Language contact and bilingualism effects in Vimeu French phonology
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It is well known that the regional languages of France – Breton, Flemish and Corsican among others – are losing ground to French, due to a lack of generational transmission (Héran, Filhon & Deprez 2002). Among the Gallo-Romance languages of northern France, traditionally referred to as *langues d’oïl*, Picard is no exception to this trend.

Based on a recent corpus of French interviews collected in Vimeu, an area of northwestern France where the Picard language still enjoys relative vitality, I demonstrate that linguistic features of Picard have seeped into French as it is spoken in the area, by both Picard-French bilinguals and French monolinguals.

In this presentation, I focus on two phonological variables of which Vimeu French speakers appear to remain unaware: word-final consonant cluster simplification in words like *autre* [ot] ‘other’, a feature well-attested in most colloquial French varieties and in Picard (Brébion 1907, Cochet 1933, Dauby 1979); and vowel epenthesis (cf. 1-2), noted particularly in the French varieties of Picardie (Emrik 1958) and Nord-Pas-de-Calais (Lefebvre 1988, Hornsby 2006).

Picard:
(1) a. *ène poaire éd jones pingeons* (Crimbillie: 19)
   ‘a couple of young pigeons’
   b. *I n’feut point éte éd Dérgnies* (Crimbillie: 75)
   ‘One must not be from Dargnies’

Vimeu French:
(2) a. *Et alors, e-d’quoï j’aurais l’air* (Fabrice D., 774)
   ‘And then (of) what would I look like’
   b. *C’est pour ça qu’on m’a envoyée au catéchisme e-d’bonne heure.* (Colette V., 766)
   ‘This is why they sent me to catechism early’

Using the methods of variationist sociolinguistics, I highlight quantitative differences between older monolingual adults and younger monolingual adults, and qualitative differences between French monolinguals and Picard-French bilingual speakers. For instance, while the rate of consonant cluster simplification before consonants is greater than 75% (n=1,117) for all groups, the age difference among monolinguals is statistically significant before vowels, a context in which simplification is stigmatized in French but not in Picard. In the latter phonological environment, older monolinguals behave as bilinguals do. I argue that differences between older and younger monolinguals can be explained in terms of language contact – older adults born prior to the mid 1950s were exposed to Picard during their formative years – while qualitative differences between monolinguals and bilinguals reveal the effects of linguistic interference from Picard to French in bilinguals.

By examining linguistic features that differentiate a local French variety from standard French while linking it to its regional language, this presentation offers a contribution to the field of regional French studies.