



## “Carrefour Louisiane”

### *Aspects of Language Contact in the History of Louisiana French*

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#### Abstract

The history of Louisiana French (LF) is closely related to Louisiana's particular societal and linguistic ecosystem, characterized by a mixed society where new forms of societal organization emerged and were reflected in new forms of linguistic patterns and linguistic behavior. From the beginning, language contact has been of crucial importance for the emergence, evolution and gradual decline of Louisiana French (“Cajun French”). In colonial times, contact between related French lects resulted in the formation of a new variety of regional French in North America with its own features and its own evolutionary dynamics. The continuing contact with English, however, which takes place in an entirely different ecological frame, results in the ongoing attrition of the minority language. The first part of the article deals with early stages of dialect contact in Louisiana; it will be shown that from a diachronic point of view Louisiana French has to be seen as a product of language mixing and dialect leveling. In the second part two specific aspects of current English-French language contact will be discussed. Both aspects serve to illustrate particularities of the linguistic situation in Louisiana now and then as well as the importance of certain universal mechanisms of contact-induced language change.

#### Keywords

Louisiana French – language contact – new dialect formation – code alternation – borrowing – language change

#### 1 Introduction

South Louisiana's linguistic landscape has always been complex. In colonial times different varieties of French were spoken in this area: while the early

settlers came from Quebec and France, other groups of francophones from Nova Scotia and Saint Domingue arrived in Louisiana in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> and the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The competition among the French, Spanish, and English for predominance in the region as well as the slave trade further complicated the situation. Spanish and later English as well as African languages entered the region and came into contact with each other, including the Choctaw based Mobilian Trade Language. This specific macroecology has shaped the linguistic landscape of colonial and postcolonial Louisiana, language contact being one of the most important factors for the emergence – and decline – of a new variety of regional French: Louisiana French (“Cajun French”), a specific variety of North-American French (NAF) with its own features and its own evolutionary dynamics. In this article the history of Louisiana French (LF) will be seen as part of Louisiana’s particular societal and linguistic ecosystem, characterized by a mixed society where new forms of societal organization emerged and were reflected in new forms of linguistic patterns and linguistic behavior. The paper is organized as follows: In section 1. I will give a brief overview of the sociohistorical and linguistic setting in colonial Louisiana; in section 2. I will argue that from a diachronic point of view Louisiana French has to be seen as a product of language mixing and language leveling; and in section 3. I will briefly examine two specific aspects of English-French language contact which shed some light on the precarious status of contemporary Louisiana French. This article consists of two different parts, the first one dealing with early stages of *dialect contact* in Louisiana, the second one with phenomena of current *language contact* between Louisiana French and English. History and present are however closely linked; both aspects serve to illustrate particularities of the linguistic situation in Louisiana now and then as well as the importance of certain universal mechanisms of contact-induced language change.<sup>1</sup>

## 2 Sociohistorical and Linguistic Setting

Ever since Louisiana was claimed for France in 1682 different waves of French speaking immigrants entered the colony: while the early settlers came directly from France and from Quebec, other groups of francophone speakers

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1 I am indebted to Thomas Klingler and Michael D. Picone, not only for giving me access to their unpublished articles (Klinger forthcoming, Picone forthcoming), but also for the scholarly exchange and many productive scholarly conversations in the last years. Their in-depth studies of the linguistic situation in Louisiana as well as the pioneering works of Kevin J. Rottet were inspiring sources for this overview article.

arrived in Louisiana during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The most important group were several thousand Acadian refugees who were deported from Nova Scotia by the British and migrated to Louisiana between 1764 and 1785.<sup>2</sup> Apart from that, new francophone immigrants came to Louisiana up until the Civil War due to continuing relations with France and the French possessions especially in Saint-Domingue. After 1719, African slaves were transported to Louisiana and other non-francophone groups of European settlers from Germany, Switzerland and Spain arrived. After the Treaty of Paris in 1763, the Louisiana Territory west of the Mississippi and the areas surrounding the river's mouth (including New Orleans) came under Spanish sovereignty, everything else west of the Mississippi passed under English control. Whereas the linguistic legacy of the Spaniards was minor,<sup>3</sup> the takeover of Louisiana by the Americans in 1803 had considerable consequences for the linguistic landscape of Southern Louisiana. At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the demographic pattern was complex: Louisiana was a real cultural and linguistic "carrefour" with French remaining strong especially among the educated white and mixed society in New Orleans, as it is stated in Berquin-Duvallon's 1803 travel memoir.

La langue française est celle généralement employée en cette Colonie: les langues espagnole et anglaise y sont pourtant assez répandues; la première à raison de l'ascendant du gouvernement, dans tous les actes, ainsi que ceux de l'administration et de l'ordre judiciaire, sont émanés en cette langue et traduits en français, quand il est de besoin, par un interprète établi à cet effet; la seconde, à cause de l'influence du commerce et du voisinage des Etats-Unis; et l'une et l'autre, enfin par rapport au grand nombre d'Espagnols et Américains fixé dans la Colonie, ou y voyageant. On parle assez bien français, à certaines locutions vicieuses près [...].  
(Berquin-Duvallon, 1803: 292–293)

The decline of French accelerated at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Today Louisiana French is a moribund language, which is still spoken by about 130,000 speakers, whose linguistic competence reflects different grades of proficiency.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> For the history of French Louisiana cf. Brasseur (1987, 1992, 1998); for the linguistic landscape of colonial and postcolonial Louisiana cf. Picone (2006, forthcoming) and Klingler (2009, forthcoming).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Lipski (1990) and Holloway (1997) for *Isleño* Spanish.

<sup>4</sup> This number is an estimate based on the data of the 2010 census (Klingler p.c.). Cf. Rottet (2001: 131–137) for the proficiency continuum in Louisiana.

One consequence of the highly heterogeneous population inhabiting colonial Louisiana was societal multilingualism and linguistic diversity: in early Louisiana different varieties of French, possibly some African languages as well as the emergent Louisiana Creole coexisted.<sup>5</sup> Although the varieties of French spoken by the settlers coming from Quebec and France were certainly very close, it is difficult to exactly determine the linguistic profile of colonial New France given the fact that the question whether strongly divergent Gallo-Roman dialects still existed during the early period or whether it was a more uniform version of popular French that was brought to the New World is still a matter of debate (cf. Mougeon and Beniak, 1994). As far as Louisiana is concerned, Picone (forthcoming) claims that a lack of social cohesion between the diverse francophone and non-francophone groups, a consequence of the rigid social stratification in colonial times, might have inhibited early dialectal homogenization.

According to a widely held view the following dialects were spoken in colonial Louisiana: two varieties of French often referred to as Colonial French and Acadian French and a French Creole that was spoken by the slave population but also by a considerable number of Whites (Klingler, 2003: 110 ff.). For two reasons this picture is today considered to be simplistic: on the one hand, the linguistic diversity of the early colonial period was certainly more complex. On the other hand, the term “Colonial French” is misleading when used indistinctively for the French spoken by the early settlers as well as for the French spoken in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Picone and Valdman (2005) argue that in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century new forms of social organization emerged, which were reflected in new forms of linguistic behavior. Due to Louisiana’s economic prosperity a true plantation society was established fostering the birth of a new class: the wealthy and educated planters whose linguistic model was the French spoken in France. For the prestige French spoken in New Orleans and on the plantations along the Mississippi and Bayou Teche Picone and Valdman therefore suggest the term “Plantation Society French” (PSF) that “evolved in greater harmony with Metropolitan French than did that of Canada, whose contact with France at that time had largely lapsed” (Picone, 1997a: 121) and thus differed from the variety spoken by the colonial settlers. For some time PSF certainly fulfilled many of the functions of a standard variety and was even adopted by wealthy Acadians in municipalities like St. Martinville.

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5 Apart from these Mobilian Jargon, a *lingua franca* used among Native American groups living on the Gulf of Mexico, may already have existed in Louisiana when the Europeans arrived (Drechsel 1997). For the emergence of Louisiana Creole cf. Klingler (2003).

The decline of Plantation Society French began after the American Civil War. The Creole economy was ruined, contact with France largely broke down, and the practice of educating young Creoles either in France or at domestic boarding schools ceased. English planters and their slaves poured into the country, and French and Louisiana Creole were rapidly replaced by the new prestige standard provided by English. Diglossia between PSF, on the one hand, and Acadian French and French Creole, on the other, was replaced by diglossia between English and the two low varieties.<sup>6</sup>

Picone and Valdman's modification of the standard view of French in Louisiana is complemented by Klingler's reassessment of the role of Acadian French for the emergence of Louisiana French. According to Klingler (2009, forthcoming) it is important to state that the Acadians arrived as a minority in a colony with well-established French-speaking populations. The first waves of Acadian refugees were settled by the Spanish governor at different strategic points along the banks of the Mississippi (Acadian Coast) between Baton Rouge and New Orleans as well as to the west along Bayou Teche and the Opelousas post; later arrivals – some of them had spent several years in France before arriving in Louisiana – mainly settled in the Lafourche area.<sup>7</sup> There were almost no Acadians settling in the northern parishes Avoyelles and Evangeline in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the minority status of the Acadians was reinforced by new francophone groups arriving from the French colony of Saint Domingue and France. From the very beginning the Acadians and their descendants formed a cohesive social group but when they entered into contact with other groups – including Whites of French, Spanish, or Anglo extraction, but also people of African and Native American descent – a process of cultural and ethnic mixing took place and the lines separating these groups got blurred.

In their contacts with other groups, the Acadians did not simply assimilate their members, or, alternatively, became assimilated by them. There was also significant cultural exchange, in particular with Louisiana's other French-speaking populations, that resulted in the development of an increasingly homogeneous cultural base among the poorer segments of francophone Louisiana.

KLINGLER, forthcoming

6 According to Picone (2006, forthcoming) a dialectal descendant of Plantation Society French is still spoken by a small population of speakers in Plaquemines Parish south of New Orleans and on Grand Isle.

7 Cf. Brasseaux (1987: 90–115). Approximately 3000 Acadian refugees arrived in Louisiana until 1785.

This was especially noticeable in the case of poor white Creoles, who, linguistically and socio-economically, already had much in common with the Acadians.<sup>8</sup> Klingler citing Brasseaux (1992) convincingly argues that the term “Cajun” thus became a socioeconomic classification for the multicultural amalgam of several culturally and linguistically distinct groups. Especially within Louisiana’s growing anglophone population this term was used to refer to “all persons of French descent and low economic standing, regardless of their ethnic affiliation” (Brasseaux, 1992: 104).

This view has, of course, serious implications for our understanding of the variety of French spoken by the Cajuns. Louisiana “Cajun” French cannot simplistically be regarded as a descendant of Acadian French in much the same way as the Cajuns should not be considered part of the Acadian diaspora.<sup>9</sup> Although the dialect brought to Louisiana by the Acadians fleeing British repression in Nova Scotia in the 18<sup>th</sup> century was certainly an important source for LF, it is far from being the only one. Since other varieties of French contributed as well to the emergence of LF, the label “Cajun French” does not correspond to the linguistic reality. Klingler therefore suggests to replace this term by “Louisiana Regional French”, “a cover term for the collection of varieties that are spoken throughout much of francophone Louisiana by several ethnic groups and that, though highly variable, share a significant number of features distinguishing this variety from Louisiana Creole, on one hand, and Plantation Society French, on the other” (Klingler, forthcoming).<sup>10</sup> The emergence of this new *regiolect*,<sup>11</sup> which has “two mother countries, linguistically speaking: Canada (both Québec and Acadia) and France” according to Picone (forthcoming), shows that changing communicative ecologies in Colonial Louisiana led to the evolution of a new lect reflecting multidimensional foundation relations.

8 The use of the term Creole as an ethnic designation is very complex. Creole is used here in reference to the descendants of European settlers in Louisiana (cf. Brasseaux 1992: 4).

9 Cf. Klingler (2009: 95) for the Acadian-origin myth focusing on the Acadian aspect of Louisiana history as well as on the often overestimated Acadian influence on LF. See also below footnote 26.

10 It was not by coincidence that A. Valdman, K. Rottet and their colleagues titled their 2010 volume *Dictionary of Louisiana French*.

11 I prefer this term to the term “dialect” which implies that a language variety “is used in a geographically limited part of a language area in which it is ‘roofed’ by a structurally related standard variety” (Hinskens et al., 2005: 1). This is not the case in Louisiana.

### 3 Dialect Mixture and Dialect Leveling in Southern Louisiana

#### 3.1 *New "Dialect" Formation*

The emergence of Louisiana French is directly linked to the multilingual setting of colonial Louisiana, its complex ethnic mosaic and the asymmetric relations between the different languages. Thus Louisiana is not only a perfect example for Aikhenvald's (2006) and Mufwene's (2008) claim that languages reflect the sociolinguistic history of their speakers, LF seems also to be an excellent candidate for what Kerswill and Trudgill (2005: 11) call the "birth of a new dialect":

New dialect formation, as conceptualised by Trudgill and others, refers to the emergence of distinctive, new language varieties following the migration of people speaking mutually intelligible dialects to what, to all intents and purposes, is linguistically 'virgin' territory. As such, it is an extreme, and often very rapid, form of dialect convergence. (Kerswill and Trudgill, 2005: 197)<sup>12</sup>

In the following I will show that the emergence of LF can indeed be described within this framework: dialect leveling as well as dialect mixing as Trudgill (1986) understands it have played a crucial role for the development of this new regiolect which reveals features that can indeed be interpreted as convergence phenomena (see below). Before presenting some selected morpho-syntactic phenomena, two preliminary remarks concerning the specific situation in Louisiana seem, however, to be important:

- a) Talking about contact between different varieties of French in colonial times, the term "dialect" is problematic. It is rather unlikely that within colonial societies marked by a high degree of mobility stable language borders evolved as they exist between the grown dialects of the 'Old World'. Moreover, in Louisiana the gradual stabilisation of regional varieties was hindered as English increasingly superseded French since the 19<sup>th</sup> century (cf. Wartburg, 1942; Neumann-Holzschuh, 2005). I think that for colonial times we are dealing with

<sup>12</sup> Within this framework Louisiana where the newly arrived migrants came from various francophone areas, corresponds to the first of two main scenarios in which new dialect formation takes place: "the settlement of a relatively large territory, either previously uninhabited or in which a previous population is ousted or assimilated", the second being the formation of a new town (Kerswill / Trudgill, 2005: 196).

sociolects rather than with diatopic varieties, although these sociolects reveal pronounced regional characteristics depending on the origin of the settlers.<sup>13</sup>

- b) Within the hierarchically scaled concept of three ecolinguistic levels (cf. Ludwig et al. forthcoming) the macroecological, i.e. large-scale historic-cultural complexities, and the intermediate ecological level like urban or smaller area ecologies seem to be of particular importance for Louisiana. Louisiana's historically constituted macroecology led to the birth of a new regional variety of French. Experts generally agree that this variety is marked on all linguistic levels by broad congruencies between the various regions. This is generally considered to originate from long-term dialect contact and leveling which the originally distinct varieties of French in Louisiana have undergone. Yet, scholars also concur that in Louisiana there are considerable regional differences in single phenomena, which derive chiefly from the fact that due to different settlement patterns some areas in Louisiana had indeed specific historical and cultural environments that created slightly different social ambiances.<sup>14</sup> The following areas are generally considered as linguistic and cultural ecologies in their own right: the northern parishes that were never a center of Acadian settlement (in this area assibilation of /t/ and /d/, a typical feature of Laurentian French, is frequent, cf. Valdman and Picone (2005: 146)); the western parishes as the heartland of the Acadians; the Lafourche Basin as well as the Tèche area, where contact with Plantation Society French (and Louisiana Creole) was certainly closer than elsewhere. As a lect whose subvarieties still reflect ancient settlement patterns LF has preserved until today a certain amount of linguistic variability notwithstanding a unity on the macro-level. Rottet even claims that "à regarder le *patchwork* linguistique des variétés actuellement attestées en Louisiane, on est loin de pouvoir cerner des variétés bien distinctes qui seraient les descendants directes de telle ou telle variété d'origine" (2006: 174).<sup>15</sup>

13 This is corroborated by Picone's observation that colonial Louisiana was characterized by extreme class stratification (Picone, forthcoming) and Klingler's classification of "Cajun" as predominantly "socioeconomic" (see above).

14 For a discussion of regional variation in LF cf. Bodin (1988); Neumann-Holzschuh (2005); Baronian (2005); Rottet (2004; 2006); Dubois (2005); Dubois et al. (2006) and Picone (2006).

15 Picone (forthcoming) correctly states that today differences between generations are bigger than between areas.



### 3.2 “Dialect Mixing”

According to Hinskens et al (2005: 9), “dialect contact often leads to abundant variation as a result of dialect mixing”. What can indeed be observed in LF is “the coexistence of features with origins in the different input dialects within the new community” (Kerswill and Trudgill, 2005: 197) or, in other words, polymorphism on the grammatical level. Note however that the mixing metaphor generally applies to the macro-level (i.e., Southern Louisiana as a whole), the various intermediate levels (specific areas or parishes) can (but need not) be homogenous with respect to the various phenomena.

One of the best known and best described examples are the *interrogative pronouns* that are subject to variation in LF. As to the LF equivalents for English “what” (fr. *qu'est-ce qui, qu'est ce que*). Byers (1988) and Rottet (2004) convincingly show that in LF two pronouns coexist, the presence of one form or the other in a particular region tending to correlate with the settlement patterns of that region. Whereas in the southwestern parishes with strong Acadian settlement (Vermilion, Lafayette, Jefferson Davis, Acadia, Assumption) the form *quoi* is used, inanimate *qui* is predominant in two geographically separate areas: Evangeline and Avoyelles Parish in the north(west) and the lower Lafourche basin in the southeast.

Subject: *quoi/qui ce/c'est qui*

- (1) *Quoi c'est qui se brasse là-bas* ‘What's going on over there?’ (Rottet, 2004: 175, Vermilion)
- (2) *Qui-ce qui va m'arriver demain* ‘What is going to happen to me tomorrow?’ (Rottet, 2004: 175, Lafourche)

Object: *quoi (ce que, c'est que), qui (ce que, c'est que)*

- (3) *Quoi tu veux je te fais cuire* ‘What do you want me to cook for you?’ (Rottet, 2004: 176, Lafayette)
- (4) *Qui vous-autres aurait fait si j'avais pas de licence?* ‘What would you all have done if I didn't have a license?’ (Rottet, 2004: 176, Lafourche)

While *qui* is certainly a pre-Acadian ‘Creole’ form, well attested in French ever since the Middle Ages, the distribution of *quoi* is obviously linked to the presence of Acadian-speaking settlers. While *quoi* is still today solidly anchored in the Maritime Provinces, inanimate *qui* is completely absent from today's Acadian dialects. “Dans l'optique du contact interdialectal, ce serait une variable où le conflit entre les deux variantes principales s'est résolu localement, de manière différente d'un lieu à l'autre” (Rottet, 2006: 179).

The fact that *quoi* has recently been attested in areas like Natchitoches in Northern Louisiana that were never settled by Acadians, suggests that a one-sided correlation of the distribution of *quoi* with Acadian settlements does presumably not do justice to the linguistic complexity in colonial times.<sup>16</sup> Although this form may have spread to these areas by diffusion, it cannot be excluded that *quoi* might have been more widely distributed within popular Colonial French varieties. This would also impact on the usage of the parameters dialect mixing and dialect leveling (see below).

Almost the same is true for the *3rd person plural verb endings*: While the ending *-ont* (*ils dansont*), considered typical of Acadian French, is predominantly used in parishes with a high percentage of Acadians, the ending *-(i)ent* (*ils dansent*), closer to the standard, is predominantly used in parishes with a high amount of pre-Acadian population, i.e. Avoyelles and Evangeline in the north(west) as well as Lafourche and Terrebonne in the southeast (Byers, 1988: 97–98). Lafourche, however, has a somewhat mixed character according to Rottet: it overwhelmingly uses *qui* ‘what’, but it also makes moderate use of *ils -ont*. “If Byers’ association of *qui* with ColF [i.e. Colonial French, INH] and *ils -ont* with Acadians is correct, then we have a concrete example of dialect mixing in the lower Lafourche Basin” (Rottet, 2004: 181). Or from a slightly wider perspective: this specific case is an example for dialect mixing on an intermediate- as well as on the macro-level.<sup>17</sup>

Other examples of variation due to dialect mixing can be mentioned, such as the coexistence of the question words *pourquoi* and *quoi faire* (as well as *pourqui* in Evangeline Parish) corresponding to English ‘why’ (cf. Rottet, 2004: 178; Baronian, 2010: 236):<sup>18</sup>

- (5) *Quo'faire donc tu veux pas t'en revenir au Port Arthur?* ‘Why don't you want to come back to Port Arthur?’ (DLF, s.v. *quoi faire*)
- (6) *Pourquoi les mâles brillent et les femelles est toujours cachées?* ‘Why are the males brilliantly colored and the females are camouflaged?’ (DLF, s.v. *pourquoi*).

16 Interestingly, Klingler (forthcoming) observes that French in Avoyelles is amazingly similar to the other parishes although this parish has never been a center of Acadian settlement.

17 Dubois correctly claims that if there are no attestations for *-ont* in Lafourche today it cannot be excluded that this form existed in colonial times. “À titre d'exemple, le suffixe *-ont* est employé presque systématiquement (*ils parlont* et *je parlons*) dans une lettre écrite en 1820 par un auteur de Lafourche, une paroisse où on observe aujourd'hui son absence” (2005: 301).

18 Note that *quoi faire* is not attested in Acadian French as spoken in the Maritime Provinces of Canada.

Polymorphism is particularly pronounced in the domains of the demonstrative pronouns and adjectives (cf. DLF, Neumann-Holzschuh, 2010), although some reduction of variants seems to have taken place in comparison to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>19</sup>

### 3.3 *Dialect Leveling*

Dialect leveling is “the process which reduces variation both within and between dialects. [...]”; it makes “(a) individual dialects more homogeneous; and (b) different dialects more similar and, consequently, diasystems more homogeneous” (Hinskens et al., 2005: 11). In LF “the selection of forms found in the mix” (Kerwill and Trudgill, 2005: 197–198) is often made in favor of the non-Acadian form, which underscores the significance of the more prestigious non-Acadian varieties involved in the contact.

One of the most characteristic features of Acadian French, the so-called ‘*je-collectif*’, i.e., the use of the pronoun *je* for the 1st person plural (type: *j’avons* ‘we have / nous avons’) is not attested in contemporary Louisiana, where the equivalent of French “nous” is *on* or *nous-autres, on*. In texts dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, however, Rottet (2005a) found attestations of the type *j’avons* with *je* as the pronoun of the 1st person plural; in most of the cases, however, this pronoun refers to the 1st person singular. Rottet’s scenario is convincing: the Acadians (or eventually other immigrants speaking some sort of Colonial French) had introduced *j’avons* with plural reference to Louisiana;<sup>20</sup> due to contact with more prestigious varieties of French that didn’t use *j’avons*, this dialectally strongly marked form was gradually given up, the more so since presumably *je* was often interpreted as 1<sup>st</sup> person singular by certain speakers. “Finalement, les pressions normalisantes et la confusion concernant son interprétation aidant, le type *j’avons* s’est éteint en Louisiane” (Rottet, 2005a: 223).

A similar scenario can be observed in the domain of total questions: in LF questions are most frequently constructed by using the tag *est-ce que* or by rising intonation. Constructions with the particle *-ti*, very frequent in Quebec and Acadian French, are extremely rare in the corpora of LF.<sup>21</sup> Once again,

19 The most popular form in Acadian French *c’ti (là)* for *celui* and *celle* is attested in a Louisiana text of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in the dictionary of Ditchy (1932); today, however, this form is not used any more.

20 It cannot be excluded, however, that this use of ‘*je-collectif*’ was also known in other varieties of French, its frequency in Acadian French is however so striking that it would be surprising if it had not left traces in Louisiana.

21 Cf. Gesner (1984/1985); Wiesmath (2006); Arrighi (2005); Léard (1996).

attestations of *-ti* in the dictionary of Ditchy (1932) and in a 19<sup>th</sup> century text permit the hypothesis that this form existed in LF but was given up in favor of a less stigmatized form.

- (7) *Vous avez ti été-là bas? Vous v'lez ti dîner?* 'Have you gone down there? Would you like to have lunch?' (Ditchy, 1932: 201)
- (8) *j'pouvions vous donner seulement deux chorus, ça vous va t'y?* 'I can only give you two roosters (coqs), is that OK for you?' (de La Houssaye, 1888 / 1983: 21)

Both examples show that the diversity of forms was higher in the 19<sup>th</sup> century than it is today, which would contradict early dialect leveling at least concerning these two features. Other dialectal features which are still frequent in the Acadian dialects in Canada but which have either never been documented in Louisiana or have been lost early include the *passé simple* forms on *ir*, the *subjonctif imparfait*, and the negator *point*. The corresponding forms in LF are forms that are closer to the *français commun*, respectively.

All leveling processes observed so far entail the almost entire elimination of a feature and thus a reduction of intrasystemic variation. I consider it indeed justified to use the terms "dialect convergence", as understood by Hinsken et al. (2005), and "long term dialect accommodation" (Auer, 2007: 109) respectively since, in LF grammar, these processes diachronically have caused an increase of similarity between the various varieties involved in the contact. According to Kriegel et al. (2013), convergence is defined as an "increase of system congruence", a universal mechanism of contact-induced change, the results of which can, however, diverge significantly depending on the ecolinguistic situation. Of course, early stages of contact have always posed epistemological problems as far as access to the precise ecological frame is concerned; it seems however as if grammatical feature selection in colonial Louisiana were at least partly linked to the differences in prestige between non-Acadian and Acadian lects, one consequence of which is the loss of strongly marked features like the *je-collectif*.

### 3.4 *Intermediate Results*

a) Each area / parish has its own history. As Byers (1988), Rottet (2004; 2005a; 2005b) and Dubois (2005) convincingly claim, the geographical distribution of certain features can best be explained in terms of the differential settlement patterns in Southern Louisiana. On the other hand, different contact scenarios certainly played a significant role as well: the retention of typical Acadian traits in the western parishes like Vermilion is probably due to intensive dwelling of Acadian groups in this area; in the southeastern parishes contact with PSF was

essential to the coexistence of Acadian features and features closer to more common forms; last but not least the linguistic peculiarities especially of Avoyelles might be partly due to temporary isolation.

b) The emergence of the new regiolect LF is due to contact between related dialects and can be explained by Trudgill's concepts of dialect mixing and leveling: not only do we observe the coexistence of synonyms on the morpho-syntactic level but also the selection of variables drawn from multiple sources. Yet, depending on the perspective, the view on linguistic variation differs: whereas there may be selection of one form in one particular region in Louisiana (i.e., on an intermediate ecological level), the picture for Southern Louisiana as a whole (i.e., the macro-level) may be the one of coexisting synonyms as illustrated, for example, by the distribution of *qui / quoi*. On the other hand, today's homogeneity on the macro- and the intermediate level may be the result of later leveling processes that blur former variation.

In this context another aspect seems to be crucial: an argument based on dialect mixing and interdialectal leveling would be weakened as soon as there would be evidence that the colonial varieties of French were more homogeneous than assumed originally. As soon as "Acadian" features like *quoi* or *-ont* are documented for areas not settled by Acadians (see above), it must at least be hypothesized that Acadian French was not the only source of these features. Their appearance in several varieties of NAF would imply that these features were probably rather frequent and thus less strongly marked; both aspects would facilitate their retention.<sup>22</sup> So far too little is known about the early stages of NAF; yet, it cannot be excluded that the scenario of dialect leveling must be seen in a more differentiated way. Picone (2006) has a similar view and tries to connect the hypothesis of leveling with the thesis of homogeneity: "L'unité dialectale en Louisiane s'expliquerait alors, d'une part, par l'homogénéité du français populaire d'alors, malgré la diversité de langues et de patois qui se parlaient à l'époque coloniale et, d'autre part, par un effet de nivellement progressif, rendant encore plus uniforme le français louisianais actuel" (Picone, 2006: 229).

c) Since each grammatical category has its own history, each feature has to be analyzed separately in order to grasp the amount of linguistic variability and language change in LF.<sup>23</sup> While certain Acadian features like the verbal

22 Cf. also Baronian (2010) and Dubois (2005: 300), who asks with good reason: "Les formes dialectales identifiées aujourd'hui comme acadiennes étaient-elles aussi utilisées dans d'autres variétés de français parlées par la population louisianaise au moment où les Acadiens ont trouvé refuge en Louisiane?"

23 This idea is elaborated in Neumann-Holzschuh (2000) with respect to Louisiana Creole. Cf. also Gadet (2011: 119), who observes with respect to morphosyntactic variability:

ending *-ont* are retained at least in certain areas, others like stigmatized *'je-collectif'* did not survive in Louisiana French. This would fit into the scenario as it is described by Trudgill and others (cf. Hinskens et al., 2005: 44): according to this, primary dialect features with a high degree of salience are susceptible to change and loss rather than secondary ones.<sup>24</sup> It may thus not be surprising that strongly marked minority features like the *je-collectif* were eliminated in favor of the majority variants. But why were both the Acadian verb form *-ont* and the pronoun *quoi* retained (cf. also Rottet (2006: 181)? And why do these two phenomena show a remarkably clear geographic distribution, unlike other phenomena, such as the periphrastic and non-periphrastic interrogative adverbs (type: *(é)quand vs. quand ce que*)<sup>25</sup> or the equivalents of fr. *pourquoi* (see above)?

d) In the light of more recent studies it is certainly highly questionable whether LF can be considered an outlying component of a geolinguistic continuum of Acadian varieties that has undergone dedialectalization.<sup>26</sup> We have seen that due to the specific socio-historic conditions in colonial Louisiana, Acadian French was just one of several components for emerging LF, and it is not surprising, therefore, that marked Acadian features as the *je-collectif* and the *passé simple* forms on *ir* were lost (or never existed) in traditional LF, moving this variety closer to non-Acadian varieties of French in many respects.<sup>27</sup> In spite of an increase in similarity between the different French lects in contact in colonial times, the Acadian heritage was however preserved in some domains, which makes LF appear as a patchwork regiolect, whose components are still recognizable on a regional level today.

e) It is probably a matter of definition whether LF can be characterized as a (immigrant) koiné or not. As the product of contact between several 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century varieties of French, LF has undergone clear processes of dialect leveling / dialect convergence on the one hand. On the other hand, there is still a considerable pool of variation resulting from interdialectal contact in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Since LF has never undergone real "focusing" defined as

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"À l'évidence, tous les chapitres d'une grammaire ne sont pas touchés, ni au même titre, ni pour autant de phénomènes, ni avec autant de complexité, d'amplitude ou de contraintes".

24 Cf. also Kerswill / Trudgill (2005: 198); Kerswill / Williams (2002) and Johanson (2002: 309): "Thus, 'salient' dialect features are thought to be relatively susceptible to change, whereas less 'salient' features are more resistant".

25 In Acadian French the periphrastic forms are by far the most frequent (cf. Neumann-Holzschuh, 2010).

26 I thereby partly revise an idea still expressed in Neumann-Holzschuh / Wiesmath (2006) and Neumann-Holzschuh (2009a; 2010).

27 Cf. Dubois (2005: 291): "Le français cadien parlé en Louisiane présente moins de formes dialectales comparé au français acadien".

“the sociolinguistic process by means of which the new variety acquires norms and stability, and is implicit in the linguistic process of leveling” (Kerwill and Trudgill, 2005:199), the application of the term *koiné* to this variety of NAF seems to be problematic (cf. Neumann-Holzschuh, 2010). Not only does the existence of a real *koiné* imply a certain degree of stability and linguistic unification, its emergence is – at least according to some definitions (cf. Siegel, 1985, 1993a, 1993b) – also characterized by radical changes in social conditions and rapid processes of language change, which doesn’t seem to be the case in Louisiana. The main reason why LF has never become a stable *koiné* is the early introduction of English as a dominant language, and, as a consequence, ongoing language loss ever since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which inhibited Louisiana French from becoming a stable variety of North American French.

#### 4 Louisiana French in Contact with English

##### 4.1 *Code Alternation*

The second part of this article is concerned with an entirely different scenario of language contact: whereas up to now the article dealt with contact between related varieties of French from a diachronic perspective, I will now turn to contact between two languages that are not as closely related genetically but often structurally similar, i.e., LF and English.<sup>28</sup>

Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century the varieties of LF have stood in a diglossic relation with English, which also quickly prevailed as the more prestigious high variety over the standard French still spoken in the educated circles, above all in New Orleans. Louisiana’s asymmetrical multilingualism with languages of unequal status reverberated on the French in Louisiana, which since then has been subject to a gradual process of language attrition (cf. Rottet, 2001). Like in other terminal language communities LF speakers usually have a high competence of the prestige language, their linguistic knowledge of the dominated language, however, can be rather limited. Besides single word insertions, the speech of bilingual LF speakers is above all marked by alternational code-mixing as defined by Muysken (2000), i.e. in comparison to traditional Acadian French there is no far-reaching insertion of foreign material into a matrix language, since both languages appearing in one sentence remain relatively separate from

28 The authors of the DLF point out that a wide variety of English dialects is spoken in the regions inhabited by speakers of Louisiana French, including Cajun English, Southern American English, New Orleans area Yat, African American Vernacular English, and Standard American (DLF xxi). I will not deal with this aspect here.

each other (cf. Wiesmath, 2001).<sup>29</sup> Frequency and type of code switching depend however on the degree of individual bilingualism.<sup>30</sup>

- (9) [KR: *And your kids don't want to learn French?*] *C'est juste, je crois que ça les intéresse pas. Je sais pas. Ça l'attend, ça dit des mots et ça rit, mais YOU KNOW, ça a pas de conversation... [Ma mère] veut que je montre les petites filles, et je dis 'Tu m'as pas montré, c'est juste qu'on l'a appris ça'. Alle comprend pas. YOU KNOW. Devrais pas les montrer. THEY SHOULD, YOU KNOW, THEY SHOULD PICK IT UP ON THEIR OWN.* 'It's just, I think it doesn't interest them. I don't know. They hear it, they say some words and they laugh, but you know, they can't have a conversation in it. ... My mother wants me to teach the girls, and I say 'You didn't teach me, we just learned it'. She doesn't understand, you know. [I] shouldn't have to teach them, they should just pick it up on their own.' (Rottet, 2001: 127–128)

Apart from code-switching / code-alternation there are various instances of the replication of linguistic matter, i.e. of morphological material and its phonological shape (MAT-borrowing) and linguistic patterns (PAT-borrowing) in the sense of Sakel (2007), Matras (2009) and Heine and Kuteva (2005) that throw some light on the specific contact ecology in Louisiana. In what follows, I will first briefly review some contact induced structural changes in LF and will then comment on two particular instances of borrowing on the lexical and the pragmatic level, at least one of which seems to be directly linked to the ongoing process of language attrition in LF: a) single word insertion and the loss of inflection; b) the borrowing of function words.<sup>31</sup>

29 Cf. Kriegel / Ludwig / Henri (2009) for a gradual model of code hybridity, the poles being code alternation and microstructural copying. As far as the integration of English origin material is concerned LF has to be situated on the left side of this continuum.

30 Cf. Blyth (1997: 41); Picone (1997); Rottet / Golembeski (2001); Rottet (2001); Wiesmath (2001).

31 I follow Matras in not abandoning the term 'borrowing', used in the sense of replication of a linguistic structure in the recipient language (cf. Matras, 2009: 146); Johanson (2002) prefers the term "code copying". The distinction between borrowing and codeswitching is not a simple one; a detailed discussion of both terms cannot be part of this study (cf. Matras, 2009: 110–114). Within Matras' codeswitching – borrowing continuum one of the delimitating factors is the degree of structural integration of the borrowed item, an idea that also underlies the code hybridity model of Kriegel / Ludwig / Henri (2009).



#### 4.2 *Contact Induced Structural Changes in LF*

In Neumann-Holzschuh (2009c) I discuss various instances of grammatical and syntactical change possibly triggered or at least reinforced through contact with English, like the replacement of the auxiliary *être* by *avoir* in the perfect tense of intransitive and reflexive verbs, the loss of the subjunctive, the increase of non-finite forms, *que* deletion in subordinate and relative clauses, prepositional calquing and prepositional stranding as well as of cases of contact-induced semantic and combinational copying. The possibility of multiple causation, i.e., the fact that language contact may have helped to reinforce intersystemic motivations of language change, cannot be excluded for some of the above mentioned features. For some of these cases, convergence seems to be a plausible explanation: structural congruence between the languages in contact facilitates pattern replications (or “covert copies”, a term preferred by Kriegel et al., 2013) which are “an effective parameter of system convergence, since they signal linguistic consistency on the surface and perform the transformation nearly exclusively in the less conspicuous, but significantly structural “background” (Matras, 2010: 76). Pattern replications trigger subsequent processes of language change which lead to an increase in structural proximity between the lects in contact.<sup>32</sup>

Instances for this kind of “change to an inherited structure of the ‘replica’ language, inspired by a structure of the ‘model’ language” (Matras, 2009: 238) seem to be prepositional stranding in oblique relative clauses as well as the postposition of accusative object pronouns. As far as stranded prepositions are concerned, sentences like

- (10) *La première paire de souliers que mon j'ai mis mes pieds dedans là, eh ben, j'ai payé pour mon-même.* ‘The first pair of shoes that I ever put my feet in, well, I paid for myself’ (Rottet, 2001: 168).

suggest that speakers have replicated the strategy to put adpositions in context where these are detached from their complements.<sup>33</sup> The postposition of the direct object pronoun in the following examples (with and without a preverbal clitic)

32 Cf. Kriegel et al. (2013) for the results of convergence which can be, among others, the deletion of a feature and processes of grammaticalization and reanalysis.

33 King (2000) argues that borrowed English prepositions are crucial for the understanding of Preposition Stranding in Acadian French. Since borrowed English prepositions are rare in LF, this explanatory framework seems to be less apt for Louisiana.

- (11) *ça fait moi j'allais avec mon prétendu la rejoindre elle*. 'Well I went with my fiancé to meet her' (corpus Valdman, Ch/EV)  
 (12) *s'il a pu rencontrer elle* 'if he could meet her' (Conwell and Juillard, 1963: 181)

appear as a case of replacement of one type of syntactic organization with another type as a result of language contact.<sup>34</sup>

Borrowed as the second part of an English phrasal verb, BACK is a famous example for a lexical borrowing triggering grammatical change. In Louisiana as well as in other varieties of NAF loanblends involving the English adverb BACK have become highly productive (cf. Rottet, 2000, 2005b; King, 2000; Perrot, 1995): apart from agreeing with the English usage ('return to a former state or place') with certain movement verbs often reinforcing the prefix *re-*, Louisiana French as well as Acadian French do make frequent use of BACK in a meaning not characteristic of the English source word at all by adopting the meaning 'again'. Triggered by contact, BACK is thus extended to new contexts. This gradual move away from *re-* + verb towards the use of verb + BACK observed by Rottet (2000: 121) means that we have an instance of matter as well as pattern replication which eventually leads to a contact induced grammaticalization process of BACK in the sense of Heine and Kuteva (2005: 40–78) as well as an increase in analyticity.<sup>35</sup>

- (13) *J'ai commencé à refumer BACK* 'I started smoking again' (Rottet, 2000: 120)  
 (14) *Dis-moi ça BACK* 'tell me that again' (DLF, s.v. back)  
 (15) *et elle a repris BACK le TRAILER* 'and she took the trailer back' (Rottet, 2000: 120)

Whether this kind of contact-induced change will actually lead to the grammaticalization of BACK remains to be seen. It seems, however, as if in LF ongoing language shift since the 20<sup>th</sup> century prohibits far-reaching and profound structural influence of English on French.

#### 4.3 *The Borrowing of Content Words*

Like in all varieties of NAF content words, especially nouns and verbs, are the most frequent English loans in LF. Whereas in the varieties of Canadian

34 Note that similar structures seem to be more frequent in other varieties of NAF and that postponed indirect object pronouns are also attested in 17<sup>th</sup> century French (Neumann-Holzschuh, 2008; 2009c).

35 Note that in *chiac* BACK can be proposed to the verb like the French prefix *re-* (cf. Wiesmath, 2001: 168).

French, English loanwords have a strong tendency toward morphological and phonological integration (Wiesmath, 2001; Rottet and Golembeski, 2001), in Louisiana balanced bilinguals tend to insert uninflected English items into their speech.<sup>36</sup> Thus English nouns and especially verbs inserted into LF discourse generally appear as bare forms: while nouns usually do not carry inflection for plurality (although there are many exceptions), verbs never carry inflection for the past participle or the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular (cf. Picone, 1997b, Klingler et al., 1997).<sup>37</sup>

- (16) *J'ai deux TRUCK* 'I have two trucks' (Picone, 1997b: 154)
- (17) *Eux-autres faisait leur WHITE BEAN ou des RED BEAN* (corpus Valdman – PC/TB) but also:
- (18) *eux-autres plantaient des BEANS blanc* (corpus Valdman – PC/TB)
- (19) *Puis ils ont SETTLE à Lafayette* 'Then they settled in Lafayette' (Picone, 1997b: 153)
- (20) *On a DRIVE en ville* 'We drove to New Orleans' (Picone, 1997: 156)
- (21) *L. a TEACH le français longtemps* (Rottet, 2001: 128)

Rottet (2000) shows that English phrasal verbs can either appear as loan translations, as intact code-switched insertions or as loanblends. Unlike Acadian French, LF does not combine English prepositions with a French verb.<sup>38</sup>

- (22) *il l'avait moitié KNOCK OUT-là* (Stäbler, 1995: 38)<sup>39</sup>
- (23) *elle a HANG UP* (speaking of the telephone) 'she has hung up' (Stäbler, 1995: 243)

36 Direct insertion of loan verbs is attested in various languages and varieties (Matras, 2009: 176). It is interesting, however, that this phenomenon, which is recent in Louisiana according to Rottet / Golembeski (2001: 108) and which can also be observed in Massachusetts (cf. Szlezák, 2010: 218), has not been observed for Isleño Spanish by Lipski (1990) and Holloway (1997).

37 Of the 67 English verbs attested in the DLF only *act, beg, bluff, lynch, move* have a morphologically adapted equivalent (*acter* etc.), the majority of the verbs are classified as invariable. In general the authors of the DLF note that the pronunciation of anglicisms "may vary from a fully English pronunciation to a more or less Louisiana French pronunciation" (DLF, xxi). Note that in traditional Acadian French, verbs always follow the inflectional pattern of French: *I sprayont, I startiont* (Wiesmath, 2001: 162).

38 Cf. King (2000: 142) and Arrighi (2005: 358) for Acadian French. Arrighi (2005: 143) attests *le BOSS voulait nous avoir hâler OFF* for New Brunswick French.

39 The DLF also lists the exclamations WATCH OUT! and LOOK OUT!.

Since the above mentioned items neither follow the French nor the English inflectional pattern according to Picone (1997b: 161) and Klingler et al. (1997: 176), these instances of structural non-integration are considered to be “intercode” phenomena.

Why don't speakers simply replicate loan verbs together with their inflection? Matras claims that “more frequent, simplex, accessible, and transparent forms have an advantage in terms of ease of replication” (Matras, 2009: 159), the transfer of non-inflected material thus being due to the general tendency toward economy. Klingler et al. (1997) underline that morphological integration of English loans becomes superfluous in Louisiana, because due to widespread bilingualism every LF-speaker understands an unassimilated English lexical item switched into French discourse. One of the consequences of the non-integration of verbs in LF is “the marginalization of internal sources for lexical renewal and expansion in CF and LC” (Klingler et al., 1997: 176).

As far as borrowing of other content words is concerned, LF more or less corresponds to the borrowing hierarchies cited in Matras (2009: 153 ff.). Whereas in *chiac*, the highly anglicised variety of Acadian French spoken especially in the city of Moncton, adjective word order follows the rules of English (cf. Wiesmath, 2001), LF has borrowed some English adjectives that follow French word order rules when used as attributes.

(24) *ce sucre BROWN là* ‘this brown sugar’ (corpus Valdman – PC/TB)

(25) *c'est un homme ROUGH* ‘He's a rough man’ (DLF, s.v. ROUGH)

The number of borrowed adverbs is small: the DLF lists BACK (see above), OFF and MUCH only. OFF is a lexical rather than a grammatical borrowing: it is mainly used with the meaning “off from school / work” or is part of a “phrasal verb” (cf. Rottet, 2001 and Arrighi, 2005:143). MUCH is only attested in the combination with *pas* (*ça j'ai c'est pas MUCH*, DLF s.v. *much*). Unlike LF, Acadian French has also borrowed modal adverbs like RIGHT (in Nova Scotia also WELLEMENT) fr. ‘très, beaucoup, complètement; vraiment’, and ABOUT fr. ‘à peu près, environ’ (cf. Chevalier, 2007 and Arrighi, 2005), both listed as function words by Matras (2009).

#### 4.4 *The Borrowing of Function Words*

Apart from the content words, LF has borrowed several function words, “defined broadly as syn-semantic [...], closed class elements, which often have a role in structuring the clause, are organised paradigmatically, and tend to be phonologically weak (often monosyllabic)” (Matras, 2009: 132). The label covers categories such as discourse makers, interjections, tags, connectors as

well as phasal adverbs and numerals, most of them occupying a position at the very top of the borrowability hierarchy (Matras, 2009: 157 f.; 2007).<sup>40</sup>

Borrowing of function words from the dominant language into the dominated one has been amply described empirically as well as theoretically. As far as the varieties of NAF are concerned, King (2000), Mougeon and Beniak (1991), Chevalier (2007), Neumann-Holzschuh (2009b), Szl zak (2010) provide descriptive analyses, most of them focusing on the borrowing of English discourse markers into French discourse. Extended theoretical observations on a cross-linguistic scale are made by Matras (2007; 2009) and Sakel (2007), for whom these are cases of MAT-borrowing not motivated by gaps in the recipient language. For Matras the main reason why connectors and discourse markers preferably appear at the top of the borrowing hierarchy is that all these items occur at prime switch points of the discourse. “[...] the motivation to borrow is anchored in the intrinsic semantic-pragmatic function of the affected categories and in the contribution they make toward the mental processing of utterances in discourse” (Matras, 2009: 163). Apart from language internal-factors that especially facilitate borrowing of discourse markers as a routine part of minority language discourse, other factors “such as competence- or identity flagging or the highlighting of discourse boundaries” (Matras, 2009: 138) play a role as well.<sup>41</sup>

In LF the most frequent English function words are discourse markers followed by various interjections and the conjunction BUT. As far as the “utterance modifiers” in LF are concerned,<sup>42</sup> multifunctional English discourse markers in LF like WELL, YEAH, SO, YOU KNOW coexist with the respective French markers *eh bien*, *oui*, * a fait* and *mais*; yet, in LF no French discourse marker has been fully replaced by its English equivalent (cf. Neumann-Holzschuh 2009b). Without being a hundred percent identical, both rows of DM are often used interchangeably, a phenomenon equally observed in other varieties of NAF.

40 The ratio of English loans in the DLF is the following: 228 nouns, 68 verbs, 20 adjectives, 7 interjections, 2 adverbs, 1 conjunction.

41 For Szl zak (2010: 238), “alien” discourse markers are indicators of pragmatic dominance of the prestige language; Lipski (2005) speaks of a “metalinguistic bracketing” by which the speaker signals that he/she is simultaneously operating on a meta-level on which discourse is framed in terms of English.

42 Matras (2009: 137) uses this generic term “to capture this somewhat extended group of operators that are responsible for monitoring and directing the hearer’s processing of propositional content” and are thus particularly sensitive to contact-induced change.

- (26) [DID Y'ALL EAT PIG'S FEET ?] OH YEAH. *Des pattes de cochon, mais ça c'était bon. ...ET WELL, on mettait la tête et les oreilles, les pattes, eux-autres les bouillait* '[KR : Did they put everything in the sausage ?] [...] Yes, they put in the ears, but not the whole ear. There was a part they cut out. [...] Oh yeah, pig's feet that was good. Well, they put in the head and the ears, they boiled them' (Rottet, 2001 : 134)
- (27) [KR : *Pourquoi les jeunes connaît plus le français ?*] WELL, *tu sais qui est mon idée à mon, ça se croit de trop, ça veut pas parler français.* 'Why did young people stop speaking it ? Well, you know what I think, they think too much of themselves, they don't want to speak French' (Rottet, 2001 : 127)

Another utterance modifier appearing with a certain regularity in LF is English NO, which functions as negator, closure signal with an intensifying function, tag and interjection.<sup>43</sup>

- (28) *il y avait pas d'air conditioned, tu connais, no* 'There was no air conditioning, you know, no' (corpus Valdman – Ch/EV)
- (29) *Pas lui, NO, pas lui* 'Not him, no, not him' (corpus Valdman – Ma/EV)

While there are no other grammatical function words (cf. Matras, 2009: 197 ff.) attested in LF, the DLF and the Valdman corpus (Valdman et al. 2004) list some frequent exclamations / interjections such as OK, OH, (OH) LORD and (OH) BOY. *Chiac* shows a significantly larger number of English function words that are not only morphologically integrated but that have in part already replaced their French equivalents.

The only English conjunctions borrowed into LF are BUT and SO. Both have a large functional spectrum and have to be considered as non-core grammar sentence connectors in comparison to other connectors. BUT is an adversative conjunction, but like French *mais* it is also frequently used as a discourse and interactive marker with a complex semantic range (cf. Neumann-Holzschuh, 2009b: 140). Due to its specific semantic-pragmatic function, BUT is indeed the most frequently borrowed connector from a crosslinguistic perspective; according to Matras' claims that expressions of contrast are among those items around which speakers must 'work hardest' in order to sustain their authority

43 NO is attested 62 times in the Valdman corpus (compared to 348 attestations of French *non*, which has the same functions as English NO). Note that YES is only attested four times, while *ouais* has 1043 entries. The question whether negation is a more salient semantic relation than affirmation and thus facilitates borrowing of negators cannot be dealt with here.

in conversation, they represent “high-risk” points in the communicative interaction and demand intensified processing effort (2009:162 ff.). There is no instance of the coordinative conjunction AND and OR in LF. SO, the English inferential marker par excellence, expresses implicit causality and sequentiality, but once more, like its French equivalent *ça fait*, SO is above all used as an “enchaînement du récit” and as a multifunctional discourse marker (Neumann-Holzschuh, 2009b). Like the discourse markers *strictu sensu*, BUT and SO do not fill a functional gap and are outmeasured by their default French equivalents as far as frequency is concerned.

- (30) *Le petit bougue, des fois, il peut dire des paroles en français, BUT pas équand toi veut lui pour parler français* ‘The little boy, sometimes he can say French words, but not when you want him to speak French’ (Rottet, 2001: 126)
- (31) *Nous-autres on pouvait pas parler français, du temps qu’on était à l’école, on était punis si on était collé à parler français. SO dès qu’on a eu notre famille, on voulait pas parler français avec nos enfants pour pas qu’eusse aouèye les mêmes tracas que nous-autres on avait dès que nous autres avait été à l’école.* ‘We couldn’t speak French while we were at school, we were punished if we were caught speaking French. So when we had our family we didn’t want to speak French with our children so they wouldn’t have the same troubles that we had when we were in school.’ (Rottet, 2001: 120)

In Acadian French BUT and especially SO are more frequent than in LF (Arrighi, 2005: 394; Wiesmath, 2001: 113); in *chiac* both conjunctions have even supplanted the French equivalent *mais* and *ça fait* (Perrot, 1995: 236). Traditional Acadian French has further borrowed the English conjunctions BECAUSE, CAUSE, SINCE, EXCEPT; in *chiac*, some of these conjunctions can be combined with the French subordinator *que*: *because que, since que*.<sup>44</sup> None of these forms are attested in LF.

#### 4.5 *Intermediate Results*

Although English-French language contact is certainly as intensive in Louisiana as in other North-American regions, the specific conditions of LF seem to be reflected in the way in which it borrows from English. While LF is very similar to other varieties of NAF as far as certain contact induced grammatical changes are concerned – I am thinking of certain cases of pattern replication possibly

44 Cf. Wiesmath (2006: 124 ff.); Arrighi (2005: 285); Perrot (1995: 236–245); for Massachusetts cf. Szlezák (2010: 250).

due to convergence processes that increase the structural similarity between the two lects – there are however differences regarding the adoption and actual integration of English-origin lexical material.

The foremost indicator for this is the morphological non-integration especially of verbs by bilingual speakers. But also the fact that LF preferably borrows those function words which are syntactically strongly peripheral complements this view. More strongly integrated elements, such as conjunctions (not including the exception BUT), which do not simultaneously serve as discourse markers are not borrowed, or even integrated morpho-syntactically. The opposite can be observed in *chiac*, the variety of NAF with the highest evolutionary dynamic which can be considered a system of its own (Perrot, 1995: 287).

In Louisiana borrowing from the prestige language as well as code-switching apparently follow their own rules. Balanced bilingualism is losing ground and shift to the majority language is very much advanced (cf. Rottet, 2001: 265 ff.), both factors have consequences for the insertion of English lexical and grammatical items. “Testimony about a personal sense of discomfort or embarrassment about using French is common in the Francophone spaces of Louisiana. Presumably for this reason, many semi-speakers prefer to simply disavow use of French” (Picone, 1997a: 129). Fading proficiency and language shift seem to make elaborate borrowing superfluous.

## 5 General Conclusions

From the beginning, language contact has been of crucial importance for the history of LF. In colonial times, contact between related lects resulted in the formation of a new (regio)lect; the multiple input is still reflected today in a considerable degree of polymorphism. Apart from that, certain features underwent leveling processes, which can be interpreted as convergence phenomena according to recent research in the field of contact linguistics. The continuing contact with English, however, which takes place in an entirely different ecological frame, results in the attrition of the minority language. While intensive lexical borrowing (and thus polymorphism) is especially pronounced at the periphery, English origin nouns and especially verbs are no longer actually integrated, as it is, to some extent, in Acadian French; contact-induced grammatical changes in LF, which themselves partly derive from convergence, are hardly prone to trigger large-scale grammaticalization processes. Since language shift has been evolving rapidly since the 20<sup>th</sup> century, more profound structural influences seem to be prohibited.



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