

# Deadjectival nominalizations: suffix rivalry and synonymy

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## 1. Introduction

The study of French deadjectival nouns (Bécherel 1976; Martin 2010; Alexiadou & Martin 2012) highlights the profusion of suffixes that can be concatenated to a same adjectival base to coin apparently synonymic nouns. See examples (1)-(3).

- (1) AIGRE<sub>A</sub> > *-eur* AIGREUR<sub>N</sub> (TLF)  
'sour, bitter' 'sourness, bitterness'  
Property of being sour / Property of being bitter
- (2) AIGRE<sub>A</sub> > *-esse* AIGRESSE<sub>N</sub> (Web, 23 occurrences)  
'sour, bitter' 'sourness, bitterness'  
*Lorsque l'aigresse entre en jeu, [...] on laisse sa bouche se laisser captiver par de telles saveurs*  
'When sourness arrives, [...] we let our mouth captivated by such flavours'
- (3) AIGRE<sub>A</sub> > *-itude* AIGRITUDE<sub>N</sub> (Web, 13500 occurrences)  
'sour, bitter' 'bitterness'  
*non, pas par amertume, ou par aigritude, ou par solitude*  
'not out of resentment, or out of bitterness, or out of loneliness'

Morphology specifies the relationship between form and meaning of expressions in a particular language. With regard to this definition, this paper presents an original situation. The variety of suffixations leads to the creation of a lot of doublets. I propose to map the relationships between suffixes using the results of doublets semantic analysis.

The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 presents the underlying data. Section 3 sets out two starting hypotheses about the construction of deadjectival nouns in French. Section 4 focuses on the synonymy of sets of elements. It presents the synonymy scale used to sort the sets according to their synonymy degree. Section 5 provides an overview of doublet mapping.

## 2. Data underlying the study

### 2.1. Data collection and data sorting

The first step is the extraction of all the words ending with a given graphic sequence (*-ité*, *-(e)té*, *-eur*, *-esse*, *-ise*, *-ice*, *-erie* and *-itude*) from the biggest multivolume French dictionary of general language: namely the *Trésor de la langue Française informatisé* (henceforth noted TLFi).

In a second phase, new forms (i.e. missing from TLFi) are extracted from the machine readable *Le Monde* newspaper corpus (years 1987, 1991, 1995, 1999).

In the third and final phase of collection, new forms are searched on the Internet. For this purpose, a list of potential deadjectival nouns is automatically generated using the TLFi dictionary list of adjectives. These candidate nouns are used as Yahoo™ queries by means of the WaliM robot (Namer 2003). These online data have been collected between 2007 and 2011.

Data collected on the Internet constitute a common element in recent morphology studies (cf. Dal & Namer 2010; Hathout 2009; Aronoff & Lindsay 2010), though its use is still in discussion (cf. Lüdeling et al. 2007; Hathout et al. 2008, 2009).

Once the forms have been collected, wrong sequences are manually discarded, for instance slugs: misprints, typing errors, spelling mistakes, etc., or nouns which are not adjective-based, although ending with the same suffixal segment /œʁ/ like DANSEUR ‘dancer’, or /ɛs/ like TIGRESSE ‘femal tiger’, etc.

## 2.2. Mordan: database constitution

In all, the MORphological Database of deAdjectival Nouns (named Mordan and freely searchable at <https://apps.atilf.fr/mordan>) contains 3,983 pairs made of deadjectival nouns (noted  $Asuf_N^1$ ) and base adjectives (A) extracted from three sources of data: a list of 1,681 nouns comes from the TLFi; a list of 157 nouns originates from the newspaper corpus of *Le Monde* and a list of 2,145 nouns has been collected from the Web.

Each pair (A,  $Asuf_N$ ) receives additional information obtained from the corpus data. A given pair (A,  $Asuf_N$ ) is encoded by means of specific features, such as its phonological, morphological, semantic or historical properties. Neological units require a real (attested) context in which they appear as additional information. This context allows reading the semantic information carried by the new lexical unit. The URL is specified to access the Web page where the context is found. Moreover, Mordan supplies potential pragmatic effects (e.g. the writer’s intended impact may be funniness). This information is required to provide an account of differences among suffixations.

Among the 3,983 analyzed deadjectival nouns, 1,566 are part of a set of two or more nouns sharing the same adjectival base. An extensional definition of a set is denoted by enclosing the list of members in curly brackets:

$$(4) \quad \hat{A}CRE_A = \{\hat{A}CRETÉ_N, \hat{A}CREUR_N\}.$$

655 sets of nouns were found, i.e. 457 sets of size two, 148 sets of size three, 43 sets of size four, 6 sets of size five and 1 set of size six. In what follows, I will focus on these sets of nouns.

## 3. Hypotheses

Alternation may result from different parameters.

- Hyp. 1: These suffixations product true synonyms. Suffix choice is either random or function of the attraction (or repulsion) between a base stem and a suffix. However, the systematic reading of the stem’s last sound does not lead to a significant result (e.g. 14% of base stems end with /t/ despite the seeming repulsion between *-ité* and stems ending in /t/).

<sup>1</sup>  $Asuf_N$  is for a noun (N) coined on an adjective (A) by means of suffixation (*suf*). For example, *Aité<sub>N</sub>* refer to the deadjectival nouns formed by suffixing *-ité*.

- Hyp. 2: There are semantic differences between these suffixations, related to semantic properties of involved bases, following Aronoff & Cho's (2001) proposition for *-ship* and *-hood*, or semantic constraints involved by each suffixation (cf. Martin 2010).

Crossing the lexematic approach (Aronoff 1976) and natural morphology (Dressler 2005), I propose an alternative hypothesis based on (i) the degree of synonymy between words, according to semantic tags that reflect possible interpretations of  $Asuf_N$  (e.g. a given  $Asuf_N$  may denote a property and potentially a concrete object / an event / an attitude), (ii) the historical properties of the different suffixations to show that availability of  $A > Asuf_N$  suffixations are not equivalent and (iii) their pragmatic properties. I will show that the suffixes involved are not in rivalry, nor in distribution but in alternation.

The high number of sets can be explained by a semantic distribution of the suffixations or by their rivalry. In this paper, the expression *affix rivalry* is dedicated to the substitution of an affix by another one without semantic change (following Lignon 2002). So, I will call *rival affixes* two different affixes are found in synonymous lexemes. On the contrary, the *semantic distribution* of affixes implies the formation of pairs of lexemes with different meanings. Each affixation expresses individual properties. In other words, the synonymy of the elements of a set has to be taken into account in order to determine whether or not suffixes are rival.

To make the analysis easier, sets have been reduced to pairs (a total of 799 pairs). This enables to study suffixes in pairs.

## 4. Data processing

### 4.1. Degrees of synonymy

Synonymy is the key concept which allows to determinate whether two suffixes are rival or semantically complementary. It is therefore essential to define precisely what synonymy means.

Cruse (2004: 154-157) distinguishes three categories of synonymy: absolute synonymy, near-synonymy and propositional synonymy. According to Cruse, **absolute synonyms** have a complete identity of meaning. They are equally normal in all contexts. Very few pairs of words are absolute synonyms.

Contrary to absolute synonyms, **near-synonyms** can be substituted only in certain expressions. Finally, **propositional synonyms** can be substituted in any expression. However, propositional synonyms involve differences in expressive meaning, stylistic level or field of discourse.

Because of the high number of pairs I have to treat, these definitions need to be adapted. The degree of synonymy of a pair will be calculated using the semantic informations encoded for the two  $Asuf_N$ . Each noun stored in Mordan is tagged according to the contexts in which it occurs. Semantic labels are given following a test procedure. For a given noun, a hundred of utterances were examined, in order to obtain the semantic labels (in pointed brackets).

Examples (5)-(8) below illustrate each category of synonymy.

(5)

- |    |             |              |                                   |
|----|-------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| a. | BALOURDISE  | 'clumsiness' | <QUALITY / ATTITUDE / OCCURRENCE> |
| b. | BALOURDERIE | 'clumsiness' | <QUALITY / ATTITUDE / OCCURRENCE> |

(6)

- |    |           |                   |             |
|----|-----------|-------------------|-------------|
| a. | AMPLEUR   | 'size/extent'     | <QUALITY>   |
| b. | AMPLITUDE | 'amplitude/range' | < MEASURE > |

- (7)
- |    |            |              |                        |
|----|------------|--------------|------------------------|
| a. | GLAUCITÉ   | ‘creepiness’ | <QUALITY>              |
| b. | GLAUQUERIE | ‘creepiness’ | <QUALITY / OCCURRENCE> |
- (8)
- |    |             |                  |   |
|----|-------------|------------------|---|
| a. | SENSIBILITÉ | ‘sensitivity’    | <QUALITY / ATTITUDE / OCCURRENCE> ;<br>neutral                |
| b. | SENSIBLERIE | ‘sentimentality’ | <QUALITY / ATTITUDE / OCCURRENCE> ;<br>pejorative connotation |

The pairs of *Asuf<sub>N</sub>* have been sorted as follows:

- The pairs with the same semantic tags, like {BALOURDISE, BALOURDERIE} in (5), are considered to be absolute synonyms.
- Consequently, pairs of nouns sharing no semantic tags, like {AMPLEUR, AMPLITUDE} in (6), are considered to be semantically distinct nouns.
- Pairs of nouns sharing one or more tags but not all of them, like {GLAUCITÉ, GLAUQUERIE} in (7), are considered to be near-synonyms.
- Finally, pairs of nouns with the same semantic tags but having expressive differences, like {SENSIBILITÉ, SENSIBLERIE} in (8), are considered to be propositional synonyms. Observed morphopragmatic effects are negative evaluations and games.

These four cases are individually discussed in Sections 4.2 to 4.5.

#### 4.2. Absolute synonyms

The pair of *Asuf<sub>N</sub>* illustrating absolute synonyms given in (5) is analyzed in examples (9-10). Nouns BALOURDISE and BALOURDERIE appear in the same syntactic structures (a, b, c) used to determinate the possible reading of an *Asuf<sub>N</sub>* (here quality, attitude, occurrence).

- (9)
- |    |  |              |
|----|--|--------------|
| a. | <i>la balourdise de deux banquiers = deux banquiers sont balourds</i><br>‘clumsiness of two bankers’      ‘two bankers are clumsy’ | <QUALITY>    |
| b. | <i>être très maladroit, faire preuve d’une grande balourdise</i><br>‘to be awkward, being mishandling’                             | <ATTITUDE>   |
| c. | <i>Le cinéma commet encore des balourdises d’une force neuve.</i><br>‘Cinema is still doing clumsy things with a new energy’       | <OCCURRENCE> |
- (10)
- |    |  |              |
|----|--|--------------|
| a. | <i>Ce scénario est d’une grande balourderie.</i><br>‘This is a clumsy film script’   | <QUALITY>    |
| b. | <i>Il a fait preuve de balourderie en se félicitant bruyamment.</i><br>‘He showed clumsiness by congratulating itself noisily’ | <ATTITUDE>   |
| c. | <i>On s’expose à dire des balourderies.</i><br>‘We may say clumsy things’  | <OCCURRENCE> |

Sometimes, the speaker / writer hesitates between the two forms. This is an important evidence of their absolute synonymy. See the following example:

- (11) *Parce que si cette balourderie, ou balourdise, tombe dans les mains de [...]*  
‘Because if this clumsy thing falls into the hands of [...]

### 4.3. Distinct meanings

The nouns of pair {AMPLEUR, AMPLITUDE} are built on adjective AMPLE ‘large’ and are semantically distinct. In sentences (12) and (13), the two nouns appear in comparable contexts (measuring). However, they cannot be substituted for each other without causing agrammaticality. Noun phrases *ampleur thermique* (13) and *amplitude des fraudes* (12) would be inappropriate. In fact, AMPLITUDE is a measure noun whereas AMPLEUR is a quality noun.

- (12) *Trop tôt pour mesurer l'ampleur des fraudes aux législatives.*  
‘It is too early to measure the scale of fraud in the legislative elections’
- (13) *On peut également mesurer l'amplitude thermique journalière.*  
‘The daily range of temperatures can also be measured’

Both nouns AMPLEUR and AMPLITUDE express measure but they are not related to the same measuring scale. On one hand, AMPLEUR is defined as a dimensional property (cf. how large is something or someone). On the other hand, AMPLITUDE is defined as “the distance between the top and the bottom of a wave” (Cambridge Dictionaries Online).

### 4.4. Near-synonyms

The pair {GLAUCITÉ, GLAUQUERIE} has been ranked among near-synonyms because the semantic tags of the two nouns do not entirely overlap. Both nouns may be interpreted as “the property of being creepy”, as illustrate examples (a) below but only GLAUQUERIE can refer to an occurrence, cf. (b) sentences.

- (14)
- a. *le public francophone ne supporte pas les récits d'une grande glaucité*  
‘francophone audience cannot stand very creepy stories’
- b. *?ne pas savoir qui utilise ce pseudo pour faire des glaucités*  
‘not know who is using this alias to do creepy things’
- (15)
- a. *inventée un soir de grande glauquerie*  
‘invented during a creepy evening’
- b. *ne pas savoir qui utilise ce pseudo pour faire des glauqueries*  
‘not know who is using this alias to do creepy things’

### 4.5. Propositional synonyms

Finally, the set {SENSIBILITÉ, SENSIBLERIE} has been ranked among propositional-synonyms because of they share the same semantic tags and exhibit expressive differences. The first element of the set is more neutral, while the second is evaluative. In sentences (16)-(17) for example, SENSIBILITÉ and SENSIBLERIE differ in expressive meaning.

- (16) *Si notre intelligence et notre sensibilité se développent [...]*  
‘If our intelligence and our sensitivity develop [...]’
- (17) *plus de fausse pudeur ni de sensiblerie de mauvais aloi*  
‘No false modesty or dubious sentimentality anymore’

In addition to the cases shown in examples (5)-(8) and developed in (9)-(17), some sets include nouns that are both near-synonyms and propositional synonyms (18). In this case, near-synonymy prevails. Then, the nouns of the pair {MODERNITÉ, MODERNERIE} are considered to be near-synonyms.

(18)

- a. MODERNITÉ ‘modernity’ <QUALITY>
- b. MODERNERIE ‘modernity’ <QUALITY / CONCRETE OBJECT> ;  
pejorative connotation

Pairs of nouns have been sorted according to their degree of synonymy, in the manner described. The sorting result is discussed in the next section.

## 5. Results

One given set of nouns is an instantiation of a particular pattern. For example, the pair {MODERNITÉ, MODERNERIE} includes two nouns from adjective MODERNE ‘modern’ and is an instantiation of the pattern {Aité<sub>N</sub>, Aerie<sub>N</sub>}. This allows the identification of significant trends:

- If a given pattern {N1, N2} produces a majority of semantically distinct nouns N1 and N2, then the suffixes implied are semantically distributed.
- On the contrary, if a given pattern {N1, N2} produces a majority of absolute synonyms, then this pattern implies rival suffixes, cf. Section 5.2.
- Finally, patterns {N1, N2} that produce a majority of propositional synonyms or near-synonyms need a closer look, cf. Sections 5.3 and 5.4.

All instantiations of each pattern have been sorted according to their degree of synonymy, in the manner described in the previous section. In other words, for each pattern, I have listed the pairs of absolute synonyms, semantically distinct nouns, near-synonyms and propositional synonyms, cf. Table 1. The pattern {N1, N2} is given in column 1, the number of its instantiations in column 2. Among the pairs instantiating a pattern, the number of absolute synonyms is reported in column 3, the number of near-synonyms in column 4, the number of propositional synonyms in column 5 and the number of pairs of semantically distinct nouns is given in column 6.

Table 1 is widely commented in Sections 5.1 to 5.4.

**Table 1:** Patterns sort according to the degree of synonymy of their instantiations.

	1. Pattern	2. Number of instantiations	3. Absolute synonyms	4. Near synonyms	5. Propositional synonyms	6. Distinct meaning
1	{Aité <sub>N</sub> , Aité <sub>N</sub> }	38	<b>33</b> <b>86,84%</b>			5 13,16%
2	{Até <sub>N</sub> , Até <sub>N</sub> }	4	<b>3</b> <b>75%</b>			1 25%
3	{Aesse <sub>N</sub> , Aesse <sub>N</sub> }	2	<b>2</b> <b>100%</b>			
4	{Aerie <sub>N</sub> , Aerie <sub>N</sub> }	5	<b>5</b> <b>100%</b>			
5	{Aitude <sub>N</sub> , Aitude <sub>N</sub> }	4	<b>3</b> <b>75%</b>			1 25%

6	{ <i>Aité<sub>N</sub></i> , <i>Até<sub>N</sub></i> }	30	<b>29</b> 96,67%			1 3,33%
7	{ <i>Aité<sub>N</sub></i> , <i>Aice<sub>N</sub></i> }	2	<b>2</b> 100%			
8	{ <i>Até<sub>N</sub></i> , <i>Aise<sub>N</sub></i> }	3	<b>3</b> 100%			
9	{ <i>Até<sub>N</sub></i> , <i>Aeur<sub>N</sub></i> }	4	<b>4</b> 100%			
10	{ <i>Aité<sub>N</sub></i> , <i>Aesse<sub>N</sub></i> }	58	<b>54</b> 93,10%	1 1,72%		3 5,18%
11	{ <i>Até<sub>N</sub></i> , <i>Aesse<sub>N</sub></i> }	16	<b>14</b> 87,5%	1 6,25%		1 6,25%
12	{ <i>Aité<sub>N</sub></i> , <i>Aeur<sub>N</sub></i> }	32	<b>27</b> 84,38%	3 9,38%		2 6,24%
13	{ <i>Aise<sub>N</sub></i> , <i>Aitude<sub>N</sub></i> }	23	<b>15</b> 65,22%	7 30,43%	1 4,35%	
14	{ <i>Aeur<sub>N</sub></i> , <i>Aesse<sub>N</sub></i> }	30	<b>18</b> 60%	8 26,67%		4 13,33%
15	{ <i>Aerie<sub>N</sub></i> , <i>Aise<sub>N</sub></i> }	31	<b>16</b> 51,61%	14 45,16%		1 3,23%
16	{ <i>Aité<sub>N</sub></i> , <i>Aise<sub>N</sub></i> }	18	<b>9</b> 50%	8 44,44%		1 5,56%
17	{ <i>Aesse<sub>N</sub></i> , <i>Aitude<sub>N</sub></i> }	36	14 38,89%	2 5,56%	<b>15</b> 41,67%	5 13,89%
18	{ <i>Aité<sub>N</sub></i> , <i>Aitude<sub>N</sub></i> }	93	29 31,18%	20 21,51%	<b>41</b> 44,09%	3 3,23%
19	{ <i>Até<sub>N</sub></i> , <i>Aitude<sub>N</sub></i> }	16	2 12,2%	5 31,25%	<b>9</b> 56,25%	
20	{ <i>Aerie<sub>N</sub></i> , <i>Aitude<sub>N</sub></i> }	32	7 21,88%	<b>22</b> 68,75%	2 6,25%	1 3,12%
21	{ <i>Aeur<sub>N</sub></i> , <i>Aerie<sub>N</sub></i> }	21	6 28,57%	<b>11</b> 52,38%	3 14,29%	1 4,76%
22	{ <i>Aesse<sub>N</sub></i> , <i>Aerie<sub>N</sub></i> }	49	15 30,61%	<b>28</b> 57,18%	4 8,16%	2 4,08%
23	{ <i>Aité<sub>N</sub></i> , <i>Aerie<sub>N</sub></i> }	188	43 22,87%	<b>118</b> 62,77%	11 5,85%	20 10,64%
24	{ <i>Até<sub>N</sub></i> , <i>Aerie<sub>N</sub></i> }	21	8 38,10%	<b>9</b> 42,86%	3 14,29%	1 4,76%
25	{ <i>Aerie<sub>N</sub></i> , <i>Aie<sub>N</sub></i> }	20	9 45%	<b>9</b> 45%	2 10%	
26	{ <i>Aeur<sub>N</sub></i> , <i>Aitude<sub>N</sub></i> }	23	5 21,74%	2 8,70%	<b>8</b> 34,78%	8 34,78%

### 5.1. General trends

The study of Table 1 leads to three remarks. Firstly, the examination of the patterns indicates that suffixes *-ité*, *-erie* and *-itude* are a kind of ‘universal alternants’. They compete with all suffixes of the study and are implied in most of the pairs. The patterns without *-ité*, *-erie* or *-itude* are the less instantiated (only 6,88% of the pairs, that is 55/799).

Secondly, one clear deviation from this overall trend should also be noted. The pattern {*Aeur<sub>N</sub>*, *Aesse<sub>N</sub>*} counts 30 pairs of nouns. It is well instantiated in view of the few number of *-eur* and *-esse* deadjectival nouns in French (respectively 75 and 132 nouns recorded in Mordan), cf. Koehl (2010). 29,70% of pairs including a noun in *-eur* include a noun in *-esse* and 49,18% of pairs including a noun in *-esse* include a noun in *-eur*.

Finally, the most important point is that there is no pattern instantiated with a majority of semantically distinct nouns. Consequently, according to the definition of suffix distribution proposed in Section 3, we can state that the examined suffixes are not semantically distributed.

### 5.2. Patterns producing a majority of absolute synonyms instances (lines 1-14)

Among the patterns mostly instantiated with absolute synonyms, two kinds of patterns can be distinguished:

- Patterns 1-6 involve the same suffixation twice. For example, the pair {CHINOISITÉ ‘Chinese-ness’, SINITÉ ‘Chinese-ness’}, instantiating the pattern {*Aité<sub>N</sub>*, *Aité<sub>N</sub>*}, consists of two nouns derived from the adjective CHINOIS ‘Chinese’ with the suffix *-ité* but they don’t realize the same adjectival stem (/sin/ is the suppletive stem of adjective CHINOIS, cf. Dal & Namer 2010). CHINOISITÉ and SINITÉ are considered as absolute synonyms because they are substitutes for one another in every context. The same is true for every pairs of Table 1, lines 1-6, column 3.  
As indicated in column 6, some pairs of nouns instantiating patterns 1-6 have distinct meanings. For example, the pair {SURDITÉ ‘deafness’, SOURDITÉ ‘property of being unvoiced’} reflects the polysemy of the adjective SOURD ‘deaf’.
- Patterns 7-14 are related to a majority of absolute synonyms (60% to 100% of absolute synonyms). Three cases can be easily explained. First, patterns 7, 10, 12 involve the productive suffix *-ité* and an unavailable suffix (*-ice*, *-esse*, *-eur*). We can make the assumption that the speaker rebuilds absolute synonym nouns using a suffix more frequent in the lexicon. Second, pattern 13 involves suffixations in *-itude* and *-ise* that shares the semantic particularity of forming attitude nouns. Third, the pattern 14 implies nouns in *-eur* and *-esse* which have a lot of properties in common (cf. Koehl 2010).

### 5.3. Patterns with 50% of absolute synonyms instances (lines 15-16)

Half of the instances of patterns {*Aerie<sub>N</sub>*, *Aise<sub>N</sub>*} and {*Aité<sub>N</sub>*, *Aise<sub>N</sub>*} are absolute synonyms and the other half are near-synonyms, propositional synonyms or semantically distinct. 51,61% of pairs realizing the pattern {*Aerie<sub>N</sub>*, *Aise<sub>N</sub>*} have exactly the same semantic tags (cf. line 15, column 3). 45,16% of instances are near synonyms (column 4) because their *Aerie<sub>N</sub>* have a concrete reading, cf. (19), contrary to the *Aise<sub>N</sub>*.

- (19) *une gluanterie qui mousse, quelle horreur!*  
‘A sticky thing that foams, how horrible!’

50% of pairs instantiating the pattern {*Aité<sub>N</sub>*, *Aise<sub>N</sub>*} are absolute synonyms (cf. line 16, column 3) and 44,44% are near-synonyms. Indeed, the *Aise<sub>N</sub>* are most likely to have an event



reading than the *Aité<sub>N</sub>*. As an example, FAIBLARDISE ‘weakling-ness’ has an event reading in (20) but FAIBLARDITÉ ‘weakling-ness’ never has.

- (20) *en faisant des faiblardises de ce genre*  
‘doing such weakling things’

#### 5.4. Patterns producing with a minority of absolute synonyms instances (lines 17-26)

The remaining patterns are instantiated by less than 50% of absolute synonyms. All the patterns 17-26 contain either *Aitude<sub>N</sub>* or *Aerie<sub>N</sub>*.

The patterns 20-25 are related to a majority of near-synonyms. These pairs all imply *Aerie<sub>N</sub>* which are interpretable as quality nouns and have additional readings (event or concrete) and/or have a pejorative connotation {SINITÉ ‘Chinese-ness’, CHINOISERIE ‘chinoiserie’}, {BLONDEUR ‘blondness’, BLONDERIE ‘a blonde’s thing’}, {VIEILLESSE ‘oldness’, VIEILLERIE ‘old thing’}.

Patterns 17, 18, 19, 26 are linked to a majority of propositional synonyms. These pairs include *Aitude<sub>N</sub>* which are interpretable as quality nouns and produce an additional morphopragmatic effect (Koehl, 2012). This can be explained by the fact that most of the new coined *-itude* nouns result from a language game consisting in substituting *-itude* to another suffix.

- (21) *Le mythe de ma bellitude est brisé, ouai j’suis moche :p*  
‘The myth of my beauty is broken, yes I’m ugly :p’

## 6. Conclusion

This paper was devoted to deadjectival nouns. In particular, sets of two or more nouns derived from a same adjective were examined. The use of a database allowed the gathering of the noun sets and their analysis. Far from being marginal, 655 sets of nouns are stored in Mordan database, namely 1566 out of 3983 nouns. The sets of size 3 and more have been reported to pairs to compare suffixations two by two. In all, 799 pairs instantiating 26 patterns have been treated.

As a first step, I have defined suffix rivalry and the degrees of synonymy. Then, the sets of nouns have been sorted according to this synonymy scale, using the semantic tags of Mordan.

Third, patterns of sets of nouns have been examined (Table 1). The first hypothesis was that there are semantic constraints involved by each suffixation. This hypothesis was discarded because no pattern is instantiated by pairs of nouns with distinct meanings.

The second hypothesis was that the suffixations produce true synonyms. All the studied suffixations construct quality nouns. Nevertheless, the only case where different suffixations produce absolute synonyms is the rebuilding of nouns in *-eur*, *-esse*, *-ice* with the more available suffix *-ité*. So, the second hypothesis is discarded too.

Suffixes involved in the nominalization of adjectives in French are not in rivalry, nor in distribution but in alternation. Indeed, three of the suffixations are universal alternants. They all have a speciality. The suffixation in *-ité* is the neutral one. The suffixation in *-erie* constructs concrete nouns, event nouns and pejorative nouns. The suffixation in *-itude* recently acquired a comic effect. A forthcoming step will be to refine the grid of synonymy analysis. A finest semantic analysis would take into account the polysemy of nouns. For example VERDEUR ‘greenness’ is currently considered as a quality noun (and color name). A

more precise analysis would take into account the distinct qualities metaphorically denoted by VERDEUR like the ‘property of not being mature’, ‘property of being young’ or the ‘property of being saucy’.

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