

Anglophones living in the bilingual city of Montreal are developing, as part of their repertoire, their own French dialect that functions as a marker of their identity. The Montreal Anglophone French (MAF) speakers in our sample represent the first generation of Montreal Anglophones that had access to French immersion schooling. They learned French both from contact with native speakers and in traditional or immersion classrooms. Each speaker is categorized according to degree and type of exposure to French during three life stages, and by their orientation toward French. The 18 speakers we analyze here participated in two sociolinguistic interviews, one in French (L2) and one in English (L1).

In this comparative analysis, we examine the L1 and the L2 of MAF speakers for a variable that exists in French and in English: the variable presence of the subordinate clause marker (COMP). In both languages, the COMP that is the head of a subordinate clause may be null or overt, as exemplified in (1) for English and in (2) for French:

- (1) When I realize [that the Canadian dream is not complete] we got work to do [...]  
I realize [Ø my bench is not clean ] [...] I got work to do.
- (2) Moi je pense [ Ø ma mère elle comprend ] mais je pense pas [qu'elle peut parler ].  
Translation : 'I think [Ø my mother understands] but I don't think [that she can talk].'

We show how L2 variation corresponds to that of L1 by looking not only at the overall rate of COMP deletion but by comparing the effects of various linguistic constraints in French to those in English. We consider a number of internal factors (type of subject, animacy of subject, negative polarity, lexical frequency, phonological context, presence of material between the verb and its subordinate CP) that have been found to be significant in earlier work in L1 French and English (Dion 2003, Martineau 1985, Sankoff 1980, Torres-Cacoullous & Walker 2003).

We see a much wider range of deletion rates in French, but very similar rates across speakers in English. Overall, there is a much higher deletion rate in English (~70%) than in French (~15%). Given the relative markedness of a null COMP in the two languages, this is expected, and it shows that even our least fluent speakers are not producing word-for-word calques from English to French. We find that the choice of verb which subcategorizes for the CP correlates strongly with the probability of a null COMP. For example, in both languages, sentences beginning with 'I think' / 'je pense' are more likely to have a null COMP than any others. Our analysis teases apart the effects of subject person/number from lexical frequency of the verb.

The potential deletion of the COMP, as a pattern not explicitly taught in school, is compared with results for other variables previously studied for this corpus (Blondeau et al. 2003). In particular we report on the effects of type and degree of contact with French in academic and non-academic environments.

## References

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