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« PARFOIS LE BON MOT NOUS ECHAPPE » : INTERFERENCE PHENOMENA AMONG FRANCO-AMERICANS IN MASSACHUSETTS

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1. Introduction

'Franco-Americans' is a term sometimes used to refer to all Americans of French descent ; in New England, i.e. in the six north-eastern U.S. States Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island, however, it denotes a special group of immigrants. A Franco-American is hereby defined as a permanent New England resident of French-Canadian ancestry, and, possibly but not necessarily, of Catholic religion and French mother tongue. In other words, the term does not refer to someone of « direct » French descent, and neither to French-Canadians who come to live and work in New England for a limited time only, since their attitude concerning language maintenance is, of course, a quite different one. Although not equally accepted among all[1], the term 'Franco-American' includes Quebeckers and Acadians alike.

Starting in the early 19th century, the bad economic situation in Canada along with a growing industrialization in the U.S. made many French-Canadians leave their farms to come to work in the textile mills of New England. Between 1840 and 1940 an estimated 1,000,000 French-Canadians had moved to New England (*cf.* Galopentia, 2000 : 266), the majority of them to the most industrialized New England State – Massachusetts. Once settled down, French-Canadian immigrants were eager to follow the motto of the Catholic Church at the time – « *qui perd sa langue, perd sa foi* » –, i.e. to build a parochial school next to the church in the heart of their all French-Canadian quarters, also called *Little Canadas*. Within these quarters, social clubs were established ; newspapers and insurance companies were founded, French-Canadian lawyers and doctors settled down. French was the language of instruction at school, of mass at church, and of daily conversation everywhere. After the economic crisis of 1929, however, immigration numbers dropped drastically, and people were forced to spread to find work (*cf.* Chartier, 2000 : 1-252). Also, after World War II, « *Franco-Americans [...] took part in [...] [a] postwar phenomenon – the exodus from the city to the suburbs* »

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[1] Acadians tend to reject the term 'Franco-American' as well as 'French-Canadian' (*cf.* D'Entremont, 1973 : 25-28).

(Chartier, 2000 : 254). Other immigrant groups, mostly Hispanics, moved into the former French-Canadian tenement houses and took over the quarters, including the churches and schools.

Although, in Massachusetts, most Franco-Americans are still found in traditional areas of French-Canadian immigration, they are quite dispersed within these areas nowadays ; a factor which, among others like the pressure of English-Only in American society and the lack of bilingual programs in public as well as in private schools, has contributed to a negative attitude toward language transmission and a gradual loss of the French language, with considerable intra-linguistic consequences.

2. Code-Switching

2.1 A Theoretical Outline

Code-switching can be described as a common, language-contact based phenomenon among bilinguals, which Gumperz (1982 : 59) has defined as « *the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems* »[2]. There are different levels at which code-switched items can be embedded in the other language[3] : « *[...] à l'intérieur d'une même conversation, d'un même discours, d'une même phrase ou expression* » (Gardner-Chloros, 1985 : 51).

According to these different levels, three types of *code-switching* are commonly distinguished (*cf.* Appel/Muysken, 1987 : 118 ; Gardner-Chloros, 1991 : 54-60 ; Myers-Scotton, 1993 : 3-5) :

a) *Tag-switching*, which Poplack (1980 : 614) calls *'emblematic'* switching because it « *may be used as a discourse strategy to achieve certain interactional effects* », involves the insertion of an exclamation, a tag or an idiomatic expression in one language into a sentence which is otherwise in the other language.

(1[4])   AC55 :   *puis ça a juste tourné avec ça I GUESS. on a juste. mis les mots avec*
b) *Inter-sentential code-switching* involves a switch between sentences[5].

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[2] The term 'code'-switching basically allows for considerations on all levels of language, i.e. it cannot only refer to switching of languages or varieties, but also to switching of registers within a conversation. In this context, however, such cases will not be taken into account.

[3] Although *code-switching* does not necessarily include only two languages, it is by far the most common constellation and the only one relevant in this context ; furthermore the types of switching and their possible implications do not depend on or change with the number of languages involved.

[4] All examples, unless otherwise marked, are taken from the corpus MASSFrench (2003/04), which is based on 392 questionnaires and 87 interviews with 143 participants (examples from the questionnaires are marked *w* – written –, examples from the interviews are unmarked) from different areas within Massachusetts ; participants : Acadians and Quebeckers of both sexes, different social classes and different age groups (but about 72 % of them older than 60 years), including four immigrant generations. The examples used in this article are coded as follows : I = Interviewer ; A = of Acadian origin ; Q = of Quebec origin ; C = grown up in Canada, 1st immigrant generation ; U = grown up in the U.S., 2nd immigrant generation ; UU = parents grown up in the U.S., 3rd immigrant generation ; UUU = grandparents grown up in the U.S., 4th immigrant generation ; figures give the respective participant's age. One period within the examples marks a one-second pause. The examples have not been analyzed quantitatively but illustrate very obvious and common tendencies among the survey's participants.

[5] Most linguists (Appel/Muysken, 1987 : 118 ; Myers-Scotton, 1993 : 24 ; Thomason, 2001 : 132) agree on what 'inter-sentential switching' denotes ; however, it should be mentioned here that some (e.g., Romaine, 1989 : 112-114) subsume under this term the switching between sentences *and* clauses, which I find contradictory with regard to 'inter-sentential'. Although it must be admitted that it is not always possible to clearly determine a sentence boundary in spoken language (which is why often the more neutral term 'utterance' is used instead), and although it might be true that intra-sentential code-switches at clause boundaries do not require the same bilingual competence as intra-sentential code-switches within the clause boundary or even within the word

    (2)   QC70 :   *celui-là va êt' un avocat. SHE'S GOIN' TO BE A SCHOOL TEACHER*

c) *Intra-sentential code-switching*, often referred to as *code-mixing* (*cf.* for instance Thomason, 2001 : 132), implies a switch within the sentence boundaries. This juxtaposition has a tendency to occur at points that allow syntactic integration in either language (*cf.* Poplack, 1980 : 581).

    (3)   QC70 :   *YOU CANNOT LOSE YOUR FAITH FOR THAT parce que euh. c'est comme dans notre monde i y en a du bon et du moins bon*

Inter-sentential code-switching does not require the same degree of fluency as necessary with *code-mixing* since the integration of the rules of either language is not necessary.

As to terminology used in the following : *code-switching* will be used as the generic term including all phenomena of switching between languages, whether inter- or intra-sentential. *Inter-sentential code-switching* will be referred to as such, whereas *intra-sentential code-switching* will be called *code-mixing* to avoid confusion. According to Muysken (*cf.* 2000 : 60-153) three[6] subcategories of code-mixing can be distinguished :

c)1 *Insertion* involves the embedding of an item – mostly nouns or noun phrases – into another language, i.e. one word or a combination of words which form a unit (the former being called 'lexical transference', the latter 'multiple transference' by Clyne, 2003 : 74) is switched :

    (4)   QC70 :   *vous devez avoir ça aussi à GERMANY*

    (5)   QU70 :   *ses parents c'est des docteurs et toute, mais i y a rien d'extravagant. sont beaucoup DOWN ON EARTH*

c)2 *Alternation* involves *code-mixing* with both languages being relatively separate. The switched string can be preceded and followed by elements from the other language without structural relation.

    (6)   QC70 :   *puis quand on a commence parler de ça. SHE REMEMBER EVERYTHING*

c)3 *Congruent Lexicalization*[7] involves a shared grammatical structure which can be filled with lexical items from either language. Hereby bilingual homophones act as trigger-words. The MASSFrench corpus lacks such an example ; in the following one, taken from Gardner-Chloros (1991 : 125), the bilingual homophone *annonces* (French) – *Annoncen* (German) triggers the switch from Alsatian to French.

    (7)   *Ich läs d'Iwwerschrifte* […] *und hinte dann, nochhär, do hesch e Portion **annonces**, et puis après c'est les régionales*.

This concept is close to Clyne's *triggering* (*cf.* 1967 : 84-99). Some linguistic elements, i.e. certain lexical items like culture-specific importations, trigger a switch from one language to another, which then often goes on being used for the rest of the utterance. The concept of *triggering* is broader than Muysken's *congruent lexicalization*, for it includes for example triggering by words that have become part of the individual speaker's language or by proper names. In most cases the switch follows the trigger-word, which Clyne (1967 : 84) calls *consequential triggering* :

    (8)   QC83 :   *j'ai dit il pourrait êt' placé à la **SOLDIERS' HOME**. I DIDN'T THINK OF IT*

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boundary, they still seem closer to me than intra-sentential code-switches at clause boundaries and inter-sentential code-switches, regarding structural similarity as well as the degree of the speaker's bilingual competence.

[6] Note that Muysken (cf. 2000 : 121) counts tag-switching among alternation, which will not be adopted here. His concept, however, is very useful to distinguish the possible implications of code-mixing.

[7] This type of switching is mentioned to complete the picture but will not be given any further consideration in this article.

In some cases, however, the switch can precede it. In a sentence like *Nous avons habité IN NEW YORK* the upcoming English place name is responsible for the use of the English preposition ; Clyne (*cf.* 1967 : 86) calls this kind of triggering *anticipational*. Except for Muysken's *congruent lexicalization* Clyne's framework is the only one which tries to analyze the way certain items cause or at least facilitate a switch and to explain the basic principles of this facilitation.

There has been some controversy on whether *code-mixing* requires most fluency from the speaker since there is a risk of violating the morphosyntactic rules of either language or whether it is, quite on the contrary, an indicator of a restricted level of bilingualism (*cf.* Clyne 2003 : 89). Whereas Weinreich (1967 : 73) claimed that « *the ideal bilingual switches from one language to the other according to appropriate changes in the speech situation (interlocutors, topics, etc.), but not in an unchanged speech situation, and certainly not within a single sentence* », more recent surveys have claimed that all three types of switching mentioned above occur among bilinguals. Especially *code-mixing* is « *a sensitive indicator of bilingual ability* » (Poplack, 1980 : 581) since the speakers must master the syntactic and/or morphological structures of both languages involved. Under certain circumstances, however, *code-switching* can be considered as an indicator of language loss, as will be demonstrated in the following.

2.2 The Functions of *Code-Switching*

Code-switching in general can serve the following functions (*cf.* Appel/Muysken, 1987 : 118-120) :

a) The phatic function. By *code-switching*, certain parts of the utterance or the conversation may be stressed in order to give them a certain nuance. For instance, these switched parts could be meant to be especially funny or ironic.

b) The directive function. *Code-switching* can be due to (a) conversation partner(s), either to exclude them from a conversation because they are not meant to understand the switched parts of the conversation, or to include them in the conversation because they are known to be more comfortable in one language than in the other, or because they do not have command of one of the languages involved.

c) The metalinguistic function. If *code-switching* is used to somehow comment on the languages involved in the conversation, its purpose is commonly to « show off », i.e. to impress the other participants. This kind of switching can occur in very different contexts, it may be a good pick-up strategy as well as a means to underline one's authority or to enhance one's chances in professional life.

d) The expressive function. By continuously using two languages, speakers can emphasize their « mixed » identity, i.e. *code-switching* can serve as a « marque identitaire » (Petit, 1997 : 1237). As Myers-Scotton (1992 : 41) has put it : « *Under CS [i.e. code-switching] as an unmarked choice each switch is not intended as a negotiation of interpersonal relations ; rather, the overall pattern of switching indexes the negotiation which is one of coordinate identities* »[8]. So in fact « *code-switching is itself a discrete mode of speaking* » (Poplack, 1980 : 615). This kind of switching requires fluent bilingualism and is probably the one speakers are least aware of.

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[8] According to Myers-Scotton (1992 : 39-40) *code-switching* can either be a marked or an unmarked choice. If a language is unmarked, it is the one that would be most expected in a given conversation. An unexpected change in language that is not due to situational features such as a new topic or a new participant in the conversation, but rather for instance a means of negotiating a change in the social distance between the conversation participants, is called a 'marked choice'. Without denying that marked switching commonly occurs, only the unmarked code-switching is the one considered relevant in this context.

e) The referential function. There are two very different ways in which code-switching can serve the referential function. Firstly, a switch may be topic-related. An expression or a whole passage may seem more appropriate in one language than in the other because the concept or object it refers to are part of this one language and its cultural background rather than of the other one. The reason why something is better expressed in one language may be obvious or, quite on the contrary, very subjective. Secondly, *code-switching* can serve as a means to bridge the gaps in the speakers' knowledge of one language, especially in the area of lexis. Since the speakers are in need of a word, i.e. looking for an expression, before they switch, this is the type of switching they are usually most aware of. Although some exclude this function from « true » code-switching, like for instance Poplack (1980 : 601) who says that « *code-switching is used for purposes other than that of conveying untranslatable items* », it is generally considered a common and very important function of *code-switching* – within a broad definition of the term 'code-switching', of course.

2.3 Inter-sentential Code-Switching[9]

This type of *code-switching* usually occurs due to a change in topic (referential function) or in conversation partner (directive function). It can, however, also serve the phatic, the metalinguistic or the expressive function. In the MASSFrench corpus, *inter-sentential code-switching* has a tendency to occur whenever the « artificial » interview situation is interrupted or considered to be over. In example (9), the interviewee – grown up in Canada – considered her question « *CAN I OFFER YOU SOMETHING TO DRINK ?* » as not being part of the French interview and therefore switched to the language she would normally use when asking someone such a question, i.e. to English :

(9) I :   *vous avez une jolie maison !*

   QC62 : *merci. CAN I OFFER YOU SOMETHING TO DRINK ? A GLASS OF SODA OR SOMETHING ?*

   I :   *OH NO THAT'S OKAY. I'M FINE.*

   QC62 : *YOU SURE ?*

   I :   *YES. THANK YOU. bon d'accord. alors votre occupation professionnelle c'est c'que je voulais vous demander. est-ce que vous en avez eu une ?*

   QC62 : *non non. à la maison*

In example (10) the interviewee – also grown up in Canada – showed me a picture of her family, and despite the fact that I had asked all questions in French, she switched to English because that seems to be the language she associates with private events or family matters, as does the interviewee in (11) :

(10) QC70 : *ça c'est sa fille celle-là. c'est son cousin. HE'S SO FUNNY. HE WAS TAKING PICTURE TAKING PICTURE TAKING PICTURE. I SAID « I DON'T KNOW WHAT FACE TO DO ANY MORE » (LAUGHING). THAT'S THE ONE OVER THERE. HE'S SO CUTE THAT'S MY/MY/MY. D THAT'S UH/THAT'S MY LITTLE SPANISH GUY. LOOK HOW HANDSOME HE IS. THAT'S HIS WIFE. THEY GOT TWO LITTLE GIRL*

(11) I :   *il y a évidemment plutôt des quartiers espagnols maintenant que*

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des quartiers français ?

QU51 :   *c'était un gros quartier canadien. parce que/même euh. quand j'allais à l'école i y en avait ben. leurs héritages étaient canadiens. ben je connaissais/i y en a ben que je connaissais pas aussi les enfants. je connaissais euh. la mère ou le père parce que on allait souvent à CHICOPEE. quand mes parents i allaient là. ben là c'est toutes des quartiers..espagnols.* (INTERRUPTION) *MY MUM HAD REMARRIED WHEN MY DAD DIED AND UM...THE MAN SHE MARRIED WAS THE NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOR. DIDN'T KNOW FRENCH AT ALL. HE LOVED TO GO TO CANADA. HE'D GO TO CANADA AND LET/AND JUST SIT THERE AND LISTEN*

In example (12) the interviewee was answering the (French) question in French, but after we had been forced to change tables, he started to talk about the mall we had met at for the interview – a topic outside the interview – in English. In example (13) the interview is over but the interviewee wants to add some information, and does so in English despite the fact that the whole interview had been conducted in French.

(12)   I :   *vos fils alors ils/ils aiment le français ? ou qu'est-ce qu'ils pensent de leur/est-ce qu'ils ont une idée de leur héritage aussi ?*

QU51 :   *um. oui ils ont une idée euh parce que il/il/euh il y a ben de fois que j'les ai amenés au Canada. quand qu'ils étaient jeunes. puis même um. ça fait pas longtemps on était au Canada. on va ben des/des fois/*(CHANGE OF TABLES) *AND THEN ACROSS THE STREET OVER HERE ON MAIN STREET THERE WAS ANOTHER DEPARTMENT STORE. THREE OR FOUR STORIES HIGH. AND THERE WAS ANOTHER ONE*

(13)   QU47 :   *ma sœur R qui/euh qui aime pas ça. je sais pas parce qu'elle aime pas les animaux mais elle trouve qu'i sont toutes sales. et elle le veut bien et propre. et puis c'est pour ça YOU KNOW quand elle vient il faut que je ca/faut que je YOU KNOW cache les chats. pas les cacher mais les mett' à une place où-c'que i vont pas se rend' là parce que euh. elle mangerait pas ici.*

I :   *bon je vous remercie.*

QU47 :   *...YOU KNOW THE BRIGHTWOOD AREA OF SPRINGFIELD. YES. AND THAT'S ROUND UM ON MAIN STREET THE WHOLE MAIN STREET AREA BY BAY STATE MEDICAL CENTER. BY THAT CANCER CENTER THERE. THAT USED TO BE/BEFORE THE INTERSTATE WENT THROUGH. IT USED TO BE..JUST FULL OF CANADIANS*

Although inter-sentential code-switches are not as easily categorized as code-mixes (see section 2.4) – simply because one can never be totally sure of the reason for the individual switch –, the above extracts *suggest* the tendency for many participants not to use French (any more) for every-day conversation, not even when talking about their families ; French is rather well on its way to be replaced by English in all situations and domains.

2.4 Evasive Code-Mixing

Whereas *code-mixing* could, in theory, serve all the functions listed in 2.2, it generally serves the referential function among Franco-Americans, i.e. it is used, mostly consciously, to fill a lexical gap. Not only has Poplack excluded such a function for *code-mixing*, she has, in

addition, set up criteria for what she calls « unskilled » (1980 : 601), i.e. *code-mixing* that lacks sufficient fluency by the speakers[10]. « True » code-mixes require that

    a) there is a smooth transition between the switched element and the elements it is embedded in, « *unmarked by false starts, hesitations or lengthy pauses* » (Poplack, 1980 : 601),

    b) the switch is not accompanied by a metalinguistic comment or question, i.e. the speaker is not or at least seems not aware of the switch, and

    c) the switch does not constitute a repetition of the preceding segment, nor is it repeated by the following segment.

    I would like to adapt her concept but include single-word items[11] and call the kind of *code-mixing* that serves the function to fill a lexical gap or to repeat an item due to the speaker's insecurity as to its meaning *evasive code-mixing* since the speakers evade the problem of lacking knowledge by switching into the other language[12]. When taking a look at the MASSFrench corpus, the majority[13] of code-mixes are accompanied exactly by these signs of deficient bilingualism, as show the following examples including multiword and single-word switches or, in Muysken's terminology, alternations and insertions.

    Examples of false starts :

    (14)   QC72 :   *non. i savent pas comment transl/trans..TRANSLATE IT. OKAY ? ça les gêne*

    (15)   QC72 :   *au commencement c'était pour les dames qui appartenaient au club. après ça i ont monté un grand..amon/euh AMOUNT OF MONEY pour euh*

    (16)   QC83 :   *le plus vieux il nous a fait plaisir. il est arrivé sur le/um dans la/ON THE ROLL..à CHICOPEE HIGH. on était bien content pour lui*

    (17)   QU42 :   *on parlait les deux ensemb' mélangés ou disons séparemment des fois seulement en anglais et des fois seulement en français. ça dép/ça dépen/IT WAS DEPENDING*

    (18)   QU51 :   *ça m'aide dans/comme ça. puis euh. là je travaille pas. je/je/I GOT LAID OFF OKAY ?*

    (19)   QU67 :   *ils ont discon/euh...DISCONTINUED. ils ont/ils ont um. i ont pas de messe maintenant*

    (20)   QUU60 :   *j'sais pas pourquoi ou pour um. quelle raison que ma grand-mère est venue. mais elle a/SHE MET MY GRANDFATHER HERE*

    Examples of hesitation and lengthy pauses :

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[10] Excluding her criterion that code-switches may not be single other-language items. See reference 11.

[11] There has been a lot of controversy on whether alien single-word items can be considered as code-mixes (*cf.* Gardner-Chloros, 1987 : 102 ; Mougeon/Beniak, 1987 : 344 ; Myers-Scotton, 1993 : 182) or should rather be classified as (nonce-) borrowings (*cf.* Poplack/Meechan, 1998 : 135-137). In this case, they will be subsumed under code-mixes because a) they resemble the ones in Turpin's corpus of French, of which even Poplack/Meechan (1998 : 135) say : « *She [Turpin] finds that patterns consistent with English grammar are most common in lone English-origin nouns which, on independent analysis, do not show the extralinguistic characteristics of loanwords (i.e. recurrence, diffusion, and dictionary attestation), and which had in addition been uttered by speakers also showing high rates of unambiguous (multiword) codeswitches to English. These facts, taken together, make it likely that at least some of the lone English-origin nouns in French discourse are also codeswitches* » ; and b) because I agree with Muysken (2000 : 75) in that, in general, « *there is not a single borrowing process, just like there is no single code-mixing process* ».

[12] In theory, *inter-sentential code-switching* could equally be called *evasive code-switching* if it serves to evade French as the language of conversation ; but, as mentioned above, it is much harder – if not impossible – to prove for inter-sentential switches that the speakers chose one language because they are unable to find their words in the other.

[13] There were also cases of « skilled » mixes which are, however, not of interest in this context.

(21)   QC83 :   *j'ai dit ben je vais voir ma fille au Texas je l'ai pas vue depuis…NINETEEN NINETY-FOUR. au Texas*

(22)   QC83 :   *c'est une personne. faut qu'il ait un/un/un euh…um. um BELT euh. BELT YOU KNOW*

(23)   QU44 :   *un p'tit peu. euh i comprend. mais i parle pas trop mais…HE UNDERSTANDS MORE THAN HE SPEAKS IT*

(24)   QUU60 :   *i y a/ i y a ben des Polonais i y a ben des Irlandais. i y a ben du/du monde du village du…FROM THE SPRINGFIELD AREA THAT ARE MOVING INTO THIS AREA AND IT'S/IT'S MORE DIVERSIFIED I GUESS*

(25)   QUU60 :   *c'était fou pour euh une coup' d'années et puis j'ai jamais jamais um…TOOK THE TIME TO TEACH THEM. YOU KNOW. BUT UM I JUST NEVER DID. LIKE I SAID I HELPED THEM IN HIGH SCHOOL BUT OTHER THAN THAT. THAT WAS ABOUT IT. YOU KNOW BUT UH…mais ma fille elle peut dire euh. quelques mots. elle peut/euh elle comprend*

(26)   AU42 :   *ça/ça a pas pris longtemps pour um..BECOME AN AMERICAN CITIZEN*

(27)   AU76 :   *oui. mais elle parlait l'anglais. chez nous on parlait l'anglais pas mal et quand…WE WERE TAUGHT UH FRENCH/UH I MEAN ENGLISH BUT IT WAS ALMOST THE SAME THING YOU KNOW*

Examples of questions and metalinguistic comments (including laughing since it indicates that the person is aware of the switch and possibly embarrassed by it) :

(28)   QC83 :   *elle enseigne..OH HOW DO THEY CALL IT ?........c'est pour les um..les gardes-malades..AND UM..c'est/c'est pour les..OH I FORGET THAT NAME..c'est pour la langue des..LIKE A SHORT/SHORT/UH SHORT*

(29)   QU47 :   *euh mon père est venu ici um. peut-êt' cinq six ans avant euh. la famille parce que i travaillait ici comme euh..CARPENTER ?..*

(30)   QU51 :   *la/la..la sœur elle/elle parlait toujours le français. même quand que euh l'église où on/où i y avait la moitié de les messes en français et puis de temps en temps en…LATIN (LAUGHING)*

(31)   QU59 :   *je n'ai/je n'ai jamais euh..euh…euh enseigné en français seulement um je n'sais pas comment dire ça le SUB/SUBSTITUTE TEACHER j'ai fait une année de ça*

(32)   QU67 :   *elle demeure à/à Nicolette. c'est un euh c'est un/comment tu dis ? ON THE OUTSKIRTS. euh jusque le bas de/de Drummondville*

(33)   QUU58 :   *la première raison que j'ai décidé de prend' cette um…euh…ste mot-là j'ai/j'ai jamais…euh…CHALLENGE. t'sais. um…c'est parce que j'aime le français. puis j'ai toujours aimé écrire puis euh la grammaire*

(34)   QUU75 :   *et puis j'étais un…ALTAR BOY comment dit-on ça..um..j'ai dû apprendre mes/mes prières en français pour être. un enfant de chœur. c'est ça. enfant de chœur (LAUGHING)*

(35)   AC87 :   *mon parents/mon père était un..un char/charpenterie. CARPENTER ?*[14]

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[14] This example could also be considered as a « false start ».

Examples of repetitions/translations : most examples of repeated words or passages are switches to English, i.e. the speakers do not seem to be sure whether the expression they chose in French was the right one (36-42).

(36)   QC82 :   *non. c'est euh. c'sont des/des patates frites. FRENCH FRIES. a/avec une/une sauce. et du fromage. c'est bon mais c'est pas des poutines acadiennes*

(37)   QC83 :   *toute est différent alors i a fallu qu'elle change um. sa manière. sa WAY. là maintenant elle travaille*

(38)   QU44 :   *j'avais/un de mes amis c'est/i était Québécois aussi. euh les parents venaient de Trois Rivières..et puis c'est tout euh…une/une année euh i y avait une famille qui sont venus au/euh du Québec. euh les G. et puis j'ai/j'étais/um..j'ai aidé à parler en anglais avec lui parce qu'i ne parlait pas l'anglais. I/I WAS A TUTOR FOR HIM. AND I THINK IT WAS IN FORTH OR FIFTH GRADE. HE DIDN'T SPEAK ANY ENGLISH SO. I HELPED HIM OUT*

(39)   QU47 :   *i/i y avait des/des..i y avait une classe en français. YOU KNOW. FRENCH CLASS. mais euh toutes les sujets étaient enseignés en anglais*

(40)   QU51 :   *ils veulent. amener au Canada. c'est plutôt pour les pages de l'aide. HELP PAGES. puis ils veulent écrire ça en français*

(41)   QUU48 :   *j'ai commencé/WELL nous-aut'/j'ai commencé le même temps. WE STARTED THE SAME TIME*

(42)   QUU75 :   *ils s/sont/sont devenus tisserands. WEAVERS. dans les/les usines euh en Nouvelle-Angleterre*

There are, however, also examples (43-49) of repetitions of English passages in French. In these cases, there are three possibilities in theory : a) the speakers are unsure of what they are going to say in French and make sure they say it in English first ; b) after having switched to English, the speakers suddenly remember the French word and « correct » themselves ; or c) after having (not consciously) switched to English, the speakers remember that they must speak French and « force » themselves back to the language of the interview. Either way, these examples illustrate very well again that English is the more « natural » choice of language for them :

(43)   AC82 :   *elle était à WORCESTER à l'hôpital pour s/six semaines. et la/l'ARTERY/l'artère depuis/qui va du cœur à la cervelle*

(44)   QC70 :   *le passé. le passé. elle se rappelle pas de ce qu'elle vient de manger. IT'S VERY VERY/c'est très très..DIFFICULT pour moi. quand elle a parti là*

(45)   QC70 :   *i était professeur. puis très très instruit. BUT/mais elle avait juste soixante et cinq ans*

(46)   QU67 :   *seulement quand je vois les femmes euh une fois par mois. euh MAYBE/euh peut-êt' deux fois par mois. L quand je vois une ou deux fois par mois. je parle français avec elle*

(47)   QU72 :   *ça c'était toujours en anglais puis en polonais. j'ai appris le polonais et un peu des/de SPANISH. espagnol. c'était assez pour dire*

(48)   QUU65 :   *AND THAT WAS THE ONLY TIME. c'était le seul opportunité[15] que j'avais pour euh. pour parler un p'tit peu le français*

(49)   QUU75 :   *m/m/ma plus vieille son NAME est D/euh son nom est D. i ont tout*

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[15] In this context *opportunité* might be a *false friend*, a semantic loan, or, more probably, a *lexical false friend* (see section 3.2).

des noms français

If a word or passage is switched under one or several of these circumstances, it can indicate lacking linguistic security : the speakers either think about the switch or a possible alternative in the other language before they switch, or feel a need to comment on it because of a possible mistake or misunderstanding or because the switch seems inappropriate. And finally, the speakers may simply be insecure about what they just said and want to make sure the information was transmitted correctly.

2.5 Passive Code-Switching

The phenomenon of understanding a language, i.e. mastering it passively, but being unable to use it, i.e. not mastering it actively, is, in fact, part of *code-switching* ; the « non-speakers » still switch from one language to the other during a conversation, only passively, which is why I want to call this practice *passive code-switching*. This equivalent of *passive bilingualism* on the level of *performance* is a very common phenomenon among second generation Franco-Americans.

(50) I : *et est-ce que vous avez des frères ou des sœurs ?*
AU40 : *deux frères.*
I : *et avec eux. est-ce que vous avez parlé français ?*
AU40 : *avec le..WITH THE OLDER ONE..WE WERE CLOSE IN AGE WE WERE TWO YEARS APART. SO WE WERE ABLE TO ALL SPEAK FRENCH AT THE TABLE IN THE HOUSE. THAT WAS THE PRIMARY LANGUAGE. THEN WE HAVE A YOUNGER BROTHER WHO WAS BORN SEVEN YEARS LATER. AND THAT'S WHERE IT ALL FELL APART.*
I : *alors en fait vos parents ont changé à l'anglais aussi ?*
AU40 : *THEY'VE ONLY RECENTLY STARTED SPEAKING ENGLISH. BUT IF IT WAS JUST THE TWO OF THEM AND Y'KNOW DURING THE DAY AT/IN THE KITCHEN IN THE/IN THE CAR IT WAS ONLY FRENCH. AND JUST RECENTLY WE WERE TALKING ABOUT. YOU KNOW WE WERE TALKING ABOUT THAT. AND MY MOTHER SAID YOU KNOW « NOW DAD AND I EVEN SPEAK ENGLISH ». AND THEY'VE BEEN HERE FOR FORTY YEARS. SO YEAH. BUT/BUT BEFORE THAT THEY WERE ALWAYS INTO FRENCH JUST THE TWO OF THEM.*

(51) I : *alors vos parents. est-ce qu'ils ont eu des problèmes à apprendre l'anglais ?*
AU44 : *NOT REALLY. THEY LEARNED WITH US.*
I : *qu'est-ce qu'ils ont fait comme métier vos parents ? comme profession ?*
AU44 : *OH MY MOTHER WAS A HOUSEWIFE AND MY DAD WORKS AS A CUSTODIAN. PRIOR TO THAT HE WAS A MECHANIC.*
I : *et ici à l'église. est-ce qu'il y avait des messes en français ?*
AU44 : *THEY DID UNTIL JUST RECENTLY. THE SEVEN O'CLOCK MASS.*
I : *d'accord. et est-ce que vous avez des frères ou des sœurs ?*
AU44 : *UH THREE SISTERS.*

(52) I : *et vous avez parlé français à votre mère par exemple ?*
QUU65 : *I'M GONNA ANSWER IN ENGLISH (LAUGHING). I/WE DIDN'T SPEAK ENGLISH IN THE HOUSE UNTIL I STARTED KINDERGARTEN. AND THEN WE DIDN/WE NEVER SPOKE*

> FRENCH AGAIN (LAUGHING).

(53)   I :   *et quand vous avez/alors quand vous étiez petite. vous êtes allée à une école paroissiale ?*

QUU65 :   *YEAH I WENT TO SAINT JOSEPH. UM CATHOLIC SCHOOL. UH THEY SPOKE/WE HAD FRENCH..ONCE A DAY. AND THEN WHEN WE WENT TO HIGH SCHOOL IT WAS ONCE A DAY TOO. UM THE SUBJECT WAS FRENCH.*

QUU64 :   *IT WAS A CATHOLIC SCHOOL.*

QUU65 :   *YES THEY WERE BOTH CATHOLIC.*

Although the participants perfectly understand the questions asked in French, they answer them in English due to insecurity or an actual lack of active competence in French, a linguistic behavior which counts among the last phases of language loss (*cf.* Sasse, 1992 : 19-23).

2.6 *Tag-Switching* : The Special Case of Discourse Markers

2.6.1 Characteristics and Functions of English[16] Discourse Markers

Discourse markers can be defined[17] as « *sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk* » (Schiffrin, 1987 : 31), i.e. they mark the beginning or the end of a unit that is rarely identical with a syntactic unit and they do not depend on the smaller units of talk but rather work on a discourse level (*cf.* Schiffrin, 1987 : 37). They occur predominantly in oral communication, especially in informal oral communication, because their appearance is in fact « *a result of the informality of oral discourse and the grammatical fragmentation caused by the lack of planning time* » (Brinton, 1996 : 33). Furthermore, discourse markers may belong to different word classes (e.g., adverbs or conjunctions) and tend to be semantically fuzzy ; although they are not void of meaning, they can be understood literally only to a certain extent, which makes them for instance hard to translate into other languages (*cf.* Brinton, 1996 : 34). In fact they figure somewhere between system and content morphemes. Being formally invariable, they do not ask for morphological integration. Furthermore they may be syntactically integrated freely in informal oral communication (a characteristic, by the way, which has often been considered a possible reason for their being frequently switched ; *cf.* e.g., Chevalier, 2000 : 88). Although it is often claimed that they appear in sentence-initial position, they do, in fact, occur in medial and final position as well (*cf.* Brinton, 1996 : 33), which is simply due to their multifunctionality and the fact that they can be integrated freely into discourse. They do, for example, not only initiate discourse, they may also close it or act as fillers, delaying discourse to hold the floor in a conversation. Also, they may signal a new topic or help to repair one's own discourse. With regard to their various functions, three types of discourse markers can be distinguished (*cf.* Chevalier, 2000 : 85) :

    1) interactive markers, which serve to initiate a conversation or hold the floor ;

    2) illocutionary markers : « *ils effectuent un acte illocutoire ou l'accompagnent pour en fixer l'interprétation* » (Chevalier, 2000 : 85) ;

    3) structural markers, which help to establish argumentative links or link the individual parts of the discourse in general.

Despite the fact that every discourse marker has a primary function[18], it can often be found to function on different planes of talk, due to its semantic shallowness. I do not want to go

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[16] This chapter will concentrate on English discourse markers since they are the only ones considered in this study. However, most of the functions listed here should be applicable to discourse markers from any language.

[17] There are many definitions of discourse markers which cannot all be discussed in this article. For further reading see e.g., Fraser, 1999 ; Hansen, 1998.

[18] For an overview of functions of discourse markers see e.g., Hansen, 1998 ; Fraser, 1999 ; Schiffrin, 1987.

into further detail as to the functions of individual discourse markers since their respective functions are not of importance in this context – other than their general characteristics of invariability and polyfunctionality, which make them a predominant feature of informal oral discourse. Before I come to discuss that in 2.6.3, however, I want to take a look at several theories on why discourse markers are switched.

2.6.2 Some Theories on the Switching/Borrowing of Discourse Markers

Within the MASSFrench corpus, there is an abundance of examples of English discourse markers in French :

(54)   QC80 :   *oh…..**WELL** euh. toute que c'est qu'c'est fait icitte c'est en anglais…*

(55)   QU81 :   *elle a quatre-vingt-quinze ans. son mari était mort. puis..ç'a bien été pour lui. sont mariés pour treize ans. puis i est mort de ALZHEIMER'S. i est mort à quatre-vingt-un ans. **YEAH**…*

(56)   QU77 :   *ah oui oui. on a des amis à..**OH BOY**...quelle partie du Canada c'est ?*

(57)   AU58 :   *asteur je crois j'aurais peut-êt' essayé. dans c'temps-là c'était **YOU KNOW**…*

(58)   AC55 :   *puis là tu vas à peu près dix-huit milles à Moncton. trois quarts. tout c'que t'entends c'est l'anglais. **SO** je pense là. c'est là où t'as passé où i y avait beaucoup d'Anglais mêlés avec les Français. puis ça a juste tourné avec ça **I GUESS**. on a juste. mis les mots avec. à place de juste toute dire en français. on a/on a ajouté ste mot-là puis on a continué à le dire*

(59)   AC82 :   *ça m'étourdit quand j'en prends de temps en temps là (LAUGHING). **ANYWAY** UH..mais i ont/i ont/« va chercher ton violon. va chercher ton violon ». j'ai venu chercher mon violon. j'ai joué une partie de la veillée…*

According to Myers-Scotton (1992 : 44) « *the processus of core borrowing probably begins with nouns and verbs (because they have the most psychological salience) and then proceeds to discourse markers and adverbs (because they have positional salience)* ». She carefully adds « probably », which is justified, this theory being too generalizing. Even if there are (few) quantitative studies on discourse markers becoming loanwords (*cf.* Mougeon/Beniak, 1987), I do not think the order of core borrowings can be maintained. First of all, to be sure about a loanword, it would have to be attested, i.e. listed in a dictionary. Nouns or verbs definitely have the advantage of being accepted as borrowings much more easily than discourse markers for the following reasons : in contrast to most nouns and verbs discourse markers belong predominantly into oral discourse ; in addition, they are generally « *stylistically stigmatized and negatively evaluated* » (Brinton, 1996 : 33), which makes it harder for them to appear in a dictionary. Secondly, nouns and verbs may be the first borrowings, but are they in all bilingual communities ? Given certain language constellations, discourse markers may well be the most commonly switched elements. Myers-Scotton (1992 : 44) herself argues that discourse markers are borrowed because they are « *lexemes hovering on the border between content and system morphemes* », i.e. because of their syntactic and morphological independence ; a theory that is shared by many others : « *fillers, e.g., […] I mean ; interjections, e.g., […] oh, my God !, shit ! ; tags, e.g., […] you know ; idiomatic expressions, e.g., […] no way […], are segments which are less intimately linked with the remainder of the utterance, insofar as they may occur freely at any point in the sentence* » (Poplack, 1980 : 596).

Muysken summarizes different approaches, all of which lack sufficient proof, one of them saying that since language shift affects different domains at different speeds, « *discourse linkers could belong to a domain (that of discourse structure) affected earlier by language shift than that of the sentence itself* » (Muysken, 2000 : 112). The counterarguments, however, are that there are cases of borrowed discourse markers without language shift, and that language shift can occur without the switching of discourse markers. Muysken favors Rooij's theory : « *Discourse markers must be highly salient within the discourse which they help structure. There is a pragmatic advantage in taking them from another language, since the foreign character of an element heightens its saliency* » (Muysken, 2000 : 114). That sounds as if awareness or even purpose was implied when people use alien discourse markers. But discourse markers are probably the feature of oral language most unconsciously used, which shows in the fact that, in formal speech, people try deliberately to avoid using them. And if there was a pragmatic advantage why are discourse markers never borrowed in monolingual speech communities, i.e. in situations other than that of close language contact ?

Mougeon/Beniak (*cf.* 1987 : 342) follow Thomason/Kaufman by taking a look at the extralinguistic correlates, discovering a connection between lower social class and the use of *so* in French. Lower class people, however, are known to generally use discourse markers more frequently, so the question remains to be answered whether the lower class participants in Mougeon/Beniak's study also use more French discourse markers in French and more English discourse markers in English than upper class people.

Finally, Chevalier (*cf.* 2000 : 92) suggests that the use of *well* in the south east of New Brunswick was due to the marker's functional specialisation with regard to the French alternative *ben*. This explanation may be true for this particular marker but is it generally true for all switched markers, i.e. do all switched markers functionally specialize with regard to their recipient language equivalents ? *Well* is a free form, polyfunctional and without inherent semantic meaning, and therefore more apt to switching than other markers. Although I agree that multifunctional discourse markers will probably be switched earlier and more often than the ones whose use is restricted, and although they may well specialize after being used frequently in competition with their native-language counterparts, I do not think that specific functions of individual discourse markers are the cause of their being switched. Rather I suggest to basically follow Clyne (*cf.* 2003 : 225-228), who thinks the use of alien discourse markers to be caused by the habitual use of another language.

2.6.3 An Attempt at Explanation : Discourse Markers as a Common Denominator

Some of the theories regarding the use of alien discourse markers seem more satisfactory and universally applicable than others. Before establishing or discarding a possible explanation, I would first like to take a closer look at the communities that make use of such switches for the different explanations could be due not to specific markers and their functions but rather to different societal structures and linguistic situations. As Mougeon (1993 : 67) has pointed out for use of the discourse marker *so* in Ontario French : « *on comprend mal que des mots aussi fondamentaux […] soient concurrencés par un de leurs équivalents anglais. […] il [the use] échappe aux explications linguistiques* ». So the explanation is possibly an extralinguistic one, and there may indeed be a common criterion to explain the switching of discourse markers independent of their individual characteristics and functions, even if the respective implications of these switches may vary.

Discourse markers are a predominant feature of oral discourse. I would even go further and say that with regard to their frequency of occurrence as well as their stigmatization, they are *the* general characteristic of informal oral discourse in many languages. They are, in other words, a kind of common denominator of languages that may differ in other respects such as morphology or syntax. Now if we recall what discourse markers are commonly used for, we

may say that they are a sign of fluency in a language (although a discourse marker itself might of course be used as a hesitator in an individual conversation). For learners of a foreign language, for example, discourse markers are among the last things to be acquired, mainly because the « structuring » of a conversation based on discourse markers requires the ability to spontaneously have a conversation, i.e. without planning its structure with regard to grammar or vocabulary. So the use of discourse markers in general can be seen as a sign of fluency in a variety or language that is used for informal oral communication.

Switched discourse markers seem to be a phenomenon of language contact situations[19], at least an example of a monolingual community that uses switched and/or borrowed other-language discourse markers could not be found (which seems obvious with regard to the fact that, in contrast to other possible core loans like for instance nouns and verbs, they carry little or no lexical meaning). To be more specific, switched discourse markers seem to be a phenomenon of language contact situations in which the language that is the source of the switched markers is used to a considerable extent for every-day conversation. So the simple knowledge of a language is not enough for this language to be the source of switched discourse markers. Canada is a good example for that criterion. In those parts of Canada, where English and French are used regularly, English discourse markers appear frequently in French (*cf.* e.g., King, 2000 : 110-115 ; Mougeon 2000 : 32 ; Perrot : 234-236 ; corpus Wiesmath). In Quebec (except for Montreal), an area known for its resistance against English, they rarely do (*cf.* e.g., Mougeon 2000 : 32 ; Meney, 1999), regardless of the high percentage of « Knowledge of Official Languages ».

Canadian Census 2001[20]	Mother Tongue French	Mother Tongue English	Knowledge of both
Novia Scotia	3.8 %	92.9 %	10.1 %
New Brunswick	32.9 %	64.7 %	34.4 %
Quebec	81.2 %	8.0 %	40.8 %

Knowing a language, even fluently, does not necessarily imply using it for daily oral communication. Discourse markers, however, are predominantly – although not exclusively – a feature of oral, and especially of informal oral communication, because « *[they] are stylistically stigmatized and negatively evaluated [...]. They are deplored as a sign of dysfluency and carelessness* » (Brinton, 1996 : 33 ; *cf.* also Schiffrin, 1987 : 310). Therefore a language which is mainly used for written or formal oral communication is supposedly not a source of switched discourse markers.

But why switch and/or borrow discourse markers at all ? Most of them are definitely core loans, i.e. « unnecessary » with regard to language economy[21]. Different bilingual communities switch and/or borrow them to different extents and with different implications. It has been pointed out that the fact that discourse markers are free forms, i.e. easily integrable, polyfunctional, with no or little meaning, has often been claimed to be the reason for their switching and/or borrowing. But these characteristics can more or less be applied to all discourse markers, i.e. to the native-language ones as well. The fact that discourse markers have these special forms and functions explains why they are predominantly a feature of informal oral communication but it does not explain their switching. In my opinion there

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[19] They need, however, not occur in every language contact situation (*cf.* Muysken, 2000 : 113).

[20] *Cf.* Knowledge of Official Languages, 2001 Counts for Both Sexes, for Canada, Provinces and Territories, and Mother Tongue, 2001 Counts for Both Sexes, for Canada, Provinces and Territories, at : http ://www.statcan.ca (02/15/2005).

[21] *Cf.* for instance Chevalier (2000 : 88) on well : « *il ne remplit pas un vide dans la langue emprunteuse* », but has become functionally specialized compared to its French equivalent *ben*. So in some cases a functional specialization may occur but it has most certainly developed after the frequent switching/borrowing ; the basic assumption is for alien discourse markers to have the same functions as their native-language equivalents when being switched.

seems to be a more general explanation for the switching and/or borrowing of discourse markers independent of their functions and implications ; an explanation that is based on the different language constellations within a speech community.

For a bilingual community that switches or borrows (depending on the frequency) discourse markers, I could imagine the following constellations of the languages involved.

a) It might be a community where we find diglossia with bilingualism (*cf.* Fishman, 1971 : 288-294), i.e. where the two varieties/languages involved are functionally separate and where most members of the community master both varieties or languages. In such a linguistically (relatively) stable community there are again different possible constellations :

a)1 A community in which the varieties/languages involved are both used for every-day conversation but restricted to different social settings or conversation partners (*cf.* Fishman, 1972 : 96). In many African or Asian countries (*cf.* e.g., Lim, 2004 : 117-119), for instance, the languages of the former colonial intruders serve not only as the high variety for written discourse but also as a *lingua franca* because of the diversity of the native dialects/languages. So if discourse markers are switched in such a context, it is often bidirectional – because due to the situational separation no language is the dominating one in oral discourse – and may simply indicate the fact that the two varieties/languages involved are both used regularly, in one way or the other, in informal conversation.

a)2 A community in which one variety/language is clearly the high variety and therefore restricted to formal conversation and written use, and the other one the low variety used predominantly for informal conversation, like it is the case in the Swiss-German cantons. In such a community discourse markers will be switched only rarely, namely when the variety/language commonly restricted to formal occasions comes to be (exceptionally) used in an informal situation. In such a case the use of switched markers would be unidirectional, i.e. from the low variety into the high variety. So the use of switched discourse markers may indicate a lack of fluency or practice in the variety/language that is commonly used for other purposes than that of every-day conversation. It does not, however, indicate a lack of fluency or practice in the variety/language when used for the purpose which it is predominantly used for, such as written communication for example, nor does it act as an indicator of a language shift, of course.

b) It might be a community where we find bilingualism without diglossia, i.e. where there is no strict functional or situational separation but where the members of the community (need to) speak two varieties/languages, as it is often the case with immigrant groups. Again there are two situations possible, both of which might not be stable but just different stages of the same development, i.e. language shift. The development of Spanish in the U.S. has given way to the assumption that b)1 is a stable situation – which in fact it is not (*cf.* Swarns, 2004 : 5) ; it is rather the first phase of assimilation and monolingualism. For the moment let's suppose that the situations described remain stable at least for a certain time.

b)1 Both varieties/languages are used for every-day conversation, but their use has a tendency to occur in certain social settings or with certain conversation partners ; therefore a bidirectional use of switches is possible. So we could say that although there is no diglossia within the society itself, there is a functional or at least situational differentiation of the varieties/languages within the speech community[22], as it is the case with Spanish in the U.S. Many Hispanics speak Spanish within their families or with other Hispanics but English at school or with monolingual English friends. The switching of discourse markers is bidirectional, and it may simply indicate the regular use of both varieties/languages in every-day conversation.

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[22] *Cf.* Lüdi (1990 : 310) : « il [Fishman] parle aussi de diglossie dans des cas où seul un segment de la population emploie deux langues ».

b)2 If, on the other hand, the varieties/languages (start to) compete with each other, and their use loses its restriction to different conversational situations and partners, which can be the case when one variety/language is the one that dominates the bigger social context, i.e. the country of immigration, this one variety/language may also become the dominating one in oral conversation. In this case this would show in the unidirectional use of switched markers.

Now if, as in a)2 and b)2 the use of other-language discourse markers is unidirectional, it can be claimed that it indicates a lack of fluency or at least of practice in the embedding language, notwithstanding the general bilingualism of the speakers. This is also indicated by the facts that discourse markers rarely act as trigger-words for code-mixes[23], and that users of alien discourse markers do not necessarily use other switches or loanwords from the language of the discourse markers (*cf.* Chevalier, 2000 : 89-90). If one language is constantly used in every-day conversation, it seems more than natural that it is the predominant features of every-day conversation, i.e. discourse markers, which are the first items to be switched when speaking another language that is not used as often for this particular purpose. As already mentioned this does not necessarily imply a shift, of course, but within a situation of competing languages it might do so, especially in an asymmetric situation, i.e. in a situation where one of the two competing languages exists mainly or only as a spoken variety whereas the other one serves in oral and written communication. If functional or situational separation, which is clearly given in a)2 but which lacks in b)2, is eliminated, i.e. if one variety/language can be exchanged against the other one in any given situation and for any given purpose, it is only according to the law of linguistic economy that it will sooner or later be eliminated. The use of other-language discourse markers may be a first step in that direction. This is supported by the fact that the more speakers use both varieties in their private life (often the only remaining area of use for the dominated language), the more often they apply discourse markers from the dominating language (*cf.* Mougeon, 2000 : 31). Also, the use of alien discourse markers by older members of a b)2-type speech community speaks in favor of this theory. In such a setting, young speakers rarely make use of alien discourse markers because for them the dominated variety/language has already become one that is mainly taught in school and not used in every-day life any more. These younger speakers are not strictly bilingual any more but rather behave like learners of a foreign language, i.e. their language is highly affected by the influence of the standard variety they were taught at school, free of (alien) discourse markers and in general unaffected by switches or loanwords (*cf.* Mougeon, 2000 : 36).

Scheme of possible implications of alien discourse markers

level of society	diglossia with bilingualism		bilingualism without diglossia	
level of speech community	both languages used in IOC	mainly one langue used in IOC	diglossic restriction of use to setting/interlocutors	loss of diglossic restriction of use to setting/interlocutors
direction of use of ADM	Bidirectional	unidirectional	bidirectional	unidirectional
use of ADM as an indicator of language shift	-	-	-	+

IOC = informal oral communication ; ADM = alien discourse markers

For many immigrants in the U.S. English is the language that dominates their lives, abruptly or step by step, depending on whether they are dispersed or live in ghettos, which allows them to continue speaking their native tongue at least for a while. Most Franco-

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[23] *Cf.* for instance Chevalier (89), who says that, for the region of southern New Brunswick, *« en aucun cas* well *ne marque-t-il le point de départ d'un passage à l'anglais ».*

Americans are confronted with the following situation : English has become the language important for their professional career, it is the language of the peer group, i.e. it is the language everyone starts to speak sooner or later, so that there are rare or no occasions to practice French ; and, most important, there is simply no need to do so. Despite the fact that many Franco-Americans of the first and second generation born in the U.S. still remember their French and might even use it sometimes at home, the lack of conversational practice is quite obvious, which explains their frequent and sometimes exclusive use of English discourse markers. In summary I assume the following :

1) discourse markers, multifunctional and free of morphological and syntactic constraints, are a sign of fluency and regular use of a language as a spoken variety in informal conversation,

2) switched discourse markers indicate in general that a language other than the embedding one is used to a considerable extent in every-day conversation,

3) reinforced by the setting (bilingualism without diglossia with one overly dominating language), discourse markers that are switched exclusively unidirectionally in spite of the fact that the two languages involved are both used for informal oral communication indicate a language shift.

I do not claim to be able to empirically prove the above considerations for that would require an analysis of several corpuses of different speech communities. And of course the frequency of switched markers, their proportion to native-language markers, the types of switched markers and their respective functions surely depend on very variable community-specific factors such as sex, social status, and education, and probably on the area of residence and its respective linguistic situation. Also, these considerations do not explain why certain discourse markers are switched more often than others (*cf.* also Clyne, 2003 : 228) ; to explain this, one would indeed have to take a look at the respective markers and their specific function, and the social setting of the switching speech community. I only claim that there is one possible explanation for the use of other-language discourse markers among bilinguals in general : discourse markers are the predominant feature of informal oral discourse and therefore often the common denominator of two languages (that may be different as to grammar, syntactic structure, and lexis) ; if switched they are taken from a language that is either more important or at least as important – depending on the frequency of use of embedded markers with regard to markers from the embedding language – for informal oral communication as the language they are embedded in. That is why they may be a sign of less fluency or practice in one and therefore a sign of dominance of the other language, an imbalance which – need not but – can finally lead to language shift.

3. Other Types of Interference[24]

3.1 Calques

Here, a selection of loan translations (on the lexical as well as on the morphosyntactic level) will be given to illustrate the English influence on Franco-American French. A very common phenomenon is *preposition stranding* in relative clauses :

<div align="center">'THE WOMAN I TALKED TO YESTERDAY'</div>

(54)   QU55(w) :   *la femme **que** j'ai parlez **avec** hier*

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[24] Borrowings are not considered in this context : although there are possibly many English loanwords in Franco-American French, there is neither a dictionary of this variety nor a corpus large enough to determine the frequency and degree of integration of English items, which is why all ambiguous items, i.e. not attested loanwords in Quebecker or Acadian French, are considered as code-mixes here.

(55) QUU75(w) : *la femme **que** je parlais **avec** hier*

(56) AC46(w) : *la femme **que** je parles **avec** hier*

This construction can be found in *français populaire* as well (*cf.* Bauche, 1951 : 132), but without doubt not to that extent, and definitely not in combination with other prepositions such as *à* :

(57) QU51(w) : *la femme **que** j'ai parlé **à** hier*

Other examples of « *calques de l'anglais* » :

'TO BE…YEARS OLD'

(58) QUU65 : *j'étais une fois à Montréal pour les visiter. j'**étais** peut-êt' um..seize ans*

(59) QUU65 : *j'pense que **j'étais** euh douze*

'AT HOME'

(60) QC50 : *Je suis certaine quand qu'on était plus jeune on parlait plutôt français **à maison**[25] parce que. ma mère parle pas gros l'anglais*

(61) AC65 : *Tu devrais parler anglais. dans les magasins. **à maison***

'ALL (THE) YEAR ROUND'

(62) AC82 : *Là c'était **l'année ronde** l'été l'hiver*

'HIS COUSIN JANE'

(63) QU41 : ***son** cousin Jane*[26]

Although it cannot be excluded that certain loan translations may be found in the Canadian varieties as well, it cannot be denied that the close contact with English favors their frequency and distribution, which is why they can be considered as specific of Franco-American French (*cf.* also Fox/Smith, 2005 : 137) due to its exposed position to English[27].

3.2 A Special Case : Lexical False Friends

Some forms do not seem to fit into any category of interference phenomena ; they cannot be classified as borrowings or code-mixes, and they are neither sham (or pseudo-) loans nor *false friends*. *Code-mixing* implies switching from one language into another. Some items may be partially integrated, they can, however, still be classified as alien items. Borrowings may be fully integrated but, at the beginning of their way into another language, they rarely are. Even if they were partially integrated from the start, they would still be perceived as other-language items in the beginning. Sham loans are words that are perceived as loans but do in fact not exist in the donor language (*cf.* Carstensen, 1981 : 175). There are two different kinds :

a) Lexical sham loans : words are built based on similarly structured loans or based on word formation rules of the pseudo donor language, and thereby give the impression of being borrowed, e.g., German *Showmaster* (in analogy to English *quizmaster*), meaning 'host of a TV show'.

b) Semantic sham loans : words are borrowed but the recipient language adds meanings that the words do not have in the donor language, e.g., German *Start*, which is an English borrowing, but which, in German, also denotes English '*take-off*' (*cf.* Carstensen, 1980 : 77).

The latter are often *partial false friends*, although not all *partial false friends* are semantic sham loans. False friends are pairs of words whose form is similar in two languages and

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[25] This expression can be found in Quebecker French as well, with the vowel [a] (*à*) lengthened, probably a result of a contraction of *à* and *la*. In Franco-American French, this *allongement* lacks completely, which suggests the influence of the equivalent English expression 'at home'.

[26] This case may simply be a loan translation but it may also show that the deep structure of French is affected by interference.

[27] And, possibly, typical of other varieties of French exposed to English to a comparative extent, like for example Louisiana French.

therefore gives way to the assumption that the words have the same meaning(s) – but they do not at all (*total false friends*) or at least not in parts (*partial false friends*). So, for instance, an English *demonstration* is also a *démonstration* in French, but a *manifestation* in a political context (*partial false friend*).

It is important to keep such cases of interference in mind to understand in how far the following phenomenon is different. Franco-Americans sometimes use English-origin words that are perfectly integrated into French in all respects. These words are therefore not code-mixes, but they are not borrowings either due to their frequency and distribution (they are single occurrences only[28]). In fact, the speakers do not seem to perceive the words as loans, i.e. coming from English, but rather assume that they are French. Such words could be called *lexical false friends* (in accordance with the terminology used with sham loans). « Normal », i.e. semantic, *false friends* tempt speakers to assume a meaning that the word has in one but not in the other language, like in the following example in which the participant meant to say *bibliothèque* but chose *librairie* ('book store') due to the English *library* :

    (64)   QC73 :   *Elle euh travaille dans DARTMOUTH COLL/UH UNIVERSITY. et elle travaille dans la **librairie*** ['LIBRARY']

In the case of *lexical false friends*, however, a whole word (or rather its form, including its meanings) is thought to exist in a language but does not, in fact, which is why they are defined as follows : *lexical false friends* are words of a language A which, based on the fact that their form is similar – phonetically as well as morphologically – to words in a language B, give way to the false assumption that they also exist in a language B, including one or several meanings they have in a language A. To give an example :

    (65)   QC83 :   *et puis on voit un gros **improuvement*** ['IMPROVEMENT']

Improuvement does not exist in French but the bilingual speaker assumed it did : the phonetic form is similar, English [ɪmpruːv] – French [ɛ̃pruv], and the morpheme *–ment* is used for word formation in both languages (and is also phonetically similar).

Other examples of this kind :

    (66)   QUU75(w) :   *c'est un **disappointement*** ['DISAPPOINTMENT']
    (67)   QU51 :   *j'ai **l'abilité** de parler deux langue* ['ABILITY']
    (68)   QUU58   *des voyelles euh. puis les **consonants*** ['CONSONANTS']
    (69)   QC82 :   *i voulait la **convenience** de/de le/des parents à moitié en français et anglais. oui* ['CONVENIENCE']

The similarities as for pronunciation as well as for word formation affixes are obvious. In some cases, the words could be semantic loans or *false friends*, since they also exist in French. However, the semantic distance (which is especially obvious in example 72, where the French noun *relative* 'relative clause' can hardly take on a semantic loan meaning 'family members', nor possibly be a *false friend*) rather suggests that they are *lexical false friends* as well :

    (70)   QU41 :   *c'est triste parce que l'gouvernement um fait des **accommodations** à ceux qui parlent en espagnol* ['ACCOMMODATIONS']
    (71)   QC55 :   *c'est pas juste que. pour toutes les nationalités qu'i ont dans le pays qu'i donnent. seulement une **translation**. on veut dire tu vas à l'hôpital à SPRINGFIELD c'est en anglais c'est en espagnol* ['TRANSLATION']
    (72)   QC70 :   *les uns disent Lauri-enne les aut' disent Lauri-ane. mais pour toutes mes **relatives** c'est Lauri-ane* ['RELATIVES']

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[28] Such words, however, may become part of a language or variety if used frequently by a sufficient number of speakers.

Cases like examples 66-72, which by the way are typical of learners of foreign languages, could not be found in Canadian Quebecker or Acadian French, and seem to be, just like the other interference phenomena illustrated above, specific of varieties like Franco-American French, i.e. of varieties or languages fully exposed to English-dominated surroundings.

4. Conclusion

Despite the fact that the analysis of the MASSFrench corpus has not yet been completed, it can be concluded from the above examples – as well as from the results of the questionnaires which cannot all be mentioned in this context – that the majority of the (overly older) participants is able to have a conversation in French ; but their abilities are limited with regard to topics of conversation as well as to linguistic competence and flexibility. Most speakers can probably be classified as rusty or semi-speakers (*cf.* Sasse, 1992 : 15-23), with both types showing considerable linguistic deficits, from lacking vocabulary to loss of grammatical structures. Among Franco-Americans of all ages, both sexes and all immigrant groups, French has come to be replaced by English in almost all situations, even within the family. Interference phenomena are unidirectional only[29], which, in addition to the fact that they are reduced to the function of filling lexical gaps, is a strong indicator of language loss.

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[29] The copying of French structures into English like in Louisiana (« Cajun English », *cf.* Stäbler, 1995 : 33) has not been found in Massachusetts.

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