

Canadian English *qua* Minority Language

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This paper describes a large-scale research project, inspired by Chambers' characterization of Quebec English as "distinctive" due to convergence with French (Chambers 1986, 1991; Chambers & Heisler 1999), whose objective is to determine the existence and extent of convergence in this variety. Our approach is three-pronged. We investigate the inference of change 1) over time (by comparing the speech of anglophones who acquired English prior to the Quiet Revolution with that of the post- Bill 101 generation), 2) according to intensity of contact (by comparing locales with varying ratios of anglophones to francophones), and 3), with the presumed source (by comparing variable linguistic structure first amongst the putative contact varieties, and then with French).

Analysis shows that the morphosyntax of Quebec English, instantiated to date by the variable expression of future and past temporal reference, owes nothing to the structure of its superficially similar French counterparts. Even the lexicon, contra widespread anecdotal reports, features vanishingly few French lexical incorporations. These results add to a growing body of evidence that even in situations most propitious to contact-induced change —i.e. where linguistic forms are analogous and contact is intense —core features of the grammar tend to remain impervious to external influence.