

## **Borrowings in French and English Construction Discourse: Comparative Aspect**

By

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### **Abstract**

The article is devoted to the problem of status and structural characteristics of foreign words used in construction discourse in comparative aspect. Data for the present study were taken from lexicographical source represented by such famous French online dictionaries as Le petit Larousse and Le Petit Robert. Besides dictionaries, online versions of specialized periodicals were used (MasterBuilder, Construction Review Online, Chantiers Magazine, Archiliste). Topicality of the research is determined by necessity of precise definition of the notion “borrowing”, and, as consequence, necessity of theoretical understanding of borrowing procedure on the basis of exact criteria picked out for its description. The aim of the present research is to study specific character of functioning of foreign words in construction discourse on the material of French and English media texts. The study shows that construction is one of the most dynamically developing spheres, whose lexical layer reveals recent trends and changes taking place in the language, copious vocabulary including both variety of original and borrowed words. The article contains review of the most productive ways of word-formation among borrowings of construction discourse of English and French. Novelty of the research consists in the use of the studied media texts data with the following aim: to reveal main vectors of development of the word stock of modern French and English.

**Key words:** Language, linguistics, discourse, media, borrowing, affixation, French, English.

### **1. Introduction**

It's fair enough to state, that as a result of globalization many languages altered a lot, procedure of borrowing processes being the most prevailing. New words and notions appear more often, and this enables us “to realize the peculiarities of the linguistic consciousness of peoples” (Akhmetova et al., 2019, p. 21). Foreign words are not only elements of another language (a word, a morpheme, a phrase), adopted by speakers of a target language from a source language by means of language contacts, but also the process itself of these elements borrowing (Yartzeva V.N., 2002, p. 158).

“At the present stage of development, the variability of speech is of great interest to

linguists” (Deputatova N.A. et al., 2019, p. 118). Such interest is explained by vocabulary being the most dynamic layer of language requiring constant scientific research. Words penetrate into a language in connection with cross-cultural interaction of numerous fields including industrial ones, where construction is one of the most productive.

Besides above-mentioned facts, topicality of the present research consists in necessity of accurate definition of the notion “borrowing” in modern linguistics, and, as a result, necessity of theoretical understanding of borrowing procedure on the basis of exact criteria picked out for its description. It’s necessary to point out that L.P. Krysin in his papers notes that borrowing is a process of transfer of elements from one language into another (Krysin L.P., 2004, p. 108-109).

Explanatory translational dictionary edited by L.L. Nelyubin defines borrowing as introduction of a foreign word into the word stock of a language (Nelyubin L.L., 2003, p. 78; Al Shdaifat & Al Zyoud, 2021; Albaheth, 2021).

These definitions show that some scientists consider “borrowing” exclusively as a process of transfer of elements of a foreign word into the word stock of another language. But it’s necessary to mention that such an approach to the definition does not allow to have a clear view of this notion, as besides borrowing of a whole word, single units (such as phonemes, morphemes, endings) can also penetrate into a target language. Probability of these word-formative elements to be borrowed is small, nevertheless their participation in the process of borrowing should be reflected in the definition of this notion.

French linguists also give different definitions of “borrowing”. While some of them consider process of borrowing of words as something positive, others express opposite point of view. Thus, A. Gilder thinks that abundance of English words in French will lead to “lexical suicide” (Gilder A., 1996, p. 167). M. Yagello believes that use of borrowed words is not dangerous for French, on the contrary, it enriches the language (Yagello M., 1989, p. 87).

Thereby, we can state that the word “borrowing” has a whole number of different definitions. Some sources consider it exclusively as a foreign word adopted by another language, while other sources define “borrowing” as a process of foreign words adoption. Besides, there are other definitions regarding it both as a foreign word and as a process of adoption of a foreign word. In our opinion, the most precise definition is given in the dictionary of Yartseva, as it considers “borrowing” both in its broad sense and in its narrow sense. In the broad sense “borrowing” means the process of adoption of foreign words, in its narrow sense – foreign words, borrowed by the language.

So, the aim of our research is to study mechanisms of activation and functioning of borrowings in French and English construction discourse as one of the most dynamically developing spheres nowadays.

## **2. Methods**

Methods, used in this research, include methods of linguistic description (investigation, description, classification, comparison). Lexicographical source is represented by such famous French online dictionaries as Le petit Larousse and Le Petit Robert. Besides dictionaries, the data of continuous sampling from the articles of periodicals were used for more detailed illustration of some tendencies: MasterBuilder (2019-2021), Construction

Review Online (2019-2021), Chantiers Magazine (2019-2021), Archiliste (2020).

### 3. Results and Discussion

First of all, it's necessary to point out that borrowings are subdivided into: *lexical* or *non-derivative borrowings*, i.e. borrowings proper: *titan; portlandcement; pergola; stoa;*

Morphological or *derivative borrowings*, i.e. borrowings formed by means of affixation: eng. *accent* = fr. *accenter* – fr. *-er*; *interferer* = eng. *interfere* + fr. *-er*; *stocker* = eng. *stock* + fr. *-er*; *parapet* = ital. *parapetto* – ital. *-to*; *outrigger* = danish *rigge* + eng. *out-* + eng. *-er*; *centrifuge* = lat. *centrum* + fr. *-fuge*.

The analysis results show that in both cases derivative foreign elements predominate, they make up 70% for English (**114 units**) and for French (**92 units**). Accordingly, non-derivative units make up 30% for English (**49 units**) and French (**39 units**) media texts.

To sum up, the research of foreign words in construction vocabulary of English and French shows that both types of borrowings occur: *non-derivative borrowings* and *morphological* ones, being i.e., derivatives from foreign roots.

The present study indicates that the following parts of speech are the most productive among the borrowings in construction vocabulary of English:

1. Nouns: cone, mortar, hygge, accent, cabinetry, curb, ottoman.
2. Adjectives: ornamental, tacky, spacious, sturdy, tiered, retrofitted.
3. Verbs: to convert, to corrode, to mulch, to retrofit, to repair.

According to morphological analysis, the nouns in English media texts are the most prevailing and make up **75% (131 units)** of the total number. The adjectives are also used extensively, they make up **15% (26 units)**. The verbs total **10 % (18 units)**.

It's noteworthy that among all the foreign words used in the construction discourse of English vast majority of adjectives and verbs are chiefly of Latin and French origin.

For example: *tacky* (from French *taque*), *to convert* (from French *convertir*), *to retrofit* (from Latin *retro*). Just a few words have different roots, namely of pro-German language group, disclosing disposition to the Dutch language, for example, *to mulch*, *to drill*, *to rig*.

It's also necessary to point out that this tendency is not specific for modern variant of English as all verbal or attributive borrowings in etymological dictionaries date back to Old or Middle French (approximately X – XVII c.). This fact also explains the absence of author's translations of the inclusions, despite the diversity of their etymology and their often very occasional character (Ageyeva A.V. et al. 2015, p. 325). It discloses initial close cooperation of two languages in the aspect of objects description, as well as further period of independence of English from French in this aspect.

The following parts of speech are revealed in construction discourse of French:

1. Nouns: talc, linoléum, anhydrite, caoutchouc, veranda, matelas, chape, clin, bretelle.
2. Adjectives: ionique, additive, axial, isolante, tectonique, amovible, hétérogène, hydraulique, kraft.
3. Verbs: détecter, cémenter, tester, stocker – to store, calibrer, ancrer, asphalter.

4. Adverb: en vrac – in bulk.

Morphological analysis has showed that nouns also prevail in French media texts, making up **79% (113 units)** of the total number of foreign words. Adjectives in this case form **8% (11 units)**, while verbs total **12% (18 units)**. A group of adverbs is represented by 1 unit, that is less, than **1%**.

It's worth paying attention to the fact that only one adverb was registered among all borrowings of French in the sample. This adverb is formed by means of preposition *en*: *en vrac*, where the word *vrac* is borrowed from the Dutch *wrac*, which means *in bulk*. Such an uncommon phenomenon can be explained by primary necessity in those borrowings which give nomination, first of all to physical objects of the world around us. In such subject field as construction this is especially important, as descriptive properties of the language here frequently act as so-called marker of formal comprehension, i.e., they don't contain any aesthetic or artistic message.

It's necessary to note, that analyzing other parts of speech among foreign words, participles and adverbial participles have not been observed in our sample. We attribute this to the following fact: in the construction media texts such forms are of no interest and in whole are not specific for the subject area describing manual labor or technical process.

Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that even in cases when verbal forms occur in the analysed texts, they are derivative from assimilated verbs and scarcely belong to construction sphere. For this reason, they can be equated with verbs or adjectives (fr. *isolante* – *isolating*).

It is natural that in both languages' tendency towards direct borrowing chiefly among nouns is observed. Illustrative examples of non-derivative borrowings are given below:

- *in English: lime, spatula, patio, drill, stucco, assemblage.*

- *in French: clinker, shingle, joint, silo, gas-cap.*

It's worth mentioning that neither single adjective nor verb belongs to the group of non-derivative borrowing. This feature is specified by the fact that adjectives and verbs function in the target language at the expense of alteration of a borrowed lexeme.

First of all, it should be emphasized that for assimilation of a word in a target language modification of its structure is required. Thus, among all the borrowings of the construction discourse of English and French the following methods of word formation were revealed: 1. Nonaffixal method or zero affixation (desaffixation): it. *salone* – fr. *salon*, it. *ottomano* – eng. *ottoman*, fr. *estordi* – eng. *sturdy*, lat. *basis* – eng., fr. *base*, eng. *aqueduct* – fr. *aqueduc*; 2. Prefixal-suffixal method (affixation): sp. *planta* – eng. *planters*, fr. *plastre* – eng. *plaster*, fr. *cabinet* – eng. *cabinetry*, arab. *barda'a* – fr. *bardage*; 3. Transposition: ger. v. *binden* – fr. n. *bande*; fr. n. *grade* – eng. v. *to grade*, adj. *graded*, lat. *modulus* – fr. v. *moduler*; fr. v. *couvrir* – eng. n. *wall covering*.

An important peculiarity of word-formation of the vocabulary used in the construction discourse of English and French is also general tendency towards graphic alteration of a word root: eng. *tacky* – fr. *taque*, fr. *sonde* – old eng. *sund*, eng. *masonry* – fr. *maçonnerie*, eng. *awning* – fr. *auvent*. Such alteration of a root morpheme points out strong phonetic and spelling assimilation in the target language. It is significant that in English construction media

texts such borrowings prevail (**57** units), while in French they make up only **39** unit.

In French it is connected with peculiar phonetic system which is manifested in diacritical marks: *sélection* – *selection*, *caméra* – *camera*, *linoléum* – *linoleum*, *hétérogène* – *heterogeneous*, *latté* – *lath*. Lack of such marks in English made it use diphthongs and other combination of sounds, typical for its phonetic system, more often changing the structure of a borrowed root: eng. *townhouse* – nederl. *tunn, hus*, eng. *repair* – fr. *reparer*, eng. *treat* – fr. *traiter*. As complex analysis shows majority of derivative borrowings are formed by means of desaffixation, i.e., the words are formed by means of some suffix's omission. This denotes to necessity of simplification of the word structure in the target language which is especially typical for construction vocabulary. Besides common disposition to desaffixation vocabulary of both languages reveals difference as well. In French both transposition and affixation are used whereas in English transposition is more widespread than affixation. Such ratio indicates the following: since English is mostly analytic it expresses grammatical relations generally through syntax. It means that words acquire definite morphological function by means of auxiliary parts of speech and definite word order, but not by means of dependent morphemes.

## 4. Summary

Thus, summarizing the main idea of the given research it's necessary to note that in the process of adaptation of a borrowed word in target language foreign words undergo different changes. So, besides grammatical component majority of borrowings undergo assimilation in phonetic system of a target language.

Having scrutinized the foreign words of the English and the French it emerged that in the process of assimilation just in the French media texts borrowed words change their structure more easily in the target language.

## 5. Conclusions

The most productive ways of transformation of foreign words are zero affixation, affixation and transposition. The latter is equally used with affixation in the French language. In English affixation is less used, than transposition.

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