comes to a pure laine classical work like Gisele, they turn shipshod." (quoted by Fee 1995:12, from a review of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens)

7 Conclusion

In this paper we have explored perspectives on motivation for lexical borrowings from French in a corpus of written Quebec English. We suggest that parameters for the interpretation of borrowing patterns include linguistic, sociolinguistic, discursive and stylistic considerations. The patterns of borrowing from French into Quebec English are indicative of the nature and sites of social, cultural, and linguistic contact between the two language communities. Borrowings from French in individual texts can reflect the ideological and rhetorical manifestation of the writer in the discourse as well as indicate relationships between the writer, the audience, and the context. Certain topics, genres and contexts are particularly conducive to intentional uses of borrowings. Intentionality appears to be linked to flagging and lack of adaptation, which indicate that the writer is treating the term as foreign to his or her repertoire, to the audience's, or to the community's.

This paper has reported on findings to date in a research project still in progress. By working with an expanded corpus and with texts from other domains and representative of a wider variety of genres, we hope in future years to gain more insight into the universal phenomenon of linguistic borrowing and the dynamics of variation in a contact situation, and specifically, in Quebec English.

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