



# Comme disent les Anglais/Américains: Identifying and Analyzing Anglicisms in Corpora by Means of Metalinguistic Comments

Ramon Marti Solano

## ► To cite this version:

Ramon Marti Solano. Comme disent les Anglais/Américains: Identifying and Analyzing Anglicisms in Corpora by Means of Metalinguistic Comments. Ramón Martí Solano; Pablo Ruano San Segundo. Anglicisms and Corpus Linguistics: Corpus-Aided Research into the Influence of English on European Languages, 20, Peter Lang, 2021, Hallesche Sprach- und Textforschung / Language and Text Studies / Recherches linguistiques et textuelles,, 9783631799772. hal-03625399v2

**HAL Id: hal-03625399**

**<https://hal.science/hal-03625399v2>**

Submitted on 31 Aug 2023

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

# ***Comme disent les Anglais/Américains: Identifying and Analyzing Anglicisms in Corpora by Means of Metalinguistic Comments***

**Ramón Martí Solano**

The metalinguistic comments *comme disent les Anglais* and *comme disent les Américains* (as the English/Americans say) tend to precede or to follow Anglicisms of all sorts, especially foreignisms, buzzwords, compounds, idioms and other multi-word units mainly as borrowings but also as loan translations in the Francophone press. A corpus-based research on the online archives of sixteen Francophone daily papers and weeklies show the wide range of these Anglicisms. Contrary to idioms such as *adopter un profil bas* (keep a low profile) or *jeter l'éponge* (throw the sponge) that have been loan-translated and are consistently used in French, compounds and other types of multi-word units seem to be used much more frequently in English, e.g. *snail mail*, *box-to-box*, *soft power*, *out of the box*, *business is business*, *the right man at the right place*, etc. Quantitative results confirm the increase of multi-word direct borrowings in Francophone journalism.

Francophone journalism; metalinguistic comment; newspaper corpus; single-word direct borrowing; multi-word direct borrowing; phraseological loan-translation

## **1. Anglicisms and Francophone Journalism**

Languages increase their stock of lexical units thanks to all the different types of word-formation mechanisms available but also by borrowing and loan translating single-word and multi-word units from other languages, especially English. Contrary to single words that tend to be borrowed and then adapted or not depending on their spelling and on the tradition of borrowing in each language, multi-word units are usually borrowed as loan translations. However, certain types of multi-word units are mostly found in their original English form in French and particularly in the Francophone press. The aim of this paper is to set up and look into two main categories of the influence of English lexis in French. On the one hand, non-adapted single-word and multi-word direct borrowings (from compounds and other set phrases to catchphrases, slogans, idioms and proverbs) and on the other hand phraseological loan translations or calques.

English lexis in general and English phraseology in particular exert a very strong influence in plenty of languages to very different extents. Some languages, such as Danish for instance, seem to be more receptive to single-word or multi-word direct borrowings than others (Gottlieb 2004: 40), “[y]et, spotting English-derived phraseology may not require historical investigation. Because news media, television, cinema and other means of globalized information and entertainment are strongly influenced by the English-speaking world, the source of Anglo-American expressions are often explicitly stated by journalists (e.g. *as the English say*) or highlighted with quotation marks (Fiedler, in this volume).” (Furiassi *et al.* 2012: 14). The Francophone press is no exception to this statement and represents an exceptional starting point for identifying both well-established and potential Anglicisms.

## **2. Metalinguistic Comments**

English words and phrases introduced by metalinguistic comments are found in all types of contexts in the Francophone press and not necessarily in news or editorials about Anglophone countries. Anglicisms in the Francophone press represent a separate phenomenon insofar as

they do not behave as borrowings from other languages such as Spanish, Italian or German that are typically used in restricted cultural contexts (Chesley 2010: 243-244). Anglicisms have, therefore, stretched the limits of Anglo-American settings and are contextually fully integrated in the recipient language, in marked contrast to what happens in English newspapers that use French words and phrases together with metalinguistic comments when covering important events in France with a huge international impact (Davies 2008: 236).

Metalinguistic comments such as *comme disent les Anglais* and *comme disent les Américains* are, in the first place, a way like any other of retrieving Anglicisms in corpora. Phrases such as *the English say*, *the so-called* or *the proverbial* have been designated as metacommunicative introducers and are commonly found in other European languages in their national language version (Fiedler 2012: 251). The use of these comments is indicative of a deliberate intention on the part of journalists of introducing English words and phrases in their written production (MacKenzie 2012: 30).

The influence of English on European languages is a widespread phenomenon but the types of Anglicisms that have so far been identified and analysed are, for the most part, lexical direct borrowings. The use of metalinguistic comments in Anglicism research is an effective means of retrieving other sorts of Anglicisms, especially multi-word units. As far as idioms and proverbs are concerned, these introducers can be extremely varied but they tend to include such phrases as *comme on dit* in French or *wie man sagt* in German, both of them meaning ‘as they say’ (Čermák 2005: 58). *Comme disent les Anglais* and *comme disent les Américains* are thus used as introducers not only for searching potential idioms and proverbs, but also for a wide range of nouns, adjectives, compounds, acronyms, and phrases of all sorts both as direct borrowings or as calques in the Francophone press.

A search in the French diachronic corpus *Frantext* yields interesting results concerning the use of these metalinguistic comments,<sup>1</sup> which show that this is not at all a recent phenomenon—the first occurrence of *comme disent les Anglais* is from 1807. The quotation in (1) is an example of a phraseological calque—*le héros de sa propre histoire* which translates as *the hero of his own story*—whereas in (2) the metalinguistic comment follows a multi-word direct borrowing, *hobby-horse*.

(1) [...] enfin il fit ce récit sans s’apercevoir le moins du monde de l’effet qu’il produisait sur lord Nelvil, et n’ayant d’autre but en ce moment que d’être, comme disent les anglais, *le héros de sa propre histoire*, quand le comte D’Erfeuil eut cessé de parler, il fut vraiment affligé du mal qu’il avait fait. (Germaine de Staël, 1807, *Corinne ou l’Italie*, vol. 3)

(2) Une première représentation d’autrefois. Chacun a son califourchon, son hobby-horse, comme disent les anglais, sur lequel il est monté, tout en se moquant de celui des autres. (Étienne de Jouy, 1812, *L’Hermite de la Chaussée-d’Antin ou Observations sur les mœurs et les usages parisiens au commencement du XIXe siècle*, vol. 2)

The use of the other metalinguistic comment, *comme disent les Américains*, is not only less widespread in *Frantext*—only six occurrences versus forty-two for the English—but also comes

---

<sup>1</sup> *Frantext* is a corpus that encompasses French texts from the ninth to the twenty-first century although the bulk of the texts are from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Ninety percent of the texts are literary and the remaining ten percent is made up of technical or scientific texts. The total number of words is 254 million.

much later in the corpus as illustrated in (3) with the expression *à vol d'abeille*, a free rendering of the English phrase *make a beeline for*.

(3) La distance qui sépare le fort Kearney d'Omahaest, en droite ligne, - à vol d'abeille, comme disent les américains, - de deux cents milles au plus. (Jules Verne, 1873, *Le Tour du monde en quatre-vingts jours*)

The use of this type of introducers serves to highlight the knowledge of English lexis and phraseology and of the Anglo-American culture and institutions that journalists worldwide are supposed to have not only in this day and age but even as far back as the early nineteenth century. At the same time journalists use them as linguistic mechanisms to distance themselves from the authorship of these words and phrases and by so doing to avoid the potential responsibility of using or even overusing Anglicisms to the detriment of their native French equivalents or translations.

## 2.1. *Comme disent les Anglais*

Another variant form, *comme disent les Britanniques* (as the British say) has also been used in order to retrieve borrowings and calques but has yielded very few results compared to the two main metalinguistic comments: 15 hits of *comme disent les Britanniques* versus 111 hits of *comme disent les Anglais* et 159 of *comme disent les Américains*. These results show the extensive use of the English as a generic term to refer as a whole to the different nations of the United Kingdom, and this is the case not only in French but also in many other European languages.

The association with sport, and especially with football, is blatantly obvious when this comment is used. The language of football is in itself a type of specialized discourse and the massive coverage of matches in the media generates a wealth of terms and expressions from “the most widespread special language in the world” (Bergh and Ohlander 2012: 283). English football is well-known among sports journalists and this is reflected in the inclusion of words and phrases such as *playmaker*, *super sub*, *goal getter*, *good game*, *box to box*, among many others. The association with British English as a language variety can be observed in the use of the football term *keeper*, a truncated form of *goalkeeper* especially used in the United Kingdom but also as a direct borrowing in Belgian French as illustrated in (4). The fact of adding the Belgians to the English in the metalinguistic comment implies that the term *keeper* is a borrowing in the variety of French spoken in Belgium and a foreignism in the variety of French spoken in France.

(4) Belle idée de faire de Maxime un gardien de but : dans une équipe de foot, le « keeper » (comme disent les Anglais et les Belges) est le poste le plus ingrat, le plus solitaire, où l'on se retrouve parfois « lâché » par ses défenseurs face aux attaquants adverses. (*Télérama*, March 26, 2016)

Even though most of the Anglicisms concern football, the use of the phrase *no scrum, no win* in (5) refers to rugby as a scrum is “a group of attacking players from each team who come together with their heads down and arms joined, and push against each other, trying to take control of the ball.” (CALD).<sup>2</sup> This phrase is widely used by rugby commentators in France

---

<sup>2</sup> CALD is the abbreviation of *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*.

(Gordon 2012) and can be regarded as a multi-word specialized term found exclusively in the jargon of rugby. Another rugby term popular with French sport journalists is *le Crunch*—the definite article in French showing its hybrid nature—which refers in French to the annual rugby match between England and France in the Six Nations Championship, as illustrated in (6).

(5) Comme disent les Anglais, inventeurs de ce jeu de mains complexe : no scrum, no win. Autrement dit, pour espérer remporter un match, il faut gagner les mêlées. (*M Le Mag*, September 26, 2015)

(6) LE CRUNCH, comme disent les Anglais. Ce sommet entre les deux rivaux qui ne s'apprécient guère. Depuis 1906, Français et Anglais se sont affrontés à 93 reprises. (*Le Figaro*, October 7, 2011)

Exceptionally the metalinguistic comment can be used as well as a regional marker to indicate how a place or an institution is popularly known amongst the British. Two examples of this use are *V & A*, the popular abbreviated form of the Victorian and Albert Museum in London (7), and *Marks and Sparks*, a popular rhyming adaptation in English of the British chain of department stores Marks & Spencer as illustrated in (8).

(7) Au début du Livre des enfants, nous sommes en 1895, dans l'ancien musée de South Kensington qui sera bientôt rebaptisé Victoria & Albert. Ce n'est pas un hasard si Byatt a choisi ce lieu. Le « V & A », comme disent les Anglais, ne devait-il pas être le premier élément d'« *Albertopolis* » (*Le Monde*, February 24, 2012)

(8) Marks and Sparks, comme disent les Anglais - nous, c'est MarkéSpencer -, tu nous as manqué. (*Le Soir*, May 7, 2015)

Other borrowings are closely associated with the United Kingdom as they reflect the reality of that country, be it concerning its history, geography, high and popular culture, food, music or other distinctive signs such as the types of housing as in (9) where the foreignism *basement flats* is followed by a detailed explanation of its meaning in French.

(9) A Mers, dans une rue à l'écart du front de mer, Elisabeth Justome s'arrête devant quelques maisons simples posées sur des basement flats, comme disent les Anglais (semi sous-sols accessibles depuis la rue). (*Libération*, August 23, 2003)

## 2.2. Comme disent les Américains

This metalinguistic comment is associated mainly with marketing, business and finance in the examples found in the corpus: financial terms such as *stakeholder* or *buyback* but especially phrases associated with business such as *out of the box*, *business is business*, *the budget is policy*, *driver to business*, *all business*, *le ciel est la limite* (*the sky is the limit*) and even abbreviations such as *IPO* (*Initial Public Offering*).

The second type of association concerns the film, television and publishing industries. Examples abound such as *hard-boiled fiction*, *buddy movie*, *breaking news*, *survival movie*, *novella*, *trans lit*, *prequel*, *captivity thriller*, *romcom*, *bromance*, *spin-off* and *drama*. The entertainment industry is associated in the Francophone journalists' mind with the USA, that is the reason why the examples in the corpus of the words *entertainer* and *entertainment* are

consistently introduced by *comme disent les Américains* and not by *comme disent les Anglais*. Examples (10) and (11) are characteristic of the use of Anglicisms that are actually terms in English designating specific types of novels or films associated with American popular culture.

(10) Cet excellent captivity thriller (comme disent les Américains), rappelle les classiques du genre et le Misery de Stephen King. (*Le Figaro Magazine*, January 18, 2013)

(11) Avec « Vertige », son premier long-métrage, qui sort aujourd'hui dans cent deux salles, Abel Ferry a réussi cet exercice sans jamais dévisser. « Vertige » est un « survival movie », comme disent les Américains. (*Le Parisien*, June 24, 2009)

American politics in general and the American political system in particular are generally well-known in Europe, and especially in France and Belgium, mainly due to the high proportion of news, documentaries and other radio and television programmes dedicated to this subject. Two direct borrowings are the noun *ticket* and the adjective *midterm*. *Ticket* represents a clear case of a common core word that has taken on a specialized sense in American politics whereas *midterm* is an adjective that collocates nearly exclusively with *election(s)* in American English when used in its political sense—a search in the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* yields 764 hits for *midterm elections*, 290 for *midterm election* and barely 14 for *midterm campaign*.

(13) Un demi mandat ne se fête pas. Nicolas Sarkozy ne commettra en tout cas pas cette erreur demain, date anniversaire de son *midterm*, comme disent les Américains. (*Libération*, November 5, 2009)

It should be noticed that even though the American origin of the term is explicitly signalled by the metalinguistic comment, the well-known Anglicism *midterm* is used in (13) outside an Anglo-American context to refer to the former French president Nicolas Sarkozy.

### 3. Corpus and Methodology

In order to identify multi-word units borrowed from English and found in the Francophone press, I used the metalinguistic phrases *comme disent les Anglais* (as the English say) and *comme disent les Américains* (as the Americans say) as target phrases. This deliberate methodological research choice is a practical and efficient means to detect all different types of Anglicisms and, above all, to try to systematize a potential typology of borrowings and calques introduced by metalinguistic comments.

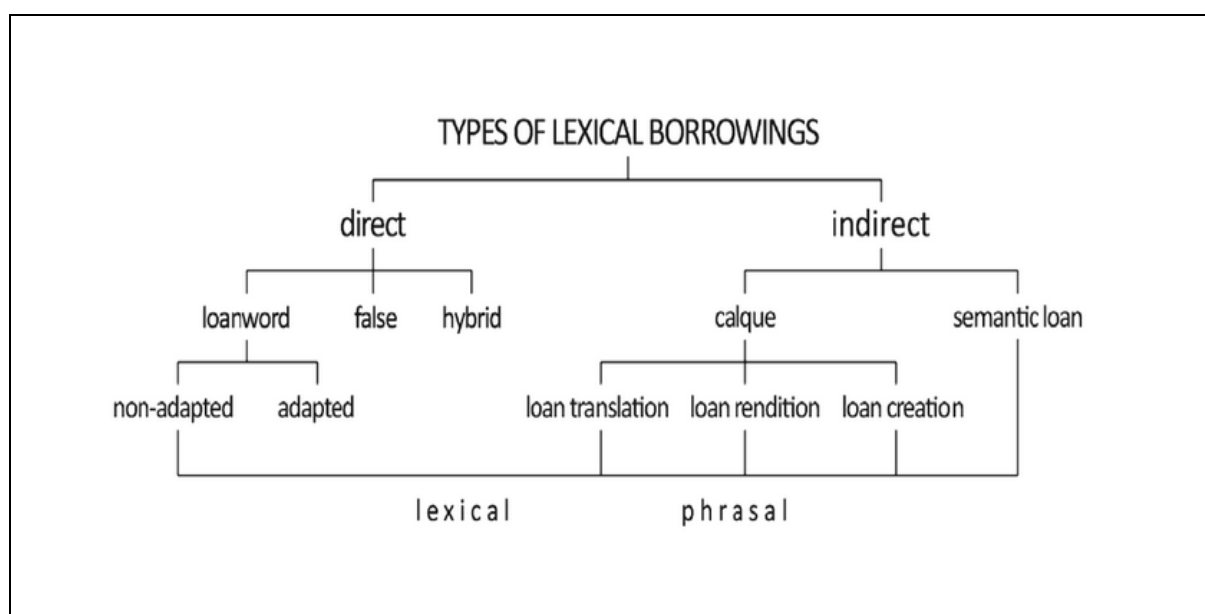
I selected sixteen different periodicals, mainly daily newspapers but also some weekly magazines, in the *Europresse* database. *Europresse* is a multilingual database that allows advanced searches of words or groups of words in a large number of publications made up of newspapers, magazines and journals. The dailies and weeklies selected for this study are *Le Monde*, *M Le Mag*, *Le Figaro*, *Le Figaro Magazine*, *Libération*, *Le Parisien*, *Le Parisien Magazine*, *L'Express*, *Le Point*, *La Tribune*, *Les Échos*, *L'Humanité*, *L'Équipe*, *L'Équipe Magazine*, *La Croix* and *Télérama*. All of these are French except for one newspaper, *Le Soir*, which is Belgian. I decided to focus on a 10-year period, exactly from April 1, 2009 to April 1, 2019, and by so doing to apply a synchronic approach to the question of borrowing and calquing of English words and expressions in the Francophone press since a newspaper-based corpus is

commonly regarded as the most appropriate medium for doing research on Anglicisms (Planchon 2018: 49).

I have excluded French Canadian newspapers in this selection since Francophone newspapers in the Canadian province of Quebec have a low frequency of English words and phrases as a consequence of these journalists' attitude of overprotection of the French language by consciously avoiding the use of Anglicisms (Planchon 2018: 60-61).

#### 4. Typology of Anglicisms

In order to set up a typology of the borrowings and calques in the French press that are introduced by the metalinguistic comments in question, they have been classified according to the phraseological criterion of polylexicity, that is whether they are single-word or multi-word units (MWUs). A second criterion has been applied to this classification which concerns whether they are found only as borrowings, only as calques or as borrowings and calques at the same time or in different quotations. In any case, all lexical borrowings follow the typology illustrated in figure 1 in which they are divided into direct and indirect borrowings and then subdivided into further categories according to morphological and semantic criteria.



**Figure 1. Types of lexical borrowings (Furiassi *et al.* 2012: 6)**

All the direct borrowings yielded by means of the request formulas are non-adapted loanwords except for one case of a hybrid multi-word borrowing, namely *au feeling*, a well-known informal adverb phrase in French that can mean, according to contexts, spontaneously, instinctively or on intuition.

##### 4.1. Direct borrowings

Of all the single-word direct borrowings, the most frequent are *bankable* and *momentum*, clear examples of buzzwords amongst French-speaking journalists that have respectively 706 and 508 occurrences in the corpus. Only two of the direct borrowings found in the corpus are orthographically or grammatically adapted to French. In (14) the noun *proxy* is pluralised as

*proxys*, following the most common regular pluralisation of Anglicisms in French, whereas in (15) the adjective *bankable* is grammatically integrated in the French text by the addition of the inflectional plural suffix *-s* as both adjectives and nouns take the plural suffix in French.

(14) Même les pays disposant de systèmes statistiques sophistiqués recourent parfois à des *proxys* (substituts), comme disent les Américains (*Le Figaro*, August 31, 2009)

(15) Si certains acteurs sont payés des fortunes, tous ne sont pas « bankables », comme disent les Américains. (*Le Soir*, January 9, 2013)

According to the results, single-word units tend to be borrowed rather than calqued, although many of them are followed by their translation into French in brackets. It is interesting to note the case of *understatement*, the third most frequent single-word direct borrowing with 482 occurrences in the corpus, which can be classified as a lexical lacuna not only in French but in other European languages<sup>3</sup>. There is no corresponding single word in French for *understatement* and the solutions proposed by bilingual dictionaries are either a paraphrase of its meaning (*affirmation en dessous de la vérité*) or the insertion of the target word in a sentence and its translation by a set phrase or expression (*that's an understatement* > *c'est peu dire, le terme est faible*). Other non-adapted single-word borrowings include nouns such as *plot*, *pundit*, *underdog*, *character*, *copycat*, *hardware*, *location*, *titbit*, *entertainer*, *loser* but also adjectives such as *cheesy*, *witty*, *successful*, *kooky*, *effortless*, *crowdy*, *overdressed*. Obviously, not all of these words (and many more found in the corpus) defy translation but they are used in the Francophone press, as with plenty of other foreignisms, to add local colour to the argument being treated.

A large number of word combinations, either compounds or collocations, have been found in the corpus, the most frequent of all being *soft power* with a record number of hits, exactly 1,315. Its loan translation, *puissance douce*, is also found among the examples but it only has forty-eight occurrences in the corpus. As with single-word borrowings, some of the borrowings correspond to lexical combinations that cannot be translated word-for-word in French as in (16).

(16) Le droit français se revendique désormais « business oriented », comme disent... les Anglais. (*Le Monde*, March 29, 2018)

Other two-word combinations include *breaking news*, *wow effect*, *name dropping*, *rocket science*, *bucket list*, *top quality*, *fashion victim*, *rocket science*. In the case of *fashion victim*, its use may have been helped by other compounds with *fashion* such as *fashion week*<sup>4</sup> and *fashion show*.

The borrowing of formulaic phrases is linked in the corpus to Americans and rather than idioms or proverbs, these multi-word direct borrowings tend to be mainly slogans, catchphrases, clichés, mottos and sayings as shown in the list below:

---

<sup>3</sup> Spanish, Italian and Portuguese do not have a single-word equivalent for *understatement* either. Other close compounds that fall into the same word-formation type, such as *foreknowledge*, for example, pose the same problem when translated into French as there is no equivalent single word—*foreknowledge* is translated in bilingual dictionaries as *fait de savoir à l'avance* or as *connaissance anticipée*, which can be back-translated respectively as *fact of knowing in advance* and *anticipated knowledge*.

<sup>4</sup> The official name of the Paris fashion week is not *La semaine de la mode de Paris* but precisely *Paris fashion week* (just three words in English versus seven words in French).



At the end of the day  
Bigger than life  
Business is business  
If it looks like a duck, quacks like a duck, walks like a duck, it's a duck!  
If you can't beat them, join them  
One size does not fit all  
Out of the box  
So far, so good  
The right man at the right place  
The show must go on  
The winner takes it all  
What went wrong?  
Who is in charge?

The borrowing of formulaic phrases must not be confused with the mixing of codes or code-switching (MacKenzie 2012: 32, Zenner *et al.* 2013: 3) but should be regarded as a further development or evolution, on the part of the Francophone journalists, in their use of Anglicisms for stylistic purposes, even though some of these phrases are no more than ephemeral phraseological Anglicisms or hapaxes (Saugéra 2017: 75).

The American origin of these phrases is corroborated by their first attestations. *The show must go on* appears for the first time in the *Washington Post* on July 3, 1879 (Shapiro 2006: 619). Concerning *If it looks like a duck, quacks like a duck, walks like a duck, it's a duck!*, this phrase is attributed to James B. Carey, a U.S. labour leader, whose original phrase as quoted in *The New York Times* (September 3, 1948) differs slightly from the one in the list above—*When someone walks like a duck, swims like a duck, and quacks like a duck, he's a duck.* (Shapiro 2006: 131).

It should be mentioned that journalists may use either comment irrespective of the English or the American origin of the phrase—the comment is then neutralized and serves in fact to point out how the phrase is said in English as in (17). *If you can't beat them, join them*, or rather *If you can't beat 'em, join 'em* is considered a modern proverb, “probably American in origin in the alternative form, ‘If you can't lick 'em, join 'em’.” (Reeds 2006: 330)

(17) Les deux premiers, en tout cas, ont tourné casaque. Comme disent les Anglais, « *if you can't beat them, join them* » (« si vous ne pouvez pas les battre, rejoignez-les »). (*Libération*, September 10, 2018)

#### 4.1.1. Borrowings with French translations or explanations

A common practice among Francophone journalists consists of providing both the English word or phrase and its translation into French in the same sentence. These translations may take the form of word-for-word translation or paraphrases and can precede or follow the English word or phrase.

(18) Nous y pensons, mais doucement. Ce sera « step by step » (pas à pas), comme disent les Anglais. L'équipe première doit retrouver la Nationale 3. (*Le Parisien*, October 7, 2010)

(19) Combien de temps va-t-il rester la nouvelle star ? « That is the question » (« C'est là toute la question », comme disent les Anglais) et la clé de ces élections. (*Le Parisien*, April 22, 2010)

In (18) and (19) the English phrases are followed by their translations into French in brackets and this seems to be the case for plenty of Anglicisms in the corpus, e.g. *obvious* (*évident*), *cheesy* (*racoleur*), *super sub* (*super remplaçant*), *so far, so good* (*jusque-là, tout va bien*), *guess what?* (*devinez quoi ?*), *What went wrong?* (*qu'est-ce qui n'a pas marché ?*), *la location* (*le site*), *name dropping* (*lâcher de noms*), *sacred cows* (*vaches sacrées*), *snail mail* (*courrier escargot*), *crowdy* (*surpeuplé*), *le 3 AM phone call* (*le coup de fil à 3 heures du matin*), *I'm the blueprint* (*Je suis l'original*). Much less frequently, the translation into French simply follows the direct borrowing as in *une bargaining position*, *une position de marchandage*.

Second to this is the use of the French word or expression followed by its English equivalent, mostly between inverted commas, as in *plus grand que la vie*, « *bigger than life* », *cyberdépendant*, un « *net junkie* », *laver mon nom*, « *to clean my name* », *gagner en jouant mal*, le « *winning ugly* », *les livres d'aide personnelle*, le « *self-help* », *des bananes ou « pompadour »*, *le savoir-faire*, *le know how*. This practice is illustrative of the nature of these English words and phrases which are regarded by journalists not as real Anglicisms but rather as foreignisms, hence the widespread use of the French translation in brackets or the direct borrowing between inverted commas.

When there is no straightforward translation, as with idiomatic set phrases without a full or partial equivalent in French, a paraphrase or gloss is used as a sort of translation of the English phrase. In (20) *out of the box* is paraphrased as *réfléchir autrement* (thinking differently) and in (21) the modern proverb *no cure no pay* needs to be followed by a lengthy explanation

(20) Et s'il devait résumer la French Touch « c'est l'esprit de Jules Verne, être capable de rêver de l'impossible, de réfléchir autrement « out of the box » comme disent les Américains... » (*La Tribune*, June 24, 2014)

(21) « *Il s'agit d'un contrat no cure no pay, comme disent les Anglais, où le contracteur prend et finance tous les risques et il est rémunéré après le propriétaire* », souligne Nicolas Vincent. (*Le Figaro*, April 14, 2015)

#### 4.1.2. Borrowings with additional metalinguistic comments

It is common practice in Francophone journalism to add further comments on the meaning, origin, context of use, translation difficulties and other linguistic subtleties concerning the English words and phrases being used. In (22) the journalist explains that he cannot find a good translation for *Who is in charge?* and that the French question *Qui est le patron ?* does not convey the same idea as its English counterpart.

(22) Comme disent les Américains, « **Who is in charge?** » Je ne trouve pas de bonne traduction à cette question cruciale. « Qui est le patron ? » ne suffit pas, l'idée de patronat n'englobe pas l'idée de mission confiée et devant donc être accomplie. (*La Croix*, April 25, 2015)

The awareness of using Anglicisms but also of the negative effect that this practice may have on the readership of the newspaper may trigger a personal apology for using an English term (23). Things can get even more complicated when the alternative in French for an Anglicism (*underdogs*) is, curiously enough, another Anglicism (*outsiders*), something which is commented upon facetiously by adding *en bon français* (in standard French), as illustrated in (24).

(23) L'Organisation internationale de la francophonie est un « soft power », comme disent les Américains. Je m'excuse d'utiliser un terme anglais ! (*Le Figaro*, March 20, 2013)

(24) Equipes de bas de classement, groupes obscurs de soul, de gospel ou de reggae : ses préférences sportives et musicales penchent toutes du côté des *underdogs*, comme disent les Américains, qu'on traduira par « outsiders » en bon français. (*Le Monde*, December 8, 2016)

Another type of additional metalinguistic comment found in the corpus concerns grammar and morphology. In (25) the journalist cannot help commenting on the word *womanizer* by signalling that English lacks a term that could be applied to women having the same attitude towards men: *Qui a jamais entendu parler de « manizer » ?* (Who has ever heard of the word “manizer”?). In (26) the additional metalinguistic comment concerns the term *bromance*—the journalist simply explains that it is a blend of *brother* and *romance*.

(25) [...] voici H. G. Wells l'infatigable coureur de jupons, le « *womanizer* » comme disent les Anglais - on notera au passage que le terme n'a pas d'équivalent féminin. Qui a jamais entendu parler de « *manizer* » ? (*Le Monde*, January 6, 2012)

(26) Au cinéma, cette année, plus de dix *buddy movies* ou *bromance* (contraction de *brother* et *romance*), comme disent les Américains. (*Le Figaro*, October 22, 2010)

Some of the direct borrowings are widely used in other Romance languages, as is the case of the direct borrowing *privacy* in Italian or the loan translation *privacidad* in Spanish. French has resisted the adoption either of the borrowing or of the calque and sticks to the French term *intimité* as an equivalent for the English *privacy*. However, the concept of *privacy* is larger and more complex than the French concept of *intimité*. In (27) the journalist not only supplies two different translations, one preceding the Anglicism (*réserve*) and the other one following it (*intimité*), but also presents and explains his personal choice of translation, the French word *privauté*, together with a detailed semantic analysis of this lexical choice.

(27) [...] j'aimerais répondre par mes incertitudes, et ma réserve, ma *privacy*, comme disent les Anglais, mon intimité, que je préfère traduire par le vieux mot français de *privauté* - ce qui est intime et privé, et qui n'a pris le sens d'une familiarité extrême que pour dénoncer précisément l'intrusion dans l'intimité de l'autre. (*La Croix*, January 18, 2018)

It is the lack of lexical correspondence between the two languages in the case of some compounds and phrases that makes journalists willing to supply the English term which could be regarded, in this context, as unnecessary. In (28) the French *natures mortes*—that literally translates as *dead natures*—is not only followed by the English *still lifes* but also by two literal translations of this term into French.

(28) Dans les *natures mortes* d'Irving Penn - les *still lifes*, comme disent les Anglais, expression que l'on pourrait traduire par « vies calmes » ou « vies immobiles » -, les sujets

photographiés semblent animés et sont comme sublimés, chargés d'allusions poétiques et fantasmatiques. (*Le Figaro Magazine*, January 2, 1010)

## 4.2. Calques

Calques or loan translations can be either lexical or phraseological. Lexical calques in French are usually compound words such as *gratteciel* (skyscraper). Phraseological calques from English that are shared by many European languages and which are commonly used in French include *donner le feu vert* (give the green light), *faire la différence* (make the difference), *jeter l'éponge* (throw in the sponge), *un profil bas* (a low profile), among many others (Martí Solano 2012: 208). All these calques are well-established in French and do not pose any problem of decoding to speakers of the language. Using metalinguistic comments to retrieve Anglicisms has proved especially interesting to detect other less known and inconspicuous phraseological calques that are becoming increasingly frequent in the Francophone press, even though the number of phraseological calques is inferior to the number of phraseological borrowings when the search is done by using *comme disent les Anglais/Américains* as target formulas.

The case of the phraseological unit *the elephant in the room* has been analysed as a calque in German (Fiedler 2012, 2014) although the use of this phraseological calque in French (*éléphant dans la pièce*) is rather restricted and tends to appear more often in Canadian French than in European French, which is also the case of *éléphant blanc* (white elephant), labelled as Canadian in French lexicography (Martí Solano 2012: 209). A search in the whole corpus has yielded 46 occurrences of *éléphant dans la pièce* and 114 occurrences of *éléphant blanc*, which shows on the one hand that supposedly infrequent phraseological calques are becoming more and more widespread, and on the other hand they are also being used in European French. Two occurrences of *éléphant dans la pièce* followed by the metalinguistic comment have been found in the corpus as illustrated in (29) and (30)

(29) L'absent de taille, « l'éléphant dans la pièce », comme disent les Britanniques, était bien sûr le père, Rupert Murdoch. (*Le Monde*, July 21, 2017)

(30) Un « éléphant dans la pièce », comme disent les Américains : Robert Mueller regarde sûrement d'un œil distrait la parade diplomatique en cours à New York, trop occupé à mener d'une poigne de fer l'enquête sur les interférences russes durant la campagne présidentielle de 2016. (*Le Soir*, September 21, 2017)

The phraseological calques introduced by *comme disent les Anglais* in the corpus happen to be amongst the best-known and most widely used idioms and proverbs in English, namely *Chaque nuage a une doublure d'argent* (Every cloud has a silver lining), *pleurnicher à propos du lait renversé* (cry over spilt milk) and *jeter le bébé avec l'eau du bain* (throw the baby out with the bath-water) as illustrated in (31), (32) and (33).

(31) D'autant que ces marchés, s'ils semblent clairement tendus vers le profit facile voire la spéculation, se caractérisent aussi par une volatilité qui confine à l'irrationalité. Cependant, comme disent les Anglais, chaque nuage a une doublure d'argent. (*Le Soir*, November 23, 2010)

(32) Mais peu importe. Comme disent les Anglais, pleurnicher à propos du lait renversé est une perte de temps. (*La Croix*, January 21, 2019)

(33) Le projet pose question, c'est bien normal, mais il doit être suivi certes d'un œil bienveillant et, comme disent les Anglais, ne pas jeter le bébé avec l'eau du bain. (*La Croix*, July 10, 2012)

The awareness of the English origin of some idioms on the part of Francophone journalists is not something new—*Le bébé et l'eau du bain* (the baby and the bath-water) is used as a headline in 1965 in the newspaper *Le Monde* and the article includes both the canonical form of the idiom and the metalinguistic comment *comme disent les Anglais* as illustrated in (34).

(34) Gardons-nous donc, comme disent les Anglais, de jeter le bébé avec l'eau du bain. Il faut réformer l'entreprise, il ne faut pas la tuer. » (*Le Monde*, April 26, 1965).

The modern proverb *Seuls les poissons morts nagent dans le sens du courant* (Only dead fish swim downstream) can be analysed as a truncated version of the American proverb *A dead fish can float downstream, but it takes a live one to swim upstream*. (Mieder 1992: 211) and is used in (35) in connection with the English.

(35) *Le monde du vin, c'est un ensemble de traditions, c'est une culture aussi. Mais, de temps en temps, il faut oser faire des choses différentes.* » Comme disent les Anglais : « *Seuls les poissons morts nagent dans le sens du courant.* » (*Le Figaro*, October 6, 2018)

The phraseological calques introduced by *comme disent les Américains* are *La politique est toujours une affaire locale* (All politics is local) and *Le ciel est sa seule limite* (The sky is the limit), which corroborates, through phraseological loan translation, the close link between Americans and politics and finance.

## 5. Conclusions

The metalinguistic comments *comme disent les Anglais* and *comme disent les Américains* are a means of retrieving a wide range of Anglicisms in corpora both as direct and as indirect borrowings. Results are extremely varied and, from a quantitative point of view, some Anglicisms can be very frequent (*momentum*, *bankable*, *soft power*) whereas others are nonce words or phrases (*kooky*, *titbit*, *who is in charge?*). Traditional idioms and proverbs as loan translations are associated with the English whereas modern proverbs, sayings, slogans and catchphrases, mainly as direct borrowings, are ascribed to the Americans, in line with the general shared idea that the United Kingdom represents tradition and that the United States stands for modernity and innovation.

Using a synchronic newspaper corpus spanning the last decade (2009-2019) allows to identify an important number of Anglicisms that are not yet represented in dictionaries of Anglicisms or other Anglicism databases. The results can then be benchmarked against the total number of occurrences in the corpus in order to distinguish between more or less well-established borrowings and calques and nonce forms.

The most striking result is the important number of borrowed compounds and phrases with which Francophone newspaper articles are peppered, something which provides a stimulus to Anglicism research beyond single-word direct borrowings.

## References

- Bergh, Gunnar and Sölve Ohlander. 2012. "English direct loans in European football lexis." In *The Anglicization of European Lexis*, edited by Cristiano Furiassi, Virginia Pulcini and Félix Rodríguez González, 281-304. Amsterdam and Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.
- Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. 2008. Third edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Čermák, František. 2005. "Text introducers of proverbs and other idioms." *Jezikoslovlje* 6(2): 57-77.
- Chesley, Paula. 2010. "Lexical Borrowings in French: Anglicisms as a Separate Phenomenon." *Journal of French Language Studies* 20(3): 231-251.
- Corpus of Contemporary American English* [Accessed online on December 22, 2019].
- Davies, Eirlys E. 2008. "Crossing les barricades: The use of French in some English newspaper articles." *Language & Communication* 28: 225-241.
- Fiedler, Sabine. 2012. "Der Elefant im Raum... The influence of English on German phraseology." In *The Anglicization of European Lexis*, edited by Cristiano Furiassi, Virginia Pulcini and Félix Rodríguez González, 239-259. Amsterdam and Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.
- Fiedler, Sabine. 2014. *Gläserne Decke und Elefant im Raum. Phraseologische Anglizismen im Deutschen*. Berlin: Logos Verlag.
- Frantext* [Accessed online on December 21, 2019].
- Gordon, Pierre. 2012. "Rugby : do you speak le crunch ?" *Franceinfo*, March 11. [Accessed online on December 22, 2019].
- Gottlieb, Henrik. 2004. "Danish Echoes of English." *Nordic Journal of English Studies* 3(2): 39-65.
- MacKenzie, Ian. 2012. "Fair play to them: Proficiency in English and types of borrowing." In *The Anglicization of European Lexis*, edited by Cristiano Furiassi, Virginia Pulcini and Félix Rodríguez González, 27-42. Amsterdam and Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.
- Martí Solano, Ramón. 2012. "Multi-word loan translations and semantic borrowings in French journalistic discourse." In *The Anglicization of European Lexis*, edited by Cristiano Furiassi, Virginia Pulcini and Félix Rodríguez González, 199-215. Amsterdam and Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.
- Mieder, Wolfgang, ed. 1992. *A Dictionary of American Proverbs*. New York, NY and Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Planchon, Cécile. 2018. "Anglicismes dans la presse écrite : le bilinguisme de milieu peut-il expliquer l'anglicisation ?" *Journal of French Language Studies* 28: 43-66.
- Pulcini, Virginia, Cristiano Furiassi and Félix Rodríguez González. 2012. "The lexical influence of English on European languages: from words to phraseology." In *The Anglicization of European Lexis*, edited by Cristiano Furiassi, Virginia Pulcini, and Félix Rodríguez González, 1-24. Amsterdam/Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.
- Reeds, Nigel. 2006. *A word in your shell-like. 6,000 curious and everyday phrases explained*. London: Harper Collins.
- Saugéra, Valérie. 2017. "La fabrique des anglicismes." *Travaux de linguistique* 75(2): 59-79. [Accessed online on December 30, 2019]
- Shapiro, Fred R. ed. *The Yale Book of Quotations*. 2006. New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press.
- Zenner, Eline, Dirk Geeraerts and Dirk Speelman. 2013. "What makes a catchphrase catchy? Possible determinants in the borrowability of English catchphrases in Dutch." In *New Perspectives on Lexical Borrowing: Onomasiological, Methodological and Phraseological*

*Innovations*, edited by Eline Zenner and Gitte Kristiansen, 41-64. Boston, MA and Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.