

CDU 801.316

Original scientific paper

Accepted for publication on 15th September 1995

## Morphological adaptation of the suffixes of English nouns borrowed in French

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The article deals with the morphological adaptation of the suffixes belonging to English nouns borrowed in French. English and French have been in constant contact throughout history, therefore it is not surprising to find a number of identical and a few similar noun suffixes in the two languages. The article provides a list of such suffixes. It also concentrates upon the adaptation of English nouns bearing the suffixes *-er*, *-or* and *-ing*.

Bearing in mind the histories of English and French, we are hardly surprised that the two languages have a number of almost identical and a few completely identical suffixes. This fact allows an easy adaptation of English loan-words in French, and lessens the problem of gender and plural endings.

### Noun suffixes similar in English and French

One of the suffixes very similar in the two languages is the English *-ism*, which, in the case of linguistic borrowing, easily adapts into the French *-isme*, (*methodism* – *methodisme*, *m*).

The English suffix *-ic* is replaced by the French *-ique* (*antibiotic* – *antibiotique*, *m*).

The gender of the French replicas is automatically ascribed, since *-ism* and *-ique* always mark masculine gender.

Other English suffixes that are easily replaced by resembling French counterparts are:<sup>1</sup>

1. Eng. *-ist* > Fr. *-iste* (adventist > adventiste)
2. Eng. *-y* > Fr. *-ie* (autobiography > autobiographie);
3. Eng. *-ary* > Fr. *-aire* (dispensary > dispensaire);
4. Eng. *-ia* > Fr. *-ie* (anesthesia > anesthésie, f);
5. Eng. *-ity* > Fr. *-ité* (falsifiability > falsifiabilité, f);
6. Eng. *-ee* > Fr. *e* (committee > comité, m).
7. Eng. *-osis* > Fr. *-ose* (dysidrosis > disidrose, f).
8. Eng. *-nym* > Fr. *-nyme* (acronym > acronyme, m).

### Noun suffixes morphologically identical in English and French

The suffix *-tion*, pronounced /fŋ/ in English and /sjɔ̃/ in French, is morphologically identical in both languages, so the word *contraception* /kɒntrə'sepʃn/ was easily imported into French as *contraception* /'kɔ̃trasɛpsjɔ̃/. Among the other identical suffixes are *-et*, as in the English word *baronet* /'bærənɛt/, which becomes *baronnet* /barɔ̃nɛ/ in French, and *-ette*, which can be found in the word *majorette* (Eng. /,meɪdʒə'ret/, Fr./maʒɔ̃rɛt/).

There is also the suffix *-age*, which remains the same when the English word *drainage* /'dreɪnɪdʒ/ turns into the French /drɛnaʒ/.

Here are a few more English suffixes that need not be changed when imported into French:

1. *-ene* (Eng. acetylene > Fr. acétylène);
2. *-ance* (Eng. admittance > Fr. admittance);
3. *-ium* (Eng. berkelium > Fr. berkélium);

<sup>1</sup> I must point out here that all the suffixes marked similar and identical originate either from Latin or Greek. Most of these suffixes came to English by virtue of the French influence on that language. The suffixes subsequently developed independently in the two languages.

Although some of the nouns mentioned in these classes may seem to be of Greek or Latin origin, this is only true of their parts. The words themselves started existing at some point in history in the English language. Therefore, when such words are borrowed in French, they are viewed as anglicisms.

## The suffix *-er*<sup>2</sup>

English nouns ending in *-er* form a relatively large corpus of 150 entries in *Dictionnaire des Anglicismes* by Debove and Gagnon (Robert, 1986). It is interesting to find that in only 27 cases its spelling in French indicates a morphological adaptation. The following nouns have undergone such an adaptation: the English *atomizer* /'ætəʊmaɪzə/ results in the French *atomiseur* /atɔmizœr/, the English *dribbler* /'drɪblə/ in the French *dribbleur* /driblœr/ and the English *golfer* /'gɒlfə/ in the French *golfeur* /gɔlfœr/. Some adapted words acquire feminine endings:

golfeur, euse /'gɒlfəz /; programmeur, euse /prɔgramœz/; prospecteur, trice. /prɔspektris/.

Words like *kidnapper* /kɪd'næpə/ have two forms in French: one which is spelled identically to the English model *kidnapper*, and an adapted variant *kidnappeur* /kidnapœr/. We must point out that the pronunciation of both variants is the same, as if both of them had the French suffix *-eur*.

In most cases the suffix *-er* stays unchanged. Nevertheless, it is not pronounced in the same way as the most productive French verbal suffix *-er* (as in verbs such as *regarder* /rəgarde/, *frapper* /frape/ and *chanter* /ʃâte/). Surprisingly, it is pronounced /ɛr/ or /œr/, as if it were substituted by the French suffixes *-aire* (as in the French word *propriétaire* /prɔprijɛtɛr/) or *-eur* (as in *chanteur* /ʃâtœr/). Thus, the anglicism *revolver* is pronounced /revɔlvœr/, as though the word had acquired the French nominal suffix *-aire*. This pronunciation, however, indicates an earlier borrowing (19th century).

The pronunciation of more recent imports shows that, in the minds of French speakers (although not in spelling), the English suffix *-er* is replaced by the French *-eur* /œr/. Here are some examples: *computer* /kɔmpytœr/, *rewriter* /ri(ə)rajtœr/, *soccer* /sɔkœr/. Some words take on feminine suffixes as well: *speaker* /spikœr/ – *speakerine* /spikrin/;

Quaker /kwekœr/ – *Quakeresse* /kwekœres/.

Several anglicisms ending in *-er* have both pronunciations, e.g. *reporter*, which can be pronounced either /ri(ə)pɔrtœr/ or /ri(ə)pɔrtɛr/; *manager*, which can be pronounced /manadʒœr/ or /manadʒɛr/; and *scooter* /skutœr/ or /skutɛr/.

<sup>2</sup>The origin of this suffix is manifold, as well as its use. Dealing with anglicisms having this suffix, we must bear in mind that these are relatively recent borrowings, and in addition they are in general nouns denoting persons dealing with something, involved in an occupation or those denoting an instrument, an occurrence, an action. Therefore, I presume that the *-er* in question is that of the Germanic origin. The *-er* originating in Old French and forming nouns which denote persons or things connected with something is considered not to be productive any more.

The latter suffix *-er* and the suffix *-or* are of the same origin.

It is interesting to note that the English word *boxer* (i.e. someone who practices the sport of boxing) becomes *boxeur*. On the other hand, the English word *boxer shorts* becomes *boxer* in French and is pronounced /bɔksɛr/, as if it contained the French suffix *-aire*.

### The suffix *-or*

In the above-mentioned dictionary of anglicisms in French there are nine English words ending in *-or* which have been accepted in French. Eight of them remain morphologically unchanged. These are:

*alligator* (Eng. /'æliɡeɪtə/ > Fr. /aligatɔr/;

*escalator* (Eng. /'eskəleɪtə/ > Fr. /ɛskalatɔr/;

*monitor* (Eng. /'mɒnɪtə/ > Fr. /mɔnitɔr/;

*solicitor* (Eng. /sə'lisɪtə/ > Fr. /sɔlisɪtɔr/;

*sponsor* (Eng. /'spɒnsə/ > Fr. /spɔ̃sɛr/;

*tour operator* (Eng. /tuə'ɒpəreɪtə/ > Fr. /tuɔɔpɛratɔr/;

*transistor* (Eng. /træn'sɪstə/ > Fr. /trɑ̃zɪstɔr/;

and *varactor* (Eng. /və'ræktə/ > Fr. /varaktɔr/.

The only word that changes morphologically is *chiropractor* /'kaɪəɹəʊpræktə/, which becomes *chiropracteur* /kɪɔpɔzaktœr/.

### The suffix *-ing*

The suffix *-ing* marks multiple grammatical functions in English (noun, gerund (verbal noun), adjective, progressive form, etc). Through linguistic borrowing, it has been imported into French, where it is accepted solely as a noun suffix in verbal nouns such as shopping /ʃɔpiŋ/, happening /'ɒpənɪŋ/, dispatching /dɪspætʃɪŋ/. In French, there exists no suffix that is morphologically similar to *-ing*. Therefore, those English loan-words containing *-ing* that have undergone a morphological change

have acquired the French suffix *-age* /ɑʒ/. This has, however, happened only in three cases out of almost one hundred found in Robert's Dictionnaire des Anglicismes: *aquaplanning* > *aquaplanage* (co-exists with *aquaplanning*), *cloning* > *clonage*, *kidnapping* > *kidnappage* (also *kidnapping*).

The suffix *-ing* is also productive in forming pseudoanglicisms such as *footing* /futɪʒ/, anti-doping /ãtidɔpiŋ/ and pressing /presɪŋ/. Pseudoanglicisms are words that are formed from English elements, but which themselves do not exist in the English language. For instance: *foot* exists in English and so does *-ing*, but the word *footing* is a French invention which denotes the same activity that the real anglicism *jogging* does. *Footing*, *pressing* and *mailing* are some of the pseudoanglicisms formed by derivation. There are also pseudoanglicisms which have been formed by ellipsis:

*rocking* from *rocking chair*, *parking* from the English *parking space* (*lot*, *place*, *ground*).

Anglicisms containing *-ing* are always masculine. The pronunciation of this suffix varies in French, but in most cases it is pronounced /iŋ/, which means that the English velar nasal sound /ŋ/ is an intruder into the phonological system of the French language. Maurice Pergnier, the author of the book *Les Anglicismes* (published by PUF, 1989), is strongly opposed to the idea that this phoneme has been imported into French. He contends that speakers of French pronounce English imports containing the suffix *-ing* using the already existing phoneme /ŋ/ (existing in words such as *signe*, *maligne*).

## Conclusion

English loan-words bearing suffixes that have similar or identical counterparts in French have become well established in the borrowing language. The suffix *-er* tends to adapt morphologically into the French *-eur*. On the other hand, the English suffix *-ing*, very strongly felt as an intrusion into the system of French, shows very little tendency towards morphological adaptation.

There are only nine anglicisms ending in *-or* in French, and only one of them has been morphologically adapted.

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U članku se govori o morfološkoj adaptaciji sufikasa engleskih imenica preuzetih u francuskom jeziku. Engleski i francuski su kroz povijest bili uvijek povezani, pa ne čudi što nalazimo određen broj sličnih i identičnih imeničnih sufikasa u ova dva jezika. U članku se navode neki od njih, a uz to se analizira morfološka adaptacija imeničnih sufikasa *-er, -or* i *-ing*.