French Resistance to English

Jennifer Pietsch
Kristin Rüth
Anni Saskia Wichers
Anna-Katharina Kurpiers
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Historical Background

- François le Premier issued the Ordonnance de Villers-Cotterêts in August 1539, which imposed the use of French instead of Latin in legal judgements.

- In 1549 a group of poets called la Pléiade published a poetic manifesto, the La deffence et illustration de la langue francoyse (Defence and Illustration of the French Language).

- The intension was to extend the uses of French and to develop it, as well as resisting a perceived threat from Latin.
Henri Estienne published the *Essai sur la percellence du langage françois* (Essay on the Superiority of the French Tongue) in 1579.

Estienne published this essay at the request of the king and ridiculed people who spoke the fashionable Italianised French of the period.
François de Malherbe (1555-1628) was official court poet, but most importantly a protégé of Cardinal Richelieu. Malherbe's influential position sealed the alliance of language and power. He insisted on purity of form and strict compositional rules. Two words characterise the view of French at this time: *prestige* and *autorité*. 
Historical Background

- The new rule-based view of the language was at first disseminated largely by the literary salons.
- Language was a frequent topic and the rules were strictly applied.
- The typically French chasse aux néologismes (hunting down neologisms) became a regular pastime.
Historical Background

- Development of the new bureaucratic class in Paris was instrumental.
- Various groups, e.g. the court, the legal profession and the bourgeoisie, sought to dominate.
- Richelieu was determined to establish the language of highly educated court administrators as the standard.
Historical Background

- The Académie française was founded by Richelieu in 1635 to give to the unity of the kingdom forged by political power, a language and a style which would symbolise and cement that unity.
- Vaugelas' grammar of French *Remarques sur la langue française* (*Remarks on the French Language*) was an extremely influential work which fixed the rules of “le bon usage”. 
1714 French was established as the language of diplomacy throughout Europe.

After the French Revolution the new republic – *une et indivisible* – needed a language spoken and understood by all its citizens.

In this kind of country dialects and patois could not be tolerated.
Bertrand Barère started the offensive against dialects and patois in 1794, associating them with barbarity and vulgarity.

Teaching was only in French.

Institutions where only French was spoken and all documents were written in French were set up.
The important changes in language planning at the Revolution were:

1. insistence on a coherent national language policy
2. the identification of the language as an integral part of the nation
3. the conviction that political unity could only be achieved by linguistic unity
A new development towards the end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century was to actively propagate the use of French outside France.

The invention of word \textit{francophonie} (the act of speaking French) in 1880 indicates that there was a growing interest in the speaking of French outside France.

This was confirmed by the creation of the \textit{Alliance française} in 1883, whose mission was to spread the French language in the colonies and foreign countries.
Literature also flourished in the 19th century.

New developments contributed to the dominance of French and tended to weaken other forms of speech and writing in France.
Historical Background

- The beginning of radio broadcasts in the 1920s and of television in the 1950s ensured that French was the language of the increasingly powerful media.
- The speed of technological innovation meant that inside France terminology became a problem.
Historical Background

- In the 18th century, England gained political supremacy; the English constitution was a model for the French enlighteners; English philosophy began influencing the French.
- The industrial revolution starting in England in the 18th century reinforced the English influence on France.
- The climax of the import of English words into French was in the 20th century after the Second World War.
- Furthermore, French was not the universal language anymore – it was replaced by English.
Historical Background

- 1952/53: the organisation Défense de la langue française (DLF) came to life.
- A lot of members of the academy belong to the DLF but only few linguists do.
- A number of laws were passed after 1975 to undermine the use of English words in French → accepted translations of these words were created.
Historical Background

Three major laws were passed in the second half of the 20th century related to the use and teaching of French: *Loi Deixonne* (1951), *Loi Bas-Lauriol* (1975) and *Loi Toubon* (1994).

- *Loi Deixonne*: regional dialects were allowed to be taught in class.
- *Loi Bas-Lauriol*: prohibited the use of English words in official/public texts.
The “Loi Toubon“

- Established in 1994
- Was to ensure that French is the dominant language
- Determines the use of French in four domains:
  - 1. Oral and written information, e.g. advertisements, have to be in French
    - Foreign advertisements have to be translated
    - “Stop signs“ were changed into “Arrêt“
There's no better way to fly.*

* Il n'y a pas plus belle façon de s'envoler.
Loi Toubon

- 2. Congresses or events in France have to be held in French
  - Lectures by English speaking participants have to be translated into French
- 3. French is supposed to be the medium of teaching
- 4. Labor law:
  - Every text regarding the employee has to be in French
Some more edicts

- Websites of the French state are supposed to be in French
  - English translation is only allowed when at least one more translation into another language is given
- 40% of all music played in the radio or in other entertainment programs has to be French
  - Placebo
L'Académie française

- Oldest and most important organisation
  → focuses on the French language inside France
  → defends the French language
- Set up in 1635 by Cardinal Richelieu
- 40 members appointed for life
Original aims:
- The production of a dictionary, a grammar, a manual of rhetoric and treaties on poetics.
- Only the dictionary was published in 1694 (→ 18,000 words).

Today two main roles:
1. keeps watch over the French language
2. administers financial support programs
Changes...

- 1996: General Secretariat for Francophonia was created.
- Flood of new terms entering the French language → when a new term was supposed to enter the language the academy was to decide; → creation of French terms instead of foreign ones.
- Award of prizes to supporters of the French language
Other agencies

1. *L' alliance française*
   - founded in 1883 (second oldest official institution)
   - After Franco- Prussian war → fear that French would lose its prestige
     - it was to be supported all over the world
     - partnerships in various countries
L’alliance française

- Teaches French all over the world
  - Opened the “School of French“ in Paris
- Active in 130 countries in 2003
- Views on English:
  - Credible alternative to French in cultural terms
La délegation générale à la langue française et aux langues de la France

- Created in 1966
- ensures, defends and expands French by means of links to competent private organisations → all over the world
- Pluri-lingualism became important
- corpus planning: French was to be able to function in developing areas of science and technology without having to use foreign terms
La délegation générale à la langue française et aux langues de la France

- attempts to introduce spelling reforms,
- feminisation of job terms, monitoring the obedience to the "Loi Toubon"
Replacement of Anglicisms

There are two ways to deal with Anglicisms in French:

1. Spontaneous replacement
   - Contact of two languages is required

2. Artificial replacement
   - Contact with one language is required
Adaptation

- there are already Anglicisms in French
  \( \text{bar, club, cowboy, football, rugby,\ldots} \)
- reasons for not replacing Anglicisms:
  1. the Anglicized word has a long history in French
     \( \text{football exists since 1689} \)
  2. the word is related to a cultural concept
  3. the words express American sport terms
     \( \text{football, golf,\ldots} \)
  4. French neologisms were not accepted by speakers
Adaptation

- there are Anglicisms which are explicitly accepted; but only if one cannot tell their Englishness

→ hall, interface, posture,...

- they don't have to be pronounced as if French
The Process of Adaptation

1. b, d, g, h, q, v, x, y, z are usually not doubled in French (*dribbling* → *drible*)
2. closed “e“ is marked with an accent aigu (´) (*media* → *média*)
3. open “e“ is marked with an accent grave (´) (*gene* → *gène*)
4. “t“ at the end becomes “t+e“ (*script* → *scripte*)
   → but the word *management* is not changed in writing (it just has to be pronounced in the French manner)
Morphological Adaptation

-er → -eur (manager = manageur)

-man → -iste (groupman = groupiste)

-ing → 1. -age (doping = dopage)
     2. -Ø (dribbling = drible)
     3. -ion (pressing = pression)

-lity → -lité (accessibility = accessibilité)
Néologie de forme (with regard to English)

1. translation
   - pocket radio → radio de poche
   - pay TV → télévision payante

2. transfer
   - walkman → baladeur
   - garden center → jardinerie
Néologie de forme (without regard to English)

- not easy to find out the process of transformation
- software = logiciel
- one meaning of software in a dictionary is “logique“
→ together with the suffix -iel the new word for software was created
Néologie de forme (without regard to English)

- replacements are often longer than Anglicisms
  
  *(survival kit = équipement de survie)*

- low chances for long forms to be accepted by the speakers

- shorter replacements are more successful
  
  *(design = stylique)*
Néologie de sens

- transfer of an Anglicized concept to an already existing French word

→ papillon
  1. butterfly as an animal
  2. butterfly as the swimming style

→ animateur
  1. animate people to do something
  2. playing music in a club
Case Study – Acceptance of replacements in the media

Important aspects of artificial replacements:

- The word needs to be communicative – easy to use and to handle.
- The word needs to be created in time, before the Anglicism has spread and sneaked into the everyday usage of the speakers.
- New words that occur out of natural language contact (spontaneous adaptations) have a much higher chance to durability.
- An artificially created word may collide with existing language habits.
Case Study – Acceptance of replacements in the media

- Example: the language of sports
- 250 accounts on the topic of sports in different newspapers were investigated.
- 55 proscribed words were analysed.
- The Anglicism is used 45% of the time.
- The Anglicism and the created new French word are used 27% of the time.
- Only the French word, as proposed by the state is used 28% of the time.
Case Study – Acceptance of replacements in the media

- Only limited enforcement from the government in the media.
- However, some of the newspapers that used the Anglicisms accentuated them, e.g. by using italics.
- Examples of the proscribed Anglicisms used in the language of sports are: *break, challenge, leader, manager, open, play-off, score* etc.
- Even at the French Open the Anglicism “time” was used in 1995 instead of its French equivalent *reprise.*
Le franglais

- Words which occur in recent French publications and indicate the extent to which "franglais" terms are in current usage
- On the one hand, words with no French equivalent; on the other hand, words that can easily be replaced by native French words
- Same phenomenon in German: "Denglisch"
Le franglais

- **campus** n. m. in French since the 1920s, as a consequence of the need to place new universities outside towns

- **club** n. m. in French since 1702, today mainly in the context of sports
Le franglais

- **patchwork** n. m. no real equivalent, because the French word «mosaïque» implies a pattern
  - used by *Le Novel Observateur* in 1994 to describe the intentions of the Education Minister François Bayrou:
    - «un patchwork de propositions dans lesquelles on chercherait en vain les réponses aux question essentielles»
Le franglais

- **week-end** n.m. in French since 1906; the spelling <ouiquende> never caught on

- **happy end** n.m. no French equivalent for the concept

- **baby sitting** n.m. nowadays as fully part of French as «au pair» is of English
boy-friend n. m.
the *Dictionnaire des Anglicismes* says: «ce mot ne s’emploie guère, en français, que par référence aux moeurs américaines, différentes des nôtres»
implies “that a French girl either slept with what was still known in 1980 as «son petit ami» or kept men at arm‘s length”
“The idea evoked by the term «boyfriend» [...] of emotional commitment accompanied by a degree of heavy petting was seen as alien to what the French regarded as their more direct and honest approach to sex“

→ the term has never been a compliment
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