

## ENGLISH VS. FRANGLISH

## ENGLEZA VERSUS FRANGLEZA

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**Abstract:** *In this paper I would like to expound a matter of utmost controversy in the field of linguistics, namely that of bilingualism and code-mixing in close relation to English and French. Another issue related to this phenomenon worth researching is that of the speaker's choice of using foreign terms over his native language words or expressions and the factors that trigger the code-switching. Nonetheless, an analysis from the vantage point of sociolinguistics and the history of the English language should endorse the theoretical grid of the paper.*

**Rezumat:** *Aceasta lucrare isi propune sa cerceteze un fenomen controversat in domeniul lingvisticii, si anume acela de bilingvism si alternarea codurilor lingvistice apartinand limbii engleze si franceze. O alta problema care trebuie evidentiata in relatie cu acest fenomen este alegerea cuvintelor imprumutate din alta limba in favoarea celor din limba materna facuta de vorbitor si a expresiilor si factorilor care declanseaza schimbarea de cod lingvistic. De asemenea, o analiza din punct de vedere al sociolingvisticii si a istoriei limbii engleza va sustine partea teoretica a lucrarii.*

**Key words:** *sociolinguistics, bilingualism, code-mixing,*

**Cuvinte cheie:** *sociolingvistica, bilingualism, schimbare de cod lingvistic*

The concoction of the aforementioned languages was inceptively denominated *Franglais* by the linguist René Etiemble. It was a portmanteau word (“an invented word that combines parts of two words and their meaning”, Oxford Advanced Learner’s 1999) which entailed different connotations in English and French. In English, *Franglais* or *Frenghish* denotes a mangled mixture of the two which is either the result of a poor knowledge of one or the other language or is employed for humorous effects. In French, this term is employed for depicting a particular manner of speaking and writing that consists in the overuse of anglicisms for which there are more appropriate French equivalents. Another issue related to this phenomenon worth researching is that of the speaker’s choice of using foreign terms over his native language words or expressions and the factors that trigger the code-switching. Nonetheless, an analysis from the vantage point of sociolinguistics and the history of the English language should endorse the theoretical grid of the paper.

To begin with, the analysis will focus *stricto sensu* on the adaptation of the English borrowings into French at a morphologic and orthographic level. The grammatical category that is most exposed to alterations in the language is the noun.

French, unlike English, has only two genders. French nouns can be categorized as either masculine or feminine. Another difference resides in the fact that in French, as opposed to English, gender affects not only the nouns but also the pronouns, the adjectives and the articles. Thus, adjectives agree in gender (and number) with the nouns they modify. The determiners also agree in gender and number with the nouns they determine. A noun’s gender is indicated by the article that precedes it. A masculine noun is preceded by the definite article “le” or the indefinite article “un” and a feminine one by “la” or “une”. The distinction of

biological sex between the two genders can only be applied to the proper noun- names of persons and the common nouns that denote human beings. The inanimate objects are also classified as either masculine or feminine since there is no neuter gender in French grammar.

The majority of English nouns that have entered French are of a masculine gender : *un clown, le budget, l' audit, un caméraman, un sandwich, un cow-boy, un pique-nique/piquenique, le lobby, un blue-jean/blue-jeans, un match, un ventilateur, un bifteck, un pugiliste, un chèque, l' euphuisme, l' absentéisme, un électrolyte, l' éocène, un dandy, le laser, un gin, le schooner, l' hypnotisme, le daltonisme, un essayiste, un colloïde, le stéréoscope, un smash, un slogan, un slow, le cockpit, l' adénovirus, un détective, un joker, un liner, un lock-out/lockout, le boycott, un bowling, le poker, un fairway, un pager/pageur, un grog le golf, un scotch, un grizzly/grizzli, un geyser, le hockey, le base-ball/baseball, le basket/ basket-ball, , le football, le volley-ball, le smog, un uppercut, un offset, un gangster, un sulky, un fox-terrier, le fox-trot, un exerciceur, un stylographe, un paletot, un paquebot, le rosbif, le boulingrin.* The animate nouns that designate occupations, typically male positions, are masculine: *un caméraman, un barman, un cow-boy, un pugiliste, un essayiste, un détective* etc. From a formal point of view, there are nouns:

a) derived by adding the suffix *-iste* (*pugiliste, essayiste*) that can however, become feminine by the change of article (*un / une essayiste*)

b) derived by adding the suffix *-er (-eur)* (*gangster, speaker, supporter/supporteur*); since the French animate nouns formed by adding the suffix *-eur* form the feminine by means of the opposition *-(t)eur/ -(tr)ice* or *-eur/ euse* the English loan words display also, if necessary, this opposition of gender by changing the suffix: *supporte(u)r / supportrice ; speaker/ speakerine*-the suffix *-ine* is of German origin.

The inanimate nouns that belong to the masculine group are those that end in:

a) a consonant that is pronounced : *un match, un sandwich, un blue-jean, un bifteck, un chèque, un pique-nique/ piquenique, le cockpit, le boycott, etc.*

b) a consonant that is not pronounced : *un budget, un slow, un paletot, un paquebot, etc.*

c) a nasal vowel: *le boulingrin, un slogan, etc.*

d) *-i / -y* : *le lobby, le hockey, le volley-ball, un sulky, le grizzly / grizzli.*

In addition to this integration of loan words in the group of masculine nouns corollary to formal criteria (orthographic and phonetic ones), there is also the morpho-lexical aspect that should be attached importance. The following nouns undertake therefore the masculine gender:

1) the nouns derived by adding the suffix *-ism(e)* and which designate trends, orientations, tendencies in thinking / science : *l'absentéisme, l'hypnotisme, le daltonisme.*

2) the nouns derived by adding the suffix *-er / eur* that denote tools, devices : *un laser, le poker, un pager, un exerciceur, un ventilateur, etc*

3) words formed with Latin and Greek elements : *le stéréoscope, un adénovirus, un stylographe.*

Due to the semantic criterion the nouns that designate chemical elements and substances are masculine: *un colloïde, un électrolyte*.

The borrowed nouns that acquire the feminine gender in French are less numerous: *une flanelle, une contredanse* (the latter is feminine on account of the analogy with the noun “*danse*” that is feminine in French), *une photographie, une compétition, la boxe, une suffragette, une cover-girl, la moire, une redingote, une électrode, une interview* (the last is feminine due to the analogy with the French feminine noun- “*entrevue*”), *une star* ( in view of the analogy with the French feminine noun “*étoile*”). The formal criterion plays an important part in gender assignment in this case as well ; the nouns that end in “e” that is dropped in pronunciation ( *la moire, la boxe, une redingote*) and those that are derived by adding feminine suffixes ( *une flanelle, une suffragette*) are, consequently, feminine.

Most of the English nouns that have the suffixes “-or” and “-er” are assimilated into French. These English suffixes turn into the native: “-eur”:

*ventilator* > *ventilateur*

*microprocessor* > *microprocesseur*

*excavator* > *excavateur* ( but also the feminine form “*excavatrice*” )

*factor* > *facteur*

*mixer* > *mixeur*

*condenser* > *condenseur*

*challenger* > *challengeur* / *challenger*

French, like English, usually indicates plurality by adding an “s” inflection at the end of a word. Many English nouns borrowed into French abide by this norm: *des ventilateurs, des électrodes, des photographies, des stylographes, des uppercuts, des interviews, des cover-girls, des lasers, des essayistes, des slogans, des électrolyte* etc.

However, there are those nouns that end in -y, -ch, -man and the problematic issue that arises is whether they should obey the English or the French grammatical rules related to plural. According to the orthographical guidelines of 1996 (elaborated by the High Council for the French language, published in the Official Journal and approved by the French Academy) they should form the plural like many other French nouns by adding the “s” at the end and should be regarded as morphologically adapted loan words. The situation is nevertheless slightly different at the present time. In Le Petit Robert (2003), such nouns are recorded as having both French and English plural form:

-y : *des ladys / ladies, des lobbys / lobbies, des lorrys / lorries* etc.

-ch *des matchs / matches, des sandwichs / sandwiches,*

-man : *des gentlemen / gentlemen, des caméramans / caméramen* etc.

Some borrowed nouns are invariable in number: *un boss—des boss, une miss—des miss*.

With regard to the English loan words that pertain to the class of adjectives a problem related to the invariable adjectives might occur. Although French has only borrowed a reduced number of such adjectives from English, they preserve their original invariable form: *groggy, cosy, sexy, shocking, etc.*

There are also some English loan words that belong both to the class of nouns and to that of adjectives: *snob, cockney, funky, underground, live*. The word “*snob*”,



f) the change of ‘y’ into ‘ie’ (there are, however, very few English loan words that go through this change):

- *telepathy* → *télépathie*
- *cookery* → *cookerie*
- *surprise-party* → *surprise-partie*

Some loan words have spelling variants recorded in Le Petit Robert (2003):

- *buggy* > *boghei* / *boguet*
  - *tabloid* > *tabloïd* / *tabloïde*
  - *squatter* > *squatteur* / *squatter*
  - *cafeteria* > *cafétéria* / *cafeteria*
  - *rocker* > *roqueur* / *rocker*
  - *rumpsteak* > *romsteck* / *romsteak* / *rumsteck*
  - *dealer* > *dealer* / *dealeur*
  - *interviewer* > *intervieweur* / *interviewer*
  - *gas-oil* > *gasoil* / *gas-oil* / *gazole*
  - *stripper* > *strip-teaseur* / *stripteaseur*
  - *hooligan* > *hooligan* / *houligan*
- (Bienbon P. 1988, PR 2003)

In French dictionaries the compound English loan words are mainly recorded with a hyphen even when the hyphen does not exist in the original words:

- *weekend* > *week-end*
- *baseball* > *base-ball* (but also *baseball*)
- *playboy* > *play-boy*
- *nightclub* > *night-club*
- *lockout* > *lock-out* (the same as in Romanian) / *lockout*
- *volleyball* > *volley-ball*
- *basketball* > *basket-ball*
- *cowboy* > *cow-boy*
- *blackout* > *black-out*

(Oxford 1995, PR 2003)

Other compound borrowings preserve their original spelling (with or without a hyphen):

- *stand-by* > *stand-by*
- *hold-up* > *hold-up*
- *ping-pong* > *ping-pong*
- *side-car* > *side-car*
- *offset* > *offset*
- *check-up* > *check-up*
- *pick-up* > *pick-up*
- *start-up* > *start-up*
- *chewing-gum* > *chewing-gum*
- *pacemaker* > *pacemaker*

(Oxford 1995, PR 2003)

Between 1990 and 1991 some orthographic rectifications regarding also the borrowings were elaborated by the High Council for the French language and approved by the French Academy. They were published in the Official Journal but it was also stated that those were only recommendations not constraints: *baseball*, *basketball*, *volleyball*, *blackout*, *cowboy*, *weekend*, *flippeur*, *freezeur*, *dealeur*, *bulldozeur*, *leadeur*, *pacemakeur*, *playback*, etc. These loan words are no longer written according to the orthographic recommendations of 1991; the compounds are hyphenated and those words that contain the suffix “eur” have nowadays an etymological spelling. (PR 2003)

Guiraud (1971) remarks that “the assimilated English loan words denominate assimilated things/objects: *moire*, *boulingrin*, *rosbif*, *flanelle*, *bouledogue*, etc. (Guiraud 1971:102-103). On the other hand the non-assimilated borrowings refer to things specific to English social, cultural, political, religious life: *lady*, *gentleman*, *sterling*, *bill*, *speaker*, *quaker*, *tory*, etc. Guiraud states that it is common practice to

preserve the original form of loan words that denote foreign concepts that refer to unfamiliar realities.

With regard to the spelling of the compound loan words it has to be mentioned that the hyphen is widely in French, even when the original compound word is not hyphenated.

To conclude with, people are constrained by the choice of code whenever they have to speak, they are required to select a set of linguistic forms to be used under specific social circumstances, with a distinctive social distribution. This code includes different accents, different linguistic styles, different dialects and even different languages which contrast with each other for social reasons. However, the individual can also decide to switch from one code to another or to coalesce codes according to the context in which they are speaking.

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