Language contact effects in the phonology have been explored in the bilingual speech community, both in communities with stable bilingualism (Poplack et al. 1988; Blondeau et al. 2002) and in immigrant communities (cf. Roeder 2006; Friesner and Dinkin 2006). However, only recently has the bidirectionality of such effects been considered, notably in heritage languages (Hrycyna et al. 2011; Nagy et al. 2011). This project aims to marry the two approaches by examining contact effects in Montreal, a community with relatively stable bilingualism, as well as an influx of immigrants who often acquire both community languages while retaining their heritage language (Meintel and Kahn 2006).

Here, we focus on two groups of Montrealers with varying degrees of association with the Anglophone community: Francophones and first- and second-generation Latin Americans. Expanding upon results of a perception experiment we conducted, we examine through production data the influences of the two local languages on one another, as well as that of a third, widely-spoken language, Spanish. Our sample consists of 6 first-generation Spanish speakers who immigrated in adulthood (L2), 6 speakers of Latin American heritage who immigrated to Quebec in childhood (L1.5) or whose parents immigrated (L1), and 6 Francophones with ties to English-speaking communities. We analyzed the presence of various sets of features in these speakers’ French, English, and (for those who were able) Spanish. These features include traits which distinguish Quebec French from European French, as well as traits in each language that reflect influence from the other two.

The majority of participants who grew up in Quebec use Quebec French features such as affrication and vowel laxing nearly categorically. Greater variability is found among L2 speakers; however, 2 of the 3 L1.5 speakers behave largely as do L1 French speakers. The results thus support the view that local French is the implicit norm, although additional factors emerge related to individuals’ social or educational trajectory. Among speakers of Latin American descent only L2 speakers retain Spanish-origin features such as /z/-devoicing and apical /r/ in French. However, English features such as initial stop aspiration are present, albeit to differing degrees, within English-dominant neighborhoods or English social networks among both native French and Spanish speakers.

The findings indicate that these multilingual speakers often exhibit multidirectional influence. Spanish-origin features are lost in the first generation, as is typical in immigrant communities. However, features originating in the long-standing dynamics of language and dialect contact in Montreal can persist. Some speakers may avoid Quebec French features that are considered too “marked,” reflecting their sociosymbolic orientation toward an international norm. The presence of English-origin features may also relate to individual histories, but their use is less about ethnolinguistic origin and more about issues of contact and identity. In the Montreal context, where multiple languages and linguistic varieties are in contact, sociolinguists need to examine within speakers’ linguistic repertoire not only the multidirectionality of contact effects but also the interplay of ethnicity as an objective social factor and as a result of individual sociosymbolic orientation.