

of the day in the massive vowel rotation of the Northern Cities Shift (Labov et al. 1972; Labov 1994), in the retrograde shift of the Parisian vowels (Lennig 1978), in the raising of (o) in Korean (Chae 1995) and many other cases.

With respect to consonants, incremental change seems less obvious. More discrete in nature, consonantal change might be susceptible to more dramatic or rapid change. Here again, available studies point to quantitative alternation such that the innovative form becomes increasingly dominant over time (e.g. Cedergren 1973b, 1988; Labov 1994; Haeri 1994)².

This established finding, however, does not imply that sound change *must* operate incrementally. Our research on the replacement of Montreal French apical [r] by posterior [ʀ] in the 1960s – 1990s has indicated a drastically different pattern for the implementation of this change (Sankoff et al. 2001; Blondeau et al. 2003; Sankoff & Blondeau 2007). In this change from above, many individual speakers have passed from a highly variable use of both [r] and [ʀ], to a stage in which they are categorical or near-categorical users of [ʀ], without having used any phonetically intermediate variants.

In the current paper, we examine the linguistic behavior of two speakers across the lifespan in order to illuminate the role of stylistic variation in different phases of the change. This detailed analysis allows us to explore the relation between the phonological and stylistic conditioning with regard to the situation of the speaker in the change spectrum.

After providing a summary of our previous research on the [r] → [ʀ] change in Montreal, and explaining our methodology, the article concentrates on the individual variability, more specifically on the stylistic conditioning of the variation.

2. Our previous research on the [r] → [ʀ] change in Montreal

In studying the real-time change from apical [r] to posterior [ʀ] in Montreal French, we have employed both trend and panel comparisons. This was made possible through the use of three corpora, recorded in 1971, 1984 and 1995 (Sankoff & Sankoff 1973; Thibault et al. 1990; Vincent et al. 1995). Our data on Montreal include 120 speakers recorded in 1971, and 60 of the same people

² One striking exception to the gradual character of changing relative frequencies in consonantal change is documented in Trudgill's re-study of Norwich, in the merger of /t/ and /th/, and non-initial /v/ and /d/. He found that "not a single speaker in the 1968 sample showed even one instance of this phenomenon, [but] of people born between 1959 and 1973, 41% have the merger variably; and 20% have a total merger, i.e. /θ/ has been totally lost from their consonantal inventories" (1988:43). Many variable consonantal alternations are, of course not involved in change, e.g. the alternation in English of (th) and (dh) with affricates and stops in Philadelphia (Labov 2001, Chapter 3); and Spanish s → h → 0 in Panama (Cedergren 1973a).

recorded again in 1984. In addition, 12 younger speakers were added in 1984. Of the original speakers, 12 were recorded again in 1995, along with 2 from the younger 1984 cohort.

Our first paper on (r) (Sankoff et al. 2001) was based entirely on panel comparisons of individuals selected from the three corpora. Making maximal use of the reduced 1995 corpus, we studied the 14 speakers carried through 1995, along with a further 11 for whom comparisons were possible between 1971 and 1984 only. We were surprised to discover that a sizeable minority of speakers had altered their usage significantly over the years, and decided that an expanded group of subjects was necessary in order to understand the course of the change more fully, as it was implemented by individual speakers. In a second study, we examined the trajectories of several individuals, comparing their implementation of the [r] → [ʀ] change with their adoption of an ongoing morphological change from above (Blondeau et al. 2003). In a third study, an enlarged sample was designed to make trend vs. panel comparisons over the 1971-1984 period (Sankoff & Blondeau 2007). This paper clearly shows the change as being implemented chiefly by a younger cohort of speakers joining the pool of [ʀ] users, and that change over the lifespan by individual speakers is part of the general movement, but not the driving force.

3. Methodology

As in our previous research, this paper reports on the two major variants of interest in the ongoing change³:

- a) The *apical* variant, [r], whether flapped or trilled; and
- b) The *posterior* [ʀ], which included both trills and fricatives, the latter often very weakly articulated.

For each speech sample, we followed Clermont & Cedergren (1979) in calculating the percentage of [r] as a function of the two consonantal tokens, according to the formula $[r] / ([r] + [ʀ]) * 100$. We then carried out χ^2 analysis to verify whether codings were significantly different, taking the .05 level as our baseline. When two codings were more dissimilar than this, we had a third

³ In addition to these two, we coded for four other variants: cases which were too indistinct to hear were coded as *indistinct*, and removed from further consideration; deleted (r) in final clusters were coded as *deleted*; a fifth variant was the rather rare *retroflex* known locally as the 'American r', and articulated as in English Canadian pronunciation; and a final variant was *vocalized* (r). This variant, most often found in the coda environment, though not restricted to it, is very frequent in the speech of many Montrealers, especially in function words like *sur* and *pour*.

person re-code, then (in most cases) held a group session in which we reconciled the codings. For a handful of very difficult samples (in some instances because of poor sound quality), we reconciled the codings ourselves in the course of the analysis necessary for this paper.

The next step was to code for the independent variables we predicted might condition the alternations for the variable speakers. In the present paper, we report our findings on stylistic conditioning for two speakers recorded in all three periods between 1971 and 1995.

4. Individual [r] ~ [R] variability

A first question to be asked is how typical is intra-individual variation? To provide a general assessment of this question, we examined all the speech samples (124) we have coded for (r) variability across all time periods.

BASIC SAMPLE COMPOSITION	1971 SPEAKER SAMPLES	1984 SPEAKER SAMPLES	1995 SPEAKER SAMPLES	TOTAL SPEAKER SAMPLES
ORIGINAL 1971 SPEAKERS	64	34	12	110
YOUNGER SPEAKERS ADDED IN 1984		12	2	14
TOTAL	64	46	14	124

Table 1 – All speech samples that form the pool for studying the conditioning of (r) variability.

Since the general findings on change in progress led us to expect incremental change throughout the community, we were surprised to discover that the majority of speakers tend toward categorical use of one of the two variants. Eighty-three of the 124 speech samples (that is, 67%) exhibit categorical or near-categorical behavior on the part of the speakers (if near-categorical is defined as within 10 percentage points of 0% or 100%). Clermont & Cedergren's findings on the entire 1971 sample had also revealed most of the speakers to be close to 0% or 100%, but we would have assumed that a real-time comparison would show more intermediate speakers, if the change progressed incrementally.

Most of the near-categorical speakers of 1971 stayed that way in 1984, but a majority of the variable speakers moved towards categoricity. In Sankoff & Blondeau (2007), we divided our 32-speaker panel into 'low', 'intermediate' and 'high' users of the innovative [R] variant in 1971. Only 2 of the 12

'low' range users of [R] in 1971 had moved into the 'intermediate' range by 1984. On the other hand, most of the 'intermediate' speakers of 1971 had moved into the 'high' range by 1984. That category increased from 12 to 18 speakers by 1984, with more than half of the panelists now having become categorical or near-categorical users of innovative [R]. From the point of view of individuals, then, it seems that being in the intermediate range of [r] ~ [R] variability is a very unstable state, with most intermediate range speakers moving to categoricity over their lifetimes.

Of the two speakers selected for the study of stylistic conditioning in the current paper, one (André L.) was in the intermediate range over all three time periods, whereas the other (Lysiane B.) was a virtually categorical user of the apical variant in 1971, and showed considerable change later in life.

4.1 Stylistic conditioning of [r] ~ [R] variability

The question addressed in this paper is whether speakers who have adopted the innovative [R] in variation with the traditional [r] also show sensitivity to stylistic considerations. Innovative [R] is a change from above, higher values of being associated with women and with higher linguistic market indices (Sankoff et al. 2001). Thus, it is reasonable to investigate whether speakers associate [R] with formal style, or youth, or women, or higher social class, and on the other hand, whether they associate [r] with being old or old-fashioned, or with intimacy or informality. We have modeled the change as one in which many speakers would have acquired [r] in primary acquisition in the family setting, adopting [R] later in childhood or adolescence under the influence of peers (Sankoff & Blondeau 2007). Thus stylistically, it is possible that speakers who have made such a change over their own lifetimes will associate the [r] variant with family and their own childhood.

Of all the middle-range speakers, we chose two of those who were followed across the 24-year time span of the study for stylistic analysis. Both in their twenties in 1971, they belonged to the first generation of speakers who were at that time adopting innovative [R] as their basic consonantal variant. This was, however, more typical of middle and upper-middle class speakers (Sankoff et al. 2001), and the two we follow here were from working-class backgrounds.

Lysiane B. (#7) at age 24 in 1971 was newly married, a factory worker who had not finished high school, but she and her husband were already planning a home in the suburbs and a better life for their family. As described in Blondeau et al. (2002), Lysiane by 1984 had forged a career in sales, and she, her husband and young daughter were indeed living in their suburban home. By 1995, Lysiane

had become a realtor, and projected self-confidence in her own mastery of her course in life, as well as pride in her daughter's accomplishments.

André L. (#65) was 27 in 1971, single, and working in his chosen profession as an actor. He talks of his working-class father's aspirations for his children to achieve white-collar status with some job security, but explains how he himself (having finished high school, and recently graduated from a prestigious acting school) prefers living on a limited income with a meaningful profession. At 40, married with a toddler and a new baby, he was still following this financially unrewarding career path in 1984. By 1995, however, he had had to give up on acting and find a more certain source of income, and had shifted, as he explained in his interview, to gerontology, working as an *animateur* in a facility for senior citizens. Even with both himself and his wife working full time, he talks of financial worries supporting a family that now includes a teenager who needs music lessons. Despite these problems, André is clearly someone who finds much satisfaction in both his work and family life.

What kind of diachronic trajectories do these two speakers have? For Lysiane, her dramatic upward social mobility seems to go hand in hand with a dramatic rise in her use of the innovative [R], from only 7% in 1971 to 65% in 1984, after which she steadily but more slowly continues to increase, registering a value of 75% [R] in 1995 (a statistically significant increase between 1984 and 1995). André, in contrast, was already a middle-range user of [R] in 1971. Though the overall values of [R] reported for him increase slightly, from 61% [R] in 1971, to 66% in 1984, to 69% in 1995, these slight increases were not statistically significant, leading us to conclude that André has been a stable mid-range user of [R] over the 24-year period of the study (a pattern atypical of our sample as a whole).

To study stylistic variation, we increased the sample size for both these speakers, and searched as well for portions of their interviews that might be likely to show the most different behavior. Both speakers showed stylistic variation, but in different ways. Since Lysiane had close to categorical use of [r] in 1971, with only 7% [ʀ], our stylistic analysis deals with her in 1984 and 1995, and André in 1971, 1984 and 1995.

The results for Lysiane are reported in Table 2. We first studied three segments in her 1984 interview. We expected that a segment in which she recounts a conflict with the administration of her daughter's school might yield a higher rate of [r] than she uses in discussing more mundane topics, and this did prove to be the case. However, we also expected that she might show a significantly lessened use of [r] in the most emotional segment of the recording, one in which she narrates her daughter's harrowing experience with a near-fatal illness.

If Lysiane's use of [r] still represents her 'vernacular' in the sense of its being her dominant form throughout childhood and up through at least the age of 24, we reasoned that this very emotional story might lead her toward more vernacular usage. However, [ʀ]-usage in this segment was not significantly different from its use in Lysiane's recounting of more mundane family history as shown in the first part of Table 2. Only in segment C is [ʀ] use significantly different from – in this case more frequent than – the other two segments (whether considered separately or combined).

	NO. OF [ʀ] TOKENS	NO. OF [r] TOKENS	% [ʀ]/ ([ʀ]+[r])	ALL TOKENS
A. MUNDANE FAMILY HISTORY	22	21	51%	63
B. DAUGHTER'S NEAR-FATAL ILLNESS	87	45	66%	199
C. CONFLICT WITH SCHOOL AUTHORITIES	41	14	75%	81
TOTAL 1984	150	80	65%	343
D. CONFLICTS WITH HER MOTHER	37	18	67%	93
E. GRANDMOTHER'S DEATH	45	13	78%	97
F. BUSINESS DECISIONS	68	20	77%	147
TOTAL 1995	150	51	75%	337

Table 2 – [ʀ] and [r] use by topic for Lysiane B. in 1984 and 1995. Tokens of [r] and [ʀ] add to less than the total coded since non-consonantal variants included there did not enter into the percentage calculations.

How can we explain why Lysiane's behavior did not match our expectations in this regard? It may be that we misanalyzed the stylistic nature of segment B – for example, some of it concerns Lysiane's dealing with doctors and hospital authorities, figures who may be parallel to the school authorities in segment C. However, separating this long segment into – for example – the utterances revealing Lysiane's emotional responses from those involving reported conversations with authorities, did not reveal any particular patterning in her use of the two variants. For example, in (1), her use of [ʀ] and [r] shows a preference for using [ʀ] in codas and [r] in onsets⁴, but does not obey any stylistic constraints we could identify. (Other coda r's in clusters in this example were deleted and thus did not enter into the alternation at issue here).

⁴ This is a general tendency we have identified for almost all of the 'mid-range' variable speakers we have analyzed, as discussed in Sankoff & Blondeau (in preparation).

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>(1) Ça peut être n'impo[r]te qui
 même les membres de la famille qui
 peut être-- être po[r]teurs du mic[r]obe</p> <p>Puis étant donné qu'elle,
 elle était en faiblesse là avec ses otites</p> <p>elle l'a att[r]apé.</p> | <p>It could be anybody who
 even family members who
 could be, be carriers of the
 germ.</p> <p>And given that she,
 she was weakened by her
 ear infections,
 she caught it.</p> |
|---|---|

A more likely interpretation of these results is that apical [r] is no longer Lysiane's unmarked, vernacular pronunciation of (r). In her case, it seems that posterior [R] may yet carry the general implication of a pronunciation associated with authority, education, and formality. The one subsection of her encounter with the school administration in which [R] co-occurs with a hyper-formal⁵ (and hypercorrect) form is in (2). When Lysiane confronts her daughter's teacher about the lunch policy, asking her who exactly set the policy, the teacher's answer is reported as containing a liaison with infinitival [R] – in a sentence where it would probably have been the past participle which was used. Lysiane continues to report herself as having replied with another infinitival [R]. It would seem almost impossible to have scored this rhetorical coup using an apical [r] in the liaison, yet her emphasis here is on the fact of the liaison itself and not the particular variant of (r) used.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>(2) «Suzanne et moi en avons décidé[R] ainsi».</p> <p>J'ai dit
 «Moi je vais en décide[R] autrement»</p> <p>pour répondre: sur le même «air».</p> | <p>“Suzanne and I have
 decided that way”</p> <p>I said,
 “I’m going to decide
 otherwise”</p> <p>to reply with the same
 “air”/ “r”.</p> |
|---|---|

Overall, however, what we see with Lysiane is that the formal passage contains 75% [R] use, without any individual subsections being particularly marked with [R] – perhaps difficult to do when what would be so *marked* would be the statistically unmarked form. Yet nor did the words in which [r] occurred here – or in her other passages – appear to be stylistically marked in any way. Lysiane raises her overall level of [R] use in dealing with a topic marked by formality,

⁵ Other hyper-formal elements in this short sentence include the object clitic *en* and the use of the first person plural verbal suffix *-ons* (where normally one would find *Suzanne et moi, on a décidé*).

yet individual tokens are not associated with a particular stylistic force. This resembles the situation for the negation in French where *ne* is associated with formality without being used all the time in formal contexts (Sankoff & Vincent 1977).

In 1995, we again studied three segments from Lysiane as illustrated above in Table 2. In none of these segments does [ʀ] use differ significantly from the others. Her discussion of business decisions and difficulties with opening a dress shop (segment F) shows [ʀ] use on a parallel with her 1984 segment on conflict with the authorities at her daughter's school. However, segments D and E, chosen to tap into Lysiane's most unself-conscious speech, showed [ʀ] usage that is not significantly different from segment F. In D, she recounts how her mother was not happy living with Lysiane's family after being widowed, and in E (a passage which begins so emotionally that the tape recorder was turned off for a few minutes), she tells of her grandmother's death. Both of these passages seem to confirm that [ʀ] is now part of Lysiane's vernacular. This time, there are a few tokens of apical [r] in words that carry an ironic flavor, especially in the segment about conflict with her mother, but overall, stylistic variation seems not to be characteristic of Lysiane's use of [ʀ] ~ [r] in 1995.

André is a different story. Though stable across time, André's use of (r) variation seems more closely keyed to the use of individual tokens. Classified as a Middle Class speaker due to his high position on the linguistic market index counterbalancing for his working-class family background, André was an interesting case to study. Born in 1944 with several older siblings, we assume from his family background that André also acquired [r] in his primary language acquisition. However, he is unusual in having undergone training as an actor that included specific attention on the part of teachers and coaches from France whose mission it was to teach the Québécois actors to lose their local accents and speak 'international' French. In both 1971 and 1984, André speaks at length about his profession and in these segments, [r] is almost entirely absent, as shown in Table 3. Segment C differs significantly from A and B in 1971; Segment F in 1984 is virtually the same as the corresponding stylistic segment in 1971, and differs significantly from Segments D and E. In 1995, André was no longer working as an actor and did not talk about the theatre: Segment I, the most formal topic he discussed, differs significantly from G and H.

	NO. OF [R] TOKENS	NO. OF [r] TOKENS	% [R]/ ([R]+[r])	ALL TOKENS
A. MUNDANE FAMILY HISTORY ('71)	48	53	48%	137
B. FINDING A POSITION IN THE WORKFORCE ('71)	63	73	46%	185
C. THE EXPERIENCE OF THEATRE SCHOOL ('71)	99	10	91%	134
TOTAL 1971	210	136	61%	456
D. THE PLEASURES OF LIFE IN THE COUNTRY ('84)	40	30	57%	100
E. FAMILY GAMES AND ENTERTAINMENT	36	38	49%	118
F. LIFE AND WORK IN THE THEATRE ('84)	66	5	93%	95
TOTAL 1984	142	73	66%	313
G. FAMILY, FINANCIAL WORRIES ('95)	60	32	65%	124
H. PARTIES, DINNERS, DRINKING ('95)	30	23	57%	90
I. POLICY, POLITICS, WORK ('95)	71	18	80%	124
TOTAL 1995	161	73	69%	338

Table 3 – [R] and [r] use by topic for André L. in 1971, 1984 and 1995.

It is clear that André's stylistic range is greater than that of Lysiane. In the sections devoted to discussion of the theatre, alveolar [r] is almost completely absent. In these sections, he appears to use individual tokens of [r] for stylistic effect, reminiscent of Gumperz' (1982) analysis of metaphorical code-switching. In one 3 1/2 minute segment from section C, there are only 3 alveolar tokens in an otherwise uninterrupted sequence of 80 posterior tokens. Two of the three occur in (3), where André switches from the exaggerated 'French French' accent he adopts for the words *l'accent français* in the second line, to the common Québécois expression *s'énervé ben gros*. Both in *énervé* and in *gros*, André uses an apical [r], co-occurring with the usual pronunciation of *bien* without the glide whenever it is used in (this nonstandard) adverbial function.

- (3) Tu **comp[ʀ]ends**, le petit **foula[ʀ]d** de côté
 puis le: puis l'accent **f[ʀ]ançais**
 et puis tout le **t[ʀ]alala** tu-sais.
Moi ça m'énervait ben gros tu sais.
 Bien 'a fallu que j'app[ʀ]enne à **pa[ʀ]ler**
 le **f[ʀ]ançais inte[ʀ]national [...]**
pa[ʀ]ce-que quand tu joues du **Moliè[ʀ]e**
 avec l'accent québécois là,
 tu es bloqué pas-mal.
- Y'know the little scarf on
 the side
 and the «French» accent
 and all that brouhaha.
It bugged the hell out of me.
 I had to learn to speak
 International French [...]
 because when you play
 Molière
 with a québécois accent,
 you're pretty much blocked.

Later on he uses another expression clearly part of the Québécois vernacular when once more he evaluates himself, this time from the standpoint of some of his ambitious theatre school classmates, in the midst of a segment that is otherwise entirely characterized by posterior [ʀ].

- (4) **Alo[ʀ]s** à ce moment là
 ils me disaient que j'étais fou,
 que j'étais *pas ben ben brillant*.
- So at that point
 they told me I was crazy,
 that I was *not too too bright*.

Here the phrase *ben ben brillant* uses the colloquial evaluative adverbial “ben ben”, never pronounced with a glide, along with the unique use of apical [r] in *brillant*.

André's use of the traditional Montreal [ʀ] continues, albeit in a less unequivocal form, to be stylistically marked in other discourse that includes a much lower rate of [ʀ] use. He tends to use a higher rate of alveolar [r] in contexts referring to the family and to childhood, whether his own or that of his own children. For example, in 1984, after a set of rather impersonal reflections on why he prefers country living to the city, featuring mainly posterior [ʀ], he suddenly mentions the concrete experience of cross-country skiing with his toddler, saying that he loves to go out with his son on days when he doesn't have to work (all words in bold characters feature alveolar [r]):

- (5) Mes skis sont toujours en avant
 puis je pars.
 Puis je vais faire du ski de fond.
- My skis are always in
 front (of the house)
 and so I leave.
 And so I go cross-country
 skiing.

Puis là avec le petit,
la **traîne**-sauvage en **arrière**
puis je le **traîne** dans le bois

puis je l'occupe tout un **après**-midi.

I have the little guy,
with the toboggan behind,
and I pull him
through the woods
and I keep him busy
all afternoon.

Like Lysiane, in discussions of family history André intersperses apical and posterior variants throughout. But whereas for her, even a mini-concentration of three or four apical r's in a row does not in itself seem to carry any emotional association, in André's speech apical (r) often appears to cluster in utterances (though not necessarily particular words) that are especially imbued with emotion. These are usually positive but sometimes have a wryly ironic flavor as in (3) and (4) above.

By 1995, André has left the theatre and nowhere does there occur a context in his interview in which he uses [R] as exclusively as in 1971 and 1984. His discussion of his work and of politics in segment I produces only 80% [R], a significant decline from the formal contexts of 1971 and 1984. However, we feel certain that were André once more to talk about his acting career, we would see the same more extreme stylistic range he demonstrated earlier in his life.

Our interpretation of these results from André is that, as a trained actor who has been made sharply aware of dialect differences, he probably represents the upper limit of speakers' ability to deploy the two (r) variants stylistically. This stylistic differentiation for André may be part of the explanation for why he remains a variable speaker and does not show evidence of an overall increase in [R] between the age of 27 and 51. That stylistic variation rather than change over time is important for André can be seen from Figure 1, which plots all of André's segments by topic and year. Between age 27 and 51, André maintains a fairly consistent overall level of [R] in the range of 65% - 70%, but he also maintains clear stylistic differences as can be seen in Table 3 above. His phonological conditioning also remains stable, with codas yielding slightly higher percentages than onsets throughout – a much lesser difference than he exhibits in stylistic range.

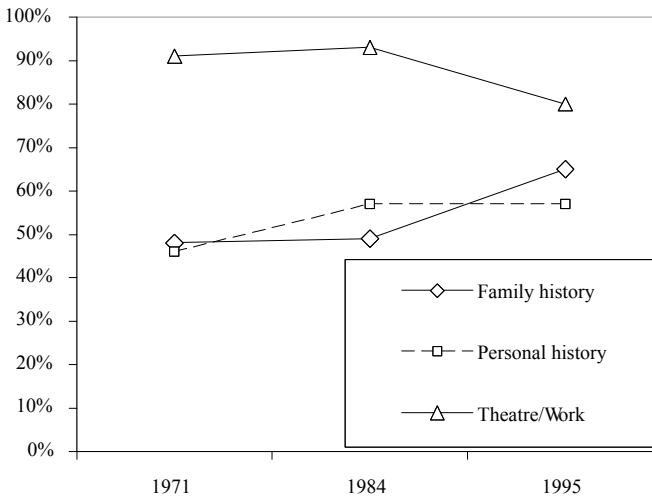


Figure 1 – Percentage of [ʀ] for André L. by topic and year.

Comparing Lysiane with André, both speakers from a working-class background, we made the assumption that both acquired [ʀ] as children. This was based on the fact that although some middle- and upper-class speakers in their 20s in 1971 tended to use [ʀ] as their vernacular form, most working-class speakers were predominant users of [r] (Sankoff et al. 2001). When we met Lysiane in 1971, this was still her pattern at age 24. André at 25, with his theatre-school experience behind him, already showed a great stylistic range and a vernacular pattern in which the two forms were in variation. Over the next 24 years, Lysiane's upward social mobility was accompanied by a dramatic increase in her use of [ʀ], but she shows only slight stylistic conditioning in 1984, and none in 1995 when [ʀ] seems to have replaced [r] in her vernacular. André on the other hand has not experienced upward social mobility and has not changed over time, but continues to show stylistic conditioning.

5. Conclusions

To date, there have been relatively few panel studies in which data on individuals has been reported over the span of a decade or more. Looking at vowel systems, Brink & Lund (1979); and Labov & Auger (1998) have shown stability in individual speakers, similar to the roughly 2/3 of our speakers who were stable across time. The majority of vowels of the speaker studied by Prince (1987,

1988) were also stable over 4 decades. In the domain of morphology, research on Montreal French auxiliary selection has shown stability in all but one or two of 60 speakers between 1971 and 1994, in the face of community change toward the use of *être* (Sankoff et al. 2004). Further work on the alternation between periphrastic and inflected future has found stability for the majority of the same 60 panel speakers, with upper class speakers showing retrograde change, increasing their use of the inflected future across their adult lives (Wagner & Sankoff 2011). In the alternation between *a gente* and the first person plural in Portuguese, Zilles (2005) reports that 11 of 13 speakers in a panel study across roughly two decades were stable in their use of *a gente* to replace the first person plural in Portuguese; the other two speakers showing retrograde change over their lifespans. Ashby (2001) reports that of 10 French speakers followed across a 19-year period, 6 were stable in their use of *ne*-deletion. Of the remaining four, three reduced their use of *ne* (the direction of community change) and one was anomalous in her increased use. A study of noun phrase agreement in Portuguese has also shown that across two decades, a sizeable minority of speakers (5 of 16) substantially increased their use of agreement – the direction of community change (Naro & Scherre 2002).

Taken together, these panel studies demonstrate that although speaker stability in adult life seems to be the majority pattern, we frequently find a sizeable minority of speakers dramatically increasing their use of the innovative variant, with small minorities becoming more conservative as they age.

Several of these studies have, like our study of Montreal (r), included a larger trend component along with a study of a subset of speakers as a panel. The studies of Ashby (2001), Naro & Scherre (2002), and Zilles (2005) concur with our research in two important respects: (1) community change outpaces that of individual speakers across their lifespans; and (2) in all these cases where options are binary, with no intermediate forms involved, change for individual speakers is often quite dramatic. It is possible that the fact that options are binary and discrete, in the [r] → [R] case as in the morphological alternations, makes possible the abrupt and rapid character of the change, as opposed to the slow and incremental nature of many of the vocalic changes described in previous research.

The implications of these results in terms of whether individual grammar change in adult life is a matter only of quantitative change, or whether qualitative change is involved, is the topic of Sankoff (in preparation). What we can reliably say on this point at present is that most of those speakers who changed from *intermediate range* use of [R] to categorical or virtually categorical use also went from a grammar where onsets and codas differentially conditioned (r) variation to a grammar that lacked this conditioning.

Our analysis in this paper has concentrated on the middle phase of a very rapid change, investigating the stylistic conditioning of the variation. The sensitivity to stylistic conditioning has appeared to be complex, as illustrated by the detailed analysis of the alternation for two speakers across the lifespan. Those two speakers who acquired the apical variant as children are not equally sensitive to the stylistic environment. Our analysis has shown that one of the two speakers already manipulated the alternation of the variants for stylistic purposes at the age of 25 in 1971 due to his personal background as an actor, and maintained this ability in later life. However, the other speaker, who was still using her vernacular [r] pattern at the age of 24 in 1971, changed dramatically toward [ʀ], probably due at least in part to her upward social mobility, without having showed a clear stylistic manipulation of the variants. In her case, it seems that one variant has replaced the other as the default variant. Further research using a combination of trend and panel study needs to be done on other variables involved in the process of change if we want to better understand the relation between stylistic markedness and the process of change.

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