On “False Friends of Translator” (French-English)

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The paper deals with “false friends of translator” in French and English. This problem is connected with problems of paronyms and international words. “False friends” in different languages are distinguished by their additional significations.

Keywords: “false friends of translator”, French, English, paronyms, international words

Introduction


What is the reason of this connection between French and English vocabulary? We know that in 1066 Great Britain was conquered by the Duke of Normandy. So the conquerors spoke French. That is why many French words, especially those of abstract meaning, entered English. It is necessary to mention their mutual contacts during the centuries. They differ by their pronunciation and often by their orthography. Sometimes the part of speech is also different. In many cases only one meaning is different.

It is necessary to distinguish “false friends” from “internationalisms” like heresy, heretic, illusion, imagination, imitation, immigration, imminent, immobile, impression, modification, pessimism, proportion, and so on.

Examples of “false friends”:
abandon (en.) v. – to leave someone or something somewhere; to stop doing something; abandon (fr.) n. – abandonment;
academic (en.) adj. – related to education; clever; not real; académique (fr.) adj. – related to academy; conventional;
academic (en.) n. – someone who teaches at a university or college; académicien (fr.) n. – member of any academy;
accommodate (en.) v. – to have enough space somewhere for a number of things or people; to do what someone wants to provide someone with a place to live or stay; accommoder (fr.) v. – to season; coordinate;
admission (en.) n. – the money that you pay to enter a place; when you agree that you did something bad, or that something bad is true; permission; admission (fr.) n. – assumption;

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brigadier (en.) n. – British army officer of high rank; brigadier (fr.) n. – bombardier; sergeant;
bombardier; 
small room; lavatory; office; consulting room; government;
ball (en.) n. – a road object that you throw; balle (fr.) n. – a road object that you throw; boulit;
cabinet (en.) n. – government; cupboard; cabinet (fr.) n. – small room; lavatory; office; consulting room; government;
chair (en.) n. – a sit for one person; someone who controls a meeting; a very important position in a university department; chaire (fr.) n. – desk; pulpit; rostrum;
chamber (en.) n. – a room used for an official or special purpose; one of the groups that a parliament is divided; a closed space in a machine or in your body; chambre (fr.) n. – bedroom; chamber;
complexion (en.) n. – the colour and appearance of the skin; the way something seems to be; complexion (fr.) n. – constitution; temperament;
compositor (en.) n. – typographe; compositeur (fr.) n. – composer;
control (en.) n. – the power to make a person, organization, or object do what you want; the power to rule or govern an area; the ability to be calm; equipment; official place; contrôle (fr.) n. – checking; the power to rule; school exercise;
convention (en.) n. – meeting; custom; agreement; convention (fr) n. – agreement; condition; meeting;
dealer (en.) n. – a person or company that buys and sells things for profit; a person who gives out cards to players in a game; dealer (fr.) n. – drug;
delay (en.) n. – when you have to wait longer than expected for something to happen; délai (fr.) n. – postponement; term;
demonstration (en.) n. – when a group of people march or stand together to show that they disagree with or support someone or something; showing how to do something; proof that something exists or is true; démonstration (fr.) n. – proof; show;
department (en.) n. – a part of an organization such as a school, business or government; département (fr.) n. – a part of an organization; a territorial administrative subdivision in France;
depot (en.) n. – a place where trains, trucks, or buses are kept; a building where supplies of goods are stocked; dépôt (fr.) n – consignment; a building where supplies of goods are stocked; a place where trains, trams, buses are kept;
deputy (en.) n. – someone who has the second most important job in an organization; député (fr.) n. – delegate; ambassador; member of parliament;
design (en.) n. – the way in which something is planned and made; a drawing which shows how an object, machine, or building will be made; a pattern of decoration; the process of making drawing; design (fr.) n. – a drawing which shows how an object will be made; a lot of objects made according these criteria; adj. made according these criteria;
eventual (en.) adj. – happening or existing at the end of a process or period of time; éventuel (fr.) adj – possible; accidental;
fault (en.) n. – if something bad that has happened, someone is responsible for it; faute (fr.) n. – mistake; fault;
figure (en.) n. – a symbol for a number; a number that expresses an amount; a particular type of person; the shape of someone’s body; figure (fr.) n. – face; a remarkable person; draught;
flagrant (en.) adj. – shocking because of being so obviously wrong or bad; flagrant (fr.) adj. – evident;
interference (en.) n. – intervention; interférence (fr.) n. – interaction;
magazine (en.) n. – *depot*, journal; magazine (fr.) n – journal;
receipt (en.) n. – a piece of paper that proves that you have received goods or money; the act of receiving something; recette (fr.) n. – *income; the description of preparing of a dish; receipt; method, way; taking gate-money*;
relative (en) n. – *member of your family*; relative (en.) adj. – compared to other similar things or people;
relatif (fr.) adj.– relative (en.);
sinister (en.) adj. – making you feel something bad or evil might happen; sinistre (fr.) adj. – sinister (en.);
dull; unhappy; fatal; funeral; grim-looking; ominous; sinistre (fr.) n. – *disaster; damage, loss*;
versatile (en.) adj. – having many different skills; useful for doing a lot of different things; versatile (fr.)
adj. – changeable; inconstant.

**Conclusion**

As we can see, many English words having the same origin (particularly because of the borrowing) as the
similar French words differ from each other in one or a few of their meanings: for example, *eventual/éventuel, sinister/sinistre*, and so on. So we have paronyms: *deputy/député, versatile (en., fr.).* I did not consider such paronyms as *chat, sale/sal*, etc., or the stylistic using of “false friends”.

**References**


Appendix A: Dictionaries


Muller, V. K. (1946). English-Russian dictionary. Moscow: OGIz-GIS.


Appendix B: Abbreviations

(1) en. – English;

(2) fr. – French;

(3) n. – noun;

(4) adj. – adjective;

(5) v. – verb.