

THE USE OF LANGUAGE IN CAJUN MUSIC

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ABSTRACT

Studies of Louisiana French, a language long spoken by people in Louisiana, almost unanimously lament the inevitable death of the language, yet very little information exists on the strengths and weaknesses of the language in various media. These predictions are generally based only on the change in the number of speakers over time obtained through census data (Bankston and Henry 1998; Henry 1997:186-187), which is notoriously unreliable (Blyth 1997:28-29; Dubois 1997:47; Brown 1997:224). Census data does not differentiate who in the house is speaking French nor to what extent they speak French. The questions on the census are not necessarily consistent over time nor entirely clear in a linguistic climate where the terms French, Cajun French, Louisiana French, and Creole, may all mean different things to different people.

This thesis took a different approach by measuring the strength of Louisiana French via its use in Cajun music. The language is used in the music often but its overall importance in defining the music, the fluency of the singers, and the form it takes—be it clearly Louisiana French or a mixture of Standard French as well—have not been thoroughly analyzed before. Two conclusions were arrived at: Louisiana French is an integral aspect of Cajun music and the French being used is highly marked as being Louisiana French. The music itself was defined using a method inspired by optimality theory, allowing the importance of French in the music to be compared to various other musical and extramusical features. The quality of the language used in each recording was then examined to determine how native-like it was.

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CHAPTER 1: LOUISIANA FRENCH

French in Louisiana can be seen as a spectrum ranging from Louisiana Creole on one end to Louisiana French on the other (Klingler 2005), the latter being much closer to Standard French. Historically, this spectrum has been split up into Colonial/Plantation Society French which is now extinct, Louisiana French/Cajun French, and Louisiana Creole (Ancelet 2007:1237; Dajko 2012). The term Louisiana French¹ is sometimes used to refer to the whole modern spectrum, but in this thesis is used to mean all varieties of French which developed in Louisiana, save Louisiana Creole. The division lines on this spectrum are more or less arbitrary as speakers often mix features and switch dialects “even unconsciously” (Ancelet 2007:1237). This fact, as well as the lack of standardization, makes defining the language difficult. Some salient features will be described later that can still be relied on for differentiating the language, at least from Standard French, even if not as clearly between various other points on the spectrum.

It is assumed by some scholars that Louisiana French, and language in general, is an important marker of identity. Ancelet (2007), writing on the history of Cajuns and Creoles, essentially couches his entire paper in terms of what has happened to the language and what needs to happen to it, while Ryan Brasseaux (2009:9) cites Carl Brasseaux's (1992) claim that the language of the people of Louisiana provided the basis for social distinction in the 19th century. Today, quantitative evidence has shown that those living in Louisiana who are not Cajun believe that speaking Louisiana French is a

strong identifier of Cajun ethnicity. This belief is shared by Cajuns who are partially fluent as well: they identify strongly with the language and “see more advantages in being Cajun,” contrary to native speakers who do not necessarily share any of these views (Dubois 1997:52). More generally, Brown (1993:84) quotes Wardhaugh's (1987) claim that “speaking a particular language is often closely related to expressing a certain nationality or identity,” and that “there is widespread belief that a shift in language often brings about a shift in identity and there may be resistance to adopting a new language because the new identity is unwelcome.”

The number of speakers does not paint a pleasant picture for the future of Louisiana French, though. Outside of census data, it has been shown that fewer than half of the people of Louisiana who identify as Cajun speak the language (Bankston and Henry 1998:6-7). There are numerous factors thought to have contributed to such a small number, such as the way state lines were drawn around Louisiana causing laws to have to accommodate both francophones and anglophones in Louisiana. Theodore Roosevelt's form of American patriotism which promoted cultural homogeneity has also received blame. This mentality, that assimilating to the national character in all ways is necessary, still exists today in the guise of groups like English First, who advocate making English the official language of the US (Ancelet 2007:1238-1239). Perhaps the most widely accepted turning point was the Louisiana constitution of 1921 which prescribed English as the sole language of instruction in schools, relegating French to being taught only as a second language. This helped lead to stigmatization and a lack of transmission to children, with some parents even keeping their children ignorant of it in order to use it as

a secret language amongst themselves (Picone 1997:123). Indeed, a telephone survey performed by CODOFIL in 1990 verified that by that point 66.9% of French conversations occurred between family members, 23.3% between friends (Picone 1997:130-131), and only 8.7% in the workplace (Picone 1997:135-136). These numbers paint a clear picture of decline in public usage.

There are more ways to measure the health of a language than through the number of speakers. Ryon (2002) argues that a language may not be dying at all even if there is a continual loss of speakers because the psychological milieu of those who may become speakers can be such that the tide can quickly change in favor of said language. This argument is interesting considering that it is generally accepted that the stigmatization that came from being Cajun, which was strong enough at one time that some Cajuns would even deny their linguistic ability when asked, has come to an end. Dubois (1997:62-63), looking into the attitudes towards Louisiana French among those living in Louisiana, shows that as one moves from “Old” people, meaning those born before 1935, to “Young” people, meaning those born after 1960, Standard French is increasingly considered the worst variety of French while Louisiana French generally follows the opposite trajectory. This leads to the conclusion that “the results corroborate the new positive attitudes toward CF [Cajun French, aka Louisiana French] mentioned in the literature” (Dubois 1997:68).

Tsunoda (2005:9), a linguist who specializes in language endangerment and revitalization, lists four factors commonly used in language death classification systems, which include the number of speakers, the age of the speakers, how often the language is

transmitted to children, and the function of the language in the community (i.e. in music). Tsunoda (2005:23) cites the Eskimo language family as not being protected from possible language death despite its geographic and social isolation. Likewise, Navajo, despite having a relatively large number of speakers, also has an uncertain future. Both of these cases are counter-intuitive and indicate the need for a holistic approach to measuring the strength of a language.

Attempts at preserving Louisiana French have been mostly one dimensional. The Council for the Development of French in Louisiana (CODOFIL) was created by the state of Louisiana in 1968 to promote the French language, particularly through education in elementary schools (Picone 1997:124). At first, teachers were imported from France, Belgium and Quebec through international bi-annually renewed agreements initiated by James Domengeaux, CODOFIL's first director (Ancelet 1988:345-346; Natsis 1999:328/330). The teachers taught Standard French but it became apparent that this created issues due to misunderstandings between students and their Louisiana French speaking family members, which potentially further stigmatized the local dialect. Today, teachers “undergo initiation into the local dialects of Louisiana and are trained to allow for the use of regionalisms,” (Picone 1997:133) but the problem still exists to some degree (Dunn 2013).

Action Cadienne is a non-profit group created in 1995 that heavily promotes immersion as the full answer to language revitalization (Natsis 1999:329), showing the level of emphasis placed on education and immersion. The group performs fundraisers, visits schools to make its arguments for immersion programs, and financially helps

support existing programs when those programs get into trouble (St-Hilaire 2005:166-167). This strategy essentially functions as a safety net for CODOFIL's educational initiatives. Action Cadienne has become more important as CODOFIL's budget has recently been cut from \$1 million in 1990 to \$150,000 today, with its crew shrinking from ten employees to two full-time employees and one part time (Dunn 2013).

Universities have also been active in preserving Louisiana French through amassing corpora of Louisiana French (Ancelet 2007:1249) and by publishing local French literature under imprints such as *Les Éditions de la Nouvelle Acadie* and *Éditions Tintamarre*. The latter of these strategies is particularly important, in light of Tsunoda's (2005:9) assessment that the function of a language in a community is one measure of its strength. Indeed, promoting writing “greatly increases the functional range of the language” (Stubbs cited in Brown 1993:90). Written French literature essentially did not exist for more than half of the 20th century in Louisiana but oral storytelling did (Brown 1993:80). The result is that reading materials were scarcely available for the very few Louisiana francophones who learned to read and write in French despite the lack of French education (Picone 1997:138). Today there are writers again but the local audience still remains mostly illiterate, leading to publications sometimes being created for French Canadians instead (Ancelet 1988:350). This contrasts with the use of French in Cajun music, which does not require a literate audience, or even necessarily one that understands the language.

Film and television, in some ways, still provide a greater “functional range” for French, even though advertisements in the language disappeared by the late 1980s.

Today, greater access to international French broadcasts, through cable and satellite services (Picone 1997:139), at least provides a one directional use for speakers. What has remained a more consistent medium for the use of French is local radio, which began being produced in 1943 (Brasseaux 2009:182). The very fact that production began at this time speaks to the power of the medium, as this was arguably during the height of stigmatization of Louisiana French and of being Cajun altogether. Today there are French programs broadcast regularly by stations like KVPI 1050 out of Ville Plate and Radio Acadie out of Lafayette. These stations also broadcast over the internet, increasing access to the language locally, regionally, and even worldwide. French plays a role in various public spheres in Louisiana, though its role in music seems to be the most prevalent.

CHAPTER 2: LANGUAGE IN MUSIC

Cajun music is arguably the public domain where Louisiana French has been used the most consistently. To better understand what one can learn from looking at this topic, it is important to understand how language interacts with music in general. In 1983, in studying the use of American English by British pop singers, Peter Trudgill came to the conclusion that the choice of dialect involved three factors: accommodating one's interlocutor, who the singers wish to identify with, and what is appropriate for the genre (Beal 2009:227). Simpson built on Trudgill's research in 1999 and suggested that "a study of influences on singing styles also needs to focus on" the natures of the imitated bands, the performing bands, the bands' audiences, and the "wider sociopolitical and cultural context" (Beal 2009:229).

Trudgill's first factor can be seen in raï music of Algeria. Both French and Arabic are widely spoken in Algeria and this creates a situation where artistic choices meet practical concerns on a regular basis. One strategy of musicians there is to choose French when singing about love or other topics generally felt to be taboo (Bentahila and Davies 2002:201). In this way, some amount of shielding is provided against the backlash such topics would receive, while using French for out-of-bounds topics allows the singers to take on quasi-separate foreign identities through which it is safer to say such things. It is also common in raï to sing refrains—the repeated hook of the song—in French and to sing verses in Arabic, providing international appeal through the most memorable

sections of the songs while still speaking to the people of the local community specifically in the verses. This even carries over into titles being most often in French as this makes it easier for foreigners to find raï recordings (Bentahila and Davies 2002:202-204). Essentially, musicians following this template are doing so for commercial reasons. The mixture is not confusing to local listeners at all because they will likely speak both languages, while being able to market towards a French audience arguably provides greater financial potential.

Raï can also be seen as an example of Trudgill's second factor in that the regular mixing of French and Arabic excludes, to various extents, those who do not speak both languages (Bentahila and Davies 2002:199). Those who live in France, Canada, the French Antilles, etc., are not likely to speak Arabic, while those living in Egypt or the United Arab Emirates, for instance, are not likely to speak French. This sets up the music as specifically identifying with North Africans while only catering to international tastes secondarily. Cheb Khaled, perhaps the most popular singer of raï music has stated explicitly that he sees himself as a representative of his community (Bentahila and Davies 2002:198). Many Algerians who have lived most or all of their lives in France continue to compose in both languages because they too wish to represent their Algerian community, which is common among immigrants from many countries (Rutten cited in Bentahila and Davies 2002:198).

The choice of language is not purely a balance between who one wishes to speak to and who one wishes to identify with. Trudgill's study found that the use of American English in British pop music could be seen as a stylistic decision. American speech

features were eventually indexed as being features of mainstream pop. The use of these features became natural and not necessarily part of a shift in identity when people from outside of the United States would sing this way. The use of American English would place one's music within the mainstream while anything outside of this would simply be choosing to be "edgy" (Beal 2009:229). British punk musicians in particular exploited this edginess. They sang primarily in their local dialects not only because their audiences tended to be small and local—and not only because it avoided the identification with upper class British society that would have been implicit in using Received Pronunciation—but also because it set their music apart from the mainstream stylistically (Beal 2009:227-228).

Ultimately, for the purposes of this thesis, it is important to understand what implications language use in music has for the preservation of a language. It is possible that the presence of a language in a medium that can be enjoyed despite language barriers can prompt some to learn the language. Clearly, this occurs with musicians who wish to play said music: “Daoudi (2000a) quotes Yahia Mokeddem of the group Raï Kum,” an immigrant who lives in France, “as saying that he actually started learning Arabic in order to be able to compose raï lyrics” (Bentahila and Davies 2002:199). Likewise, Texas Czech is an endangered language of central Texas which is still often used in Texas Czech music, a sort of polka mixed with country music. Dutkova-Cope claims that “Texas Czech [the language] today survives as a 'varying factor in ethnicity,' relevant to some and irrelevant to other ethnic memberships” (2000:13), yet her informants would often spontaneously sing along to the local music even though they could not remember a

single traditional fairytale from their culture nor were they very willing to speak the language when prompted to in conversation (2000:18). Apparently, even a language that is not highly regarded, within an ethnic group that cares little for carrying on some aspects of its culture, can find prominence in the format of music.

One must also ask what people are being exposed to when they listen to, for example, Texas Czech music. Dutkova-Cope found that listeners who spoke fluent Czech claimed they could tell when someone was not a native speaker by mistakes in pronunciation (2000:22-24). It is unclear whether this means the singers would pronounce nonsense altogether or whether their pronunciation was just not the standard the listeners were used to, but at least one example is described by Dutkova-Cope, a fluent speaker herself, as creating a word that yielded a nonsense sentence. Either way, she argues that it does not matter because fluent speakers in the community could understand these instances as mistakes and the non-speakers were ignorant of the mistakes but were at least being exposed to the idea and general sound of the language (2000).

CHAPTER 3: CAJUN MUSIC

Musical genres are not easy to define, yet it is necessary to develop an operational definition of a genre—in this case Cajun music—in order to say anything about how language is used in it. In the case of Cajun music², Ancelet (1988:353) effectively sums up the problem, asking, “Is 'Jolie Blonde' [traditional Cajun song] sung in English still Cajun music? And where does Creole zarico [zydeco] end and Afro-American rhythm-and-blues begin?” Indeed, Cajun music can be seen as an amalgam of styles that has changed significantly over time, which is why Mattern (1998:42) comes up with such a long list of influences including “French folk music, American Indian chants, West Indies work songs, New Orleans jazz, Texas swing, bluegrass, country and western, Spanish guitar music, Anglo folk songs, '50s rock and roll, field hollers, and pop music.” While some see these as influences on something that can be definitively called Cajun music, others may pick and choose when styles from this list are simply influences and when they are cases of Cajuns playing music that is not their own. Hence, while Mattern calls Texas swing an influence, Ancelet (2007:1241) says that at one time “Western Swing replaced Cajun music in the dance halls.” Even musicians themselves may describe their music in terms that differ from those of listeners. Zachary Richard, a musician of Cajun heritage popular in both the United States and Canada since the 1980s, is often classified as playing Cajun music but describes his own style as “a holy trinity mix of Cajun, Zydeco, and New Orleans rhythm and blues cooked in a rock-n-roll pot” (Mattern 1998

citing Simon:46). This chapter will briefly review the ways Cajun music has been described by scholars. These descriptions will serve as the basis for a more concise system for defining Cajun music, described in detail in chapter 5.

A wide array of influences on Cajun music has helped shape the instrumentation of the music. Fiddles have always been central to the genre, introduced by Acadian settlers and described in the first account of Cajun music in 1782 (Savoy 1984:4; Brasseaux 2009:15-16). The evidence for the earliest use of the triangle, a common percussion instrument in Cajun music today, is spotty but suggests it came out of “Afro-Creole or African American traditions” (Brasseaux 2009:16-17). The guitar has a similarly obscure history but has at least been common since the very first Cajun music recording by Cléoma Breaux Falcon (Brasseaux 2009:15-16). It was, likewise, commonly used by string bands during the Cajun swing era of the 1940s. Jazz coming out of New Orleans introduced drum kits, the upright bass, and even the banjo to Cajun music (Brasseaux 2009:23). The lap steel guitar and mandolin were appropriated from Western swing (Brasseaux 2009:23/115). The piano and washboard—literally a washboard for clothing, used for percussion—can be found in recordings such as those by the Rayne-Bo Ramblers in the 1940s (Brasseaux 2009:150). Perhaps the most iconic instrument in Cajun music is the diatonic button accordion, used in Cajun music at least since the 19th century (Brasseaux 2009:18-20). Leo Soileau also “introduced the chromatic piano accordion” into his band in the 1940s (Brasseaux 2009:145), though the diatonic accordion is used much more frequently.

Harmonically, Cajun music has been greatly affected by the instruments used,

namely the diatonic button accordion. This accordion is capable of playing fully in one key and partially in up to four if the player is skilled (Savoy 1984:1). Most songs are played in the major key the accordion is built around. The tonic of this key is able to be played in full with just the left hand by pushing the accordion together while the dominant of this key can be played in full with just the left hand by pulling the accordion apart (Savoy 1984:1-2), leading to numerous songs that involve only one or two chords. Fiddles can play any pitch, unlike the diatonic accordion, yet tend to reinforce this limited harmonic movement by regularly employing drones (Balfa 1984:6).

Guitars are generally accompaniment instruments in Cajun music (Savoy 1984:9). They are responsible for creating or reinforcing the rhythms—which take a prominent position in the music in light of the limited available harmonic movement. Rhythm in Cajun music tends to be highly syncopated. The most common meters are 2/4 (Brasseaux 2009:88/193), also referred to as a two-step, and waltzes in 3/4, the latter of which accounts for roughly half of the 133 songs published by Ann Savoy (1984).

Songs are structured around “instrumental bridges” which are additional sections “that employ two or more chords from the main” section of the song. The rhythm of these bridges is improvised just as a guitar might play a solo during an instrumental break in a rock song (Savoy 1983, p. xiii). This leads to songs following a simple ABAB structure. Originally, these bridges were meant to introduce variety into a song whose main sections varied only in their lyrics, but amplification and the growing number of instruments being used reduced the use of these sections (Savoy 1983:14).

The voice plays an important role in Cajun music and will be the focus of the next

chapter. Stylistically, vocals stick to a single voice in most cases. Typical harmonized vocals of “the Anglo South” have never had a strong place in Cajun music (Brasseaux 2009:152). Call-and-response is used fairly often but, even in this case, the response tends to come from instruments as opposed to coming from other voices. A loud belting style of singing was historically common as singers would have to throw their voices over a dance hall without amplification. After the introduction of amplification, vocalists began singing in a smooth manner which is heard regularly today (Savoy 1984:xiii).

While it is clear that Cajun music is many things, there are patterns in what has been described. For instance, instrumentation plays a prominent role in defining the genre, the fiddle and the diatonic accordion being mentioned in practically every description of the music. The use of sparse, impressionistic lyrics is another reoccurring theme, as well as the use of French. Rhythm, particularly the two-step, waltz, and a rhythmically-focused bowing technique on the fiddle, also stands out as an important characteristic. This information, as well as the amount of songs on which these features appear in the sample used in this thesis, serve as the basis for defining Cajun music, described in more detail in the methodology section. The place of French within the music will also become readily apparent from the resulting definition.

CHAPTER 4: LANGUAGE IN CAJUN MUSIC

Moon Mullican, a Western swing musician, once made a recording of the popular Cajun song *Jolie Blonde* which he called *Jole Blon is Gone, Amen*. In his English lyrics, he mimics the sound of the original French lyrics in a mocking way. At the end of the song, however, he plays the role of a Cajun who refers to Mullican and his ilk as “hillbillies” and accuses them of running *Jolie Blonde* out of town (Brasseaux 2009:168). The lyrics of Mullican's song suggest a mixed relationship between the language and people responsible for the original, and Mullican's own history with it. In fact, this was the third version of *Jolie Blonde* that Mullican recorded and the lyrics refer back to his previous versions, which were quite famous. It seems that *Jolie Blonde* was such a powerful song that those who could not understand the words at all wanted to appropriate it, even while being somewhat condescending towards Cajuns. The song is both a perfect example of the complicated nature of language in music and the potential for music to carry even a stigmatized language across social boundaries. This is seen not only in Mullican's renditions but in the numerous others that have been recorded over the years. Bob Wills, perhaps the Western swing musician who influenced Cajun musicians the most, recorded a version of the song (Brasseaux 2009:169). Waylon Jennings, who would go on to be one of the founders of the outlaw country genre, recorded *Jolie Blonde*. To make Jennings' case even odder, his version came about as a suggestion from Buddy Holly, an early rock-n-roll musician (Brasseaux 2009:170). Even Bruce Springsteen did a

much modified version of the song, which he called *Jole Blon*. For some, their lack of understanding of the original lyrics led to strange reworkings of the intent of the song, such as Betty Amos's, which she called *Jole' John*. Amos used the word “Jole' as a synonym for male unabashed sexuality” (Brasseaux 2009:174), contrary to the original which is simply a lament over a pretty girl who decided she could not marry the singer because her family did not approve.

The first recording of *Jolie Blonde* was by Les Breaux Frères—entitled *Ma blonde est partie*—and was one of the earliest recordings of Cajun music in general. However, the recording that became such a sensation that it bled into other genres was that of Harry Choates. Choates was a Cajun swing fiddler who died young but made a big impression on the fiddle styles of later musicians. Perhaps the most interesting thing about Choates in the context of this thesis is his linguistic background: Brasseaux (2009:163) claims that “Choates was not conversant in French, though his recordings may suggest otherwise,” while Ancelet (1991:158) claims that “[Harry Choates'] first language was French, but he sang the language of swing [English] with virtually no accent.” Apparently, Choates' own language abilities are a mystery to begin with, and may be what led Leadbitter (2006:419) to suggest, “From all accounts, his [Choates'] command of the French patois of southwestern Louisiana was as bad as that of his English,” as he describes the difficulty in assessing whether Choates was even a Cajun or not.

In the case that Choates' first language was English, it gives testament to the pressure to sing Cajun music in French during his lifetime, which may parallel the current

situation to some extent, as much Cajun music is still sung in French, even as significantly fewer people speak the language as a first language than in the 1930s and 1940s. It is also quite possible that Choates spoke no French at all as “Cajun song texts usually are lexically sparse, with one or two verses and no refrain” (Emoff 1998:292), meaning he would not have to master a great deal of the language to sing Cajun music in French. As Savoy (1984:13) and Emoff (1998:292) both suggest, the lyrics are impressionistic expressions of problems of life and love as opposed to clear narratives. Hence, many of the phrases used in Cajun songs are oft repeated clichés such as one of the lines from Choates' version of *Jolie Blonde*: “Tu m'a quitté pour t'en aller avec un autre.” This line was so memorable and so widespread that it is one of the few that even Moon Mullican was able to say correctly. Indeed, as Savoy (1984:56) says of fiddler Dennis McGee's singing in particular: “McGee uses the words for rhythm and sound more than to present a story.” This suggests the possibility that Cajun music is linked to Louisiana French not only due to history but also due to the aesthetics of the sound of the language, treated as abstract sound just as an instrument would be.

Jolie Blonde is a good case study on the push and pull between English and French in Cajun music as well as the way non-Cajun and Cajun musicians influenced each other both stylistically and linguistically, but these tensions have been played out in Cajun music since the first documentations of it. In the 1930s, the Lomaxes recorded musicians in Louisiana to document traditional American music for the Library of Congress. One such recording was of a man identified only as Mr. Bornu. His song *Belle* is sung in French but involves the protagonist reading a letter from his Texan lover

which, according to Brasseaux (2009:99), suggests that the protagonist would have had to know English to understand the letter. The argument follows that, if this were a common enough occurrence to make it into a song, then it must have some basis in reality. Perhaps Mr. Bornu spoke English just fine but chose to sing in French instead. It could also be that the Texan in the song spoke French, though, as the Texas-Louisiana border has never been a particularly solid dividing line between francophone Louisianians and anglophone Texans. Given the former case, though, one is left wondering what reasons were behind the language choice at the time and how they would compare to reasons given by Cajun musicians today.

One reason for the decision to sing in French or English at the time could fall under Trudgill's audience factor. In 1928, Dudley and James Fawvor recorded two proto-swing Cajun numbers in French to accommodate their audience even though they did not speak the language (Brasseaux 2009:117-118). Given the strong similarities between Cajun swing and Western swing, it would be difficult to believe that the Fawvors' choice involved stylistic motivations at all. This contrasts with today's Cajun music when sung in French in that it would be difficult to argue that this choice involves accommodating an audience of mostly English monolinguals—although it is possible that musicians are targeting a select group from within the audience.

The Lomaxes also recorded multiple songs sung by Samuel Stafford in 1934, some in French and some in English. In reference to these recordings, Brasseaux (2009:100) points out that “English arrangements played a complementary role to French compositions.” Stafford's choice of language did not have to be all or nothing: there was

ample room for him to perform in both English and French. It is unclear, however, whether his choices were stylistic, based on whichever audience he may be playing for, or even based on the source of his repertoire.

The recordings made by the Hackberry Ramblers in 1937, under the name the Riverside Ramblers, exemplify a motivation for language use which is easier to explain. The group recorded 16 English language songs for a tire company with the intent of creating a wholesome image for themselves (Brasseaux 2009:139). This appears to be a clear case of playing to one's audience but is also interesting in that they felt the need to use a different name for all their English recordings. This use of two identities mirrors that of writers like Barry Jean Ancelet, who does scholarly work under his real name but writes prose and poetry under the name Jean Arceneaux, and indicates the tensions between assimilating to American culture and maintaining a Cajun identity. The tension for The Hackberry/Riverside Ramblers' bandleader, Luderin Darbone, must have been particularly great as he learned French in school, since his French-speaking parents did not teach him the language for fear that it would hurt his chances for success. Darbone lived during a clear turning point for Louisiana French in general, which must have factored into his musical decisions. For the Hackberry Ramblers, then, the only way to resolve this tension was to simply maintain two identities at once, one of Cajun francophones and the other of American anglophones.

Leo Soileau, a popular Cajun fiddler and bandleader up until after World War II, recorded most of his material in French but, during recording sessions, the label would have the group record some old-time tunes as well, with band member Floyd Shreve

singing in English (Brasseaux 2009:1443-144). Here, the decision seems to be purely commercial as songs in English would appeal to the audience outside of Louisiana. Of course, old-time music was not a genre traditionally sung in French, but Soileau's recordings cannot be viewed as stylistic decisions as he also made recordings of old-time songs and jazz numbers, which he translated into French (Brasseaux 2009:144).

Likewise, J.B. Fuselier and the Merrymakers used guitarist Preston Manuel's voice for English material to "satisfy public demand" even though they were perfectly capable of translating this material into French, as they predominantly did (Brasseaux 2009:154).

Soileau's translations, as well as those of J.B. Fuselier, beg the question of whether these songs could be considered Cajun music or not, based purely on language. They may have been simply providing a way for Louisiana francophones to appreciate decidedly non-Cajun genres or he may have been broadening the Cajun music umbrella to include old-time music and jazz. Perhaps these bands were really, knowingly or not, both spreading anglophone music to Cajuns and broadening the genre. The Rayne-Bo Ramblers, for instance, recorded a French version of Bob Wills' *Faded Love* in 1940 calling it *La veuve de la coulée* (Brasseaux 2009:152). These early songs of the Cajun swing era may have been simply introducing a foreign aesthetic that, once it became commonplace enough, was thought of as a core part of Cajun music. This would explain the dispute over whether Cajun swing actually existed or whether it was Western swing sung in French: it may have actually been both.

An interesting extreme in the recording of old-time tunes can be found in the Dixie Ramblers. While French was the first language of the members of this group, they

focused particularly on old-time tunes sung in English (Brasseaux 2009:153). In this case, it would be tempting to define their music as being Cajun simply because it fulfills the sense of “music made by Cajuns.” Realistically, it might be more appropriate to simply label them an old-time music band that sometimes plays Cajun material.

Many other genres were being appropriated and sung in French by Cajun musicians as well. By 1940, the Cajun repertoire as a whole included “renditions of Broadway numbers, jazz arrangements such as *Tiger Rag*, *Eh La-Bas*, and *High Society*, [as well as] such hillbilly tunes as *Red River Valley* and *Dear Old Sunny South By the Sea*” (Brasseaux 2009:115). Language was not the sole change made to this repertoire, though. Bands would appropriate the music by also “modifying melodies, riffs, and chord arrangements to suit local aesthetics” as well as employing Louisiana fiddle techniques (Brasseaux 2009:117). While this may be a strong indication that language was not the main distinction for the genre, many of the songs would have needed to be modified very little melodically and harmonically to fit Cajun stylistic conventions even when played on accordions, let alone when played by string bands. Brasseaux does not mention changes in instrumentation, though, where the accordion would be a particularly clear indication that the music was Cajun despite the language being sung.

Cajun listeners may have never had a particular preference for the language their music was being sung in. During World War II, honky tonk songs in English composed by people like Ernest Tubb, Tex Ritter, and Hank Williams were often requested at Louisiana radio stations as dedications to loved ones overseas (Brasseaux 2009:188-189). Indeed, Cajuns necessarily had an affinity for these anglophone musicians who indirectly

helped shape Cajun music itself at the time. It is also possible that there was simply a lack of appropriately patriotic music by Cajun musicians. One must ask what was in Hank Williams' music or Ernest Tubb's that made it any more patriotic in that case, though. Perhaps honky tonk musicians better represented the nation as a whole. After all, the war was not being fought just by Cajuns but by the country. This preference may be another indication of the dual identity of Cajuns who were in the process of assimilating—and sometimes rejecting—the larger culture which they found themselves a part of.

By the end of World War II, radio in Louisiana had changed a bit. French language DJs in Louisiana such as Jerry Dugas of KJEF and Willie Bordelon of KAPB were receiving so many requests for the same set of French language songs that programming variety was inhibited (Brasseaux 2009:191). This is interesting due to French being particularly stigmatized at the time. It may also imply that those returning from the war had a great desire to hear music that was specifically representative of their part of the United States, as opposed to the honky tonk music that had often been requested during wartime. The prototypical music they were interested in hearing may have been not just Cajun music but Cajun music in French, although a comparison of radio requests among all stations at the time would really be required to know for sure.

Variation in sung languages continued as well as the debate over whether language functions as a defining trait of Cajun music. For instance, in the 1960s, Doug Kershaw released *Diggy Liggy Lo* (Laird 2006: 275), originally a Cajun swing tune sung in French, although Kershaw's version was in English and moved more towards a country music style. Kershaw is a Cajun who began his career playing songs which fit squarely

into the Cajun repertoire, along with rockabilly and old-time music (Tucker 2006:245). He spoke French as his first language and *Diggy Liggy Lo*, consequently, remained sprinkled with French words like *chaud* and *beau*. It is not clear why this was done as the vast majority of his recordings are completely in English and he had a successful career outside of Louisiana. Perhaps he wanted to cement his image as a Cajun for commercial reasons, playing up a sort of 20th century exoticism of Cajuns. He was, in fact, known as The Ragin' Cajun (Laird 2006:275-276). He may have also been making an assertion that the music was intended to still be tied to its Cajun origins. The tune went on to be played by anglophone musicians in English and Cajun musicians in French. At times, this role was also reversed. John Fogerty, an English-speaking roots rock musician once recorded the song in French. Perhaps this was done out of respect towards Cajun musicians but it lingers as an oddity when the tune was originally popularized by a Cajun singing it in English.

Nothing about the history of Cajun music necessarily proves that language is a defining characteristic of the genre. While it appears that the majority of recordings have been in French, this could simply be a matter of circumstance as opposed to an aesthetic choice. Many today have clear opinions on the matter. L'Association de Musique Cadien Française de Louisiane is a preservationist group which aims to teach French and promote Cajun music and dancing. It holds family events for these purposes and also gives out an annual “Le Cajun” award. The award is given to a fiddler who sings in French (Mattern 1998:41), suggesting that the association believes that the language is an important aspect of the culture, which should be expressed in the music.

Belton Richard, a popular Cajun accordionist, explicitly states that playing other genres of music with lyrics translated into French can make that music Cajun and help keep Cajun music in general from becoming stagnant—though he does not explicitly support the idea that Cajun music must be sung in French. Marc Savoy, on the other hand, does not believe that translated songs can be considered Cajun (Emoff 1998:293). This suggests that, for Savoy, language alone is not all that is needed to characterize a tune as Cajun music.

Others are much less nuanced in how important the role of language is in defining Cajun music. Brasseaux (2009:216) argues that music sung in English and even played in an “Anglo-American” style can still be authentically Cajun if it is being interpreted by a member of the ethnic group. This rather extreme view would disregard all empirical markers for the genre save the person playing the music, which cannot be known simply by listening. Brasseaux's criteria seems to fit under the idea that Cajun music is simply music made by Cajuns. It would also suggest that groups like the Dixie Ramblers, who stuck almost exclusively to old-time music in English, were actually playing Cajun music.

Despite the necessity, or lack thereof, to sing Cajun music in French, the strong presence of the language in the music has been a driving force for some musicians to learn it. Musicians such as David Greely and D'Jalma Garnier taught themselves French through extensive use of dictionaries, lyrics, recordings, radio, and interactions with native speakers (Rabalais 2010:4-5/8). Greely was approached at the beginning of his career and told by a native speaker that he was speaking gibberish when he sang, which

prompted him to take learning the language seriously (Rabalais 2010:4-5). He claims that the fear that he would “lead them [young listeners] astray” was responsible for his desire to become fluent (Rabalais 2010:8).

Others attended immersion programs, particularly at L'Université Sainte-Anne in Nova Scotia, Canada, including Chris Stafford and Chris Segura of Feufollet, Cedric Watson, Corey Porche, and Steve Riley (Rabalais 2010:5-6). The immersion program is in Standard French, which is used as a stepping stone to Louisiana French for these musicians. The need to transition between dialects after the program has led to some issues with intelligibility with older speakers in Louisiana, as has been the case with Chris Segura (Rabalais 2010:7). On the other hand, Steve Riley claims that he had so much exposure to the language growing up in Mamou, Louisiana that his pronunciation is naturally of the local dialect even though he may “formulate [his] sentences a little bit more like they do in Standard French” when speaking (Riley 2010:7). This variation of fluency in Louisiana French along different linguistic parameters does not necessarily find expression in music as composition is not often a spontaneous event and so errors can be corrected. This thesis will take a particularly close look at the pervasiveness of such problems within the music.

The ubiquity of French in Cajun music is such that Picone (1997:140) claims that it has actually become more common in this medium, even while decreasing in use in all other areas. He suggests that many musicians who play Cajun music do not actually speak the language but that their use of French adds a sense of “much-needed prestige” to the language (Picone 1997:141). While Picone did not perform an actual analysis of the

number of fluent speakers or the ratio of French to English in the music, his assessment of its importance is relatively common. Emoff (1998:288) shares a similar sentiment, stating, “The medium—the sound of sung Cajun French [Louisiana French]—in this case is the message.” He refers to how remarkable it is that Louisiana French persists in the music even while the number of speakers diminishes. Again, the numbers are not known but the idea of the importance is there.

Some listeners find a sort of symbolic meaning in French when used in Cajun music, even when they do not understand the language themselves. One such listener states, “The words make the song beautiful” (Emoff 1998:287). Emoff likens this to the sound of the language providing listeners with a link to their heritage, which presumably would not be possible when the music is sung in English. The other obvious argument is that this listener's statement is simply a preference for the aesthetics of the sounds being made by the singers. This still easily ties into Emoff's argument, as the aesthetic appeal could stem from associations with a romanticized past—real or imagined—as opposed to having some abstract value regardless of associations.

It is possible to see singing in dance halls in French to English monolinguals as a type of implicit protest, perhaps not even thought of as such by the musicians (Emoff 1998:289). They would, in a sense, be taking a stand against linguistic assimilation. If this effect could be empirically shown to be true, it would say much for the health of Louisiana French within the psyche of the community. It would suggest that regular exposure to the music would likewise be regular exposure to affirmations of the value of the language.

Exposure also has practical implications for language use among the populace. Fiddler Dewey Balfa's lyrics in *Casse pas ma tête* include the lines “Toi t'as cassé ma tête,” meaning “You nagged me” [lit. “You broke my head”], and “Cogne p'us sur ma tête,” meaning “Don't nag me anymore” [lit. “Don't strike my head anymore”], which are both repeated often enough in Cajun music that even non-speakers will potentially understand these phrases (Emoff 1998:297). This potentially allows musicians the option of singing in French without fear of alienating their audience simply by relying on phrases that are already heard often in Cajun music. As noted above, this is a common practice in Cajun music to begin with. Lyrics that rely completely on these set phrases may allow an entry point into the language as well, as listeners who become familiar with these phrases could choose to learn what the components mean or use them as reference points when they come across similar phrases in other contexts. If the music relies too heavily on these phrases, however, it limits the extent to which Cajun music can be used to practice and advance one's language skills.

Emoff (1998:298) mentions sources for French words borrowed into English that function in a similar way in the song “Les flammes d'enfer,” which includes *priez* [pray], *sauvez* [save], and *condamné* [condemned]. These words would function as a means for non-speakers to understand the language regardless of the medium but, if they are ubiquitous, it may cement them in the minds of listeners as opposed to just being words that they recognize when coming across them. There would be arguably more utility in the use of shared words, as opposed to idiomatic phrases, as far as language learning is concerned, although the implication for the musicians would remain the same: they can

continue to sing in French to anglophone audiences and expect some level of understanding as long as a significant number of shared words are used. In some cases, one may argue that these lexical choices even help to teach the meanings of unrelated words. *Blonde*, for example, is the source for the English *blond* and appears very frequently with the word *jolie*. Furthermore, this also provides the title for a very popular classic Cajun song. It is unlikely that any fan of the music, anglophone or not, would not understand this phrase or not be able to link the words to their individual meanings. Of course, this may be assuming too much in light of the failure to understand the full meaning of the original song by those who have performed their own English versions, mentioned above.

CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGY

In order to analyze a representative sample of Cajun music, a useful population must be defined. One of the advantages of working with a regional music genre is that it provides the possibility of gathering a list of the entire population of musicians. In the case of this thesis, the desired population is all the Louisiana-based musicians who have released an album of Cajun music on CD between 2003 and January of 2014. While this clearly does not capture every single Cajun musician that may be heard, as there may be many who never record albums but do play in dance halls, it is expected to capture the music that is most likely to be heard through the widest array of mediums (i.e. live, radio, internet streaming services, YouTube, and of course personal collections).

Limiting the population to musicians living in Louisiana may also be argued to arbitrarily cut out a large group of musicians who may be heard by the community of Southern Louisiana. While it is fairly common for popular Cajun groups to tour just outside the borders of Louisiana, particularly in Texas, going beyond this point is rare even for the most popular of groups. For instance, the Lost Bayou Ramblers, as of April 4th, 2014, have a tour schedule that takes them no further than Austin, TX and Birmingham, AL (Lost). This is telling for a group which is popular enough to have landed a slot opening for Arcade Fire—a band who recently won the Grammy for album of the year—in Austin and Houston, TX, as well as being a band which has appeared on the HBO series *Tremé*. Bands such as the Lost Bayou Ramblers may actually tour much

further than Texas and Alabama, but the audience is limited enough outside of the region that the bulk of touring happens quite close to home.

Due to the limited audience outside of Louisiana, it is also unlikely that there are many Cajun musicians that can be supported in other locales. One exception may be the San Francisco Bay Area, which was a common destination for those migrating out of Louisiana in the 1940s, although the scene has only thrived enough to support a dozen or so bands (DeWitt 2006:115). Some of these California musicians have been quite popular, such as the California Cajun Orchestra and Queen Ida—the latter of which is arguably a zydeco musician—yet they are anomalies and few in number, leaving the bulk of the groups outside of Louisiana unlikely to be able to mount the sort of nationwide tours that would bring them to the region of interest for this thesis very often.

The source for the population is the Cajun music section of the web site for Floyd's Record Shop, which is physically located in Ville Platte, LA (Floyd's). This site is ideal as it sits quite centrally in the region of Louisiana of interest and is popular enough to double as a record label that puts out Louisiana music as well. The site also has a finely delineated set of categories for genres which separates closely related genres such as Cajun and zydeco. The site was accessed on February 2nd, 2014, and a list of all the musicians who have put out a recording since 2003 were written down. Floyd's also provides short descriptions for every release as well as dates, simplifying the process of determining the details for each recording listed. Due to the focus on Louisiana music and the level of detail of their listing and categories, it is safe to assume that the method of selecting which records are to be considered Cajun for the site would closely resemble

what listeners in Louisiana would consider Cajun. A total of 73 artists were found, of which 10 were randomly selected using Random.org as a random number generator. The sample size was arbitrary as the population was not large enough to apply any statistical analysis that would ensure generalization unless nearly the entire population was used. For each artist in the sample, all recordings made since 2003 were listed. Sources for the albums included their official web sites, Floyd's, and AllMusic.com. Every track from each musician was then numbered and Random.org was once again used to select three tracks from each artist. This selection of 30 tracks formed the final sample to be analyzed.

The next step was to develop a system for defining how prototypical each selected Cajun song was. While Floyd's provides a useful starting point for choosing music that is considered Cajun in general, it does not provide the fine-tuned system from within that category that is required if one is to contrast language use with a style of music. As was made obvious in preceding sections, Cajun music is many different things. The goal here is to determine the features that are common throughout, to determine whether the French language is one of them, and to contrast the use of French—or lack thereof—in recordings that employ these features to greater or lesser extents.

For this task, a system loosely based on optimality theory was used. The idea for this involves the basic premise that genre is a gradient system, but not simply along one parameter (in this case, the parameter “Cajun music”). That is to say, there are many overlapping parameters, all of which are their own gradient system, adding up to a genre. For instance, one parameter for a particular genre may be “involves the use of a nylon string guitar.” This would narrow down the genre to classical music, flamenco, some

American country music, and perhaps other styles. However, it is clear that these are all very different musics which rely on “the use of a nylon string guitar” to varying extents for their definitions. In flamenco music, this type of guitar exists in nearly every exemplar of the genre. In fact, it is often the only instrument outside of hand-clapping and a single vocal line. In classical music, a nylon string guitar is generally the most prominent instrument in a composition or simply does not exist at all. It is not the strongest parameter when defining something as classical music, but can still be quite prominent in some forms of classical music. In American country music, nylon string guitars may appear in a larger percentage of all the music produced in this genre than it does in classical music, but it rarely holds as prominent a position in any given composition as it may in classical music, leading essentially to the same result: it is not the strongest parameter when defining something as country music. Ranking *+nylon string guitar* within an optimality theory tableau helps to sort out these idiosyncrasies.

Parameters need not be limited to instrumentation, as this is only one dimension of music. Rhythm, dynamics, harmonic content, and compositional form should also be considered. Parameters along these lines are also a bit too limited, though. As has been mentioned in the case of Cajun music, the ethnicity of the very people making the music may be involved in defining something as part of a genre. Extramusical parameters can play a large role in defining genre. For instance, a prominent parameter for defining the genre indie rock may be “published independently.” There are, of course, musical parameters that may define something as indie rock—and these may even be more important for the definition today—but the initial definition had arguably as much to do

with this extramusical parameter as with any shared musical aspects between artists involved in it.

A tableau from optimality theory provides a simple method for ranking parameters and visualizing how closely a given piece of music represents a prototype for a given genre (see Fig. 1 below). As in the case of the linguistic theory, a list of parameters will appear in columns ranked with the most important on the far left to the least important on the far right. Parameters may be listed as features that should be present (+parameter) or should not be present (-parameter). Unlike optimality theory, rows will not consist of an input along with all possible outputs, but will consist only of pieces of music. For this thesis, this system is not so much employed to choose a prototype out of many possible variations of one song, but more to analyze each example individually in relation to all the given parameters. In other words, it would make just as much sense to list only the recording currently in question as the entirety of the rows, but listing them all at once saves some space. A star (*) is used to indicate parameters which a song violates. Here lies another difference with linguistic optimality theory: there is no clear way to quantify the severity of the violations. In other words, a linguistic tableau might use more than one star in a box to indicate how many times a phonological parameter (referred to as constraints in linguistics) has been violated, which cannot be done with the tableau developed here for music. This is possible in linguistic analyses because a constraint such as DEP-C (do not insert consonants) can be violated multiple times in an output form for a word that contains a given number of consonants. This is not the case with music, where a parameter such as +*guitar* either exists or does not. It

may be possible to fine tune the system to allow for more or less severe violations of a parameter to be displayed if, for instance, one considers whether a guitar is present throughout, in only section of a song, or not at all, but this is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Fig. 1 Example of a tableau for two recordings by the Pine Leaf Boys.

Track	+Fiddle	+Diatonic Accordion	+Guitar	+Major Key
La valse du vieux charpentier		*	*	
Les barres de la prison				
Weight	45	36	29	27

Parameters for the tableau used in this thesis were chosen due to being used to explicitly describe Cajun music within the literature (see Appendix 1 for the corpus and Chapters 3 and 4 for the descriptions). Casual references to features were ignored so that a singer stating, “I’ve always loved Cajun French music,” was not taken to mean that the French language is a prominent parameter to Cajun music for this person. Each successive use of a parameter in a description of Cajun music beyond the first added 3 points to its weight, otherwise the weight was determined by adding 1 point each time a parameter was present in a recording in the sample (i.e. *+guitar* has a weight of 29 because it was mentioned 2 times in the literature and appeared in 26 songs). Ideally, the parameters would derive their weight from a larger corpus of music and a larger set of descriptions, obtained from a comprehensive survey of people who listen to Cajun music, as the latter would better represent common views about the music than what a much smaller sample of scholars says. A survey of this sort was beyond the scope of this thesis, however, and so more weight was provided for the descriptions scholars provided as a compromise when trying to balance with what actually appeared in the music. It is

believed that the parameters are ranked accurately enough for the purposes of this thesis regardless.

The result of this method of weighting parameters is that none of the music in the sample is likely to violate many high-ranking parameters, but this does not invalidate the system. The population for the sample—all the Cajun music released in the last 10 years, listed under Cajun on the web site for Floyd's Record Shop—is assumed to be an accurate representation of what most listeners would call Cajun music. The optimality theory system used here was not developed to rule any of these songs out as Cajun music, rather, it was developed to determine how prototypical each is and to determine how high the use of French ranks. If a different population were to be sampled, say, all the music listed as country music by iTunes, one would likely find a large proportion of songs that violate nearly every high-ranking parameter in the tableau, providing evidence that the system is valid.

The process used above was enough to determine not only how often French has been used in Cajun music in the last 10 years, but also how much weight can be applied to French as a defining parameter of the genre. It also provided a way to determine what helped classify a song as Cajun music in the absence of the French language. However, this thesis is also concerned with the quality of the French used in Cajun music. For this, a qualitative analysis was done of each individual song in the sample, sung by a non-native speaker, to determine how marked, so to speak, the language is. Music performed by native speakers, however, was not analyzed as it was expected to be marked as native-like³. Likewise, the syntax and lexical items used by non-native speakers were not

analyzed if the lyrics were written by a native speaker—though a phonological analysis was still performed in these cases. In some instances, gross errors in a singer's interlanguage system were noted, as well as possibly production mistakes.

Markedness in this case refers to how clearly the language used instantiates itself as being Louisiana French, as opposed to Standard French or various other dialects spoken in other parts of the world. As many features are shared between various dialects and Louisiana French, there was no practical way to say that any instance of language use was clearly one dialect or another, only whether it resembled the local dialect more closely through the use of features documented as being more uniquely of Louisiana (more marked) or whether it did not resemble any dialect in particular due to using features that are broadly shared among many dialects (less marked). It is important to note that the latter state in no way disqualifies the language used as being Louisiana French, it simply does not provide evidence that the language used is distinctly Louisiana French. Also, it was noted whenever a feature classified as being distinctly not Louisiana French was used (i.e. perhaps the use of an interrogative formed through subject-verb inversion using *nous* as the subject).

All lyrics were transcribed from the recordings by ear, using various web sites, liner notes, and, in some cases, direct communication with the musicians as a starting point. In most cases, songs were not originals and had been covered many times over the years. Lyrics for each song have not always remained consistent but individual verses generally have. Changes made to lyrics are often the result of replacing verses with those from other songs or simply incorporating extra verses from other songs, as opposed to

changing the wording of individual lines. This can be seen in the Lost Bayou Ramblers' version of *J'étais au bal*, the last verse of which comes from Alcide "Blind Uncle" Gaspard's *The Swallows*⁴. There were only rarely some minor changes within verses or brand new verses. When necessary, songs were transcribed completely by ear and, therefore, potentially contain errors. This scenario only occurred once for a song that made it into the final data set with *Crawfish Festival Waltz* by Huval, Dupuy & Fuselier, where one word was left out. Three other occurrences include Don Montoucet's version of *Eunice Two-Step* and Joe Hall's *Mas pain bruler* and *Café des amis*. As such, these last three tracks were analyzed musically but only very general statements can be made about the language within.

Phonetic transcriptions for each song were then created by ear. As the language could not be isolated from the sound of the music surrounding it, it was not possible to use software such as Praat to verify consonants and vowel qualities. As a result, only very clear phonetic features were used to measure markedness, while other features were simply noted as possible points of interest. For example, vowels did not contribute to the measure of markedness of the language produced as these are generally quite variable even between native speakers. Vowels are also subject to change when singing, such as pronouncing /i/ closer to [e] in order to allow greater airflow and resonance.

Three phonological features were specifically measured: /ʁ/ as the alveolar tap [ɾ], agglutination (Papen and Rottet 1997:78), and metathesis (Valdman and Rottet 2010:xxxix-xl). Agglutination usually involve a [z] being prefixed to a vowel-initial noun in all instances where, in Standard French, this would only be expected to happen when

the noun is plural. Words looked at for possible usage are those found under Z in the Dictionary of Louisiana French (Valdman 2010), but which would begin with a vowel in Standard French, as well as *oncle*, which is commonly pronounced as [nɔ̃k]. Metathesis generally occurs with schwa [ə], but not always. In each case, a ration of uses-to-possible-uses was used to measure markedness. For instance, if 15 instances of /ʁ/ appear in a song and all but 3 are pronounced as [r], a ratio of 4:5 is noted, meaning the marked form is used 80% of the time. Expectations for the ratios also vary with features. The Standard French /ʁ/ is systematically realized as [r] in Louisiana French—to the point where it feels almost inappropriate to provide the phoneme as anything other than /r/—so a near 1:1 ratio is expected. On the other hand, *je* being realized as [əʒ] is probably not quite as widespread and systematic, so a 1:2 ratio might be considered quite high.

A few instances of false liaisons are noted in the song *J'ai été au bal*⁵, although these were not calculated for markedness as a source listing exactly where they might occur was not obtained. This feature is similar to that of agglutination, in that it involves a consonant being prefixed to a vowel-initial word. The difference here is that the latter occurs in a context where a liaison might normally be used, meaning the prefixed consonant is not a fixed component of the word but a result of phonological rules and its location within a phrase (i.e. a speaker may say *il va t-aller*, but would simply say *aller* without the *t-* when not in this context). The liaisons noted in this thesis are interesting in that they may stem from the huge popularity of *J'ai été au bal*, the original recording of which, by Iry LeJeune, includes these liaisons. They may also be due to some confusion over whether the actual lyrics in question are *j'ai été au* or *j'étais au*, and *tout habillé en*

or *tous habillés en*.

Syntactic features are simpler to isolate in music than phonological features as all that is required are the lyrics, which are either transcribed correctly or not. However, an important limitation for syntax is the apparent lack of thorough syntactic analyses of the language. Features used in this thesis come exclusively from Papen and Rottet (1997), which only looked at the language spoken in the parishes of Terrebonne and Lafourche in southeastern Louisiana. Hence, not every possible marked syntactic feature was measured. However, due to the use of mainly short, simple constructions in Cajun lyrics and the common practice of playing covers written by native speakers, it is believed that this list of features is sufficient to come to conclusions about the markedness of the syntax being used. It is also important to note that syntactic analysis was not done for recordings which are covers of songs written by native speakers for the same reason that a phonological analysis was not done for singers who were native speakers. The only exception was when changes were made to the lyrics by a non-native speaker.

A number of syntactic features were looked at. Ratios were calculated in the same way as they were for phonological features. For imperatives, the use of *allons* + *<infinitive>* to denote 1st person plural was noted, as opposed to simply inflecting the latter verb for the 1st person plural as in Standard French (i.e. *allons parler* in Louisiana French, *parlons* in Standard French). Negative imperatives were also expected to take object pronouns after the verb, as opposed to before the verb as in Standard French (i.e. *mange-le pas* in Louisiana French, *ne le mange pas* in Standard French). The dropping of subject pronouns for verbs which function as fixed phrases was also noted (i.e. *il faut* as

faut or *il y a* as *y a*). This particular feature is possibly quite common in casual registers for many dialects, so a near 1:1 ratio would not necessarily be a unique marker of Louisiana French, but a 1:many ratio likely would be a marker of not being Louisiana French. In cases where *dont* or some form of *lequel* would be used as a relative pronoun in Standard French, one should expect to find *que* in Louisiana French. Use of the simple future inflection for verbs was examined as the only verbs that this should occur with are *avoir*, *falloir*, *pouvoir*, and *vouloir* (Papen and Rottet 1997:100). The last, and possibly most distinctive syntactic feature looked at, was progressive constructions in the form of <subject> + *être* (present indicative or imperfect for past progressive) + *après* + <infinitive>. Standard French rarely uses explicit progressive constructions and, when it does, the form is expected to be <subject> *être* + *en train de* + <infinitive>.

Lexical features, just as with syntactic features, were not analyzed in cases where recordings were covers of songs composed by native speakers unless there were changes made. The argument is the same: it can be assumed that the lexical items used by native speakers would be as marked as Louisiana French as they should be to accurately portray the dialect. Otherwise, the bulk of the items analyzed came from Thibault's (2013) draft of his study on lexical items unique to Louisiana. This was a perfect source as it focused on corpora to determine items unique to Louisiana as well as items shared with various other regions such as Quebec and the Antilles. This provided a method for weighing how marked each word was. In other words, a word used only in Louisiana and the Antilles would appear marked, but not as much as a word appearing only in Louisiana. A simple ranking system was used, which applied 5 points to items found only in Louisiana, 4 to

those found in Louisiana and one other region, 3 to those appearing in Louisiana and two other regions, and so on. A ratio was again used to quantify points-to-possible-points.

Lexical items which did not appear in Thibault (2013) were included as they appeared in Papen and Rottet's (1997) study of the French spoken in Terrebonne and Lafourche parishes. However, these items are only mentioned when they appear as ranking them for markedness would not be possible with the same degree of accuracy as those found in Thibault (2013). This list is shorter and includes the use of the subject pronouns *nous-autres (on)*, *vous-autres*, and *eux-autres/eusse* for *on/nous*, *vous*, and *ils* respectively, the indirect object *y* and *yeux* for *lui* and *leur* respectively, the use of *ça* for *ce* in conjunctions such as *ce que* and *ce qui*, and the use of *back* as an adverb when the prefix *re-* might be used in Standard French (i.e. *venir back* versus *revenir* for *to come back*). Borrowing of English verbs in general were noted as they are described in Blyth (1997:41) in both uninflected forms and with the suffix *-er* attached, as well as in Klingler (1997:174) in only uninflected forms. Lastly, from the *Dictionary of Louisiana French* (Valdman and Rottet 2010), the use of *été* for the past participle of *aller* and the use of *icitte* and *aussitte* for *ici* and *aussi*—meaning *here* and *also* respectively—were mentioned when found.

CHAPTER 6: RESULTS

Musically, some clear overall patterns emerged. Descriptions of Cajun music (see Appendix 1) focused much more on instrumentation than anything else, which is represented in the resulting tableau (see Appendix 2). In particular, the fiddle and diatonic accordion were by far the most prevalent instruments both described and used. The Pine Leaf Boys' *La valse du vieux charpentier*, a twin fiddles song, was the only song which did not incorporate at least two of the top three ranked instruments. The high-ranking parameters seemed to be based mostly on qualitative aspects of the sound of the music but Cajun identity and the use of French were also highly ranked. In the case of the former, the weighting is almost entirely based on nearly every musician being, presumably, Cajun. However, it should be noted that it was not always possible to find explicit evidence for this. Evidence came from personal communication (Arsement), documentary footage (WIKITONGUES), biographical sketches (Hurt 2006:443-452), official web sites (About Cedric; About the members; Chaisson; Meet; Who), and press releases (Cheever 2012). Many of the performers had common last names, which was used as additional evidence for their ethnic backgrounds.

The use of French may have ranked even higher as a marker of Cajun music had all the recordings included vocals. Six tracks were purely instrumental, and are noted as such on the tableau. Of those which included vocals, only *Barroom Blues* by the Magnolia Sisters was in English, while two other songs may have used a mix of

languages, although the languages in those were never definitively identified. *Barroom Blues* succeeds at being considered Cajun music as it contains all the highest ranked parameters other than a diatonic button accordion. It may also be worth noting that Jimmie Rodgers is often mentioned as having been a huge influence on Cajun musicians. This song in particular was even recorded soon after the original release by a Cajun swing band, the Dixie Ramblers.

Harmonic content played various roles in defining the music. Although every song was in a major key, providing a high rank for that parameter, the parameter limiting songs to only a small number of chords was not quite as highly ranked. This was probably due to a few artists, such as Vin Bruce, being influenced by country music and Cajun swing, both of which allow for more harmonic movement as they do not employ diatonic button accordions very often. It may also be a result of younger musicians who are more progressively minded, such as the Lost Bayou Ramblers, who took a traditional song like *J'ai été au bal* and added a new instrumental section that modulates to the supertonic with a harmonic minor melody in the fiddle, a strategy most likely never used before in Cajun music.

Rhythmically, while syncopation could be found in all but two recordings, there was a fairly even split between meters. Only six songs did not follow either a waltz (3/4) or two-step (2/4) meter. Those of Joe Hall were all in 4/4, as his music resembled zydeco as much as it did Cajun music. The Pine Leaf Boys covered a Cajun country song by Belton Richard, *The Sound of Loneliness*, which was also in 4/4. The Magnolia Sisters also covered an early country blues song by Jimmie Rodgers, *Barroom Blues*, which was

in 4/4. Interestingly, this group also covered Ambrose Thibodeaux's *Point Noir Two-Step* but did not convincingly create the rhythmic feel of a two-step, the difference between a two-step rhythm and a standard 4/4 rhythm being essentially tempo and where accents are placed.

From this data, it is clear that French is used almost universally in Cajun music that includes vocals. If one were to ignore instrumental tracks, it would also be the third highest ranked parameter, right after inclusion of the fiddle and the diatonic accordion. Instrumental songs themselves only accounted for 6 of the 27 songs in the sample, suggesting that musicians are not attempting to avoid singing in French by not singing at all. There was also a lack of translating. Only one song in the sample, *Les veuves de la coulée*, could have potentially been translated from the English version of the song it was based on, but was not. However, the fact that the Rayne-Bo Ramblers, the group that made a Cajun song out of the original Bob Wills version, did not simply sing the English lyrics suggests that French was an important characteristic of Cajun music in 1950 as well.

The ages of the musicians in the sample ranged from teenagers (Huval, Dupuy & Fuselier) to a 95 year old (Don Montoucet). No clear correlations were found between the ages of the musicians and the language they used: as all of them used French. The only song performed in English was sung by a female, but 2 of the 3 songs performed by women were still in French. Because of the small number of women musicians in the sample, no correlation between gender and the language used could be drawn. The diversity of this group along some parameters suggests that their target audiences may

have been different. However, even if the target audiences were not the same, every performer sang in French. The target audience seems to have no bearing on the language used.

The breadth of the target audience of the performers was also not able to be determined. There was an initial attempt made to use sales figures, the number of downloads on iTunes, or even the number of listens on Spotify to choose a sample that would capture the popularity of the musicians. However, as was mentioned in Chapter 5, Cajun music is almost exclusively a regional phenomenon. Searches for “Cajun” on Amazon, Billboard, iTunes, and Spotify yielded either very short lists of artists, some of which were even from unrelated genres like swamp pop, to large lists that only included a few Cajun artists among a large number of country artists. As such, it was not possible to compare popularity with language use directly. It is important to note that the sample did, however, capture some Cajun musicians who are popular enough to have occasionally mounted tours to Europe (i.e. Lost Bayou Ramblers, The Pine Leaf Boys).

Why it is true that French is such an important marker of Cajun music is not evident from the data, only that it is true. Perhaps it has something to do with roughly half of the recordings being covers of songs written by French speakers. It could also simply be a deeply embedded stylistic preference. The consistent use of French may also be a part of Emoff's (1998) suggestion that it is a sort of protest against acculturation, or even a way to maintain a separation between it and zydeco, which makes much greater use of English.

Trudgill may also provide clues as to why Cajun music is so consistently sung in

Louisiana French. Two of his conclusions about how one chooses the language they sing in may apply: who the musicians wish to identify with and what is appropriate for the genre (Beal 2009:227). Cajun music is a regional music; it is reasonable to believe that those performing this music would have a desire to identify with the area by also using a regional dialect of French. The language may have also been popular in the early days of recording due to the fact that a large portion of the population spoke French at that time. This may have served to cement the idea that the music is only sung in French, making English inappropriate for the genre. One may suggest that this is not so evident in zydeco, a genre with a similar history. The difference here is that Cajun musicians appear to reuse classic songs far more often than zydeco musicians, a genre that barely resembles its roots. This suggests a greater affinity for tradition in general. Interviewing the musicians making Cajun music would help verify what motivations are for the choice of language in the music and perhaps provide evidence as to whether one can expect French to continue to be an important feature of Cajun music.

The overall markedness of the French used in the music was quite high. Each song was given a percentage based on the ratios described above, then the mean of the percentages was calculated, resulting in 79%-83% markedness⁶. It is important to note that 100% markedness is not at all required to come to the conclusion that the language used in this music is definitively Louisiana French. An unmarked feature may still be perfectly normal within the dialect. Even native speakers may occasionally use features marked as being specifically not of Louisiana French, particularly if they have spent a significant amount of time in France or other francophone regions. In light of this, one

may interpret a result of 50% markedness as language that is definitely Louisiana French, as is done in thesis when interpreting occurrences of metathesis. However, supporting argumentation may be needed for lower percentages.

These results are also impressive as the majority of the singers in the sample are non-native speakers. Out of 10 singers, only Vin Bruce is known to be a native speaker while Paul Frugé and the members of Les Amies Louisianaises represent the only unknowns. The other seven singers are known to be non-native speakers as per Rabalais (2010), personal communications with the musicians (Arsement; Simon), official web site descriptions (Chaisson), documentary interviews (WIKITONGUES), and descriptions on the web site for Floyd's Record Shop. It appears that the language used in Cajun music is consistently and clearly Louisiana French. We move now to looking at the language use of each artist individually.

Les Amies Louisianaises

Only one recording was analyzed for Les Amies Louisianaises as the other two that were randomly selected were on an album that is out of print, and was never available online, called *Love Can Build a Bridge*. This would have been an interesting addition to the sample as the titles are all in English and include spiritual songs like *Amazing Grace*. It is unclear whether they actually sang in English or if only the titles are in English. Even in French, though, this style of music would have been in stark contrast to the rest of the sample. The song that was analyzed, *Les veuves de la coulée* is a cover of a Rayne-Bo Ramblers cover of the Bob Wills song *Faded Love*. That is to say,

it has its basis in western swing and the lyrics can be assumed to be native-like. As such, only the pronunciation was analyzed. Furthermore, the lyrics were not translated from Bob Wills' version but were completely original. The results are quite impressionistic as all the singing is done in harmony, making it difficult to separate one voice from another. This violated the highly ranked parameter *-harmonized vocals*, but was offset by the fact that nearly every other mid-high ranked parameter was followed.

It is not clear whether the members of this group are native speakers of Louisiana French but their pronunciation was 100% marked. There was one feature worth noting outside of those counted for markedness: a false liaison, that could have been used and was not, between *aller* and *à/au*, as is done in the *J'ai été au bal*. However, only a very conservative interpretation of this occurrence would suggest that the group's usage is not native-like, as it is likely that the pronunciation in the latter song was part of the idiolect of the original singer or confusion over which verb and tense is actually being used. The fact that *Les veuves de la coulée* used the infinitive of the verb (*aller / Au* and *aller / à*), instead of the past participle used in LeJeune's song (*été au*), also makes it questionable whether a false liaison would ever actually be present in a similar context. Otherwise, the pronunciation in the song appears to be exceptionally native-like in all ways, even including contractions such as *qui est* as [ke]. It would not be surprising to find out that the singers are in fact native speakers.

Ganey Arsement

Ganey Arsement had one album published since 2003, entitled *Le forgeron*. The

songs on this album were widely accessible, even for free through Spotify. The three in the sample were all easily considered Cajun music as not a single parameter was violated until reaching +lap steel guitar at the bottom of the mid-range of the rankings. French is not Arsement's first language and, although two of the three recordings were covers, all of them involved either changes to the lyrics or personal transcriptions by Arsement, which may have been imperfect. The original lyrics were provided by Arsement and verified by the author of this thesis, using the actual recordings. An overall markedness of 68%-90% was found.

The title track was originally by Arsement's great-grandfather, Vinus LeJeune. It was transcribed by Arsement personally as best as he could (personal communication). Phonologically, the song is 100% marked, including features such as the agglutinated form of *oncle* [nõk]. His written version of the lyrics also includes the structure *lui il est*, which he pronounces as [li e], making it not only marked as Louisiana French, but even somewhat marked as Louisiana Creole (i.e. in the case that it is truly *li est*). Although not an issue for markedness, the line *Et comme dit l'autre* ends simply with [la], making it difficult to distinguish between what Arsement wrote and the possibility that the line is *Et comme dit là*.

Syntactically, the only feature to be used was the progressive in the line *Lui il est là, après brailler*, making the song 100% marked for syntax. Cases like this one, where only a small amount of opportunities to use marked syntactic forms existed, were common in the sample. Interpreting just a single use of a marked feature as 100% marked may seem presumptuous, but it should be noted again that this also means that all other

syntactic structures in the song are expected to be identical between Louisiana French and Standard French. That is to say, these identical structures would be what any Louisiana French speaker would use, but they do not help one to differentiate the language from Standard French—the point of looking at marked features only is to do just that. Lexically, the song is also 100% marked. One use of *connaître* for *savoir* was found and one use of *paré* for *prêt* as well. The anglicism *blacksmith man* may also be considered a marked feature, although not part of the list used for this thesis.

La pistache à Tante Nana is a regularly played song in Cajun music, though Arsement changes some of the lyrics. Overall, the song is still 67%-100% marked. Phonologically it is 100% marked, although one of the lines unique to this version seems to be a point of confusion. The line *Les tartes meilleures sont* is pronounced [sœ] at the end of the line, yielding what might better be written as *Les tartes meilleures sœurs*. Neither version makes much sense syntactically. One would expect *meilleures* to come before *tartes* while the following word, *c'est*, makes *sont* unlikely. Likewise, *sœur* simply does not fit in any case. With the next line included, the translation seems to be one of two ungrammatical phrases: *The pies best are is* or *The pies best sisters is*.

The song is perhaps 100% marked syntactically except that this is based on a somewhat uncommon form of the 1st personal plural imperative, which may also be interpreted as 0% marked. Where one would expect the structure *allons* for *let's go* in Standard French, we find *allons aller*. This latter structure is how one would normally construct 1st personal plural imperatives in Louisiana French, though *allons* by itself is more common in this particular case. This is the result of *allons* being an inflection of

aller already. It is interesting that this change was made at all, though, as the more commonly used phrase for this song is *s'en aller*.

C'est trop tard is an original and the least marked of the three, at 37%-70%.

Phonologically, there is a 50% markedness rate, based on use of a tapped alveolar [ɾ] 100% of the time and one instance where metathesis could have been used, but was not, in the adjective *fermée*. Low markedness with metathesis is not surprising in Louisiana French as many phonetic transcriptions of metathesis in the *Dictionary of Louisiana French* (Valdman and Rottet 2010) are also documented as occurring without metathesis. One may be able to argue that this is more regular within a word than with prefixes, though.

Syntax provided an interesting example of uncertainty about the forms actually being used. Here, the the song is either 100% marked, 50% marked, or 0% marked, based on two instances of the fixed verb phrase *il y a*. In the first, *il n'y a rien* is written, as it would be in formal Standard French, but *i n rien* [in ɾjɛ̃] is produced, resembling the Louisiana French version of this fixed phrase: *i-n-a*. This hypothesis is further supported by the general lack of use of *ne* in negative constructions in Louisiana. The second example is also a negative construction but lacks the *ne*. It is written by Arsement as *il y a pas* and pronounced [il a pa], similar to the common pronunciation in Louisiana with the subject pronoun *il* omitted: [i a]. Depending on how one wishes to interpret these forms, various levels of syntactic markedness exist in this recording.

Vin Bruce's music included all original songs which were 100% native-like as he is a native speaker. His music, however, was interesting in that it did not violate any of the highest ranking parameters but did violate many of the mid-range and lower ranking parameters. In particular, his lyrics were not impressionistic, a feature used to describe Cajun music more than once in the literature. A clear narration existed in each as opposed to simply emotional outbursts about some unspecified events. His songs were also quite harmonically adventurous, straying far from the one to two chord system employed in most Cajun songs. Most likely, this is the result of Vin Bruce's time in Nashville and the general similarity his music has with country music. It is interesting to note that what helps one label his music being Cajun at all seems to be almost completely dependent on instrumentation, the use of French, and his own ethnicity.

Les Frères Michot

All of the songs by Les Frères Michot came from their album *La Caroline* and included a cover of Willis Touchet's *Deux pas de vieux temps*, Varise Conner's instrumental *La valse à Varis*, and a traditional tune with lyrics added by Rick Michot, entitled *Ris-donc, Alladin, ris-donc*. The music of the Michot brothers is heavily steeped in a particular tradition that almost everything they play is a cover of some sort, performed with a fiddle, diatonic button accordion, and guitar, in either a two-step or waltz rhythm, and sung in French. This is prototypical Cajun music. The language used is also relatively highly marked at 75%.

Deux pas de vieux temps was only analyzed phonologically as the lyrics matched

the original version exactly. It was found to be 50% marked, owing to a complete lack of metathesis when three opportunities were present. As has already been said, the absence of metathesis would not be all that surprising, even if the singer, Rick Michot in this case, was a native speaker. However, all the opportunities in this song included the prefix *re-* and the subject pronoun *je* as opposed to the any opportunities located within words, such as the previously mentioned *fermée* [frɛ̃me]. *Il y a* is also pronounced [i a] here, as would be expected in Louisiana French.

Despite the general high markedness of the pronunciation, there are clear signs that this is an imperfect representation of Louisiana French pronunciation. Vowels are regularly raised as in *contents* [kotɔ̃t]—with an an additional [t]—instead of [kɔ̃tɑ̃] and *comme* as [kɔ̃m] instead of [kɔ̃m]. It must be noted again that vowels could not be transcribed with the aid of software, but close examination and repeated listenings on different days supported these transcriptions. *Voir* was also pronounced [vwa], which is documented, but [wa], without the [v] and with the further back vowel would be the marked variant. This recording also includes one of the few possible examples of interference from English. The verb *observe* is pronounced as [ɑbærv], closer to the English equivalent, with [ɑ] instead of [ɔ] as the first vowel. The [z] is also missing the first time this word is sung but is clearly a production mistake, not a systematic error, as it appears the second time the verb is produced. The initial vowel remains the same in both cases, though.

Ris-donc, Alladin, ris-donc was 100% marked, despite the lyrics being completely original. Both Michael—also a non-native speaker—and Rick Michot sing in unison

throughout this song. This makes the phonetic transcription of the song quite impressionistic, as distinguishing overall sound qualities from what two people are producing simultaneously is necessarily inexact. Still, it appears that vowels are often produced higher than expected here as well. One other very clear pronunciation that stood out was the use of a [t] liaison between *est* and *arrivée*. While this may happen in Standard French (i.e. *c'est une* commonly receives a liaison), true liaisons are not particularly common in Louisiana French.

Perhaps due to the brevity of the lyrics, there was not a single opportunity to measure syntactic markedness. This may actually be a boon to the authenticity of French in Cajun music, as brevity is a highly ranked parameter of the genre, while at the same time a detriment to learners who may be using it for exposure, as the structures they are hearing are likely limited. Nonetheless, there is one feature worth noting in this song. The previously mentioned use of *est arrivée* is interesting in that *avoir* is much more commonly used as the auxiliary verb in past perfect constructions, even when *être* would be used in Standard French. In this case, it is not clear whether the meaning is *he arrived in the past* or *he is arrived/here*. Both make sense within the context, perhaps suggesting that this is simply poetic word play. A similar construction occurs with *sortir*, this time using *avoir* as the auxiliary verb, suggesting that the language system of the writer at least tends toward *avoir* in these constructions, where Standard French would require *être*

Another interesting syntactic construction that is also an example of lexical markedness is the line *Qui ont connu comment faire une vie*. On the one hand, this is the use of *connaître* for *savoir*, a feature particular to Louisiana and the Antilles (Thibault

2013), while on the other, it is an attempt at a direct translation from English due to the addition of *comment* for *how*. *Savoir* + <verb> is normally translated in Standard French as *to know how to* <verb> and one would expect the same when *connaître* is used. Also adding to the markedness of the song is the use of *asteur* for *maintenant* [now]. While it was not counted towards or against markedness, one instance of *aussi* occurred where the more regional version *aussitte* would have been an option.

Joe Hall & The Louisiana Cane Cutters

Joe Hall's music could possibly be mistaken as zydeco or Creole la-la music⁷, but fits perfectly well as Cajun music according to the tableau used in this thesis. The major points of departure are the possible use of a two-row diatonic accordion instead of a single-row, 4/4 rhythms, Creole ethnicity as opposed to Cajun (Wirt 2009), and possibly language. In fact, a thorough analysis was not done of the language used in these recordings as, unfortunately, the words were not available, nor could they be deciphered. He does clearly use the phrases *mâche-pain brûlé* and *un bon temps*, but it is not clear that he is singing in French. He may instead be singing in Louisiana Creole, based on his self-identification as Creole (Wirt 2009), or even English. In the song *Café des amis*, he uses the second phrase in a construction that may be partially English (*Gonna pass un bon temps*) or possibly a French past perfect construction with a vowel missing (*On a pass[é] un bon temps*). The level of uncertainty about the linguistic details of these recordings makes it truly unfortunate that more cannot be said about them. This might be an example of Louisiana Creole in essentially Cajun music, mixing of languages,

imperfect French usage, perfect usage of an uncommon variant of Louisiana French, or any number of other situations.

Huval, Dupuy & Fuselier

Huval, Dupuy & Fuselier is a trio of surprisingly popular teenage musicians playing Cajun music. Their sound is very prototypical, consisting usually of nothing more than a classic trio arrangement of fiddle, diatonic accordion, and guitar. Their recordings in this sample rarely violated the high or mid-range parameters and two out of three of the songs are known covers, the source of the third assumed to be original. Only the original song, *Crawfish Festival Waltz*, was analyzed closely, as it was the only one of the three which contained lyrics.

The overall markedness of *Crawfish Festival Waltz* was 100%. Part of this may, again, be due to the sparseness of the lyrics, which included only two short verses. In fact, four instances of a tapped [r] and one instance of *éou* for *ou* [where] were the only features used to measure markedness in this example, out of phonology, syntax, and lexical items. One item of note, not used to measure markedness, was the two lines “Viens dans le chemin / De Pont Breaux.” *De* in the second line was pronounced as either [da] or [dã], creating ambiguity as to whether the word is actually *de* [də] or *dans* [dã]. In the case of the former, the pronunciation may simply be influenced by the need to hold this vowel for musical reasons. In the case of the latter, it is an unexpected locative preposition for a city, where *à* would be much more common (Dubois and Noetzel 2005:135). Regardless, the language use in this song is quite native-like, and a small

discrepancy with a function word is not likely to be detrimental to comprehension for listeners in any way.

Lost Bayou Ramblers

The Lost Bayou Ramblers are perhaps one of the most popular young Cajun music bands today. Their music is deeply influenced by tradition yet progressive at the same time. No better example could be given than their live version of *J'ai été au bal*, a song popular since the 1950s. They add a new instrumental section to this song that employs modulations and scales that are simply never heard in Cajun music. What seems to keep their music recognizable as Cajun music is that they do not violate any high-ranking parameters. Even though only two out of three of their songs were able to be transcribed for this thesis⁸, they also provide a large amount of interesting material for analysis. The overall markedness of the language used in these recordings was 68%. There were numerous ambiguous features that were not measured, as they were not of those explicitly analyzed as per the methodology of this thesis. These features may make the vocals either particularly marked, in a way that other music in the sample is not, or otherwise poorly produced.

The Lost Bayou Ramblers' recording of *J'ai été au bal* possibly owes much of its linguistically interesting characteristics to the fact that it was recorded live. This provides this sample not only with an example of what happens when musicians have time to record something until it is right, but also what happens when they are in a performance situation. The song is highly marked as Louisiana French at 79% overall. This is based

almost entirely on phonological features.

This song provides the only example where a tapped [ɾ] was not used 100% of the time. That is not to say that a Standard French velar [ʁ] was used. One instance involves this consonant as the coda of a held syllable which was realized as [ɾ]. The other realization is a trilled [r] at the beginning of *retourner*. This prefix is often imperceptible when this song is sung, as it passes very quickly, but the singer here produces something quite unexpected. This may also be a variant of his own interlanguage system, as the only instance of metathesis used in the song is with the same word in the same context in another verse. It is not clear whether the trill was a stylistic choice or whether these two pronunciations are in free variation. Metathesis was not used during the other three opportunities in the song.

Outside of what was measurable for markedness, there were quite a few notable pronunciations. False liaisons were used in all the same contexts as the original recording, perhaps owing to the popularity of said recording. One instance of a liaison between *habillé* and *en* was realized as [s] instead of [z]. Vowels were reduced to [ə], as they would be in unstressed English syllables, in *retourner* [ərtəmi] and *j'ai été* [zəte]. While the initial *re-* of *regardez-donc* is commonly unpronounced in Louisiana French, the [ɾ] in the middle of the word is also left out, producing [gade dɔ̃n]. Note also that there is no final [k]. *Je* is sometimes omitted when required (i.e. *moi j'ai eu* [mɔ̃ e y] and *j'ai été au* [te zo]). There are a few possible explanations for this. It may be a creolized form, meaning he is saying *mo ai eu*, where *mo* takes the place of *je* in Louisiana Creole. It may also be an attempt at using the pronunciation [hə], common in Terrebonne-

Lafourche. It may even be very casual production, resulting in dropping *je* altogether. The first two seem very unlikely as he clearly uses *je* [ʒ] at times in both contexts. Perhaps this is an area where he uses all three variations interchangeably, or maybe he just runs out of breath when playing live. Of further note, *à la fin* ends with [bẽ] instead of [fẽ], which may just be a production mistake. Unfortunately, this mistake can lead to comprehension difficulties: both the author and a collaborator for the transcription of this song had trouble making out this word, even when using a dictionary. *Fion*, in *Comme fion*, as [fa] instead of [fjã] also lead to similar transcription difficulties. One last phonetic form that appeared in the song, which simply shows marked usage, was *venir* as [mnir].

Syntactically, only two verses were analyzed as they were additions to the original lyrics. This led to a 100% markedness rate based purely on the dropping of the subject in the construction *il y a* in the last verse of the song. However, it is unclear if he is saying *il y a (l')autre* or simply *l'autre*. If it is the former, the requisite definite article is missing. If it is the latter, the initial consonant is being pronounced as the glide [j]. Neither seems very satisfactory. Another point of interest is the structure *tu/t'es comme ça*, as it is pronounced [ti kãm]. It is possible that this is a mispronunciation of *t'es comme* or a mispronunciation of a Creolized form with the copula dropped: *to comme*. Another use of *comme* worth noting is in *comme fion*, where he seems to mean *aussi fion*. His version could actually work if it is the latter part of the marked structure *aussi.. comme..* [as... as...]. There were no lexical items in this recording that could be measured for markedness. However, it does include the only example in the sample of *quofaire* for

pourquoi [why] out of all of the original lyrics written.

Il m'envoyer [sic] appears to be an original song and was overall 56% marked.

Phonologically, there was one opportunity for the use of metathesis, with the subject pronoun *je*, that was not taken. The pronoun was actually deleted altogether, as happened in the previous recording. All other phonological remarks pertain to features that were not measured. The noun phrase *bon jour* pronounced as [bɔ̃ ʒo] is an unexpected lowering of a vowel. It would be normal in Louisiana French for the final vowel in this word [u] to lower to [ɔ], but not to [o], which lies somewhere in between. *Demandé* is pronounced [mãde], which is not documented for Louisiana French but is apparent even in written texts for Louisiana Creole. *Improuver* has a very backed initial vowel, not really explainable by either interference from English nor Standard French pronunciation. However, this did show up in a similar phonological context with Les Frères Michot—with the word *observe*—so it may be a common interlanguage feature for all non-native speakers of Louisiana French. The noun phrase *mon nègre* is pronounced closer to *ma nègre*, adding a bit of ambiguity as to who the interlocutors are, although the latter would be *ma négresse* when clearly feminine. A common marked feature that did not appear often in the sample is the affricate in *adieu* [adʒœ], used in this recording. Also, the second vowel in *poussillé* is raised and nasalized while an inserted [ʀ] appears at the coda of the first syllable. It is not entirely clear whether this is a variant pronunciation or simply an incorrect transcription of the word the singer is actually using. Regardless, at least the raising of vowels can be seen in other places as well, such as *années* [ãni]. There is also some occasional backing of vowels, as in *vu* [vu] for [vy]. This is most likely

systematic as it occurs twice in a row. Another curious construction is *Il m'a envoyé*, which begins with [e]. This may be either a highly marked pronunciation, as has been anecdotally related to the author, or a production mistake. This phrase also displays a native-like deletion of a vowel between *m'a* and *envoyé* [mãvoje].

Syntactic markedness was once again measured purely on deletion of a subject pronoun in a fixed verb phrase, in this case *faut*. There were no instances of replacing the relative pronouns *dont* or *lequel* with *que*, but there were some opportunities to use *que* that were not taken (i.e. *Moi j'ai vu c'est toi [qu']il m'a envoyé*). This is common in Louisiana French. What may not be as common, or may just be outright ungrammatical, is the use of *que* where *où* might be better (i.e. *le bon jour que moi je m'ai réveillé*). The use of *là* for the impersonal object pronoun *y* can also be found in this recording, as well as *quoi* as an interrogative where *qu'est-ce que* would be used in Standard French, at least in formal registers.

Lexically, the language used was 17% marked, which may be accounted for by the small number of opportunities to use marked lexical items. One instance was *tout*, which could have been *tout quelque chose*, while the other was the marked form *asteur* for *maintenant*. As *tout quelque chose* is used solely in Louisiana, it counted for much more than *asteur*, which is used in all of North America. For unmeasured features, the use of infixes for verbs to denote a negative sense (Klingler 1997:167) occurred with *traînaillé* for *traîné* and *poussaillé* for *poussé*. *Improuver* is also an anglicism, perhaps unique to Louisiana, while *nègre* as a term of endearment is also used.

The Magnolia Sisters

Three recordings from the Magnolia Sisters were selected, all from different albums. *Misi Banjo* from *Lapin, Lapin* was not able to be analyzed linguistically nor musically as the album, although not particularly old, is now out of print. *Barroom Blues* from the album *Stripped Down*, the Jimmie Rodgers cover mentioned already, was analyzed only musically as it was sung in English. A more thorough analysis was done on *Ambrose's Song/Point Noir Two-Step* from *Après faire le boogie woogie*, a cover of a song originally by Ambrose Thibodeaux. Musically, *Point Noir Two-Step* is clearly Cajun music. It agrees with almost every parameter above the lowest other than in meter, which is 4/4. *Barroom Blues* only seems to succeed at being considered Cajun music due to the use of the fiddle, guitar, a major key, syncopation, and being played by Cajun musicians, all of which are highly ranked parameters. This is despite the fact that it violates a significant amount of mid-range parameters.

Point Noir Two-Step was marked at 50% overall. As this was a cover with no changes in the lyrics, syntax and lexical items were assumed to be perfectly native-like. The result is due to 100% use of a tapped [r] and two instances where metathesis could have been used at the beginning of the word *rejoindre*. Instead, the initial *re-* was deleted. There is no evidence whether this deletion is systematic or simply due to the context—the phrase it is sung in passes quickly. It also may be worth noting that the vocals in this song appear to be copied and pasted, as there were two instances of each verse that were pronounced exactly the same in every perceivable way. It is common practice in music recording to perform one good take of a verse or refrain then to simply make copies to be

used in each successive appearance of that verse or refrain, but this is the first clear example found in the sample.

Other native-like pronunciations appear—and it is not clear whether the singer is a native speaker or not—such as the deletion of *est* in the progressive structure *il est après*, which is a common phonological strategy for what would otherwise be [il e apre]. *Venir* is also pronounced [mnir], a marked form that was noted in a Lost Bayou Ramblers recording as well. *Connu* is pronounced [koni] as opposed to [kõny]. While the nasalization is missing, the final vowel is a plausible phonological variation (Valdman and Rottet 2010:xxxix), which is also found in other past participles (i.e. *couru* [kuri] and *lu* [li]). *Arriver* is pronounced without the initial vowel, which may be a case of deletion to avoid following the preceding word *après* [apre] with another vowel, or may be an undocumented variant similar to how *arracher* may be pronounced in Louisiana French as simply [raʃe]. Lastly, *elle* seems to take various forms for this speaker: [e] in *elle voulait* and possibly the more common form [ɑ(l)] in *elle a resté*.

Don Montoucet

Don Montoucet is an accordionist with a lot of friends. He does not sing on this album, entitled *Legendary Cajun Accordion*, but instead has guest vocalists, some of which are quite popular in Cajun music, such as Kevin Naquin in *J'étais au bal*. The recordings themselves represent prototypical Cajun music, violating no high parameters and even including some mid-range parameters that few others in the sample included, such as the use of a lap steel guitar. All the songs were covers of very old and popular

songs, one being an instrumental: *Amédé Two-Step*. Unfortunately, an accurate transcription of could not be obtained for *Eunice Two-Step*, sung by Paul Frugé. Even the record label that published the album was unable to provide lyrics to base the transcription on. This song is also a cover of an Amédé Ardoin original but the lyrics seem to have been changed quite a bit from all other versions. It was also not able to be verified whether Frugé is a native speaker or not.

Kevin Naquin, however, is not a native speaker of Louisiana French. His is the second recording in the sample of Iry LeJeune's classic, and was looked at in depth phonologically. Overall, the recording was 50% marked. The use of a alveolar tap [ɾ] and metathesis were present in this case, with metathesis being, once again, the only feature not used 100% of the time. One of the four opportunities to use metathesis, in this case with the word *retourner*, instead involved the deletion of the initial *re-*, possibly owing to the fact that this line is sung quite fast. On the contrary, Naquin pronounces the *re-* in its entirety in the imperative *regardez-donc*, where it would perhaps be more likely for the initial syllable to be deleted. On a more general note, nasalization seems underused except with very common words like *moi*. The vowel /ɑ/ also appeared as the more forward variant [a] in nearly all cases, which is the opposite of what is expected (Valdman and Rottet 2010:xxxviii-xxxix). Lastly, false liaisons in this song are used consistently, possibly due to their existence in the original recording more than due to perfect acquisition of the language. As this study is only concerned with what sort of French appears in the music, the effect is same.

The Pine Leaf Boys

Although often serving as the front man for the Pine Leaf Boys, and also likely being a native speaker of Louisiana French, Wilson Savoy did not sing any of the songs selected here. Instead, two non-native speakers in the band are the vocalists: Cedric Watson on *Les barres de la prison* from the album *La musique* and Drew Simon on *The Sound of Loneliness* from *Back Home*. The third song was the instrumental *La valse du vieux charpentier*, also from *La musique*. The styles used run the gamut of what seems to be possible in Cajun music without simply stepping outside the boundaries of the genre. *La valse du vieux charpentier* represents the only twin fiddle tune in the entire sample. This style has been popular since Dennis McGee's time, meaning at least the beginning of recorded Cajun music in the 1930s. It makes use of only two fiddles, many drones, and is highly syncopated; it would in fact be difficult to identify as Cajun music otherwise as this particular song, for instance, violates numerous mid-range and high-ranking parameters. *Les barres de la prison* was originally played by Canray Fontenot in a similar fashion, with only a fiddle and vocal line, but the version here adds other instrumentation and fits more clearly into the Cajun tradition. *The Sound of Loneliness* is a cover of a Belton Richard song which, as with Vin Bruce, would potentially be understood as country music if it were not for instrumentation and use of French vocals.

Overall, the language used was 88% marked. *Les barres de la prison* was the slightly less marked of the two analyzed at 75%, based purely on phonology as none of the lyrics had been changed. Metathesis was possible twice in this recording and used once with the subject pronoun *je*. This was one of the few clear examples of metathesis

use in the sample. Watson's production is one of the least noteworthy of those analyzed as it is almost completely native-like. Some support for this from features not measured comes from the pronunciation of *elle* as [ɑ] or [a] and *je suis* as [ʃy]. The alternative [ʃɥi], for the latter, occurs regularly with all these samples, but the version here is less common and perhaps a bit more marked as [ʃɥi], which occurs in casual registers of other dialects. Also of note is the pronunciation of *j'ai été* as [zite] where [zete] is expected.

The Sound of Loneliness was even more marked, at 100%, perhaps due to the lack of opportunities to use metathesis. Generally, though, this recording appears just as native-like as Watson's, including features such as deletion of the vowel [i] between *qui* and *a*, resulting in [ka]. There was, however, one instance of possible interference from English in a word that is closely related in the two languages: *téléphone*. In the recording, it is pronounced with an unexpected schwa [tɛləfɔ̃n], as it would have in English, while one would expect [e] in French.

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION

The aim of this thesis was to determine how important French is in Cajun music, what form French takes when it is used in the music, and what this all means in terms of the strength of the language. The answers are all quite clear from the data: French is an integral aspect of Cajun music today, appearing in almost all modern recordings; the French used in Cajun music is highly marked as Louisiana French; and the language appears to be healthy in one of the four measures of language endangerment described by Tsunoda (2005:9).

French not only showed up in every recording that employed vocals but one, *Barroom Blues*, it was also ranked as a high parameter through descriptions in the literature. It may also serve as almost the only feature that sets a song apart from related genres like country, as in Vin Bruce's *A Dream I'll Never Forget*. To a lesser extent, it simply helped solidify songs as Cajun in cases where many mid-range and low-level parameters were violated, as in Vin Bruce's other music, as well as the Pine Leaf Boys' *The Sound of Loneliness*. It was not the only feature contributing to this categorization in any of these cases, but it is certainly an important one. A limitation of this thesis, though, is that it is synchronic. A 10 year time-span was used, but changes over the course of that time-span were not considered. A similar study of music within the zydeco tradition might have come to the same conclusions 40 years ago, but today zydeco is sung arguably as often in English as in French. A diachronic study on how language use has

changed over time in Cajun music might be helpful for providing evidence as to whether music can be relied on as a consistent medium for the use of Louisiana French in the future.

It is perhaps a bit surprising that the language use in Cajun music is as accurate in all linguistic dimensions as it is, particularly considering that the majority of singers are not native speakers. Very few second language learners are capable of acquiring native-like fluency in general, so the appearance of this fluency, convincingly resembling a particular dialect which is rarely taught in educational institutions, is an accomplishment. Part of this success may be attributed to the preference within the genre for playing classic compositions, but there is no clear evidence that original material is any less fluent. Indeed, original material may even be more marked as Louisiana French as writers may be focusing on features specific to the region, as in the use of *quofaire* by the Lost Bayou Ramblers. It would not be a stretch to imagine that people who play regional music professionally and have learned a regional language just to do so also feel partial to promoting local usages. Some qualitative interviews with musicians in Louisiana would be required to know how much this plays into the results, though.

Production was, of course, not always perfectly fluent, such as the occasional dropping of the 1st person singular subject pronoun *je* in the music of the Lost Bayou Ramblers. This may be not be representative of imperfect acquisition by the singer, as there is a possibility that this has more to do with his ability to project during a live performance when fatigued. This feature may also be a result of very casual speech or may even be stylistic. Imagine Thom Yorke of Radiohead, for instance: certainly his

natural speech is more articulate than what one hears when he sings. In either case, this occurrence does support the idea that music may not always be the best forum for exposure to Louisiana French for second language learners, but its existence in the music is likely beneficial for them the majority of the time, as errors are not the norm.

Huval, Dupuy & Fuselier also provide a case, described above, where ambiguity occurs through a possible error in either pronunciation of a possessive preposition *de* or the ungrammatical usage of a locative preposition before a city name if the word was actually meant to be *dans*. Considering that this error involves function words, not content words, it may have more implications for the acquisition of subtle syntactic features than with phonological or lexical features by learners who use music for exposure. It is important to note, however, that none of the errors described in this section were widespread. The only features that may be considered more widespread, are variants on vowel qualities. This hardly seems to matter, though, as vowels would be the most likely features to vary even with native speakers, as evidenced by the conflation of [ã] and [õ] in Louisiana French (Valdman and Rottet 2010:xxxviii). Singing voices are particularly prone to vowel variation as one has to account for projecting one's voice differently than one would when speaking, as well as lengthening vowels that may not normally be lengthened. Only in cases where a minimal pair is accidentally stumbled upon would vowel quality be a significant issue, or perhaps in extreme changes such as a low back rounded vowel becoming a high front unrounded vowel.

There are a number of reasons why one can expect that occasional minor errors would not affect what a second language learner might acquire from listening to the

music⁹, the most important of which may be the simple fact that language change is natural. Imagine that those making Cajun music begin systematically using *dans* as a locative preposition for cities. Also imagine that their usage is much more prevalent in the minds of young learners than the native speakers who may or may not be in their community. In this scenario, *dans* may become the de facto locative preposition for cities for future generations, but it would be hard to imagine older speakers being completely unable to understand that *dans Pont Breaux* means *à Pont Breaux*. Language change is not automatically indicative of language death nor of a corruption of some sort.

Both Dressler's and Smith's models of language endangerment begin with a reduction in use for some reason, leading to either low evaluation of the quality of the language or drastic changes in the language, leading to lowering the prestige of the language, which feeds back into the reduction of use (Tsunoda 2005:33-34). In the case of Louisiana French, reduction began in the 1930s due to changes in the Louisiana State Constitution disallowing the use of French to teach core subjects, along with various other factors. This fulfilled the first stage of these models, as well as the low evaluation of the quality of the language. However, drastic changes do not seem to be occurring, at least not at this time, in the usage in Cajun music. Subtle changes are quite possible, but not necessarily drastic changes. The prominence of French in Cajun music, coupled with being produced in a mostly native-like manner, suggests that this step in the models is being disrupted. It would be foolhardy to suggest that music is evidence that language death is not occurring at all, but it may be fairly safe to say that it is at least capable of slowing down the spiral.

The work of Dubois and Noetzel (2005) directly supports the idea, at least in the case of Huval, Dupuy & Fuselier's possible error, that a natural shift is occurring in locative prepositions to begin with. Their study not only shows a change over time in preposition usage, it also suggests that those who use uncommon or idiosyncratic forms are not chastised by the native speaking community (Dubois and Noetzel 2005:134). It is as though any use of Louisiana French is, today, encouraged by the community of Southern Louisiana, whether it be imperfect usage in music or speech.

Perhaps a worst case scenario for the influence of language use in Cajun music would be where it is so divergent from speech norms, and such an influential medium for exposure and learning, that those learning Louisiana French may not even be able to communicate with older native speakers. This is the case with Māori in New Zealand, where teachers are often not fluent themselves (Mutu 2005). Anecdotal stories have been related to the author about musicians who do not speak French but simply mimic the sound because they feel they cannot authentically sing the music in English. David Greely himself has attested to being among these musicians at one time (Rabalais 2010). However, they either do not make up a large segment of the population or do not reach the kind of popularity that would lead to their music being recorded and sold.

A perfect area for future research on this subject may be the usage of French over time by only the most popular Cajun musicians. As has been mentioned, reliable sources for measuring popularity were scarce to non-existent, yet that does not mean this information cannot be compiled with time. This information would be useful in light of the situation with raï music, described in Chapter 2. Raï musicians are pressured to

choose language based on financial incentives. French, in their case, allows their music to be easily marketed in France, a relatively affluent country. Assuming Cajun music is experiencing a renaissance today and will continue to gain broader popularity, it would be interesting to see the kind of decisions about language use those musicians who have the greatest potential for mass distribution would make. For instance, Feufollet is a relatively young and progressive Cajun band that regularly wins local awards. Their next album will include songs in English (Hahn 2014), something that did not occur in their previous work. It remains to be seen whether there is evidence that mass appeal is having an effect on the language in Cajun music or whether the language will not change at all and a phenomenon similar to what occurred with *Jolie Blonde* is hoped for.

Ultimately, the widespread and accurate use of Louisiana French in Cajun music is such that it is nearly impossible to see it as anything other than a boon to its survival. The specific impact it has on the listeners and the community of Southern Louisiana in general cannot be determined from the data gathered in this thesis. Future research specifically aimed at what people are gaining linguistically through exposure to the music would be a helpful in that it would help us understand the usefulness, or not, of language in music in terms of revitalization.

NOTES

- 1) This term is often used interchangeably with Cajun French, which may appear in quotations from source literature. Unless otherwise noted, use of the term Cajun French in said quotations should be understood to match the definition of Louisiana French used in this thesis.
- 2) The term Cajun music is used broadly in this thesis and often incorporates what may be considered pre-zydeco Creole music as well as the two have historically been closely related (Mattern 1997).
- 3) Music performed by native speakers is assumed to be native-like. By the definition of markedness provided here, it would be possible to say something about how marked their language use is, but it can be assumed that it is at least as marked as Louisiana French as any native speaker's language system should be. It might be argued that these speakers may use Standard French features to sound more formal in their music, but this is not likely. While some native speakers have had exposure to Standard French, those responsible for the bulk of the lyrics in the sample used here were generally isolated from the rest of the francophone world.
- 4) Despite the fact that lyrics written by native speakers of Louisiana French were not analyzed syntactically and lexically, a closer analysis of these linguistic dimensions of this verse appears in this thesis due to being initially unaware of the

source for the verse.

- 5) There are two ways in which the title for this song is normally written: *J'ai été au bal* and *J'étais au bal*. Regardless of how it is written, a liaison universally occurs before *au*, meaning there is a false liaison in the former case, and a true liaison in the latter. Furthermore, the meaning of each phrase (*I went to the dance* and *I was at the dance* respectively), make perfect sense in the context of the song. As the earliest recording, by Iry LeJeune, uses the version that would include a false liaison, the recordings in this thesis are analyzed as such.
- 6) The range is a result of features in two of Ganey Arsement's recordings with questionable forms, in that they may have been marked or not marked depending on interpretation.
- 7) A different tableau for zydeco or Creole la-la music would be required to determine if this is true, though Hall himself claims to play Creole music, not Cajun music (Wirt 2009).
- 8) One of the songs in the sample by the Lost Bayou Ramblers, *Bayou Perdu*, is an original. Roughly one third of the lyrics were questionable or untranscribed after an attempt to do so by ear. Liner notes did not provide the lyrics, nor were they able to be found online. Direct correspondence with the singer yielded a response, but, at the time of the submission of this thesis, the lyrics had still not been sent along.
- 9) It has already been shown that at least some learners of Louisiana French use music as a major source for linguistic input (Rabalais 2010).

Appendix 1*Corpus for musical features.*

Musical Feature	Sources	Number of Appearances
+Fiddle	(Brasseaux 2009:87) (Savoy 1984:4) (Mattern 1998:41) (Lindahl 2006:85) (Darbone 2006:399) (Comeaux 2006:108) (DeWitt 2006:125)	7
+Diatonic Accordion	Brasseaux 2009:191) (Savoy 1984:1) (Lindahl 2006:85) (Comeaux 2006) (Darbone 2006:399) (DeWitt 2006:125)	6
+French	(Emoff 1998:291) (Brasseaux 2009:191) (Mattern 1998:41)	3
+Impressionistic Lyrics	(Emoff 1998:292) (Savoy 1984:13) (Mattern 1998:38)	3
+Guitar	(Brasseaux 2009:15-16) (Savoy 1984:7-11)	2
+Triangle	(Brasseaux 2009:16-17) (Darbone 2006:399)	2
+Rhythmic Fiddling	(Savoy 1984:4) (Brasseaux 2009:117)	2
+Two-Step	(Brasseaux 2009:88) (DeWitt 2006:125)	2
+Washboard	(Brasseaux 2009:150) (DeWitt 2006:125)	2
+Syncopation	(Brasseaux 2009:11)	1
+Waltz	(DeWitt 2006:125)	1
+Double Time	(Savoy 1984:2)	1
-Harmonized Vocals	(Brasseaux 2009:152)	1
+Drum Kit	(Brasseaux 2009:23)	1

+Lap Steel Guitar	(Brasseaux 2009:23)	1
+Piano Accordion	(Brasseaux 2009:145)	1
+A cappella	(Brasseaux 2009:97)	1
+Upright Bass	(Brasseaux 2009:23)	1
+Banjo	(Brasseaux 2009:23)	1
+Mandolin	(Brasseaux 2009:115)	1
+Piano	(Brasseaux 2009:150)	1
+Major Key	(Savoy 1984:1)	1
+Small # of Chords	(Savoy 1984:1)	1
+Drones	(Balfa 1984:6)	1
+Call-and-Response	(Brasseaux 2009:11)	1
+Blues	(Brasseaux 2009:150)	1
+Rhythmically Improvised “Bridge”	(Savoy 1983:xiii)	1
+1 to 2 Verses w/o Refrain	(Emoff 1998:292)	1
+Cajun Musicians	(Brasseaux 2009:153/216)	1

Appendix 2

	+Fiddle	+Diatonic Accordion	+Guitar	+Major Key	+Syncopation	-Harmonized Vocals	+Double Time
Songs (Composer)							
Les veuves de la coulée (Rayne-Bo Ramblers)					*	*	
Le forgeron (Vinus LeJeune)							
La pistache à Tante Nana (Sidney Brown)							
C'est trop tard							
A Dream I'll Never Forget		*			*		*
Ma vie de musicien							
J'aurais des ailes							
Deux pas de vieux temps (Willis Touchet)							
La valse à Varis (Varise Conner)							
Ris-donc, Alladin, ris-donc						*	
Mas pain bruler		*					
Café des amis		*					
Carrière Brothers Breakdown (The Carrière Brothers)		*					
Crawfish Festival Waltz							
Hick's Wagon Wheel Special (Aldus Roger)							
Perrodin Two-Step (Angelas LeJeune)							
J'ai été au bal – Fariad (Iry LeJeune) (v.Lost Bayou Ramblers)							
Bayou Perdu							
Il m'envoyer							
Ambrose's Song/Point noir Two-Step (Ambrose Thibodeaux)							
Barroom Blues (Jimmie Rodgers)		*					*
Eunice Two-Step (Amédé Ardoin)							
J'étais au bal (Iry LeJeune) (v.Don Montoucet)							
Amédé Two-Step (Amédé Ardoin)							
La valse du vieux charpentier		*	*				
Les barres de la prison (Canray Fontenot)							
The Sound of Loneliness (Belton Richard)							*
Weight	45	36	29	27	25	25	24

Appendix 2 Cont.

	+Cajun Musicians	+French	+Rhythmic Fiddling	+Impressionistic Lyrics	+Drum Kit	+Small # of Chords
Songs (Composer)						
Les veuves de la coulée (Rayne-Bo Ramblers)						
Le forgeron (Vinus LeJeune)						
La pistache à Tante Nana (Sidney Brown)						
C'est trop tard						
A Dream I'll Never Forget			*	*		*
Ma vie de musicien			*	*		*
J'aurais des ailes			*	*		*
Deux pas de vieux temps (Willis Touchet)					*	
La valse à Varis (Varise Conner)		Instrumental		*	*	*
Ris-donc, Alladin, ris-donc					*	
Mas pain bruler	*	Unknown				
Café des amis	*	Unknown				
Carrière Brothers Breakdown (The Carrière Brothers)	*	Instrumental		*	*	
Crawfish Festival Waltz					*	*
Hick's Wagon Wheel Special (Aldus Roger)		Instrumental		*		
Perrodin Two-Step (Angelas LeJeune)		Instrumental		*	*	
J'ai été au bal – Fariad (Iry LeJeune) (v.Lost Bayou Ramblers)						*
Bayou Perdu						
Il m'envoyer			*			*
Ambrose's Song/Point noir Two-Step (Ambrose Thibodeaux)						
Barroom Blues (Jimmie Rodgers)		*	*	*	*	
Eunice Two-Step (Amédé Ardoin)						*
J'étais au bal (Iry LeJeune) (v.Don Montoucet)						
Amédé Two-Step (Amédé Ardoin)		Instrumental		*		
La valse du vieux charpentier		Instrumental		*	*	*
Les barres de la prison (Canray Fontenot)						
The Sound of Loneliness (Belton Richard)						*
Weight	24	24	24	23	19	17

Appendix 2 Cont.

	+1 to 2 Verse w/o Refrain	+Two-Step	+Waltz	+Lap Steel Guitar	+Drones	+Triangle	+Washboard
Songs (Composer)							
Les veuves de la coulée (Rayne-Bo Ramblers)			*	*	*	*	*
Le forgeron (Vinus LeJeune)			*	*	*	*	*
La pistache à Tante Nana (Sidney Brown)		*			*	*	*
C'est trop tard		*		*	*	*	*
A Dream I'll Never Forget	*	*			*	*	*
Ma vie de musicien	*	*			*	*	*
J'aurais des ailes	*	*			*	*	*
Deux pas de vieux temps (Willis Touchet)			*	*		*	*
La valse à Varis (Varise Conner)	*	*		*		*	*
Ris-donc, Alladin, ris-donc		*		*		*	*
Mas pain bruler		*	*	*	*	*	*
Café des amis		*	*	*	*	*	
Carrière Brothers Breakdown (The Carrière Brothers)	*	*	*	*	*		*
Crawfish Festival Waltz		*		*	*	*	*
Hick's Wagon Wheel Special (Aldus Roger)	*		*	*	*	*	*
Perrodin Two-Step (Angelas LeJeune)	*		*	*	*	*	*
J'ai été au bal – Fariad (Iry LeJeune) (v.Lost Bayou Ramblers)	*		*	*	*	*	*
Bayou Perdu			*	*	*	*	*
Il m'envoyer		*				*	*
Ambrose's Song/Point noir Two-Step (Ambrose Thibodeaux)		*	*	*	*	*	*
Barroom Blues (Jimmie Rodgers)		*	*	*	*	*	*
Eunice Two-Step (Amédé Ardoin)			*			*	*
J'étais au bal (Iry LeJeune) (v.Don Montoucet)			*		*	*	*
Amédé Two-Step (Amédé Ardoin)	*		*		*		*
La valse du vieux charpentier	*	*		*		*	*
Les barres de la prison (Canray Fontenot)		*		*		*	*
The Sound of Loneliness (Belton Richard)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Weight	16	13	11	8	7	5	4

Appendix 2 Cont.

	+Piano Accordion	+Blues	+Upright Bass	+Call and Response	+A cappella
Songs (Composer)					
Les veuves de la coulée (Rayne-Bo Ramblers)	*	*	*	*	*
Le forgeron (Vinus LeJeune)	*	*	*	*	*
La pistache à Tante Nana (Sidney Brown)	*	*	*	*	*
C'est trop tard	*	*	*	*	*
A Dream I'll Never Forget	*	*	*	*	*
Ma vie de musicien	*	*	*	*	*
J'aurais des ailes	*	*	*	*	*
Deux pas de vieux temps (Willis Touchet)	*	*	*	*	*
La valse à Varis (Varise Conner)	*	*	*	*	*
Ris-donc, Alladin, ris-donc	*	*	*	*	*
Mas pain bruler		*	*	*	*
Café des amis		*	*	*	*
Carrière Brothers Breakdown (The Carrière Brothers)		*	*	*	*
Crawfish Festival Waltz	*	*	*	*	*
Hick's Wagon Wheel Special (Aldus Roger)	*	*	*	*	*
Perrodin Two-Step (Angelas LeJeune)	*	*	*	*	*
J'ai été au bal – Fariad (Iry LeJeune) (v.Lost Bayou Ramblers)	*	*		*	*
Bayou Perdu	*	*		*	*
Il m'envoyer	*			*	*
Ambrose's Song/Point noir Two-Step (Ambrose Thibodeaux)	*	*	*	*	*
Barroom Blues (Jimmie Rodgers)	*		*	*	*
Eunice Two-Step (Amédé Ardoin)	*		*	*	*
J'étais au bal (Iry LeJeune) (v.Don Montoucet)	*	*	*	*	*
Amédé Two-Step (Amédé Ardoin)	*	*	*	*	*
La valse du vieux charpentier	*	*	*	*	*
Les barres de la prison (Canray Fontenot)	*	*	*	*	*
The Sound of Loneliness (Belton Richard)	*	*	*	*	*
Weight	3	3	3	0	0

Appendix 2 Cont.

	+Banjo	+Rhythmically Improvised “Bridge”	+Mandolin	+Piano
Songs (Composer)				
Les veuves de la coulée (Rayne-Bo Ramblers)	*	*	*	*
Le forgeron (Vinus LeJeune)	*	*	*	*
La pistache à Tante Nana (Sidney Brown)	*	*	*	*
C'est trop tard	*	*	*	*
A Dream I'll Never Forget	*	*	*	*
Ma vie de musicien	*	*	*	*
J'aurais des ailes	*	*	*	*
Deux pas de vieux temps (Willis Touchet)	*	*	*	*
La valse à Varis (Varise Conner)	*	*	*	*
Ris-donc, Alladin, ris-donc	*	*	*	*
Mas pain bruler	*	*	*	*
Café des amis	*	*	*	*
Carrière Brothers Breakdown (The Carrière Brothers)	*	*	*	*
Crawfish Festival Waltz	*	*	*	*
Hick's Wagon Wheel Special (Aldus Roger)	*	*	*	*
Perrodin Two-Step (Angelas LeJeune)	*	*	*	*
J'ai été au bal – Fariad (Iry LeJeune) (v.Lost Bayou Ramblers)	*	*	*	*
Bayou Perdu	*	*	*	*
Il m'envoyer	*	*	*	*
Ambrose's Song/Point noir Two-Step (Ambrose Thibodeaux)	*	*	*	*
Barroom Blues (Jimmie Rodgers)	*	*	*	*
Eunice Two-Step (Amédé Ardoin)	*	*	*	*
J'étais au bal (Iry LeJeune) (v.Don Montoucet)	*	*	*	*
Amédé Two-Step (Amédé Ardoin)	*	*	*	*
La valse du vieux charpentier	*	*	*	*
Les barres de la prison (Canray Fontenot)	*	*	*	*
The Sound of Loneliness (Belton Richard)	*	*	*	*
Weight	0	0	0	0

Appendix 3*Song sample details.*

Performer	Song (Year)	Composer	Original Language	Translation	Original Recording
Les Amies Louisianaises	Les veuves de la coulée (2010)	Les Amies Louisianaises (on a song by Bob Wills)	French	No	1940
Ganey Arsement	Le forgeron (2013)	Vinus LeJeune	French	No	Unknown
	La pistache à Tante Nana (2013)	Sidney Brown	French	No	1957
	C'est trop tard (2013)	Ganey Arsement	French	No	2013
Vin Bruce	A Dream I'll Never Forget (2006)	Vin Bruce	French	No	2006
	Ma vie de musicien (2006)	Vin Bruce	French	No	2006
	Si j'aurais des ailes (2006)	Edius Naquin	French	No	1965-1966
Les Frères Michot	Deux pas de vieux temps (2008)	Willis Touchet	French	No	1985
	La valse à Varis (2008)	Varise Conner	Instrumental	N/A	Unknown
	Ris-donc, Alladin, ris- donc (2008)	Rick Michot (on a melody by Varise Conner)	French	No	2008
Joe Hall & The Louisiana Cane Cutters	Mas pain bruler (2011)	Joe Hall	Unknown	No	2011

	Café des amis (2011)	Joe Hall	Unknown	No	2011
	Carrière Brothers Breakdown (2011)	The Carrière Brothers	Instrumental	N/A	1974
Huval, Dupuy & Fuselier	Crawfish Festival Waltz (2012)	Huval, Dupuy & Fuselier	French	No	2012
	Hick's Wagon Wheel Special (2012)	Aldus Roger	Instrumental	N/A	1960s
	Perrodin Two-Step (2012)	Angelas LeJeune	Instrumental	N/A	1929-1930
Lost Bayou Ramblers	J'étais au bal (Fariad) (2007)	Iry LeJeune	French	No	1950s
	Bayou Perdu (2007)	Lost Bayou Ramblers	French	No	2005
	Il m'envoyer (2009)	Lost Bayou Ramblers	French	No	2009
The Magnolia Sisters	Ambrose's Song/Point Noir Two-Step (2004)	Ambrose Thibodeaux	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
	Barroom Blues (2009)	Jimmie Rodgers	English	No (some lyrics were changed)	1927-1933
Don Montoucet	Eunice Two-Step (2007)	Amédé Ardoin	French	No (most or all of the lyrics were changed)	1929-1934
	J'étais au bal (2007)	Iry LeJeune	French	No	1950s
	Amédé Two-Step (2007)	Amédé Ardoin	Instrumental	N/A	1929-1934

The Pine Leaf Boys	La valse du vieux charpentier (2006)	Canray Fontenot	Instrumental	N/A	1981
	Les barres de la prison (2006)	Canray Fontenot	French	No	1971-1973
	The Sound of Loneliness (2010)	Belton Richard	French	No	Unknown

Appendix 4

Les Amies Louisianaises:

Transcription 1: Les veuves de la coulée from Le p'tit Chevrolet (originally by the Rayne-Bo Ramblers/Bob Wills)

French	IPA
C'est les veuves de la coulée Qui est parties au village Pour acheter du petit coton jaune Pour faire des petites mimines Pour les belles petites filles Pour les belles petites filles aller Au bal chez Joe, yé yaille	se le vœv də la kule ke parti o villaʒ pur aʃte dy ti cotõ zon pur fæɾ de tit mimin pur le bɛl tit fiʒ pur le bɛl tit fiʒ ale o bal se dʒo je jaʒ
C'est les veuves de la coulée Qui est parties au village Pour acheter du petit coton jaune Pour faire des petites calottes Pour les belles petites filles Pour les belles petites filles aller À Grande Basile	se le vœv də la kule ke parti o villaʒ pur aʃte dy ti cotõ zon pur fæɾ de tit kalo pur le bɛl tit fiʒ pur le bɛl tit fiʒ ale a grã bazi
C'est les veuves de la coulée Qui est parties au village Pour acheter du petit coton jaune Pour faire des petites mimines Pour les belles petites filles Pour les billes petites filles aller Au bal chez Joe, yé yaille	se le vœv də la kule ke parti o villaʒ pur aʃte dy ti cotõ zon pur fæɾ de tit mimin pur le bɛl tit fiʒ pur le bɛl tit fiʒ ale o bal se dʒo je jaʒ

Ganey Arsement:

Transcription 2: Le forgeron from Le forgeron (originally by Venus LeJeune)

French	IPA
S'en aller	sã nale
Ouais, là-bas	we laba
Ouais, là-bas	we laba
Chez Oncle André	se nõk ãdre
Pour avoir un bon temps	pur awar ẽ bõ tõ
Tout nous voir, nos bons amis	tu nu war no bõ zãmi
Tu connais tous les jours	ti kõne tu le jur
Lui il est là, après brailler	li e la aprɛ braje
Ça c'est drôle	sa se drɔl
Et comme dit l'autre	ɛ kõm di la
Ouais bébé, comment moi je vas faire	we bebɛ cõmmwõ ʒ va fɛr
S'en aller au Lac Charles	sã nale u læk ʃarl
C'est pour voir nos bons amis	se pu war bõ zami
Rencontrer un <i>blacksmith man</i>	rãkõtre ẽ blæksmɪθ mæn
(Il a) un ouvrage, mais, toute la semaine	ã navraʒ mɛ tut la smɛn
Samedi au soir, tous les jours	sãmdi əswar tu le jɔr
Il travaille pour faire une belle vie	i travaʒ pu vãn bɛl vi
Samedi au soir, Tante Ella	sãmdi əswar tã ela
Est paré pour s'amuser	ɛ pare pu zãmyze

Transcription 3: La pistache à Tante Nana from Le forgeron (originally by Sidney Brown)

French	IPA
Allons aller chez Oncle Saul Pour voir les belles récoltes Coton et le maïs La pistache à Tante Nana	alɔ̃ ale si nɔ̃k ʃal pur waʁ le bɛl ʁikɔl kətɔ̃ e lə mai la pistɑʃ a tɑ̃n nɑ̃na
Qui c'est aussi bonne Griller en bas du stove Les tartes meilleures sont C'est la pistache à Tante Nana	ki se osi bɔ̃n gʁijɛ ɑ̃ ba dy stov lə tart mɛjœʁ sɔ̃t se la pistɑʃ a tɑ̃t nɑ̃na
Allons aller chez Oncle Saul Pour voir les belles récoltes Coton et le maïs La pistache à Tante Nana	alɔ̃ zale si nɔ̃k ʃal pur wa le bɛl ʁekɔl kətɔ̃ e lə mai la pistɑʃ a tɑ̃t nɑ̃na
Qui c'est aussi bonne Griller en bas du stove Les tartes meilleures sont C'est la pistache à Tante Nana	ki se osi bɔ̃n gʁijɛ ɑ̃ ba dy stov lə tart mɛjœʁ sɔ̃t se la pistɑʃ a tɑ̃t nɑ̃na

Transcription 4: C'est trop tard from Le forgeron

French	IPA
Oh ma chère petite fille Il est trop tard pour brailler Tu vas payer pour tout t'as fait J'ai déjà décidé	o mə ʃæ tit fij i e tro tar pu braje ti va peje pu tu ta fe ʒɛ deʒa deçide
Il n'y a rien pour manger Il (y) a pas de l'argent Les petits braille tout le temps Et mon cœur (me) fait du mal	in rjɛ pur mɑ̃ʒe il a pa də darʒɑ̃ le pɑti braj tu ltɑ̃ e mɔ̃ kœr sa fe dy mal
Oh vilaines manières C'est trop tard pour changer Les fenêtres sont fermées Et la porte partout barrée	o vilɛ̃n mɑ̃nʒɑr se tro tar pur ʃɑ̃ʒe le fənɛt sɔ̃ fɛrme ɛ la pɔrt partu bare
Oh ma chère petite fille C'est trop tard pour brailler Tu vas payer pour tout t'as fait J'ai déjà décidé	o mə ʃæ tit fij sɛ tro tar pur braje ti va peje pur tu ta fe ʒɛ deʒa deçide

Les Frères Michot:

Transcription 5: Deux pas de vieux temps from La Caroline (originally by Willis Touchet)

French	IPA
Ton papa et ta maman Ça me ressemble pas trop contents Quand je passe pour te remasser Ils sont droite là après me guetter Ça observe comme je suis habillé Ça aime pas comme je suis peigné Il y a une chose que moi je connais Ça peut oublier le vieux temps passé	tõ papa e ta mãma sa mæ rəsãm pa tro kotõt kã ʒ pas pur t rãmase i sõ dre la aprɛ m gete sa abærv kõm ʃɥi abile sa em pa kõm ʃɥi pɛ̃je i a ɛ̃n ʃɔʒ kə mõ ʒ kõne sa pœ ublie læ vjœ tã pase
Moi je vois pas comme moi j'ai fait C'est tout du trop des idées Il y a une chose que moi je connais C'est dur de partir et échapper Ça observe comme je suis habillé Et aussi comme je suis peigné Il y a une chose que moi je connais Ça peut oublier le vieux temps passé	mõ ʒ vwa pa kõm mõ ʒe fe se tu dy tro de zide i a ɛ̃n ʃɔʒ kə mõ ʒ kõne se dy rə parti e eʃape sa abzærv kõm ʃɥi abile e osi cãm ʃɥi pɛ̃nje i a ɛ̃ ʃɔʒ kə mõ ʒ kõne sa pœ ublie læ vjœ tã pase

Transcription 6: Ris-donc, Alladin, ris-donc from La Caroline

French	IPA
Alladin est arrivé Avec un cœur aussi cassé Il a changé son idée Asteur ris-donc, Alladin, ris-donc	aladẽ e tarive avɛk ɛ̃ kœr osi kase i la ʃõʒe sõ nide astœr ri dõk aladẽ ri dõk
Il a trouvé des nouveaux amis Il a sorti avec des jolies filles Qui ont connu comment faire une vie Asteur ris-donc, Alladin, ris-donc	i la truve de nuvo zami i la sœrti avɛk de jœli fij ki õ kõny kõma fœr ɛ̃n vi astœr ri dõk aladẽ ri dõk

Huval, Dupuy & Fuselier:

Transcription 7: Crawfish Festival Waltz from Cajun Band

French	IPA
Oh mes chers amis Viens dans le chemin De Pont Breaux Au festival des écrevisses Éoù les cadiens viennent Pour s'amuser	o me ʃa zɑ̃mji vjɛ̃ dɑ̃ lə ʃmɛ̃ da pɔ̃ bro o festival di zɛkrivɛs aju le kadzɛ̃ vjɛ̃n pu sɑ̃myzɛ
Oh mes chers amis Viens dans le chemin De Pont Breaux La plus belle ... Dans la Louisiane Au festival des écrevisses	o me ʃa zɑ̃mi vjɛ̃ dɑ̃ ly ʃmɛ̃ dɑ̃ pɔ̃ bro la ply bɛl plɑ̃ dɑ̃ la lwizjɑ̃n o festival de zɛkrɔ̃vis

Lost Bayou Ramblers:

Transcription 8: J'étais au bal (Fariad) from Live à la Blue Moon (originally by Iry LeJeune)

French	IPA
J'ai été au bal hier au soir Je vas retourner encore à soir Si l'occasion se présente Je vas retourner demain au soir	ʒəte zo bal jɛr o swaɾ ə va ɛrtəɾni ɑ̃kɛr a swaɾ si lokazjɔ̃ sɛ prezɑ̃ ə va rɛtəɾne dmɛ̃ swaɾ
Regardez-donc les jolies filles Celles-là que j'aime autant Moi je connais tout l'amour Que moi j'/mo ai eu pour toi	gadə dɔ̃n le ʒɔli fij sɛla k ʒɛm otɑ̃ mɔ̃ ʒ kɔ̃ne tu lɑ̃mɔɾ kə mɔ̃ e y pur twa
J'ai été au bal hier au soir Tout habillé en noir C'est l'habit que moi j'aime Pour courtiser ma belle	te zo bal jɛr o swaɾ tu tabijɛ zɑ̃ nwaɾ sɛ labi kə mɔ̃ ʒɛm pur kotizɛ ma bɛl
À la fin petite fille Quofaire tu/t'es comme ça Quofaire donc tu veux T'en venir à la maison	a la bɛ̃ tit fij kofɛɾ ti kɔ̃m sa kofɛɾ dɑ̃ ti vø tɑ̃ mnir a la mɛzɔ̃
J'ai été au bal hier au soir Tout habillé en bleu C'est l'habit que moi j'aime Pour courtiser la belle	ʒəte zo bal jɛr o swaɾ tu tabijɛ sɑ̃ blø sɛ labi kə mɔ̃ ʒɛm pɔɾ kotizɛ la bɛl
Il y a (l')autre/l'autre qui aime les blondes Les autres qui aiment les brunes Moi je suis pas comme fion Moi je/Mo les aime bien tous les deux	jɔt ki ɛ̃m le blɔ̃n le zot ki ɛ̃m le brø̃ mɔ̃ ʃy pa kɔ̃m fa mo le zɛ̃m jɛ tu le dø̃

Transcription 9: Il m'envoyer from Vermilionaire

French	IPA
Pour sept grandes années Tout j'ai fait c'est traînaillé J'ai gamblé et buvé toute ma vie	pur sɛt brɑ̃ zɑ̃ni tu ʃɛ fe se trɛ̃nɑ̃ʒ ʒɛ ɡɑ̃blɛ e buvɛ tut ma vi
Astœur c'est le bon jour Que moi je m'ai réveillé Moi j'ai vu ma vie j'ai gaspillé	astœr se lə bɔ̃ ʒo kə mɔ̃ ʒ me reveʒ mɔ̃ ʒɛ vy ma vi ʒɛ gaspiʒ
Moi j'ai demandé À ma chère et ma mère Quoi je peux faire pour improuver ma vie	mɔ̃ ʒɛ mɑ̃de a ma ʃa e ma ma kwa ʒ pœ fœr pur ɑ̃pruve ma vi
C'est là elle m'a dit Mon nègre, faut dire adieu Pour quelque'un, quelque'un m'a poussillé	se la a ma di ma nɛg fo dir adʒœ pur kɛkœ kɛkœ ma pɔ̃rsɔ̃ʒ
Le soir je l'ai rencontrée Moi j'ai vu dans ces yeux Moi j'ai vu c'est toi il m'a envoyé	la swar le rɑ̃kɔ̃tre mɔ̃ ʒɛ vu dɑ̃ se zjœ mɔ̃ ʒɛ vu se twa e mɑ̃voʒ
C'est toi il m'a envoyé Pour m'aimer et soigner La balance de ma vie sur la terre	se twa e mɑ̃voʒ pur mœ̃me e swɑ̃ʒ la balɑ̃s də ma vi sy la tœ̃

The Magnolia Sisters:

Transcription 10: Ambrose's Song/Point Noir Two-Step from Après faire le boogie woogie (originally by Ambrose Thibodeaux)

French	IPA
Ton petit nègre il est après arriver, chère Par la fenêtre tu veux rejoindre ton nègre, chère Ta maman elle voulait pas me voir Ton papa est tracassé dans ses yeux	tõ ti neg il apre rive ʃæ par la fənɛt ti vø ʒwɛ̃ tõ nɛg ʃæ ta mama e vule pa mə wa tõ papa e trakase dā se zjœ
Rappelle-toi le mardi passé, chère J'ai connu tu voulais venir avec moi, chère Ton papa il voulait pas me voir Ta maman elle a resté dans la porte	rapəl twa lə mardi pase ʃæ ʒɛ koni tu vule mnir avɛk mwa tõ papa i vule pa mə wa ta mama al a rɛstɛ dā la pɔr
Rappelle-toi le mardi passé, chère J'ai connu tu voulais venir avec moi, chère Ton papa il voulait pas me voir Ta maman elle a resté dans la porte	rapəl twa lə mardi pase ʃæ ʒɛ koni tu vule mnir avɛk mwa tõ papa i vule pa mə wa ta mama al a rɛstɛ dā la pɔr
Ton petit nègre il est après arriver, chère Par la fenêtre tu veux rejoindre ton nègre, chère Ta maman elle voulait pas me voir Ton papa est tracassé dans ses yeux	tõ ti neg il apre rive ʃæ par la fənɛt ti vø ʒwɛ̃ tõ nɛg ʃæ ta mama e vule pa mə wa tõ papa e trakase dā se zjœ

Don Montoucet:

Transcription 11: J'étais au bal from Legendary Cajun Accordionst (sung by Kevin Naquin) (originally by Iry LeJeune)

French	IPA
J'ai été au bal hier au soir Tout habillé en noir Si l'occasion se présente Je vas retourner demain (au) soir	ʒɛ ete zo bal jɛr o swar tu abije za nwar (s)i lokædzã sprezã ʒva turne dæmõ swar
J'ai été au bal hier au soir Tout habillé en bleu C'est ça l'habit que moi j'aime Pour courtiser ma belle	ʒɛte zo bal jɛr o swa tu abije zã blø (s)e sa labi k mõ ʒɛm pu kõtize ma bɛl
J'ai été au bal hier au soir Tout habillé en bleu Et c'est ça l'habit que moi j'aime Pour courtiser ma belle	ʒɛ ete zo bal jɛr o swa tu abije za blø (s)e sa labi k mɔ ʒɛm pu kõtize ma bɛl
Regardez-donc les jolies filles Celles-là que j'aime autant Moi je connais j'ai tout l'amour Que moi j'ai eu pour toi	rɛgarde dãk le jøli fij sɛla k jɛm anta mõ ʒ kəne ʒɛ tu lamur mõ ʒɛ y pu twa

The Pine Leaf Boys:

Transcription 12: Les barres de la prison from La musique (originally by Canray Fontenot)

French	IPA
Oui goodbye chère vieille mom Goodbye pauvre vieux pop Goodbye à mes frères Et mes chères petites sœurs Moi j'ai été condamné Pour la balance de ma vie Dans les barres de la prison	wi ɡɔdbaɪ ʃæ vij mɑ̃m ɡɔdbaɪ pov vjœ pø ɡɔdbaɪ a me fræ e me ʃæ tit sœ mɔ̃ ʒite kɔ̃dɔ̃ne pu la balãs də ma vi dã le bar də la prizɔ̃
Moi j'ai roulé Je m'ai mis à malfaire J'avais la tête dure J'ai rentré dans le tracas Asteur je suis condamné Pour la balance de ma vie Dans les barres de la prison	mɔ̃ ʒɛ rule əʒ mɛ mi malæɾ ʒavɛ la tɛt dyr ɛ rɑ̃tre dɑ̃ traka astœɾ ʃy kɔ̃dɑ̃ne pu la balãs də ma vi dã le bar də la prizɔ̃
Ma pauvre vieille maman Elle s'a mis sur ses genoux Ses deux mains sur la tête En pleurant pour moi Elle dit, « Mm mm Cher petit garçon moi Je vas jamais te revoir Toi t'as été condamné Pour la balance de ta vie Dans les barres de la prison »	ma pov vjeʒ mɔ̃mɑ̃ a sa mi sy se ʒnu se dœ mɛ̃ sy la tɛt ɑ̃ plœrɑ̃ pur mwɔ̃ a di m m ʃæ ti ɡarsɔ̃ mɔ̃ ʒ va ʒɑ̃me tə wa twa ta te kɔ̃dɑ̃ne pu la balãs də ta vi dã le bar də la prizɔ̃
Il a dit, « Chère vieille maman Pleure pas pour moi Il faut tu pries pour ton enfant Pour essayer sauver son âme De les flammes de l'enfer »	i a di ʃæ vjeʒ mɑ̃mɑ̃ plœɾ pa pur mɔ̃ i fɔ̃ ti pri pu tɔ̃ nɑ̃fɑ̃ pur seʒe sove sɔ̃ nɑ̃m də le flɑ̃m də lɑ̃fæ

Transcription 13: The Sound of Loneliness from Back Home (originally by Belton Richard)

French	IPA
L'ennui c'est une maison	lãnuʝi se ẽn mezõ
Qui a pas d'amour	ka pa zamur
L'ennui c'est un homme	lãnuʝi se ẽ nõm
Qui a pas de femme	ka pa dfãm
L'ennui c'est une téléphone	lãnuʝi ce telõfõn
Qui sonne jamais	ki sõn zãme
Le son d'ennui	lõ sõ dãnuʝi
Après me détruire	apɾe m detɾiɾ
Mets la musique	me la myzɪk
Plus fort	ɛ ply fõr
Allons s'amuser	alõ sãmyze
Allons faire accroire arien arriver	alõ fæɾ akɾõr arjẽ arive
Aide-moi hauter	ed mwõ hote
Le son d'ennui	lõ sõ dãnuʝi
Le son d'ennui	lõ sõ dãnuʝi
Après me détruire	apɾe m detɾiɾ
Mets la musique	me la myzɪk
Plus fort	ɛ ply fõr
Allons s'amuser	alõ sãmyze
Allons faire accroire arien arriver	alõ fæɾ akɾõr arjẽ arive
Aide-moi hauter	ed mõ ɛ hote
Le son d'ennui	lõ sõ dãnuʝi
Le son d'ennui	lõ sõ dãnuʝi
Après me détruire	apɾe m detɾiɾ
Le son d'ennui	lõ sõ dãnuʝi
Après me détruire	apɾe m detɾiɾ

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