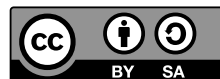


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## **BLENDING AS A WORD-FORMATION PROCESS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF BLENDS IN ENGLISH AND FRENCH**

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

Every word is once new, a neologism. It is perceived as new until it has been used or heard enough times to lose this air of novelty. Although there are several ways of creating new words, the present article is concerned with the morphological process referred to as *lexical blending*. This is a minor word-formation process that is used to coin new words by joining together two or more source words, at least one of which is shortened. This process is found in many languages, and is clear proof of how inventive a language can be.

The present article investigates English and French blend words. The first part of the article is an overview of defining characteristics of blending and blend words. The second half of the article brings an analysis of the corpus examples collected for this particular purpose. Some of the characteristics of blends that are put forward in various studies conducted by English and French linguists are tested on the corpus. The article also investigates the differences that appear between English and French blends in order to find out if there are any major discrepancies between the two languages.

### **2 DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS OF BLENDING AND BLEND WORDS**

The examination of numerous studies of amalgamation in English and French suggests that, although obvious differences exist, some prototypical features of blend words appear repeatedly. As mentioned in the introduction, the majority of lexicologists agree that a blend word is the result of the fusion of two or more source words, at least one of which is shortened or truncated. The structure that is mentioned as the most typical is the front part of the first source word and the last part of the second source word (e.g. Eng.

*chofa* < *chair* + *sofa*, Fr. *gélule* < *gélatine* + *capsule*<sup>1</sup>) with overlap in the middle of the blend (e.g. Eng. *babymoon* < *baby* + *honeymoon*, Fr. *franglais* < *français* + *anglais*). In addition, a number of linguists add that amalgamation may include more than two source words (e.g. Eng. *Xrunkopy* < *Xerox* + *drunk* + *photocopy*, Fr. *almasilicium* < *aluminium* + *magnésium* + *silicium*), and that it is also possible that the blend word is composed of two source words shortened to their front parts (e.g. Eng. *modem* < *modulator* + *demodulator*, Fr. *courriel* < *courrier* + *électronique*<sup>2</sup>) or that a source word is infixed in the other (e.g. Eng. *Sleavenia* < *Slovenia* + *leave*, Fr. *rajolivissant* < *ravissant* + *joli*<sup>3</sup>).

The following table shows the typical characteristics of blends described in various publications, as listed in the bibliography section, and checks how many authors include each individual characteristic in their definitions.

Table 1: Defining characteristics of blends according to different authors

	Involves two SW <sup>4</sup>	Involves more than two SW	Front part of SW1 and last part of SW2	Front part of SW1 and front part of SW2	Shortening of at least one SW	Overlap of SW1 and SW2	Embedding of one SW into the other
<b>Pound (2015)</b>	+		+	+	+		
<b>Adams (2001)</b>	+				+	+	
<b>Algeo (1977)</b>	+	+			+	+	+
<b>Bauer (2012)</b>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<b>Cannon (2009)</b>	+		+		+		
<b>Lehrer (1996)</b>	+				+		+
<b>Plag (2003)</b>	+	+	+		+		
<b>López Rúa (2004)</b>	+	+	+	+	+	+	

1 Eng. “gelatin” + “capsule”.

2 Eng. “email” + “electronic”.

3 Eng. “delightful” + “pretty”.

4 SW stands for source word.

	Involves two SW <sup>4</sup>	Involves more than two SW	Front part of SW1 and last part of SW2	Front part of SW1 and front part of SW2	Shortening of at least one SW	Overlap of SW1 and SW2	Embedding of one SW into the other
Gries (2004)	+	+	+		+	+	
Brdar-Szabó & Brdar (2008)	+		+		+	+	
Clas (1987)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Fradin (2000)	+	+			+	+	+
Renner (2012)	+		+		+	+	
Léturgie (2012)	+		+		+	+	+
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>

If we summarize the information gathered in the table, we can construct the following prototypical definition of blending:

Blending is a word-formation process that involves two or more source words. It involves the shortening of at least one source word, but frequently the source words display some overlap. The most typical pattern of blending is the front part of the first source word and the last part of the second source word.

### 3 CORPUS ANALYSIS

#### 3.1 Compiling the corpus

The present article attempts to provide a clear description of significant structural properties that dominate the process of blend formation in English and French on the basis of a corpus that has been compiled for this particular purpose. Blends do not exhibit a single, clear-cut rule of formation, but, hopefully, the analysis of the corpus will reveal some prominent structural patterns in both languages.

The only way to get meaningful results, which would reveal any significant differences between English and French blends, is to analyse blends gathered from similar sources. Therefore, the vast majority of lexical data forming the corpus of French and English blends was gathered from articles and studies included in the bibliography. Additionally, some entries were found in opportunistic sources, such as contemporary American and British online newspapers and magazines and online collections.<sup>5</sup>

The corpus is limited to single-word blends only, excluding multi-word blends such as *store d'oeuvre*, created by blending *store* and *hors d'oeuvre*. Additionally, only blends with two source words are included in the corpus, eliminating entries coined from three source words.

The most notable limitation, however, is the exclusion of words created by joining together the front parts of two or more source words (e.g. *modem* < *modulator* + *demodulator*). These coinages are considered by some authors as a sub-type of acronyms or complex clippings rather than blends. Both Renner (2006, s. p.) and Léturgie (2011b, 204) claim that a blend is composed of source words which are shortened at their inner edges (meaning that the last part of the first source word and the first part of the second source word are removed). Arndt-Lappe and Plag (2013, 5) classify *modem* as a representative of complex clippings that have the following structure:  $AC = AB + CD$ . They state that “AC formations are therefore often treated as a pattern distinct from blending”.

On the other hand, the corpus includes examples where one source word is embedded into the other. As mentioned in section 2 on definitions of blends, Bauer (2012, 17) claims that while these “infix blends” are rare in English, they are more frequent in French.

The final corpus contains 458 English and 396 French blends.

### 3.2 Corpus analysis

In the present article, English and French blends are analysed separately in order to see if any major differences can be found between blends from both languages.

The analysis is limited to the following structural parameters:

- The lexical categories of blends and of their source words entering each blend.
- The presence or absence of shortening of source words: some blends are formed by juxtaposing two source words in their entirety with overlap in the middle, while others show different degrees of shortening of either one or both source words.
- The type of shortening: which source word is shortened in the process of blending – first, second or both.
- The structural patterns of blends: how are source words combined to form blends.

<sup>5</sup> For example Word Spy <https://wordspy.com/>, Urban Dictionary <https://www.urbandictionary.com/>, Pinterest <https://www.pinterest.com/>.

- The presence or absence of overlap between the source words: the overlap may be perfect (with both source words present in their entirety) or only partial.
- The type of overlap: the overlap may be orthographic, phonic or both.
- Infixation: sometimes one source word is inserted into the other.

The parameters listed above are corroborated by the statistical analysis of the corpus. Additionally, some parts of the analysis are compared to the findings published by Renner in “French and English lexical blends in contrast” (2018). His study is based on 97 French and 374 English blends from two corresponding dictionaries in both languages, namely the *Grand Robert de la langue française* and the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*. Both his study and the present article analyse the lexical categories of blends and their source words, structural patterns of blends and type of overlap between source words. Upon closer examination, however, some interesting discrepancies emerge.

### 3.2.1 Lexical categories

In English as well as in French, the majority of blends are nominal, followed in quantity by adjectival, then verbal and adverbial blends. The corpus also includes one English pronominal blend (*shim*<sup>6</sup>).

As the graph below demonstrates, the percentage of each of these lexical categories is almost identical in both languages. Nouns represent 85.4% of the English part of the corpus and 84.8% of the French part.

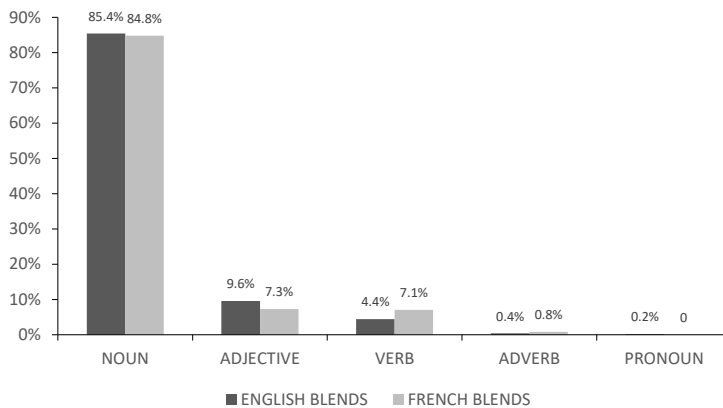


Chart 1: Lexical categories of English and French blends

Chart 2 shows how frequent each combination of lexical categories of source words is.

<sup>6</sup> In Renner's study *shim* (< *she* + *him*) is not considered a pronominal blend but rather a nominal one, even if he analysed it as being formed from two pronouns.

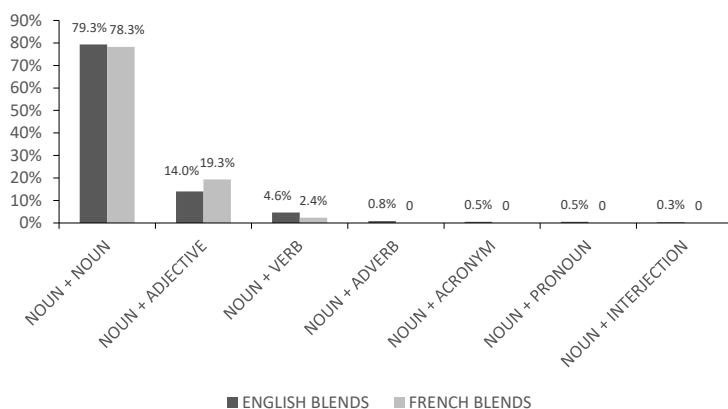


Chart 2: Comparison of nominal blends in both languages

The most frequent combinations are the juxtaposition of two nouns (e.g. Eng. *archi-tourist* < *architecture* + *tourist*, Fr. *confipote* < *confiture* + *compote*), a noun and an adjective (e.g. Eng. *fakeation* < *fake* + *vacation*, Fr. *sublimitude* < *sublime* + *attitude*) or a noun and a verb (e.g. Eng. *shareware* < *share* + *software*, Fr. *Cracotte* < *craquer* + *biscotte*). These three combinations appear in both languages. On the other hand, the English part of the corpus displays four additional combinations, those of a noun and an adverb (e.g. *backronym* < *back* + *acronym*), a noun and an acronym (e.g. *waplash* < *WAP* + *backlash*), a noun and a pronoun (e.g. *himbo* < *him* + *bimbo*) or a noun and an interjection (e.g. *grrrl* < *grrr* + *girl*). These four combinations, however, are only present in the English part of the corpus and they are a minority (their frequency is below 1%).

Chart 3 demonstrates different combinations of source words in adjectival blends and their respective frequencies.

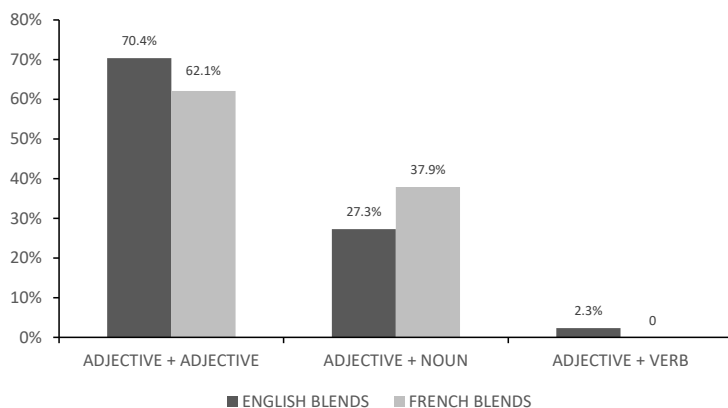


Chart 3: Comparison of adjectival blends in both languages

The list of lexical data contains 44 English and 29 French adjectives, which represent 9.8% and 7.3% of each part of the corpus, respectively. This quantity does not suffice to deduce any definitive conclusions about adjectival blends in general, but it seems safe to assume that the majority of them are formed from two adjectives (e.g. Eng. *fantabulous* < *fantastic* + *fabulous*, Fr. *spûre* < *spontanée* + *sûre*<sup>7</sup>). The second most frequent combination attested in both languages is that of an adjective and a noun (e.g. Eng. *lugged* < *luggage* + *mugged*, Fr. *ennuiversel* < *ennui* + *universel*<sup>8</sup>). Additionally, only one English blend is constructed from an adjective and a verb (e.g. *brusherific* < *brush* + *terrific*), while no examples with this type of structure are found in French.

Chart 4 illustrates the frequency of each combination of source words in adjectival blends.

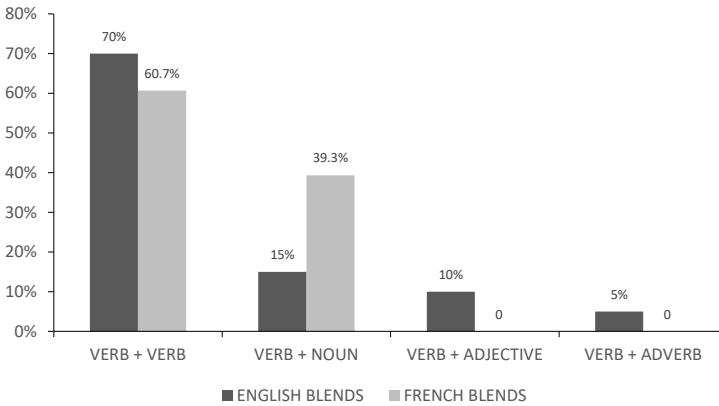


Chart 4: Comparison of verbal blends in both languages

Twenty English and 28 French verbal blends make up 4.4% and 7.1% of each part of the corpus, respectively. Again, this amount is not sufficient to draw any conclusions about the entire category. However, as the chart below demonstrates, the majority of verbal blends combine two verbs (e.g. Eng. *chillax* < *chill* + *relax*, Fr. *pleiger* < *pleuvoir* + *neiger*<sup>9</sup>). The juxtaposition of a verb and a noun is found in both languages, but it is much more frequent in French than in English (e.g. Eng. *prowebstinate* < *procrastinate* + *web*, Fr. *clavarder* < *clavier* + *bavarder*<sup>10</sup>). Among the English lexical data, the combinations of a verb and an adjective (e.g. *narrowcast* < *narrow* + *broadcast*) or a verb and an adverb (e.g. *gazunder* < *gazump* + *under*) are also present.

7 Eng. “spontaneous” + “safe”.

8 Eng. “boredom” + “universal”.

9 Eng. “to rain” + “to snow”.

10 Eng. “keyboard” + “to chat”.

Adverbial blends also exist, and the corpus contains two in English (e.g. *absolutely* < *absolutely* + *positively*) and three in French (e.g. *intelligemment* < *intelligement* + *gentiment*<sup>11</sup>).

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, *shim* is the only pronominal blend in English that made its way into the corpus. It is a combination of the pronouns *she* and *him*.

As far as lexical categories of blends are concerned, Renner's study (2018) presents almost identical results to the analysis above, apart from the fact that Renner did not find any adverbial or pronominal blends. However, this difference is of little importance as these two lexical categories represent a minority.

Table 2: Percentage of each lexical category of blends revealed by the present analysis and Renner's study

LEXICAL CATEGORIES OF BLENDS	% OF ENGLISH BLENDS	% OF ENGLISH BLENDS (RENNER)	% OF FRENCH BLENDS	% OF FRENCH BLENDS (RENNER)
NOMINAL	84.8%	89%	85.4%	88%
ADJECTIVAL	7.3%	8%	9.6%	8%
VERBAL	7.1%	3%	4.4%	4%
ADVERBIAL	0.4%	0	0.8%	0
PRONOMINAL	0.2%	0	0	0

A notable difference between the two studies can be observed in the number of possible combinations of lexical categories of source words. While the present analysis discovered 13 possible combinations, Renner discovered only eight.<sup>12</sup> The table below demonstrates the differences between the findings of both studies.

11 Eng. "intelligently" + "nicely".

12 Renner's analysis actually reveals 10 combinations, but in order to simplify the comparative analysis, I joined combinations 'noun + adjective' and 'adjective + noun' into one category. The same goes for 'verb + noun' and 'noun + verb'.



*Table 3: Percentage of each combination of source words in both studies*

<b>COMBINATIONS OF LEXICAL CATEGORIES OF SOURCE WORDS</b>	<b>% OF ENGLISH BLENDS</b>	<b>% OF ENGLISH BLENDS (RENNER)</b>	<b>% OF FRENCH BLENDS</b>	<b>% OF FRENCH BLENDS (RENNER)</b>
NOUN + NOUN	67.7%	75.0%	66.4%	74.5%
NOUN + ADJECTIVE	14.6%	21.7%	19.2%	24.5%
ADJECTIVE + ADJECTIVE	6.8%	0.6%	4.5%	1%
NOUN + VERB	4.6%	1.2%	4.8%	0
VERB + VERB	3.1%	0	4.3%	0
NOUN + ADVERB	0.7%	0.3%	0.3%	0
ADJECTIVE + VERB	0.7%	0	0	0
NOUN + ACRONYM	0.4%	0	0	0
NOUN + PRONOUN	0.4%	0.6%	0	0
ADVERB + ADVERB	0.4%	0	0.5%	0
NOUN + INTERJECTION	0.2%	0.3%	0	0
VERB + ADVERB	0.2%	0	0	0
PRONOUN + PRONOUN	0.2%	0.3%	0	0

In both analyses English blends display a greater number of possible combinations than French blends. In Renner's corpus French blends are only found with the following three combinations: two nouns, a noun combined with an adjective or two adjectives. The corpus assembled for the present article also includes combinations of a noun and a verb, two verbs, a noun and an adverb or two adverbs. As Renner (2018, 6) also pointed out, this seems to indicate that, if compared to French, there is "[...] a higher degree of word playfulness of blending in English than in French."

Moreover, if we disregard the smaller discrepancies discovered in connection with the combinations that are in the minority, three major differences stand out. In contrast with Renner's list of blends, the present corpus includes examples of blends that couple two adjectives, two verbs and even a noun and a verb, which are marginal or even non-existent in the earlier corpus.

### 3.2.2 Shortening of source words

The analysis shows that blends from the corpus display one of the following three structures:

- one source word is shortened, the other one remains intact (e.g. Eng. *Dixiecrat* < *Dixie* + *democrat*, Fr. *jaguarion* < *jaguar* + *lion*<sup>13</sup>),
- both source words are shortened (e.g. Eng. *Chimerica* < *China* + *America*, Fr. *plapier* < *plastique* + *papier*<sup>14</sup>) or
- both source words are present in their entirety, with medial overlap (e.g. Eng. *cutensil* < *cute* + *utensil*, Fr. *féconductrice* < *fécond* + *conductrice*<sup>15</sup>).

The chart below shows the percentage of each type of shortening in both languages.

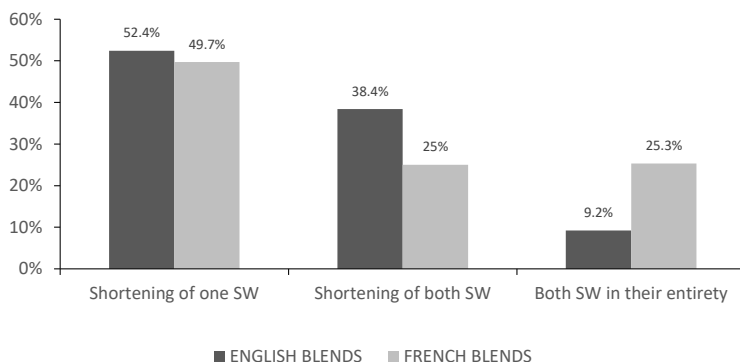


Chart 5: Number of source words shortened during the formation of blends in both languages

About 50% of all the words in the corpus include shortening of one source word, whereas the other two types of shortening display a difference between the two languages. Shortening of both source words is more frequent in English (38.4% versus 25% in French). On the other hand, in comparison to English, French favours keeping both source words intact (25.3% versus 9.2% in English).

### 3.2.3 Structural patterns of blends

As has already been pointed out, blends show a variety of structural patterns. The source words can be shortened or not, they can be juxtaposed or inserted or they can even be kept whole and overlap in the middle part of the blend they form.

13 Eng. “jaguar” + “lion”.

14 Eng. “plastic” + “paper”.

15 Eng. “fertile” + “forewoman”.

Both English and French blends show the following five structural patterns:

- The first part of the first source word is in juxtaposition with the last part of the second source word (e.g. Eng. *chofa* < *chair* + *sofa*, Fr. *gélule* < *gélatine* + *capsule*);
- The whole first source word is followed by the last part of the second source word (e.g. Eng. *furminator* < *fur* + *terminator*, Fr. *kebabisation* < *kebab* + *islamisation*);
- The first part of the first source word is in juxtaposition with the entire second source word (e.g. Eng. *relationblip* < *relationship* + *blip*, Fr. *catapostrophe* < *catastrophe* + *apostrophe*);
- None of the source words is shortened, but they overlap in the middle (e.g. Eng. *Yahooligan* < *Yahoo* + *hooligan*, Fr. *animalphabet* < *animal* + *alphabet*) or
- The second source word is embedded into the first one (e.g. Eng. *Armachillo* < *armadillo* + *chill*, Fr. *s'embellemerder* < *s'emmerder* + *belle-mère*<sup>16</sup>).

The chart below demonstrates the difference in the percentage of each structural pattern in both languages.

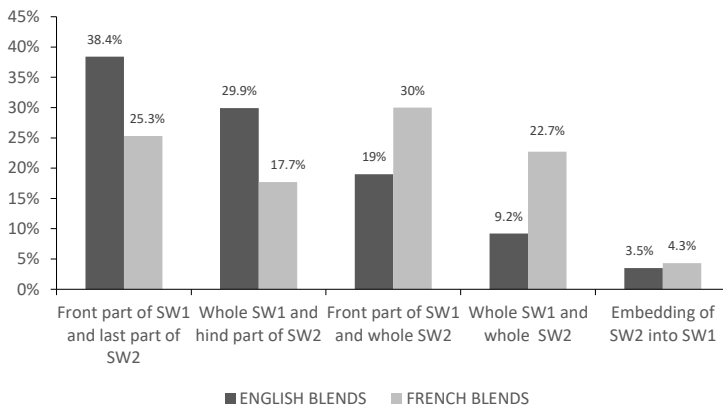


Chart 6: Percentage of each structural pattern in both languages

This section is the first that reveals quite a few notable differences between both languages. The majority of the English blends from the corpus are composed from the front part of the first source word and the last part of the second source word (38.4% of the English versus 25.3% of the French blends), while the majority of French blends are formed by juxtaposing the front part of the first source word and the second source word in its entirety (30% of the French versus 19% of the English blends). The entire first source word followed by the last part of the second source word is also a popular structural pattern in both

16 Eng. “to be bored” + “mother-in-law”.

languages, but there is a significant difference in the percentage of blends with this pattern, namely, 29.9% of the English blends and 17.7% of the French blends are formed this way. Another dissimilarity between both languages is that French has more than twice as many blends composed from two complete source words if compared to English, namely 22.7% in French versus 9.2% in English. As far as infix blends go, the percentage in both languages is comparable (4.3% in French and 3.5% in English).

Renner (2018) also investigated which structural patterns appear in English and French blends, and the following table shows the differences between the results of both studies.

*Table 4: Percentage of each type of blend structure in the present article and Renner's study*

<b>BLEND STRUCTURE</b>	<b>% OF ENGLISH BLENDS</b>	<b>% OF ENGLISH BLENDS (RENNER)</b>	<b>% OF FRENCH BLENDS</b>	<b>% OF FRENCH BLENDS (RENNER)</b>
Front part of SW1 and last part of SW2 (double inner shortening <sup>17</sup> )	38.4%	31%	25.3%	31%
Whole SW1 and last part of SW2 (right-hand-side inner shortening)	29.9%	21%	17.7%	8.5%
Front part of SW1 and whole SW2 (left-hand-side inner shortening)	19%	24%	30%	44.5%
Whole SW1 and whole SW2 (haplologic blending)	9.2%	7%	22.7%	3%
Embedding of SW2 into SW1 (sandwich blending)	3.5%	1%	4.3%	0
Front part of SW1 and front part of SW2 (double right-shortening)	0	14%	0	12%
Other	0	2%	0	1%

17 The names of patterns of lexical shortening in brackets are from Renner's study (2018, 6-7).

Firstly, Renner's corpus contains blends which are formed from the front parts of source words, which the present article excludes. Secondly, Renner also found a small percentage of words which display other structures, as an example he lists *audimat*, which is coined from the first part of *audimètre* and the middle part of *automatique*. The present article excludes such formations from the category of blends, following Arndt-Lappe and Plag (2013, 5) who classify these coinages as complex clippings that have the following structure:  $AC = AB + CD$ . They state that "AC formations are therefore often treated as a pattern distinct from blending".

Secondly, both lists of blends show that the majority of English blends are formed by connecting the front part of the first source word and last part of the second source word, while French blends clearly prefer the juxtaposition of the front part of the first source word and the entire second source word. As far as the frequency of each structural pattern is concerned, the only notable difference is that the second and third places in the English part of both corpora are reversed, namely Renner's second most frequent blend structure is the front part of the first source word followed by the entire second source word, while the third place is taken by blends coined from the entire first source word and the last part of the second source word. The analysis conducted in the present article reveals that these two places are switched in frequency.

Blends that keep both source words in their entirety with overlap in the middle (e.g. Eng. *affluenza* < *affluence* + *influenza*, Fr. *déceptionniste* < *déception* + *réceptionniste*<sup>18</sup>) are clearly much more frequent in the French part of the present corpus than in Renner's, which seems strange as some linguists dub this type of coinage as the ideal blend (e.g. Kaunisto 2000, n. pag.). It is possible that such blends started gaining in popularity in recent years and have therefore not been included in traditional dictionaries, which are the basis of Renner's corpus. The same might apply to infix blends (e.g. Eng. *Sleavenia* < *Slovenia* + *leave*, Fr. *Dékačkainé* < *décaféiné* + *Kafka*<sup>19</sup>), where the second source word is embedded into the first one. The present corpus includes a slightly higher number of such blends than Renner's.

### 3.2.4 Overlap

The present section focuses on an analysis of overlap that appears in some blends and it is the second area of analysis that revealed some notable differences between both languages. Before looking closely at these differences, it needs to be pointed out that even if overlap is frequently mentioned in studies on blends, it is rarely specified which type of overlap is meant. The present analysis is only interested in medial overlap, namely the string of letters or phonemes that are present at the inner edges where both source words are joined to form a blend (e.g. *skinship* < *skin* + *kinship*).

18 Eng. "disappointment" + "receptionist".

19 Eng. "decaffeinated" + "Kafka".

Chart 7 presents a comparison of different types of overlap in English and French.

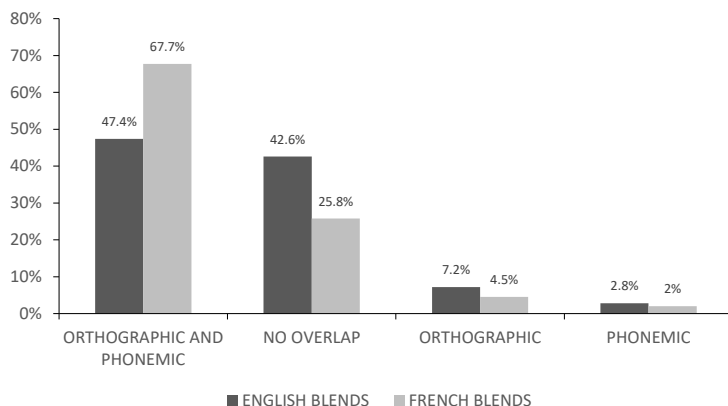


Chart 7: Comparison of types of overlap between English and French

In English, as well as in French, the majority of blends show both orthographic and phonemic overlap, but the percentage of such blends is significantly higher in the French part of the corpus (67.7% versus 47.7% of English blends). On the other hand, the percentage of blends without overlap is lower in French (25.8% versus 42.6% in the English part of the corpus). The rest of the lexical data show either orthographic (7.2% of English versus 4.5% of French blends), or phonemic overlap (2.8% of English versus 2% of French blends).

The following example is very interesting as far as overlap is concerned: *hangry* < *hungry* + *angry*. Both source words have over 65% of letters in common, however, the first source word only contributes the initial letter *h*, and since the second source word does not have the same letter at its left edge, there is no medial overlap.

Additionally, various types of medial overlap can occur, the source words can have orthographic (e.g. Eng. *smog* < *smoke* + *fog*, Fr. *chiantifique* < *chiant* + *scientifique*<sup>20</sup>), phonemic (e.g. Eng. *ballute* < *balloon* + *parachute*, Fr. *jeansmnastique* < *jeans* + *gymnastique*<sup>21</sup>) or both orthographic and phonemic overlap (e.g. Eng. *babymoon* < *baby* + *honeymoon*, Fr. *picoléreux* < *picoler* + *coléreux*<sup>22</sup>). What needs to be underlined at this point is that even if a blend shows orthographic and phonemic overlap of its source words, this does not necessarily entail that the overlap is perfect. To illustrate, from the orthographic standpoint *croissantwich* (< *croissant* + *sandwich*) overlaps in three letters, but looking at this blend from the phonemic angle, the overlap is not perfect because the source words overlap in only one phoneme (/krə'sɑ:nt/ + /'sænwidʒ/). The same holds for the French example *créatique* (< *création* [kʁeasjõ] + *informatique* [ɛ̃fɔʁmatik]).

20 Eng. “boring” + “scientific”.

21 Eng. “jeans” + “gymnastics”.

22 Eng. “to drink” + “angry person”.

Before we examine overlap further, it needs to be stated that some blends do not display any overlap (e.g. Eng. *procrastibaking* < *procrastination* + *baking*, Fr. *paponcle* < *papa* + *oncle*<sup>23</sup>).

The two most interesting examples found in the corpus are *clandestiny* (< *clandestine* /<sup>l</sup>klændəstain/ + *destiny* /<sup>l</sup>destəni/) and *aiguillotine* (< (*aiguille* [egɥij] + *guillotine* [gijotin]<sup>24</sup>). The former overlaps in six letters, but only one phoneme, while the latter overlaps in five letters but only one phoneme.

In contrast, *cashmiracle* (< *cashmere* /<sup>l</sup>kæʒmir/ + *miracle* /<sup>l</sup>mirəkl/) has a perfect phonemic overlap and an incomplete orthographic overlap. In French, *téléphonie* (< *téléphone* [telefɔn] + *folie* [fɔli]<sup>25</sup>) overlaps in one letter and two phonemes.

Another noteworthy type of blend appeared in both parts of the corpus, i.e., graphic or orthographic blends. These formations owe their name to the fact that they can only be identified as blends in spelling. This is due to the fact that the blend is pronounced exactly like one of the source words from which it is coined. From the phonemic standpoint, in *fantasea* (< *fantasy* + *sea*) both source words are preserved entirely (they have perfect overlap), but looking at them from the orthographical viewpoint the overlap is far from perfect (the *y* in *fantasy* has been replaced by the entire second source word). The corpus revealed seven graphic blends in English (e.g. *pursonality* < *purse* + *personality*) and ten of them in French (e.g. *constipassion* < *constipation* + *passion*).

As far as Renner's study (2018) is concerned, 50% of English blends and 38% of French blends show overlap. The results of the analysis in the present article are quite different, with 57.4% of English and 74.2% of French blends having medial overlap.

The following table shows the percentage of each type of overlap in the present article and Renner's study.

Table 5: Percentage of each type of overlap in the present article and Renner's study

TYPE OF OVERLAP	% OF ENGLISH BLENDS	% OF ENGLISH BLENDS (RENNER)	% OF FRENCH BLENDS	% OF FRENCH BLENDS (RENNER)
ORTHOGRAPHIC AND PHONEMIC	82.5%	83.5%	91.2%	81%
ORTHOGRAPHIC	12.4%	11%	6.1%	11%
PHONEMIC	4.9%	5.5%	2.7%	8%

23 Eng. "father" + "uncle".

24 Eng. "needle" + "guillotine".

25 Eng. "phone" + "madness".

While Renner's analysis revealed that as far as the type of overlap is concerned, English and French blends display practically identical properties, the corpus in the present article demonstrates a notable difference between both languages. The frequency of each type of overlap in English blends is practically identical between both corpora, but there is a difference in French blends, where the orthographic and phonemic overlap is 10% higher than in Renner's analysis. Consequently, only orthographic or only phonemic overlap is found in a smaller percentage of French blends.

### 3.2.5 Infixation

Both languages include blends that are coined by inserting one source word into the other. The English part of the corpus has 16 such blends (3.5% of all English blends), while the French part has 17 infixated blends (4.3% of all French blends).

There are ten interesting French examples of infixated blends that deserve to be highlighted. They all have both source words present in their entirety, the difference is merely in the presence or absence of overlap. The first three do not display any overlap: *encyclospirouédie* (< *encyclopédie* + *Spirou*), *rajolivissant* (< *ravissant* + *joli*<sup>26</sup>) and *ubiamourquité* (< *ubiquité* + *amour*<sup>27</sup>). The other seven blends have overlapping source words. These blends are: *autoimmobiliste* (< *automobiliste* + *immobile*<sup>28</sup>), *embellemerder* (< *emmerder* + *belle-mère*<sup>29</sup>), *escameloter* (< *escamoter* + *camelote*<sup>30</sup>), *pyrimidine* (< *pyridine* + *imide*), *revolution* (< *revolution* + *Volvo*), *ridicoculiser* (< *ridiculiser* + *cocu*<sup>31</sup>), *télévisseur* (< *téléviseur* + *visse*<sup>32</sup>). Examples like these are not found in English.

On the other hand, the English part of the corpus only includes infixated blends where the first source word is shortened and the other one is inserted in its entirety. The majority of such blends show overlap, the only two exceptions being *parahawking* (< *paragliding* + *hawk*) and *prowebstinate* (< *procrastinate* + *web*).

26 Eng. "delightful" + "pretty".

27 Eng. "ubiquity" + "love".

28 Eng. "driver" + "motionless".

29 Eng. "to be bored" + "mother-in-law".

30 Eng. "to retract" + "trash".

31 Eng. "to make fun of" + "cuckold".

32 Eng. "television" + "to screw".



## 4 CONCLUSION

The most important findings revealed during the analysis presented above are summarized below.

- As far as lexical categories are concerned, English and French blends do not display any significant differences, the vast majority of blends are nouns coined from two nominal source words.
- English is slightly more inclined to play with different combinations of source words. For example, the corpus includes blends combining a noun and an acronym or a noun and an interjection. Such blends are not found in French.
- Quite a few blends keep their source words intact with overlap in the middle part of the blend. It is interesting that this type of combination is more than twice as frequent in French than in English (22.7% in French versus 9.2% in English).
- Additionally, the analysis revealed that French blends demonstrate a higher preference for keeping both source words intact (25.3% in French versus 9.2% in English).
- The most typical pattern of blending in English is the juxtaposition of the front part of the first source word and the last part of the second source word (e.g. *pregnesia* < *pregnancy* + *amnesia*), while French blends prefer the juxtaposition of the front part of the first source word and the entire second source word (e.g. *crapoussin* < *crapaud* + *poussin*<sup>33</sup>).
- Both in English and in French the majority of blends display orthographic and phonemic overlap (e.g. Eng. *sheeple* < *sheep* + *people*, Fr. *élevache* < *élevage* + *vache*<sup>34</sup>), but the percentage of such blends is significantly higher in French (67.7% in French versus 47.4% in English). In contrast, French has a smaller percentage of blends with no overlap (e.g. Eng. *Polskedadle* < *Poland* + *skedadle*, Fr. *Nissbaru* < *Nissan* + *Subaru*) if compared to English (25.8% in French versus 42.6% in English).
- Bauer (2012, 17) stated that infix blends are rare in English, while the French language seems to be more inclined to their production, although the corpus revealed that the percentage of infix blends is quite similar in both languages (3.5% of all English blends versus 4.3% of all French blends from the corpus).

After reviewing all the information that was gathered during the analysis of the corpus and comparing it to the definition of blending that is formed with the help of Table 1, which shows the prototypical characteristics of blends, it is clear that while blends can be formed from two or more source words, which may display some overlap, it is not obligatory for at least one of the source words to be shortened during the process. Quite

33 Eng. “toad” + “spring chicken”.

34 Eng. “breeding” + “cow”.

a few blends keep their source words intact with overlap in the middle part of the blend. The definition also predicted that the most typical pattern of blending is the fusion of the front part of the first source word and the last part of the second source word. The analysis of the corpus only confirmed this to be true of English blends, while French blends prefer the combination of the front part of the first source word and the entire second source word. The corpus therefore only partially confirmed our prototypical definition.

While it is true that recent studies on blends have shed new light on this minor process of word-formation, there is still no real consensus regarding some basic characteristics of blending and, most importantly, the boundaries of this category. The goal of the present article was thus to define and classify blends by sifting through numerous publications by different authors. This task proved to be quite challenging, as definitions differ greatly and it is nearly impossible to decide which one is the most exhaustive. This might be attributed to the ludic character of blends, which seems to be more important than adhering to a rigid set of rules guiding their formation. It could be said that blends tend to ignore rules in favour of producing playful coinages with the intention of attracting as much attention as possible.

The article has also attempted to reveal general characteristics of blends and highlight any discrepancies between English and French by analysing a corpus designed for this purpose. While some differences between English and French blends exist, the two languages also show quite a lot of similarities in the area of blend formation.

To conclude, even if some important findings have been obtained by the present article, the subject of blending is far from exhausted. For example, since the pronunciation of French and English differs greatly, it would be interesting to check phonemic and orthographic overlap more closely and examine the phonetic transcription of source words and blends to see how different English and French blends are in this respect.

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## POVZETEK

### **KRNITEV S SKLAPLJANJEM KOT BESEDOTVORNI PROCES: PRIMERJALNA ANALIZA MED ANGLEŠKIMI IN FRANCOŠKIMI SKLOPI**

Čeprav obstaja več načinov ustvarjanja novih besed, je pričujoči članek osredotočen na morfološki proces, ki ga imenujemo krnitev s sklapljanjem. Resda ta besedotvorni proces vse bolj pridobiva na priljubljenosti, a je pravzaprav precej slabo definiran, prav tako pa ni jasno ločen od ostalih besedotvornih procesov. Krnitev s sklapljanjem je prisotna v mnogih jezikih in je izjemen pokazatelj iznajdljivosti jezika.

Prvi del članka je sestavljen iz pregleda temeljnih značilnosti sklapljanja in sklopov. Drugi del članka je praktične narave. Nekatere ključne značilnosti sklopov, obravnavane v prvem delu, so testirane na podlagi korpusa, ki je bil sestavljen posebej za ta namen in vsebuje 458 angleških in 396 francoskih sklopov. Tvorjenke iz posameznega jezika so analizirane ločeno, z namenom, da se razkrijejo morebitne večje razlike med angleščino in francoščino. Osrednje točke analize so: besedne vrste sklopov in izvornih besed, ki vstopajo v posamezen sklop, prisotnost ali odsotnost skrajšanja izvornih besed, vrsta krajšanja izvornih besed, strukturni vzorci sklopov, prisotnost ali odsotnost prekrivanja izvornih besed, vrsta prekrivanja in pogostost vrivanja ene izvodne besede v drugo. Vsaka od teh točk vsebuje tudi statistično analizo korpusa, ki razkriva morebitne izrazite strukturne vzorce v obeh jezikih. Dodatno pa članek nekatere točke analize primerja z najdbami, ki jih je Vincent Renner opisal v svojem delu *French and English lexical blends in contrast* (2018). Njegov analiza temelji na 97 francoskih in 374 angleških sklopih, ki jih je avtor odkril v dveh slovarjih, in sicer v francoskem *Grand Robert de la langue française* in angleškem *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*.

**Ključne besede:** sklopi, krnitev s sklapljanjem, besedotvorni procesi, besedotvorni krm

## ABSTRACT

**BLENDING AS A WORD-FORMATION PROCESS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF BLENDS IN ENGLISH AND FRENCH**

Although there are several ways of creating new words, the article investigates the morphological process that is referred to as lexical blending. Even if this minor word-formation process is increasingly popular, it is still not clearly defined and limited. This process is present in many languages, and is clear proof of how inventive a language can be.

The first part of the article presents an examination of defining characteristics of blending and blend words according to different authors. The second part of the article is of a practical nature. Some of the key characteristics of blends discussed in the first part are tested on the basis of a corpus, which was compiled specifically for this purpose and contains 458 English and 396 French blends. Blends from each language are analysed separately in order to reveal any major discrepancies between English and French. The focal points of the analysis are the lexical categories of blends and of the source words entering each blend, the presence or absence of shortening of source words, the type of shortening of source words, the structural patterns of blends, the presence or absence of overlap between the source words, the type of overlap and the frequency of infixation. These parameters are corroborated by the statistical analysis of the corpus in order to reveal any prominent structural patterns in both languages. Additionally, some of these points of analysis are compared to the findings presented by Vincent Renner in "French and English lexical blends in contrast" (2018). His study includes 97 French and 374 English blends from two corresponding dictionaries in both languages, namely the *Grand Robert de la langue française* and the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*.

**Keywords:** blends, blend words, portmanteau words, blending, amalgamation, word-formation processes, splinter