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# Morphosyntactic adaptation of English loanwords in present-day French: A study of gender and number

Vincent Hugou

*This study deals with the morphosyntactic adaptation of recent English-origin nouns and adjectives into French. It aims to determine to what extent these loanwords are brought into line with the French system, which differs structurally from the English one. More precisely, it investigates the factors influencing gender assignment (for nouns), gender agreement (for adjectives), as well as plural inflection (for both nouns and adjectives), and seeks to explain how these factors interact. The data used for this study is taken from a corpus, which comprises texts from two online women's magazines. A small survey is also conducted with ten native speakers and sheds more light on the information provided by the corpus. The results for nominal gender reveal that semantic properties seem to be better predictors of gender assignment than formal properties. On the other hand, nominal plural inflection is more grounded in formal criteria. In both cases, constraints tend to converge toward the same results, or more rarely compete with each other. The analysis of adjectival Anglicisms indicates that they are consistently less amenable to morphosyntactic adaptation than nouns. The explanation provided is based on the degree of "adjectiveness" of borrowed adjectives, more prototypical adjectives tending to receive gender and plural inflections. Overall, this paper yields some insights into present-day French and confirms earlier findings. It also proposes to revisit some classifications to make them more powerful and it incorporates factors heretofore ignored in Anglicism research, such as the role of the syntactic environment.*

Keywords: adjective – Anglicism – gender – noun – plural

## 1. Introduction

French has borrowed from English since at least the early 18th century (Tritter 1999; Walter 1989), and continues unabated in the fields of entertainment, sports, fashion, science and information technology (Wise 1997: 85-86). This extensive borrowing from English, among other languages, has contributed to the formation of a sizeable and etymologically diverse word-stock. English influence on French, however, is often viewed as invasive and arouses negative reactions among language experts and lay people (Etiemble 1964; Flaitz 1988).

Borrowing is by no means limited to lexical items ("loanwords") and can affect any linguistic material, from syntactic patterns, phonological features to discourse strategies (Campbell 1998). When they enter a language, borrowings, whatever their status, usually accommodate themselves to what is already there, which means that they are remodeled to conform to the phonological, graphemic and morphological structure of the recipient language. However, not all borrowings are fully integrated into a language: some become totally assimilated while others retain traces of their foreign origin in their pronunciation or inflectional behavior, for instance.

The present paper is concerned with recent lexical borrowings from English into French<sup>1</sup> and their morphosyntactic adaptation. The point of view adopted is, therefore, that of inflectional morphology. Nouns and adjectives have been selected as they form open word classes, which normally inflect for gender and in number in French.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A pluricentric conception of the French language would certainly yield finer-grained results, but the investigation limits itself to metropolitan French. The study of Anglicisms in the province of Quebec, for example, would pose different and altogether more difficult challenges because of North American English influences and ongoing linguistic debate (Planchon 2014).

<sup>2</sup> Adverbs are also members of open word classes, but do not inflect in French.

Fundamental to this research is the fact that the two languages in contact vary greatly in their degree of inflectional complexity. Typologically, French is a moderately inflected language in which grammatical information is encoded in inflectional endings: nouns are marked for the plural and have an inherent grammatical gender; adjectives take on the number and gender of the head noun that they modify. Another feature of French is that there is a large degree of redundancy in grammatical markers in the written language (gender and number usually appear on most determiners, on nouns, adjectives, pronouns and some past participles), while in speech marking is left almost entirely to determiners (Léon and Bhatt 2009: 111). On the other hand, English has limited inflectional exponents: vestiges of an older declensional system (Schmid 2011: 62-66; Siemund and Dolberg 2011) are apparent only in plural formations on nouns, and adjectives are not subject to agreement; besides, all morphological signs of a three-class gender system are lost. In English, however, the -s of the plural is normally sounded.

These different behaviors therefore raise several questions, which become even more acute when recent borrowings – which may not yet have acquired stability – are involved<sup>3</sup>: to what extent does gender and number marking apply to novel English loanwords? Are there constraints and predictable patterns? Can new trends and developments be identified? Are borrowings treated like native words or can additional rules, which only apply to borrowings, be postulated?

As will be seen, studying the marking of gender and plural on new material is not only interesting for borrowings in their own right, but also yields insights into the structural properties of the French language.

The remainder of this article is structured as follows. I will start with a definition of an Anglicism, as it is used in this study (2.1.), and present the corpora which have provided the data for my analysis (2.2.). I will then discuss each word class under study: the noun (3.) and the adjective (4.). The structural properties of French, as well as a brief review of the literature on gender and number will be presented, before turning to corpus evidence.

## 2. Terminological and methodological fundamentals

### 2.1. Preliminary definitions

Katamba's (2005: 137) definition of a loanword is a good point of departure: "A loanword is a word belonging to one language which is IMPORTED or ADOPTED by another, e.g. *catamaran* was imported into English from Tamil and *shopping* was imported into French as (*le*) *shopping*". This is, of course, a first approach to an otherwise rather complex field of study, as is made clear by Haugen's (1950) typology and further refinements by Weinreich (1968) or Picone (1996), among others.

For the context of this study, I will take an Anglicism to be a dictionary-unattested English<sup>4</sup> word which has fairly recently entered the French language. The word "recently" should be understood roughly as the period from 1990 onwards (see below for details on the adopted methodology). Long-established borrowings such as *un weekend*, *le shopping*, and *une star* are therefore excluded.

At a finer level of detail, the definition I have chosen for an Anglicism also captures the following:

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<sup>3</sup> Even though French has a rather rich system of conjugational paradigms, borrowed verbs from English to French adapt almost without exception to the inflectional system of French and all belong to the first group. Note that the first group is very regular, *i.e.* the stem hardly ever changes when the conjugational ending is added (Anastassiadis-Syméonidis 2005, cited in Anastassiadis-Syméonidis and Nikolaou 2011). This is the main reason why borrowed verbs will not be touched upon here.

<sup>4</sup> "English" is a cover term. Regional varieties of English are not considered relevant here.

i) words which are recognized by part if not all of a speech community as well as occasionalisms or so-called “xénismes”, *i.e.* foreignisms (Guilbert 1975: 92-93), which have not yet achieved general currency and which may never do so (Schmid 2011: 73-83);

ii) “loanblends”, that is English-origin words which have been adapted to native word-formation processes (Haugen 1950). Such is the case of *une relookeuse* (“a makeover artist”), where the base *le look* entered into further derivation, through prefixation with *re-* and suffixation with *-euse*;

iii) “false Anglicisms” like *un tennisman* (“a tennis player”);

iv) recent “re-borrowings”, that is in the present case words borrowed from French into English and which were re-borrowed from English into French: *le design* is felt to be an Anglicism, and did enter French *via* English, but *design* was originally borrowed from Middle French *desseign* (“purpose”), and underwent alteration when it moved to English.<sup>5</sup>

Note that common nouns and proper nouns, such as the names of persons, places, products, and song or film titles are also included.

## 2.2. Data and method

### 2.2.1. A corpus-based study

The present study is corpus-based. Corpus data are not only instances of attested usage in present-day French, they are also used as a source of quantitative evidence relevant to the topic at hand. I focus on a specific genre, online women’s magazines. As outlined above, the written medium provides far more evidence of French inflectional morphology (see also example (1) in 2.2.2.).

A corpus solely consisting of articles published in magazines and newspapers is by no means the first such attempt and seems to be the norm for the study of European Anglicisms (*e.g.* Balteiro and Campos 2012; Bement 1956; Furiassi and Gottlieb 2015). For the present paper, online women’s magazines have been chosen as they tend to contain casual types of writing. They are less averse to neologisms, borrowings and linguistic innovation in general (Cynarska-Chomicka 2012; Humbley 2004: 120). It may also be assumed that the visibility of language on a computer screen fosters creativity and playfulness, at least to a certain degree (Greiffenstern 2010).<sup>6</sup> The use of Anglicisms in online women’s magazines is therefore bound up with subject matter, genre, but also with the medium as a whole.

For this purpose, two corpora consisting of articles from two women’s magazines, *Biba* ([www.bibamagazine.fr](http://www.bibamagazine.fr)) and *Marie-Claire* ([www.marieclaire.fr](http://www.marieclaire.fr)) have been compiled. Most articles deal with hobbies, fashion, beauty, lifestyles, relationships and the latest gossip on celebrities. *Biba* corresponds to spontaneous, unplanned or semi-planned production of writing and is geared toward young women. It clearly displays many features typical of spoken language, such as lengthy coordinate sentences, shifters, vague words and slang. The many nuances of intonation, tempo, and attitudinal stance are rendered through capitalization, repeated punctuation marks, and other special symbols for emphasis. The *Marie-Claire* magazine also publishes articles on topics of general interest, but in comparison to *Biba*, it reflects different formality levels and varies in its constructional complexity. A possible explanation could be that *Marie-Claire*’s readership is older than *Biba*’s.

The two corpora are made up of randomly selected texts with a balanced ratio of the different sections that can be found in each magazine. The “*Biba* Corpus” is a 20,246-word sample of articles written and published by different authors between June 2014 and April 2015. The “*Marie-Claire* Corpus” has 20,411 words and ranges across the same time period.

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<sup>5</sup> [www.etymonline.com](http://www.etymonline.com)

<sup>6</sup> The textual functions of Anglicisms in online magazines do not pertain to this study. Some of them may fall under the definition of “necessary loans” (Onysko and Winter-Froemel 2011) since they fill in lexical gaps, while others may be considered “luxury loans (*ibid.*): their expressiveness in comparison to more usual native words may be deliberately exploited for effect, to fulfill conative and emotive functions.

It should be pointed out that the overall size of the corpus did not make it possible to observe potential differences in terms of frequencies of occurrences between the two corpora. The main motivation was to capture more data belonging to the same genre, *i.e.* women's magazines (see also 2.2.3.).

### 2.2.2. Corpus search and coding procedures

The selection and coding of data took place in three steps:

- first, all Anglicisms were retrieved indiscriminately to minimize the risk of missing interesting loanwords. Given the size of the corpus and because there were no sufficient formal clues to detect Anglicisms, careful perusal of the whole corpus became the best option;

- this careful manual search had to be followed by a stage of post-editing to remove unwanted items such as long-established Anglicisms.<sup>7</sup> As has been stated earlier (2.1.), it was decided that only fairly recent loanwords would be under discussion. The interest of general language dictionaries, in that case, is that they can be used as "exclusion corpora". By including a word or not including it yet, they testify to the newness of a word. However, care is needed with this kind of statement for two main reasons. First, the perception of newness is relative to place and time, and may vary from person to person (see *e.g.* Sablayrolles 2006). Second, the thoroughness and reliability of dictionaries may easily be called into question when it comes to new words. The Anglicism *un look* is a case in point: even though it has attained wide usage in French, it is not listed in *Le Trésor de la Langue Française* ([www.cnrtl.fr](http://www.cnrtl.fr)), where it may have been overlooked for different reasons, but appears in *Le Larousse* ([www.larousse.fr](http://www.larousse.fr)). On the other hand, comparatively recent concepts such as *le buzz* are already attested in some dictionaries, though not systematically (for a longitudinal study of this word, see Fiévet and Podhorná-Polická 2010). To complicate matters further, the presence of an Anglicism in a dictionary should not necessarily lead to its immediate rejection as its meaning may have already been reinterpreted or expanded, as is exemplified by the adjective *glam* which has an entry as a type of music (therefore as a noun), but not as an adjective. Disambiguation had therefore to be performed manually.

The lexicographic corpus used in this task is comprised of two extensive online dictionaries, *Le Trésor de la Langue Française* and *Le Larousse*. With the above-mentioned caveats in mind, a loanword was selected if it did not appear in these dictionaries or when it appeared in only one of them;

- finally, coding procedures were applied to the loanwords which had passed successfully through the first and second stages. However, only words which exhibited gender and / or number marking became worthy of investigation. Consider the following:

(1) (...) pour devenir le<sub>Masc/Sing.</sub> « outfit<sub>Masc/Sing.</sub> » préféré<sub>Masc/Sing.</sub> des<sub>Fem,Masc/Plur.</sub> Parisiennes<sub>Fem/Plur.</sub><sup>8</sup> ("... to become the favorite 'outfit' of Parisian women") (*Biba*).

As can be observed in (1), there are two clues at the syntagmatic level to indicate that *outfit* is masculine singular: *le*<sub>Masc/Sing.</sub> and *préfér*<sub>Masc/Sing.</sub>. In the absence of such evidence, Anglicisms were rejected from the database.

### 2.2.3. Preliminary results

This study relied primarily on type counts. However, token frequencies were also given consideration, at least as an initial step: this decision was based on the assumption that, with regard to loanwords, number and gender marking may still be optional, unstable or sensitive to external factors such as speech style. Consequently, intra- and inter-textual variation within the corpus became a possibility that could not be *a priori* excluded. It should also be noted that

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<sup>7</sup> Note that by forcing a spell-check on *Word* documents, the wavy red lines, which appeared under the text, facilitated the identification of some dictionary-unattested Anglicisms.

<sup>8</sup> For practical purposes, the inflectional categories (number and gender) are often written as subscripts of word-forms.

drawing on similar sources, two women's magazines dealing with the same topics, increased the odds of encountering the same loanword in a variety of contexts and made it possible to determine whether the different tokens exhibited different morphosyntactic behaviors from each other.

Overall, the application of the selection criteria and coding procedures defined earlier (2.2.2.) resulted in 65 distinct nouns (types), with 102 tokens, and 50 distinct adjectives (types) with 75 tokens. The preponderance of nouns is in line with previous findings, which indicate that there are more new things to name than there are new events, qualities or actions (Désirat and Hordé 1976: 195; Hock 1991: 386; Muysken 1998; Wise 1997). A semantic analysis of these nouns substantiates this claim: 45 nouns are "first-order entities" (Lyons 1977: 442-446), which refer to persons or physical objects (*un freak, un headband*); 20 are "second-order entities" and denote events, states and activities (*le running*); none are "third-order entities", which refer to purely mental representations whose *denotata* do not belong to the extra-linguistic world. Another argument that could be put forward is that nouns are more readily borrowed than adjectives because of the complexity of the latter category, in terms of inflectional endings and irregularities, as will be seen as the discussion progresses.

Finally, a few words can be said about other parts of speech, for illustration purposes only: the corpus search turned up ten different verbal types (*e.g. shopper, buzzer*) comprising 16 tokens. Another eight types correspond to other parts of speech, mainly interjections (*e.g. roar! bingo!*) and discourse markers (*OMG!*). These "pragmatic borrowings" (Andersen 2015: 123-144) could be the indication of a recent evolution in the use of Anglicisms, and could suggest the need to revise borrowability hierarchies, without profoundly altering them, nouns still probably ranking highest on the list.

Having outlined my definition of an Anglicism and having addressed a number of practical issues, I now turn to nominal Anglicisms and the mechanisms for gender and plurality marking.

### 3. Loan adaptation of nouns

#### 3.1. Gender

##### 3.1.1. Structural properties of French and overview of the literature

French distinguishes the "masculine" from the "feminine". Even if gender is considered to be a fixed property of a word, stylistic hesitation and diatopic variation can be observed, albeit sporadically. For instance, *vidéo* and *radio* are masculine in Quebec French, but feminine in metropolitan French (Léon and Bhatt 2009: 116; Pergnier 1989: 39-41). The gender of a noun in French is also an inherent grammatical feature, which means that all nouns are assigned to either the masculine or the feminine in an arbitrary way,<sup>9</sup> except when the noun manifests a direct link with biological sex. As in Romance languages in general (Posner 1996), the feminine can be communicated through lexical means (*un homme / une femme*) or through grammatical means by resorting to additive morphemes, along with possible stem vowel modification (*un docteur / une doctoresse*, "a lady doctor"), compounding (*une femme docteur*, "a lady doctor"), or simply no formal gender marker (epicene words or double gender words, *un docteur*: female or male).<sup>10</sup> These are clear cases; in everyday usage, however, few nouns are as overtly marked for gender.

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<sup>9</sup> Note that "grammatical gender" is also traditionally called "arbitrary gender". However, the arbitrariness of gender assignment can only be understood in synchronic terms as many cases are explicable historically. For example, *une âme* ("a soul") is feminine and corresponds to the Latin etymon "anima" which was also feminine (Béchade 1992: 177).

<sup>10</sup> Mention should also be made of the feminization of many French occupational nouns (*une docteur*, "a lady doctor", *une auteure*, "a female author") (see Houdebine-Gravaud 1998).

Attempts at finding gender assignment rules to account for native nouns with non-animate referents (e.g. Corbett 1991; Mel'čuk 2006; Schafroth 2003) boil down to semantic criteria and to formal criteria (morphological and phonological, in the narrow sense of sound structure). Insofar as English loanwords are supposed to comply with the rules of their new language, the most common classifications of factors conditioning gender assignment to Anglicisms run along the same lines (e.g. Nymansson 1995; Poplack *et al.* 1982; Zenner and Kristiansen 2013). The following are usually considered:

- the natural gender of the referent: *une vamp* is feminine because it denotes a female. Referential gender seems to be a universal semantically-based principle (Dahl 1999: 101).

- the formal structure of the loanword and its resemblance with native words: Anastassiadis-Syméonidis and Nikolaou (2011) call it the “morphophonological analogy rule” (“règle de l’analogie morphophonologique”). In *vaseline*, feminine gender can be motivated by analogy because the ending *-ine* is consistently associated with feminine words in French (e.g. *la mousseline*, *la crinoline*). Wagner and Pinchon (1962: 46-47) talk of “hereditary gender” (“genre héréditaire”) for suffixed nouns which stand in a paradigmatic relationship to each other.<sup>11</sup> In this perspective, deverbal nominalizations in *-age* (*le nettoyage*, “cleaning”) are masculine because they “inherit” from a long tradition of masculine nouns, and so should Anglicisms ending in *-age*, such as *le mixage* (“audio mixing”) for example;

- semantic association with the host language: Onysko (2007) posits a *continuum* of “lexical-conceptual equivalence”. This means roughly that the gender of an Anglicism is the same as the native word it is more or less consciously associated with. Likewise, Anastassiadis-Syméonidis and Nikolaou (2011) mention the “hyperonymy rule” (“règle d’hyperonymie”) whereby the borrowed noun is assigned the gender of the superordinate word that it falls under: *la house* is feminine because, as a basic-level category, it attaches to a higher term in the taxonomy, *la musique*, which is also feminine. But, as Guilford (1999: 70) aptly remarks, an ellipsis could also be at work here: *la musique house* (“house music”) / *la house* (“house”). Finally, according to Humbley (1974: 67), gender assignment can also operate through “homonymic attraction”: a loanword is associated with the gender of a host language homophone or homograph, whether homonymy is linguistically fortuitous or etymologically motivated. *Une check-list* is feminine because *a list* is a “homonym” for *une liste*, an otherwise perfectly established French word;

- a final factor includes the generic masculine, which “assumes the function of an archilexeme in neutral contexts” (Schafroth 2003: 101). In the theory of markedness, the masculine is taken to be the unmarked form; it is morphologically more basic (Aikhenvald 2000: 50-52).

This typology raises substantive questions regarding rule-ordering and constraints. Hock (1991: 401), for example, argues that in order to get an optimal output when assigning gender, i) formal criteria should be given precedence by speakers who encounter a loanword that they do not know; ii) should formal criteria fail, speakers should turn to general semantic criteria; iii) then and only then can they turn to the gender of semantically related native words; iv) if none of the previous criteria apply, speakers may fall back on a default class to which words are assigned (the generic masculine in French). Obviously, in agreement with Hock, some factors are only valid and reliable to a certain extent and may encourage speakers to adopt such an algorithmic approach, that is a set of operations to be performed step by step. One may wonder, however, whether or not semantic criteria, reputedly less tangible, should always come second after formal criteria, and whether semantic and formal criteria could overlap rather than be sequentially ordered. Another question is to determine whether a change in the ordering of criteria necessarily leads to alternative analyses and / or conflicting solutions.

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<sup>11</sup> A paradigm must be understood henceforth as a network of words which are related to each other, and not in its strictest sense, as an inflectional paradigm (Aitchison 2008: 146-147).

Corpus results will now be evaluated in light of the above typology and the previous discussion.

### 3.1.2. Gender adaptation of nominal Anglicisms in the corpus

#### 3.1.2.1. General results and administration of a survey

Out of 65 noun types, 51 are masculine and 14 are feminine, which means there are almost four times as many masculine nouns as there are feminine nouns. Comparable estimations have been made in earlier research. For instance, according to Roché (1992: 115), over 85 % of borrowed nouns are assigned to the masculine gender in French.

In order to determine the factors responsible for gender assignment, the 65 nominal Anglicisms under study were submitted to ten native speakers, aged 30-60. Informants were surveyed orally on a one-on-one basis and were instructed to suggest why such-and-such a word was assigned the feminine gender or the masculine gender; no contextual information was given. For each Anglicism, answers were restricted to a maximum of three possible explanatory factors.

The decision to use a semi-structured oral survey made it possible to ask for clarification and follow up on the participants' responses as the interview went along. Close attention was also paid to the way factors were hierarchized, although this proved to be rather challenging. Note that for practical reasons the survey was limited to a small number of respondents and that the results displayed in Table 1 are only meant to provide a basis for initial discussion.

|  |   | Total number of responses                           | Examples of informants' wording (answers were given in French, but a hybrid translation is provided for the sake of clarity) |
|--|---|---|--|
| <b>Semantic and referential criteria</b> | natural gender                            | RC+ (6); RC+/- (3) (out of 9 nouns)                 | " <i>Une relookeuse</i> is feminine because it refers to a woman"  |
| <b>Formal criteria</b>                   | (non-)native suffix or suffix-like ending | RC+ (10); RC+/- (10) (out of 20 suffixed nouns)     | " <i>Un trader</i> is masculine because it ends in <i>-er</i> "  |
| <b>Semantic criteria</b>                 | hyperonymy                                | RC+ (30); RC+/- (6); RC- (29) (out of all 65 nouns) | " <i>Un outfit</i> is masculine because one says <i>un vêtement</i> (= a garment)"   |
|  | (near-)synonymy                           | RC+ (4); RC+/- (10); RC- (51) (out of all 65 nouns) | " <i>Un bun</i> is masculine because it's like <i>un chignon</i> "   |
|  | (near-)homonymy                           | RC+ (29); RC+/- (7); RC- (29) (out of all 65 nouns) | " <i>Un hashtag</i> is masculine because it makes me think of <i>un tag</i> (= a graffiti)"                                  |
|  | ellipsis                                  | RC+ (6); RC+/- (5); RC- (54) (out of all 65 nouns)  | " <i>Le healthy</i> is masculine because one means ' <i>le mode de vie healthy</i> ' (= 'the healthy lifestyle')"            |
| <b>Other criteria</b>                    | direct translation                        | RC+ (6); RC+/- (3); RC- (56) (out of all 65 nouns)  | " <i>La fashion week</i> is feminine because 'week' means ' <i>une semaine</i> ' in English"                                 |

Table 1. Distribution of factors conditioning the assignment of genders to nouns

N.B. The parenthesized figures should read as follows: RC+ (6), for instance, means that the same 6 words were justified with the same criterion by anywhere from 7 to 10 participants (RC must be understood as "the rate of consensus"); RC+/- (12), for instance, means that the same 12 words were justified with the same criterion by anywhere from 3 to 6 participants; RC- refers to a low rate of consensus, that is below 3 participants.

All informants provided at least one reason each time to account for gender assignment, except for one Anglicism which was a general source of puzzlement: *le too much*. This came as no surprise as there are no intuitive formal or semantic criteria for justifying the masculine gender. *Le too much* is an instance of a phrase which underwent delocutive conversion to become a noun. However, as in all delocutive conversions, the resulting noun is used in autonomous mention, as if quotation marks were appended around it. Now whenever a word or phrase is used autonomously, it does not function in a normal way, in that its categorial properties are suspended (Kerleroux 1996: 55-56). The use of the masculine can therefore be analyzed as a default gender.

I will now proceed to discuss the empirical findings separately, then summarize them at the end.

### 3.1.2.2. Natural gender

Participants concurred on the “natural gender criterion” for six words out of nine words falling into this category. There was no consensus, however, over the remaining three words, *bimbo*, *freak* and *weirdo*, which will be discussed further below.

### 3.1.2.3. Formal criteria

Formal criteria in the above-mentioned typology mainly correspond to word endings. The term has to be taken in its broadest sense as an ending lies somewhere between non-native or native suffixes (e.g. *-er*, *-ing*) and morpheme-like elements, such as clusters of phonemes, submorphemic units (e.g. *-unch*, *-ush*, *-ight*). It is clear that some of these endings fulfill the usual criteria of minimality (morphemes as atomic linguistic units) and semanticity, while others may not (for an overview of the issues in this area, see Schmid 2011: 39-44).

As Table 1 indicates, half of the “suffixed” nouns were systematically and consensually attributed to a specific gender through formal criteria. These results concern primarily the derivational suffixes *-er* and *-ing*, which can be added to a verbal stem. Let us take a closer look at the latter, five instances of which can be found in the corpus (e.g. *le running*, *le tuning*, *le phishing*). They are all masculine. The high productivity of this suffix and the fact that it continues to permeate the French vocabulary, even if it was borrowed some time ago (Désirat and Hordé 1976: 196-199; Glessgen 2012: 307), probably explain why it was recognized by speakers as a predictable gender-imposing suffix. Note that its versatility in English (from gerunds to action nominals and lexicalized nouns) has been extended even further in French which uses it, among other things, as a nominalization morpheme instantiating the pattern “le+V-ing”, as in *le running*. Obviously, English cannot do that as freely: *?the running is great*. The derivational suffix *-ing* also suggests, as has been just said, infinitival nominalization, i.e. deverbal nouns formed with the infinitives of verbs, as in *manger et boire* (verbs) / *le manger et le boire* (deverbal nouns) (Guilford 1999: 74-75). It seems that verb-to-noun conversion, as well as conversion in general (*le too much*, see *supra*), invariably results in the use of the masculine.

The picture was somewhat more complex for the *-o* ending, which was not unanimously recognized as a reliable indicator of gender. Informants explained that it showed a high degree of correlation with the masculine, as evidenced by *un combo* (“a combination”), nevertheless referential gender prevailed over suffixation with *une bimbo*. The word *un weirdo* received almost the reverse treatment: speakers intuitively ascribed the masculine gender of this noun to formal rules, that is the masculine-sounding ending *-o*, but were often hard-pressed to imagine what would be said if the “weirdo” turned out to be a woman. *?Une weirdo* sounds unlikely, but of course cannot be ruled out.<sup>12</sup> A possible reason for this is that socio-cultural factors influence gender assignment, and at least in that example (*un freak* poses the same challenges), the masculine could be selected for its dysphemistic effect, to refer to mental or physical

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<sup>12</sup> It got several hits on *Google*.

inadequacy; differently put, the masculine fails to demonstrate respect for the person's self-image as it downgrades them and reduces them to an "unmarked non-human" entity. Another option is to consider that *un weirdo* is inherently indeterminate with regard to gender or that the gender of the referent is irrelevant, hence the "generic masculine".

Non-native morpheme-like endings from the corpus (e.g. *-unch*, *-ush*, *-ight*) deserve further consideration. Impressionistic as they were, some of the answers provided by the participants indicated that submorphemic correlations among words helped conjure up one gender or another. For instance, all Anglicisms in French sharing the *-unch* ending are treated as masculine nouns (e.g. *punch*, *crunch*, *lunch*, *brunch*). Such units are indeed suggestive of final phonaesthemes (Mattiello 2013), which, because they are connected by rhyme, form paradigms, even though they may be devoid of morphemic significance.<sup>13</sup> In all likelihood, the next unit entering the language, say *hunch* ("an intuition"), will be masculine: it will be introduced as a new member of the paradigm which, in turn, will gain even more strength.

#### 3.1.2.4. Semantic criteria

##### (a) Hyperonymy

Recourse to hyperonymy in order to justify gender assignment mainly concerned concrete concepts, which have a direct utilitarian effect and "objective" properties. For example, the ten informants showed a high level of agreement for *le blush*, which they considered masculine because it consistently evoked the referent of the more general category *maquillage*<sub>Masc.</sub> ("make-up").

On the other hand, a number of problems may arise in the identification of superordinate categories when one moves to the other end of the spectrum with more abstract Anglicisms, since the greater the abstractness of a word and subsequently of its superordinate, the more likely they are to vary perceptually and functionally (Ungerer and Schmid 2006: 77). As an example, consider the Anglicism *le healthy* from the corpus. There does not seem to exist a simple or at least obvious superordinate term for an already somewhat abstract notion. In that specific case, participants resorted instead to an ellipsis to account for the choice of the masculine, *le healthy* / *le mode de vie healthy* (see *infra* for "ellipsis"). However, some words acted as exceptions to this perspective: *une baby shower* designates a second-order entity, i.e. an event (Lyons 1977), and displays therefore a rather high degree of abstraction. The predictability of gender from the suffix *-er* being very low and unreliable here, some informants called up the hyperonym *une fête*<sub>Fem.</sub> ("a celebration", "a party") to justify the feminine gender.

##### (b) Near-synonymy

Under this criterion, a word like *bun*, as a type of hairstyle, was understood as masculine because it displays extra-linguistic similarities with the referent of a near-synonym, *chignon*. As was noticed by some informants, a superordinate category like *une coiffure*<sub>Fem.</sub> ("a hairstyle") would have conflicted with the masculine gender attached to *bun*. Recourse to synonymy appeared to be a viable solution.

##### (c) Homonymy or near-homonymy

In quite a few cases, correlations were established between an Anglicism and a French (near-)homonym (*la city* / *la cité*), or between an Anglicism and a longer established homophonous Anglicism (*le spotlight* / *le spot*). Especially interesting is the case of *un open space* as seven informants relied on homophony (*space* / *un espace*), but the remaining three stated that *open space* was understood as having an elliptical head noun, *un espace* ("un open space c'est un espace open-space", literally "an open space is an open-space space"). This

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<sup>13</sup> Their organization in paradigms is supported by experiments in lexical priming (McCrum 2002).

resulted in interlinguistic redundancy, but as can be seen, taking an alternate route eventually led to the same result.

In other cases, the situation was not quite so straightforward, as evidenced by the two tokens of the word *Game Boy* in the corpus. They seem to reflect uncertainty as to gender assignment as one is masculine and the other is feminine. In order to account for these two different solutions, participants either applied the homonymy rule (*un Game Boy / un boy*, cf. *le spotlight / le spot*) or they relied on the hyperonymy rule (*une Game Boy / une console de jeux*, “a handheld game console”). This isolated example in the corpus is reminiscent of similar gender vacillation with *pipeline* in French. The Anglicism is treated as masculine (according to normative grammar) or feminine (against normative grammar) depending on whether speakers give preference to the homonymy rule (*a line / une ligne*), to the hyperonymy rule (*un conduit, un tuyau*), or to the phonological makeup of the word (*-ine* as a prototypically feminine ending).

#### (d) Ellipsis

On a few occasions (see Table 1), participants justified the use of the masculine or the feminine by retrieving a missing word as in ellipsis. In the case of *un slimmy*, i.e. *un jean slimmy*, three older informants pointed out that they needed additional information to make an informed judgment. I then returned to the original text, to which they had no access, to discover that the elided material could readily be recovered from the previous discourse and / or inferred from extra-linguistic cues. In (2), the word *jean* appears in the immediate vicinity of the word *slimmy*:

(2) (Title of the article) *Le dernier jean à la mode : le slimmy !* (“The latest fashionable jeans: the slimmy!”) (*Biba*).

The remainder of the article contains numerous occurrences of the Anglicism *slimmy* used alternately with or without the word *jean*. It became abundantly clear that information gleaned from the linguistic context can also guide speakers in their search for the right meaning and gender. Furthermore, thanks to such examples, the linguist has the opportunity to witness first-hand the shortening process that many words undergo as their frequency of usage increases and as their novelty wears off: *un téléphone portable / un portable* (“a cell phone” / “a cell”). *Un jean slimmy / un slimmy* seem to have already gone through the same process. This finally suggested that for some recent Anglicisms gender may change when a particular (amount of) context is introduced. The noun *slim-fit* – which is not in the corpus – is a case in point. It may be treated as feminine if one refers to a shirt (*une chemise*) or as masculine if one refers to a pair of pants (*un jean, un pantalon*).

#### (e) Direct translation

Table 1 reveals another strategy: direct translation. Consider *la fashion week*. Formal criteria and semantic criteria fail to determine gender, even if *week* ends in a voiceless velar plosive, which tends to signify the feminine (Mel’čuk 2006: 327), as in *la musique, une trique* (“a rod”), *une bique* (“a goat”). However, according to the informants, since the translation of “a week” in French, i.e. *une semaine* is feminine, so is the sequence *fashion week*. Let it be mentioned in passing that this Anglicism is modelled after the English structural pattern of a prototypical endocentric compound, where the right-hand constituent is usually the head. Translation relied on this pattern: “*une fashion week* designates a kind of / a subclass of *week*”. Other instances of this strategy in the corpus include *le no mail Friday* (literally, “Friday” is *le vendredi*<sub>Masc.</sub>), and *le soft power* (literally, “power” is *le pouvoir*<sub>Masc.</sub>).

Of course, direct translation presupposes sufficient proficiency in English. In the examples given above, one can assume that speakers translated directly, at best, or merely “recognized” a constituent of the phrases, and resorted to inference strategies to retrieve the right translation. This could apply to *fashion week* or *soft power*, whose right-hand constituents

*week* and *power* are otherwise very familiar Anglicisms which appear ubiquitously in *le weekend* or on electronic devices, as in *power: on/off*.

### 3.1.2.5. Brief summary

A few concluding remarks are now in order. The analysis presented so far shows that while there is no absolutely conclusive evidence, gender can better be explained by recourse to semantic association, at least within the limits of this survey; it cannot always be predicted on morphological grounds alone.

In some cases, constraints seem to cooperate jointly. In other cases, they conflict and another route can be taken, which then leads to two solutions (*un Game Boy / une Game Boy*). Further research would then be required to evaluate whether some constraints are more likely to overrule others. For example, the degree of entrenchment of a word, that is the result of the frequency with which it is used, could be relevant in an onomasiological approach to gender assignment: high-frequency superordinates, which have more robust mental representations, should be easier to access in order to assign gender to freshly borrowed Anglicisms. With regard to submorphemic correlations, that is the phonological commonalities that some Anglicisms share amongst themselves (e.g. the final phonaestheme *-unch*), it seems that exploring the strength of associations within existing paradigms could contribute to a better knowledge of gender assignment and allow for safer generalizations.

Finally, the survey could also be conducted in a slightly different way: respondents could first be administered a gender choice task, and then results could be commented upon, and checked against corpus results, in case of discrepancies.

Now let us discuss the question of the pluralization of nominal borrowings. A simplified picture of the French inflectional system is first provided.

## 3.2. Number

### 3.2.1. Structural properties of French and overview of the literature

French expresses plural meaning with graphic distinctions, namely the addition of the standard *-s* inflectional ending, which means that English and French share the same pluralization morpheme. However, unlike English, the *-s* ending is normally silent in spoken French. The phonetic realization of this nominal inflection can mainly be observed in “liaison” (Armstrong 2001: 177-180, for a comprehensive definition), like “intra-phrasal liaison” (*des enfants [z] adorables*), which is rather rare among speakers (Béchade 1992: 52-55). What is more, alongside regular plural formations in *-s*, the plural morpheme in French is instantiated by a variety of allomorphs, for example *-aux* as in *cheval / chevaux* (“horse / horses”) or a null morpheme in the case of proper nouns. In both languages, the regular plural *-s* remains the default ending.

There seem to be few detailed accounts on nominal inflection of English loanwords (e.g. Corbett 2000; Humbley 2004: 116; Saugera 2012a). A possible explanation for this is that pluralization of English-origin nouns seems to be the norm given the congruence between the two languages, as outlined above. However, the situation is not so clear-cut since *not all* Anglicisms are unambiguously inflected for number. Authors therefore attempt to determine why some borrowings are subject to French internal pluralization rules and why others defy morphological rules, that is do not inflect for number, unlike most French plurals, or inflect for number in a manner characteristic of English. The latter scenario typically applies to the so-called “exotic plurals”, the self-conscious use of the foreign plural in some words (e.g. *fora* for *forums* in English, *des apparatusiki* for *des apparatusiks* in French). This is the subject of many prescriptive discussions (see e.g. Grevisse and Goosse 2008: 694-700).

In order to account for the resistance of some Anglicisms to pluralization, Etienne (1964: 173) states that French speakers have come to realize, whether through experience or

education, that very few English words in general bear the plural marker. They are thus encouraged to leave out what is not needed in the communicative situation, probably in accordance with the more general principle of linguistic economy. While such an assumption may contain a grain of truth, it does not begin to explain why other Anglicisms do carry the plural inflection. A more general and intuitively acceptable principle is that borrowings which are orthographically and phonetically assimilated are more likely to conform to regular number marking rules. More precisely, pluralization may be facilitated or blocked because of factors such as the feeling of “newness” that accompanies a borrowing, and the adjunction of native morphemes to it (“loanblends”, see 2.1.). Saugera (2012a) also appeals to the criterion of length in syllables, as a promoter or inhibitor of inflection. As will have been noted, most analyses are morphology-oriented, with comparatively few observations on semantics or syntax.

In what follows, all of the factors presented above are discussed using the data provided by the corpus. A summary is included at the end.

### **3.2.2. Number adaptation of nominal Anglicisms in the corpus**

#### **3.2.2.1. General results and initial assumptions**

The results from the corpus study (the *Biba* Corpus and the *Marie-Claire* Corpus) indicate that out of 40 nouns in the plural, 80 % bear an -s morpheme marking the plural, and 20 % remain uninflected. Even a *pluralia tantum* noun like *people* falls in line with the French model: *les peuples*. The choice between the native plural form (*les people*) and a regular “Gallicized” version (*les peuples*), as is the case in the corpus, may be largely influenced by the resemblance to the French word *peuple* (“a people”, “a population”), which is normally pluralized (*un peuple, des peuples*). What is more, the Anglicism *les peuples* in French only refers to “celebrities”, the “glitterati”. Semantic reinterpretation – in this case meaning restriction – could have brought about morphological reinterpretation and regularization.

As has just been remarked, most occurrences (80 %) display a strong tendency to pluralize in compliance with French patterns; there are, however, a few irregularities (20 %), which have to be taken into account. In light of the literature previously presented, I set out first to determine whether plural marking is facilitated or blocked by formal constraints such as the morphological structure of the Anglicism, that is its phonological shape and its morphemic complexity. I then tentatively explore the role of the syntactic environment in which Anglicisms are embedded.

Note that corpus size and the nature of the medium prohibited further exploration of other potentially relevant variables. For instance, there remained uncertainty as to whether or not uninflected forms could be ascribed to editorial negligence in online publications, which are mostly written in a casual, informal speech style. By the same token, it was assumed that the oral-like nature of this type of writing (2.2.1.) might have had an impact on the absence of plural marking since although many nouns are marked for plural in written French, very few differ in singular and plural form in spoken French, *i.e.* the *s* in the plural is not usually sounded (3.2.1.); however, such information was also very difficult to obtain and had to be excluded from consideration.

Now that I have set the stage by introducing some of the most general results and my initial assumptions, let us turn to more specific aspects of number adaptation of nominal Anglicisms in the corpus.

#### **3.2.2.2. Formal criteria: word ending**

##### **(a) Loanblends**

As earlier findings have suggested, nativized loanwords which have already undergone suffixation are more likely to be pluralized, since they are integrated into the orthographic structure of French. For example, the noun *paddés* (“padded bras”) is a nominalized adjectival participle patterned after e.g. *être chocolaté / un chocolaté* (“covered in chocolate” / “a chocolate-flavored cake, drink, cookie”).<sup>14</sup> It therefore has nominal properties, like gender and number:

(3) (...) *tricher en optant pour des « push-up » ou des « paddés »* (...) (“...cheating by choosing ‘push-up bras’ or ‘padded bras’...”) (*Biba*).

As will have been noticed in (3), the Anglicism *paddé* is coordinated with another Anglicism *push-up*, which is unmarked for inflection. I will take up this question later on in this section.

### (b) Semi-nativized suffixes

Let us now consider the frequently occurring English suffix *-er*, which could be regarded as at least partly nativized in French. Words in *-er* have indeed a high degree of analyzability, as they share commonalities with the French ending *-eur*, whether or not these similarities are the result of a common heritage: both types of endings have an identifiable phonological content and the same semantic contribution, that of an agentive noun. Further, neither type gives rise to stem modification. All of these elements most likely help *-er* words to be borrowed more readily (Winford 2003, section 7), and thereby account for their systematic pluralization in the corpus (e.g. *hipsters*, *wedding planners*).

One might even go so far as to wonder whether the suffix *-er* is not on the way to being recognized as an alternant<sup>15</sup> of the native suffix *-eur*. In this perspective, the choice of the orthographic variant is lexically conditioned: recent Anglicisms normally attract the *-er* ending, longer established Anglicisms fluctuate between *-er* and *-eur*, as is the case with dictionary-sanctioned *supporte(u)r*, and native words end in *-eur*.

### (c) Non-native word endings

All the words in the corpus ending in the vocalic morphemes *-ie* and *-o* pluralize consistently by adding an *-s*: for example, *selfies*, *shorties*, *twittos*, *weirdos*. This may be ascribed to the fact that word-final vowels are very frequent in French and do not normally block plural inflection (e.g. *une amie*, *des amies* “female friends”, *une roue*, *des roues* “wheels”). There might also be paradigm pressure effects with such words as *talkie-walkies* (“walkie-talkies”), *groupies*, *pianos*, *ghettos*, etc. which are all well-established borrowings from English and other languages, and which carry an *-s* in the plural. It should finally be pointed out that, as regards words ending in *-o*, no other spelling variants are provided by the corpus data, unlike English *weirdo(e)s*, for example. This could be construed as another indicator of integration.

On the other hand, Anglicisms ending in unusual consonant clusters in French, for example *patch* and *match* (in the sense of “couple”, “pair”), are not pluralized in the corpus. This might suggest native speakers’ awareness of graphotactic constraints as words ending in a voiceless affricate (*-tch /tʃ/*), or in the combination of a voiceless affricate and a sibilant (*-tchs /tʃs/*) cannot be found in the French system.

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<sup>14</sup> The number of word-formation processes involved and their possible “temporal” sequencing are not quite clear. The unit *un padded bra* may have been borrowed first “as is”, and then later submitted to ellipsis (*un padded bra / un padded*). However since *un padded* could not stand alone, mainly for phonological reasons – the ending *-ed* does not occur in final position in French –, it may have been modeled after other nouns ending in *-é*. Booij (2010)’s constructional approach to morphology could certainly allow for a more elegant account of such “X-é<sub>Noun</sub>” constructions.

<sup>15</sup> The question whether this alternant is an allomorph and / or an allophone lies beyond the scope of this study.

### 3.2.2.3. Formal criteria: morphemic complexity

#### (a) General results

Bauer's (1983: 30) definition of morphologically "simplex" words (*i.e.* monomorphemic words) as opposed to "complex words" is adopted here. Simplex words marked for plural make up 60% (24 words) of the database; seven of these words are monosyllabic. Since all 24 words are inflected for plural, except for previously discussed results for *match* and *patch*, the length of monomorphemic words, measured in number of syllables, does not seem to be correlated with pluralization. The remaining 16 words (40 %) are complex: six are produced by derivation and ten are compounds. All derivatives are pluralized; compounds behave slightly more erratically, as will be seen further on.

What is particularly surprising at first sight is that these general results challenge traditional claims, according to which words with a higher degree of morphological complexity are less prone to be borrowed. In keeping with this traditional view, Pergnier (1989: 42-47) argues that French speakers are drawn to the shortness and conciseness of English words, which tallies with the propensity to clip words in present-day French. More recent studies, such as Picone's (1996: 269) and Loock's (2013) argue, on the contrary, that the increasing popularity of nominal compounds in French can be attributed to the influence of English, notably in the field of advertising which is a rich seedbed for linguistic innovation. The relatively new presence of compounds makes their study even more compelling, especially as regards their inflectional morphology.

#### (b) Compounds

The demarcation of compounds from phrasal expressions has long been, and remains the subject of dispute in English (Scalise and Vogel 2010; Schmid 2011) as well as in French (Corbin 1992), that is why a "compound" is considered here in its broadest sense.

Their pluralization in English is a relatively straightforward matter as the rightmost constituent (*i.e.* the head) usually carries the *-s* morpheme, which applies to the compound as a whole. In some exceptional cases, both members admit an *-s* (*clothes-brushes*, or with some root allomorphy, *teeth-marks*, Miller 2014: 47; Jamet 2006). A different state of affairs holds for French where both constituents tend to be inflected if the compound is made up of nouns and/or adjectives (*des coffres-forts*, "safety deposit boxes", literally "strong chests"). Inflection is disallowed on non-nominal and non-adjectival constituents (*des arrière-boutiques*, literally "back shops"). However, semantic relations between the two members cloud the issue somewhat: *des chasse-neige* ("snowplows") is not inflected in spite of the presence of the noun *snow* because *snowplows* push snow (a non-countable noun), while *des tire-bouchons* ("corkscrews") is inflected as *corkscrews* are specifically designed to pull corks (a countable noun). The substantial amount of "exceptional cases" inevitably results in a good deal of hesitation over possible variants.

Aside from two proper noun compounds which, true to form, remain uninflected (*les Playmobil*, *les Stan Smith*), most of the compound Anglicisms in the corpus are nominal compounds of the type "N-N" or "Adj-N". They should, in theory, exhibit the same tricky and somewhat unpredictable behavior as French compound words: *un wedding planner* ("N-N-er") should bear two plural morphemes *des weddings planners*, and *un smart phone* ("Adj-N") should become *des smarts phones*. However, in practice, the right-hand edge of the word systematically takes the plural marking: *des wedding planners*, *des smart phones*, etc. In order to account for this, Saugera (2012a) has convincingly argued that such complex units are analyzed as simplex words, so they are externally modified. "Verb-centred noun compounds with a preposition as the second constituent" (Schmid 2011: 128), such as *un check-up*, *un come-back* also require further consideration. Saugera (2012a: 133) explains the absence of inflection on these compounds by stating that French speakers recognize the preposition-like status of *up* or *back*. Many function words, at least in French, are typically short and invariable.

Valid as these two points are (*i.e.* the treatment of compounds as simplex words and the invariability of particle compounds), the criteria Saugera puts forward fail to account for possible exceptions. The corpus contains several of them (see below). In the following, I offer an alternative view, which is not, however, at variance with Saugera's explanations; I believe that the author's arguments could be subsumed by a more general principle, a "precautionary principle" whereby speakers choose to err on the side of caution when inflecting a compound. Under this principle,

- (i) either the right-hand constituent is inflected, as word-final position is by default the morphosyntactic *locus* of all variable parts of speech in French,
- (ii) or the compound remains uninflected, because the internal structure of the compound, the status and / or origin of the right-hand constituent cannot be easily determined.

By way of illustration, consider the two tokens of *push-up* ("push-up bra") in the corpus; one is inflected (*des push-ups*) while the other is not (*des push-up*). This "exception" can be explained away under the precautionary principle. Speakers either choose to consider the word holistically and make it fall into line with other complex words, by attaching an *-s* to the second constituent, under condition (i), or they prefer not to inflect it, in application of (ii). The same holds for *fashion week*, which occurs twice in the corpus (*des fashion week* and *des fashion weeks*). Another illustration of principle (i) is with the compound *tote bag*, found in the corpus with an *-s* attached at the end (*des tote bags*). Inflecting the non-head member of the compound (*tote*) would have been too risky and costly an enterprise indeed. Besides, it would have led to ill-formedness, at least looked at from the point of view of the donor language: *tote bag* corresponds to the pattern "V-N", and *\*totes bags* would have been tantamount to inflecting the verbal component *to tote* ("to carry") for plural, which is not grammatical.

In light of the previous discussion, additional research with more representative samples would be required to determine whether statistically significant correlations can be found between the pluralization of compound Anglicisms and their spelling. One may surmise that hyphenated compounds or, better yet, compounds spelled as one word are likely to dispel doubts and hesitations concerning inflection. Such compounds are better viewed as integrated wholes, whose integrity cannot be easily compromised.

As will be seen now, contextual factors may come into play in choosing whether or not to inflect a compound Anglicism or any other Anglicism. These factors, in contrast with the more traditional ones, have drawn little attention in the existing literature.

#### **3.2.2.4. Contextually-induced (non-)pluralization patterns**

##### **(a) Countable nouns and contextual coercion**

Countable nouns are expected to be pluralized as their *denotata* can be individuated. On the other hand, non-countable nouns which denote undifferentiated masses – so called "compact nouns" in Culioli's (1991) terminology – do not usually exhibit the singular-plural contrast. A generally similar pattern is observable in French, *\*des jazz(e?)s*, *\*des showbusinesses*, and in English, *\*jazzes*, *\*showbusinesses*.

However, as is clear enough from examples in the corpus, some countable Anglicisms are not pluralized. This implies that further refinement of the countable category might be needed to offer an explanation for some irregular pluralization patterns observed in the data. Lyons (1977: 443) noted that "(there is) a hierarchy within the classificatory scheme that is employed to describe or refer to first-order entities such that persons are more strongly individualized than animals and animals more strongly individualized than things". This could lend support, for example, to the consistent pluralization of nominal Anglicisms ending in *-er* as they designate agentive humans. Living entities occupy the highest position in the hierarchy,

as individuals can be clearly discerned. On the other hand, “second-order entities”, that is events and processes, are less strongly individualized. It results from this that some second-order entities may need more contextual support to be perceived as individual objects, which in turn increases the likelihood of overt plural marking. Contrast, from this point of view, the two following utterances containing the two tokens considered earlier, *fashion week*:

(4) *Il y a donc deux fashion weeks dans l'année (...)* (“There are thus two fashion weeks during the year...”) (*Biba*).

(5) *Les demoiselles (...) qui veulent fouler les podiums des fashion week vont être ravies* (“the young ladies who want to step on the runways of the fashion weeks are going to be delighted”) (*Biba*).

In (4) the pronominal quantifier *deux* (“two”), a “mensural classifier” in Lyons’ parlance (1977: 463), gives a clear notion of quantity, and coerces *fashion week* into being construed as a series of discrete entities, hence the plural morpheme. In (5), context causes a more non-specific reading to emerge and there is no overt marking of the plural on *fashion week*. A possible explanation is that *fashion week* is then viewed as a “kind” of entity, from a qualitative point of view. The determiner *des* functions as a “sortal classifier” (Lyons *ibid.*). It should be emphasized that this line of reasoning does not contradict earlier results (see “b” *supra*); on the contrary, it underscores the fact that factors may act in concert toward a common goal.

### (b) Coordinate constructions and contextual coercion

Let us turn to another example of contextual pressure involving strings of coordinated noun phrases. In (6) and (7), the first nouns, *sportifs* and *robes* impose overt plural marking upon the string of conjuncts (my emphasis in the examples below). As a result, these nouns constitute a chain with a unitary status, which is one of the functions of coordination (Quirk *et al.* 1985: 945).

(6) *Sportifs de très haut niveau, hipsters ou encore mannequins (...)* (“elite athletes, hipsters or models”) (*Marie-Claire*).

(7) *En maxi-robes, maxi-shirts, maxi-pulls et maxi-jeans vous vous sentirez « maxi-à l'aise » !* (“By wearing maxi-dresses, maxi-shirts, maxi-sweaters and maxi-jeans, you’ll definitely feel ‘maxi-comfortable!’”) (*Biba*).

Constraints may also conflict with each other. In (8), morphological factors, such as graphotactic constraints (3.2.2.2.c.), come into play and prevail over the morphosyntactic solidarity of coordinated nouns:

(8) (...) *produits « coup de pouce » comme les patch detox* (no overt plural marking), *les boissons drainantes* (overt plural marking), *les compléments alimentaires* (overt plural marking).

(“...helpful products such as detoxification patches, fat-burning drinks, dietary supplements...”) (*Marie-Claire*).

### 3.2.2.5. Brief summary

Summing up at this point, one can notice that pluralization patterns are very much alike in French and in English even if the data revealed contexts where no overt plural marking occurred. Unlike gender assignment, plural marking on Anglicisms is more grounded in formal criteria (phonological and morphological constraints), even though it may not be totally devoid of semantic motivation. There appear to be inflection-facilitating constraints and inflection-inhibiting constraints. The table below provides an overview of how they play against one another to produce certain results:

|   | Examples                                 | Word ending                   | Morphemic complexity                                     | Semantics (first-order entities) | Pressure of context   |
|---|--|-------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Inflected; in compliance with French rules</b>       | <i>Paddés</i>                            | + (loanblend)                 |  | + (artefact)                     | – ( <i>des paddés et des push-up</i> )                      |
|   | <i>Hipsters</i>                          | + (-er)                       |  | + (individual)                   |   |
|   | <i>Wedding planners</i>                  | + (-er)                       | Treated as simplex word > Precautionary principle (i) +  | + (individual)                   |   |
|   | <i>Deux fashion weeks</i>                |                               | Treated as simplex word > Precautionary principle (i) +  | – (event: 2nd-order entity)      | + (numeral <i>deux</i> gives a “unit” reading)              |
| <b>Uninflected; not in compliance with French rules</b> | <i>Patch</i>                             | – (unusual consonant cluster) |  | + (artefact)                     | – ( <i>comme les patch detox, les boissons drainantes</i> ) |
|   | <i>Tous les défilés des fashion week</i> |                               | Treated as simplex word > Precautionary principle (ii) – | – (event: 2nd-order entity)      | – (determiner <i>des</i> gives a “sort” reading)            |

Table 2. Plural marking on nouns and the interaction of constraints (out of 40 nouns)

N.B. A plus sign is used to show that the “constraint” favors the appearance of the -s morpheme. A minus sign has the opposite meaning. Some boxes are left blank as the same criteria do not apply across the board to all Anglicisms.

A further point may now be made with regard to two singular borrowed nouns ending in an -s. The question is to determine whether or not we are looking at different facets of the same phenomenon.

### 3.2.3. Singular borrowed nouns followed by the suffix -s

#### *Une news fracassante* (“An earth-shattering piece of news”)

*News* in English and the Anglicism *les news* in French do not have the same countability status. In English, \**a / two / several news* is excluded as ungrammatical, as it cannot sustain a bounded interpretation, i.e. its referent does not seem to be conceived as a separate unit. In French, however, *une news* has an individuated interpretation, which shows that it has been adapted to the French system. Surprisingly, the -s is also preserved in the singular (*une news*, \**une new*), at least within the limits of the corpus. *Google* was also consulted for occurrences of *une new* and returned no hits.

Along with the fact that *une nouvelle* is countable in French, an explanation may be that the level of internal structure of *news* in English is not the same as other non-count nouns, namely “compact nouns” like *jazz* and *show business*. Differently put, *news* in English is a less prototypical mass noun in that it almost consists of discrete parts in the objective reality itself. It is what Culioli (1991) termed a “dense noun”, as it allows sampling (*a, two, three piece(s) of news*). The mass interpretation of *news* can then be more easily overridden in *une news* in French.

This process of recategorization – in this case, a cross-linguistic mass-to-count shift – is not exceptional. The long-established Anglicism *des toasts* (“slices of toast”), for instance, has already paved the way for similar developments; likewise, the Italian plural *spaghetti* sometimes accepts pluralization (*des spaghetti*) and *un spaghetti* is also commonly heard (see Chierchia 1998). The unit *une news* will then swell the ranks of an already existing paradigm, and by reinforcing it, it may also contribute to predicting potential arrivals in the language: ?*un luggage* / ?*des luggages*.

#### *Un Golden Globes*

The proper noun *un Golden Globes* was also found in the corpus. It bears comparison with *une news* because of the presence of an *-s* in the singular. It can be assumed, however, that the unit underwent a different form of treatment. As *Golden Globes* occurs most frequently in *les Golden Globes*, as an award-giving ceremony, it has come to be stored whole in the mental lexicon. It is therefore retrieved as such, which means that the *-s* is retained, despite a syntactic-semantic mismatch.

In French a similar observation applies to *cornflakes* (“cereal”) and *chips* (“potato chips”). Usage is unsettled over the number and gender of these words because they are, more often than not, used in constructions such as *un sachet de chips* (“a bag of chips”) or *une boîte de cornflakes* (“a package of cereal”). When an instance is extracted, the *-s* is likely to be maintained: *un(e) chips*, *un(e) cornflakes*. It is not added on in the process of speech production, as with most countable words in the plural, but attached to the words in the mental lexicon. As can also be seen, and for like reasons, gender is not stabilized, even after long usage.

Two separate sections were devoted to nominal gender assignment and plural marking because, when applied to nouns, these two grammatical categories require a separate treatment. The issue of number and gender agreement on adjectives is altogether different and allows for a joint presentation. As a prerequisite to an analysis of these borrowings, I will first analyze the properties of French adjectives.

## 4. Adjectives

### 4.1. Structural properties of French and overview of the literature

Agreement is defined by Haspelmath (2002: 65) as “a kind of syntactic relation in which the inflectional behaviour of a word or phrase (the target) is determined by the properties of a nominal constituent (the controller) to which it is closely related”. What is of interest here is agreement within the noun phrase, between the head noun and one of its satellites, namely its adjective. French adjectives, whether they are predicative or attributive, must agree in gender and in number with the noun they modify. It can be said, therefore, that an adjective’s gender and inflection in number is an effect of its syntactic context. Head-modifier agreement on adjectives is realized with external affixation.

The plural of adjectives is normally formed like that of substantives, which is by adding an *-s*, but morphological irregularities can also be found. What is more, as with nouns, there is very little oral morphology, except when adjectives participate in liaison (*mes seuls [z] amis*). Feminine marking is somewhat more complex: in traditional approaches to grammar<sup>16</sup>, final orthographic *-e* is said to be added to the masculine singular form to indicate the feminine. In many cases this results in the sounding of the word-final “latent consonant” such as /p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /g/, /s/, /z/, /f/, /v/, along with possible orthographic changes and associated morphophonological changes (Battye *et al.* 1992: 126-132; Béchade 1992: 198-205). For example, the feminine of *mignon*<sub>Masc.</sub> (“cute”) is *mignonne*<sub>Fem.</sub> and involves a doubling of the consonant *-n* but also a change from a nasal vowel /*õ*/ to an oral vowel. Some studies (Royle *et al.* 2012: 242) have shown that the default rule for a large amount of adjectives in French entails no change between the masculine form and its feminine form; the appearance of final *-e* is, then, not the most common situation. Let us add, as a final remark, that the overall issue of adjectival agreement is compounded by the fact that not all adjectives are gender-variable and / or plural-variable. Some color adjectives (especially nouns used adjectivally such as *orange*), compound color terms (*bleu foncé*, “dark blue”), and colloquial adjectival reduplications such as *cracra* (“dingy”, “grungy”), *rikiki* (“tiny”) reject plural affixation.

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<sup>16</sup> Since the feminine form of an adjective often involves the addition of an *-e* to certain final consonants, it is also possible to conceive the reverse situation, as is done in subtractive morphology (Apothéloz 2002: 38, for a brief summary): under this theory, the masculine form is obtained *after* removal of the last consonant of the feminine adjective.

As underlined by Saugera (2012b), work on the inflectional integration of borrowed adjectives in French is scarce, and most remarks are scattered through the literature and in traditional grammars. There is nevertheless every reason to attempt to determine whether they display the same inflectional patterns as in French, or if they form a distinct system of their own, that is a “small” inflection class with very local constraints. As was the case with nouns (3.2.1.), the speaker is faced with several theoretical options: borrowings may comply with French morphology, and be inflected or remain uninflected, or there may be cases of non-compliance.

Among the parameters that are likely to influence the inflectional behavior of borrowed adjectives are their frequency of usage, their perception by native speakers, their degree of “Gallicization”, and their phonological structure. This is aptly summarized by Saugera (2012b), who states that the presence of a non-native feature in French triggers the incorporation of a non-native morphological pattern. For example, -y endings are not felt to be French, so adjectives remain unmarked for number and for gender: *des vestes<sub>Fem.</sub> baggy* (\**baggyes*, \**baggies*) (“baggy jackets”). The same holds for prepositions, adverbs and prefix-analyzed adjectives, which are not only uninflected because of their foreignness but also in compliance with a more general invariability rule for French prepositions, adverbs and prefixes: *les sièges avant*, \**les sièges avants* (“the front seats”), and in the same way, *ils sont très in*, \**ins* (“they’re very hip”), *des voix off*, \**offs* (“voice-overs”). According to Saugera (*ibid.*), ellipsis may also account for the absence of marking in some cases: *des concerts (en) live* (“live concerts”).

The purpose of the following section is to test the validity of the above-mentioned parameters in my corpus.

## 4.2. Number and gender adaptation of adjectival Anglicisms in the corpus

### 4.2.1. General results and initial assumptions

The inflectional morphology of English-origin adjectives is, at first glance, a rather straightforward matter as results indicate that 94 % of adjectival Anglicisms (*i.e.* 47 adjectives out of 50 types) inflect neither for gender nor number. This being said, I will attempt to determine the reasons why adjectives are less susceptible to morphosyntactic adaptation than nouns. I will also propose to model the aforementioned factors responsible for inflection or for its absence under one single common factor. My hypothesis is that the lack of inflection on an adjective is directly correlated with its prototypicality as an adjective.

At least two main arguments lead me to view French adjectives in general as a prototype-based category: the first one is that morphology alone fails to provide reliable formal markers of word-class affiliation, namely “adjectiveness” (Noailly 1999: 11). An illustration of this is that French adjectives are characterized by a rich variety of forms ranging from derived adjectives to compound adjectives and primary adjectives, which is something they have in common with nouns. In the same vein, the suffix of a derived adjective, *i.e.* the morphological head, is not necessarily responsible for its categorization as an adjective: *-eur*, for instance, can be found in nouns and adjectives alike, *flatteur* (noun: “flatterer” / adjective: “flattering”). Adjectives and nouns also share a number of prefixes, such as *astro-* (*astronomical* / *astronomie*). An even more powerful argument in favor of prototypicality is what Noailly calls the “amorphous behavior” (“comportement amorphe”) of adjectives, in that they exhibit very little morphological variation as opposed to verbs. This implies that they readily allow other parts of speech to occupy their syntactic position. Included in this category are prefixes (*il est extra*, “he’s great”), nouns (*c’est limite* “it’s borderline”), and of course borrowings (for a fuller account of the versatility of adjectives, see Goes and Moline 2010).

Since some French adjectives are more adjective-like than others, I argue that some adjectival borrowings are also closer to the core members of the class of French adjectives,

while others lie further away from the prototype. I will start with loanblends which are as close as can be to central French adjectives.

#### 4.2.2. Loanblends

Loanblends are hybrid forms composed of native constituents and foreign elements. The three adjectival loanblends that can be found in the corpus are unambiguously inflected in gender (*une fille lookée*<sub>Fem.</sub>), or in gender and number (*boostantes*<sub>Fem/Plur.</sub>, *actrices botoxées*<sub>Fem/Plur.</sub>). All three comprise a foreign stem (*look*, *boost*, *Botox*) to which is attached a native ending, in the form of a past or present participle. At this point, one can wonder whether inflection is caused by their “loanblendness” or by more specific factors such as the ending of the adjective. Theoretically at least, adjectival loanblends can also be made up of a native stem and a foreign suffix. This pattern seems to be far less common in French, and no data are available in the corpus. It can be assumed however that the question of inflection is liable to more problematic. Consider, for example, a non-existing loanblend like *choquing* (“shocking”), resulting from the combination of a native stem *choc* with the *-ing* affix, along with spelling modification (*-c > -qu-*). Until proven otherwise, it seems to be impervious to morphological operations, *?des révélations choquings* or *?des révélations choquingues*.

It must be concluded, at least temporarily, that an adjectival loanblend receives inflection if its final suffix is a native adjectival ending or if it bears a very close resemblance to it.

#### 4.2.3. Native English adjectives

This subpart concerns adjectival Anglicisms which are authentic native English adjectives. They comprise overwhelmingly primary adjectives (*fun*, *sweet*, *soft*), but also a few derived adjectives (*British*, *punchy*). What is at stake here is the fact that despite their typical adjectival properties, these native adjectives are still recognized as “foreign bodies”, which tends to distinguish them from prototypical French adjectives. Gender and number agreement is therefore difficult to maintain.

The absence of gender agreement is discussed first: such units as *fun*, *sweet*, *fashion*, *dark*, *British*, *soft* – all found in the corpus – are perceptually salient because in English, unlike French, realization of the final consonant is the norm (*sweet* /swi:t/, *soft* /sɒft/, etc.). They are all the more noticeable as most of these endings do not usually belong to the phonemic inventory of French adjectives. These factors may therefore block feminine agreement. Note that this constraint does not apply to adjectives ending in *-e* (*loose*, *nude*) which, as in French, remain the same as the masculine. Other forms of salience can also be relevant: situational salience, for instance, emerges “online”, as the discourse unfolds. An example is provided by metalinguistic marks such as quotation marks which may signal that speakers perceive the adjectives that they use as exceptional.<sup>17</sup> Not only do these marks highlight their allogenic status, they also help them “resist” full agreement control by the noun that they modify:

(9) (...) *quelles activités « fun » peuvent remplacer cette dépense énergétique (Marie-Claire).*

It should be pointed out, however, that adding a final *-e* is not technically impossible in writing, as French allows, with accompanying vowel change, forms like *mignon* / *mignonne* (“cute”), *opportun* / *opportune* (“opportune”). However, the phonological and graphemic form of the linguistic sign, its “signifier”, would be affected somehow in *fu(n?)ne* and *fashion(n?)ne*. The underlying rule seems to be that recognized foreign elements must be preserved as such and ought not to be tampered with. This brings us back to the precautionary principle (3.2.2.3. b).

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<sup>17</sup> Of course, there often remains doubt as to whether quotation marks are used as “scare quotes”, as a way to indicate other people’s words or merely for emphasis.

The marking of the plural on native English adjectives is now under discussion. On the face of it, plural marking should not pose the same difficulties, as the *-s* morpheme generally remains silent in spoken French – except in liaison contexts – and does not affect the phonic or written image of the adjective. Why does it not occur in any of the data? An explanation could lie in the ordering of inflectional endings: the feminine suffix comes first, and the output of this inflectional process provides a base for the plural suffixation. Since plural morphemes are attached farther from the root than gender morphemes, speakers may prefer to ignore inflectional endings altogether.

Certainly, the absence of gender and number marking on adjectives is not peculiar to Anglicisms; it also occurs in French and may therefore act as a catalyst in a number of ways. Spoken French, for instance, does not always differentiate between *con*<sub>Masc.</sub> and *conne*<sub>Fem.</sub> (“dumb”): *cette fille est con / conne* (“that girl is dumb”). Doing so does not hinder comprehension. The absence of feminine agreement is also a common feature of casual speech when the direct object precedes the subject: *la maison qu’il a construit* (“the house that he built”), instead of the expected form *construite*, as the past participle has to agree with the direct object, *la maison*<sub>Fem.</sub>. Let us also mention that none of the adjectives in the corpus are used in prenominal position, which is a syntactic context where liaison may occur, provided the following noun starts with a vowel (*mes seuls [z] amis*). This comes as no surprise as French in general marginally allows adjectives in this position. As a result, the speaker is rarely, if ever, faced with the question of liaison with adjectival Anglicisms; this could further reinforce the absence of inflection. More generally, the fact that an adjective is mainly characterized by its external incidence (i.e. number appears on the target, the adjective by agreement with the controller, the noun) may contribute to making inflection somewhat “superfluous” as the noun and its determiner already indicate number and gender. The principle of linguistic economy could be at work here.

A final word should be said regarding constraints. What has been claimed thus far about the foreignness of the adjective as an inflection-inhibiting factor does not preclude the possibility of interaction with other constraints. Consider adjectives ending in *-y* (e.g. *punchy*, *arty* in the corpus); for reasons stated above, their non-indigenous status blocks inflection. But one can also observe paradigm effects with other words ending in *-y*, some acting perhaps as exemplars, which serve as possible models for further adjectives of the same structural type. The adjective *sexy* in French may be one of them: it is attested in all French dictionaries and is invariable. The corpus contains 32 instances which all remain consistently uninflected for agreement. A word like *sexy* could then impose its behavior on other adjectives patterned on the same model “X-y”. As another exemplification of the interplay of constraints, note that the allogenic status of adjectival Anglicisms seems to take precedence over other factors such as contextual pressure, which in the case of nouns was assumed to influence inflectional behaviors (see 3.2.2.4.b.):

(10) (...) *les dessous glam' et rigolos* (“...glam[orous] and funny underwear”) (*Biba*).

*Glam'* is an uninflected adjectival Anglicism, *rigolos* is an inflected native adjective.

(11) (...) *couleurs pop ou pastelles* (“...eye-catching and pastel colors”) (*Marie-Claire*).

*Pop* is an uninflected adjectival Anglicism, *pastelles* is an inflected native adjective.

#### 4.2.4. Recategorizations

As pointed out earlier, different grammatical categories can syntactically belong to the adjective slot. These putative “adjectives” lie therefore at the periphery of the category of adjectives, and their membership is not easy to confirm. They seem to have undergone recategorization, which is viewed here as a synonym for “conversion”, that is “the usual term for change of category (N, V, etc.) without a phonologically overt formative” (Miller 2014: 10).

Modern French sports the following construction, which involves the apposition of two distinct nouns: *film culte*, *série culte*, *livre culte* (“cult film, series, book”) / *grève surprise*,

*visite surprise* (“lightning strike”, “surprise visit”). Lehmann and Martin-Berthet (2008: 206) note that such a pattern, which is highly productive, raises the question of word-class boundaries. The nature of the relationship between the two elements is indeed controversial and the question is to determine whether or not the second element has been fully converted to an adjective, or whether it is more suitable to speak of partial conversion.<sup>18</sup> On the one hand, the second element is definitely not an adjective *per se*. But on the other hand, it also displays the syntactic properties typical of an adjective: the structure at hand corresponds to the default noun-adjective order in French, with the adjective being expressed contiguously to the noun; it can be modified (*un film vraiment culte*) and take the form of a predicative adjective (*ce film est culte*), although this is not systematic (*?cette grève est surprise*). From a semantic point of view, the second element performs the functions of an adjective: Noailly (1999: 25) and Goes (1999: 159) argue that because of the slot they occupy, these nouns tend to be emptied of their referential content and mainly denote qualities or properties, which are adjectival traits

Let us now consider the matter further with adjectival Anglicisms which exhibit a structure similar to that found in *grève surprise*, *film culte*. A sample of these includes *des looks biker*, *des patch detox*, *un régime baby food*, *une allure jungle rock*, *la tendance revival*. Once again, the second element is not originally an authentic adjective, but is rather meant to act and look like one. Evidence of this is: the second noun can be employed attributively and can optionally be premodified (*des looks [très] biker*); it can also function predicatively, but in that case, it seems to require obligatory premodification to retain its acceptability (*leur look est très biker*; *?leur look est biker*). As can be seen, these tests do not offer consistently conclusive results, which clearly shows that not all the examples in the corpus have the full range of adjective-like qualities. Returning to the topic of inflection, or rather its absence, it seems to me that the foreignness of the second elements in these constructions and the fact that they are not *bona fide* adjectives account for their uninflected status. Native French nouns which instantiate this construction, it should be noted, are not often inflected for number and gender either (Goes 1999: 151-152), although there are “exceptions”: *des chèques cadeau* (“gift certificates”), *des prix choc* (“unbeatable prices”), *des grèves surprise*, but *des films cultes* (“cult films”). That is why in the case of Anglicisms, I believe that both factors – their allogenic status and their non-prototypical character – militate in favor of a far more consistent absence of inflection.

Finally, while this is not the place to discuss and evaluate the different approaches to conversion (see Schönefeld 2005 for an overview), I would at least like to hint at the process of ellipsis. According to Wise (1997: 108), a word like *une berceuse* (“a lullaby”) has its origin in an elliptical expression, *une chanson berceuse*, literally “a lullaby song”. In the same line of reasoning, it seems plausible to reconstruct an underlying phrase from which the “NN” structures under study could have been derived. For example *un look biker* could be interpreted as an elliptical form of *un look de type / du genre / à la mode biker*, which would also account for the invariability of the second element (see also section 4.1., Saugera 2012b). Some examples lend credit to this claim:

(12) (Corpus example) *Ces chemises à la coupe stretch* (“stretch shirts”) (*la coupe* means “the cut, the way in which cloth has been cut”) (*Marie-Claire*).

(12’) Syntactic simplification is just one step away: *ces chemises stretch*.

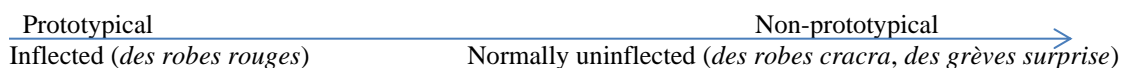
#### 4.2.5. Brief summary

In summary, the idea that formed the major thrust of this section is that the vast majority of English-origin adjectives do not behave like most prototypical French adjectives. The data indicate, however, that the absence or presence of inflection is not distributed randomly; these behaviors are best understood by postulating a scale of adjectiveness:

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<sup>18</sup> The answer to the question is far from being as settled as I suggest here. For an extensive discussion of this issue and other related issues, see Arnaud (2008).

a) Native French adjectives:



b) Adjectival Anglicisms:

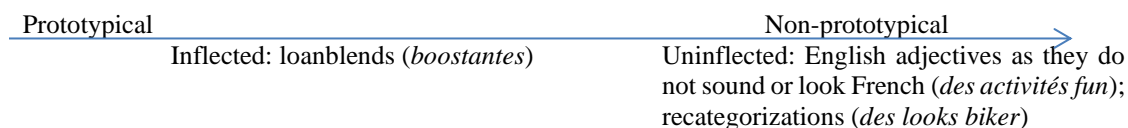


Figure 1. Scale of adjectiveness and inflectional patterns

## 5. Concluding remarks

This study has focused on the morphosyntactic adaptation of English-origin nouns and adjectives in present-day French. It has been primarily concerned with the mechanisms of gender assignment, gender agreement and number marking and has attempted to determine to what extent French rules extend to Anglicisms. The Anglicisms isolated for detailed investigation are relatively recent and do not (consistently) appear in dictionaries. For this study, I have made use of a self-compiled corpus and I have also examined the results gleaned from a small-scale survey involving ten native informants.

The question of gender assignment to nominal Anglicisms has been addressed first. If there are cases of gender vacillation, to which an explanation can sometimes be applied (*un Game Boy / une Game Boy*), my findings have revealed that semantic factors are often at play and that gender assignment can rarely be explained by the combination of morphemes alone. The next step has dealt with the marking of number on nouns. It has been shown that formal criteria prevail over semantic criteria. Further, plural marking has been rather consistently observed, which goes to show that the “hard core” of the French language is not significantly affected by English influences (the bringing in line of *peoples* with French plurals is a case in point). A few instances have also revealed that Anglicisms differ to varying degrees from the corresponding patterning in French, especially with nominal compounds, which remain an unresolved issue with most French speakers. I then turned to the category of adjectival Anglicisms, which is even more straightforward as very few of them inflect for plural or gender. Probably the most compelling conclusion that can be drawn from their analysis is that they tend to simplify the system *vis-à-vis* the more general standard system. This means that, in contrast to nouns, their behavior goes against the “genius” of the French language, its structural properties. I have attempted to account for this pattern of simplification by positing a scale of adjectiveness. The more peripheral members of the category, that is the vast majority of adjectival Anglicisms, are less likely to be inflected.

A number of deeper and far-reaching insights have also emerged:

- Taking into account elements *in absentia* (paradigmatic relations) and elements *in praesentia* (syntagmatic relations) has proven to be indispensable for a complete description of phenomena. It has been demonstrated that Anglicisms enter into paradigmatic relations with countless other elements ranging from well-established Anglicisms to native words which bear phonological or semantic resemblances. This was a particularly relevant issue with gender assignment (networks of similar-sounding nouns like *crunch, brunch, lunch*, for instance) and gender agreement (uninflected adjectives ending in *-y*, for instance, patterned after invariable *sexy*). While this paper was primarily about morphological aspects, it also had to look beyond morphology to get a better grasp of underlying mechanisms. More specifically, I have also explored the syntagmatic context in which the Anglicisms were embedded. My results have shown that the linear dimension of a sentence or even a stretch of discourse may also play a role in assigning gender or inflecting for number.

- Closer inspection has also revealed that certain decisions seem to be dictated by what I termed a “precautionary principle”. This is in agreement with what Pergnier wrote (1989: 40): “La nécessité d’adapter des éléments pris dans un système grammatical étranger au fonctionnement intrinsèque d’un système grammatical autochtone crée à la fois une sorte d’incertitude dans l’usage, et l’élaboration inconsciente de micro-systèmes destinés à résoudre cette incertitude” (“The need to adapt elements borrowed from a foreign grammatical system to the intrinsic functioning of a native grammatical system causes uncertainty in usage, and the subconscious creation of microsystems to solve this uncertainty”). The “precautionary principle” has been abundantly illustrated by the pluralization of compounds (3.2.2.3 b), the analysis of quotation marks (4.2.3.), and the invariability of native English adjectives used in French (4.2.3.).

- Overall, my results indicate that the division of labor between English-origin nouns and adjectives is as follows: it seems that adjectives can “afford” to remain uninflected because the nouns they modify do “all the work for them”. Nouns cannot do without gender marking (all French nouns must be assigned to a gender), and most of them, or their determiners, bear an overt plural marking. As will have become clear, this issue suddenly becomes but one aspect of a wider field of research concerning language contact and language change. For example, this state of affairs could serve as a predictor of future evolutions, or at least signal emerging trends: tentatively, one could argue that native (or even borrowed) French nouns are less likely to be affected by the loss of inflection in the future than adjectives which, as evidenced by adjectival Anglicisms, are more prone to survive without any inflection. A parallel can be drawn here with adjectives in Old English which were required to agree with their nouns in case, number and gender, and which as early as the Middle English period started to lose their inflection (Stévanovitch 1997: 68-70). They have progressed faster and further along this path than nouns since in present-day English, adjectives are totally uninflected whereas nouns still carry the plural morpheme.

- At this point, a word is also in order about the use of corpora. They are obviously essential tools for the study of Anglicisms, especially recent Anglicisms, and allow for observation of a broad range of phenomena, such as gender vacillation (*un Game Boy / une Game Boy*) or hesitation over pluralization (*des push-up / des push-ups*). Such methodology is consonant with what Aronoff and Fudeman (2005: 4) call “morphology in action”, or with Hathout *et al.*’s (2009: 268) approach to “morphologie vivante” (“living morphology”). Furthermore, by providing examples of authentic morphosyntactic contexts, corpora become very good observatories for studying emerging patterns and uncovering underlying trends (*e.g.* the frequent occurrence of Anglicisms in coordinate constructions, or the presence of anaphoric ellipses as in the case of *le slimmy*, (example 2)).

There is, for the time being, one main direction for future work. It is traditionally understood that neology is a language-internal phenomenon, as opposed to borrowing. However there is a fairly straightforward relationship between the two fields of study as neologisms and borrowings i) both contribute to the enrichment of a language, ii) are not always willingly accepted by the members of a speech community, iii) and most of all, particularly germane to the discussion at hand, they both raise the question of morphosyntactic adaptation. Some scholars include the two notions in their work (Tournier 2004) because they both participate in the lexicogenesis of a language. Others, like Anastassiadis-Syméonidis and Nikolaou (2011), eloquently call recent borrowings “neological borrowings” (“*emprunts néologiques*”). This terminological choice is not random. It clearly shows that a comparative study between “native neologisms” and “neological borrowings” (*i.e.* the present case of Anglicisms) will shed new light on the mechanisms of gender and number, and thereby contribute to a better understanding of how the French language works.

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