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French and Canadian French, Are They Really Different?

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French and Quebec French: Are They the Same Language?

INTRODUCTION: When listening to both French and Quebec French, it is likely that you will notice a difference in the way they speak, whether you know French or not. While the difference in accent is the most noticeable difference between both languages, linguists argue that there are way more features that differentiate French and Québec French.

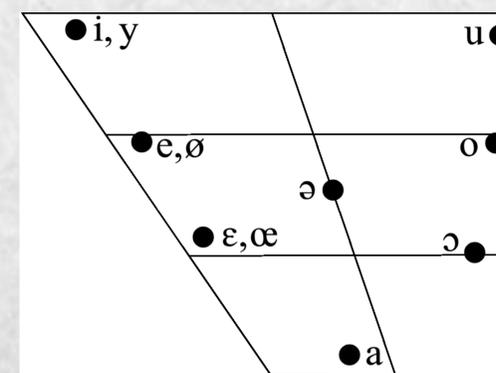
GRAMMATICAL DIFFERENCES:

-Quebec French is characterized by a “freer” use of grammatical rules. For instance many Canadian French suppress articles: “à ce soir” (literal translation: "see you this night"), would become “à soir”, dropping the article “ce” (“this”).

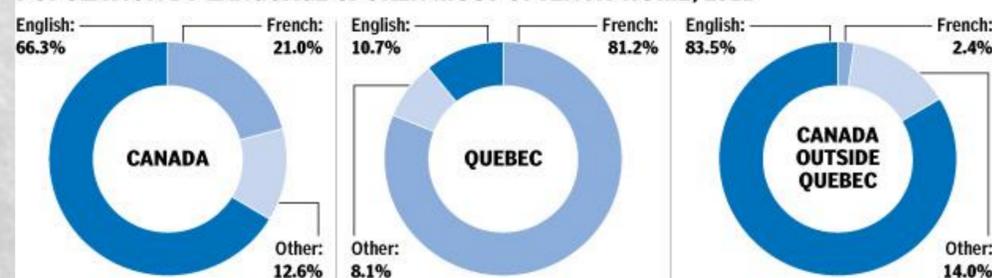
-Many Québec French also remove prepositions from their utterances. For example, “voici le chien dont tu dois t’occuper” (this is the dog you must take care of), would become: “voici le chien à t’occuper”, (this is the dog to take care of).

PHONOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES:

Quebec French has more vowel sounds than Parisian French. For instance, /a/ and /ɑ/, /ɛ/ and /ɛ:/, /ø/ and /ə/, /ɛ̃/ and /œ̃/ are pronounced different in Quebec French while it is not the case anymore in standard French.



POPULATION BY LANGUAGE SPOKEN MOST OFTEN AT HOME, 2011



NOTE: Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
SOURCE: STATISTICS CANADA

JONATHON RIVAIT / NATIONAL POST



EXAMPLE OF THE DIFFERENCES

FRENCH	France	Canada
	Grammar	More formal, more prepositions used
Vocabulary	Cranberry = airelle To lock = verrouiller	Cranberry = atoca To lock = barrer
Pronunciation	R = flapped way	R = uvular sound

QUICK HISTORICAL FACTS: 7,2 million Canadians are French speaking natives (20% of the Canadian population). Although English is the most spoken language in Canada, Quebec French is known for being a French speaking province since the 17th century. While at the beginning of the 1800s, Canadian French was identical to Parisian French, it started to change during the industrial revolution and both English and French have influenced what we commonly know now as Québec French.

VOCABULARY DIFFERENCES:

There is a huge paradox regarding anglicism in Quebec French. In fact, since the 1970s, French Quebec is characterized by its rejection of anglicism. While in France, people would use words such as “weekend”, “email”, “parking”, “chewing gum” etc... Quebec French would translate those words into literal French (“email” becomes “courriel”, “chewing gum” becomes “pâte à macher” ... etc.

However, due to the geographical location of Quebec in the world, Canadian French sometimes use more current anglicisms, for example: être dans le “trouble”, (to be in trouble), or Mets tes “running shoes”, (put on your running shoes) that French people would not use.

CONCLUSION: Quebec French is a language that has often been considered wrong and unconventional due to the anglicisms and all the differences listed above. However, it is important to remind that it is a very rich language which is the result of the culture of appropriation of words. Therefore, although it might be preferable to learn standard French for the world of work, Quebec French should not be neglected.

