Aspects of Deceptive Cognate Derived Loanwords in Kinyarwanda

Jacques Kayigema*

Senior Lecturer, Adventist University of Central Africa, Kigali, Rwanda

*Corresponding Author: Jacques Kayigema, Senior Lecturer, Adventist University of Central Africa, Kigali, Rwanda

ABSTRACT

Loanwords derived from French and English deceptive cognates or false friends have caught the researcher’s attention because of the complexity they present in the areas of language contact and language teaching and learning. Deceptive cognates very often constitute obstacles to the understanding of the meaning and the pronunciation of a word because they have tricky similarities. In Rwanda where most English learners have already acquired French as Target Language 2, the use of the right word in English (Target Language 3) is a serious threat to communication. The tendency is to consider the meaning, the pronunciation of an English word as that of a French word, especially when both words have the same spelling.

The complexity of deceptive cognates in a bilingual education system results from the position France and the United Kingdom have played in the history of the world since both countries have had two distinct educational systems.

Teaching and learning deceptive cognates in a bilingual education system is challenging, though, especially with non-native students currently learning French and English in Rwanda.

Therefore, researchers should carefully study these words that morphologically resemble in both languages but have a different meaning. Bilingual learners of French and English will face a big challenge in learning deceptive cognates until they possess a high command of the two languages, they will face serious obstacles in mastering deceptive cognates or false friends.

Keywords: loanwords, language contact, loanwords, sociolinguistics, allocation, deceptive cognates, aspects.

INTRODUCTION

The objective of this article is to show how deceptive cognate derived loanwords from French and English which have been allocated to noun classes in Kinyarwanda present difficulties in daily communication, teaching, and learning. It focuses on some specific semantic aspects of loanwords when the speaker and the listener use them.

According to Pateau A.M. et al (1998:7), deceptive cognates are usually words of which the etymology is the same, but which have undergone, from a common form, generally from vulgar Latin, a different semantic development for each language. Thus, the Latin word decipere, ‘deceive’, gave deceive/deception in English and décevoir/déception in French. The primary meaning has been preserved in English, but weakened in French, in such a way that today these two words of which the form is similar or identical in both languages denote in each language strong differences of realities.

The coexistence of English and French alongside Kinyarwanda results in various sociolinguistic aspects. One of the sociolinguistic phenomena observed in this coexistence is the influx of French and English loanwords in Kinyarwanda. The latter include deceptive cognates of French and English, which render the use of the three languages more complex. There seems to be a linguistic clash here. The speaker faces a challenge while conversing in either English or French. The understanding of deceptive cognates, false friends or “look-alikes”, would enable the speaker to express his/her ideas correctly and communicate more fluently. French and English pairs of words having a common origin, whereby the homonym suggests the synonym, are hardly mastered.

THE COMMON DENOMINATOR OF DECEPTIVE COGNATES

To explain the reason why two words may deceive the speaker or the listener, the researchers consider two examples of deceptive cognates having their root in Latin. For example, the word ‘library’ and
The Latin word *librarium* lent two words to two recipient languages: French, Recipient Language 1 (RL1), and English, Recipient Language 2 (RL2). Kinyarwanda, Recipient Language 3 (RL3), has now two loanwords from French and English, *libureri* and *layibureri*, two more new deceptive cognates added to the existing ones, ‘library’ and *librairie*.

The French word *librairie*, ‘bookshop’ and the English word ‘library’ for *bibliothèque* developed from the Latin word *librarium*, place to keep books (book case). Therefore the common denominator is the word ‘book’ (*liber, libra in Latin*).

When a Rwandan from a French speaking background uses the loanword *libureri*, he means “bookshop”, while a Rwandan from the English-speaking background uses the loanword *layibureri*, he means “a place where books are kept and may be read, and borrowed”. The problem increases when both speakers are talking to each other. There arises a misunderstanding, a quid pro quo.

The Latin word *audientia* lent two words to two recipient languages: French, Recipient Language 1 (RL1), and English, Recipient Language 2 (RL2). Kinyarwanda, Recipient Language 3 (RL3), received two words from French and English, *odiyanse* and *odiyense*, two more deceptive cognates added to the existing ones (audience and audience).

The loanword *odiyanse* comes from the French word *audience*, ‘appointment’. The spelling of *odiyanse* follows the French pronunciation of the word *audience* /o:djɛntja/ while the loanword *odiyense* comes from the English word ‘audience (public, hearing) and follows the English pronunciation of the word *audience* /ˈɔːdiəns/.

The high rate of loanwords in a recipient language is a striking proof that a donor language has exercised a great influence on that language. For example, the presence of loanwords of Latin origin in Romance languages (French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Rumanian), English, German, and other languages speaks of the strength of the language of the Roman Empire. This influence is still felt even today in the globally powerful English.

The researchers agree with Pooley (1963:23-24) who finds this influence more in the borrowing than in any other sociolinguistic phenomenon.

Words related to church and Christian life were borrowed from Latin and became a part of English; for example, *alms, altar, candle, disciple, mass, organ, and temple*. In addition to the strictly religious influence, contact with the Roman form of Christianity brought a general advancement of culture, which may be seen in the adoption of such words as *school, master, grammar, notary; and cap, chest, plant, circle, and place*. The advance in culture also developed Anglo-Saxon words to express the new ideas, such as *dyppan* (literally “to dip”) for *baptism*, and *fëond* (“fiend”) as a synonym for *devit*. Thus Christianity and Roman culture started that extensive borrowing of words from Latin sources which has persisted to our own day; for only yesterday we borrowed our new word *radio* from Latin *radius*.

The phenomenon of deceptive cognates is not limited to French and English only, but also to other languages. For instance if a Rwandan is learning Kirundi and he asks someone to help him cross the lake in a canoe, which means *guturira*, he may find himself burnt by the Burundian because the two words do not necessarily mean the same thing, though both verbs exist in both languages. In Kinyarwanda, *guturira* means to put someone in his boat and make him cross the lake or a river, while in Kirundi, it means, to burn somebody. The same situation exists with other interlacustrine languages (Great Lakes Region): There are false friends between Kinyarwanda-Kiganda, Kinyarwanda-Gihavu, Kinyarwanda-Kinande, etc.

There exist also false friends in English and Irish, e.g. *bean* for woman, *fear* for man, *bad* for boat.

Moreover, there may be mere formal coincidence or accidental homonyms, such as *pin* (bread) vs *pain*, *chat* (cat) vs chat, *pin* (pine) vs pin, *habit* (clothe) vs habit, etc.

However, languages of different origin may also have false friends. For instance, you may come across the word *pool* in Korean, meaning totally two different things. When it is pronounced short like ‘pull’ it means *weed*, but when it is pronounced long like ‘pool’ it means *glue*. Another example is the word *check*, which means *book*. However, the word ‘book’ itself does not mean check. It means *drum*!

Currently, Rwanda is a trilingual country. Due to historical events which have heavily affected the country, there are three official languages:
Kinyarwanda, French, and English. Therefore, loanwords may have different interpretation depending on the speaker’s background. In most cases, the French meaning seems to be predominant. The most striking example of ambiguity is within the area of education (such ambiguous words are most common in the area of education). Why does French gain over English in this area? This has to do with the sociolinguistic background of French in Rwanda.

The presence of a high rate of French loanwords finds its origin in the colonial period. However, today the English influence is growing rapidly. Of course, some English loanwords came into Kinyarwanda (very often via Kiswahili) by the same time French was being introduced. Today deceptive loanwords present conflicting meaning and pronunciation for Rwandan bilinguals. In French and English there are half deceptive cognates and full deceptive cognates. For half deceptive cognates, the primary meaning or the secondary meaning of a given word may be deceptive, while the other has the same meaning in either language.

DECEPTIVE COGNATES AND SEMANTIC ASPECT IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEMS

The use of some deceptive cognates very often leads to difficulties in interpreting and evaluating degrees for French and English speakers from different linguistic backgrounds of their education systems. For example, the word bachelier means “a secondary school leaver” in France and in the former French speaking colonies.

In Rwanda, a former Belgian colony, bachelier means “a 2-3 year university degree”, just slightly below the BA (Bachelor of Arts), a 4-year University programme in the Anglo-American educational system. BA holders are very often taken for those holding the University baccalaureat degree. Those who were educated in the former system consider them as bacheliers (two-year University degree holders). The semantic complexity also exists with the use of the word licence, “a 4 or 5-year University degree” in Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Belgium. In these countries it is a second university degree. In France and some other French-speaking countries, especially former French colonies, the licence is the first university degree offered on completion of a 2-3 year university programme.

CONTEXTUALIZATION

A few deceptive cognates have been randomly selected in order to illustrate just the semantic complexity in three official languages of Rwanda: French, English, Kinyarwanda. The English translation of French and Kinyarwanda sentences is provided between brackets.

• agenda versus agenda
  agenda (French): date book, diary
  agenda (English): list of items to be considered at a meeting

• assistance versus assistance
  assistance (French): attendance, assistance
  assistance (English): help, aid, support

• assurance versus assurance
  assurance (French): certainty, guarantie, insurance
  assurance (AmE): trustworthy statement, promise,
  (BrE insurance)
  assurance (Kinyarwanda): insurance

• audience versus audience
  audience (French): court hearing, appointment
  audience (English): people listening to or watching a performance, speech, TV show, formal meeting, or attending a hearing.
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**Odiyanse** (Kinyarwanda): appointment, court hearing

*L’audience* de vendredi passé était houleux. (Last Friday’s *hearing* was overcrowded).

*Le public* était déçu car le spectacle était trop court. (The *audience* was disappointed because the show was too short).

*Unsabire odiyanse kwa muganga.* (Please, request an *appointment* with the doctor on my behalf).

- *auditeur* versus auditor
  
  *auditeur* (French): listener, attendant

  auditor: (English): officer responsible for verification of accounts

- *oditeri* (Kinyarwanda): attendant, auditor

  *Notre université accepte des étudiants auditeurs-libres.* Cependant, ils n’ont ni droit aux crédits ni documents académiques, tels que les relevés des notes et l’attestation de fréquentation. (Our university accepts free *attendant students*. However, they are neither entitled to any credits nor academic documents, such as grade transcripts and attendance certificate).

  *Yohani asigaye yiga nk’umuwoditeri libure.* (John is now studying as an auditee student).

- *avertissement* versus advertisement
  
  *avertissement* (French): warning

  advertisement (English): announcement, notice for something for sale

  *avertisoma* (Kinyarwanda): warning

  *Il est regrettable que beaucoup de gens n’écoutent pas les avertissements.* (It is a pity that many people do not listen to the *warnings*).

  *Le matin, les gens se précipitent aux kiosques pour trouver des annonces publicitaires sur l’emploi.* (In the morning, people rush to the stands to read *advertisements* on job offers).

  *Yahawe avertisoma iheruka ku kazi kubera imyitwarire ye mihi.* (He has received the last *warning* from his employer because of his misconduct).

- *bachelier* versus bachelor
  
  *bachelier* (French): who has completed the baccalaureate, A level holder, or a two or three year university degree holder (in some French-speaking countries)

  bachelor (English): unmarried man

  Bachelor of Arts (English): a first university degree holder

  *Basholiye* (Kinyarwanda): a 2-3 year university holder

  *Nous acceptons uniquement les bacheliers au poste de comptable.* (Only people with the *baccalaureate* are eligible for the post of accountant).

  *J’ai deux frères; l’un est déjà marié, l’autre un célibataire endurci.* (I have two brothers; one is already married, the other is a confirmed bachelor (single)).

  *Nous avons engagé beaucoup de licenciés ès lettres. Nous avons maintenant besoin de gens qui ont le doctorat.* (We have hired many teachers with a *Bachelor* of Arts (BA). From now on we will only employ people with a PhD).

  *Ntabwo mu iyi minsí ababasholiye bakibona akazi vuba.* (People holding 2-3 year University degree hardly get a job quickly nowadays).

- *bagage* versus baggage
  
  *bagage* (French): piece of luggage, load, background

  baggage (BrE), luggage (AmE): all the bags and other containers a person travels with

  *bagaje* (Kinyarwanda): baggage, luggage

  *Tes bagages pèsent trop. Tu dois payer l’excédent.* (Your *luggage* is too heavy. You have to pay for the extra weight).

  *Il n’a pas assez de bagage scientifique pour faire sa maîtrise.* (He hasn’t got enough scientific *background* to do his Masters).

  *Bagaje ye yatakaye ku kibuga cy’indege.* (His *luggage* was lost at the airport).

- *ballot* versus ballot
  
  *ballot* (French): bundle

  ballot (English): vote bulletin

  *ibaro* (Kinyarwanda): bundle

  *Le ballot contenant des vêtements usés, coûte moins cher.* (A second hand clothes *bundle* is not expensive).

  *Au moment du comptage des bulletins de vote, les observateurs des élections ont remarqué qu’il y avait une fraude massive aux élections présidentielles.* (While the *ballots* were being counted, the election observation team noticed that there was serious rigging during the presidential elections).

  *Amaze guhambura baro ya cumi y’imyenda, yasanzemwo amafaranga menshi.* (On opening the tenth *bundle* of clothes, he found much money inside).

- *bénéfice* versus benefit
  
  *bénéfice* (French): profit
benefit (English): advantage, allowance, good effect, profit  
benefise (Kinyarwanda): profit  

Il réalise des bénéfices considérables avec l’internet-café. (Thanks to the internet-café considerable profits are yielded).  
Son pays paie des allocations de chômage. (His country pays unemployment benefits).  
Nta benefise ishimishije akibona kubera ko igiciro cy’ikawha cyamanutse. (He no longer gets considerable profits because the price of coffee has gone down).  

- candidature versus candidature, candidat versus candidate  
candidature (French): application for employment, position  
candidature (AmE): candidacy, the state of being a candidate  
candidat (French): applicant for employment, position, examination  
candidate (English): a person taking an examination, who wants to be chosen for a position, especially in an election  

Le jury a rejeté sa candidature au poste de directeur général. (The Jury has rejected his application for the post of Director General).  
Combien de candidats se sont présentés à ce concours d’admission? (How many applicants were there at the entrance examination?).  

Umukandida w’ishyaka ryabo yatsinzwe. (The candidate from their political party has failed).  

- caractère versus character  
caractère (French): behaviour  
character (English): moral nature, able to play an unusual part in a play  
karagiteri (Kinyarwanda): behaviour  
Ta soeur a un caractère irréprochable. (Your sister has an irreproachable character).  
Le personnage principal dans Animal Farm de George Orwell est un cochon appelé Napoléon. (The major character in Animal Farm by George Orwell is a pig called Napoleon).  
Afite karagiteri iruhije. (He has a bad behaviour).  

- certificat versus certificate  
certificat (French): certificate, card  
certificate (English): an official sheet of paper (document) on which is written or printed a statement  

seritifika (Kinyarwanda): certificate  
Il ne peut pas voyager parce qu’il a perdu son certificat de vaccination. (He cannot travel because he has lost his vaccination certificate/card).  
Regarde mon attestation de naissance; je suis né à la fête de Noël. (Look at my birth certificate; I was born on Christmas).  
Yohana yahave diplome y’amashuri yisumbuye. (John has just been awarded a secondary school certificate).  

- chimiste versus chemist  
chimiste (French): scientist who specializes in chemistry  
chemist (English): scientist who specializes in chemistry, pharmacist, drug seller  

L’erreur commise par le pharmacien a causé la mort de plusieurs malades. (The chemist’s error caused the death of several patients).  
Il est devenu ingénieur chimiste après 5 ans d’études universitaires en chimie. (He became a chemical engineer on completion of 5 years of university studies in chemistry).  
Umushimisite abona akazi bitamuruhije. (A chemical engineer gets a job more easily).  

- collège versus college  
collège (French): high school  
collège (English): within university, school  
ikoleji (Kinyarwanda): high school  
Grâce aux meilleurs résultats obtenus au collège, il a eu une bourse d’études pour continuer ses études à l’étranger. (Thanks to his outstanding results from high school, he got a scholarship to pursue his studies abroad).  
L’université qu’il fréquente n’offre que le programme du 1er cycle. (The college he is attending only offers a first degree programme).  
Yize amashuri ye yisumbuye muri koleji y’abihayimana ba bajezuwite. (He did his secondary studies in a Jesuits’ high school).  

- compas versus compass  
compass (French): a pair of compasses  
compas (English): a device for indicating a geographical direction (e.g. North)  

Afite ne sait pas tracer le cercle avec un compas. (Alfred does not know how to draw a circle with compasses).
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Les navigateurs utilisent très souvent la boussole pour connaître le nord. (Sailors very often use a compass to identify the north).

Unzanire ikompa yaniye nce kugirango nshushanye imfuruka. (Bring me my compasses so that I can draw an angle).

- congrégation versus congregation

congrégation (French): religious association, corporation, religious order, body
congregation (English): a group of people gathered together

kongeregasíyo (Kinyarwanda): religious order
Paul a rejoint la congrégation des Pères Barnabites à Milan. (Paul has joined the religious order of Barnabites Fathers in Milan).

Le prêtre vient de dire au revoir à l’assemblée. (The priest has just dismissed the congregation).

Karoli yinjiye muri kongeregasíyo y’abihayimana ba Bafuratiri ba Bamirisite umwaka ushize. (Charles entered the religious order of Marist Brothers last year).

- décevoir versus deceive

décevoir (French): disappoint
deceive (English): to cause to accept as true or good
false or bad

Son comportement m’a forfait déçu. (His/her beloved has disappointed him/her).

Son comportement m’a forfait déçu. (His attitude disappointed me a lot).

Le diable les trompe très souvent, mais ils ne s’en rendent pas compte. (The devil very often deceives them, but they are not aware).

Umukunzi we yaramudeserwe. (His/her beloved one has disappointed him/her).

- degré versus degree

degré (French): grade, degree
degree (English): a step or stage in a set of steps or stages rising in order from lowest to highest
dogere: grade, degree

Grâce à sa performance, il a atteint le plus haut degré dans sa carrière. (Thanks to his performance, he has reached the highest grade in his career).

Pierre a obtenu son diplôme universitaire en 1982. (Peter got his university degree in 1982).

Ubushyuke burgeze muri dogere 25. (The temperature has risen up to 25 degrees).

Yohana afité impambyabumenyi ikirenga y’icyiciro cya gatatu cya kaminuza mu mateka ya vuba y’isi. (John holds a PhD degree in Contemporary History).

- délai versus delay
délai (French): deadline
delay (English): the act of putting off until later
dele (Kinyarwanda): deadline

L’étudiant a bel et bien envoyé sa demande avant le délai du dépôt des candidatures. (The student sent his application before the deadline).

Le retard dans la remise du rapport lui a causé un échec profond. (The delay in handing out the report led to his absolute failure).

Umukoresha we yamuhaye dele y’iminsi itatu. (His employer has given him a deadline of three days).

- délivrer versus deliver
délivrer (French): to free, to hand out, to issue
deliver (English): to help in giving birth, to set free, to hand over

Pilate, le gouverneur romain, a délivré Barabas, le crinell, et livré Jésus aux mains de principaux sacrificateurs pour être crucifié. (Pilate freed Barabas, the gangster, and handed out Jesus to the high priests to be crucified).

Le Direction d’Immigration et d’Emigration délivre les passeports du lundi au vendredi dans la matinée. (The Immigration Office issues passports from Monday to Friday in the morning).

Je dois féliciter mon épouse qui a mis au monde un garçon, mon premier né. (I have to congratulate my wife who has delivered a male child, my first-born).

Mu biro bishinzwe abimuka n’abasohoka mu gihugu badelivura pasiporo buri muni mugi rondo urense muri wikende. (The Immigration Office issues passports every day in the morning except on weekends).

- démonstration versus demonstration
démonstration (French): show, exhibition
demonstration (English): protest, a public show of strong feeling or opinion
demotitarama (Kinyarwanda): show

Des jeunes acrobates feront une démonstration au stade. (Young acrobats will have an exhibition at the stadium).

Les musulmans radicalistes ont organisé une manifestation pour protester contre le frappe...
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militaire en Irak. (Islamic fundamentalists have organized a demonstration to protest against the military strike on Iraq).
Abakozi bakora muri labatware baradukorera demonsitarasyo y’ikuntu amazé avamo umwuka. (Laboratory workers will show us how water evaporates).

- député versus deputy

député (French): member of parliament
deputy (English): a person who has the power to act for another

umudepite (Kinyarwanda): member of parliament

Il a été élu député aux élections précédentes. (He became Member of Parliament /Representative (US) during the last elections).

Mon remplaçant n’assume plus les fonctions de directeur général. (My deputy no longer occupies the post of a Managing Director).

Umudepite wo mw’ishyaka rye yadusuye. (The Member of Parliament from his political party has visited us).

- diplôme versus diploma

diplôme (French): degree, certificate
diploma (English): an official paper showing that a person has successfully finished a course or passed an examination
diplomme (Kinyarwanda): degree, certificate

Il a obtenu son diplôme de licence en histoire à l’Université d’Anvers. (He got his BA degree in History from the University of Antwerp).

A la fin de 10 mois de formation en informatique de gestion, il lui a été décerné un certificat de réussite. (He was awarded a diploma on completion of a ten-year course in information management).

Yabonye diplomle ya license nyuma y’imyaka ine y’amashuri ya kaminuza. (He got his BA degree on completion of 4 years of university studies).

- distraction versus distraction

distraction (French): entertainment, absent-mindedness

distraction (English): the act of taking a person’s mind off something
disitaragisiyo (Kinyarwanda): entertainment

Quelle est ta distraction favorite? La natation. (What is your favorite distraction? Swimming).

Sa distraction lui fait oublier même sa carte d’identité. (Because of his absent-mindedness, he even forgets his identity card).

Ukwiriye kwigira abantu hatari disitaragisiyo. (You should study in a quiet location).

- effectif versus effective

effectif (French): in force, definite, strength

effective (English): producing the desired result

Zadig, personnage principal dans l’oeuvre de Voltaire, Zadig, a révélé au roi Nabussan une méthode efficace de trouver un trésor honnête. (Zadig, a major character in Voltaire’s work, Zadig, revealed to King Nabussan an effective method of finding an honest treasurer).

Le gouvernement a interdit l’usage des boissons stimulant. (This device/instrument/machine uses methane gas.)

Le moteur de la voiture fait un bruit étrange. (The engine of the car is making a strange noise).

Umukanishi yashyize amavuta muri anje ija mu kirere. (The mechanic has put oil in the spacecraft).

- exciting versus exciting

excitant (French): provocative, stimulant

exciting (English): interesting, pleasant

Le gouvernement a interdit l’usage des boissons excitantes. (The government has banned the use of stimulant beverages).

Sa victoire au marathon est formidable. Il ne s’y attendait pas. (His victory in the racing is exciting. He did not expect he could win).

Je voudrais te raconter l’histoire la plus passionnante que j’aie jamais lue. (I would like to tell you the most exciting story I have ever read).

Abantu bakwiriye kwirinda ibinyobwa byegisita. (People should avoid stimulant drinks).

- experience versus experience

expérience (French): experience, experiment
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experience (English): knowledge, event
egisiperiyanse (Kinyarwanda): experience, experiment
Le professeur de chimie a fait une longue expérience au laboratoire. (The teacher of chemistry has performed a long experiment in the laboratory).
Yakoze egisiperiyanse nziza kugirango yerekane uko bakora isukari. (He did a good experiment to show how sugar is processed).

- formation versus formation
formation (French): training, formation
formation (English): composition

La formation en informatique est un besoin pressant. (Training in computer science is an urgent need).
La formation de l’équipe du basketball a quelques faiblesses. (The formation of the basketball team has some weaknesses).

- furniture versus furniture
furniture (French): supplies
furniture (English): house equipment

La fourniture en bois connaît des moments difficiles de nos jours. (Wood supply is at its most strenuous moment these days).
Les meubles de sa maison sont très chers. (His house furniture is very expensive).
Ndagusaba ko wampa furniture y’ibikoresho byo mu biro mu minsi ya uba. (I would like to ask you to send me office supplies in the near future).

- informations versus information
informations (French): news, bulletin
information (English): facts

Les informations en français nous sont parvenues tardivement. (News in French came to us too late).
Les renseignements fournis n’étaient pas du tout fiables. (The information provided was not reliable at all).

- licence versus licence
licence (French): 4/5-year university degree in French speaking countries

II a un diplôme de licence en droit. (He has a Bachelor degree in law).
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Le chauffeur a été sérieusement puni parce qu’il conduisait sans permis de conduire. (The driver was heavily punished because he was driving without a driving license.)

Afite lisanse mu ndimi (He holds a Bachelor degree in languages).

Afite layisense yo kuroba amafi manini mu cyiyaga (for a Rwandan English speaker). (He has a fishing permit to fish big fish in the lake).

- note versus note
  note (French): grade, note
  note (English): short word message, bank note
  inota/note (Kinyarwanda): grade/bank note, musical note

L’étudiant a été chassé de l’école parce qu’il a eu une note inférieure à 10/20. (The student was expelled from school because he got a grade below 10/20).

Le billet de banque de mille francs de 1998 n’aura plus cours légal l’année prochaine. (The 1998 one thousand francs bank note will no longer be in use next year).

Afite amanota meza mu mibare. (He has good grades in Mathematics).

- occasion versus occasion
  occasion (French): opportunity, occasion
  occasion (English): event, ceremony
  okaziyo (Kinyarwanda): opportunity

Ne ratez jamais l’occasion qui vous est offerte pour réussir. (Do not miss the opportunity offered to you in order to succeed).

A l’occasion de la fête nationale de l’indépendance, il a prononcé un discours émouvant. (On the occasion of the Independence Day, he made a thrilling speech.)

Ntabwo ajya agira okaziyo yo guhura n’abategetsi. (He has never had an opportunity to meet authorities).

- physicien versus physician
  physicien (French): physicist
  physicien (English): medical doctor
  umufiziyiye (Kinyarwanda): physicist

Monsieur Ali Baba est physicien dans une grande entreprise de fabrication d’armes à feu. (Mr. Ali Baba is a physicist in a big manufacturing fire arm firm).

Sa maladie a été soignée par un médecin de grand renom. (His ailment was treated by a highly reputed physician).

- politique versus politics
  politique (French): politics, policy
  politics (English): ideology
  politike (Kinyarwanda): politics, policy

La politique du pays sur les relations extérieures est bien solide. (The policy of the country on external relations is very strong.)

La politique exige une tactique psychologique. (Politics requires psychologial strategy.)

Abantu birukira muri politike bahura n’ibihazo mu buzima. (People who rush in politics have serious problems in life).

- professeur versus professor
  professeur (French): teacher (secondary), professor/lecturer (university)
  professor (English): university lecturer
  umuporofeseri (Kinyarwanda): secondary and tertiary teacher

Le professeur de maths dans un lycé est très respecté. (A teacher of Mathematics in a secondary school is highly respected).

Notre professeur n’a pas enseigné aujourd’hui à cause d’une pluie torrentielle. (Our lecturer did not teach today because of a heavy rain.)

Umuporofeseri ntabwo ahembwa umushahara utubutse. (A teacher/lecturer does not earn a high salary).

- publicité versus publicity
  publicité (French): advertisement, advertising, publicity
  publicity (English): public notice or attention
  pubulisite (Kinyarwanda): advertisement, publicity

Pendant les élections, les candidats parlementaires font d’intense publicité. (During the election campaigns, parliamentarian candidates conduct intensive publicity).

Il a gagné beaucoup de sous parce qu’il a fait assez de publicité de son nouveau produit. (He gained a lot of money because he did enough advertising of his new product).

Yakorewe pubulisite y’ibicuruzwa bye n’inzohe kuri radio mazi arunguka. (An expert did advertising of his product on the radio and he got much profit).

- sensible versus sensible
  sensible (French): sensitive
  sensible (English): reasonable, showing good sense
  sansibule (Kinyarwanda): sensitive
Un enfant est sensible aux remarques de ses parents. (A child is sensitive to the remarks of his parents).
Ses nerfs ne sont plus sensibles car il a attrapé la lèpre. (His nerves are no longer sensitive because he has been infected with leprosy).
Ni umuntu sansibule ku bibazo by’akarengane. (He is sensitive to injustice).

sentence versus sentence
sentence (French): condemnation, sentence
sentence (English): a grammatical structure of one or more words.
isenteso (Kinyarwanda): sentence
Il a construit une fausse phrase. (He made a wrong sentence).

Le procureur a requis une peine capitale contre le criminel. (The prosecutor requested the death sentence for the criminal).
Isenteso yakoze irimo ikibazo. (There is something wrong with the sentence he has made).

stage versus stage
stage (French): training course
stage (English): steps, platform
sitaje (Kinyarwanda): training course
Cette pièce de théâtre exige une estrade attrayante. (This play requires an attractive stage).
Pierre ne sera pas disponible avant la semaine prochaine parce qu’il est en stage. (Peter will not be available until next week because he’s on a training course).
Yamaze iminsi myinshi muri sitaje. (He spent many days on a training course.)

substitut versus substitute
substitut (French): deputy prosecutor
substitut (English): replacement
umusubusititi (Kinyarwanda): deputy prosecutor
Le substitut a examiné le cas de l’accusé et requis un emprisonnement provisoire. (The deputy prosecutor has examined the case of the accused and requested that he be held in prison temporarily).

Après avoir reçu la commande d’une machine à additionner, le fournisseur a offert à son client un produit de remplacement parce qu’il ne pouvait pas trouver le produit exact commandé. (On receipt of the order of an adding machine, the supplier offered a substitute to his customer because he did not have the exact ordered product).

Umusubusititi yasabyekyo bakora anketi irambuye ka bwicanyi bwabereye mu kigo cy’amashuri. (The deputy prosecutor has requested that a thorough investigation be conducted on the massacre which took place in a school).

- sympathetic versus sympathetic
sympathique (French): likeable, nice
sympathetic (English): compassionate, understanding
sempatike (Kinyarwanda): likeable, nice
Charles est un enseignant sympathique. (Charles is a likeable teacher)
Marie est une fille compréhensive. (Mary is a sympathetic girl)
Karoli ni umwarimu sempatike, akundwa n’abantu bose. (Charles is a likeable teacher, he is loved by many people).

tape versus tape
tape (French): type, knock, blow
tape (Kinyarwanda): knock, blow
Il fait une mauvaise tape sur la machine à écrire. (He made a wrong type on the typewriter).
Il ne faut pas endommager la bande magnétique. (Do not damage the magnetic tape).
Yakoze tape itari yo maze ibyo yanditse biragenda. (He made a wrong type and what he had written went off).

voyage versus voyage
voyage (French): trip, travel, journey, voyage
voyage (English): travel by sea
ivwayaje (Kinyarwanda): any travel
Je serai en voyage dans plusieurs pays à partir de demain. (I shall be undertaking a trip in several countries from tomorrow).
Yakoze ivwayaje ndende kuva i Buruseli kugera i Kigali. (He has made a long trip from Brussels to Kigali).

ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

CONCLUSION

Bilinguals of French and English have a big challenge with deceptive cognates. Unless they possess a high command of the two languages, they will have some obstacles in using deceptive cognates.

However, Obeng (2006:99) observes that loanwords do not always come via bilinguals. A
monolingual may hear the new word direct from the speaker of another language and try to imitate it. He quotes three stages from Lehiste (1988) in the process of borrowing:

- A bilingual introduces a loan word from language B (the secondary language) to language A (the primary language) in a phonetic form close to the norm in language B.
- A bilingual introduces a loan word from language B (the secondary language) to language A (the primary language) in a phonetic form close to the norm in language B.
- If the bilingual has occasion to repeat it or if other speakers also begin using it, elements of A will be substituted for those of language B.
- If monolinguals learn the loan words, a total or practically total substitution will be made in the sound structure, and the word will be integrated into the grammar as well.

REFERENCES