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Bilingualism and the Literary Text

Ortho and Morpho-graphic Transcoding of Acadian "Franglais"

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The occurrence of English forms in Franco-Acadian discourse acts is a fact of life. Insofar as such occurrences are a matter of *choice*, they reflect, not linguistic poverty, but the performative bilingualism of the speaker. The visual effect of the insertion of English forms into written Franco-Acadian discourse is determined by the way in which they are *formally* incorporated into the discourse — syntactic, morphological and orthographic adaptation. The aesthetic effect of this visual bilingualism is determined additionally by the way in which the English forms are used. A descriptive analysis of data from a published collection of letters-to-the-editor (1895-98) is the basis for a classification of spelling tricks used to make an English word look or "sound" French, the combinatory tricks used to make a word *seem* French, and the adaptation of English forms to delimit the "speaker" roles. Further evidence from modern written monologues and dialogues is provided. When the discourse act in question has an *aesthetic* function, the writer's treatment of Anglicisms becomes a tool in his creative bag of tricks, and a factor in the coherence of the text.

Introduction

When an author attempts to reproduce, or to write in a geographically-determined speaking style, his texts are almost always assigned to the category loosely defined as regional literature (i.e. for local consumption only). And, even if such texts are accepted as literary works *à part entière*, they still carry with them at best the impression of folklore, at worst the stigma of linguistic stereotyping. Such is the fate, for example, of *La Sagouine*, the series of monologues composed in the Franco-Acadian dialect of Bouctouche that catapulted their author, Antonine Maillet, to international literary recognition.

In spite of the critical acclaim which the work has received, there linger traces of apologism in essays published in a later (postsuccess) edition of the monologues. André Belleau's reaction to the Anglicisms found in Maillet's text is inspired by such an attitude. Not only does he underestimate their number, but he derives from it a reason for the social value of the protagonist's language (A. Belleau, 1973:34). The vibrant language of *La Sagouine* is assessed, not as that of a literary work, but as a sociological record, which confirms a nostalgic desire for acceptance, colored by the traditional view of a norm and the value of linguistic "purity".

I have undertaken to examine the treatment of Anglicisms in written Franco-Acadian, and further, in response to the critical stance referred to above, I propose to illustrate how, when the discourse act (the text) has an *aesthetic* function, even the writer's treatment of Anglicisms (not only his manipulation of French) becomes a tool in his creative bag of tricks, and a factor in the coherence of the text.

The written Franco-Acadian I have analyzed is that used in three published collections of brief texts by three different writers: *La Sagouine* by Antonine Maillet (1973), *Dans note temps: avec Marc et Philippe*,

by Félix Thibodeau (1973), and *Marichette. Lettres acadiennes. 1895-1898. La Sagouine* is a collection of monologues initially composed for radio and theatrical performances by an established Acadian writer who gained international attention for this work. *Dans note temps* is a collection of fictional dialogues originally published as a regular feature in a regional newspaper, *Le Petit Courrier* of Yarmouth, Nova Scotia; its author is a teacher of long standing, a pillar, culturally-speaking, of the Acadian community of Southern Nova Scotia, and a devotee of "La Petite Histoire". And Marichette is the pseudonym of a prolific writer of letters to the editor of *L'Evangéline*, the newspaper in which the letters were published. P. and P.M. Gérin, in their recently-published (1982) critical edition of the letters, identify Marichette as the probable pseudonym of Emilie Leblanc, a schoolteacher, from St. Joseph (Moncton), New Brunswick, but most likely living in Weymouth, Nova Scotia, during the period the letters were appearing in *L'Evangéline*. Marichette was, as the Gérins conclude from their careful analysis of the clues which her letters contain, educated and well-read, in addition to being politically aware. All three collections of texts have in common the audience for whom they were originally intended: the general public (though regionally defined); and, relevant to the object of my study, a rather wide lexical scope, afforded by the treatment of a diversity of topics. All three writers, though widely separated in time, are conscious of, and attached to, their roots; all give evidence of the creative potential of "writing the dialect". All three writers attempt to evoke the essence of the Acadian language, which is its orality, and to portray in written form the linguistic character of that orality.

Almost a century and a half of cultural and geographic isolation (see N. Griffith, 1973, and M. Maillet, 1983) had, even by the time of Marichette's epistolary career in the late nineteenth century, created an enormous linguistic gulf between the
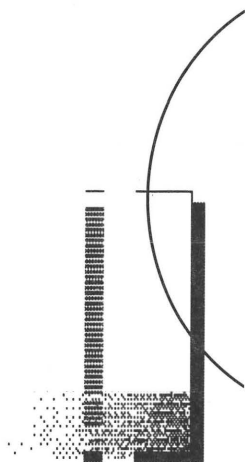
Franco-Acadian dialect and standard written French. The language was representative of an essentially unlettered, rural population; it had evolved freely, in the absence of the conservative influence of a stable literacy. It preserved features removed from the French of France, or altered in their development by the interference of grammarians and other linguistic role models. Free evolution has resulted in the stabilizing of other features, such as contractions, for example, which have remained accidental manifestations of context-bound features in common French (relevant to level-of-style, in this case "popular" in the traditional scheme of classification). Above all, the dialect had become, and still is, a vehicle of *oral* communication. The written French of the literate Acadian was, and is, that of other Francophones: common or standard French.
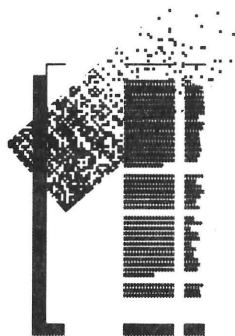
Writing the dialect, then, is an attempt to respect the lexical features, the syntactic structures, and the morphological systems of the oral code. It is also an attempt to translate into graphic form the aural effect of an archaic, and, at the same time, popular phoneticism. Thus, it will not respect the reading and writing habits of the public for which it is destined.

The result will be a written text with high visual impact, since, inevitably, the essentially ideographic nature of conventional writing is contravened (see P. Léon, 1971, for a general discussion of this question; P. Wrenn, 1985, for its application in *La Sagouine*). Any interpretation procedure will require a certain amount of conscious effort that "ordinary" reading normally does not, and it is because of this effort that the written text gains its significance as *visible* language. However, acceptability will depend ultimately on a balance between interest and readability.

Along with unorthodox spellings, word formation and word sequences, the incorporation of English forms into a French text influences the visual processing of

the text; the degree to which they are assimilated influences its readability; the ways in which they are assimilated, its interest. Their "shape" (orthographic/phonetic and morphological), and their "behavior" (morphological and syntactic), as well as their identity, and their frequency, are factors to be controlled in the integration process.

The occurrence of English forms in Franco-Acadian discourse is a fact of life. For more than a century now, ever since the Acadians of Atlantic Canada "came out of the woods" and ended their exile in their own land, the French language, which they had preserved and protected in their isolation, has rubbed shoulders with English. While the relative insularity, until recently, of their environment and lifestyle has held in check the pressure to replace French with English, the temptation to borrow has known no such restraint. The Acadian's vocabulary is a mixture of common French, of items relevant to the Acadian's milieu but long since fallen into disuse in common French, and of the surrounding English. The status of the use of any English item in Franco-Acadian, that is, as evidence of a conventionalized borrowing (inclusion of the item in the code) or of spur-of-the-moment code-switching (performative bilingualism) is, of course, difficult, if not impossible, to prove, given the almost exclusively oral status of the language.

In fact, the occurrence of Anglicisms in *La Sagouine* is relatively infrequent (although certainly not to the extent Belleau claimed; I counted 130 occurrences of 65 different lexical items in approximately 90 pages of text). When they *do* occur, however, they undergo spelling adaptation consistent with the author's handling of the French used by the Acadian (see P. Wrenn, 1985: 19). Thibodeau's use of English forms in *Dans note temps* is similar: 151 occurrences of 114 lexical items in about 80 pages of text (the average length of the 54 dialogues is about one and one-half pages).

A far richer source of evidence for the aesthetics of
performative bilingualism turned out to be the letters
of Marichette, written almost a century earlier, only a
decade or so after the Acadian National Conventions
of the 1880s. While letters to the editor constitute a
genre of dubious literary merit, those of Marichette
reveal a linguistic creativity worthy of her fictional
spiritual successor, the Sagouine. Like the mono-
logues of the latter, Marichette's letters are a pointed
and often witty commentary on the political and
social mores of the time, and the socioeconomic lot
of the Acadians. They are positively bristling with
Anglicisms. (There are 503 occurrences of 273
different lexical items in 68 pages of text, and, in
addition,many borrowed phrases.)
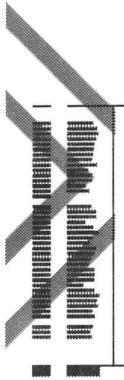
Marichette's repertoire at first sight suggested the
standard type of infiltration, due either to ignorance
of the French equivalent or to laziness, as in the use,
in a bilingual milieu, of a frequently recurring
vocabulary item. But, as my reading progressed, I
became increasingly certain that hers was no ordinary
anglicized, and therefore "impoverished", French.
Apart from the simple fact that, had her purpose
been solely to express her ideas in writing, she would
have made every effort to respect the constraints of
correct usage, the originality and imaginativeness
of some examples, as well as the ironic relevance
of others to their discourse function, are convincing
evidence to the contrary. Any lingering doubts that
I had concerning Marichette's ability to manipulate
her bilingualism at will were dispelled when I
encountered, in a single paragraph, "le bed-room",
"la chambre de lit" and "la chambre à coucher"[1]. She
had much earlier used "dé bagues" immediately after
"dé rings". It gradually becomes clear that the writer
was enjoying herself, and by manipulating the lan-
guage-mixing process she turned it into an art form.

The three collections of texts thus reflect divergent
approaches to the presence of a second language.
Two authors acknowledge it and exploit it without

giving it undue weight; the third, the earliest and ostensibly the least sophisticated, embraces it as an integral element in her style.

Lexical Borrowings

The English borrowings of *La Sagouine* and *Dans note temps* are almost without exception limited to lexical items. The exceptions are in both cases citations: the song fragment <<Tse [it's a] long way to Tipperary>>, used twice in the same monologue, and the phrase <<no trespassing>>, used once, in *La Sagouine*; and the formula <<An apple a day keeps the doctor away>> in *Dans note temps*.

Marichette's use of English items, on the other hand, ranges from single words (in the sense of a dictionary entry): lexical items or interjections, through word phrases: complete syntagms as well as syntagmatically incomplete sequences of lexical items, to complete sentences. Lexical borrowings, however, dominate.

The lexical borrowings are most likely to be nouns, although the preference is less striking in the letters of Marichette than in Maillet's *La Sagouine* or Thibodeau's dialogues. Both verbs and adjectives are almost as frequently borrowed in Marichette's letters as are nouns in the latter. The *relative* importance of nouns is, of course, inevitable, since French (like English) syntax dictates that one clause necessarily contain only one verb syntagm, but optionally any stylistically acceptable number of noun syntagms. In fact, the prevalence of nouns as borrowed items is well documented (see E. Haugen, 1950; U. Weinreich, 1953; G. Forgue, 1980; C. Thogmartin, 1984).

More than half the items occur only once. Only a handful (22) are used by more than one author; the majority are shared by Marichette and Thibodeau, perhaps because of the larger number of English

items used by these two writers compared to Maillet. The items used by both Thibodeau and Maillet, but not by the nineteenth century writer, designate twentieth century concepts (*stamps*, referring to unemployment insurance; *truck*), or concepts perhaps only recently assimilated into Acadian culture (*peanut, Santa Claus*).

The handful of English nouns that occur more than three times in Maillet's collection of monologues owe their prominence to their recurrence, in every case but one, in a single text, where the concept they represent has a thematic prominence. For example, in "L'enterrement" the *dory* of Jos, whose goal in working his dory was to earn money to buy himself a decent funeral, is ultimately used as his coffin. The number of such thematically-relevant borrowings is, however, so small, and represents such a small proportion, both of the *mots-clé* of La Sagouine and of the English borrowings, that overall their relative prominence is most likely accidental.

In Thibodeau's dialogues, only seven of the 114 items occur more than twice; here also, the recurrences are clustered. The occurrence of English forms in both twentieth century texts, thus, is essentially restricted to isolated and sporadic borrowings - occasional occurrences of a single word used in a French context.

More than half the borrowed lexical items used by Marichette occur only once; the proportion of repeated borrowings is higher than in the case of *La Sagouine* and *Dans note temps*, although not markedly, and the recurring items are often thematically relevant: e.g. *whisky, tory, grit, State* (i.e. United States). However, this time, some, at least, are undisputedly institutionalized or conventionalized borrowings, rather than an idiosyncracy of the writer; "à la State" is perhaps a calque on the Canadian English designation of the United States as "the States". A small number of other borrowings are,
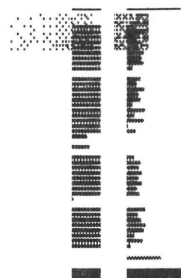
at least in her case, conventionalized; they occur consistently with a specific connotation. For example, the word *boy* occurring with a possessive, or in an analogous context, has added to the basic concept of "young male person" the notion of "belonging" to a group or to someone else (she doesn't use the word for any other purpose). These are not simple cases of arbitrary code-switching; the choice of the term appears to be motivated by the meaning to be conveyed.

The borrowing tends, thus, with all three writers, to be a very casual procedure, reflecting what I have called, above, a type of individual, *performance* bilingualism, rather than a systematic infiltration of the code. This conclusion is consistent with the findings of Forgue (1980), in his quantitative analysis of "franglais" in *Le Monde*: the newness of the borrowing (which he established by comparing dates of the first attestation according to "historical dictionaries") appeared to be the determining factor in low frequency of occurrence, rather than the subject matter in question.

Spelling adaptation

The conjunction of written and oral language is graphically mirrored in the orthographic code. Not surprisingly, therefore, a tendency toward spelling innovation is an important characteristic of the style of writers of dialect, and therefore a highly visible identifying feature of their writing. Spelling innovation is also the means used to integrate an English borrowing into a French context, *when integration is the goal*.

The modification of the spelling of the English word to conform with the orthographic patterns of French serves as a sort of camouflage; in effect, the word so adapted represents a lesser obstacle to French reading habits, reading habits which already have to adapt to the unaccustomed *French* spelling features. On the other hand, the word's origin may be less readily evident, and interpretation thus less assured.

Spelling adaptation may consist of replacing a letter or sequence of letters used in English but not in French, or rarely, with the letter or sequence of letters used in French with the same orthoepic value; for example -*k*- or -*ck*- is replaced by -*qu*- or -*q*-, -*sh*- by -*ch*-, or -*ee*- is replaced by -*i*-, -*oo*- by -*ou*-.

AM = Antonine Maillet
FT = Félix Thibodeau
MA = Marichette

ex. AM crack > craque
    AM buckwheat > boqouite
    FT packpoles > pacquespoles
    MA Blackader > Blaque-à-deurre
    MA shaky > shéqué
    MA whisky > wisqui
    MA push > pouche
    MA feed > fider
    FT raccoon > racoune
cf. also
ex. MA suit > soute
    MA beat > biter
    MA factory > factrie
    FT boat > botte

Or spelling adaptation may consist of replacing a letter or sequence of letters used also in French but with a different orthoepic value, with the letter or sequence of letters appropriate in French to the representation of the English pronunciation. For example, -*a*- with the value /e/ in English is replaced by -*é*- (cf. *shéqué* for *shaky*), or -*j*- with the value / dʒ/ in English is replaced by -*dj*-. A final consonant such as -*p* or -*t*, which in French has no orthoepic value (it is "silent"), is replaced by the doubling of the consonant with added final -*e*: that is, -*p* > -*ppe*, -*t* > -*tte*. In either case, the word is simply dressed in French clothing; it is an English word that *looks* French.

ex. FT shop > shoppe
    AM peanut > pinotte
    FT jigger > djigger

Other spelling innovations may reflect a phonological or a morphological adaptation, in which the graphic substitution suggests a phonetic or phonological substitution, for example, the substitution of [i] for [ɪ]

ex. MA bit [bɪt] > bite [bit]

MA bother [bɔðə] > bodrer [bɔdre]

MA young [jʌŋ] > yonng [jɔŋ]

FT Santa Claus [sæntəklɒz] > Sandi-Clâ [sādiklɑ]

MA push [pʊʃ] > pouche [pʊʃ]

to suggest a word that doesn't *sound* English anymore. In the case of *shéqué* for *shaky*, the phonic adaptation is also morphological: the final *-é* is at once the graphic representation of the sound [e] and the written suffix of the past participle form - a morphological adaptation.

In some cases a word that is in fact a cognate, with the same spelling in French and in English, is spelled so as to suggest the English pronunciation:

ex. FT raisin > rézonne

FT rail > rélle

FT rheumatism (e) > roumatizes

FT station > stécheune

FT train > traine

Other cognates that are spelled differently in English and in French appear with their English spelling.

ex. MA rum (rhum)

MA porch (porche)

FT savage (sauvage)

Some changes are pure whimsy, as in the treatment Marichette often gives English names, especially those of politicians, a favorite target of her dry wit: "Koppe", "Kop", for "Copp", "Bowel" for "Bowell", "Maclac-claine" for "McLaughlan", "Powill" for "Powell", "Sneek" for "Sneak". Others, finally, are attempts at punning, or at least formal word associations:

ex. FT overseer > overcire (cf. French *cire*)

FT packpoles > pacquespoles (cf. French *Pacques*)

MA Killham > Killhim (English *kill him?*)

MA suffrage > souffrage (French *souffrir*)[2]

AM Rolls Royce > Rouleroyce (French *rouler*)

AM Rockefeller > Roulefeller (French slang *rouler*)

Spelling adaptation of English borrowings is thus consistent with the global function of spelling innovation in the texts analysed: the evocation of the language's

> ( ) ^ ...] : =) ´ ≪ .
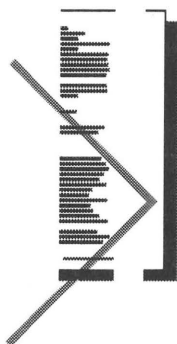
orality. When English borrowings are assimilated in this way, not only are the words themselves integrated into the French texts, and perhaps into the writer's linguistic code, in addition their treatment is an integral part of the writer's technique.

This is particularly striking in the case of *La Sagouine*, in which the adapted spellings of English words not only conform to French spelling patterns, but also in many cases are identical to those used to represent the so-called archaic features of Franco-Acadian pronunciation.

ex. balloon > bal(l)oune (cf. bonne > boune)
     spittoon > spitoune
     loose > lousse (cf. chose > chouse)
     hatchet > hatchette (cf. nerfs > narffes)

This coincidence is doubly significant: it is the archaic features that Maillet stresses in her spelling modification of French, while playing down the features of popular, oral standard French; these are thus the important spelling substitutions. At the same time, paradoxically, they represent the antithesis of conservatism. They are perhaps tolerated *because* they are adaptable and do not visibly contradict the archaic allure of the graphic system. The writer avoids the contractions that are the mark of the style of a Queneau or a Tremblay, for example.

In fact, although English borrowings are far less frequent in *La Sagouine* than in Marichette's letters, they are far more likely to undergo orthographic integration (more than twice as likely). This is perhaps why Belleau only noticed two or three, an indication of their visibility (or invisibility). Thibodeau is also more likely than Marichette to adapt the orthography of the English borrowing in one way or another. In the letters of Marichette, barely one-quarter of the occurrences of English lexical items show any attempt at spelling adaptation, if the spelling changes associated with morphological adaptations of verbs are excluded and only the stem is treated as constituting the "lexical item". I have

considered even the omission of a hyphen, or the use
of a hyphen in a compound where the English uses
simple juxtaposition, with or without word separa-
tion, as representing "spelling adaptation", as in
ex. bed-room for bedroom
     hog reeve for hog-reeve
These are adaptations that in fact have little effect on
the visual identity of the item.

Given the numerical importance of borrowings
in Marichette's letters, the relatively infrequent
camouflaging by spelling change is perhaps a blessing
in disguise for the reader. Since the word's origin is
readily recognizable, interpretation is facilitated, no
doubt even for the reader who does not understand
English. In the case of verbs, the combination of
English stem and French affixes is exotic enough
without further manipulation.[3]

Paradoxically, therefore, spelling change may have
the effect of both facilitating the reading process and
complicating it. At the same time, the preservation
of an English spelling in the French text also may
facilitate and/or hinder the reading/interpreting
process. However, the various ways of treating the
borrowed words are complementary in effect rather
than contradictory. On the one hand, if spelling
adaptation impedes interpretation, or semantic pro-
cessing, it integrates the English word into the
Acadian text, facilitating the visual processing of the
print sequences. And "odd" spellings do not in
themselves seem aberrant, since much of the French
spelling is itself unusual. On the other hand, the
absence of spelling adaptation no doubt facilitates
interpretation (accessibility), although it slows down
the visual processing (readability). Unadapted words
are in effect another kind of "oddness". In short, the
varied treatment of the orthography of English
words, like that of the French text itself, represents
a compromise between accessibility, readability,
and novelty.
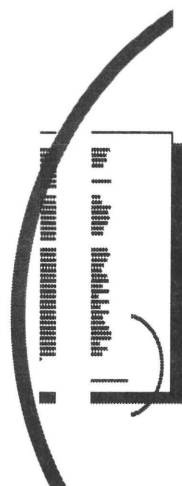
Morphological and morpho-graphic adaptation

The bulk of the evidence for morphological adaptation is derived from Marichette's letters; Maillet and Thibodeau use virtually no English items other than nouns.

Rules governing integration of English lexical items into a French syntagm are complex, but the process is systematic. Similarly, morphological assimilation follows predictable if sometimes unexpected patterns.

English verbs are almost invariably assimilated morphologically. That is, an English stem is combined with the French affix appropriate for tense marking and agreement with the subject – appropriate, that is, in Marichette's own rendering of the Acadian version of French verb morphology (which may be the absence of marker - I exclude here cases in which the absence of marker does not appear inconsistent with French spelling habits):

la tête arrived

carry on une petite flirting

I taut qu'il[4]

come Marichette

Note that *arrive*, had it been adapted morphologically to French, would no longer be identified as an English verb, but rather as the French *arriver*; in this case the English suffix is essential to the word's identity.

The composition of the verb syntagm having as its nucleus an English verb stem follows in other respects the (Acadian) French model: type and placement of negation forms, form and placement of complements, including reflexives. The transitivity class of the verb is consistent with its English origins. However, the vast majority are concrete action verbs, whose French cognates or equivalents are also transitive or intransitive respectively. Only two are English phrasal verbs and therefore structurally nonconforming in a French context: the already cited
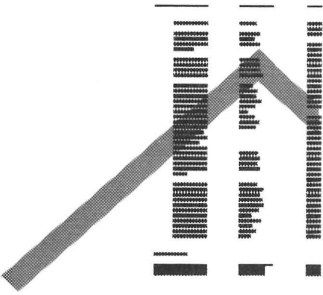
carry on, and *kick out* in
> carry on une petite flirting
> allions être kické out

In short, the borrowed verbs behave in almost every
case and respect as if they were French verbs. This is
not to say that the reader will not sit up and take
notice, for the morphology of the borrowed verbs is
not that of the standard written French code, but
rather that of the nonstandard *oral* Franco-Acadian.
ex. j'le soakrons
> (ils) shakions like fun
> s'avait busté en
> nos garçons se groguons pas

Even for the Acadian reader, used as he is to *hearing*
such forms but *seeing* those of common French,
ideographic reading habits will no doubt be perturbed.

Morphological assimilation of nouns is less clear - the
commonest written form of plural marker is the same
in English and in French: the addition of -*s*. The
absence of this affix on a plural English noun *might*
indicate interference from the French pronunciation
rules, according to which singular and plural are
usually phonetically undifferentiated: the affixed -*s*
has an oral correlate in English, but not in French.
In fact, while Maillet and Thibodeau treat nouns like
conventional French items, in Marichette's letters a
small number of English nouns used in the plural
(12 out of 85) do not themselves carry a mark of the
plural (which is indicated elsewhere in the French
sentence by a verb form or a determiner). Thus they
are morphologically assimilated to Marichette's wildly
erratic spelling system for *French* nouns, according
to which she marks or does not mark the plural
indifferently, whether or not it is marked orally.
(In this respect, the treatment of English nouns is
more consistent than that of French nouns.) A few
isolated examples do have the plural marked, but
incorrectly according to English rules and correctly
according to French spelling rules. Notably, *tory*
occurs in the plural as "tory", "tories", and "torys".
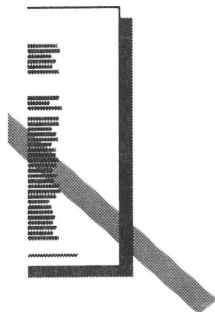
Derived nouns undergo another form of assimilation: the English suffix is replaced by a French one:

scolding > scoldure

smuggling > smugglure

canvasser > canvasseur

Paradoxically, *flirtation* becomes *flirting*, consistent with the well known procedure of assigning this -*ing* form to borrowed English words in French (cf. *smoking*, etc.) - this, perhaps, should not be interpreted as an original creation, since it occurs also in standard French. Similarly, the English agent suffix -*er*, replaced by -*eur* in *canvasseur*, is added to *speech* to form *speecher* (intended to have the same derogatory effect as *speechifier* in twentieth century English?), a pseudoborrowing (see Thogmartin, 1984, for a definition of this term). These few examples echo the creativity elsewhere evident in orthographic/phonetic adaptation.

English adjectives are assimilated to French adjective morphology if they are participial forms: they acquire a suffix marking the gender and number of the noun they accompany (like that of French adjectives, the agreement is not necessarily "correct"!). Nonparticipial forms remain invariable as in English.

ex. pas une seule personne grogée

une chaise pas stuffé

toute lé yonng boys

et young [sic] lectrices

For the most part, adverbials accompanying an English adjective are French. English adverbials do occur, however, including one that is used to qualify a morphologically assimilated English adjective accompanying a French noun:

les jambes PRETTY shakées

In general, then, the spelling of borrowed lexical items is adapted to suggest this morphological adaptation, to conform to the morphological system of Acadian French. In this respect, the treatment that they receive, and any inconsistency it reflects,
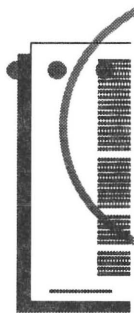
is analogous to the morpho-graphic transcoding of
native French words.

Phrasal Borrowings

Borrowed syntagms, which are found only in the
letters of Marichette, occur as manifestations of a
common form of code-switching, starting a sentence in
one language and finishing it in the other. With the
exception of a small number of verb phrases: *I bet...*,
I guess..., they tend to be sporadic borrowings, the
occasional occurrences of a set phrase. Although
varied in identity, the majority fall into two broad
categories. The first is composed of sentence-opening
verb phrases expressing the position of the writer:
ex. I bet que...
    I guess que...
These borrowings are syntagmatically integrated, in
that they take a complement in French, introduced
by a French connective (in this case the conjunctive
que). The second type includes sentence-ending
parentheticals or tags:
ex. and don't you forget it
    yessirree bob...
   et God knows what else!
or sentence adverbials
ex. all the time
    on the road.
Both types, however, are examples of code-switching
rather than true borrowings. They appear to be
functionally motivated - the writer is commenting on a
situation or on the utterance itself. In a sense, their
use is conventionalized, since when the performance
has perlocutionary force, English is chosen.

Another type of multiple-word sequence is less com-
mon, and the motivation of the examples less appar-
ent - borrowed lexical items occurring in combination
- such as an English noun accompanied by an English
adjective (or a string of adjectives
ex. une first class house
    en tip top good health
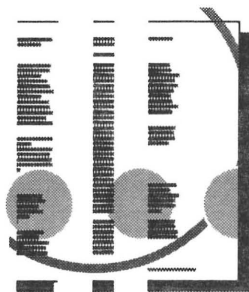
- note the use of the French determiner and the French preposition). The only discernable common denominator is the nature of the adjectives used in these combinations - they are qualifying modifiers, expressing a judgment - "first class", "tip top", "good", a trait shared, however, by the majority of English adjectives used in isolation by Marichette. Once again, is it a characteristic of Marichette's expression, independently of the use of English, to use adjectives of quality rather than of determination or identity? Is the multiple-word sequence accidental, composed of two or more borrowed words, or is the sequence itself borrowed *as a sequence*?

Whatever their motivation, the presence of unassimilated and only partially integrated English word phrases underscores the linguistic reality behind the isolated and sporadic lexical borrowings: Marichette's world, like that of her twentieth century compatriots, was a bilingual existence.
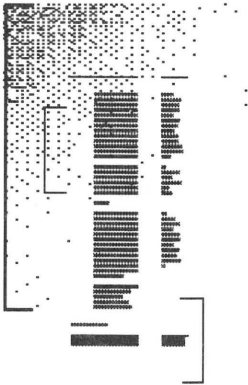
Swearing

Another type of borrowing is clearly that of word sequences, and of a type that has a clearly-defined function: Marichette swears in English. In part at least because of their social function, no doubt, these borrowings would appear to be a more pervasive element of her style, if the reaction of her contemporaries is any indication (see Gérin and Gérin, 1982: 173, 232), than their frequency would actually warrant. She used no French vulgarisms or blasphemies. (In *La Sagouine* one finds only one "swear word", *batèche*, a form that recalls Marichette's *bidèche*, and none at all in *Dans note temps*.)

The majority of such oaths are used as parentheticals or tags:
  comme le hell
  cross as the devil
  in a hell of a hurry

However, a few are syntagmatically incorporated into the text of the utterance, as in the case of "J'attrape s'te gâchette d'amanchure là" (Gérin and Gérin, 1982: 116; *gâchette* is a feminine diminuitive of *gâche [gosh]*: 264).

With few exceptions these borrowings, even the milder oaths, undergo orthographic modification of some sort, and it is often a modification that is more camouflage than integration, because the results do not always look very French; "Ghe hosse pônet" (*Jehosophat*, no doubt), and "gee hoss" (also occurring as "ghé hose", and representing also *Jehosophat*, or possibly *Jesus*?). One nicely gallicized oath is *for God's sake*, realized as "pour gâdesèque"; another is "gaudolle" (*God all*). *Damn* and *dashed* become "dème" or "dême" and "dèche" or "daiche", following the spelling rules applied in the assimilation of socially acceptable lexical items. *By jove* is borrowed as is, *by gosh* becomes a hybrid "by gâche", half-English, half-"French", as do *(I'll) be damned, I'll be dashed*, which become "I be dème", "I be dèche".

The use of the circumflex accent on some examples is presumably purely decorative, and not related to any phonetic rules (*by jove* does not receive one); in addition to the examples already cited, it is found on "hell-mâllé", "hèche mâlle", alongside "hell mallé", without it.

In short, although relatively few in number, swearings are highly susceptible to spelling change, and relatively highly varied spelling change at that. One unadapted item is camouflaged in another way (in an allusion to the reported speech of an Anglophone): it appears as d....d.

Marichette seems to be playing with these items, and perhaps poking fun at the procedure of deforming taboo items to overcome the stigma attached to their use. In one case the process results in a pun incorporated into the text of the utterance itself:

] : =) ´ « . > ( ) ^ ...

"Il counnaissait pas un dème de bite en politique";
["He didn't know a damn bit about politics."]
This is the only instance in which the suffixed *-ed* of
certain English swear words is preserved, here
taking the form of a French preposition, and thereby
increasing the Frenchness of the syntagm.

Sentence Borrowings

Finally, Marichette uses English for complete sen-
tences. Although such "borrowings" are scattered
throughout the series of letters and, naturally, are
prominent by virtue of their length, they are not, in
fact, a characteristic of the writer's expression.
Rather, their use is clearly constrained, and
identifies them as being external, or foreign, to
Marichette's own repertoire. These English sen-
tences occur in passages relating encounters with
monolingual Anglophones - for example, politicians
campaigning for (re)election and soliciting (or
attempting to buy) the votes of the rural Franco-
phone - and, although they are not direct quotes, are
used to represent the speech of such individuals.
Their use is therefore contextually, rather than
linguistically, determined. The message conveyed is
the fact that these utterances are (or were) made in
English, a type of linguistic commentary. It is also a
type of social commentary in that the language of
communication is made explicit in this way only in
the case of unsympathetic individuals. They do
offer, incidentally, indirect evidence of Marichette's
bilingualism: her control of English, at least in
written form, may be inferred from her faultless
rendering of the English politicians' speech.

She uses the same technique to similar ends in a
portrait of her daughters who speak English when
home for a visit from their adopted life in urban
America. This time, by representing their faulty
pronunciation and grammar, she provides a wry
commentary on the success, or lack of success,

of "ces jeunes ladies là" in accomplishing their goal
of cultural assimilation and social advancement. In
both cases, the use of English (either its presence,
or the form it takes) suggest a role reversal - the
homebound rural, Francophone Marichette, whose
command of English surpasses that of her daughters,
is in fact the superior figure.

Conclusion

There is thus in Marichette's letters a double portrait
of the languages-in-contact situation of the Acadian,
the one less central to the writer's own language use
serving to illustrate the context of her own personal
bilingualism or "sesquilingualism." Marichette
defends her use of language without apology: "note
belle langue que j'parlons dampi que j'sont sortis du
bois y ousque les Anglais nous avions *chasé*." [our
beautiful language which I/we speak since I/we came
out of the woods where the English had *chased* us.]
(Gérin and Gérin, 1982: 117) At times Marichette
appears to revel in the languages-in-contact situation
which history has forced on her people. The follow-
ing paragraphs, which conclude the next to last letter,
are a notable example:

> Paul à Plaise à Philippe à Joe, marchand sur la
> dûne à busté. Son butin sera *auctioné* samedi par
> le shérif pour payer de la *smugglure*. On dit que
> sa femme sera à la *sale* pour *bidder* sur le *stuff*.
>
> Vous ferez mes compliments à tous ceuses que
> vous voirez.
>
> [Joe's Philippe's Plaise's Paul, the dealer on the
> dunes, went *bust*. His loot will be *auctioned* on
> Saturday by the Sheriff to pay for the *smuggling*.
> They say his wife will be at the *sale* to *bid* on the
> *stuff*. Give my best to all those you see.]
> (Gérin and Gérin, 1982: 114)

The juxtaposition of the two codes, with the substitution of an English vocabulary for the French she knew, serves, here as often elsewhere, to draw attention to the content, and consequently to the situation described, as well as to the social and linguistic realities implied.

The integrative devices exploited by all three writers, at times with ingenuity and wit, repay the processing effort required of the reader with a text whose visual effect balances the unexpected and the organisation of the unexpected into a "system" that the reader can quickly master. Orthography is reinvented, but according to familiar (if hitherto unconscious) rules. Oral (aural) language becomes written (visible), but, in the process, adaptation - orthoepic and morphographic - is neither exhaustive nor systematic. English borrowings undergo the same judicious transcoding process as the French context into which they are incorporated. The inevitable and often maligned result of the bilingual reality of the Acadian writer's text-world, such borrowings thus contribute to the aesthetics of the text.

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Notes

1 Verbatim illustrations from
the texts or letters are
identified in quotes, while
vocabulary items cited out of
context are identified in italics.

2 In a discussion of discrimi-
nation against women.

3 I shall refer later to another
category of borrowing in the
letters, in which the author
camouflages items the reader
might object to.

4 "Thought" - actually in the
reported speech of one of
Marichette's daughters.

-) ´ ≪ . > ( ) ^ ...] :