This volume, which appeared in 2011 in the «Les Voies du français» series by the Presses de l’Université Laval, proves an invaluable study of what Hélène Blondeau characterizes as the current reorganization of the Québécois French pronominal system. Working within a variationist sociolinguistics framework, the author traces the emergence of sociolinguistic variation in the non-clitic forms of Québécois French pronouns nous, vous, eux and nous-autres, vous-autres, eux-autres concluding that this variation across time demonstrates a linguistic change in progress. Especially invaluable as a methodological model is Blondeau’s tracing through time not only of the given linguistic variable throughout the last century, but also her analysis of individuals speakers’ adaption of their speech over time in conformity with a linguistic change in progress of adoption within the community, a model made possible by the unique nature of her data of a cohort of speakers recorded at three different points in time.

The study opens with a small introduction (1-8) to the question at hand and the nature of the study. She provides a brief history of the two forms of pronouns in French, which she will term clitic and non-clitic (from among other alternatives) and their Québécois compound variants. Firmly establishing her work in the variationist sociolinguistic framework, Blondeau presents it as une étude en temps reel, or a study that looks to change in a given speaker’s usage overtime, contrasting with the Labovian notion of apparent time, wherein a linguistic change in progress is deduced from a pattern in synchronic variation.

The second chapter entitled «La variation et le changement linguistique au fil du temps» (9-28) provides the core theoretical framework within which Blondeau’s study takes place. She pulls both from the research agenda and methodology laid out by previous research conducted in variationist sociolinguistics, establishing her study squarely in the Labovian tradition. The chapter opens with a discussion of the nature of variation, its emergence from linguistic heterogeneity, and its structured differentiation ordered along two distinct axes: that of style and that of social prestige. She explains that her work will differ from the original first wave of sociolinguistic studies, which projected the trajectory of a change in apparent time. Instead, she will use her data to understand the change in temps réel. Previous sociolinguistic studies used data from synchronic variation to project the occurrence of a change in future time, called «apparent time ». This chapter is a clear delineation of not only classic variationist sociolinguistics but also of the innovative étude en temps reel that has recently emerged in variationist sociolinguistics.

The third chapter, entitled «La mesure de la variation en temps réel» (29-52) introduces the sources of data that will allow for not only contemporary analysis but the étude en temps réel undertaken here. Blondeau outlines the three sources of her data: (1) the corpus Récits du français québécois d’autrefois (RFQ), a collection of recordings taken of Québécois storytellers in the 1940s and 1950s, (2) the corpus Sankoff-Cedergren taken in 1971, (3) the corpus Montreal 84, and (3) the corpus Montréal 95. The last three corpora follow a cohort of speakers through their lives, with each corpus representing a selection of speakers from the study that preceded it. The Montreal 95 corpus includes not only studies in the classic sociolinguistic interview setting but also in self-recordings voluntarily undertaken by the subjects themselves. Following this, the author gives a thorough review of the extra-linguistic factors that are hypothesized to bear on pronominal variation (gender, sex, socioeconomic status) as well as style, which, in this study, correlates largely to the topic of discussion at hand (education, domestic matters, hobbies, occupation) and the level of formality there associated.
In chapter four, «Le Paradigme pronominal des pronoms dits personnels» (53-78) Blondeau reviews various analyses of the French pronouns and the distinction between the clitic and non-clitic series. She considers the role of phonological contrast enabled by the compound non-clitic forms (for example, *nous-autres nous allons* vs. *nous nous allons*), the role non-clitics have as semi-lexical noun syntagms (as compared to fully lexical, given the restrictions on pronouns), and their semantic and pragmatic values.

The fifth chapter, entitled «Alternance des formes simples et composées des pronoms non-clitiques» (79-104) carries on the work begun in the preceding two chapters by focusing on where and how variation between simple non-clitic forms *vous*, *nous*, *eux* and their respective compound forms *nous-autres*, *vous-autres*, *eux-autres* arose. Blondeau begins with a history of the forms from emphatic *nous-autres*, *vous-autres* which evolved from pro-nouns modified to emphasize a group distinction (i.e. you others, we others) to grammaticalized pronouns now in variation with their simple counterparts in Québécois French. The author then moves on to describing the various syntactic constructions within which the variants may appear. She provides a particularly exhaustive list, including not only broad categories (person, syntagm type, double marking, position, referential contrast, and construction type) but secondary analyses for both preposition type as well as the function of the double marked construction as well.

Chapter 6, «Les Contraintes linguistiques sur la variation entre formes simples et composées» (105-39) is the first chapter to analyze data based on the analytical groundwork laid out in the previous chapter. Here, the author considers only the data for the 1971 and 1984 corpora. She systematically works through the various syntactic positions where variation between the two occurs. Part of the motivation for the alternation, theorizes Blondeau, arises from a desire for phonological contrast between a clitic and its non-clitic form, explaining perhaps why *nous* (non-clitic) for *on* (historically an indefinite third person singular that has replaced clitic first person plural *nous*) is permitted while *vous-autres* is the only form that appears for the second person, due to otherwise unavoidable homophony between clitic *vous* and simple non-clitic *vous*. *Eux-autres* is then believed to come from analogical extension to the third person plural and desire for symmetry within the pronominal paradigm. Blondeau proceeds to look at syntagmatic types – which especially concern double marking – as well as possible differences between nominal versus prepositional syntags, and finds that double marking, especially without a preposition, favors the compound forms.

With the structural factors studied, Blondeau then seeks to establish in Chapter 7, «Le développement d’un marqueur sociolinguistique» whether the variation between the simple and non-simple forms can be considered a social variant. This leads her to compare (1) social factors, (2) stylistic factors, as well as frequency of forms in a given year (do the social factors have bearing on frequency over time, thus indicating indicate a change in progress?). Blondeau finds that simple forms appear more often in 1986 than in 1971 and appear more associated with education, while more formal topics elicited more tokens of the simple forms both generally and in double marking. Such data confirms, she concludes, that not only do the simple and compound forms alternate, their variation on the stylistic and social gradients demonstrate that they are clearly social markers.

With the data thus compared, Blondeau aims in Chapter 8 «Le passage du temps» (167-87) to understand the variation not just as the projection of a change but rather one that might be charted through time. Her look at the *RFQ* data demonstrates that the compound form is in fact the dominant one earlier in the history of Québécois French, with the simple forms appearing only after the prepositions *parmi* and *entre*. Blondeau then compares the 1971 and 1984 data, which reveals a significant shift of the compound to simple forms in double marking, especially wherever the non-clitic appears to the left of the verb, a place Blondeau supposes to be of particular linguistic salience. In order to support this claim, she
does a brief comparative study with *moi-même*, a non-grammaticalized emphatic form that occurs routinely to the left of the verb. She deduces that if simple forms are found in emphatic double marking, especially to the left of the verb, it can be concluded that the compound pronouns have been grammaticalized to the point of loss of emphatic value, thus vacating space for the simple forms to take on an emphatic effect.

Since the longitudinal nature of the data used by Blondeau allows for the following of several individuals’ speech patterns throughout time, she then turns to see if their own speech reflects an actual change in progress or age gradation in the community in Chapter 9, «Le parcours du marqueur chez les individus entre 1971 et 1995» (189-210). Blondeau notes an increased use of the simple forms. She also finds that the change is led by the first person plural, perhaps due to the phonological contrast permitted by «nous on» rather than recourse to a compound form before the clitic as would be observed in *nous-autres nous* given the virtual loss of subject clitic *nous* (and its verb forms) in Québécois speech. Social differences seem harder to compare, as simple forms increase in frequency in speakers from the upper social strata, only somewhat in the middle, and then not at all at the lower levels. However, with only twelve speakers in this final data set, she admits that it is hard to draw definitive conclusions. Nonetheless, Blondeau argues that this is clear evidence for a change in progress and that changes in speech may occur within a speaker over a lifetime in response to changes within speech norms in the community.

Chapter 10 «Le contraste situationnel» (211-28) moves away from the quantitative data reviewed before and looks at the self-recordings of the speakers in the Montréal 95 data. Though qualitative in nature, the chapter remains compelling for the general trends Blondeau notes. Especially interesting is the sudden decrease she observes in the use of simple forms in these recordings compared to their high frequency in in the interview settings. Nevertheless, she finds similar patterns between the self-recordings and the interviews along the axis of formality, such as when the issue of schoolwork is addressed in the home setting. Also of note, and perhaps a point underdiscussed, is the higher frequency of simple forms in the speech of younger children. Blondeau refers to Labov’s idea of «vector change» but does not delve much further. Certainly, an upswing in simple forms merits greater discussion and study, perhaps to the extent that it is beyond the scope of Blondeau’s study here. Certainly, the roles of media, schooling, and that of emphatic forms in language acquisition, as well as other factors, would be fruitful for further research and understanding of the phenomenon observed in the Québécois context.

In her eleventh and concluding chapter (229–49), Blondeau recapitulates and elaborates on the main points of her study: (1) use of the compound non-clitic pronouns in Québécois French is subject to sociolinguistic variation, (2) the data as evidence for a link between discursive resources (such as emphatic and phonologically contrastive forms seen here) and linguistic change, (3) the possibility of the continued maintenance of any variable as a stylistic variant (explaining the simple forms), (4) the usefulness of looking at community tendencies in comparison to individuals over time, and (5) the role of sociolinguistics in relation to both the reframing of Québécois French as an autonomous variety and its power to aid in the understanding of linguistic change.

Overall, Blondeau presents an excellent and thorough study of sociolinguistic alternation in Québécois non-clitic pronouns. What might have been of interest that is missing here is speaker reflection on the simple and compound forms, their social meaning, and who they believe to be the speakers using either one of the given variants. Such information would not only serve to render the data more vivid but to better illustrate the motivations informing speakers’ choices in speech forms. Furthermore, though it is readily understood that the simple forms are the forms prescribed for the *français de référence* and that Québécois usage does not necessarily follow this norm, a discussion of the influence of schooling,
the understanding speakers of Québecois French have of their own language to have to a 
français de référence, as well as current language ideologies in Québec would much facili-
tate an understanding of how various factors interact to bring about the results observed by 
Blondeau. This seems all the more relevant when the data reveals that young children in 
1995 more readily produced simple forms than their parents.

This, however, is a small qualm, and for her thorough treatment of the question at hand 
and presentation of Québecois French as an autonomous system and «non comme un écarts 
par rapport à une autre variété ou à une norme extérieure» (239) that is to be commended.

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