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# French Language Legislation in the Digital Age: The Use of Borrowed English Telecommunication Terms and Their Official French Replacements on Twitter and in the American Foreign Language Classroom

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French Language Legislation in the Digital Age: The Use of Borrowed English Telecommunication Terms and their Official French Replacements on Twitter and in the American Foreign Language Classroom


by

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Minnesota State University, Mankato

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Abstract

How effective is language legislation? In the age of digital communication and increased globalization, is it possible to create vocabulary and enforce its use? In an effort to continue to develop and modernize the French language to compete with the influx of English technology terms, the French government creates replacement terms for borrowed relevant technological English vocabulary. To determine the use and result of these French replacement terms in "real-time" communication, the micro-blogging social media website, Twitter, was used as a means of gathering linguistic data from Twitter users within 15 miles of Paris, France. Then, three leading introductory French textbooks are examined to reveal whether American students of French are being taught the French government's lexical choices or their borrowed English equivalent.

Chapter One

**Introduction**

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"Our French language is not so poor that it cannot faithfully give back what it borrows from others, so infertile that it cannot produce on its own any fruit of good invention through the industry and diligence of those who cultivate it, provided that some of them have enough love for their country and themselves that they will work at this"

- Joachim DuBellay (qtd. in Joseph 107)

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Language is cultural identity. Not only is it a means of verbal communication for personal expression, but it represents a common connection to a group of people, a link to a community, a culture and its history. As French linguist Henriette Walter notes, "Changing one's language is like giving up a part of oneself" (Walter, French 17). Living languages are never static, rather they are in a continuous state of flux, constantly evolving, and ever changing to best reflect the current needs of the people who are using it to express and define them. This idea of shifting, dynamic language as applied to the French language has become a source of contention among French language purists, especially in regard to the use of English computer, technology and Internet specific terms that are a part of popular French usage.

After hundreds of years of international language dominance, the twentieth century saw the Lingua Franca shift from French to English. From the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries French was the language of the elite, the educated, and the formal international language of diplomacy and government (Flaitz 2). Even in 2005, despite the past century's shift to English global dominance, French was still considered the second

most influential language and ninth most spoken language in the world with an estimated

175 million speakers (Nadeau and Barlow 451). Although French now shares official

language titles with other languages, it remains one of the official languages of the

United Nations, the International Olympic committee, the World Trade Organization, and

the Red Cross, in addition to other influential world groups (Nadeau and Barlow 281).

Throughout the second half of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first

century, English language dominance has been reinforced by political and economic

shifts, increased globalization, and reliance on technology. Technology is changing

communication through quick dissemination of language (Nadeau and Barlow 235).

Humphrey Tonkin asserts that "global English offers its users access to the new

globalised networks and institutions" (322), and the science and technology industries are

dominated by the English language (Truchot 104). Like French, English is also an official

language of the United Nations and the World Trade Organization, as well as many

private and public companies and world-wide organizations (Dunton-Downer 2).

France is not exempt from technology's spread and influence. According to the

website "Internet World Stats," in May 2011 the French language was estimated to be the

eighth most used language on the internet with slightly less than 60 million French

speaking users (accounting for 17.2% of internet users) whereas English was the most

common language with 565 million or 43.4% of users ("Internet World Stats").

Furthermore, among the World Almanac's list of "Nations with the Most Internet Users,"

France ranked ninth in 2009, totaling 2.35% of the world's internet users ("Languages

with the Most Internet Users") and sixth of "Nations with the Most Personal Computers

in Use" with 46.66 million users ("Nations with the Most Personal Computers in Use").

Even though French remains a dominant global tongue, and the French people continue to be consumers of computers and technology, French language purists persist in seeking limits on the infiltration of English words. The French government has passed language laws officially sanctioning the use of English when there is a French equivalent and they have gone to great lengths to formally encourage frenchifying borrowed English terms. As the second decade of the twenty-first century begins, the presence and influence of computer technology and globalization continue to expand. Given the new linguistic landscape and traditionally resistant attitudes to linguistic change demonstrated by French language purists, how has France formally reacted to this influx? Do these English terms have a place in popular French usage? And, which terms are American English speakers learning in the French foreign language classroom?

Purpose

In discussing the influx of borrowed English technological terms[1] in contemporary France, the purpose of this paper is to address and examine the following questions:

1. To what lengths has the French government gone in attempting to formally sanction borrowed English telecommunication and technology terminology?

2. What is the outcome of these efforts, as determined by common language usage in twenty-first century France?

3. To what extent are government approved French lexical terms or borrowed American English terms being taught in America's French foreign language classrooms?

There has been considerable research published on the sociolinguistics of English and French loan words, anglicisms, neologisms, and the connection between cultural ideology and language. There have also been multiple works done highlighting computer terminology in the French language and the influence of English terms. This study intends to synthesize these works to further examine the attempts to officially sanction English technical terminology loan words, to analyze the effect these sanctions have had on popular usage within France, and to examine which terms are taught to beginning American students of French in the digital age. This study will look solely at lexical terms and is not inclusive of syntactic, morphologic, orthographic or phonologic aspects. First, the history of language legislation and guidelines of official language use in France will be presented, followed by two studies I designed and conducted to compare and

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[1] terms specific to computer, internet and telecommunication terminology

contrast the use of English and French telecommunication terms on the social media

website, Twitter, and in the American classroom.

Definition of terms

Anglicism: "Anglicized language, such as the introduction of English idiom into a

sentence in another language; *hence,* a peculiarity of the English language, an

idiom specially English" ("Anglicism")

Bloc-notes: « Site sur la toile, souvent personnel, présentant en ordre chronologique de

courts articles ou notes, généralement accompagnés de liens vers d'autres sites. »

(FranceTerme)

Blog/Blogue: (see *bloc-notes)*

Borrowing: "The transfer of a word from one language into a second language, as a result

of some kind of contact" (Trask 44)

Courriel: « Document informatisé qu'un utilisateur saisit, envoie ou consulte en différé

par l'intermédiaire d'un réseau.

*Note :*

1. Un courriel contient le plus souvent un texte auquel peuvent être joints d'autres

textes, des images ou des sons.

2. Par extension, le terme « courriel » et son synonyme « courrier électronique »

sont employés au sens de « messagerie électronique ». (FranceTerme)

Chat: (see *dialogue en ligne)*

Dialogue en ligne: « Conversation entre plusieurs personnes connectées en même temps à

un réseau, qui échangent des messages s'affichant en temps réel sur leur écran. »

(FranceTerme)

Diffusion pour baladeur: « Mode de diffusion sur l'internet de fichiers audio ou vidéo qui

sont téléchargés à l'aide de logiciels spécifiques afin d'être transférés et lus sur un

baladeur numérique. » (FranceTerme)

E-mail: (see *courriel)*

Frenchify: "To make French in form or character, imbue with French qualities, render

French-like" ("Frenchify")

Instant messaging: (see *messagerie instantanée)*

Lingua Franca: "A language which is routinely used in some region for dealings between

people who have different mother tongues" (Trask 196)

Loan word: "A word which has been taken into one language from a second language in

which it was already present" (Trask 201)

Mél: « Symbole de « messagerie électronique » qui peut figurer devant l'adresse

électronique sur un document (papier à lettres ou carte de visite, par exemple),

tout comme Tél. devant le numéro de téléphone.

*Note :* « Mél. » ne doit pas être employé comme substantif. » (FranceTerme)

Messagerie instantanée: « Service de télécommunication qui permet aux membres d'un

groupe de transmettre à tour de rôle des messages à tous les correspondants à

l'écoute. » (FranceTerme)

Minimessage: "Message alphanumérique de longueur limitée transmis dans un réseau de

radiocommunication avec les mobiles. »  (FranceTerme)

Neologism: "The use of, or the practice of using, new words; innovation in language"

("Neologism")

Podcast/Podcasting: (see *diffusion pour baladeur*)

Smartphone: (see *terminal de poche)*

Tchat : (see *chat, dialogue en ligne*)

Terminal de poche: "Appareil électronique mobile de petite taille qui assure par voie

radioélectrique des fonctions de communication, telles que la téléphonie ou

l'accès à l'internet, et le plus souvent des fonctions informatiques ou multimédias.

*Note :*

1. Un terminal de poche combine, entre autres, certaines fonctions d'un téléphone

portable, d'un assistant électronique de poche et d'un baladeur.

2. Les noms de marque tels que « Blackberry » ou « iPhone » ne doivent pas être

utilisés pour désigner de façon générale ces appareils. » (FranceTerme)

Tweet: mode of communication on social media website, Twitter. "Small burst of

information" that may include photos, url links and written content with a limit of

140 characters ("About")

Chapter Two

## History of the French Language and the State

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« Langue de la République en vertu de la Constitution, la langue française est un élément fondamental de la personnalité et du patrimoine de la France. »

(Art. 1er. Loi no.94-655 ; "Historique des textes législatifs")

---

Since the sixteenth century, the French language has constituted an important national and cultural value, legislated and preserved by Renaissance monarchs to the fifth republic. To establish a language as one of power, education, culture and prestige, France took many steps to deliberately create and foster a language that represented the people and history of French cultural dominance from the sixteenth century through the end of the First World War. A series of laws and authoritative government organizations were created specifically to unify, define, and preserve French values through common language use. Shaped and molded into its current state, achieving a universal French language has been an ongoing process attempted through a structured state effort to form, maintain, and regulate vocabulary and grammar. The French language helped unify and create current cultural values. However, the steps necessary to construct and maintain a universal language all but eliminated regional dialects, generated prejudice toward neologisms, borrowed words, foreign terms and anything outside of the official and acceptable French lexical parameters.

THE RENAISSANCE AND THE ACADÉMIE FRANÇAISE

During the Renaissance in Europe, the French language was very casual, inconsistent and "was considered by many to be an undeveloped, impoverished

language" (Adamson 2). A mix of regional dialects, borrowed foreign terms, made-up words and lexical creativity, French lacked the structure and uniformity that would later characterize and define it (Nadeau and Barlow 52). In 1539, François I took first steps to promote and distinguish the French language from Latin by mandating its use in legal documents in the *Ordonnance de Villiers-Cotterêts* (Adamson 2; Goudaillier 86; Kibbee 24). A politically motivated action, the *ordonnance* was an attempt to establish consistency and clarity by standardizing the language as dictated in Article 110: "qu'il n'y ait, ni puisse avoir, aucune ambiguité ou incertitude" (Adamson 5; website, Académie française). Ultimately, François I's *ordonnance* did not regulate the language, but rather legitimized it in its own right (Nadeau and Barlow 57). It was also the first link between power, authority and language in France (Adamson 4), a theme that reappeared a century later when le cardinal de Richilieu took another step towards standardizing and creating consistency within the French language by establishing a state institution called the *Académie françiase* in 1635.

Unlike the *Ordonnance de Villiers-Cotterêts,* the purpose of the Académie française was to unify and regulate French language and use. It became the official arbiter of the French language and was charged with creating the dictionary, a grammar, a manual of rhetoric and a treatise of poetics (Adamson 52; Kibbee 24; Académie française website). By publishing the official French dictionary, the Académie became the gatekeeper of the state-approved French language and retains final approval over new French vocabulary. Still in existence today, the purpose of the Académie remains (to) "fixer la langue française, de lui donner des règles, de la rendre pure et compréhensible par tous. Elle devait dans cet esprit commencer par composer un dictionnaire »

("L'Histoire"). To date, the Académie has published nine editions of the official French dictionary, and maintains its role as keeper of the language.

Although « [L]a principale fonction de l'Académie sera de travailler avec tout le soin et toute la diligence possibles à donner des règles certaines à notre langue et à la rendre pure, éloquente et capable de traiter les arts et les sciences» (Académie française website, « la langue française »), the release of the first edition of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* highlighted a gap that has long existed between the officially recognized French lexicon and technological terms, neologisms and other outlier vocabulary. According to Kibbee, Louis XIV influenced much of the contents of the first edition of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française,* published in 1694 (24-5). The king's preference was to exclude technical terms, literary references, and words that reflected "bourgeois usage" in favor of having the dictionary's contents express "the preference of the Bourbon monarchy for culture over science" and to only include language that was used at court (Kibbee 25). Despite the fact that the dictionary's contents did not fully portray the language of the time, as it purposely failed to include neologisms, archaisms, regional, lower-class and technical terms, the first edition of the dictionary's principles remained the standard for hundreds of years (Kibbee 25).

Louis XIV maintained control over the officially recognized language through the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française,* yet other dictionaries and works of the time were more inclusive and reflective of technical scientific terms, regionalisms, and actual usage outside the royal court. For example, in 1606 Jean Nicot published a French-French dictionary, *Thresor de la langue françoise,* a well-researched representation of French translations of Latin found in literary works (Kibbee 24). However, the book was rejected

by Louis XIV because it included dialectic and technical terms and was not considered

the "best French and thus did not serve the centralization of power envisioned by the

Bourbon kings" (Kibbee 24). Furthermore, a member of the Académie française, Antoine

Furotière, was released from the institution due to disagreements about the omission of

technical terms and the Académie's refusal to include some vocabulary that reflected

modern use of the language (Kibbee 25).

Likewise, as a way to further the development of the French language in literary

expression, in their book *La deffence et illustration de la langue francoyse (1549),* the

poets of the Renaissance *Pléaide*, championed the idea of incorporating borrowed terms

to enrich the French language (Adamson 2; Joseph 108).

> "Translators should not worry if they occasionally encounter words which cannot
>
> be taken into the French family, given that the Romans did not insist on
>
> translating such Greek words as *rhetoric, music, arithmetic, geometry, philosophy*
>
> […] and most of the terms used in the natural sciences and mathematics generally.
>
> Those words, then, will be in our language like foreigners in a city […] . Thus, if
>
> the philosophy sown by Aristotle and Plato in the fertile fields of Attica were
>
> replanted in our own plains of France, this would not be throwing into the
>
> brambles and thorns where it would be sterile, but rather changing it from
>
> something distant into something near, and from a foreigner into a citizen of our
>
> republic" (Joachim DuBellay, qtd. in Joseph 108).

Du Bellay argued for the inclusion of terms that offered something beneficial or novel to

the language. For him, borrowing foreign terms enriched French by adding more options

into the pool from which to draw upon when creating poetry. He recognized that some foreign terms may be short lived serving only one purpose and not having a long-term place in the language, but he also argued that others enhance the language and should become fully integrated French terms (Joseph 108).

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Throughout the eighteenth century, further legislation was enacted to sanction the use of the French language, while the Académie continued to release new editions of its dictionary. In 1714, the Treaty of Rastadt made French the universal language of diplomacy in Europe, and subsequently the French language "dominated intellectual life" and became a means of gaining French political and cultural influence throughout Europe (Adamson 6). Meanwhile, despite tremendous strides made in science and technology, and pushback from *académiciens* like the philosopher, Voltiare, the four subsequent editions of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* published in the eighteenth century continued to exclude technological terms and neologisms (Kibbee 25).

The end of the eighteenth century brought the Revolution, whose new-found republican values *Liberté, Égalité, Frantérnité* reinforced the importance of a unified common language. To establish the principle of *égalité* and to create oneness within the new republic, French was promoted as the universal language and other linguistic variations, as well as the use of patois and dialects, were to be eliminated (Adamson 8; Kibbee 26). Having one common language allowed for much easier dissemination of information and political ideals, strengthening the centralized government and allowing citizens to be more aware of and involved in the newly established political system

(Adamson 7). During this period, a prejudice toward other dialects persisted, and in 1794 the government went so far as to imprison and take away all "rights and goods" of those who wrote a document in a language other than French (Adamson 8). According to Adamson, the idea of language universalism was important to the longevity of the new French Republic because they recognized the importance of establishing a national language policy, identified language as an integral part of the nation, and understood that political unity could be achieved through linguistic unity (8). At this time, French was to be used instead of the regional language in all classrooms and written correspondence (Adamson 7), but due to the lack of established centralized education, enforcing these rules proved challenging.

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The changes in the education system in the nineteenth century secured the use and standardization of the French language while the government continued to dismiss foreign terms and regional dialects. The centralized education system was a vital contributor to the spread of French as the universal language of the Republic because it was free and required the attendance of all children under the age of twelve to learn in and be exposed to the language (Adamson 8). That meant, however, that the support and regulation of French diminished the acceptability and use of regional dialects by prioritizing their abolishment among school children (Adamson 9-10; Kibbee 26). The government went so far as to make the use of languages other than French in an educational setting treasonous (Kibbee 27). Between 1881-84 Jules Ferry, the Minister of Education, further changed the system by making it *gratuite, obligatoire,* and *laïc*, which "created ideal conditions for the extinction of the despised 'lower' forms of language and

their replacement by French" (Adamson 10). Kibbee states that standardized tests during this time were so stringent that "tolerances officielles" had to be passed to allow schools to overlook common spelling problems (27).

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY AND ENGLISH LEXICAL BORROWINGS

Although there had long been defensiveness toward the use of neologisms and borrowed terms, the French government specifically focused on limiting the influence of American English terms during the second half of the twentieth century. The evolving media presence and fast pace of technological improvements invited a significant shift in French language use. Government agencies were founded to create new terms and vocabulary because "borrowing, it was felt, was a threat to the lexical system, at the very least, and frequently to the phonological and morphological systems as well" (Kibbee 27). According to Adamson, "The speed of technological innovation meant that inside France terminology became a problem, since the tendency was to adopt the English-language terms for new inventions, and many of these words were (and are) felt not to be suitable in French" (12). To create new terms to replace technological ones, the *Commission de terminologie technique* was founded in 1933, followed by many other government bodies tasked with replacing scientific and technical terminology (Adamson 12).

REPLACING BORROWED ENGLISH TECHNOLOGY TERMS

The official resistance to foreign terms and regional dialects shifted focus from promoting and preserving the French language through the dictionary and exposure in schools, to defending it by combating the barrage of English technology terms with more

aggressive formal legislation. Spurred by the influx of English terms, the second half of

the twentieth century saw the implementation of four different French laws supporting

internal language planning. Despite the attention paid to language planning, French did

not become the official language of France until the 1992 Loi constitutionnelle (No. 92-

554) added it to the second article of the constitution (Adamson 27). In 1966 Prime

Minister George Pompidou created the political institution the *Haut-Comité pour la*

*defense et l'expansion de la langue fraçaise* as reaction to the increasing debate about

English lexical borrowings. The influx of borrowed American English terms was

highlighted in a controversial book by Étiemble entitled *Parlez-vous franglais?,* which

pushed the issue to the forefront of political discourse (Adamson 61; Thogmartin 1000).

Managing language regulation with a top down approach (Adamson 25), the objective of

the *Haut-Comité* was to:

> "examine appropriate measures to ensure the defence and expansion of French, to
>
> establish the necessary links with competent private organizations, especially in
>
> the areas of cultural and technical cooperation and to instigate or encourage any
>
> and all initiatives related to the defence and the expansion of the French
>
> language."[i] (qtd. Adamson 62 & 178; qtd. Thogmartin 1000; "les institutions
>
> chargée de la langue française").

The *Haut-Comité* underwent numerous changes from 1966 to 2011, and now exists as

part of *La Délégation générale à la langue française et aux langues de France*

(DGLFLF) in the Ministère de la culture et de la communication, the most current French

governmental institution charged with guiding national language policy at the inter-

ministerial level (DGLFLF website). According to the DGLFLF website, its philosophy

and approach to governmental language involvement as:

> "Of all the bonds that link individuals in society, language is the strongest,
> because it constitutes the foundation stone for the feeling of belonging to a
> community. This bond is constantly changing, as a result of increasing
> globalisation and the building of the European Union. The public authorities
> therefore need to promote a language policy, which ensures that the French
> language remains pre-eminent on French soil, but which also contributes to social
> unity and helps to foster cultural diversity in Europe and throughout the world"
> ("Délégation générale à la langue française et aux langues de France").

To ensure that French persists as the primary language in France, the DGLFLF has

several missions: one is to use and spread the French language, which includes promoting

the use of French within the scientific community, and another is tasked with the

"development and modernization of the French language" (Adamson 63; website,

Minstère de la culture et de la communication). To develop and modernize the French

language, there exist eighteen different terminology ministries, each representing a

different segment of the technical and scientific community. Each ministry is charged

with suggesting new terms to be considered as replacements for industry specific foreign

terms that have no direct French translation (Nadeau and Barlow 403). Consisting of

business and industry personnel, each ministry suggests new terms which are then

proposed to the Académie française, the ultimate authority of which terms will become

officially accepted into the French language (Adamson 53). The terms allowed into

official use are published in the *Journal officiel,* the French governmental paper of official business.

In addition to the *Haut Comité* and the DGLFLF, there were other laws passed specific to language legislation at the end of the twentieth century. In 1975, la Loi Bas-Lauriol (no.75-1349) made the use of French compulsory and prohibited foreign language use in certain settings ("Historique des textes législatifs"). Moreover, it broadly mandated the use of the French language and specifically rejected the use of other languages in advertising, contracts, describing and presenting goods, radio and television, and on all written documents relating to the official public domain in France (Adamson 25; "Historique des textes législatifs").[ii] Translations were allowed only in conjunction with French text, and this insistence upon using French in France was enforced by the threat of withdrawing government financial support (Adamson 25). In 1994 another new law was introduced as a reformed version of the Loi Bas-Lauriol. Known as the Toubon law (no.94-665), it addresses the use of the French language in media, advertising, work, education, and research within France (Adamson 27). Article one reads : « L'emploi d'une marque de fabrique, de commerce ou de service constituée d'une expression ou d'un terme étrangers est interdit aux personnes morales de droit public dès lors qu'il existe une expression ou un terme français de même sens approuvés dans les conditions prévues par les dispositions réglementaires relatives à l'enrichissement de la langue française » ("Loi no. 94-665 du 4 août 1994").The compulsory use of French in the media, advertising and among civil servants was designed to preserve and actively defend the use of the French language and further unify and define the people of France.

LE *BON FRANÇAIS* AND THE IDEA OF "PURE" FRENCH

As a reaction to the increased presence and influence of technology and its American English technical terms, came concern from language purists. According to Nadeau and Barlow, language purism appears to be somewhat of a French cultural value, as they claim almost all Francophones subscribe to the idea that the French language has a "pure" form (381). Nadeau and Barlow describe this notion on a continuum with some French speakers adapting to the language's evolution whereas the minority of more fundamentalist language purists claim an ideal and fixed language (381). The fundamentalist language purists believe the language to be currently in decline and idealize the language of seventeenth century literature as the true and standard *vrai français,* a belief that the language is a fixed entity (382). However, Nadeau and Barlow argue this as superstitious because the "supposed golden age of French, the time of Louis XIV, three-quarters of French people could not speak French fluently, if at all. Among those who did, only a fraction spoke 'pure' French" (Nadeau and Barlow 383). And as noted previously, the first (standard) edition of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* was not an accurate depiction of the language, since Louis XIV specifically shaped its contents to exclude much of the language of the time. Nevertheless, the idea that the French language has a pure and classic form makes variances from that idealized norm more apt to meet resistance and increase the perception that the French language is deteriorating. As cited in Kibbee, Maurice Druon of the Académie française, is quoted as saying that the ninth edition of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* was driven by the "dégradation brutale et accélérée du langage français, [qui met] en danger notre culture, notre économie et notre identité même » (qtd. in Kibbee 28). A main area of

blame for the perceived decline of the language comes from the increased foreign, and most notably English, terms. According to the Académie française website, the language is being threatened by English, "plus précisement l'américan, qui tend à envahir les esprits, les ecrits, le monde de l'audiovisuel" ("Défense de la langue française"; Adamson 54).

The extreme language purist's rejection of using borrowed English computer and technical terminology represents a conservative ideology. French linguist Claude Hagège calls it the "expression of a class struggle over who gets to set the standard" (qtd. Nadeau and Barlow 389) and Flaitz's (1988) research revealed that the attitudes of French people surveyed about "the relationship between French attitudes toward English, speakers of English, and anglo-American ideology" as "attitudes of the more common French men and women participating in this study appear to be more positive than those held by their more vociferous counterparts in government" (Flaitz 191). She goes further in referring to another study by "Henry Kahane's (1982) claim that the defense of French is an intelligentsia-inspired campaign which symbolizes conservatism and resistance to change" (192).

"Dire, Ne pas dire"

The Académie française started a series on their website to highlight French language misuse and suggest corrections called "*Dire, Ne pas dire.*" The series was designed to highlight errors and idiosyncrasies in modern language use, and is broken down into several subgroups or sections to make more specific recommendation for accurate language use. One subgroup is dedicated exclusively to *Néologismes et l'anglicismes* ("Dire, Ne pas dire"). Neologisms are new words or expressions and

anglicisms are neologisms specific to English words and idiomatic phrases, which are common in modern French usage. The second of the subgroups suggests avoiding English abbreviations and dictates that one should correctly say (*dire)* superlatives like « très beau, très bien, le meilleur, etc" instead of using (*ne pas dire)* the anglicisms "super," "hyper" or "mega" ("Abréviations et mots anglais à valeur superlative").

COMPETITIONS TO REINVENT AND FRENCHIFY POPULAR ENGLISH TERMS

In early 2010, the French government hosted a competition for students to create new, French-sounding alternatives to commonly used English borrowed words or anglicisms. Students' suggestions were evaluated by a panel of judges, including popular rapper MC Solaar, whose top choices would go on to be further evaluated by the eighteen government ministerial committees for official suggested usage (Litchfield 2010). The English terms chosen for the reinvention and frenchification process were largely related to the Internet and technological realm, such as "le buzz," "chat" and "newsletter." "Le buzz," referring to internet buzz, will now be replaced with "le ramdam," an Arabic term. "Chat," and "newsletter" will now be "tchater" and "infolettre" respectively (Litchfield 2010). Whether or not these suggested terms have been approved by the DGLFLF and put into use has yet to be seen, but the competition illustrates the government's creativity and persistence in creating substitutions for English terms in an attempt to defend the French language.

Chapter 3

**English Technology Loan Words and Their Place in Modern French Usage**

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**"Frenchify (*v.*) :** To make French in form or character,
imbue with French qualities, render French-like" ("Frenchify")

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WHAT ARE ENGLISH COMPUTER TERMINOLOGY LOAN WORDS?

In this paper, English computer terminology refers specifically to words attached to computer, telecommunications and, more broadly, internet use and functions. This includes, but is not limited to physical computer parts, terms such as hardware, software, mouse and laptop, as well as internet specific terms such as a computer bug, website, or blog.[2]

Borrowing English computer and technology terms is commonplace in French when the French language possesses no equivalent term. As Maurice Pergnier asserts "A quoi servirait un nouveau mot s'il permettait seulement de dire ce qu'on peut déjà dire avec les mots français existants?" (61) Technology and computer terminology often do not change from their English origin because, as French linguist Henriette Walter suggests, it may be "an effect of the law of least effort: … the loan word has been kept but modified and integrated into the more normal modes of word formation in French. It is especially in this technological area, where they serve a pressing need, that loan words are most frequently found" (Walter, French 208). As cited in Ben-Rafael, Pergnier (1989)

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[2] This study is not inclusive of telecommunication or internet acronyms or abbreviations such as BTW (by the way) or TTYL (talk to you later).

proclaims that English loan words in French serve three purposes "1) designing a new reality which can hardly be named by French terms; 2) indicating a virtual reservoir for neologisms to invigorate the vocabulary with new denotative and connotative values, and 3) adding a 'quasi magic' touch to the discourse" (cited in Ben-Rafael 45).

Some borrowed English terms retain their original English form whereas others become frenchified, or become more French. There are many examples of directly borrowed words such as the English term *software* or *Internet*. For example, directly translated, *email*, or *electronic mail*, is officially known as *courrier éléctronique* or *courriel*. However, *email* is commonly referred to not as *email* or *emél*, rather as *mél,* a frenchified amalgamation form of the borrowed English term.

THE ORIGIN OF ENGLISH TECHNOLOGY TERMINOLOGY LOAN WORDS IN FRENCH

Loan words are widespread in French computer terminology, but according to a 1996 study by Henriette Walter, few of them are of English origin. In her article "Le lexique de l'informatique et l'emprise de l'anglais," published in *La Linguistique*, Walter found only 44 of 1, 649 (2.5%) of the entries in the 1996 edition of the Larousse *Dictionnaire français d'informatique* to be English or anglicisms (48). The study's main focus was to examine the origin of data-processing vocabulary in French dictionaries relative to anglicisms, English loan words, and direct translations from English terms (Walter, "la lexique" 45). The list of anglicisms and borrowed English data-processing terms found in the *Dictionnaire français d'informatique* includes 44 words such as: bogue (bug), client-serveur (client-server), digit (digit), plug and play (plug and play), software (software) and widget (widget) (Walter, "la lexique" 49-50). Interestingly, the

study identified that 80% of English loanwords come from a Latin base and 14.5% stem from Germanic origin, indicating the vast majority of words considered English loanwords to the French language have simply returned to their Latin based roots through English (Walter, "la lexique" 52). In which case, these borrowed English words were originally adopted into English and have now come full circle by returning to French usage. Although Walter determines only 2.5% of 1, 649 entries in the 1996 edition of the *Larousse dictionnaire français d'informatique* are English or anglicisms, this statistic is not necessarily a reflection of actual language usage among the French people. Nor is it an indication of the broad reach of the English language in computer terminology loan words or the profound English language presence in technology (Walter, "la lexique" 50).

FRENCH REPLACEMENT TERMS

To judge the influence of the language planning process in France, Fugger conducted a study to measure awareness of new French terms created to replace English lexical borrowings (Thogmartin 1001). Fugger surveyed a group of French journalists, members of the media, educators and civil servants (those professions targeted specifically by terminological planning commissions), and requested they compare ten anglicisms with the new French terms created to replace them (Thogmartin 1001). Results indicated a discrepancy in meaning, as only 40% of participants believed the anglicisms and French terms to mean the same thing (Thogmartin 1001). Fugger also inquired about the participants intention to use the new French terms, and feedback indicated that "30% would decide according to circumstances," solidifying the perceived inconsistency in meaning between the anglicism and new French term. Furthermore, only 15% noted they would "always" use the new French term and 46% would "refuse to use

them in any case" (Thogmartin 1001). Fugger's study showed an evident gap between the intentions of French terminology planning efforts and its actual effect.

Similarly, Thogmartin (1991) conducted a survey of Lyonnaise study abroad host families, asking them to identify their "recognition of and preference for English words versus the officially-sanctioned French equivalent" (1001). The twelve vocabulary words he used were a smattering of terms like *shopping/lèche-vitrines, compact disk(CD)/mini-disque, bulldozer/bouldozeur,* and did not represent one specific or technical theme. Two of the sets of terms were technical terms: *compact disk or CD/disque audio-numérique* and *mini-disque/disque audio-numérique.* Results revealed that 50% of time the official term is known and used more often than its English counterpart whereas 42% of responses indicated that the English term was more widely known and used (Thogmartin 1001). He also found that there was a higher rate of recognition and use of English terms than their official French counterparts (1002). Thogmartin posits that "subjects had a high degree of passive recognition for these words and some inclination to use them actively" and that official terms may have influence in specific industries, but not in general usage (1004-5). Both Fugger and Thogmartin's research demonstrate the insufficient reach and outcome of French language planning efforts. Fugger studied the target-group of French terminology planning commissions and Thogmartin surveyed ordinary speakers of French and both groups indicated little interest in using new terms.

Chapter Four

**Assessing Official French and English Telecommunication Term Use in Modern**

**France on Social Media**

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To examine the use of borrowed English technical terms and their official French

government replacements, I designed and conducted the following study using social

media to collect data about telecommunication terms. In the digital age, the internet and

telecommunication have become an integral part of modern communication. According

to WorldStats.com, 50.29 million, or 77.2%, of the French population used the internet as

of December 31, 2011, a statistic that has continued to substantially increase each year

since 2000 ("Internet Users in the European Union"). Social media websites like Twitter

are also being used more frequently, as the number of Twitter users in France more than

doubled to 5.2 million in 2011, according to Parisian start-up Semiocast ("5,2 millions

d'utilisateurs"). There are vast discrepancies in research data regarding Twitter

demographics in France, but the microblogging site is the fastest growing social network

according to a 2010 Pew Research study (Hampton, Goulet, Rainie and Purcell 12).

Assuming French Twitter demographic patterns are similar to those in the United States,

where more statistics and demographics have been researched, the majority of users

(60%) are between 18 and 35 years old, racially diverse, female, and have some college

education (Hampton, Goulet, Rainie and Purcell 11-12).[iii]

Due to this shift to more digital means of communication, social media websites

like Twitter allow unique insight into linguistic use. Twitter describes itself as a "real-

time information network" that allows users to stay current by reading and interacting through the website ("About"). Twitter users represent a wide variety of the population. Twitter has commercial and marketing applications for businesses, media outlets, government officials, and many other organizations, and social applications for those looking to stay connected with others and their communities. Many segments of French society are represented on Twitter, including major media outlets like the newspaper *Le Monde*, French television stations, and even several of the government ministries including the Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication. Because of Twitter's broad appeal and diverse user base, it is a reasonable representation of the general population, and thus was the chosen means to gather linguistic data.

Although Twitter has only existed since 2006, it is becoming an increasingly prevalent instrument to collect and study linguistic and sociolinguistic data. For example, a 2011 study by Zappavinga explored the use of Twitter as a means of gathering information to illustrate community-building aspects of searchable talk (789). According to Zappavinga, "searching Twitter may soon be one of the most effective ways to gather useful information, since returns capture what users are saying online in real-time" (790). Zappavinga employed Twitter's hashtag feature to collect data to support the theory that "searchable talk" is a community-building social endeavor (790). Similarly, Pak and Paroubek (2010) evaluated feelings and opinions using Twitter as a data collection instrument, and Russ used Twitter as a means to identify linguistic patterns based on geographical location (Schuessler 2012). Others use Twitter to help determine marketing strategies, predict elections and gain information about what the population is talking

about online. The microblogging social networking site is used to connect, communicate

and discuss, and it is proving to be a useful repository of real-time linguistic data.

PURPOSE

To better understand the current effect of the language planning in the digital age,

I performed a study to examine the difference between the use of several terms from the

telecommunication lexicon as regulated by the *Journal officiel* and their borrowed

English counterparts in modern France. Twitter.com was utilized as the instrument to

uncover and measure the occurrence of official and unofficial telecommunication words

expressed in current French popular culture. Twitter is a microblogging social media

platform that represents the face of modern communication.

INSTRUMENT: TWITTER

Communicating on Twitter is done primarily through tweets, or short messages of

one-hundred forty characters or less, that allow users to share an idea or respond to

another user. Others may choose to "follow" another user, which means they will be

updated as soon as that user posts a comment. Each Twitter account has a homepage

newsfeed where tweets from users they follow are posted. Anytime a tweet is written it is

then posted to their newsfeed and to the newsfeeds of others who follow them. Each

tweet shows the date posted (or how long ago, in seconds or hours, it was posted if within

the last 24 hours), the name and username, which includes an @ symbol, a picture or

photograph, and the tweet content. Depending on each user's personal settings, their

location may also be listed. Unless the user "protects" their tweets to make them private

and unavailable for public view, they will be included in a search conducted for specific

words, phrases, or "trending" topics. Therefore, Twitter's "real-time" capacity provides a rich opportunity to study word choice and usage within specified parameters, and to observe casual, authentic interaction.

METHOD

Six word sets specific to digital age telecommunication were studied. Each set included three terms with one shared meaning: 1) the new French *terme officiel*, 2) the foreign/English equivalent or borrowed term, and 3) one other alternate word for each official term. The French governmental website FranceTerme, a part of the Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication, an online resource for accessing the terms published in the *Journal officiel* by the Commission général de terminologie et de néologie (FranceTerme), was used as the means to identify the official French term, to define the foreign/English equivalent term, and to reveal other official synonyms, accepted abbreviations or symbols. All foreign equivalent terms are of English origin. The terms in the third category of other alternative words are either a) one of the synonyms, abbreviations or symbols of the *terme officiel* listed on the FranceTerme website, b) a vocabulary word with the same definition as the *terme officiel,* or c) a creation from the terminology competition mentioned in the previous chapter.

As dictated by the *Journal officiel* de la République française on the FranceTerme website, all terms researched are part of the official domain of telecommunications, with a subgroup of either internet or radio communication. Telecommunication terms were chosen specifically because of their universal and ubiquitous application in the digital age. Terms like *email, blog, chat* and *text* are widely used in different industries and

applications, as tools for communication as well as a topic of conversation. All terms researched are universal, and brand or company specific communication terms (ie. "friend," "tweet," etc.) were not included in the research.

A Twitter search was conducted for each term. In the search options, Twitter permits users to set specific parameters around words, people, places, language, and even includes advanced searches containing two different emoticons, questions, and re-tweets. Using Twitter's Advanced Search option for most accurate results, the parameters were set only to include tweets using the French language that occur within fifteen miles of Paris, France. The search preferences allow the selection of miles or kilometers; miles was chosen to include the most geographic area. Each term was then entered into the "This exact phrase" search box with the other set parameters, and a search was conducted. Twitter then displayed results of tweets that included the exact phrase given within the set bounds. The social media website does not allow searching by date, nor does it count the number of given results. After the search is performed, there is an option to view either the "top" or "all" results, filtering the tweets so that the most recent are at the top. "All" results were selected for this study to be as inclusive as possible.

The results include tweets with the exact term found in the username, name or tweet content. Therefore, any embedded links and shortened links that included the searched term were also displayed. Terms found in the username, name or link, were not counted in the data. Only terms whose use matched the definition given on the FranceTerme website[3] were incorporated in the data. While gathering data, careful attention was paid to deciphering meaning of the term as it was used in each tweet. For

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[3] found in Chapter One, Definition of Terms, at the beginning of this paper

example, the English word *chat* also means *cat* in French, so tweets that described a household pet, for example, were not included in the data. Also, terms like *blog* were often found in a URL posted in a tweet, and such occurrences were also excluded from the data. Data collected was counted manually and consists of tweets that occurred within the twenty-four hour period from midnight to 11:59 PM on Monday, April 2, 2012.

**Table I. Telecommunication terms as defined in the *Journal officiel*/FranceTerme website**

| Official Term | Year term became official | Official Synonyms/Abbrev. | Foreign Equivalent |
|---|---|---|---|
| courriel | 05/2003 | courrier-éléctronique<br>message éléctronique<br>mél. (as messagerie éléctronique) | e-mail<br>electronic mail |
| minimessage | 12/2004 | - | short message |
| bloc-notes | 05/2005 | bloc | blog<br>web log<br>weblog |
| diffusion pour baladeur | 03/2006 | - | podcasting |
| dialogue en ligne | 05/2006 | dialogue | chat |
| messagerie instantanée | 12/2006 | | instant messaging |
| terminal de poche | 12/2009 | ordiphone<br>TP | smartphone<br>PDA phone |
| personal communicator<br><br>handheld device | | | wireless |

(all information cited from FranceTerme, 3/31/2012)

RESULTS

Results indicate that the *termes officiels* are not used as frequently on Twitter as either their foreign/English equivalent or other synonymous terms. Out of the three

different terms measured in each word set, the *terme officiel* consistently was least used by French Twitter users within fifteen miles of Paris. Throughout the twenty-four hour data collection period, 66% of the foreign/English (*e-mail, blog, chat, smartphone*) equivalent terms occurred more than the official term or the other term counterparts. 33% of the "other" terms (*SMS, podcast)* appeared more than the foreign/English equivalent and official terms, and one entire set of terms (*messagerie instantanée/instant messaging/instant message)* resulted in no mention on Twitter.

Each term in the *courriel/e-mail/mél* word set netted significant use on Twitter. The official term, *courriel (*17%), was used second to its foreign/English equivalent counterpart *e-mail* (72%) and the other term, *mél (10%),* was found significantly less frequently. *E-mail* was searched with and without the hyphen and yielded the same results, indicating the hyphen is not recognized or relevant to search results. *Mél,* an amalgam of the words *méssagerie* and *électronique* and pronounced like *mail* in English, is officially recognized as a symbol representing *messagerie éléctronique*, not *e-mail* or *message électronique.* According to the *Journal officiel* and FranceTerme, it is not to be used as noun, but rather « comme Tél. devant le numéro de téléphone" (FranceTerme, 4/4). However, in data collected on Twitter, it was used in the same fashion as both *courriel* and *e-mail*, as both a verb and a noun. *Mél* also proved to be a challenge to search due to its variety of meanings outside of telecommunications. For example, search results included users named Mél, as a short form of names such as Mélanie, Melody or Mélissa.

*Minimessage,* and *short message* both netted zero results. *SMS,* however, a term used in English and French alike, received the most results of any of the researched terms

with more than one-hundred tweets. *Short message,* the foreign/English equivalent that resulted in zero Twitter usage, is a term not frequently used in American English. Interestingly, the *Journal officiel* does not recognize the term *text* (noun: a text, or verb: to text)*,* a much more current and common word for *short message*.[4]

Bloc-notes, a « site sur la toile, souvent personnel, présentant en ordre chronologique de courts articles ou notes, généralement accompagnés de liens vers d'autres sites. » (FranceTerme, 4/4) appeared in only three tweets whereas the foreign/English equivalent, *blog,* was used in seventy-five tweets. The other spelling, *blogue,* occurred six times in the search, four of the six times it was used as a conjugated verb form instead of as a noun like *bloc-notes* and *blog*. A *blogueur* or *blogueuse,* or someone who writes a blog, is not recognized by the *Journal officiel,* and the spelling is similar to that of *blogue. Diffusion pour baladeur* and *podcasting,* the official term or foreign equivalent yielded zero results. *Podcast*, however, generated significant results, used in fifty-four tweets throughout the twenty-four hour period. Furthermore, the Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication's official Twitter account includes the term *blog,* not *bloc-notes,* the *terme officiel,* as expected from a government organization.

Dialogue en ligne, the official term for *chat,* did not produce any results. *Chat (34x)* the foreign/English equivalent yielded significantly more results than *tchat (6x),* the other option. Following a similar pattern, the official term *terminal de poche* produced

[4] Although the terms *text* is not included in the *Journal officiel,* it was searched on Twitter and, like *SMS,* yielded over one-hundred results (term not included in table II).
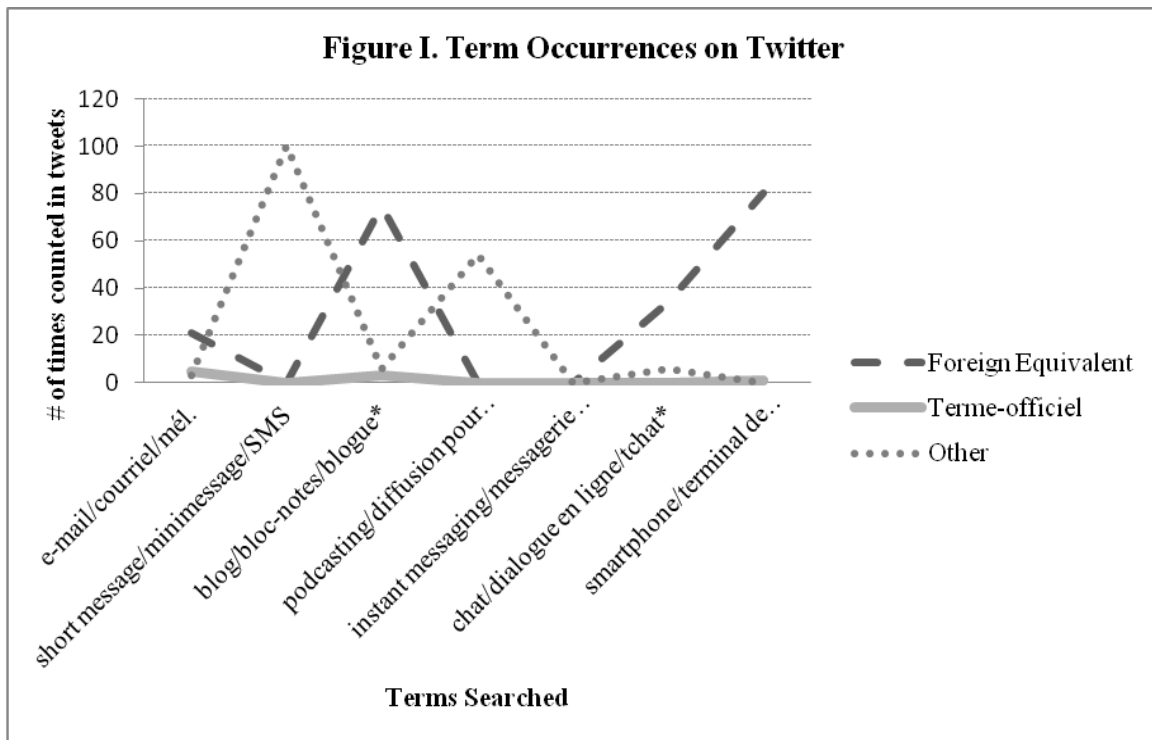
zero results, and the foreign/English equivalent, *smartphone,* yielded the most in the word set with eighty uses over the data collection period. The other option, *ordiphone,* a combination of the words *ordinateur (computer)* and *téléphone,* resulted in zero occurrences.

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**Table II. Occurrence of Telecommunication Terms on Twitter**

| Official Term of tweets | # of tweets | Foreign Equivalent | # of tweets | Other terms | # |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| courriel | 5 | **e-mail** | **21** | mél. | 3 |
| minimessage | 0 | short message | 0 | **SMS** | **100+** |
| bloc-notes | 3 | **blog** | **75** | blogue* | 6 |
| diffusion pour baladeur | 0 | podcasting | 0 | **podcast*** | **54** |
| messagerie instantanée | 0 | instant messaging | 0 | instant message | 0 |
| dialogue en ligne | 0 | **chat** | **34** | tchat* | 6 |
| terminal de poche | 0 | **smartphone** | **80** | ordiphone | 0 |

*terms that are not included in the *Journal official*/FranceTerme

Results indicate a correlation between word length and usage, as the most popular term was also the shortest in four of the six term word sets studied. *SMS, blog, podcast* and *chat,* were used more than, and contain the least amount of characters relative to, their synonymous counterparts. *E-mail* and *smartphone* have the middle amount of characters in their respective word sets and yielded more search results and tweet occurrences than their counterparts. The option with the most characters never yielded the most use.

**Figure I. Term Occurrences on Twitter**

*term not officially recognized in *Journal officiel*

Two of the shortest terms that yielded the most tweets were foreign/English equivalents and two were from the other category. Both *e-mail* and *smartphone,* the terms that fell in the middle (not the longest or shortest option in the set of synonyms) are the foreign/English equivalent. Five of the six longest terms were *termes officiels,* which were also the five least used terms. Two of the six longest terms produced zero net results.

The official terms created to replace the borrowed English term follow similar models to their original English form. Some were formed as a direct translation and others are an amalgamation or abbreviation of the longer term. For example, terms like *diffusion pour baladeur, dialogue en ligne* and *terminale de poche* are all considerably

longer and more descriptive translations of the original English terms *podcasting, chat* and *smartphone.* However, terms like *courriel* and *ordiphone,* are the mix of two words just like *electronic mail* and *smartphone,* the respective English equivalents. Furthermore, although English terms use may be discouraged for public officials and civil workers, their use is often considered chic or fashionable among the public, which may contribute to the trend toward their use on Twitter.

LIMITATIONS

Twitter is a social networking site open to anyone who would like to register, therefore this study only represents the portion of the general population who use Twitter. Users pick their own privacy settings, so those who leave their data open may suggest something about the type of individuals that do not protect their tweets and thus may have an effect on the data. Also, Twitter searches do not necessarily include every tweet within the search parameters; they are meant to be general.

Furthermore, Twitter users within the search parameters, or fifteen miles of Paris, may not all be French native speakers. Twitter does not require or publish information about users' country of origin or native language, so there is a possibility that tweets included in the data were written by French-speaking foreigners. Depending on the background of the user, this may or may not suggest a more natural affinity for the foreign/English equivalent terms. For instance, an American Twitter user in France may be more likely to tweet in French, but use the English equivalent versus the official French term due to awareness, accessibility and cultural norms. The only language parameter that was able to be set was that the tweet was written in French.

Twitter does not have a tweet counting feature, nor does it total search results. Therefore, because the individual tweets were counted manually, there may be a margin of human error. Furthermore, the data collection period was twenty-four hours due to the necessity of counting tweets manually. When a search yielded an exceptional quantity of results, the website became slow to respond and would cease to respond. This made it challenging to accurately collect data, so a shorter data collection period was chosen to ensure more accurate results. Had the search been conducted over a longer period of time, however, the resulting data may have been different.

CONCLUSION

The data in this short study suggest that the *termes officiels* are not incorporated into everyday Twitter use as frequently as their foreign/English in French language tweets coming from the Paris, France, geographical area. The data imply that the general population may not be incorporating official telecommunication lexical terms as readily as the DGLFLF expects their use at a government level. The findings suggest a preference toward the foreign/English or other term, which may reflect an apathetic attitude to the influx of English telecommunication terms among Twitter users in Paris or a disregard for the official terms. However, more research is necessary to further investigate these ideas.

The need for brevity with a one-hundred forty tweet character limit may also impact the use of *termes officiels* on Twitter. The results indicate a preference toward the shortest term option 66% of the time. Realistically, the character limit disfavors much longer terms like *dialogue en ligne* for the four letter *chat.* It is clear that Twitter users

use the foreign/English term more frequently than the *terme officiel,* but why this is the case requires further study. Likewise, comparing French and English linguistic usage on other social media websites like Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, etc., may offer more conclusive data about lexical use on social websites. Expanding this study to include more websites invites further research possibilities to look specifically at a specific demographic, which is not possible on Twitter due to their search restrictions.

Chapter Five

**English and French Telecommunication Vocabulary in the American Foreign**

**Language Classroom**

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As noted in previous chapters, language is tightly woven into the French cultural identity. New terms approved for use in the *Journal officiel* were created to preserve, defend and keep the language current with technological shifts that demand linguistic accommodation to take on a more French, versus English, form. Although use of *termes officiels* is expected by those in government and the public sector, the general population is the ultimate target for putting these words into common usage. There were over 216, 000 American university students learning French as a foreign language in 2009 ("Language Enrollment Database"), showing significant interest in the language. So, are *termes officels* being taught in American French Foreign language classrooms? What terminology is being taught to American French Foreign Language students?

To examine these questions, I studied three leading textbooks from different publishers for beginner-level university French courses. Designed for the 21st century classroom, all three textbooks were chosen because they have a significant technological focus, have integrated technological vocabulary, activities, and incorporated supplemental electronic learning tools. The latest edition of each text was used to ensure that the most current material was included in this study. The telecommunication vocabulary terms observed previously on Twitter (*courriel, message instantanée, minimessage, bloc-notes, diffusion pour baladeur, dialogue en ligne, terminal de poche*

and English equivalents) were examined to note whether the *terme officiel,* official

foreign/English equivalent, or other non-official term are taught to students. The official

term and any given alternatives with synonymous meaning are recorded in table III.

*VOILÀ! 6TH EDITION*

Published in 2010, the Heinle Cengage Learning book *Voilà! 6th edition* is a

digital age savvy textbook that incorporates technologically relevant material aimed at

students. The book strives to include timely topics relevant to French cultural issues and

the typical college student demographic. Technology vocabulary is dispersed throughout

the book, but the subject is presented most extensively in a lesson dedicated to rainy day

activities. The rainy day activities vocabulary contains a section specific to Internet

terminology with relevant, useful terms and phrases specific to Internet use and

telecommunications. The chapter, fourteen, vocabulary is broken down into sections that

include a sub-sections for "Internet," "Le français tel qu'on le parle" and "Le français

familier" to further define terms that have definitions in different applications

(Heilenman, Kaplan and Tournier 336). *Voilà!* also has a book companion website and

offers an online workbook and ebook via Quia learning management system, and

supplemental electronic activities.

*DEUX MONDES 7TH EDITION*

The seventh edition of McGraw-Hill's introductory-level French textbook *Deux

Mondes* is a communicative approach to language learning. The textbook is supported by

an online learning system, Connect French, which houses the ebook, an interactive

audio/video chat and an online workbook (Terrell, Rogers, Kerr & Spielmann xi). Much

of the content is geared toward electronic communication and technology, but chapter eleven focuses primarily on vocabulary specific to Internet, computer and audiovisual terminology, and gives several useful expressions and examples of these terms. The chapter is rife with activities that reinforce and recycle new vocabulary, offering students an opportunity to practice and apply new words and grammatical structures. For example, there are reading and cultural activities about the language of texting, technology in France, and texting as a cultural phenomenon (Terrell, Rogers, Kerr and Spielmann 342-346), realia including an advertisement for a smartphone (342), and several online activities incorporating technology words and themes. There are also numerous activities that position discussion and conversation activities around technology and telecommunications, prompting students to use the vocabulary.

*FRANÇAIS-MONDE*

Pearson Prentice Hall published the textbook *Français-Monde* in 2011, which uses a learner-centered approach specifically focusing on "meaningful and relevant language in real-world contexts" (Ariew & Dupuy xiv). The text is technology-heavy, loaded with features to enhance the language learning process by providing students with a variety of different resources via an online learning system, podcasts, supplemental online activities and online audio/video textbook support (Ariew & Dupuy xv). MyFrenchLab, the online learning system connected with the book, encourages students to utilize the site as a forum to "personalize, stimulate and measure learning" and acts as tool where supplemental and online resources are available for students to work cooperatively and independently to complete assigned tasks (mylanguagelabs). The Pearson language lab site also has a Twitter account.

Although technology is integrated into many of *Français-Monde'*s lessons and activities, chapter three vocabulary thematically focuses on "talking about relationships and social networking," "talking about computers" and introduces a variety of different terms specific to the Internet and audio-visual equipment (99). Within the chapter there are many activities discussing social networks, means of telecommunication and their place in young French peoples' lives as a way to communicate and stay connected. A cultural article about telecommunication company Minitel presents a "well connected" France, discussing the involvement of the French public in blogs and social networks. There is another activity including an interview of a Generation Y student, who states that he communicates with friends through text, email, and Facebook (Ariew & Dupuy 70). The chapter concludes with a sizable project in which students are asked to synthesize and apply the vocabulary and themes from the chapter and create a personal page on Facebook France.

**Table III. Telecommunication terms taught in Beginner-level French Foreign Language Textbooks for American Students**

| Terme officiel | Equivalent Term(s) taught in | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | *Voilà!* 6$^{th}$ ed. | *Deux Mondes* 7$^{th}$ ed. | *Français-Monde* |
| **courriel** | courriel, courrier éléctronique, message éléctronique (all termes officiels) & mail | courriel (terme officiel) | courriel, email, mail, mèl |
| **minimessage** | texto | texto | texto, message SMS |
| **bloc-notes** | blog | (none) | (none) |
| **diffusion pour baladeur** | (none) | (none) | (none) |
| **dialogue en ligne** | discussion en ligne; discussion en temps réel; tchat | (none) | (none) |
| **messagerie instantanée** | instant messaging (terme officiel) | (none) | (none) |
| **terminal de poche** | (none) | un PC de poche | Le Blackberry®* |

*not included in data due to brand name

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Telecommunication terms are not abundantly found in the vocabulary lists of any of the three beginning French textbooks. Of the seven telecommunication word sets studied on Twitter in the previous chapter, *Voilà!* includes decisively more of these terms (71%) than *Français-Monde* (14%) and *Deux Mondes* (14%). *Termes officiels* comprise 40% (*courriel, messagerie instantanée)* of the telecommunication terms in *Voilà!,* 50% *(courriel)* in *Deux Mondes,* and 50% *(courriel)* in *Français-Monde*. *Voilà!* is the only textbook that included any official foreign/English equivalents (20% - *blog*), and the remaining telecommunication terms were other words synonymous with the *terme*

*officiel,* but not acknowledged in the *Journal officiel* (as either an official term or foreign

equivalent): *Voilà!* (40% - *minimessage, dialogue en ligne), Français-Monde* (50% -

*minimessage*) and *Deux Mondes* (50% - *minimessage*). Although these terms are not

necessarily highlighted explicitly as vocabulary, many of them are used in exercises and

activities throughout the chapter.

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**Figure II.**
**Percentage of Telecommunication *termes officiels* found in Introductory French Textbook**
**vocabulary**
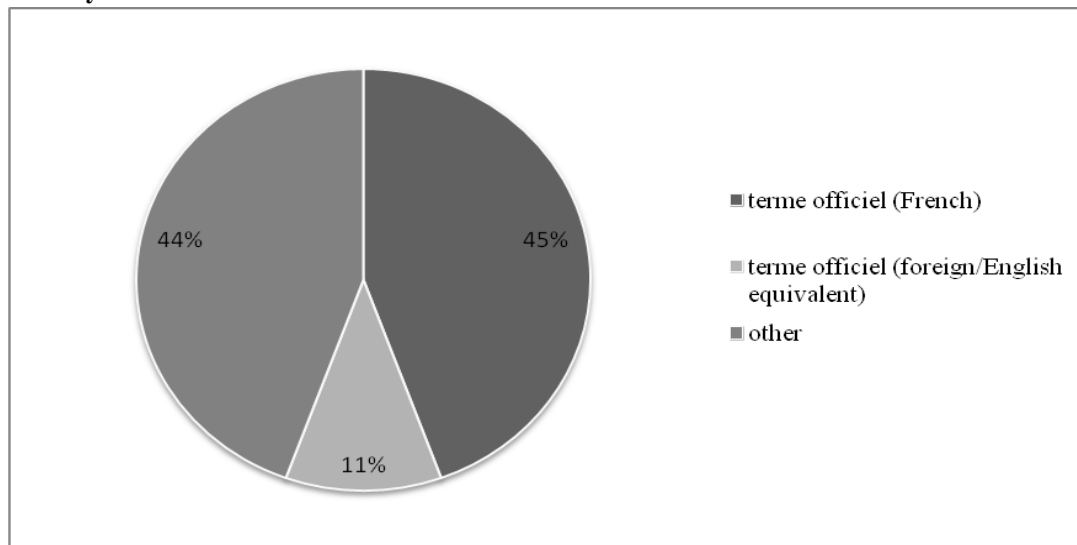


All three textbooks teach the *terme officiel* as the French word for *e-mail.* All

three teach *courriel,* and *Voilà!* and *Français-Monde* also give several other alternatives.

In *Voilà!* the *terme officiel, courriel,* and official synonyms for *e-mail (courrier*

*éléctronic, message électronique* and *mél)* are defined in the vocabulary of Chapter 14. In

an asterisked disclaimer-like acknowledgement separate from the defined sub-sections

("Le française tel qu'on le parle" etc), it is noted that *mél* is to be used as a symbol,

coinciding with the definition in the *Journal officiel*: "On business cards, letters, etc., the

email address can be preceeded by Mél (for méssagerie éléctronique)" (336). *Courriel* is

cited as the English equivalent of *email*, just like in the *Journal officiel,* but *Voilà!* defines each official synonym and specified the subtleties in each term's use: *courrier electronique* and *message électronique* equate to *electronic mail* and *electronic message* respectively, a subtle distinction not made in the *Journal officiel.* Unlike the *Journal officiel,* however, *Voilà!* also adds *mail* as another option for *e-mail* in an example in the sub-section "Le français familier*."* Similarly, *Français-Monde* includes *email, mail* and *mèl* as well as *courriel* (*mèl* is spelled with an accent grave instead of the typical accent aigu). Although it is listed on the FranceTerme website as a *terme officiel, mél* (in the *Journal officiel* spelled with an accent aigu) is not included in the data of this study as an official equivalent of *email* because it is a symbol for *messagerie éléctronique,* not *email.* The second official term in *Voilà!*, *messagerie instantanée,* is defined with the English equivalent as *instant messaging,* exactly as dictated in the *Journal officiel.*

*Blog* is the only official foreign/English equivalent listed as a vocabulary word in any of the textbooks and is taught as the French term for the English noun *blog* in *Voilà!* Its *terme officiel* counterpart, *bloc-notes,* is not mentioned in *Voilà!'s* vocabulary. Although it is not outlined explicitly as such, *Français-Monde* and *Deux Mondes* use the term in several chapter activities among both French and English text. The two specific activities using blogs in *Français-Monde*, "Blog et profil" and "Blogs Music," include *blog* in the English directions and then the French language activity (Ariew and Dupuy 92-3), and *des blogs* are mentioned in part of an exercise in *Deux Mondes* (Terrell, Rogers, Kerr and Spielmann 342).

Of the telecommunication terms taught as vocabulary, there were equally as many non-official words as *termes officiels* included in both *Deux Mondes* and *Français-*

*Monde.* All three textbooks teach the term *texto,* not included in the *Journal official* in any capacity, as the French word *minimessage.* Also, none of the textbooks equate *texto* to *short message,* the terme officially recognized as the foreign/English equivalent. Instead, *text message* is given as the English definition. *Français-Monde* also lists *message SMS* in addition to *texto.* Like *mél,* the *Journal officiel* specifically cites *SMS* as a symbol for *service de minimessage,* a relative, but not synonym for *minimessage.* Furthermore, the official term for *chat* is *dialogue en ligne,* but *Voilà!* offers three different expressions instead: *discussion en ligne; discussion en temps réel; tchat. Discussion en ligne* and *discussion en temps réel* are given as the French term under "Internet" vocabulary, and *un tchat* as a *discussion en ligne* specifically as used in "Le français familier." As with other aforementioned terms in *Français-Monde, chat* is used in a French language reading activity, but is not specifically highlighted as a vocabulary word.

*Terminal de poche* is never used or taught as vocabulary in the three textbooks. However, *Deux-Mondes* teachers *un PC de poche* as the equivalent to the English *a PDA with Internet access* in the chapter vocabulary, and *Français-monde* specifically highlights the brand-specific term *le Blackberry®* as the correct vocabulary term. Le *Blackberry®* is not included in the data because it is a specific brand name.<sup>iv</sup> Interestingly, the *Journal officiel* specifically directs against the use of brand names like *iPhone* or *Blackberry* to generally describe smartphones ("Ordiphone"). The term *smartphone* is not used as the taught French or English translation in any of the textbooks. *PDA with Internet access* is not the official foreign/English equivalent as noted in the *Journal officiel,* however, it is listed as a synonym for *smartphone.*

All three textbooks fail to include *diffusion pour baladeur* or any of its equivalents in vocabulary lists. However, all three textbooks use *podcast* in chapter activities and the online learning systems. For example, each book has a complementary podcast through their online learning package, yet *podcast, podcasting,* and *diffusion pour baladeur* do not appear in the book vocabulary. Both *Voilà!* and *Français-Monde* use the English words *podcast* and *podcasting* in reference to these supplemental activities.

Also, there is inconsistency between the explicit vocabulary and the language used in chapter activities in *Français-Monde.* For example, despite being defined specifically in the vocabulary as the French word for *email*, *courriel,* the *terme officiel,* is never employed in the chapter activities. Instead, *le mail* and *email* (used nine times collectively) are preferred over *courriel* in the language of chapter activities (ie. an interview activity offers students "communiquer avec le mail" as one of the question options) (83). Also, *messagerie instantanée* is not explicitly taught in the vocabulary (therefore is not included in table III), yet it is included as an option in an activity.

Likewise, *Deux Mondes* uses several terms throughout the chapter, yet does not explicitly include them as vocabulary terms. For example, an extra activity for students includes an online exercise to discover electronic devices, specifically suggesting a *smartphone* and *des apps pour smartphone* in the French language context (343). Yet unlike *Français-monde, Deux Mondes* consistently uses the exact vocabulary words introduced in the chapter. For instance, the *terme officiel* and vocabulary word*, courriel,* is the only option given for *email,* and is used consistently in chapter activities.

The data suggests not only that telecommunication terms are not the primary focus of vocabulary definitions in beginner French course textbooks, but also that their given French *termes officiels* are shown no more preference in introductory vocabulary lists than other French terms. Also, unlike the results on Twitter, the official foreign/English terminology is used even less than the *termes officiels.* Most significant, however, is the quantity of unofficial (both French and foreign/English equivalent) that are taught but not included in the *Journal officiel.* Conclusions may be drawn that this trend suggests terms other than those included in the *Journal officiel* are used more in other dictionaries or in common French language usage. It can also be inferred that English terms like *blog* and *podcast* are not taught because a translation is not required. They are considered relevant enough to be included in their English form as evidence by their place in textbook lessons (incorporated into directions written in both English and French using the English form), yet may not need to be specifically recognized in a vocabulary list.

It is unknown if and to what extent textbook authors consult the *Journal officiel* in vocabulary selection, or how the decision is made to include certain terms and what specific language is used to define them. More research is needed to ascertain how textbook vocabulary selection is conducted. Also, because of the limited scope and sample size of this study, an extended study would include more textbooks and online resources in data collection.

CONCLUSION

The college age group of 18-22 year olds comprise over a third of social networking users in the United States (Hampton, Goulet, Rainie and Purcell 9), and rely very heavily on technology and telecommunications in their daily lives. Students of the digital age use the telecommunication lexicon as both a form of communication and topic of conversation, which render technological and telecommunication vocabulary necessary and relevant to include in beginning French curriculum. Although many terms like *chat, instant messaging* or *smartphone* do not necessarily serve as a literary base for future literature courses, they are indeed functional terms that are used regularly in spoken French. In addition to their functional and social application, teaching these terms provides an opportunity to engage students in learning the historical significance of language legislation, the role of language in French culture, and to demonstrate the strength of the French language during the digital age. Therefore, incorporating new French terms and recounting their cultural significance is extremely relevant to the twenty-first century language curriculum. According to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), the standards for foreign language learning should include aspects of communication, culture, connections, comparisons and community ("Standards for Foreign Language Learning"). A cultural and technology focused activity to introduce terminology planning, the history and value of language legislation in France, and to draw comparisons between borrowed English terms and their official French counterparts would provide an opportunity for students to learn vocabulary in context, be exposed to legislative differences between the United States and France, and understand the importance of language to the French cultural identity. To

make the terms from the *Journal officiel* more relevant in today's quickly changing world and more taught to American students of French would be to try to expose students of French to their terms. Due to the technologically focused material found in all three beginner textbooks, adding a cultural exercise about language planning would be a natural complementary activity and extension of existing textbook activities. It may also serve as an independent project for an honors student presentation or supplemental classroom activity.

Researching vocabulary selection and terms taught to beginner-level language students presents several avenues for potential future studies. First, including more textbooks, ebooks and digital classroom resources into this study would offer a different dimension to understanding the application of technology and telecommunication vocabulary. How these terms are used in online versus print media by publishers, instructors and students alike, would be a logical extension and comparative of this research. Also, studying classroom vocabulary selection taught to students in France, both native speakers and second language learners of French, would be an interesting opportunity to extend the above study to compare vocabulary selection and the influence of language legislation in France.

Chapter Six

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

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      From François I's signing of the *Ordonnance de Villiers-Cotterêts* to present day

terminology planning competitions in popular culture, it is evident that the French

language plays an integral role in the French cultural identity. It has been deliberately

preserved, promoted, defended, created and molded into its current state and has acted as

both a unifying and dividing force throughout history. The influx of technology and the

speed of global communication during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have

influenced the French language considerably, and many lexical changes have reflected

the increased relevance of technology and English borrowings. In its present form,

terminology planning is an attempt to keep the French language current and relevant,

while maintaining its traditional sense of prestige and authenticity. The findings on

Twitter and in introductory French textbooks may suggest that 1) language legislation is

not strictly followed, 2) achieving effective communication is more important than using

official terms, and 3) the juxtaposition between official language and actual usage in the

twenty-first century is merely a continuation of similar tensions that have existed between

linguistic authorities and the general French population for centuries.

      Clearly, the occasional use of borrowed English terms does not detract from the

ability to communicate effectively in French as the common language. Conveying

meaning appeared to be the ultimate goal rather than following correct language use

protocol. Also, some borrowed English terms and their French replacements may

sometimes have interchangeable meaning, while others may have slight differences in perceived meaning. So, as Thogmartin suggested, the terms found most on Twitter and within French textbooks may reflect nuances in meaning between English loan words and their official French counterpart, indicating use of the term that best suits the needs of the communicator. Furthermore, the volume of lexical options to convey similar meaning, coupled with trendiness of words, phrases and language used in groups, cannot be discounted. It is clear that the focus on effective communication is more immediately important than consistently using legislated terms.

Also, it seems the incongruence between official French language and actual usage may itself be part of the French cultural identity. The trends separating used and legislated language continue to reflect the same pattern as during the time of Louis XIV: the official language does not necessarily reflect popular or technical linguistic use. While Louis XIV's motivation was to create a specific image through official language, the 21st century French government is attempting to keep the language current, relevant and incorporate technical terms. Although the current official language is more inclusive of technical vocabulary than during the seventeenth century, official terms do not fully correlate with the linguistic choices of Twitter users or American textbook authors. As aforementioned, Nadeau and Barlow suggest that most Francophones subscribe to some degree of belief in the idea of "pure French," yet the value put on the language as a fixed entity is not followed in practice. So, has this contrast between believing in the value of some form of a pure and fixed language while rarely abiding by its rules become part of French cultural and linguistic identity?

Furthermore, French language planning highlights contradictions and inconsistencies within France's stated linguistic cultural values. For instance, government organizations and media are officially required to utilize French, yet the Twitter account belonging to the Ministry of Culture and Communication has a *blog* not *bloc-notes.* The recent popular culture competition chose neologisms (borrowed terms from the Arabic language) to replace common anglicisms despite a well-documented history of shunning new words, and having the Académie française decry the use of both neologisms and anglicisms in "*Dire, Ne pas dire"*. The idea of "pure French" draws upon a fictional linguistic identity created by Louis XIV, yet still persists today as a cultural ideal.

Moreover, new terms created to replace technical English lexical borrowings do not appear to be absorbed into popular usage. Both Fugger and Thogmartin's (1991) respective studies show the tepid response to new French replacement terms, and the majority of telecommunication *termes officiels* yield relatively weak results in current use on a social networking website. French citizens do not seem to employ these replacement terms simply because they have officially been accepted and legislated by the government; instead it appears that French replacement terms are used when and if the meaning best corresponds with the intended meaning of the speaker.

There is also inconsistency between how French replacement words are being used and what is being taught to American students of French, as evidenced by the lack of *termes officiels* found on Twitter and the variation of terms taught in beginning French textbooks. The second article of the French constitution dictates French as the official national language, there have been several laws enacted to ensure the use of French in most public and educational settings, and there are several governmental institutions

dedicated to language planning and development. The French language is an irrefutably important component of the cultural identity of France, yet the terms created to preserve and promote the relevance of French in the digital age are not readily being taught in American textbooks. Again, the terms taught in beginner textbooks reflect the needs of the American classroom context rather than the desires of the language planning officials.

The inconsistent use of officially accepted new French technology and telecommunication terms on Twitter and in American textbooks demonstrate the challenge of attempting to harness and control language, an inherently transferable, fluctuating and fluid entity. As Du Bellay and Walter suggest, lexical borrowings enrich a language, adding depth and further opportunities for creativity and precision in expression. Walter's 1996 study confirms the interrelated nature of language by demonstrating how many terms seen as English lexical borrowings are in fact merely French words that were borrowed into English hundreds of years earlier. Therefore, the twenty-first century, influx of technology, and American English lexical borrowings reflect the dynamic and adoptive nature of language. The rapid pace of modern communication renders terminology planning less effective because the nature of language dictates it difficult to plan, legislate and enforce.

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Appendix

**Language regulation timeline in France 1951 – 2011**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1951 | – | Loi Deixonne |
| 1966 | – | Pompidou creates the *Haut comité pour la défense et l'expansion de la langue française* (internal & external) |
| 1973 | – | *Haut comité* becomes *Haut comité de la langue française* |
| 1975 | – | Loi Bas-Lauriol |
| 1984 | – | Mitterrand replaces *Haut comité de la langue française* with the *Comité consultatif* (la francophonie) *and the Commissariat général à la langue française* (France) |
| 1989 | – | The *Comité consultatif and the Commissariat général à la langue française* are replaced by the *Conseil supérieur de la langue française (CSLF)* and the *Délégation générale à la langue française (DGLF)* |
| *1992* | – | *Loi Constitutionnel* |
| 1993 | – | Creation of the *Ministère de la culture et de la communication* (DGLF in this ministry) |
| 1994 | – | Loi Toubon |
| 2001 | – | Chirac makes the DGLF the *Délégation générale à la langue française et aux langues de France (DGLFLF)* |

(Adamson 24-29)

Notes

[i] "étudier les mesures propres à assurer la défense et l'expansion de la langue française, d'établir les liaisons nécessaires avec les organismes privés compétents, notamment en matière de coopération culturelle et technique, de susciter ou encourager toutes initiatives se rapportant à la défense et l'expansion de la langue française." (Adamson 178)

[ii] The first article of the Loi Bas Lauriol reads :

« Dans la désignation, l'offre, la présentation, la publicité écrite ou parlée, le mode d'emploi ou d'utilisation, l'étendue et les conditions de garantie d'un bien ou d'un service, ainsi que dans les factures et quittances, l'emploi de la langue française est obligatoire. Le recours à tout terme étranger ou à toute expression étrangère est prohibé lorsqu'il existe une expression ou un terme approuvés dans le conditions prévues par le décret n° 72-19 du 7 janvier 1972 relatif à l'enrichissement de la langue française.

Le texte français peut se compléter d'une ou plusieurs traductions en langue étrangère.

Les mêmes règles s'appliquent à toutes informations ou présentations de programmes de radiodiffusion et de télévision, sauf lorsqu'elles sont destinées expressément à un public étranger.

L'obligation et la prohibition imposées par les dispositions de l'alinéa 2 s'appliquent également aux certificats de qualités prévues à l'article 7 de la loi de finances n° 63-628 du 2 juillet 1963. » ("Historique des textes législatifs")

iii In 2010, the Pew Research Center conducted a study about social networks (from which the

    data cited in chapter 4 came), and did an update six months later in 2011. The updated

    data directly opposed the data from the original study, indicating inconsistency within the

    same research project. It is unclear whether the drastic change in data is due to

    inconsistent methodology or extreme shifts in Twitter user patterns.

iv Within the three textbooks there is much use of brand-specific technology such as *le Facebook,*

    *Bluetooth, le Blackberry®, une Wii, un iPod,* instead of using more generic terms to

    describe these devices or social media. There is a French law asserting the use of generic

    terms as to not advertise or promote specific product placement in the domestic news

    media. For example, French newscasts are not to mention social media networks by

    name, instead they are to use the more generic term "social media websites" (Ferenczi).