
"Draction!": English Borrowings and Linguistic Creativity in Drag Race France (2022)

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Résumé

This presentation will investigate the use of English borrowings in French by drag queens on Season 1 of *Drag Race France* (2022), focusing on their linguistic functions, borrowing types, and their phonological/morphological integration into French, whilst also examining how these loanwords reflect sociocultural dynamics in this microcosm of the queer community.

Borrowings will be categorised into a variety of strategies: wholesale borrowings (e.g., 'je suis *safe*'); hybrid forms (e.g., 'vous *lip-sincerez* sur...'); pseudoanglicisms (e.g., 'tu as *du tucking* avec le scotch'); semantic calques (e.g., 'je ne sais pas si c'est jeune, mais c'est plus *vert*'); syntactic calques (e.g., '*finger in the nose*'). Each of these strategies will be examined in borrowed nouns (e.g., 'la *pit-crew*'), verbs (e.g., 'se faire *drag-queener*'), adjectives (e.g., '*fatbuleuse*'), and honorifics (e.g., '*yes, girl*'). Phrasal borrowings (e.g., '*free the nipple*') will be analysed semantically, highlighting the performative aspect of English borrowings as expressions of engagement with global drag culture.

The presentation will also examine the phonological and morphological integration of these borrowings. For example, the difference between borrowings which largely retain English phonetics (e.g., '*on brand*' (mbænd)) and those which are phonologically integrated (e.g., '*tucker*' (tyke), not (t.ke)). Similarly, inflectional morphological adaptations, such as pluralisation and gender assignment on nouns (e.g., 'les *big girls* (l)'; '*girls* (ls) *band*') and adjectives (e.g., 'si je ne suis pas *tuckée*' (tyke)), as well as verbal inflections (e.g., 'tu *embraces* (mbes) ça'; '*vous lip-sincerez*') reveal how borrowings are incorporated into existing French linguistic paradigms.

Findings suggest that English borrowings serve as a linguistic bridge between local and global drag subcultures, embodying cultural hybridity and signalling affiliation with the broader Anglophone drag tradition. At the same time, their integration into French demonstrates linguistic innovation and resistance to prescriptive norms.

Mots-Clés: English borrowings, French drag queens, Drag Race France, phonological integration, sociolinguistics, queer linguistics

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