Anglicisms in French Vocabulary in the Early 21st Century

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Abstract

The article examines the history and causes of the widespread use of Anglicisms in French. It also presents the views of French linguists concerning the mass penetration of English borrowings into the vocabulary of the French language. Examples are given of English borrowings from different parts of speech, of the ways of their penetration and the scope of functioning in modern French. The article also provides classification of Anglicisms, as well as some examples of their replacement by French words. Various forms of assimilation of Anglicisms in French, the phenomena of the parallel use of English borrowings and their French equivalents are considered. Examples are given of semantic, semantic-stylistic, and stylistic synonymy of French words and English borrowings. The author makes examples of regulatory documents aimed at slowing penetration of foreign vocabulary into French, of the facts of public response to the use of English borrowings in French. He concludes that the number of English borrowings will inevitably grow and that this vocabulary is necessary in modern French.

Keywords: Linguistics, French, English, Borrowing, Synonymy.

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Introduction

In the 17-18th centuries, in the Age of Enlightenment and scientific discoveries, along with the active word formation process, French borrowed words from English. However, until the early 20th century, their number remains insignificant. Many of them integrated into the French language and are not perceived by native speakers as borrowings. This can be exemplified by the word *redingote*, which is the result of the deformation of the English word *riding coat* (Maillet, 2014: 66)*.*

The promotion of American culture in Europe in the early 20th century, technological progress, the economic upsurge of the United States, its military presence in France after the Second World War (Fouché, 2017) lead to introduction to the French language of a significant number of Americanisms: *tank, buldozer, scooter, jeep, primetime, hit-parad, flash,* etc. (Pruvost, 2012: 19). Despite the measures taken by the government to protect the French language (the Bas-Lauriol law, the Toubon law), the activities of Académie Française (French Academy) and Conseil Supérieur de L'audiovisuel (CSA) (the Superior Council of the Audiovisual) (2017) which offers French equivalents to English borrowings, articles in the French press on Anglicisms that need to be excluded from professional communication, (Baptiste, 2017) the RFI contest called Speakons français, at the beginning of the 21st century we observe the increasing process of penetration of Anglicisms into the French language. The so-called *franglais* (Machoul-Yatim, 2010) has got widespread use in modern French. We can speak about some "ideology and influence not only on language, but on culture as well" (Gardette, 2017). The influence of North American culture is realized through the numerous associations and organizations existing in France: *L'Eglise Américaine, La Cathédrale américaine, La Bibliothèque américaine, L'hôpital américain* in Paris (Bochmann, 2013). According to the US Consulate in France (2017), there are about 100,000 Americans living in France. By 2014, the number of British people living in France reached 150,000. In some communes of Aquitaine where the exodus of indigenous people is noted, their number is up to 15% of the population (Tchiveindhais, 2017).

The mass penetration of English vocabulary, "californisms" in particular (Rey, 2016), into French causes concern of lexicographer Alain Rey. Linguist Claude Hagège sees no threat, pointing out that in communication, French equivalents of English borrowings should be given preference (Toussaint, 2013). According to Jean Pruvost, a professor at Cergy-Pontoise University, the French language "protects itself": some of borrowings come out of use, giving way to French equivalents. Such nouns as *teen-ager, walk-man, self-service*, have gone out of fashion, replaced by: *adolescent (ado), baladeur, libre-service* (Pruvost, 2012: 20). Examples of replacement of an Anglicisms with its French equivalents is the use of *courriel* instead of *e-mail*, *texto* instead of *message* or *SMS*, *logiciel* instead of *software.* However, such cases are isolated.

The objective of this study is to classify English borrowings, define the ways of their penetration into modern French, their scope of functioning, features of assimilation and the role of English borrowings in the French language, as well as an analysis of the reasons for parallel use of English borrowings and native French words.

Methods

The descriptive method is used in the study to classify Anglicisms, the ways of their penetration, scope of functioning in modern French. The comparative method is used to analyze the reasons for penetration of English words into modern French, the phenomena of assimilation and linguistic parallelism.

Results

Anglicisms penetrate into all French parts of speech: nouns including various suffixes and derived from phrasal verbs (*deal, look, must, has-been, casting, hacker, fitness, burn-out, stand-up, startup)*; compound nouns that have English and French word elements *(voix-off (voice off), sur-booké (over-booked), drive fermier)*; adverbs and prepositions *(after, before)*; interjections: *Yeah!, Wow!*; adjectives: *OK, soft, hard, cool*; adverbs *live*, verbs *booster, flasher*; acronyms: *CD, DVD, USB, SMS, LOL*; *Htd (HowtoDie?)*, which is synonymous with *MDR*; *FB (Facebook), FBO (Facebook official)*, meaning *est le fait de passer en statut en couple avec quelqu'un sur Facebook (is the fact of becoming a couple with someone on Facebook)* (Dico2rue, 2017).

Anglicisms in French can be divided into four groups:

- Words describing realia that do not exist in Francophone countries *(cow-boy, bump-stock)*:

- Borrowings that are indispensable in everyday or professional communication *(tablette, parking, gif, agenda)*.

- Anglicisms that can be replaced by French equivalents, but their use is attributed to the speaker's desire to emphasize the stylistic or semantic difference of a borrowing from its French equivalent: *vintage, patchwork du paysage (patchwork of the landscape), melting-pot*;

- Borrowings, the use of which is unreasonable: *voiture (car) low-cost (French: voiture bonne marché), box Wi-Fi (French: boitier Wi-Fi), feedback (French: commentaires)*.

The key ways of penetration and popularization of Anglicisms in French include television, mass media, and the Internet. Thus, Anglicisms come into French from:

- Modern technology and social networks language: *poster, captcha, gif, spam, troll, netflixisation;*

- Show business, beauty industry: *magazine people, news, fake news, fashionista, look;* advertisement: *Google-le, Made for sharing, we are analogue;*

- Modern pop culture*: télé-réalité, casting, star, street art, tag, fashion week, buzz;*

- Names of cultural events: *ONLYLIGHT, Against The Wind, Le Fesival OFF d'Avignon.* It is not infrequent that a syntactic structure characteristic of English is used with French vocabulary preserved: *PARIS DRONE FESTIVAL 2017*;

- Social sphere: *squatter, street pooling, sénior, manspreading;*

- Gastronomy and foodservice: *cake, snacking, fast-food;*

- Business and professional relations: *made in France, layout, helpdesk, checker, overbooker, burnout, feedback;*

- Everyday communication: *OK, t'es trop speed (you are too fast), t'es off (you are off), je suis en bad (I am in trouble), il n'est pas clean (it's not clean).*

English borrowing are assimilated in French. In this way, the first group verbs are formed from proper names denoting names of enterprises or commercial brands: *Facebook - facebooker, Skype- skyper, Twitter – twitter;* from common nouns and verbs: *selfi – selfier, hashtag – hashtaguer, blog – bloguer, to like – liker, to spoil – spoiler, to boost – booster.* Google's advertising slogan *"Google-le"* caused the verb *googler* to appear in the language and then its more popular form *googliser.* In the process of assimilation, two forms may be used in parallel: *selfier - selfiser.*

In formation of French verbs describing global processes and phenomena occurring in the society, the suffix –is is used: *googliser, ubériser* (Lopatnikova, 2006: 263). The suffix *-ation* is used to derive abstract nouns from these verbs: *googlisation*, *ubérisation, selfisation.* According to our observations, uncountable nouns appear in French *google, internet: c'est du google (this is a Google translation), il y a de l'internet (there is some internet).*

While adapting to French phonetic system, Anglicisms retain the spelling and pronunciation that are unusual for French-speaking people spelling and pronunciation (Lopatnikova, 2006: 152-153): *burpees, patchwork.* The combination of –gl, -zl at the end of a word is uncharacteristic of the French language. Thus, when pronouncing *google,* French people add [Ə] between [l] and [g] and pronounce it as [gugƏl], the noun *puzzle* is pronounced as [poezƏl]. In the process of assimilation, two ways of pronunciation may be preserved. The combination of letters *ch* in *challenge* may be pronounced either according to French [ʃ] or English [tʃ] phonetic rules.

English borrowings assimilation includes the change in the spelling of words with morpheme *-man*. In modern French, there are two variants of the plural, but preference is given to the variant with the ending -s: *barmen-barmans, caméramen-caméramans.* According to new spelling rules, in plural, the «e» is no more used in endings of English borrowings ending in –ch in singular: *matchs* (former spelling *matches*), *sandwichs* (former spelling *sandwiches*) (Dupriez, 2016: 49).

In borrowing, the French language does not borrow all meanings of a word, but one or some of them (Lopatnikova, 2006: 156). In course of assimilation of English borrowings in French, the meaning of words can be extended, narrowed, or acquire a new meaning.

The verb *to zap* was borrowed from English and meant *to change channels on a television by using a remote control* (Longman, 2017). In the process of assimilation, the meaning of the verb extended. At the moment, while preserving its primary meaning in the language, in colloquial speech it is more often used in the meaning of *oublier (to forget, get out of one's head): J'ai complétement zappé mon rendez-vous! (I have completely forgotten about my meeting!),* The neutral English verb acquires a new abstract meaning and stylistic coloring in French.

An example of meaning narrowing is the verb *spoiler*, which in French has the meaning *to spoil the pleasure of watching a film by revealing its content or interesting moments* (Académie Française, 2014). While in English the verb *to spoil* is used in several meanings: to *damage* (of inanimate objects), to *indulge* (of a person) etc. (Macmillan Dictionary, 2017).

Anglicisms also take part in forming set expressions in French, e.g., with the verb *faire (do or make): faire un break, faire un burn out, se faire un challenge, faire son coming out, faire buzz, faire du forcing*.

Discussion

The root causes for penetration of a large number of Anglicisms into French cannot be explained solely by the "language laziness" of native speakers, as Jean Maillet states (quoted in LeParisien, 2016), or by the fact that they sound more modern, fashionable and stylish, as put by a CSA member Patrice Gélinet (2016), since there are examples of parallel use of Anglicisms and their French equivalents: *mot-dièse, balise, mot-clic* instead of *hashtag; toupie anti-stress* instead of *hand-spinner, jeune pousse* instead of *startup.*

Anglicisms are used to describe global socio-economic political phenomena occurring in modern society (*startup, ubérisation, Brexit*), as well as innovations in communication and information sharing, participating in active lexical derivation (Franceculture, 2016): *Uber – ubériser – ubérisation; Facebook – facebooker – facebookeur(-euse) – facebookien*.

English borrowings are monosyllabic or disyllabic. They are more concise in communicating information. Thus, on French Academy web site in an article on Anglicism *scoop*, *publier une information en exclusivité is* proposed instead of the expression *publier un scoop (*Académie Française, 2015)*.

Anglicisms are used in French as euphemisms. The word *black* and its variant *keubla* refer to black people and supersedes French *noir* and its variant *renoi.*

One can note the use of Anglicisms as semantic synonyms of their French equivalents. In mass media, English adverb *en live (en direct live)* is used instead of *en direct*. According to French Academy, it is correct to use *une émission en direct, retransmettre en direct (*Académie Française, 2015)*. However, these expressions differ in the shades of meaning. Unlike *en direct* that means *on the air,* the process of transferring and receiving information at the moment with the role of the viewer ignored, - *en live* emphasizes the presence of the viewer *en étant présent au moment des faits, en vrai (being present at the moment of the action, in truth)* (Reverso Dictionnaire, 2017). The list of contextual synonyms offered on the website of L'Office québécois de la langue française (Quebec Board of the French Language) *en concert, en public* confirms that the Anglicisms *live* and the adverbial expression *en live* have a connotation that is absent in the French expression *en direct* (Banque de dépannage linguistique, 2017)*.

With respect to Anglicisms and their French equivalents, we are also dealing with stylistic and semantic-stylistic synonymy. The synonym for *fake new* used in journalistic style, is a neutral word *mensonge*, in colloquial speech – *bobard, boniment*, in in common parlance – *bidon.* The stylistic synonym of a French verb *se détendre* is a colloquial verb *chiller* (to chill); *flasher sur qqn (to flash back)* means *tomber amoureux de qqn (fall in love with someone).* The expression *c'est top!* has a pronounced emotional color and is used in colloquial speech in the meaning of *c'est très bien!, c'est formidable! (It's very good!, It's wonderful!)*

According to our observations, in the language of the French youth, stylistically and emotionally colored superlative adjective forms *coolissime, topissime* appear with the suffix *–issime: c'est topissime!, un playlist coolissime!*

The adverb *trop* in colloquial speech replaces the adverb *très*: *Elle est trop mignonne. (She is very cute).* There is a lexical lacuna which is filled with an Anglicism *too much*: *c'est too much* instead of *c'est trop* (Académie Française, 2017)*.

Summary

Assimilated in French, Anglicisms retain their foreign sound and are connected by native French speakers with the latest trends in culture, with new socio-economic phenomena, and scientific achievements. In certain contexts, they can not be replaced by French equivalents, more accurately and briefly conveying the meaning that a speaker puts into his statement, giving accent to its emphatic and stylistic originality.

Conclusions

Currently, the mass penetration of Anglicisms into French seems inevitable. Their presence in modern French is necessary and raises the issue of linguistic discrimination and the aesthetic role of language in human communication.

Acknowledgements

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