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***Frenitalianese in Montreal: when French, Italian and English
collide***

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Introduction

As a child, we were told by our grandmother about her personal experience as an immigrant in Canada. She arrived in the Old Port of Montreal, Québec, after a voyage on board a ship which lasted ten days. In that “new” country, she could finally reunite with her older siblings and the man she married some years later. After the Second World War, Italy was destroyed and extremely poor. They went to Montreal dreaming of a better life. They started rebuilding their lives; they worked, got married and had children there. After a while, they became Canadian citizens and thanks to this, we could attain the dual citizenship from our mother.

Once their lives stabilized, our grandmother and some of her siblings along with their families decided to return to Italy and live out the rest of their lives here. When we were younger, we found it normal to feel both Italian and Canadian. However, as we got older, we began to realise that, besides our Canadian passport, we had around eighty relatives who lived in Montreal. Then, one day, we had the fantastic opportunity to visit Montreal. We saw the home where our grandparents and their siblings lived and settled their lives in, the place where the beautiful family we are part of started. What really surprised us was the fact that, generation by generation, the Italian culture eased its way into Montreal and established its own community known today as Little Italy. We could not help but notice that the collision of Italian, French and English cultures had created a unique interweaving language that we have decided to call, generally, *Frenitalianese*.

The language, above all, is what best represents this incredible mixture because it is the mirror of cultural and generational changes. For precisely this reason, curiosity drives us to try to illustrate the evolution of the language spoken by Italian immigrants in Montreal through this thesis. The analysis starts from the French and British settlement. These European countries had a huge influential effect, evolving the cultures and languages that were already established in Canada. Centuries later, immigration made its contribution to changing the language of this country, while the native language of the immigrants also changed over time. Taking as an example an Italian family which immigrated to Montreal, the aim of this paper is to highlight all those lexical, phonetic, semantic and syntactic properties that have changed, evolved or disappeared through four generations in the Italian language they speak.

1 The arrival of French and English languages in Canada

1.1 The History of Canada: from New France to the British settlement

Canada was inhabited by Aboriginal people long before European settlers had ever set foot in the country. In 1497, King Henry VII of England sent the Italian navigator John Cabot (Born *Giovanni Caboto*) on an expedition in search of a more northern passage to India, but what was discovered was Newfoundland: John Cabot was the first European to have disembarked in Canada after the Viking Era. Years later, in 1534, the French explorer Jacques Cartier went ashore at the Gaspé Peninsula and took possession of the territory in the name of King Francis I of France, baptizing it with the name of New France. One year later on his second voyage, Cartier came into contact with Iroquoian villages on both shores of the St. Lawrence River, at Stadacona, near the current Quebec City, and Hochelaga, in the immediate vicinity of Mount Royal in the present-day Montreal. However, the real beginning of the French colonization in the St. Lawrence Valley began in 1608, when the lieutenant Samuel de Champlain established a permanent settlement at Cap Fort, the ancient site of Quebec City, which became the capital city of New France. In 1759, the British army took possession of Quebec City and New France fell a year later. The French army and the ruling elite left the conquered territory. Ordinary people, the Roman Catholic clergy, lesser merchants and some members of the civil administration, most of whom were born in Canada, stayed in the country and became British subjects. In 1763, France ceded definitely Canada to Great Britain through the Treaty of Paris.

1.2 The rise of Quebec French

The first colonists were mostly non-francophone except for the migrants from Paris area, who most likely spoke a popular form of French. The provinces that contributed the most to these migrations were those of the northern and western regions of France. The immigrants came from Normandy, Aunis, Perche, Brittany, Paris and Île-de-France, Poitou, Maine, Saintonge and Anjou, most of those being regions where French was rarely spoken at that time. Gradually, a linguistic transfer towards French occurred, leading to the linguistic unification of all the ethnic groups coming from France. Unlike the language spoken in France in the XVII and XVIII centuries, French in New France was fairly unified. With the onset of British settlers, Quebec French became isolated from European French. Rapidly, the French-speaking colonists were absorbed into the English-speaking society of British North America. Gradually, English immigration was encouraged and trade quickly passed on to

British and British-American merchants who migrated to Quebec City, Trois-Rivières, and Montreal. French, up until then the lingua franca in all aspects of social life, was quickly relegated to the second rank in trade and government. The educated classes, however, began to practice French-English bilingualism by necessity.

1.3 The change of the French language

After the French Revolution, the standard pronunciation in France changed to that of the bourgeois class of Paris. Quebec French, instead, retained many pronunciations and expressions shared with modern Oïl languages like Norman and Picard because speakers of these languages of France predominated among the settlers of New France. Therefore, while in France the French of the Parisian middle-class became the national standardized language, the French of the Ancien Régime kept evolving on its own in Canada. The most important change involved the pronunciation of the diphthong *oi*, pronounced /we/ before the so-called dialect clash (*choc des patois*) and /wa/ after the linguistic revolution. The example glossary below depicts some of these lexical changes.

Quebec French (Ancien Régime)	Post-Revolution French	English translation
Abrier	Couvrir	To cover
Barniques	Lunettes	Eyeglasses
Chantepleure	Robinet	Faucet
Garrocher	Lancer, jeter	To throw

What is more, we should take into account the undeniable fact that Canadian-French speakers had lived alongside and among English speakers for two and a half centuries, ever since the beginning of British administration in 1763. Thus, Anglicisms in Quebec French tend to be longstanding and part of a gradual, natural process of borrowings.

The language also began to borrow words from Aborigines, especially place names such as *Quebec*, *Canada* and *Hochelaga*, and words like *atoca* (cranberry) and *achigan* (largemouth bass) to describe the flora and fauna of the country. The name “Canada”, for instance, comes from the Huron-Iroquois term “Kanata”, which means “my village” or “my settlement”. When Jacques Cartier came on the shores of St. Lawrence River for the second time, two Aboriginal youths told the French explorer about the route to Kanata; they were actually

referring to the village of Stadcona. For lack of another name, Cartier used the word “Canada”, modifying the original pronunciation of the name “Kanata”, to describe not only the village but also the entire area controlled by French settlers.

1.4 The origin of Quebec English

The vast majority of British settlers, who arrived in the Americas in the XVII century, came from Ireland, Scotland and West Country. Their language was characterised by rhoticity, such as a postalveolar approximant [ɹ] or a retroflex approximant [ɻ] pronunciation of the letter r. Most of the North American speakers have retained rhoticity in their speeches because of this influence. In addition, British settlers brought with them the English language of their time, such as Middle English or Early Modern English, like the above-mentioned case of the French language. For this reason, American English kept words like *fall* or the past participle *gotten* that gradually became obsolete in Britain. Moreover, the proximity with the Natives (from which, for example, the words *raccoon* and *opossum* derive) and the closeness with settlers coming from other European countries, such as France, Germany, Netherlands and Spain, provoked a colourful network of borrowings. For instance, the term *cookie* has a Dutch origin, the word *rodeo* a Spanish one.

The French language, above all, had a profound influence on Quebec English. When the British took New France, the population was unable to understand English. Therefore, ordinances were published in French and, to accomplish this, numerous Canadians were allowed to participate in the administration of justice.

All these factors put together constitute the preamble to the English and French speeches you can hear nowadays in Montreal.

2. The first generation of Italian immigrants in Montreal

2.1 The premise of the first generation's story

When the first waves of immigrants arrived in Canada following the Second World War, they found a complex situation from a linguistic perspective. Especially in Quebec, they had to cope with two languages: English *and* French.

After the Canadian Confederation in 1867, English had become the language of business and communication. Also in Montreal, where the majority of citizens were francophone, English was the language of its commercial activities. The First World War had brought a hint of modernisation with it: French and English radio and television programs were broadcast for the first time in Canada. Thanks to this, Canadians discovered European pronunciations and started borrowing terms from contemporary English and French. Nevertheless, Quebec French and Quebec English had evolved differently from their European equivalents.

Through the centuries, the French speech in Canada has evolved on its own as well as the English language. They are the result of centuries of both French and English settlements over the XVII and XVIII centuries, a set of borrowings from the Natives and people of other nationalities. English and French languages, as a sort of a circle, mutually borrowed words from one another. In this way, a French speaker used an English term to fill a communicative gap in a determined context, as well as an English speaker could use a French word when he or she could not find the equivalent term in English.

Lexically, for example, Quebec French uses the aboriginal word *ouaouaron* to indicate a bullfrog. In addition, the term *chum* (/tʃʌm/ in English, /tʃɔm/ in French) is believed a shortening of the term chamber mate and it replaces the French “copain” and the English “boyfriend”; *puncher* instead of “donner un coup de poign” derives from the English verb to punch. Moreover, some lexical items of Quebec French have the same general meaning in European French, yet they are used in different contexts. *Arrêt*, for instance, is the writing on Quebec stop signs, although in France all such signs say *Stop*.

What is more, from a semantic point of view, we should indicate some words that have different meanings in Quebec French and European French. Let us take the case of the term *dépanneur* (usually called “the dep” in Quebec English): it is a convenience store in Canada, but a repairer in France.

The pronunciation of words in Quebec French, then, was and remained different: the phonemes [d] and [t], which in European French are alveolar sounds, become affricate

consonants in Quebec French [dz], [ts]; the diphthong *oi* is pronounced /we/ instead of /wa/. Therefore, the sentence *tu es parti* (you left) is not pronounced /ty e parti/, but /tsy e partsi/; the term *Québécois* is pronounced /kebekwe/ instead of /kebekwa/.

Quebec English, too, has some important features that make it different from other forms of English. The closeness to French language and culture, above all, has introduced to Quebec English vocabulary words like *metro*, which substitutes *subway*, or *guichet* instead of *ATM*. The term *terrace* is usually pronounced /tɛ'vas/ and spelled *terasse* like in French.

Thus, Italian immigrants, as well as all the other allophone communities that live in Montreal, encountered such a complicated bilingual situation when they arrived there. Nevertheless, they had found, over time, a very amazing solution in order to deal with this linguistic problem.

2.2 Who were the Italian immigrants?

Between the 1950s and the 1960s, a huge number of people left Italy to migrate overseas. The 1961 Census recorded 101 000 inhabitants of Italian origins in Montreal. The majority of them came from small villages of southern Italy, such as Abruzzi, Molise and Campania (Villata, 1985: 33). As was the case of our family, most of the Italian immigrants already had some relatives living in Montreal. What seemed incredible was that “this integration to the already established groups of immigrants profoundly mitigated the crisis caused by disorientation” (Villata, 1985: 34, my translation). Therefore, the first Italian immigrants did not experience an enormous cultural and linguistic shock. They worked with their “compaesani”, such as people coming from their same village or region and they used their dialect to communicate with each other. As underlined by Bruno Villata, “they came from the countryside and their language was merely limited to their dialect. They could not even understand people who were from other Italian regions” (2010: ii, my translation).

According to the information we gathered from the first generation, at the beginning they understood neither English nor French. Time after time, they began to understand words and expressions linked to their working field. Especially when they had an important position in their job, they were obliged to speak at least French. Nevertheless, most of them learnt other European languages, such as Ukrainian in order to ease the communication with the other foreign workers.

The proximity with other regional dialects led a substantial change in the Italian language immigrants spoke in Montreal. To allow the communication with other Italians, they started modifying their dialects by using words they heard frequently. In this way, a new language

came to life. It was not proper Italian nor a dialect that had prevailed on the others: it was a completely new speech.

A detailed analysis of the first generation is fundamental to explain the change of the Italian language in Montreal and to give reason to its gradually decreasing usage through generations.

2.3 A hybrid form of the Italian language in Montreal: the Italianese

When new immigrants from Italy arrived there, they joined the Italian-speaking community in Montreal and absorbed their way of speaking, even though, at the beginning, they found it to be a little unusual (Villata, 2010: iii, my translation).

As a result, Italian immigrants started using this new language even at home. The language used at home became the means of communication Italians used with their friends, relatives and the speech they could impart to their children.

“Italianese” (the acronym of Italiano, Francese, and Inglese) is the term which Professor Villata used to identify the Italian language spoken by Italian immigrants of Montreal and to distinguish it from one of other cities, such as Toronto, what is referred to as “Italiense” (the acronym of Italiano and Inglese) (Villata, 1985: 56). Thus, if Italian immigrants of Toronto found themselves in a bilingual environment, the new inhabitants of Montreal had to deal with three languages at the same time.

To depict the language of the first generation, it was fundamental for us to hear the sounds and the pronunciations of the words they said because orality is the feature that characterises this group of people the most. The majority of them obtained a primary education in Italy and once in Montreal, they began to work. For this reason, the largest number of terms they learnt was represented by a sequence of sounds that they began to learn by heart. Moreover, the lack of interest along with the inability in reading local newspapers weakened the written competence of the Italian language and disadvantaged the rise of a written ability in French or English. In other words, their way of speaking is a mind-blowing mixture of English, French and Italian terms.

First, the pronunciation that speakers retained is the one of the native dialects. For example, an immigrant from the Italian Molise region will preserve all the phonemes which are characteristic of their region. When talking in French and English, instead, the speaker gets

closer to the proper pronunciation of a word or a sentence, but it is clear that the knowledge of the language is mostly oral. For instance, the question *What's the matter with you?* is pronounced /uozmariu/; *Rue Saint Hubert* is said /rusanzuber/ because those expressions are thought to be a single term.

Then, from a morpho-phonological point of view, these speakers tend to integrate loanwords and neologisms to Italian terms. They add the vowel sounds commonly used for feminine and masculine words, namely the vowels –a and –o, to Italian words that have a morphologically different final vowel. In this way, a word like *pesce* (fish) becomes *pescio* in Italianese and a *problema* (problem) is transformed in a *problemo*.

The same process occurs when Italian Montrealer speakers try to translate some French or English words into Italian by simply adding a suffix to an English or French term. The Italian *capo*, for example, is substituted with *bosso/bossa*, from the English word “boss”; *il frigidero*, instead of *il frigorifero* stands for the Quebec French term *le frigidaire* (the fridge). Moreover, the interference between English and French provokes another morphological phenomenon concerning desinences. A variation can be especially observed when a word has the same ending letters in these two languages. For instance, the term *celebration/célébration* becomes *la selebrazione* in Italianese, while in the Italian language the equivalent word is *festa*; *governo*, from the French and English words *gouvernement/government*, replaces the Italian term *governo*.

However, the most interesting feature of this hybrid language concerns the semantic field. Loanwords and calques indicate those words that are currently used in a language but have a foreign origin. A language can borrow a term in two cases: when it is necessary because it does not exist in the target language (necessary loanword) or when a word exists in the target language, but the original word appears to be more appropriate or – in most of the cases – fashionable than the other one (luxury loanword). We can also have a simple translation of a term to which desinences of the target language are added according to its grammatical rules: this is the so-called calque. According to Bruno Villata and confirmed by our research, among the most common loanwords we can find *bisnisse* (*business* in English), *commanda* (*commande* in French, *ordine* in Italian and *order* in English) and *norza* (*nurse* in English, *infermiera* in Italian) (Villata, 2010: 20). Sometimes, an Italian word can have two equivalent loanwords, one derived from English and the other borrowed from French. For example, *permesso* or *licenza* (*permis* in French and *licence* in English) refers to the Italian term

patente; *tenta* and *penta* (*teint* in French and *painting* in English) stand for the Italian word *vernice*. *Garabiccio* (*spazzatura* in Italian) translates the Canadian English word *garbage* (*ibid.* : 21).

“Who uses the term *permesso*, for instance, is unlikely to adopt *licenza*, even if he knows its meaning” (Villata, 2010: 23, my translation). This means that everyone has its own preference in borrowing words from French or English. Moreover, all the words need to be introduced to their own context of usage, because the main goal of a language is always communication (*ibid.* : 23). Loan translations are also common among the Italian community of Montreal. We can hear *basso città* (*centro città* in Italian) translated from the English term *downtown* or *prendere una fotò* (instead of *scattare una foto*) from the French expression *prendre une photo* or the English *take a photo*; *andare a la campagna* (to go to the countryside) substitutes *andare in campagna* in Italian.

Another phenomenon that characterises the Italianese is the use of the article in relation to some Italian words caused by a poor acknowledgment of the actual spelling of the terms. For instance, *l'uccello* (the bird) is pronounced *lu cello*; *gli occhiali* (the eyeglasses) become *gli chiali*, and *la lasagna* is transformed in *la sagna* (Villata, 2010: 29). Sometimes the wrong spelling is due to a dialectal factor and to the presence of dialectal articles like *u*, *lu*, *a* that stand for the Italian articles *il*, *la*. Moreover, this language has also a hybrid, yet limited written form. The spelling of a word or phrase is very adapted to the English and French phonology. For this reason, *c'è* /tʃ ε/ may be written *che*, and *che* /ke/ is often written *que*.

Lastly, the cultural interference has had a key role in the rise of this hybrid speech. When the first Italians arrived in Montreal, they dealt with a different reality in which, consequently, they could find a great range of new things they had never seen in Italy (Villata, 1985: 57-58). This mainly occurred with food and beverages: *sevenop* and *gingerella* were used to indicate 7up and Ginger Ale, unknown to Italian immigrants as well as peanut butter, which became *burro di pinotz*. The governmental and financial systems were different too. This explains the adoption of the term *sciomaggio* instead of the proper Italian *disoccupazione* to translate the French word *chômage* (unemployment) or *cecco/cecca*, a check, for the Italian *assegno*, a common method of payment in the past.

The whole of these features forms this unique speech that the first generation of Italian immigrants has passed down to the second and the third generations.

3. The second generation: linguistic and socio-cultural changes

3.1 The displacement of Italian immigrants and the birth of the second generation

In 1976, we were witnessing a displacement of Italian immigrants from the downtown area to the suburbs of Montreal, mainly to Laval and Rivière-des-Prairies. Moreover, the flux of immigrants had turned the tide and the number of Italian Montreal inhabitants who came back to Italy was by far higher than the one of the new immigrants (Villata, 1985: 35). This change occurred together with the birth of the second generation of Italian migrants.

The second generation of Italian immigrants, such as the sons and daughters of the first generation, were born in Montreal and they experienced a situation that was very different from that of their parents.

As bilingual individuals, they had to cope with two realities at the same time: on one hand, the domestic environment where they spoke Italian, on the other hand, the scholastic and working places where they were asked to talk in English and French. So, in the way of speaking of the Italian Canadian second generation, it must not go unnoticed that a series of changes has occurred from a linguistic point of view. This is because languages consist of a dynamic stream of words: they get their meaning enriched by every single element that is part of a precise context.

To better depict the situation lived by the second generation, we asked them some questions that go beyond the simple linguistic research. It is important to underline that the Italian language - the hybrid Italian spoken in Montreal- was their first language when they were children. Until the age of 5 or 6, they mainly spoke Italian and this caused some integration problems towards the other non-Italian children. One of the interviewed answered: “I didn’t have too many difficulties, nor did I have to face racism, but I had problems with French speaking children...they were a bit snobby!”

However, the problems disappeared with the beginning of school. Before Bill 101 entered into force in 1976, the choice of an English or a French school does not appear to have been dictated by the preference of one of the two languages. After that date, instead, *the charter of the French language* imposed that all the young allophones attend French schools. Nevertheless, their parents continued, whenever possible, to alternate their children’s English and French education, so that they could learn both languages. This gave them a wider range

of employment opportunities, given the fact that French and English are required at the same level in the working field.

3.3 The differences between the first and the second generation

What immediately makes possible to distinguish the second generation from the first one is the language they prefer for their routine communication. If the first generation, as already mentioned, usually uses the Italian language, the second generation prefers English even at home with siblings and friends. A young second-generation allophone needs to adapt his behaviour to the system of values in which he interacts continuously (Villata, 1985: 155):

[i]n order to be accepted by his group of friends, a teenager is ready to abandon the language and culture of his parents. That is the reason why the name Carmela becomes Camie and Giuseppe, Joe (ibid. : 155, my translation).

The Italian language is relegated to the mere communication with parents and relatives. Moreover, everything related to the domestic environment has predominantly retained the Italian term. Food, for instance, is the lexical category in which the Italian language still prevails, especially when the term indicates typical dishes eaten on special occasions like Christmas and Easter (e.g. lasagne, cannelloni).

However, they claim to use the dialects of their parents when they are in the family context with people of their age and to mix it with English. In addition, the second generation declares to use Italian even with their children, who will constitute the third generation analyzed. The usage of Italian language between the second and the third generation cannot be compared to the one between the first and the second generation. Italian language is, now, limited to some words, such as *mamma mia*, *buono*, *bello*, *stai zitto*, *ciao*, *va bene* and *grazie*. Before, in contrast, parents spoke with their children almost exclusively in Italian. For this reason, the second generation has gradually lost its skills in speaking Italian, even if they just need to get in contact with a native Italian person to regain them.

According to our data, the percentage of Italian language used in the relation first-second generation and that spoken between second and third generation, has decreased from 90% to 20%. Nevertheless, the second generation, recognising Italian as their mother tongue, considers it as the language they know the most after English. Thus, English tops the list of their language knowledge and skills.

3.4 English influence

Between the 1970s and the 1980s, when the United States led fashion from the clothing to the music field, the second generation was living its teenage years. They watched North American TV series such as Happy Days, Charlie's Angels and Bonanza, and listened to Michael Jackson's and Jimi Hendrix's songs along with English music bands such as Led Zeppelin and the Queen. They were totally embedded in the American culture and they started using North American slang to communicate to each other. In this way, English became the language they used the most, especially because it was the most diffused and internationally spoken language. Nowadays, it is their strongest language, the one used within their families and with their friends.

3.5 French influence

The French language, instead, has always had a minor importance in their lives because it represents, in their opinion, a mere means of communication used outside the home environment, such as in public places. All the second-generation questioned people affirm that their French language is not as skilful as the English one. The acknowledgment of this language stayed connected to the school and it has never been sustained by a constant practice in some contexts (for example, spare time), where the English language is certainly stronger.

The reason is that French is, above all, the language of the working context. After the Quiet Revolution (the 1960s) and Bill 101 (1976), French regained the linguistic importance it was going to lose in the Quebec region. From that time on, French speakers were protected as a linguistic minority. In practical terms, when you are in a public place, the communication between a customer and a shop assistant, for example, has to start in French, and then it can switch to English if the customer does not speak this language. We should point out that the French usage in public places is not mandatory, but "suggested".

According to our research, French is also the language of Quebec culinary traditions. For example, the *poutine* /putzin/, such as French fries with cheese curds and gravy, originated in rural Quebec in the 1950s, retains its French name among the English speaking community. The maple baked bean dish known as *les fèves au lard*, instead, has an English origin (New England) but belongs to the Quebec traditions since the beginning of the XX century, reason why it has a French name.

4. The third and fourth generations: an amazing linguistic collision

4.1 General considerations

This group is composed by the third generation of immigrants, such as the grandchildren of the first Italian migrants aged under 30. This range, in turn, can be divided into two subcategories: third generation between 18 and 30 years of age and third generation under 18 years of age. The choice of this differentiation is due to the fact that in the second subgroup the Italian language seems, in our opinion, to have completely disappeared. So, while the oldest retain a knowledge- although limited- of the Italian language, the youngest have entirely lost this skill. The first ones try to communicate with their grandparents in Italian and have a passive understanding of this language that is still very strong. By contrast, the second subcategory appears not to be able to understand the native language of their grandparents. Therefore, they find common ground with the first generation in English or French usage.

4.2 Third generation between 18 and 30 years of age

Let us start with the group that, from our point of view, shows the most amazing collision of Italian, French and English: the third generation between 18 and 30 years of age.

In the research conducted for this paper, they are all the children of the second generation and they still live with their parents. The majority of them work and only a small part among them is attending college or university (4 cases). According to the information we collected, 90% attended an English education system and only 10% of them had French and an English education at school. The reasons for these different choices are various. Some of them declare to have preferred an English high school or an English college because they feel their French to be weaker than their English language. On the other hand, a smaller group went on attending both French and English education systems. What we could notice is that a solid knowledge base in these two languages is very important in the working environment. “It was hard to study and go to school in both languages, but now in the working environment it is for me a better edge understanding and speaking both languages”, said one of the interviewed while talking about the importance of languages. The French language, above all, is extremely important- we dare say essential- in the working life of Montreal. However, English is necessary when you work for any company that sells goods outside Quebec.

In the university field too, bilingualism is important. For example, in the eyes of those who do not live in a country with two official languages, a law book of McGill University should seem very unusual because its pages are divided into two parts with the same content but a different language. The bilingualism is a mandatorily required skill in the majority, but not in all the universities of Quebec. According to section 23 of the Charter, a limited right to receive publicly funded primary and secondary schooling is provided in the two official languages when they are in a minority situation, namely, English-language schooling in Quebec, and French-language schooling in the rest of the country.

Therefore, even if bilingualism is not a compulsory element within the educational system, students are required to have skills in both languages in the majority, but not in all the universities of Quebec. McGill, for example, is one of only three English-language universities in Quebec and fluency in French is not a requirement to attend. However, there are some exceptions: the Faculty of Law does require all students to be "passively bilingual". This means that all students must be able to understand written and spoken French - or English if the student is Francophone - since English or French may be used at any time in a course.

4.3 The relationship with the Italian language

First, we have to remember that they are the grandchildren of the first generation, who speak predominantly the hybrid Italian described before. Therefore, we cannot deny that the Italian language takes on a key role in their lives. At least, they all retain a passive knowledge of Italian. Most of them, however, are able to speak the type of Italian language they learnt from their grandparents when they were children. Moreover, they declare that the Italian language is not only linked to the communication with their grandparents or with other first-generation relatives, but it is part of their everyday lives and conversations. In fact, 70% of them claims to be more skilful in Italian than in French, which they consider as their third language. On the other hand, only a 30% confesses to have a bad knowledge of the language of their grandparents and to be good in French, which they recognise as their second language. Finally, it is also important to highlight the sense of belonging to the Italian community of Montreal and the Italianness felt by every one of them.

4.4 The experiment

To analyse the third generation between 18 and 30 years old and catch perfectly how differently each language influences their speeches, we have decided to ask them a simple question pretending to be a different interlocutor every time. More precisely, the four ideal interlocutors were respectively English, French, Italian Montrealer and Italian. In this way, it has been possible to understand how they have adapted their language in relation to the four different speakers. Notice the following practical example.

Question 1: Can you, please, describe your job?

- English interlocutor: I test the quality of some items. Before the stock goes to the warehouse, I have to check the quality of the product, such as I open up a box and write down the product number, I check the roll and I mark if it's good for shipment.
- French interlocutor: Je vérifie la qualité des produits. Avant que le stock n'aille dans l'entrepôt, je contrôle la qualité du produit, c'est-à-dire j'ouvre une boîte et j'écris le numéro du produit. Puis, je contrôle la liste des produits et je note si on peut procéder à la livraison.
- Italian Montrealer interlocutor: Today, at work, my *contremaître*, he said, "You have to fix the roll, okay?" I was a bit disappointed and what I said was, "*Ma* you there, don't talk to me *comme ça!*"
- Italian interlocutor: no answer

Question 2: What is your ideal night out ?

- English interlocutor: I find that my ideal night out isn't really a night out, but more of just staying at home and watching a movie while eating pizza.
- French interlocutor: Je pense que ma soirée idéale n'est pas sortir avec mes amis, mais rester chez moi et regarder un film en mangeant un pizza.
- Italian Montrealer interlocutor: My ideal night out would be *chillage* by the *plage* with my *cougis*, but we usually eat *i* poutine, a hamburger or we go to *nonna's* and eat *pastina*.
- Italian interlocutor: no answer

As we can see, there are three different ways of talking. Each answer shows that they can modify their language in accordance with the context in which they are. According to the answers, it is clear that English and French are perfectly comparable, even though they had

claimed the inequality between the skills of these two languages. On the other hand, the third language we have considered is mainly connected to an oral and informal kind of communication and it consists in a mix of French, English, and Italian words. The fourth question, instead, has received no answer. The reason is that they thought it was too difficult, from their point of view, to give an answer using proper Italian. From this consideration, we can assume that their Italian language, even if it is felt as a strong language, is not strong enough to deal with an entire conversation or sentence in Italian.

The third language above depicted is, indeed, the fourth language used by the third generation, because we have to take into account the Italian spoken with the first generation. An Italian Montrealer's speech is what they commonly recognise as their slang. They call it R.D.P. slang from the name of the suburb Rivière-des-Prairies, mostly inhabited by Italian migrants along with Little Italy, La Salle, and Saint-Leonard. This slang is frequently spoken by the young Montrealers of Italian origins when they are in a very informal context and, above all, when they are among other people of Italian origin. Given that the second generation has recognised North American as the main slang they used, we can conclude that R.D.P. slang has risen recently. As every form of slang, it shows the belonging to a precise group of people, in this case, the one of the Italian descendants. It has just one rule: mix French, English and Italian together. In our opinion, it can be considered as a branch of the so-called *Franglais* or *Frenghish*.

4.5 *Franglais* and *Frentalian*

Before showing in detail the main features of the R.D.P. language, it is necessary to define this other linguistic phenomenon, which retains in its own name its actual meaning. The term *Franglais* or *Frenghish* indicates the mixture of the French (*français*) and English (*anglais*) languages. It is the product of interlanguage, calques and mistranslation originated in a context of poor knowledge of one or the other language, native bilingualism, or humorous intent. *Franglais* usually consists of filling in gaps in the knowledge of French with English words (or vice versa) using false friends with their incorrect meaning.

It can have a strictly English sense when French is spoken in such a manner that would not be understandable to a French-speaker who does not also have a knowledge of English, for example, by using a literal translation of English idiomatic phrases. For instance, in Montreal we should hear *Je vais driver downtown*, which corresponds to the English "I'm going to

drive downtown” and the French “Je vais aller en voiture au centre-ville”, where the suffix -er of French verbs is added to the English verb to drive and the term downtown is not translated. Another example can be the expression *Je suis tired* when the English sentence “I’m tired” and the French one “Je suis fatigué” are amazingly mixed.

On the other hand, it has a French sense when it concerns the use of English words sometimes regarded as unwelcome imports, but it also refers to nouns created from recent English loanwords, often by adding the suffix *-ing* at the end of a term. For example, the French *parking*, such as a car park, is more properly a *stationnement* in Quebec French, although it actually means 'the action of parking or the state of being parked' in European French. Moreover, the word *shampooing*, shampoo, is pronounced /ʃãpwẽ/, instead of /ʃãpu.ɪŋ/, and has become standardized since at least the 1990s.

Franglais can be intended in the sense of a mistaken usage of languages by second-language speakers all over Canada. An example of an Anglicism turned Franglais is the unintentional translation of English sentences into French by people unaware of the Canadian French term. For example, a hot dog is called *chien chaud* when in fact the French term is simply *hot dog*.

Frenglish can also come from the mispronunciation and misspelling of words by bilingual Canadians. It also includes inappropriate doubling of consonants, improper inflection and stresses on syllables, unusual vowel combinations in their spelling and using combinations of prefixes and suffixes from English. Here are some further examples of this amazing linguistic phenomenon:

Franglais	English	French
Close the TV	Shut off the TV	Ferme la télé
Take a decision	Make a decision	Prendre une décision
Me, I work in Laval	I work in Laval	Moi, je travaille à Laval
You speak French ?	Do you speak French ?	Tu parles Français?
A location	A rental	Une location
It's ok	It's fine	Ça va
That's it	That is correct	C'est ça

As we can see from the table, some Franglais expressions retain a French syntactic structure, such as *Me, I work in Laval* that traces the French phrase “Moi, je travail à Laval”, but expresses it in English. In addition, Frenghish maintains the French lexical form of words, but uses the English pronunciation (e.g. location). The noun *decision*, for instance, is usually collocated with the verb *to make*. However, the French and English mix has retained the French verb form usually used for the term *décision*, such as *prendre*, and it has simply translated it in the corresponding English verb *to take*.

After having defined what the proximity between French and English has created not only in Montreal or in Quebec, but also all over Canada, we can easily assume that R.D.P. slang derives from Franglais. The Italian language has significantly influenced this conversational language, which they define also as Frentalian (French-English-Italian). According to our research, the Italian words in their conversations can be inserted in two lexical categories, food and family, and in the syntactic group of fillers.

- Food: This category does not include only typical Italian dishes, such as *lasagne*, *cannelloni*, *pizza*, *caffè* or *pasta*; it includes also some vegetables (*melone*, *melanzan[a]*) and some other foods like *mozzarella*, *capocollo*, *panino*. In general, all these words are not pronounced in proper Italian but retain a dialectical pronunciation. For example, the term *capocollo* is usually called *capicollo*, a *panino* is most commonly known as a *panini*.
- Family: The names of relatives that are usually used are the Italian ones. The uncle or the aunt are called with the Italian equivalent term, such as *zio* or *zia*, as well as the cousins who are *i cugini*, not to mention their beloved *nonno* and *nonna*. For example, you can more commonly hear “I bought some flowers for my *nonna*” than “I bought some flowers for my grandma”.
- Fillers: Words like “you know” or “I mean”, considered standard fillers of the English language, are substituted by terms derived from Italian language. They commonly use words such as *beh yeah* that translate the Italian *beh sì* or *mi*, which is the abbreviation of an Italian bad word and can be translated with the English exclamation “oh my god!” *Ma* usually used with the subject pronoun you (e.g. *ma you there!*) instead of “hey you”, is a common interjection of Frentalian. Finally, we should point out that those hybrid fillers are not usually used in a common Italian conversation. For this reason, we cannot define them as part of Italian language but only derived from it.

4.6 Third generation under the age of 18 and the youngest fourth generation

This second subcategory includes both the younger sons and daughters of the second generation and some children that, in fact, belong to the fourth generation (they are children of the oldest members of the third generation).

This group is characterized by a knowledge and usage of the Italian language that is in process of disappearing almost completely. The relationship with their grandparents is experienced in a completely reversed manner. Unlike all the previously analyzed groups, they do not adapt their language to the family context, always connected with the Italian language. On the contrary, the family itself – from the first to the third generation- adapts its way of speaking in relation to its youngest members.

We will give you a practical example of this trend reversal. Nicky is 30 years old, he has Italian origins and English is his first language. He is married to Julie, 27, who has Jewish and Indian origins and speaks French as her first language. They have a child, Mattieu who is 5 years old, speaks mainly French and is learning English. When his grandmother interacts with him, she has to speak French and fill the wording gaps with English terms. This happens because his parents do not communicate with each other in Italian. Therefore, he is not used to hearing this kind of speech when he is at home.

Unsurprisingly, if the home environment does not include the Italian language anymore, the reverse of the linguistic situation is an obvious consequence.

5. Glossary

Finally, we present this glossary containing the most interesting terms gathered during the interviews. In this way, we hope to give the reader a further, but significant explanation of this incredible linguistic phenomenon.

Frenitalianese	Italian	English	French
Anglesa	Inglese	English	Anglais
Blocco	Isolato	Block	Quartier
Boxa	Scatola	Box	Boite
Ceccare	Controllare	To check	Controler
Checa	Torta	Cake	Tarte
Dangeroso	Pericoloso	Dangerous	Dangereux
Dieci pezzi	Dieci dollari	Ten bucks	Dix dolars
Elevatore	Ascensore	Elevator	Ascenseur
Fromaggio	Formaggio	Cheese	Fromage
Giuffo	Ebreo	Jew	Juif
Guardare	Conservare	To save	Garder
Iarda	Giardino	Yard	Jardin
Mariaggio	Matrimonio	Marriage	Mariage
Norza	Infermiera	Nurse	Infirmière
Parenti	Genitori	Parents	Parents
Praticare	Praticare	To practice	Pratiquer
Sciuranza	Assicurazione	Insurance	Tichetta

Conclusion

Through this thesis, we have tried to show how some languages can rise and decline, the manner in which they can evolve and change. Above all, at the end of this paper we can quite surely affirm that languages are all but separate entities. They are mixed, linked and bound together in such various manners that can create unlimited speeches. What is more, historical and social factors have laid the basis of the language we hear, read, speak and write nowadays.

Frenitalianese is the perfect example of how peacefully and positively different languages and cultures can coexist. It is the result of a physical displacement from Italy to Montreal and the product of a linguistic integration that cannot be considered separately from the socio-cultural meeting occurred. Through the analysis of four generations of Italian people immigrated to Canada, we have ascertained a constant linguistic change and we could not help but notice that the use of proper Italian language is more and more restricted. Moreover, the Italians who live in Montreal come back to Italy less and less frequently because their families are quite completely based in Canada. Therefore, they do not experience a return to their roots and the interest addressed to Italy seems to flag generation by generation.

The transmission chain of Italian language from the parents to their children appears to end in the next generations. The Italian language has lost its importance as language of the home context and it has been relegated to second place. The trilingualism French-Italian-English is going to leave room for a stronger bilingual English-French. The Italian language has not yet lost all its functional features: the fact that the first generation is quite entirely still alive allows the Italian language to survive. However, we cannot exclude the possibility for it to be downgraded to a mere collective memory of a family with Italian origins in the next 30 years. Only an uninterrupted research activity will answer this question.

After all, languages have always been a continuous stream of incredible changes and collisions.

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Appendix

1. Questions asked to the Italian family we have analyzed through the thesis.

FIRST GENERATION

- Che piatti prepari durante le feste?
- Che cosa è cambiato dal tuo arrivo a Montreal?
- Perché hai scelto di andare a vivere a Montreal?
- All'inizio, come facevi a comunicare con chi non era italiano? È stato difficile?

SECOND GENERATION

- Where did you go to school? Was it an English or a French school?
- When you were a child, what language did you use to speak with your parents?
- As child of immigrated parents, have you ever find some linguistic difficulties at home or with other people of your age that were not children of immigrated people?

THIRD GENERATION from 18 to 30 years of age

- What is your ideal night out ?
- Can you, please, describe your work?
- Pretend I am an English speaker and answer to the same question again.
- Pretend I am a French speaker and answer to the same question again.
- Pretend I am an Italian Montrealer speaker and answer to the same question again.
- Pretend I am an Italian speaker and answer to the same question again.

THIRD GENERATION under 18 years of age

- Could you describe your Birthday Party?

2. Questions asked to the Italian family immigrated to Montreal, divided by context.

FOOD	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What do you usually eat on special occasions (Xmas, birthdays, etc..)? 2) When you are not at home, what do you usually have for lunch/dinner? 3) What are the traditional Montreal dishes?
FAMILY	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) How many people are there in your family? Can you describe it? 2) What is the language used when you are with your family?
JOB	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What is/was your job? 2) Can you describe it? 3) What are your rights and obligations as a worker?
SCHOOL	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Where do/did you go to school? 2) How is the educational system there? 3) Being in a country with two official languages, why did you choose the French/English school? 4) How do you feel about studying the other language as your second language? 5) Do you go to University? How is it organized your faculty?
FRIENDS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Where do you usually go with your friends? 2) What do you like doing together? 3) How do you speak with your friends? 4) What language do you usually use? Do you use a sort of slang?
SHOPPING	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Where do you go shopping? 2) When you have to ask something to a shop assistant, do you use English or French?
SPARE TIME	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What do you watch on TV? 2) Is there any Italian program? 3) What kind of newspaper do you read? 4) Is there any Italian newspaper?
LANGUAGE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What is the language you feel as your native language? 2) Do you think you are able to speak and write in French and English at the same level? 3) How much Italian do you know?