

**“La Première Difficulté C’est Pas La Neige, C’est La Langue!”
Language attitudes and strategies of immigrant francophones in
Montreal***

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ABSTRACT

Considerable psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic research has been conducted over the past 50 years into the language attitudes and strategies of Canadian Anglophones, Francophones, and immigrant allophones in Montréal, Québec. Research into the language attitudes and strategies of Montreal’s multi-ethnic, heteroglossic communities has so far failed to study immigrant francophones who arrive speaking a non-Québécoise French. Immigrants who arrive in the bilingual city of Montreal from other parts of the non-European francophone world (e.g., Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East) are said to have a distinct advantage over those who arrive speaking neither English nor French, yet they are nonetheless thrown into a sociolinguistic situation which is not equivalent to that which Canadian francophones occupy. This paper will examine the sociolinguistic constraints these immigrants confront and the meanings their linguistic choices reveal about their expectations of integrating into Quebec society. It will also observe their rationale for acquiring and using English.

1. INTRODUCTION

- (1) *Quand je suis arrivé à Montréal, la première difficulté c’est souvent la celle de tout immigrants c’est la langue, pourquoi? Des fois quand on parle le Français ici on peut bien pas comprendre avec l’accent. Donc je cherche à savoir qu’est ce qu’ils disent, qu’est ce qu’ils disent c’est ... la première difficulté c’est pas la neige, c’est la langue ... parce que quand on arrive et on descend l’avion on rencontre pas directement la neige, on rencontre les gens, mais les gens quand ils parlent on a difficile (difficulté) à se communiquer...* (Eppy)

‘When I arrived in Montreal...the first obstacle...it’s often that of all immigrants, it’s the language, why? Sometimes when people speak French here, you can’t understand with the accent so I tried to discover what are they saying? ... what are they saying? ... the first obstacle is not the snow, it’s the language... because when you arrive and get off the airplane, the first thing you encounter is not the snow, it’s the people, but when they speak you have trouble communicating with them.’

Francophone immigrants from the Maghreb, Sub-Saharan Africa, Haiti, and South East Asia arrive in Quebec with what at first seems to be a distinct advantage over those immigrants who arrive without either of Canada’s two official languages. They enter

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Bourdieu's *marché linguistique* armed with a school-book version of the standard code and the prestige it purports to hold, as well as the cultural concepts encoded in the language of the colonizing nation, in this case France. In spite of what may be thought to be a linguistic and cultural passport, these immigrants face the political and economic constraints inherent in being a member of both a visible and an audible minority.

As noted in Pigott & Kalbacj (2005), language may be one of the most important components of ethnic identity, yet few studies have been done on the linguistic attitudes of immigrants to Montreal speaking a non-Quebecois variety of French. This pilot project hopes to contribute to work done on the linguistic positioning of immigrants through the examination of the attitudes of non-European francophones. In looking at their linguistic choices as self-reported in recorded interviews, I examine the sociolinguistic constraints they react to and the linguistic strategies they are producing and consider their expectations of integrating into Quebec society.

2. ON THE IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE ATTITUDE STUDIES

- (2) *J'peux pas te parler en français, j'peux pas te parler en une autre langue, je vais te parler dans ta langue maternelle là tu sens que je suis allé toucher le fond ce que je suis en train de dire, fort.* (Eppy)

'I can't speak to you in French, I can't speak to you in another language, I'm going to speak to you in your mother tongue, there, you feel that I touched the depth, that I'm about to say, (something) important.'

In his paper on language attitudes in Khartoum, Mugaddam (2005) identifies *language attitude* as the sentiment speakers of different languages or varieties of language have towards each others' languages or their own. "Negative or positive attitudes towards a language may reflect linguistic difficulty or simplicity of learning, degree of importance, and social status" (Mugaddam 2005:3). Cargile (2002) explains that accents evoke initial responses which at first may be negative until further cognitive processes take place. Attitude is not merely a response to an accent or a form but also to the voice, the message, and the situation among other aspects; therefore, he goes on to say, language based stereotypes are a cognitive element of a more wide-ranging language attitude. Gudykunst & Schmidt (1987:158) write that "language is one of the major factors used to categorise others, and that it plays a major role in the development of social identity in general and ethnic identity in particular".

Sociolinguistics' initial task was to "seek an understanding of the linguistic consequences of societal stratification, but immigrants have seldom been included among the strata" (Chambers 2003:97). Considering that language is perhaps one of the most important components of ethnic identity this has been a lacuna worth filling. Wolck (1986: 35) states that giving a place in research to the reactions and attitudes of consultants has been one of sociolinguistics' greatest accomplishments, complementing the traditional objective data with subjective data to "provide a more complete basis for our analysis and understanding of the structure and development of human languages". He goes on to underline the fact that it is now standard procedure to include the target population's hopes before finalizing language

policy preparations and conclusions. He also identifies the success of attitude studies in resolving problems not elucidated through standard grammatical or linguistic analysis.

Lasagabaster (2001:402) notes that the contribution of linguistic attitude studies to the development of the field of sociolinguistics has been vast, that attitudes toward different languages and language varieties can reveal the perceptions of various social classes, and that “such perceptions influence the interaction within and across boundaries of a speech community”.

However, as previously mentioned, the majority of such studies have focused on the English, French, and Spanish speech communities of Europe and North America and have not taken into consideration those in North and sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America or Asia. Lasagabaster (2001:402) shows that conducting a language study without attention to attitude would be unsound as studies done around the world indicate that whatever is considered to be the standard variety of a language is connected to an idea of higher competence and social status, the social group of participants notwithstanding.

Giles, Hewstone & Ball (1983) also argue for the need to study the reaction of subjects to the language varieties present in their environment; they go on to say that language attitude is a fundamental concept in social science, maintaining that such attitudes can determine teachers’ perceptions of their students and are known to lessen chances for eventual learning and professional success for speakers of non-standard varieties.

The Concise Encyclopaedia of Sociolinguistics suggests that “in some societies, ethnicity may be more salient than class stratification and language may play a key role in reflecting and indeed maintaining and reproducing an ethnic identity” (Mesthrie & Tabouret-Keller 2001:166). Giles & Billings (2004) describe a body of work that presents data on how a speaker’s language choices affect the impressions of others, influencing the judgment procedures throughout a range of significant social and applied domains. And to complete this review, Baker (1992) offers the argument that a survey of attitudes presents us with a way of measuring existing community opinions and principles as well as any changes in their perceptions. Information on attitudes can also indicate the chance for success in language planning implementation.

3. PILOT STUDY METHODOLOGY

The principal objective of perceptual dialectology is to ascertain the consciousness speakers have of linguistic differences, theirs and those of others. The typical methodology used to uncover these reactions directly is through questionnaires, sociolinguistic interviews, and/or the subjects’ reactions to recorded voices (Evans 2002:2).

For this pilot study, I used the first two of these methods to interview participants of classes and workshops I give in my work as an ESL instructor for a labour market integration centre in Montreal. After receiving permission from the centre, I approached potential participants, explained my project, and then gave them a written explanation to take home and consider. Interested parties then contacted me either in person or through e-mail.

The classes are part of the free services offered to participants in a vocational training course. The groups are made up of native Quebecers and, more recently, of recently arrived immigrants. Of the eleven students who agreed to participate, six are from Morocco, one is from Tunisia, and four are from Sub-Saharan Africa (three of these are refugees). One

additional participant in the study is the counsellor for the workshop and another is a student of linguistics at Concordia.

The interviews were recorded between January and May 2006. A fellow linguistics student who is a native Francophone assisted me in leading the interviews. The interviews were conducted at Concordia University as most students did not appear comfortable at the thought of having relative strangers in their homes, and since most were relatively new to Montreal the downtown campus was easily accessible via public transport.

At the interviews the consultants were presented with the option of completing a written questionnaire and of doing the interview in either English or French. This was to obtain basic biographical and linguistic background information as well as to see whether any felt comfortable enough to work in the newly acquired third language. All but one chose French. A second francophone student assisted me with the transcriptions.

4. ETHNOHISTORICAL LINGUISTIC BACKGROUND OF TARGET IMMIGRANT POPULATION

- (3) *Je préfère* (laughs) ... *je préfère arabe, c'est ma langue maternelle, j'aime bien français parce que j'ai fais mes études avec, j'aime bien l'anglais mais j'parle pas très, bien, mais je l'aime bien aussi, ...j'ai du mal avec berbère... quand les gens parlent très vite...* (Najat)

'I prefer Arabic, it's my maternal language, I like French because that's what I did my studies in, I like English very much, but I don't speak very well, I have trouble with Berber- when people speak very fast I have trouble...'

In 1912, when the French arrived, Morocco was already multilingual. Berber and Arabic were being spoken and these are still a large part of the linguistic landscape. Berber was the indigenous language spoken throughout North Africa before the arrival of the Arabs and covered a multitude of sometimes mutually incomprehensible dialects, none with written forms. Morocco alone had three of these dialects. The Arabs came in the 7th century A.D. bringing their religion and their language, which was taught through the reading of the Koran. Classical Arabic is the official language of Morocco, but Moroccan Arabic, the colloquial variety, is the mother tongue of the majority.

According to Bentahila (1983), the policy of the colonising French, when they arrived in Morocco, was to educate the elite to speak and think like they did, to believe in the universal superiority of the French language and culture and to forget their own.

In Tunisia after the French occupation, which lasted from 1883 until independence in 1956, one of the main goals was to "Arabise" the country, and in the end, they settled for French-Arabic bilingualism. Years of living under the influence of French language and culture meant that, as in the rest of North Africa, Tunisia developed an elite that is proud of its French education and culture (Stevens 1983).

- (4) *Oui, oui ... si on n'a pas des mots spécifiques, on utilise soit en Français ou en Arabe, (avec) amis, la plupart est en Français parce que... mes études ... sur l'économisme*

j'ai faite en Français, il n'y pas des mots spécifiques ... en Arabe en économisme.
(B.med)

'Yes, yes, ... if you don't have the specific words, you use French or Arabic, (with) friends, most of the time in French because, ... I did my studies in Economics, I did them in French, there aren't specific economic terms in Arabic.'

Sub-Saharan Africa differs from North Africa in that French, paradoxically, became the unifying language between ethnic groups that had been divided and amalgamated according to the needs of the conqueror (Bourhis 1982:48). In Sub-Saharan Africa, French was not taught as a second language but as if the children had had no language before, as if French were their mother tongue. But just as in North Africa, a Sub-Saharan elite, which had been educated in Europe or in European style schools, believed that French was the answer to modernisation, technology, and international communications.

Thus, language attitude research conducted on the target population in their own countries indicates that French carries the overt prestige of status and prosperity; by contrast, the indigenous languages, as well as Arabic to some degree, tend to be the idiom of poverty and the past. Indigenous languages in many countries are struggling for a place or at minimum a place as the manifestation, for all classes, of education and cultural expression. Moses related this memory:

- (5) *Mon père parce que lui c'était un monsieur qui voulait qu'on perfection aux niveaux des études etcetera dans la famille, on parlait toujours le Français mais ma mère nous parlait toujours une autre langue le Poular ou le Peul oui,... mais quand même avec mon père, parce que je ne peux pas parler ma langage Poular sans mettre un mot en Français, c'est pas possible. Je ne peux pas le ...parler a 100%, ...(avec) des années, c'est vrai, par exemple, il ya des mots que, il faut que je mette le Français, je ne peux pas le parler à 100% sans parler Français, donc vraiment ... la ... langue que j'aime c'est le Français, c'est ça.* (Moïse)

'My father was a man who wanted perfection at the level of education etc. in my family we always spoke French but my mother spoke us to in another language, Polar but even then with my father, because I can't speak my language Polar without putting a French word in, it's not possible. I can't speak (my language) 100%, (with) the years, it's true, for example, there are words that I, ... have to put in French, I can't speak it 100% without speaking French then really, ... the ... language that I love the most, it's French, that's it.'

5. IMMIGRATION IN QUEBEC/CANADA

During his teenage years in France, a young man of Algerian ancestry was told 'more than once' to 'go home'. He finally did return to the place where he had grown up, Montreal. He reported to the *Globe and Mail* that "In Canada, someone who wants to integrate can do so. Those who don't won't. It's not offered to you on a platter. But at least people here don't judge you by your outside appearance". (Peritz 2005:1).

Until the 70s, Quebec had a relatively stable birthrate, but when the rate fell Allophones (of another race), morphed into Allophones (speakers with native languages other than Canada's two official languages), and became political, rather than cultural, entities. The ethnic relations situation was reframed as ethnic categories became linguistic ones in the national discourse (Piché 2004:8). Further changes for immigration came in the late 90s when francisation of the public sphere necessitated further linguistic integration of immigrants. As Piché (2004) shows, this called for a new integration formula whose implementation fell squarely on the shoulders of the immigrants themselves; the bidirectional procedures required for successful integration were largely ignored.

Traditional borders between Anglophones and Francophones became less visible. New immigrants and their children entered into this murkiness and began to impact the linguistic composition (Lamarre, Paquette, Ambrosi & Kahn 2004). Thus, a generation after Bill 101 the face of Montreal was altered as was expected but not in the ways expected. Meintel & Fortin (2002:2) explain that Montreal is known for its ethnic retention -- the capacity ethnic communities have for retaining their distinctive character stands at a higher rate than anywhere else in Canada -- and in this environment accent, according to Fortin, becomes a "potent marker of insider/outsider status".

Socio-professionals (sociologists, psychotherapists, social workers etc.) were the target of the revised immigration policies that centred on proficiency in French and by 2001 9% of Muslims and 35% of Arabs in Canada were living in Quebec (Abu-Laban & Abu-Laban 2006). Forty percent of these immigrants arrived in Quebec with university degrees, compared with 23% of Canadians in the same 25–54 age group.

These highly educated immigrants may have the education and training to meet the criteria for middle-class employment, but managers do not always deem them suitable for these jobs (Leblanc 2002). Evans (2002) claims that feelings in Quebec towards language variation became more tolerant as sociolinguistic notions were introduced into primary and secondary classrooms; this, she proposes, fostered awareness of various regional and ethnic styles locally and in the francophonie. In spite of these adjustments there have been reports of job applicants being turned down for, among other reasons, their non-Quebecois French accents and of a rise in requests for name changes from Maghreb immigrants with obvious Arabic names (Helly 2004). One of the consultants illustrated how, when dealing with native Quebecers in his telephone sales job, he avoided potential problems that might result from his name: My consultant Oubaid showed awareness of this necessity:

- (6) *Ça fait combien maintenant? Dix jours .., une semaine à peu près que je fais le travail au téléphone ...et la je n'ai que des Canadiens Québécois au téléphone...Juste une fois un type a demandé ... mon nom, juste mon nom, parce que apparemment, en plus, j'ai (dû) changé mon nom c'était Thierry en faite, donc le (type m'a demandé) 'comment vous appelez vous?'((said in falsetto)) j'ai dis 'Thierry' etc.... mais... Ah oui, c'est emprunter parce que si je dis 'Oubaidallah' donc ... comprendre? Donc il va commencer à réfléchir sur moi 'ça vient d'où? ' etc. ... Donc c'est après, même Thierry c'était trop long, j'ai changé en Éric, c'est facile. (Oubaidallah)*

'It's been about 10 days, a week, that I've been working on the telephone... and there I only deal with Quebecois... just once a guy asked, ..., my name, just my name because, apparently I (had to) change my name, it was Thierry in fact, the (the guy asked me) "

What's your name" I said, "Thierry" etc.... But .. Ah... yes it was borrowed because if I say 'Obaidallah' then, ..., understand (?) then, he's going 'to begin to think about me, and ask 'where's that from?' etc. ... then afterwards, even Thierry was too long, I changed it to Eric, it's easy.'

Heller (1991) shows that European-trained immigrants often arrive in French-speaking Canada with the minimum expectation of being able to connect in French, but are actually faced with a French they find difficult to comprehend or that (in their eyes) is not even French. While the students in her study considered these differences to be superficial, they were not interested in incorporating this variety into their repertoire, their feeling being that this, in their eyes, was a sub-standard variety and not worth learning. We will see evidence of this linguistic posturing below.

6. FINDINGS

My assumption when constructing this pilot study was that the non-European Francophone immigrant, this *new* immigrant, would not be so very different from previous immigrants who are native speakers of one of Canada's official languages with only the important exception that, for the most part, they had been pre-selected for their high level of education and skills. I had also anticipated that they would bring along with their university degrees the international pride of being members of the francophonie.

Thus, my research question was whether being a member of the francophonie had actually facilitated integration as was expected by Quebec politicians and the immigrants themselves or whether the difference in linguistic perceptions are too great to be overcome. I also wanted to see if their variety of French continues to garner linguistic prestige in any way.

6.1. ROLE OF LANGUAGE IN DECISION TO IMMIGRATE

After the first interview, my Francophone assistant and I decided to add a question concerning the set of circumstances that had brought the consultant to Canada in general and to Quebec specifically. We wanted to know how large a part language had played in the final decision. Of the reasons for leaving one's homeland, attaining a better future remains at the top of the list:

- (7) *Je suis venu ici ... parce qu'il y a plus de perspectives ... : de réussites, et moyens de faire des études à n'importe quel âge, à n'importe, quel moment, puis ... faut dire aussi qu'y a une très bonne publicité pour la promotion d'immigration au Canada.*
(Mohcine)

'I came here because there were more opportunities for success and a way to go to school at any age at anytime, and, ..., I have to say too that there is a very good promotional campaign for immigration to Canada.'

- (8) *J'ai pris la décision d'immigrer, ça fait très longtemps en fait que je voulais partir au Canada. J'ai vu que c'était un pays neutre, qui commençait, donc, qui a déjà commencé d'être construit, ce n'est pas l'Europe qui était déjà construit et acceptait plus des étrangers* (Oubaid)

'The decision to immigrate was already made, I had wanted to come to Canada for a long time now. I saw that it was a country that was neutral, that is being, that had already begun to be built, this is not the case in Europe which is already built and was no longer accepting immigrants.'

By contrast, although language appears to be a deciding factor it was only when probed that it was mentioned. In one case, the interviewer explicitly asked whether the consultant would have come to Quebec if French weren't spoken here; after a long pause Mourad responded with the single word: **non**. Only Oubaid went on about this at a little more length:

- (9) *Canada c'est un pays qui accueille, francophone, donc francophone c'est très important pour moi ...si c'était anglophone, là, je ne saurais répondre mais je ne penserais pas, donc, j'aurais (pas) été si motivé pour partir, j'aurais eu peur avant.* (Oubaid)

'Canada is a welcoming country, francophone, so francophone is very important to me. If it were anglophone, I don't know what my answer would be, but I wouldn't think that I would have been as motivated to leave; I would have been scared before.'

6.2. LANGUAGE ATTITUDES

While consultants were mixed in their linguistic expectations, few were completely unaware of the bilingual linguistic situation in Canada. Some had expected Quebec to be more Anglophone than it turned out to be, and others were astonished at the amount of English they encountered. Some were taken aback that the types of jobs they were seeking would require English as well as French; others were, nonetheless, able to adjust to the continued importance of English in Quebec.

- (10) *Quelqu'un s'il parle français mieux il est fier de lui parce que le pays est francophone, bon quand je suis arrivé ici j'ai fais quelques cours d'anglais, pourquoi? Parce que le pays est francophone et ils nous exigent d'apprendre l'anglais pour travailler.* (Eppy)

'If someone speaks French better he is proud of himself because the country is Francophone, well, when I arrived here, I took some English courses, why?, because the country is Francophone and they expect that we learn English in order to find work.'

- (11) *Non, non pas du tout, non, non c'est pas une surprise je m'attendais à ça... donc (je suis) pessimiste de nature donc, Je m'attendais que tout le monde parle anglais et légèrement français dès le départ.* (Obaid)

'No, no, not at all, no it wasn't a surprise, I expected it so... I am a pessimist by nature so I expected that everybody would speak English and a little French.'

Additionally, all of the consultants were aware that the French spoken here is not a recently transplanted European variety and that the Quebecois themselves are aware of this.

And yet some expressed real shock at the actual differences and that the Quebecois were unable to understand the immigrants' international variety:

- (12) *Donc le français parlé au Québec, sincèrement, même les Québécois le savent, ils nous disent que ... ce n'est pas le même français que nous apprenions. La preuve ... que si les Québécois (sont) en France ils ne parlent pas (le) français du Québec, ils parlent l'anglais, on a déjà constaté ça, nous les immigrants, on observe que les Québécois au lieu d'aller en France de parler leurs langue Québécoise ils parlent l'anglais.* (Eppy)

'So, the French spoken in Quebec, sincerely even the Quebecois know it, they tell us that,, it's not the French that we learn. The proof is that if the Quebecois are in France, they don't speak Quebec French, they speak English, we've noticed that, we immigrants, we observe that the Quebecois instead of going to France and speaking Quebecois, they speak English.'

- (13) *Souvent si je parle le français, ben, là ou je travaillais avant, si je parle le français que j'ai appris, que je dirais le français littéraire, souvent les gens disent ils ont ... du mal à me comprendre, ben, je sais pas pourquoi.* (Moïse)

'Often if I speak French, well, there where I was working before, if I speak the French that I learned, what I'd say (is) literary French, often, people say, ... they have trouble understanding , well, I don't know why.'

All of the consultants were quite forthcoming in expressing their attitudes about the variety of language spoken here. As I expected, they consider their own variety to be much closer to and in some cases exactly like the European standard variety. Additionally, some appear to think that their hosts will share their appreciation of this variety.

- (14) *Mais ils y a des gens, ... Pour les gens qui sont, qui ont déjà vécu en France ou bien pour eux (ils) prennent ça d'une manière parce qu'ils se sentent une nostalgie comme,' vous étiez ou en France'?... À l'extérieur je sais pas, je ne peux pas juger mais parce que là ou j'ai beaucoup de contacts c'est là ou je travaille, j'ai beaucoup de contact avec les gens donc, là, je vois que ... les gens trouvent que ... je suis très gentil quand j'utilise les expressions, quand je dis, mais par exemple, 'passez une excellente soirée', 'pourrais-je parler à quelqu'un', donc, ou c'est à dire ils sont pas habitués à ce genres d'expressions sont les expressions normales mais les gens trouvent, ... qu'il y a une grande politesse quand on parle avec, ... c'est à dire, (cette) façon de parler.* (Mounir)

'But, there are some people, ... for people who are who have lived in France or well for them (they) take it in a (certain) way because they feel nostalgic, like...'you're from France?'... Outside, I don't know, I can't judge but, because where I have the most contact with people is at work, I have a lot of contact with people so there I see that ... people find that, ..., that I am very nice when I use expressions, when I say, for example, 'Have a lovely evening', 'Would it be possible for me to speak with someone?', then, or, I mean they are not used to these types of expressions, (these) are normal expressions,

but people find, they find that there is a great politeness when one speaks with, ... , I mean, this way of speaking.'

On the other hand, the director of the Integration Centre expressed a more nuanced understanding that Quebecois attitudes towards accommodation are sometimes negative:

- (15) *Il y a, il y a aussi les réactions négatives par rapport aux Québécois ... (il y a du monde) qui le prend, comme un espèce, je pense, d'assimilation pour conserver leur culture, conserver sa façon de parler, et puis, quand on a plus de mots Québécois dans notre conversation, plus on est vu comme, mettons, une personne qui, ... est un peu, pas transparente, mais, qui est comme l'éponge, en fin de compte, une personne qui n'a pas conservé son... authenticité.* (Yolande)

'There is, there is also a negative reaction on the part of the Quebecois, (there are people) who look at it, as a kind of, I think, assimilation, you have to preserve your culture, preserve your way of speaking, so then, the more Quebecois words in your conversation, the more you are seen as, let's say a person, ... who is a little, not transparent, but, who is like a sponge, in the end, a person who has not preserved ... their authenticity.'

6.3. LINGUISTIC STRATEGIES

As a consequence of feeling their French to be in many ways superior to the French they are exposed to here, nearly all of my consultants were fairly adamant about keeping "their own" French. Nonetheless, some of my consultants had pragmatically decided that, as this was their new home, they were willing to adjust to some degree, if only in order to be understood. And these choices were apparent in the ways in which they spoke French during the interview.

- (16) *Mais quand on arrive ici les gens parlent ils mettent 'là' partous (partout) ..., on est perdu là ... il faut vraiment exercer l'oreille trois ou quatre fois pour comprendre...parce que chez nous là ... C'est quand, mais là vous m'avez posé la question si je mets les mots a ... Québécois, là (phrase avant) je dis 'chez nous là'... quand ... je mets les mots Québécois bon je ... sens c'est après avoir dis que je réalise je dis quelque chose je vais (dire) 'bon' et je continue.* (Eppy)

'But when you arrive here, the people speak, they put 'there' (everywhere), you get lost...you really have to strain your ears two or three times to understand ... at home there, it's when, but look, you asked me the question if I use any Quebecois expressions, I said ' at home, there ...when I, I put in Quebecois words, well, I, I feel, I notice it after having said it, I say 'good' and I go on.'

- (17) *Ouais* (pronounced with a Québécois accent) ... *parfois. Mais ... je préfère...ben ... ça me ... mélange un peu mon français là, mais ... j'ai pris la décision de ... garder mon français international.* (Mohcine)

'Yeah... sometimes, but, ..., I prefer... , (it) mixes up my French a little, but , ..., I've made the decision to keep my international French.'

- (18) *Parfois je change, parce que .., pour ... me faire comprendre (j'utilise) quelques expressions mais parfois j'évite..., je fais ça exprès, j'évite de parler parce que je trouve que c'est pas du français correct. (il) y a des expressions que j'utilise que je trouve normal, joli pour ..., me faire comprendre (il) y a des expressions que j'évite totalement d'utiliser parce que c'est pas du français correcte. (Mounir)*

'To make myself understood (I use) some expressions but sometimes I avoid...I do it on purpose. I avoid speaking because I find that it's not proper French. ... (there) are some expressions that I use that I find normal, beautiful ...to make myself understood, (there) are some expressions that I totally avoid because it's not proper French.'

- (19) *Non. Parce que la plupart du temps surtout quand ... je parle avec des profs ou bien pour un entretien ou bien avec des gens j' utilise mon français qui est ... mon vrai français parce que je trouve que c'est, comme on dit, ... ça passe mieux, ça donne une bonne image quand on parle un français correcte avec ..., des expressions françaises mais surtout à l'extérieur pour faire des courses c'est là où j'utilise des expressions Québécoises. (Mounir)*

'No, because most of the time, especially when... I speak with profs or well for (a) service (call) or well with some people I use my French that is...my real French because I find that it's, like they say ...it goes over better, it gives a good impression when you speak proper French with... French expressions but especially outside, to run errands, there's where I use Quebecois expressions.'

- (20) *Oui, par exemple je travaille essentiellement, je travaille avec ..., les personnes de population immigrante aussi en fait des Québécois d'origine et j'ai réalisé que, ... en fait, ma façon de parler je vais la modifier selon en fait, les deux populations et même d'ailleurs avec mes collègues, ..., de travail j'ai dû parfois changer mon langage ou expliquer les mots j'ai utilisé parce que, en fait, ce n'est pas des mots usuels, en fait ..., oui j'adapte mon langage, {yes I adapt my language}, en utilisant un langage moins compliqué. (Yolande)*

'Yes, I work essentially, I work with persons from the immigrant population, also, in fact, some native Quebecois and I've realised that., ..., in fact, that my way of speaking , I'm going to modifier it according, in fact, (to) the two populations and even, moreover with my, ..., work colleagues, I have to sometimes change my language or explain the words I use because, in fact, they are not everyday words, yes, I adopt my language {in English} I adapt my language}, by using less complicated vocabulary.'

Thus, many of the consultants were pragmatic in their plans to one day be able to use the lexicon and if possible the pronunciation of their adopted land, others hoped to truly integrate and yet others were not so sure attempting to change to suit the new environment was such a

good idea. Nonetheless, most of my consultants appear to be well on their way to integrating, at least linguistically, into what is considered to be Québécois society:

(21) *Quand je m'énérve je dis ... 'tu m'irrites tabernak'!* (Mourad)

'When I get upset I say ... you're irritating me "tabernak" !'

(22) *Bah, c'est comme, mais non, ça n'est pas assez Québécois, alors, euh, 'c'est tannant'(pause), 'sacrifice tabernak'!* (Yolande)

'Well, it's like, but no, that's not Quebecois enough, so, ah, 'that's annoying' "sacrifice tabernak!"'

(23) *Quand tu me fais quelque chose ... que je n'aime pas je dis tabernak!* (Bah)

'When you do something to me ... that I don't like I say : "tabernak".'

7. CONCLUSION

New reports indicate that recent Francophone immigrants to Montréal are leaving Quebec to learn English in other provinces and not returning. But for those who remain, their future remains to be seen. Blain states that immigrants from the professional sector undergo a “negative entrance effect; a transition penalty of an initial socio-professional dequalification” (2006:1) She found, as I did, that their most viable options were to return to school for requalification, to modify their objectives by accepting lower positions in their fields, or to leave their fields altogether. As for language, she reports that being Arabic-speaking had a negative effect that disappeared after 10 years; while several of my consultants from North and sub-Saharan Africa have been able to requalify within 5 years.

Cameron and Lalonde (1994) discuss the manifestation of ethnicity and state that either the individual or group may choose to integrate and retain their cultural diversity or assimilate and abandon their cultural heritage; Canada claims to ask the former of its immigrants. Chambers (2001) describes the bigger investment some people have made in acquiring and using the standard dialect. It is well known that opportunities of getting an interview or an apartment can be limited by accent alone.

In line with previous studies, the group studied here seems determined to make rather large adjustments, such as changing their names to hide their ethnic identity, accepting work they were incredibly overqualified for, or starting over from scratch academically. However, language, at least at a conscious level, seems non-negotiable. *A la* here a *tabernac* there seems to be as far as most are willing to go in terms of linguistic integration. This determination seems to be supported by their seemingly unshakeable certainty that the host speech community either admires their linguistic acuity or should admire it.

However, the question remains for non-European francophone immigrants: what limitations on social and economic integration are placed on standard or close to standard speakers who don't look the part. I hope that through continuing my study these questions can, at least in part, be answered. Meanwhile, one of my consultants had this to say about his chances of integrating socially:

- (24) *Je vais-je vais me sentir toujours un étranger, même si j'parle cent langues, ici j'veis me sentir un étranger parce que j'suis pas née ici j'suis pas élever ici.* (Mounir)

'I'm going to, I'm going to always feel like a stranger, even if I speak 100 languages, here, I, I'm going to feel like a stranger because I was not born here, I was not raised here.'

On the other hand, the face and language of Montreal continues to change and even the newer members of the speech community seem well aware of these transformations in the social fibre. When asked if he had ever felt a negative reaction to his non-Quebecois accent, B.med said:

- (25) *No, for this question I haven't answer, you know why, because, ... all ... the place where I live ... before ... now, the dépanneurs, ..., are Arab or Chinese now.* (B.med)

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