The (non-)adaptation of /VN/ sequences in English loanwords in Québec French (QF):
A sociolinguistic and syllabic exploration
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It is well-known that when speakers of one language use loanwords borrowed from another language, illicit segments must be adapted to conform to the borrowing language's phonology (Haugen 1950). Thus, when French speakers use the English loanword *hockey* [**hɑ**ki] they realize it [ɔki] deleting /h/, a segment that is not allowed in French. It is generally assumed that bilinguals, who have knowledge of both source and borrowing language phonologies, are responsible for borrowing (Haugen 1950). Thus, loanword phonological integration is constrained by both source and borrowing language phonologies.

Previous studies have theorized on the process(es) mediating loanword phonological integration (ie., Paradis and collaborators promote a phonological approach while others including Kenstowicz, Peperkamp, Dupoux uphold a perceptual approach) or on societal influences on loanword integration (Weinreich 1963; Matras 2009); few have used sociolinguistic corpora to investigate actual speaker realizations in extemporaneous speech (exceptions include Friesner 2008, 2009, and Poplack, Sankoff, and Miller 1988). The existing corpus-based studies have often focused on the adaptation of individual segments judged illicit because either their distribution is different in each language (eg., QF high vowels variants are distributionally restricted in word-final syllables: tense in open syllables, *pis* [p**i**] 'worse', lax in closed syllables, *pile* [pɪl] 'battery'; whereas English word-final closed syllables can contain either tense or lax vowels: *beat* [b**i**t], bit [bɪt]), or the segment is not found in the phonemic inventory of the borrowing language (as in the *hockey* example above). None of these studies investigates diatopic variation in loanword adaptation, though Poplack, Sankoff, and Miller, 1988 examines adaptation by speakers from different neighborhoods in Ottawa-Hull. Additionally, although constraints on syllable shape can influence how loanwords are integrated (eg., French nasal vowels are unpacked to a [VN] sequence by speakers of Fula if the unpacked /N/ fits into a CVC syllable, but if unpacking leads to a CVCC syllable, the /N/ is deleted (Paradis and Prunet 2000:327–8)), few studies have explicitly examined how borrowing can impact borrowing language syllables, with the notable exception of historical studies (see Gess 1999; Montaño 2017).

The present study makes use of corpora recorded in two cities in Québec: the 1984 recording of the Language Change Across the Lifespan corpora of spoken Montréal French (Thibault & Vincent, 1990) and a corpus of spoken French from Saguenay (Chicoutimi-Jonquière) (Paradis, 1985), representing data from two different dialect zones within QF, although recent studies show that the divisions are more variable based on the feature under consideration and show leveling across QF (Côté, 2012).

Focusing on the integration of /VN/ sequences in English loanwords in QF, this study addresses questions of diatopic variation, intracommunity variation, and, in the context of a larger project, the effect of borrowing on syllable structure. English /VN/ sequences are always realized as a nasalized oral vowel (*bingo* [bĩŋgoʊ]), while QF /VNC/ and /VN#/ sequences are realized as nasal vowels (*pain* 'bread' [pɛ̃]). What happens, then, when QF speakers borrow words such as *bingo*, do they maintain the English oral vowel-nasal consonant sequence ([bɪŋgo]) or adapt a French nasal vowel ([bɛ̃go])? Do speakers in Saguenay and Montréal treat these sequences in the same way? Is there other variation in adaptation patterns that is not diatopic? Finally, /VN/ sequences help shed light on changes in possible coda constituents of QF. The change in realization of /VN/ from [VN] to [Ṽ] has been analyzed as part of a move toward a CV syllable in the 11–13/14th centuries (Gess

1999); modern QF realizations of [VNC] and [VN]# might be evidence for a move away from simpler syllable shapes, in line with the diachronic findings in Montaño 2017.

Preliminary results suggest that there is significantly more importation than is expected in loanwords, suggesting that the diachronic trend to allow nasal consonants in the coda (and, in general, more complex syllables) is continuing. However, there is evidence of variation in a certain lexical items: while most /VN/ sequences are realized [VN], items such as *camping* are realized both [k**am**pɪŋ] and [k**ɑ̃**pɪŋ]. There may be some effect of frequency in these findings as well, since extremely high frequency items such as *le fun* show absolute conventionalization with the realization [fɔ**n**]. Thus far, there is no evidence of diatopic variation in the findings, but data collection is ongoing.

This research is part of a larger study focused on a number of phonological processes that are active in QF, specifically high vowel laxing and word-final consonant clusters (CC) simplification. While the adaptation of /VN/ sequences focuses on one subset of possible coda consonants, the larger project addresses questions related to the right-edge of the word in QF and the evolution of the constraints on word-final syllables.

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