

Language Attitudes & Language Use: The Case of *joual* in Québec

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OBJECTIVE

This study aims at shedding light on the language attitudes and language use of *joual*, a variety of informal/colloquial French spoken in Québec. The term *joual* is used pejoratively and criticized by many throughout the province and the global francophone community as an incorrect or inferior form of French. *Joual* is nevertheless a fundamental element of Québec identity, which must be rid of its pejorative connotation and granted equal status within the francophone community.

MODELS³

Canada:

English Speaking Population: 26,216,243
French Speaking Population: 7,914,498

Bilingual Population (English - French): 6,216,075

75.4% English 22.8% French 17.9% Bilingual

Québec:

English Speaking Population: 1,103,475
French Speaking Population: 6,890,300

Bilingual Population (English - French): 3,586,410

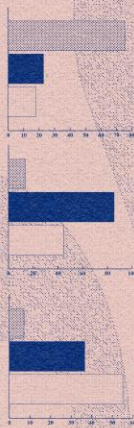
13.7% English 85.4% French 44.5% Bilingual

Montréal:

English Speaking Population: 286,280
French Speaking Population: 1,472,055

Bilingual Population (English - French): 2,231,540

7.1% English 36.3% French 55.1% Bilingual



LINGUISTIC TRAITS OF *JOUAL*

English: I'm going to park my car.
International French: Je vais garer ma voiture.
Québec French: Je vais stationner mon auto.
Joual: J' vais parquer mon char.

1. Anglicisms¹
 - a. Bécousse – backhouse
 - b. Parquer – to park
2. Neologisms²
 - a. Cabane à sucre – sugar shack
 - b. Acériculture – maple syrup production
3. Archaisms²
 - a. Tuque – toque (IF)
 - b. Char – chariot (IF)
4. Phonological Traits
 - a. Schwa deletion
 - b. Diphthongs in stressed syllables: e.g. *rêve* [raev], *sainte* [sɛit]
 - c. /a/ variant in word-final position: e.g. *moi* [mwa] becomes *moé* [mwe]

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KEY DATES

- ✦ 1534: Arrival of Jacques Cartier in New France
- ✦ 1608: Québec founded by Samuel de Champlain
- ✦ 1763: Treaty of Paris & The Royal Proclamation
- ✦ 1774: Québec Act
- ✦ 1791: Constitution Act
- ✦ 1839: Durham Report
 - “...the character of the North American Continent are English; and every race but the English appears there in a condition of inferiority. It is to elevate them from that inferiority that I desire to give to the Canadians our English language.”
-Lord Durham⁶
- ✦ 1840: Act of Union (Article 41)
- ✦ 1867: British North America Act
 - 1894 *Joual, J'val, s.m., Cheval*
-Dictionnaire canadien-français⁴
- ✦ 1910: Loi Lavergne
- ✦ 1960: Quiet Revolution
 - “Joual is a boneless language.”
-Jean-Paul Desbiens⁴
- ✦ 1961: Establishment of the Office de la langue française
 - “The Office is seen as...arbitrarily restricting the daily language of Quebecers and cramping the verbal freedom of joual.”
-Paul Laurendeau⁵
- ✦ 1963-70: The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism
- ✦ 1968: The Gendron Commission & Les Belles-seurs by Michel Tremblay
- ✦ 1969: The Official Languages Act
- ✦ 1974: Bill 22
 - “...our language is joual. What was contempt becomes pride.”
-1976 Jean-Claude Corbeil⁴
- ✦ 1977: Bill 101
- ✦ 1980: Quebec Referendum on Sovereignty
- ✦ 1982: The Canadian Charter of Rights & Freedoms
- ✦ 1987: Lake Meech Accord
 - “Joual is a vulgar language based on 16th century French plagued with bad English.”
-Anonymous Professor⁵
- ✦ 1988: Bill 178
- ✦ 1993: Bill 86
 - “[joual is] the partly defeated language of a defeated people.”
-Malhot 1997⁴
- ✦ 2003: Action Plan for Official Languages
- ✦ 2013: Bill 14
- ✦ 2021: Bill 96

CONCLUSION

Considering this work, we can better understand how the question of language has awakened the québécois people, who are a nation distinct from the rest of Canada. Although French has obtained the official language of Québec, *joual* still can't be considered an alternative. Nevertheless, *joual* is inseparable from the Québec identity because it is very much alive and remains a functional language to the French speakers in Montréal. Perhaps, this research has shown that *joual* is an essential variety of French use in Québec, a variety that should not be denounced but affirmed.