Creating a muli-lingual site

with

Joomla!® 1.7.3

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Joomla 1.7 includes a basic way to implement a multi-language site.

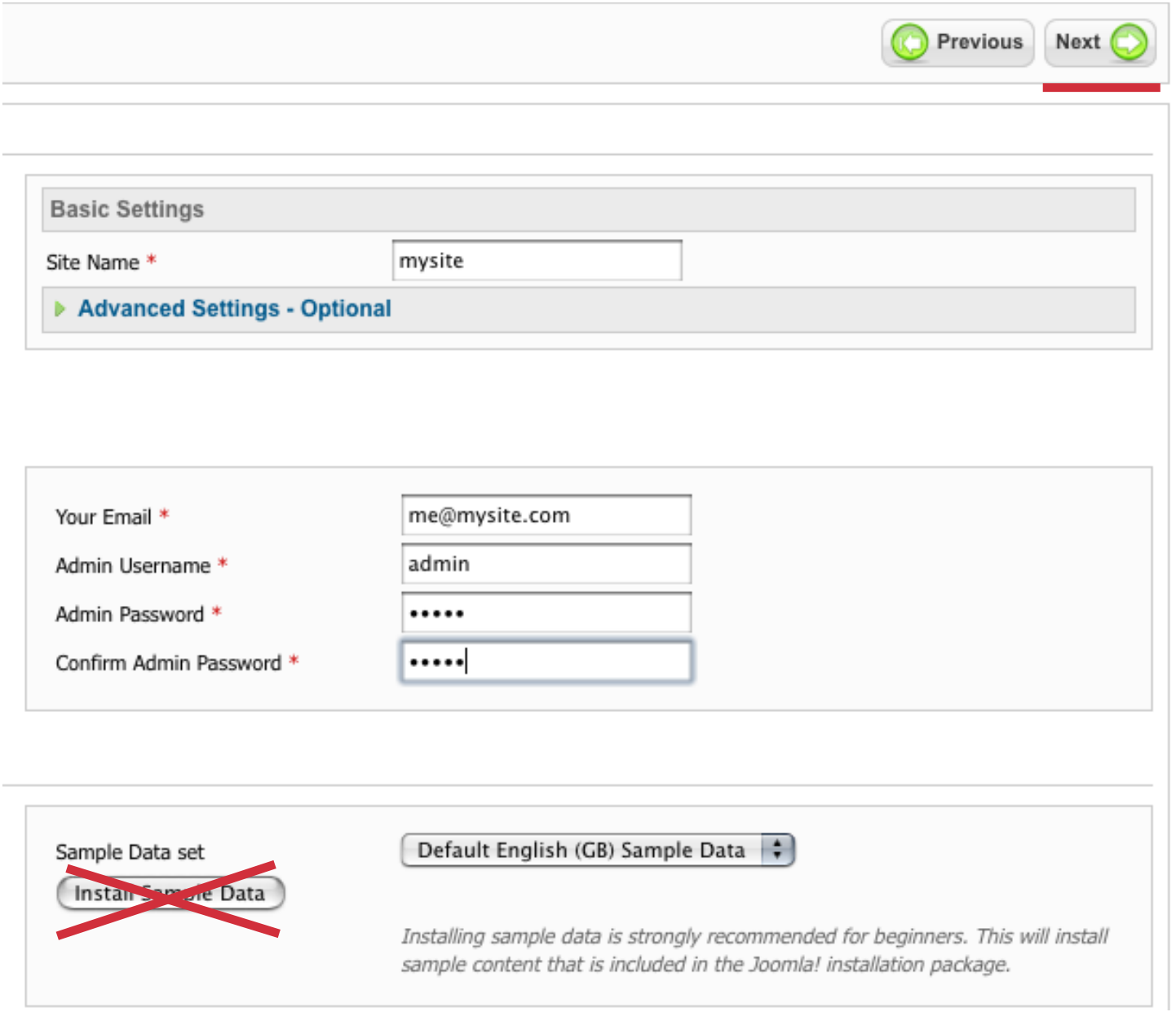
This feature does not work as an association-type display where each content, whatever it is, has an equivalent in another language.

In 1.6 the module is set to redirect to the Default Home page for each content language.

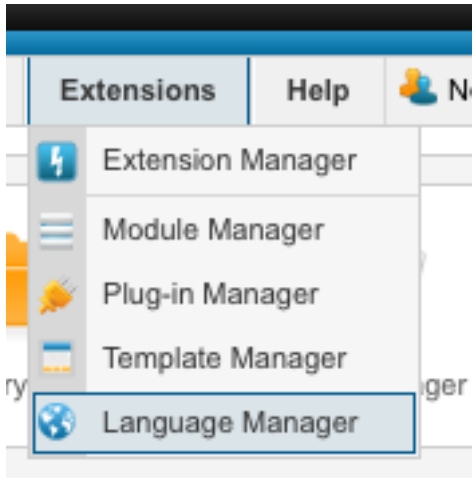
In 1.7 was introduced a new feature that lets associate menu items to other menu items in different languages. In this case the Language Swicher module will redirect to the associated menu items.

(It does not replace other multi-lingual managers extensions such as Joomfish)

1. Install Joomla without sample data

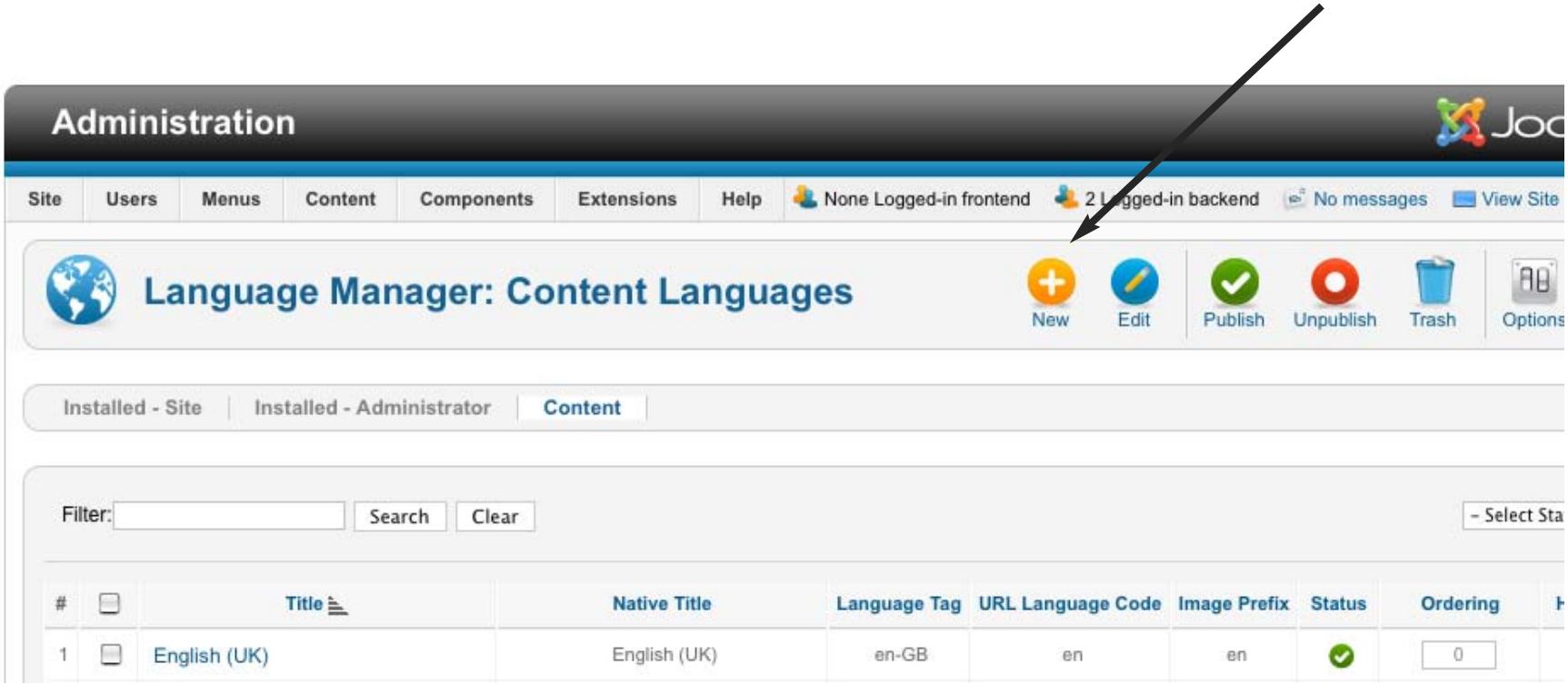


The French (fr-FR) language pack has been installed.
Go to the Language Manager

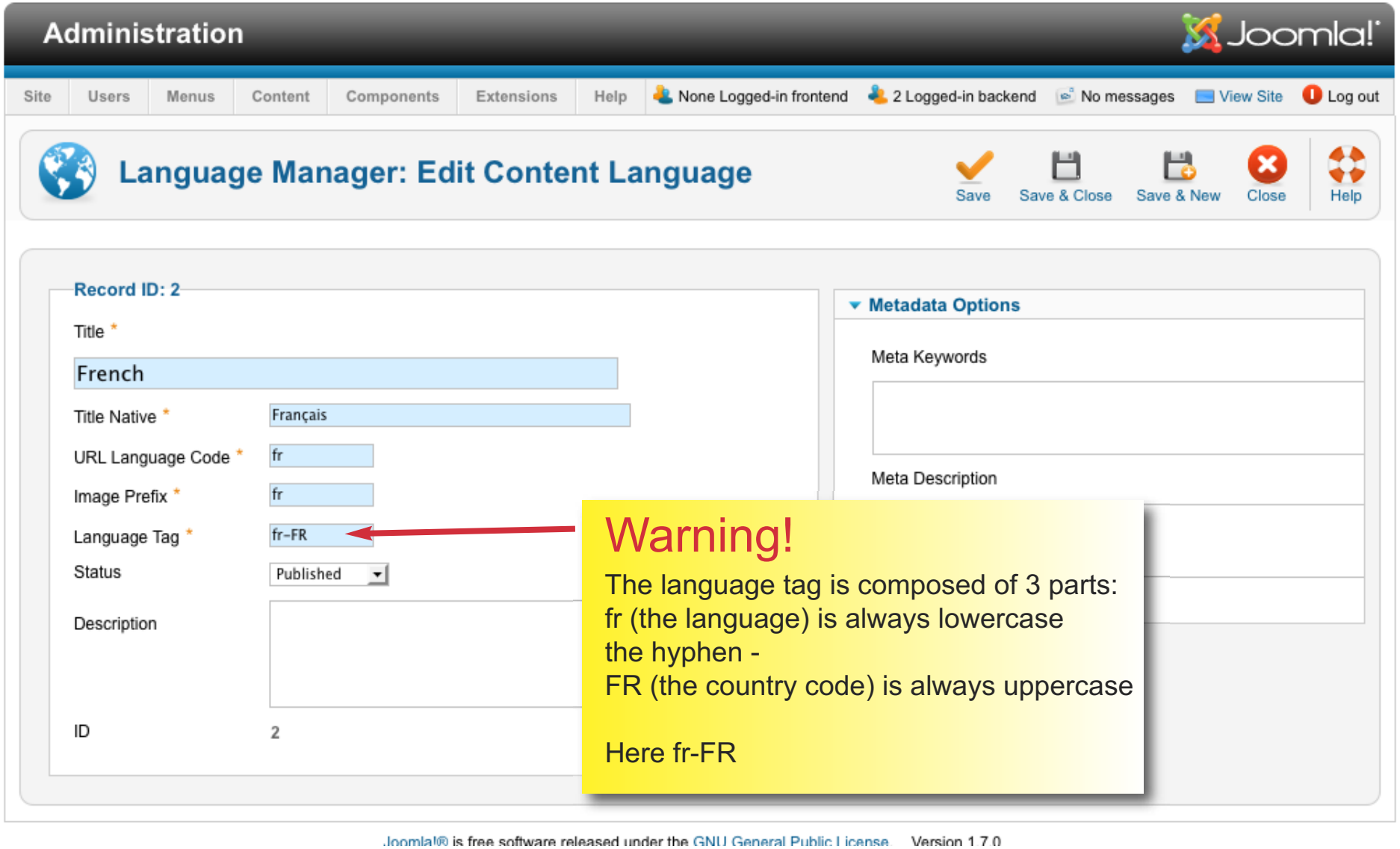


2. Create Content Languages

Click on the ‘Contents’ tab.
English has already been created as default Content language.
Create a new Content Language.
(This can be done BEFORE installing the language pack)



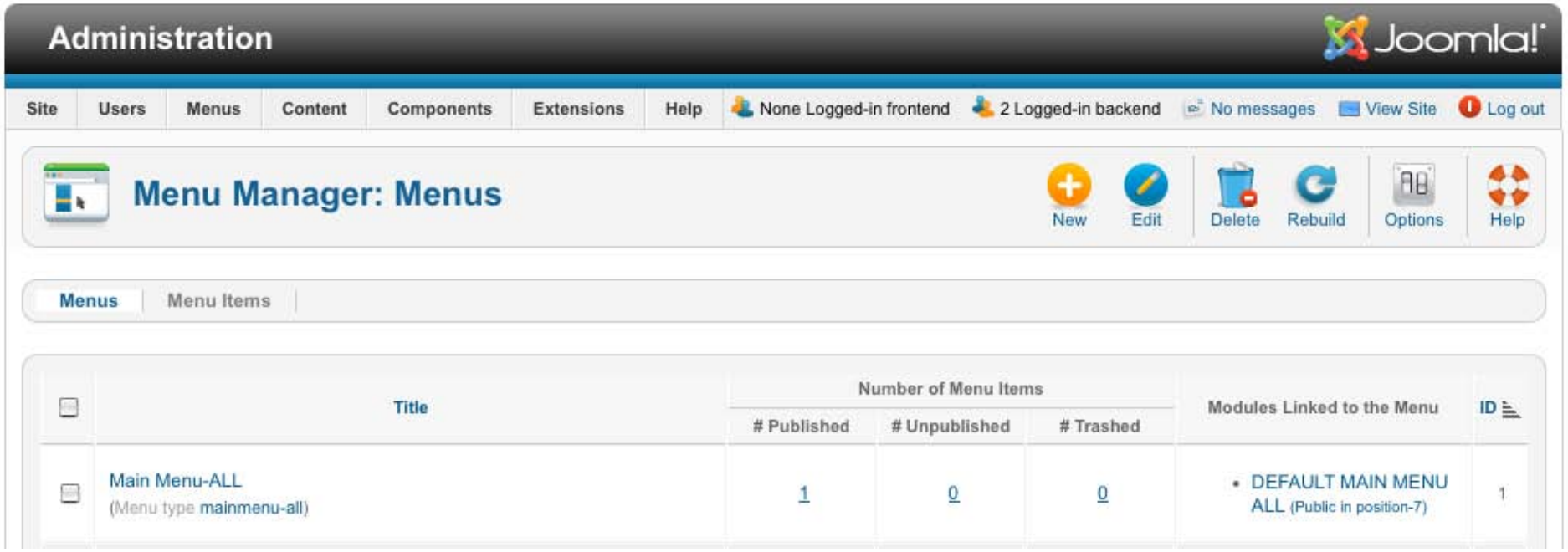
All parameters shall be unique.
The Language Tag is the same as the one used for the pack
(fr-FR, en-GB, etc.)



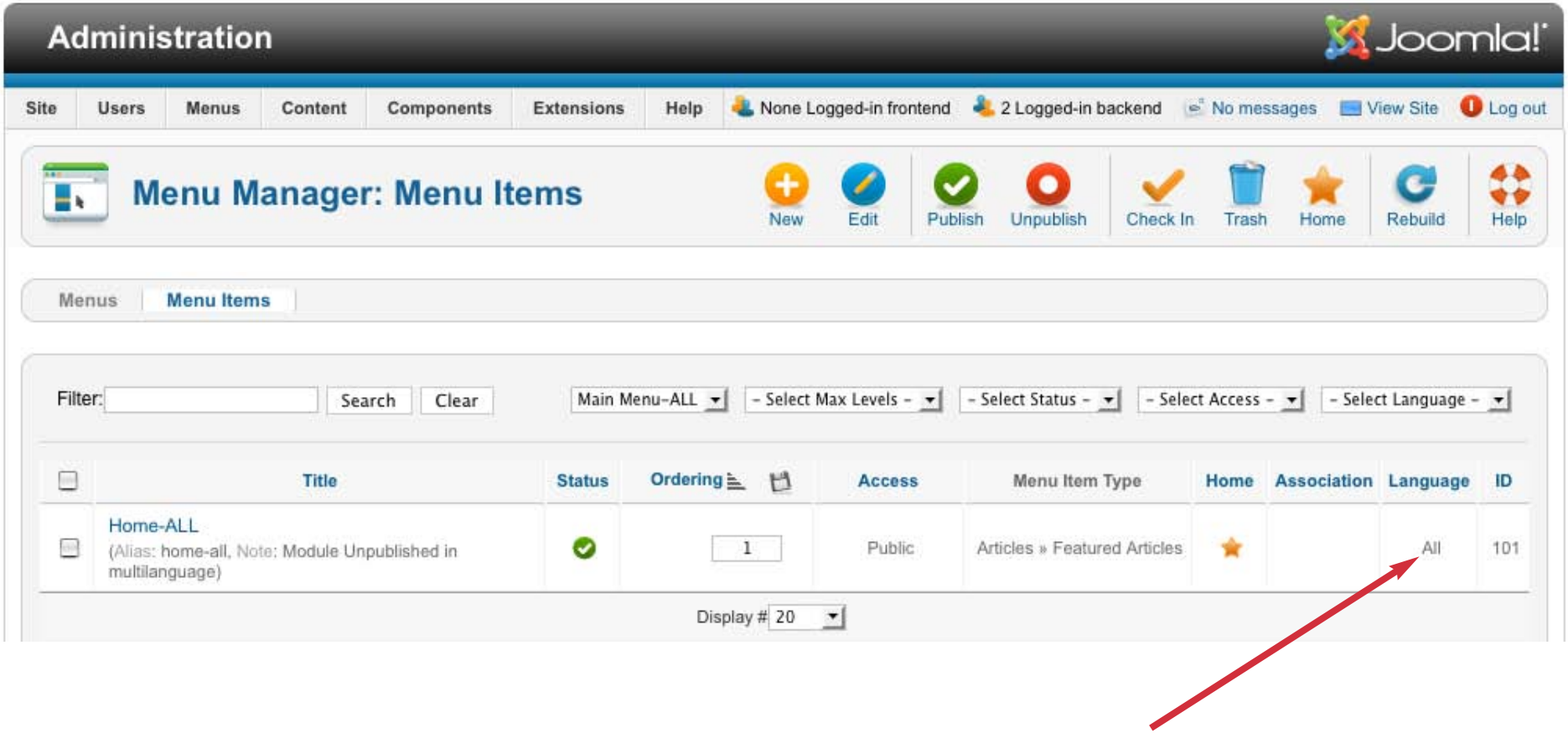
Once these are defined,
they will be available all over Joomla User Interface.

3. Default Home page assigned to ‘All’

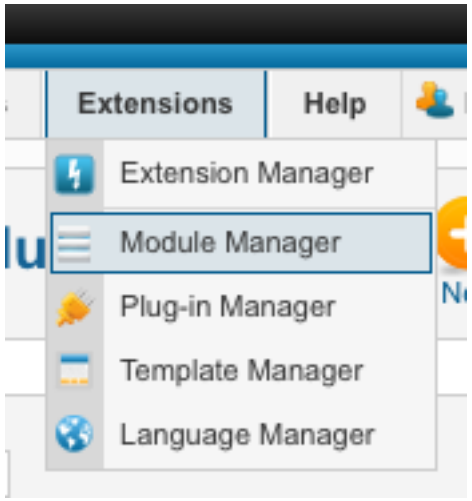
It is compulsory to keep a Default Home page assigned to ‘All’.
To prevent further confusion,
rename the default main Menu to Main Menu-ALL



Keep there any type of Menu item defined as Default Home page and assigned to Language ‘All’



Go to the Module Manager

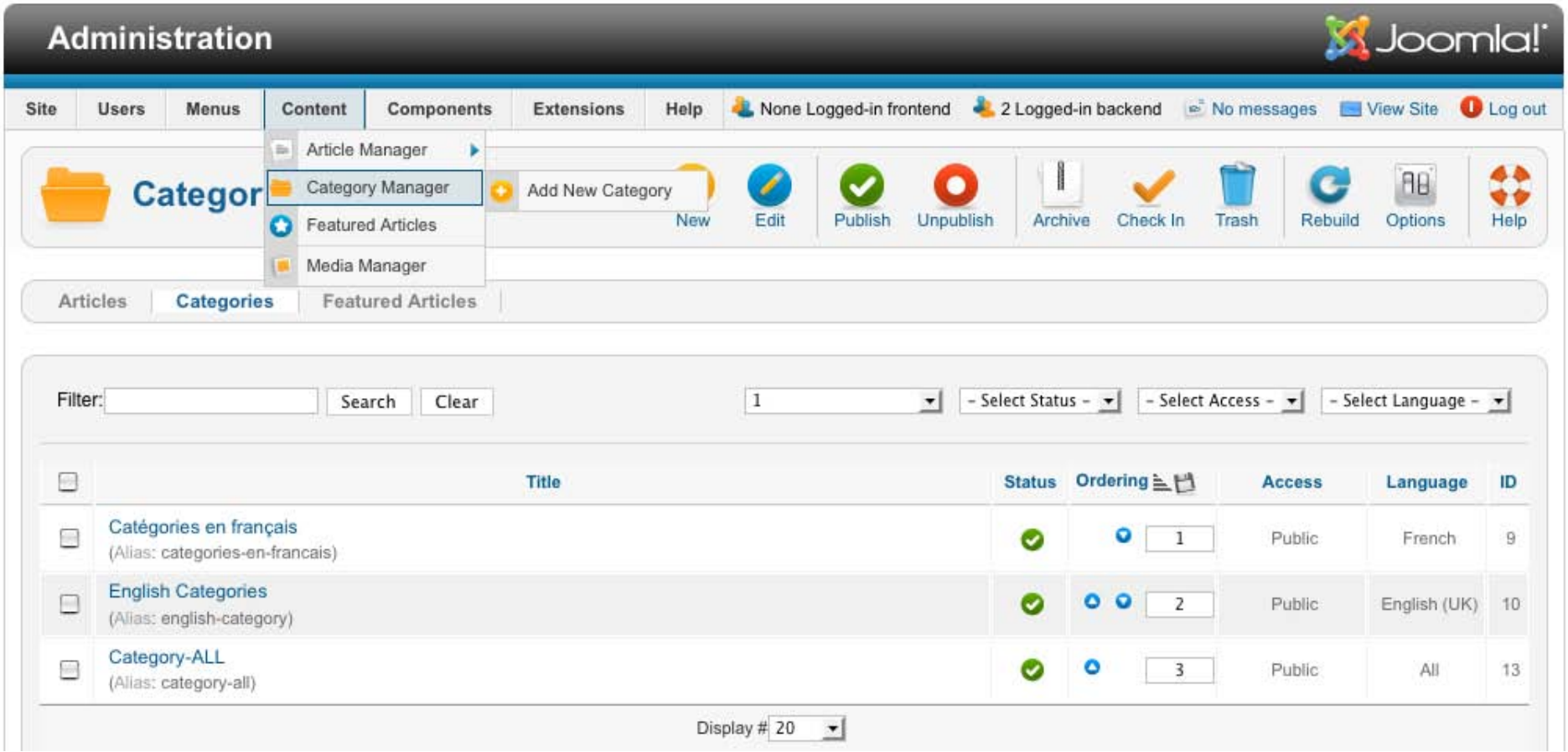


UNPUBLISH the Menu module displaying the Main Menu-ALL menu. The module itself is assigned to Language ‘All’

4. Site contents structure

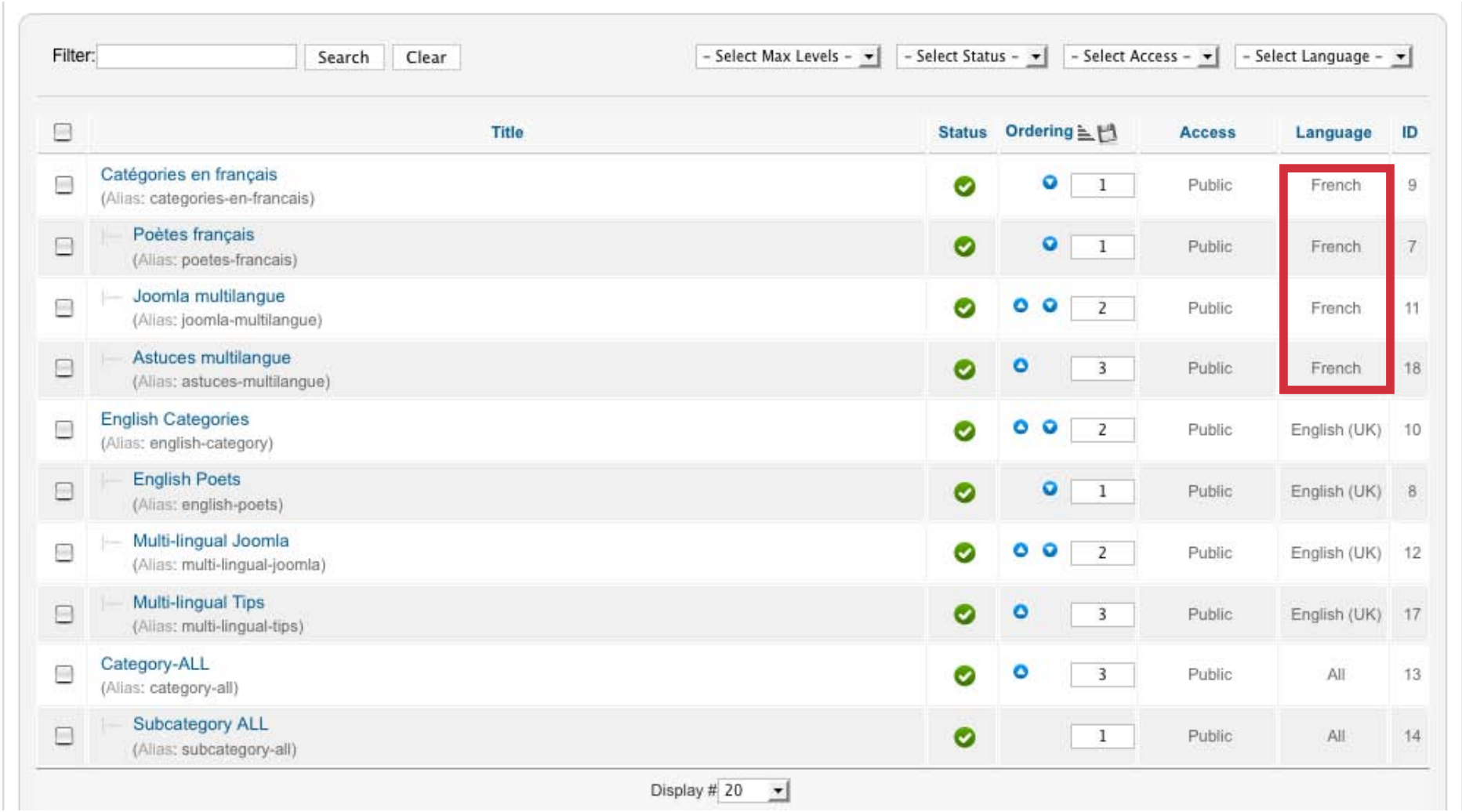
A multi-lingual site has to be structured in a specific way to avoid 404 when drilling down / navigating.

1. Create, for each Content Language, a ROOT parent category for each component used. Assign to the Content Language.

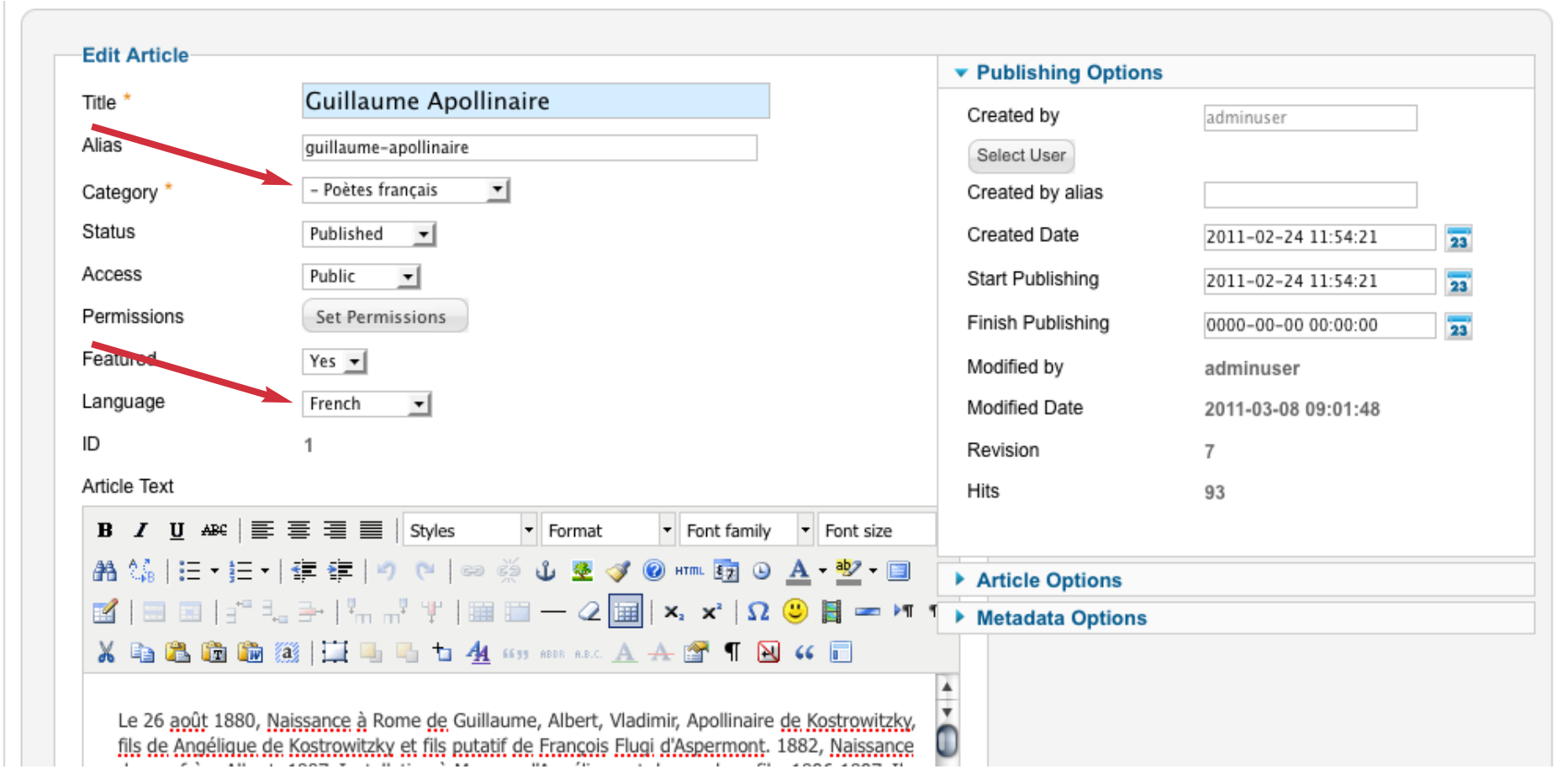


2. Create children categories for each root or parent category. Assign the same Content language used for the root category.

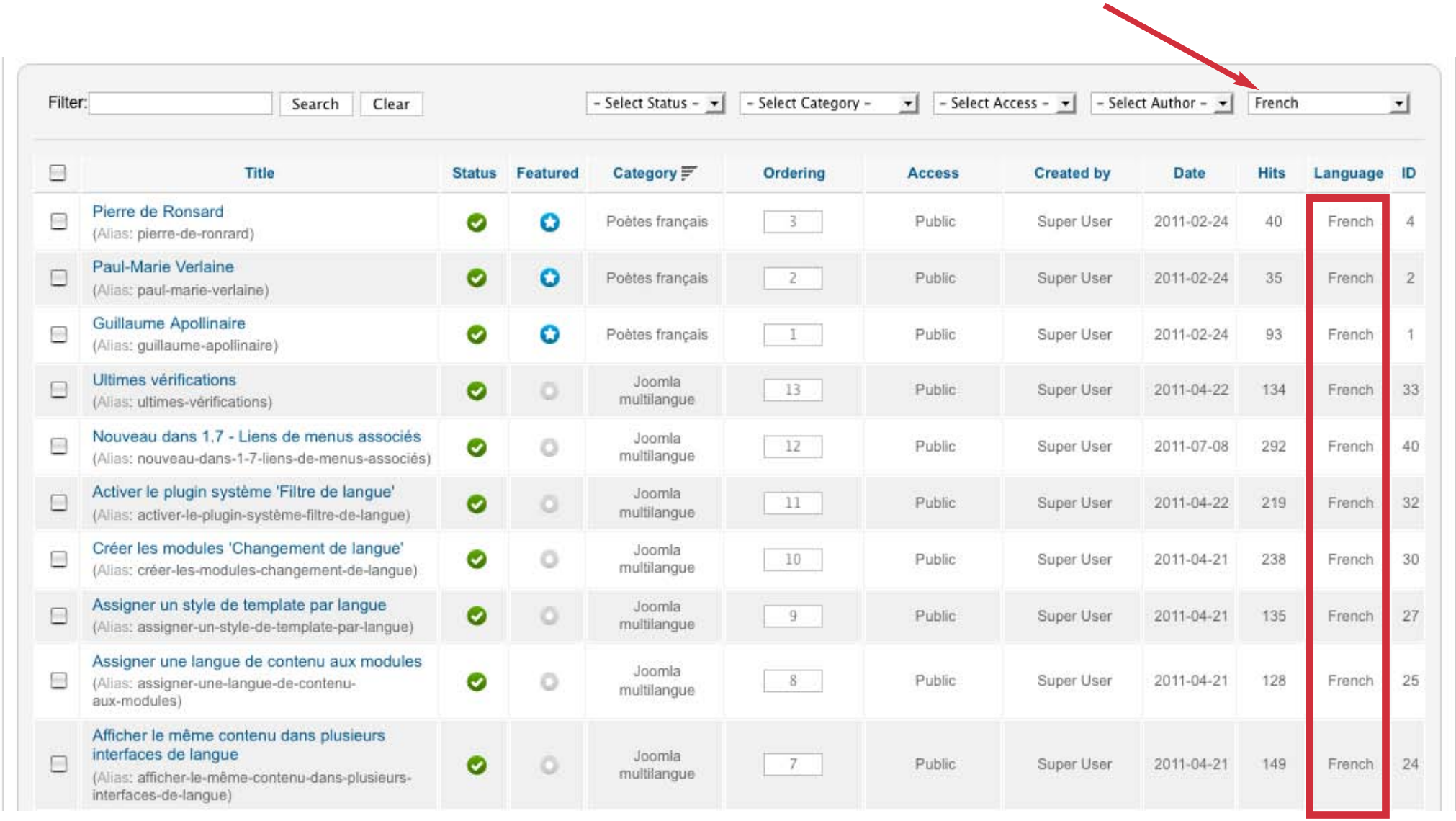
NOTE: A root category and siblings assigned to Language 'All' shall be structured the same way as those prepared for Content Languages.



3. Create contents in each of these categories and assign them to the same Content language as the root category. Example here for Articles.

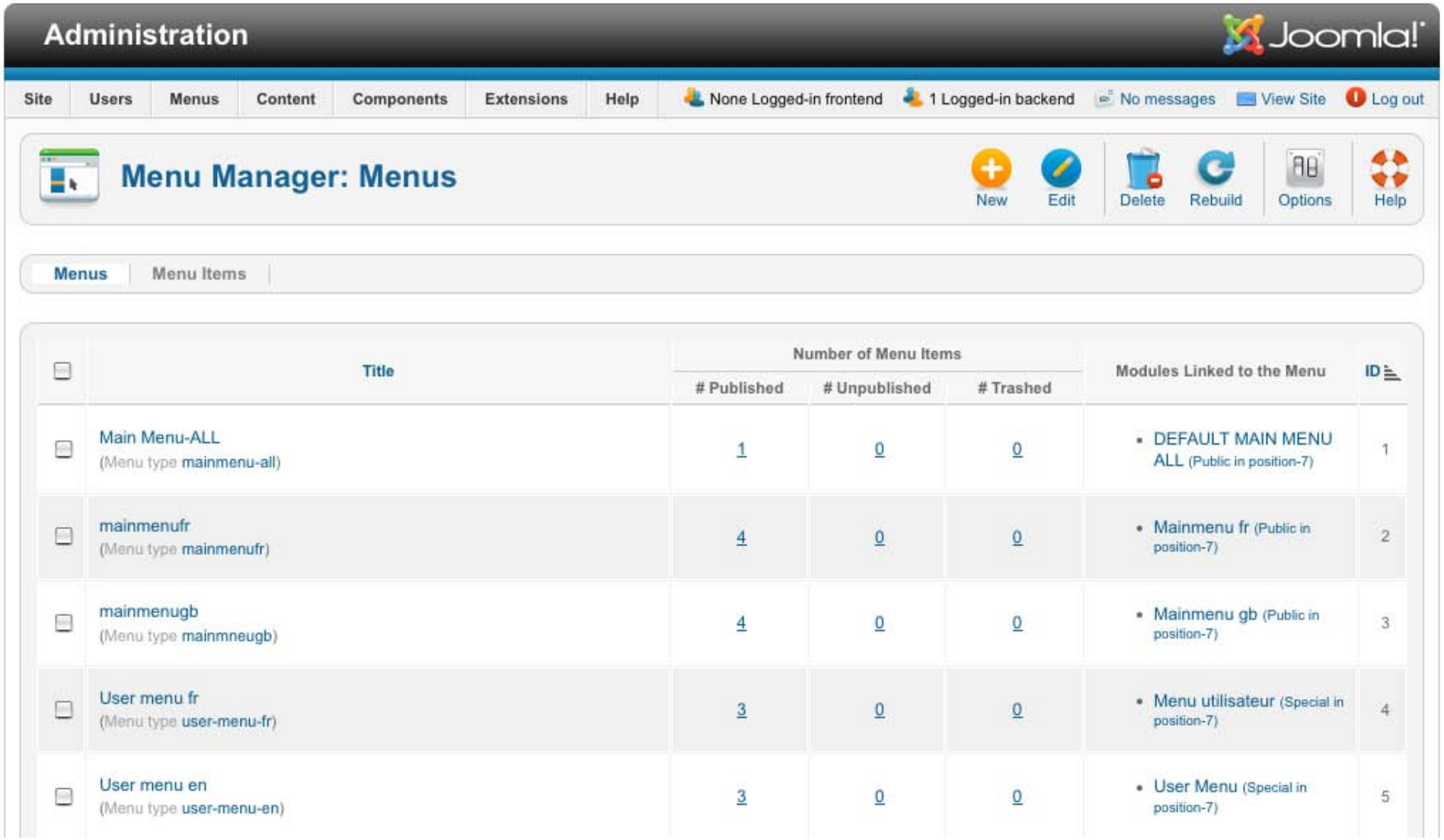


All managers can be filtered per Content Language



5. Create specific menus & menu items

Create menus for each Content language.



Create menu items for each menu

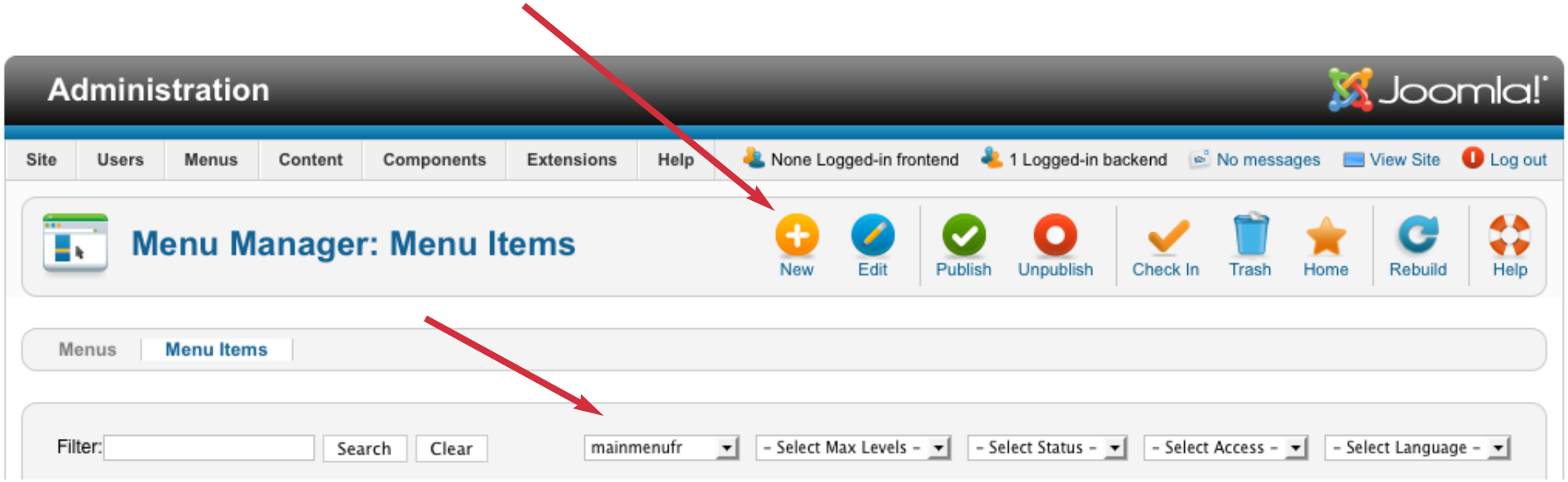
Rules

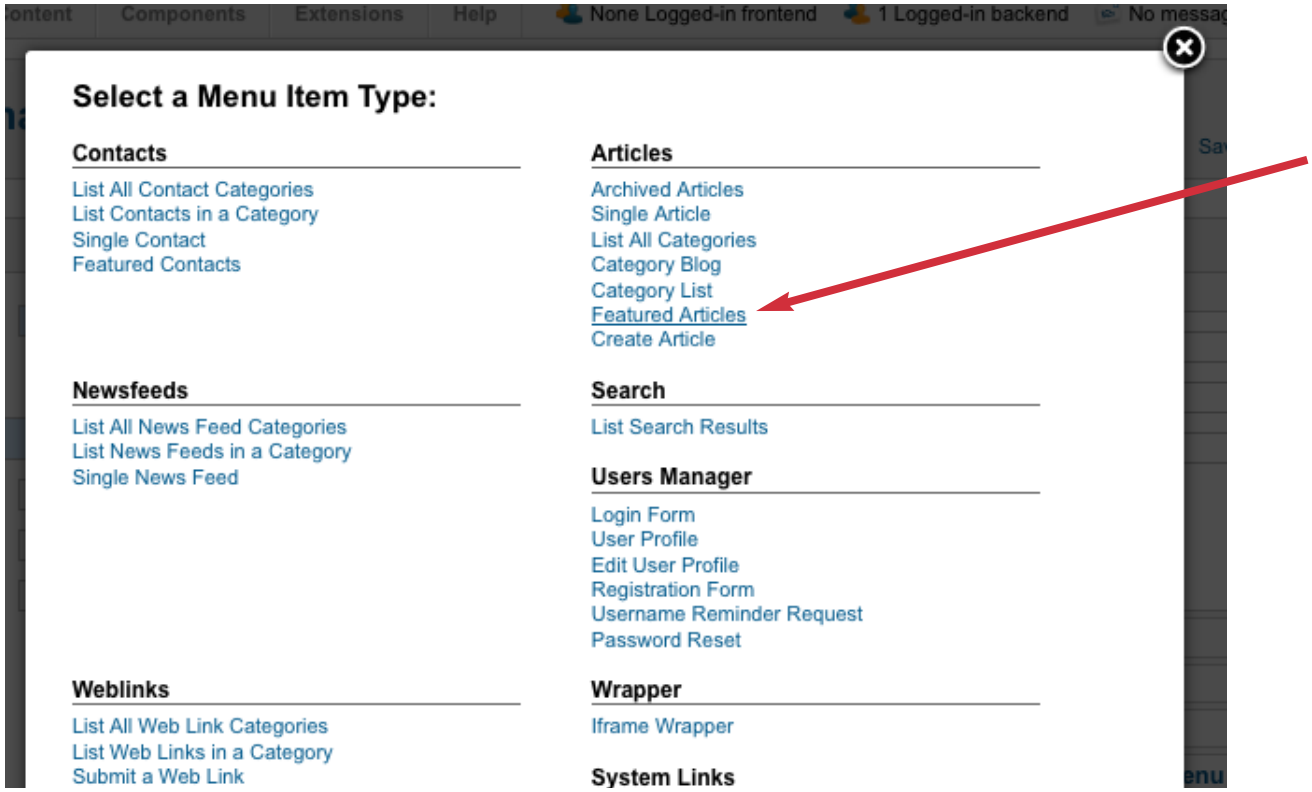
All menu items created in a specific menu should be assigned to the same language or to language ‘All’.

One of the menu items —in only one menu— should be defined as default home page for this language.

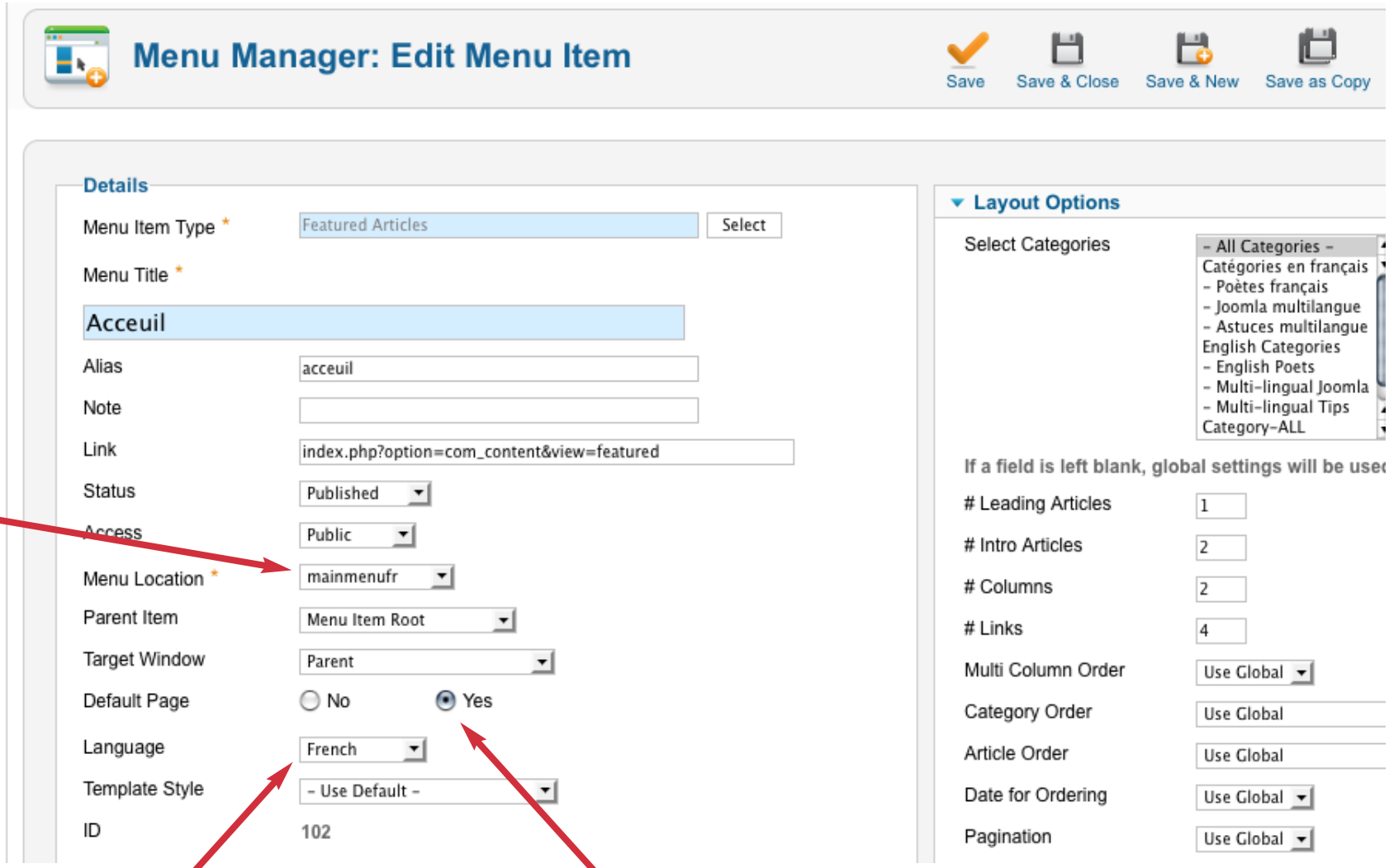
The menu items assigned to a specific language have to display contents assigned to the same language.

In this respect, Language ‘All’ should be considered as any other specific language.


Administration
Joomla!
Site
Users
Menus
Content
Components
Extensions
Help
None Logged-in frontend
1 Logged-in backend
No messages
View Site
Log out
Menu Manager: Menu Items
New
Edit
Publish
Unpublish
Check In
Trash
Home
Rebuild
Help
Menus
Menu Items
Filter:
Search
Clear
mainmenufr
- Select Max Levels -
- Select Status -
- Select Access -
- Select Language -


Select a Menu Item Type:
Contacts
List All Contact Categories
List Contacts in a Category
Single Contact
Featured Contacts
Articles
Archived Articles
Single Article
List All Categories
Category Blog
Category List
Featured Articles
Create Article
Newsfeeds
List All News Feed Categories
List News Feeds in a Category
Single News Feed
Search
List Search Results
Users Manager
Login Form
User Profile
Edit User Profile
Registration Form
Username Reminder Request
Password Reset
Weblinks
List All Web Link Categories
List Web Links in a Category
Submit a Web Link
Wrapper
Iframe Wrapper
System Links

All menu items created in a specific menu should be assigned to the same language or to language ‘All’.

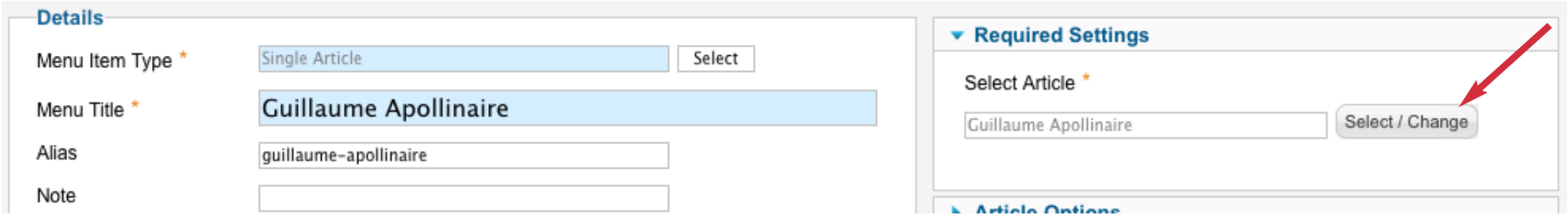


Name of the menu

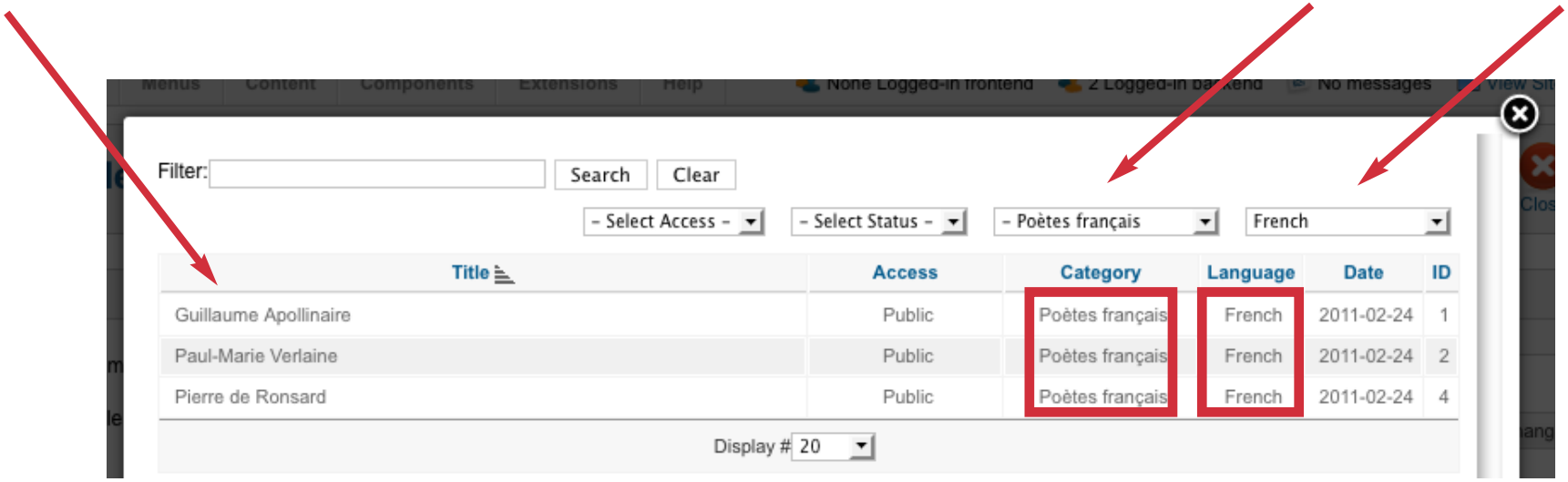
Language

One of the menu items — in ONLY one menu — has to be defined as Default Home page for that language.

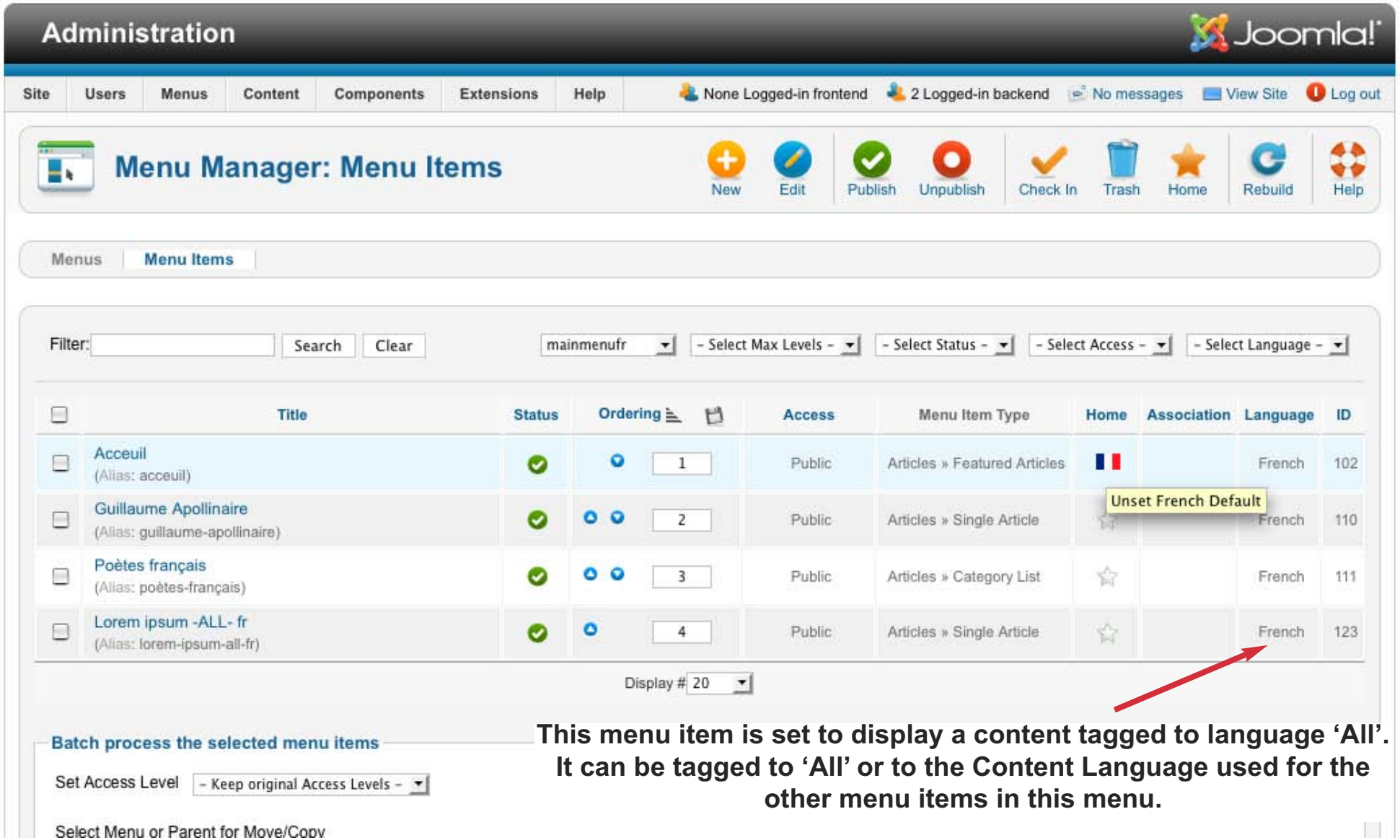
The menu items assigned to a specific language have to display contents assigned to the same language.



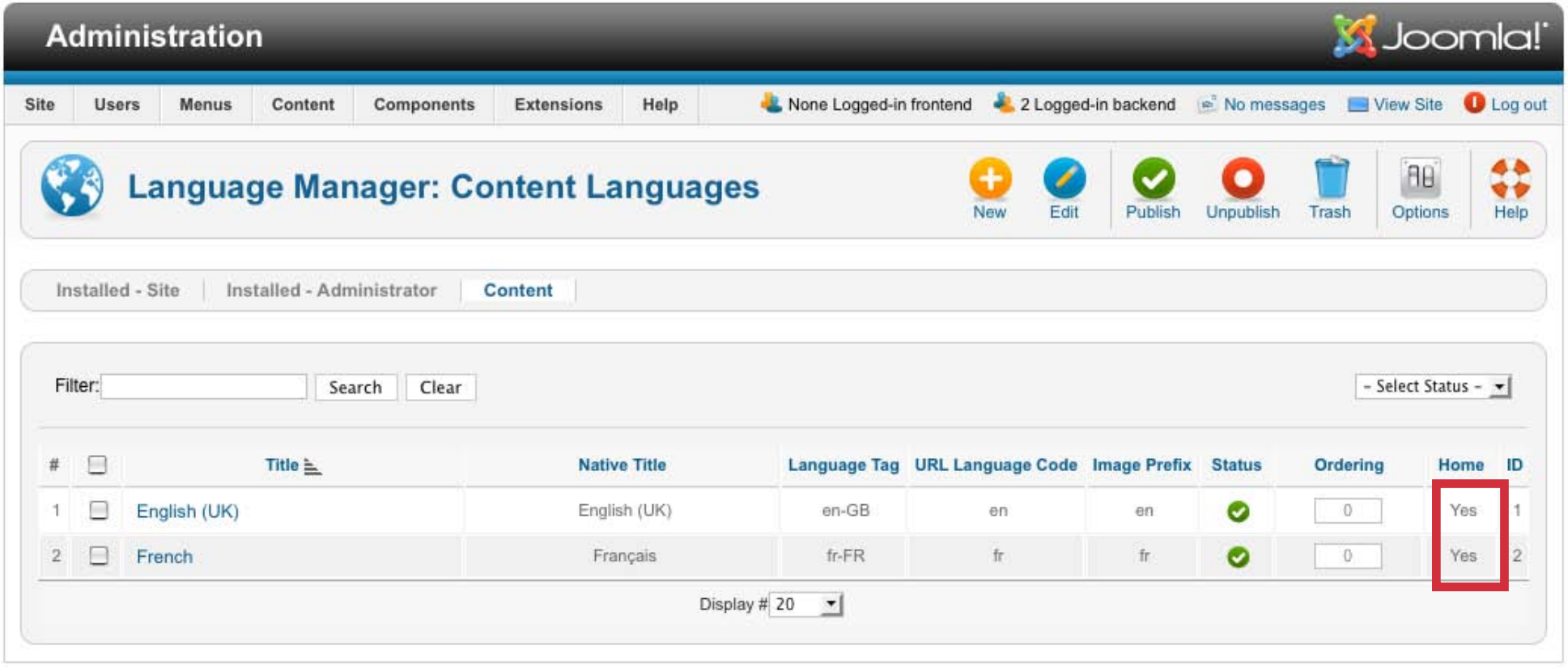
The modal displayed allows filtering



Example:
The mainmenufr with its menu items, one of them defined as Default Home page



The Language Manager Contents tab displays the existence or not of a Default Home Page for each Content Language



The Administrator Menu displays the flags for the menus which contain a Default Home page.

If a Content Language does not have a Default Home page, the front-end language switcher module will NOT display that language!!

6. Create menu modules

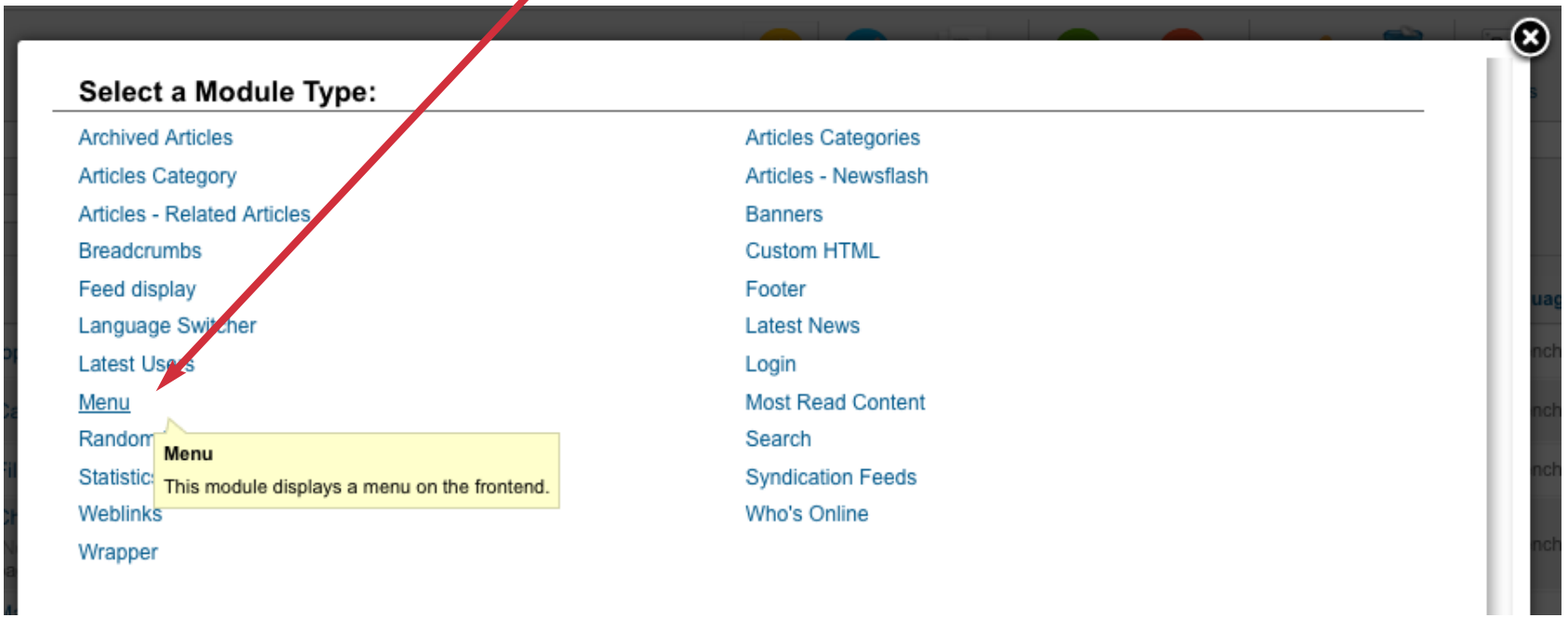
Create menu modules for each menu.

Assign these modules to the Content Languages concerned
(or to Language ‘All’)

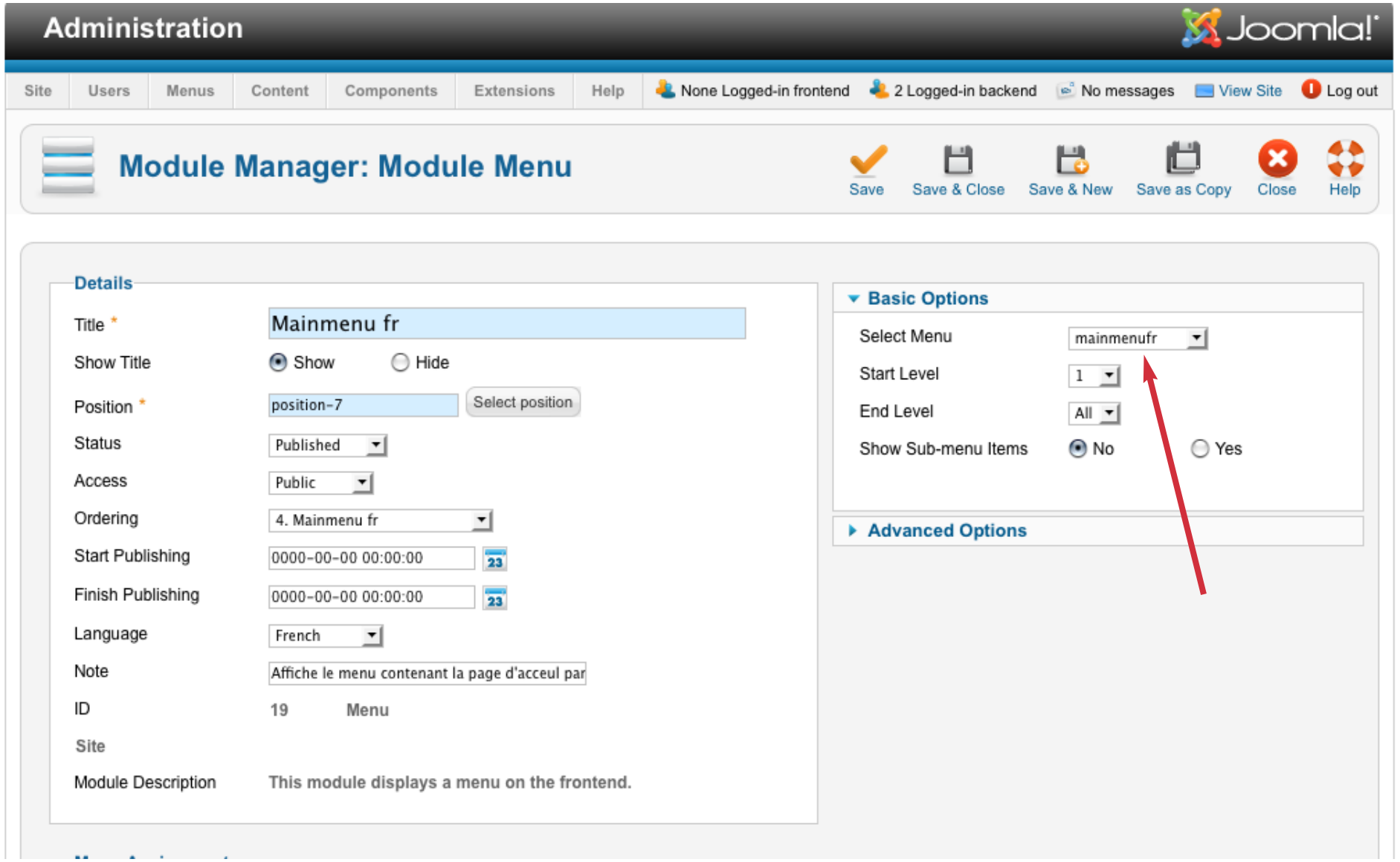
A menu module assigned to Language ‘All’ should display a menu which only contains menu items assigned to Language ‘All’.
This module will display for all Content Languages.

A menu module assigned to a specific language may display a menu containing menu items assigned to the same language as well as menu items assigned to Language ‘All’.

Select the menu module

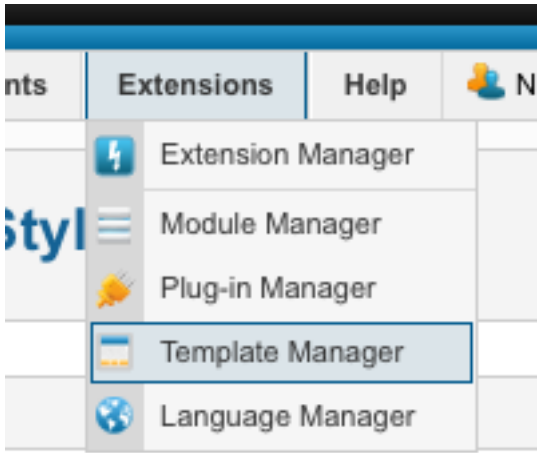


The menu module displaying the mainmenufr containing the Default Home Page for fr-FR

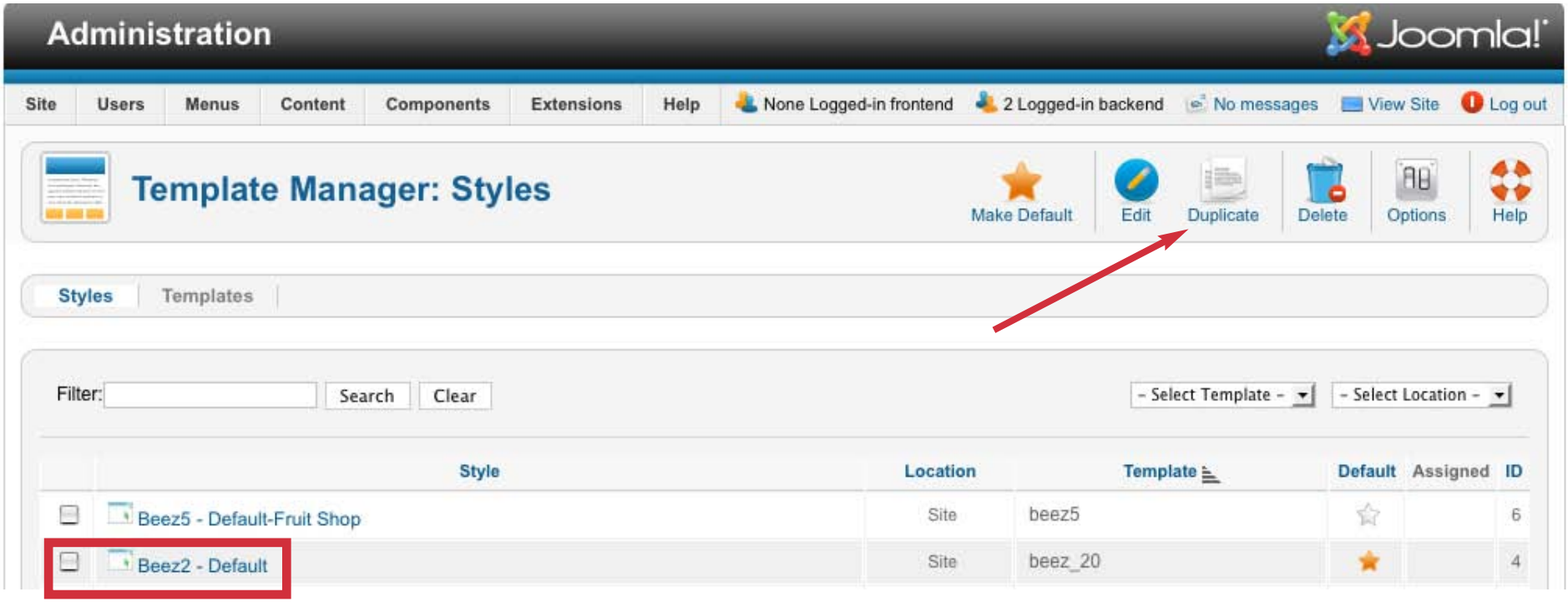


7. Assign a template style per Content language

One can assign a default template style per Content Language.
This lets customize the template for logos and headers.
The style is also used as default for this language.



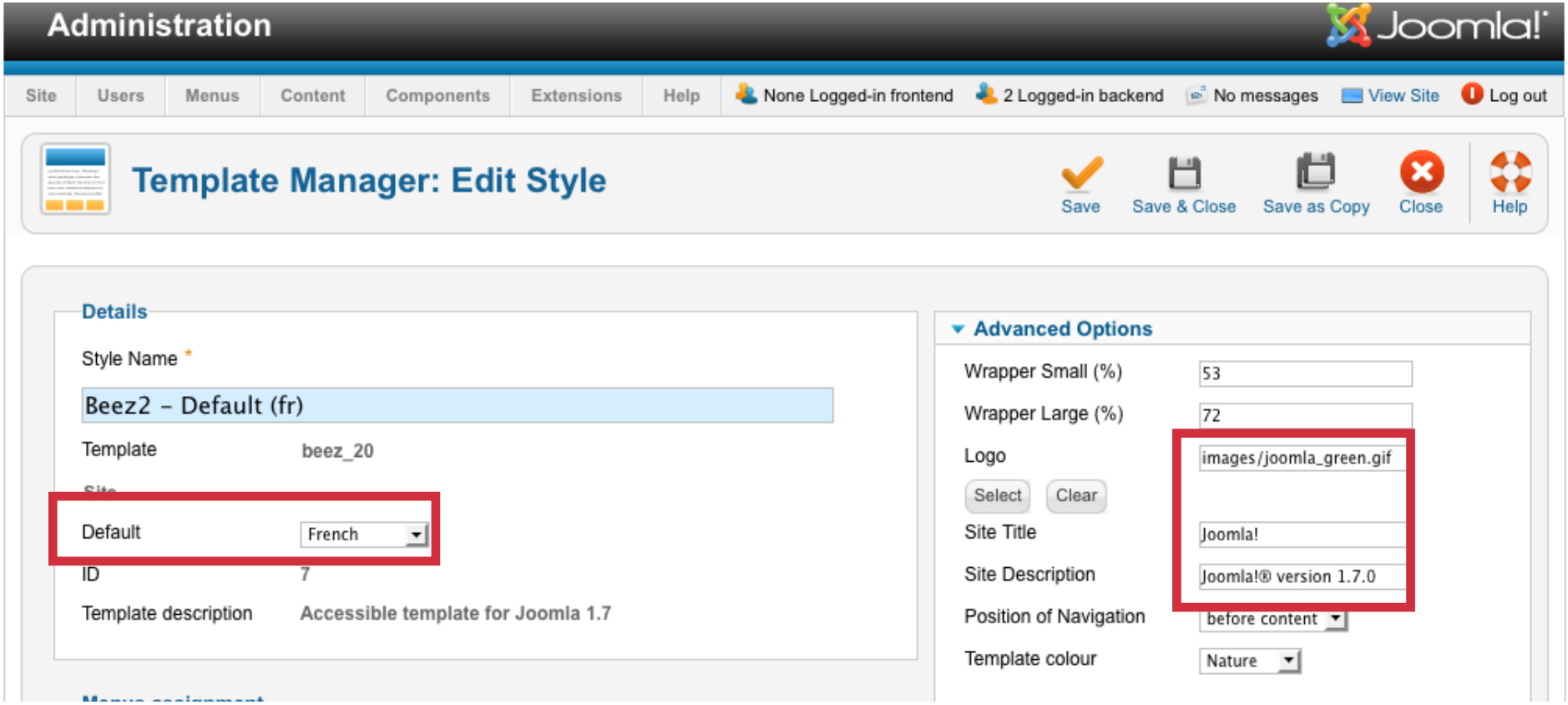
Select a style, duplicate it.



This template style is assigned to fr-FR

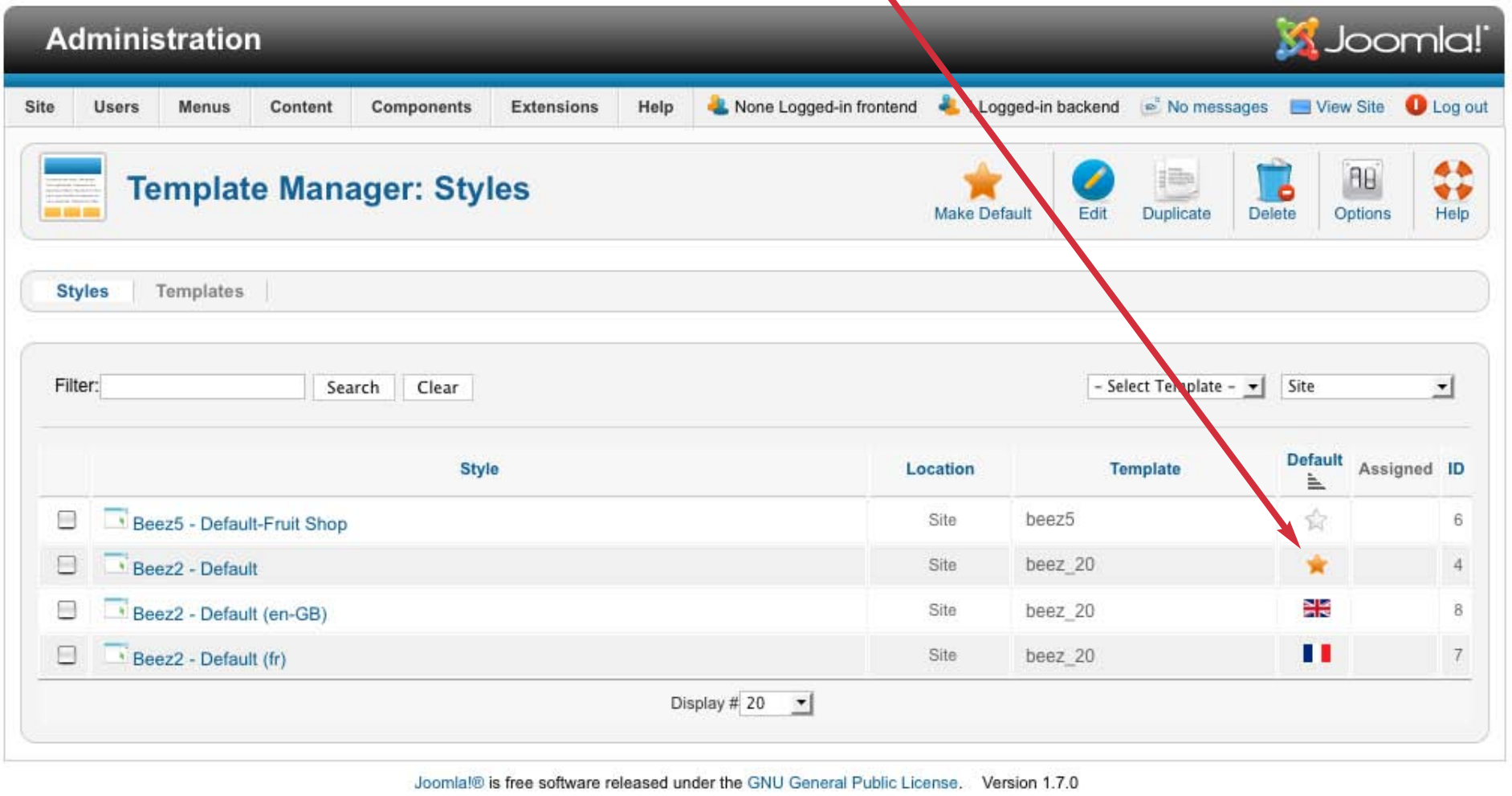
WARNING!

Some templates available on the Net are not 1.7 compatible.
They do not let you create duplicates of a style or, if they do, they do not let assign a different menu containing a specific language Default Home page per language assigned style.



The Template Style Manager displays the language flag in a column.

One template style has to remain assigned to Language ‘All’



8. Create the ‘Langswitcher’ module(s)

To display the language choice in front-end,
create mod_languages module(s) (langswitcher).

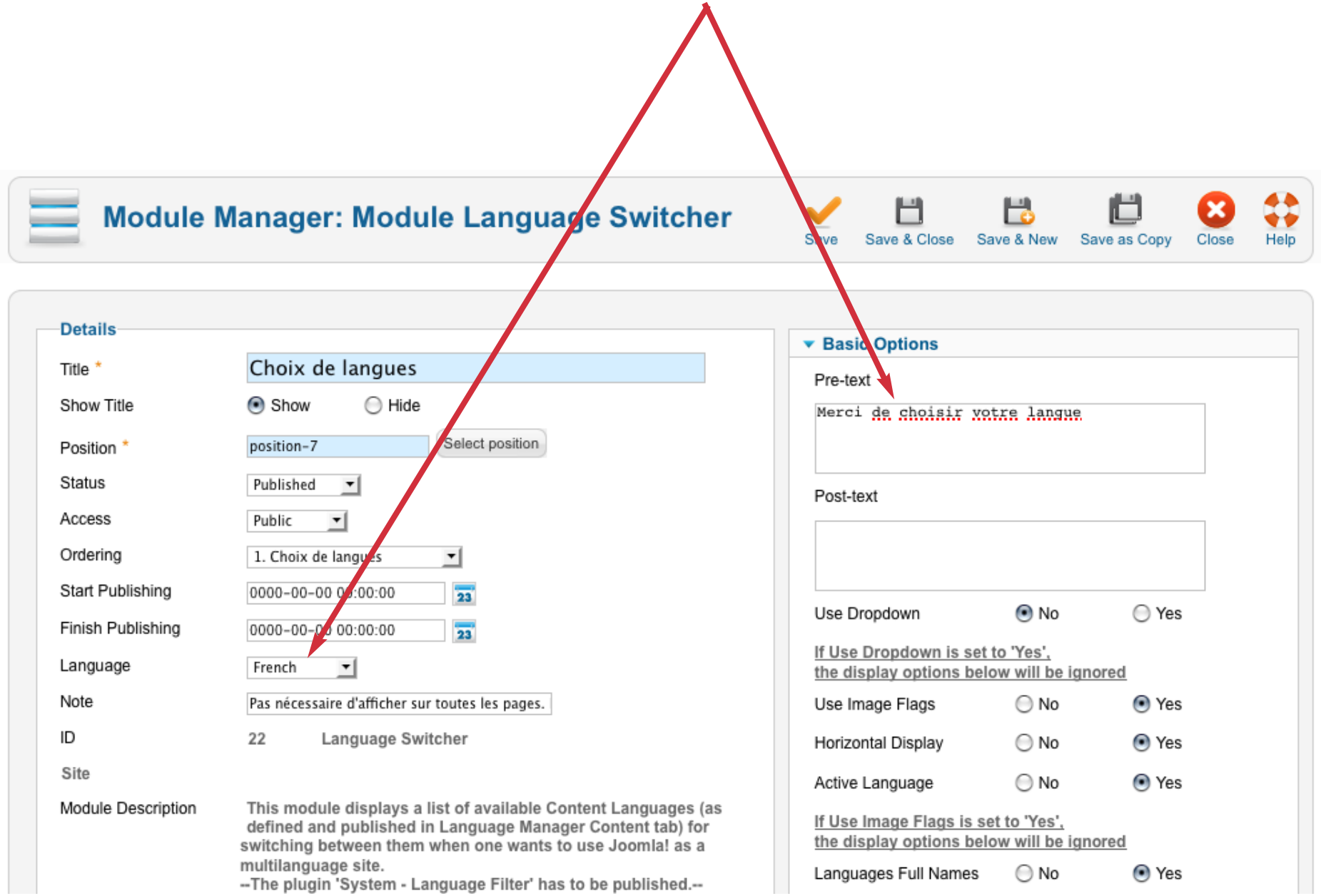
One can create one module per Content Language if the Pre-text or Post-text are filled, or an unique module to which is assigned Language ‘All’ if not.

The module displays flags or names for the Published Content Languages.
Parameter the module to choose layout.

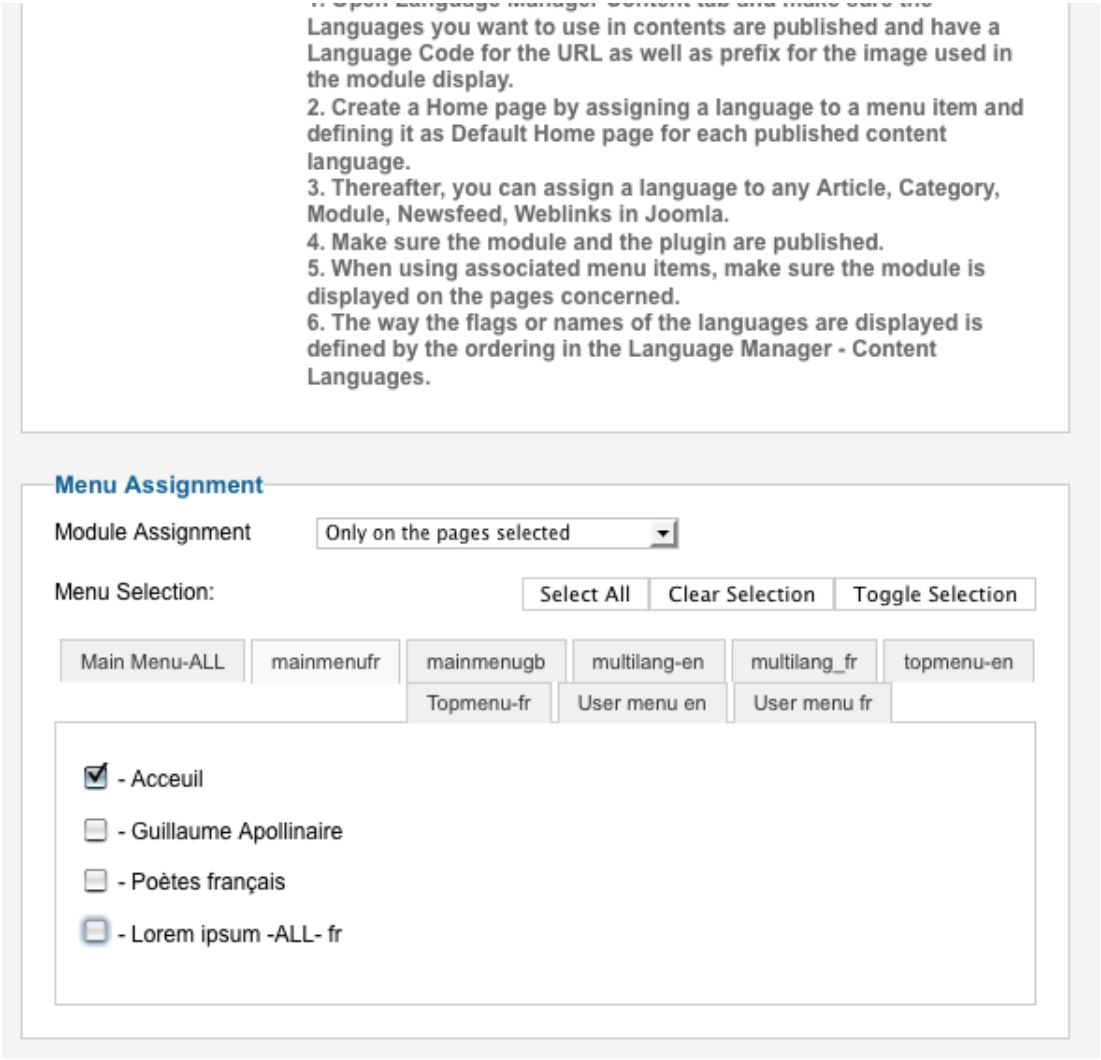
Publish the module(s) before enabling the Language Filter system plug-in.

NOTE: If menu associations are not implemented, it is unnecessary to display the module(s) on other pages than the Default Home pages, as it is designed to link to the Default Home page for the language chosen.
If there are menu associations,
the module should also be displayed on the pages concerned.

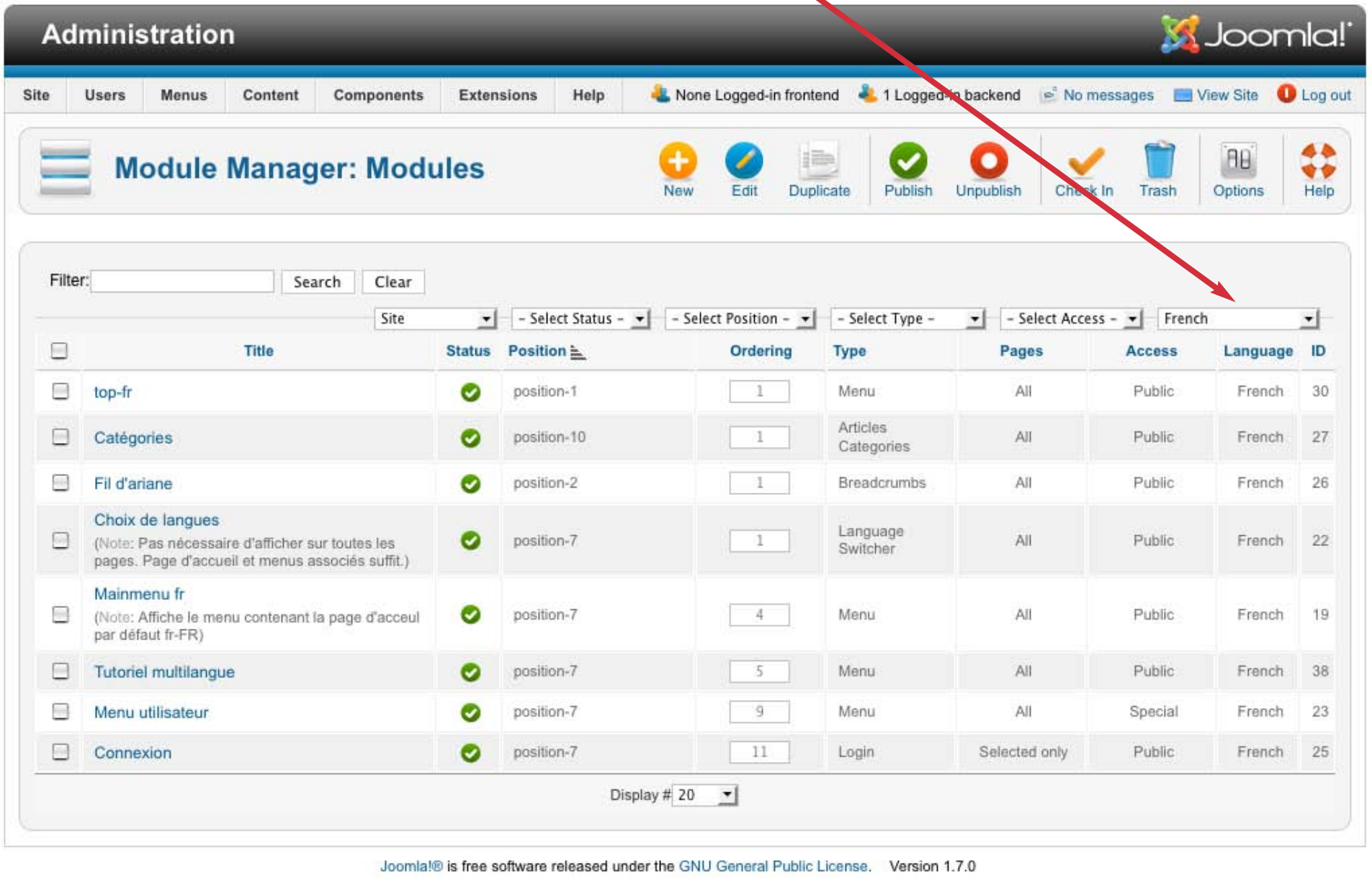
This Switcher is customized for fr-FR



This switcher is assigned to the Default Home page for the specific Content Language



Module Manager filtered per Content Language



9. Enable the ‘Language Filter’ system plug-in

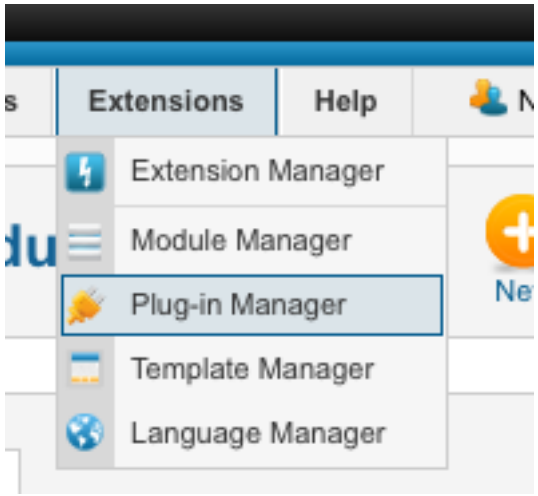
The Language Filter system plug-in has to be enabled
to activate the multi-language functionality.

It should only be enabled after making sure
that the Langswitcher modules are published!

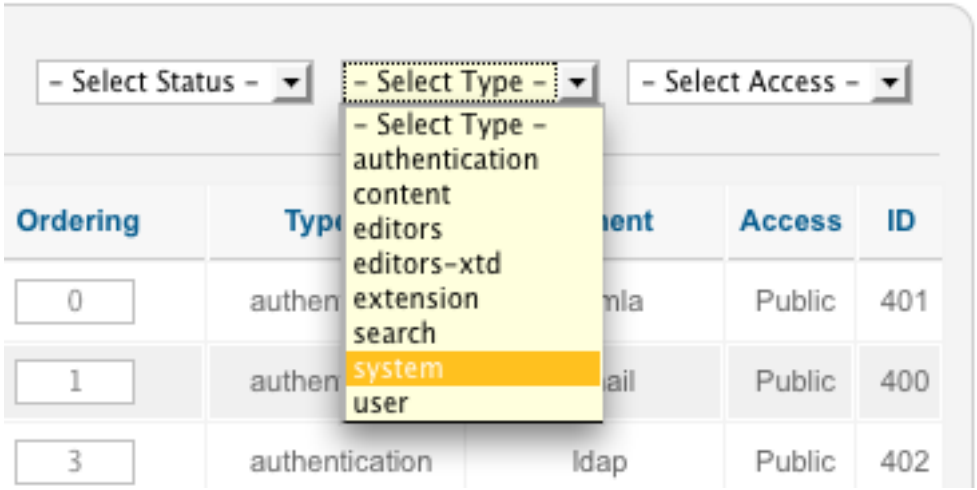
There are 3 options to define in the plug-in:

1. The site language selection for new visitors.
2. The site language display when a logged user changes its default site language.
3. A new parameter in 1.7 that let’s associate menu items to which are assigned different languages.
4. A new parameter in 1.7.3 that let’s get rid of the URL Language code for the Content Language mapped to the Default site language.

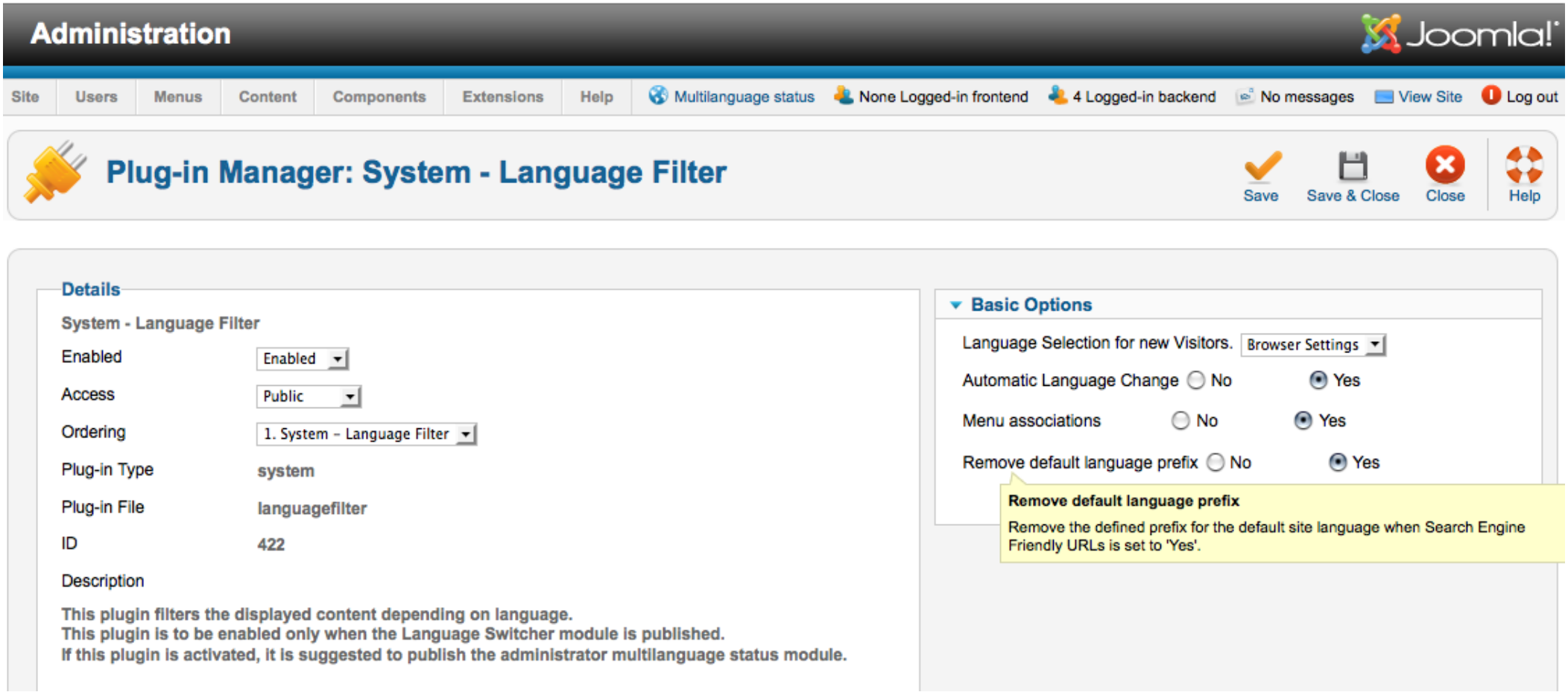
Go to the Plugin Manager



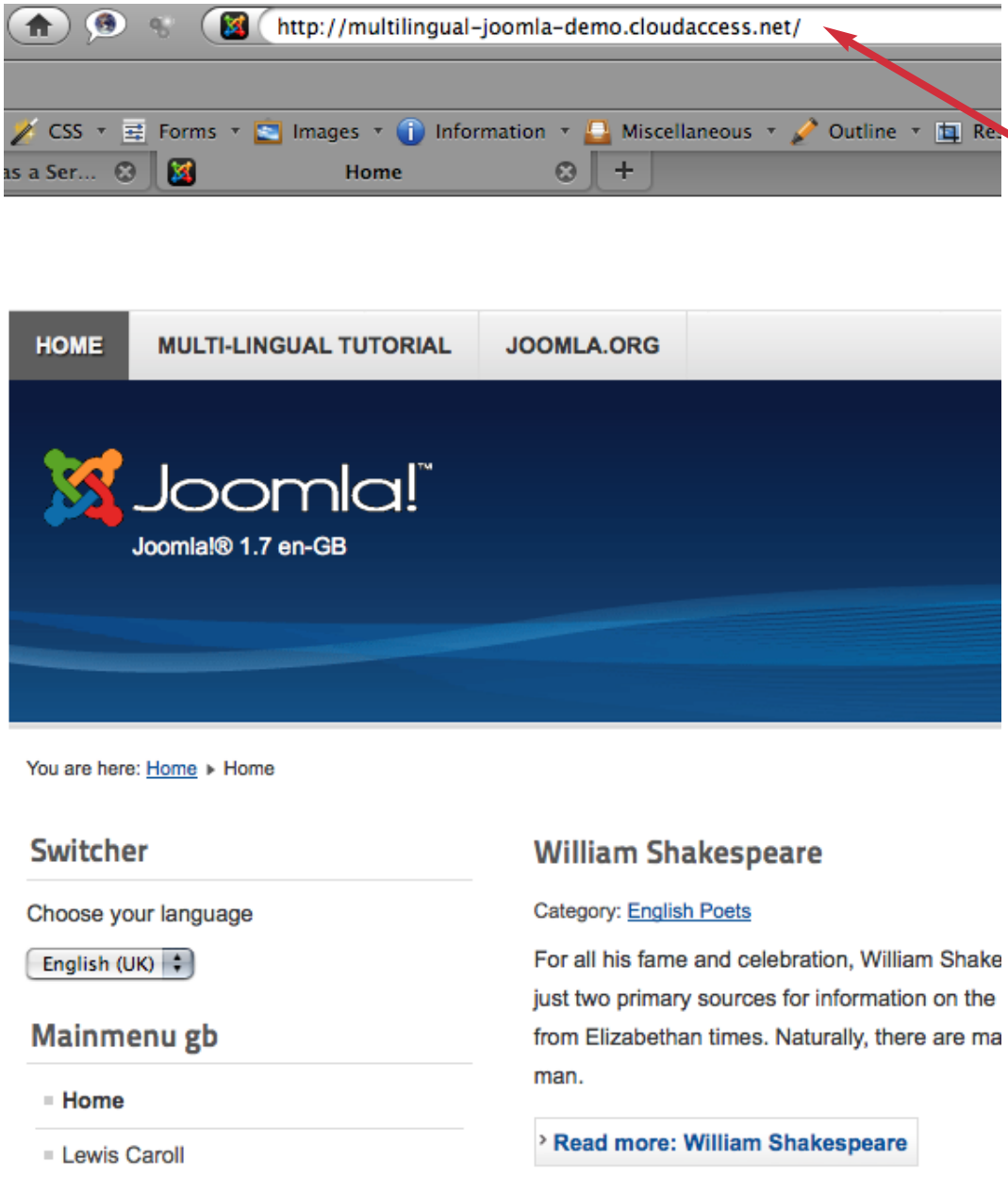
Filter by System



Edit the Language Filter System plugin
and save its parameters.
Here we use Menu Associations
and improve SEO by taking off the URL Language code
for the site default language (**New in 1.7.3**).



Result of improving SEO by taking off the URL Language code for the site default language (New in 1.7.3).



Here the Site default language is en-GB and the URL Language code is ‘en’.

The url was formerly: http://multilingual-joomla-demo.cloudaccess.net/en/

10. New in 1.7 - Associated menu items

It is now possible to associate menu items in different languages.

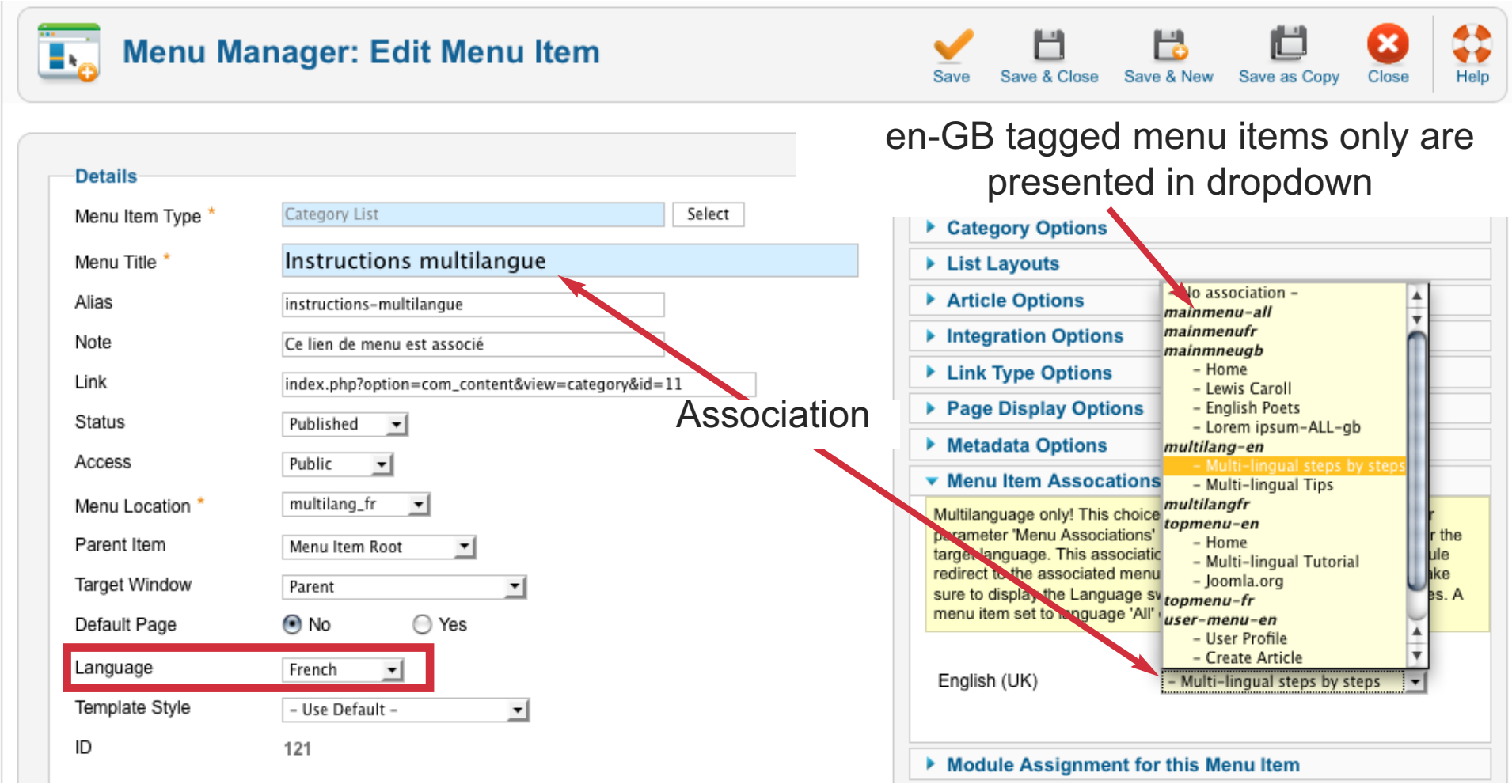
When a menu item, let's say tagged to fr-FR, is associated to a menu item tagged en-GB, **if the Language Switcher module is present on the page**, clicking on the en-GB flag/name redirects to the en-GB menu item and reciprocally.

If a menu item is not associated, the behavior will be the same as in 1.6, that is redirect to the Default Home page in the language concerned.

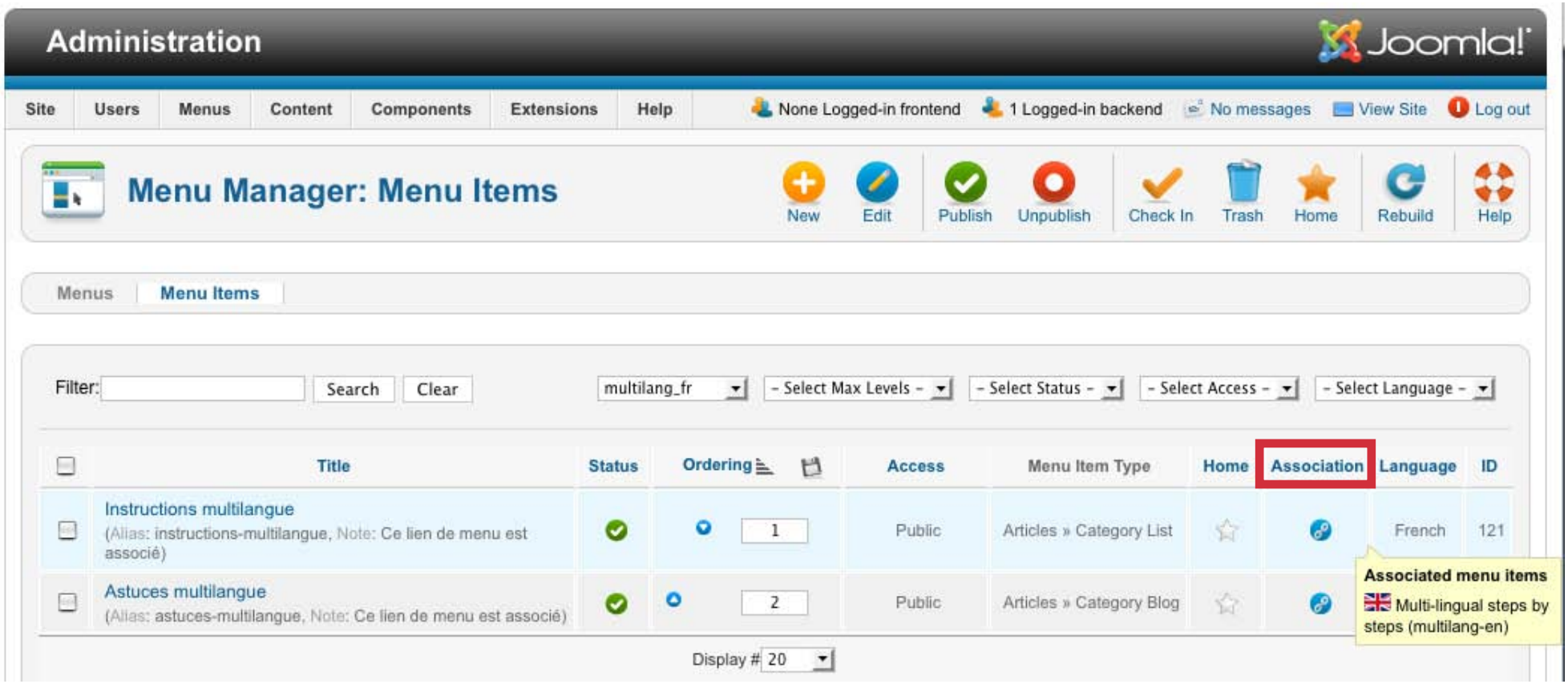
This let's therefore the choice for the webmaster to associate or not, item per item.

Activate the Language Filter plugin and make sure that ‘Menu Association’ is set to ‘Yes’. Save the parameters. Edit one menu item to which a language is assigned.

A new slider called ‘Menu Items Associations’ is now displayed.



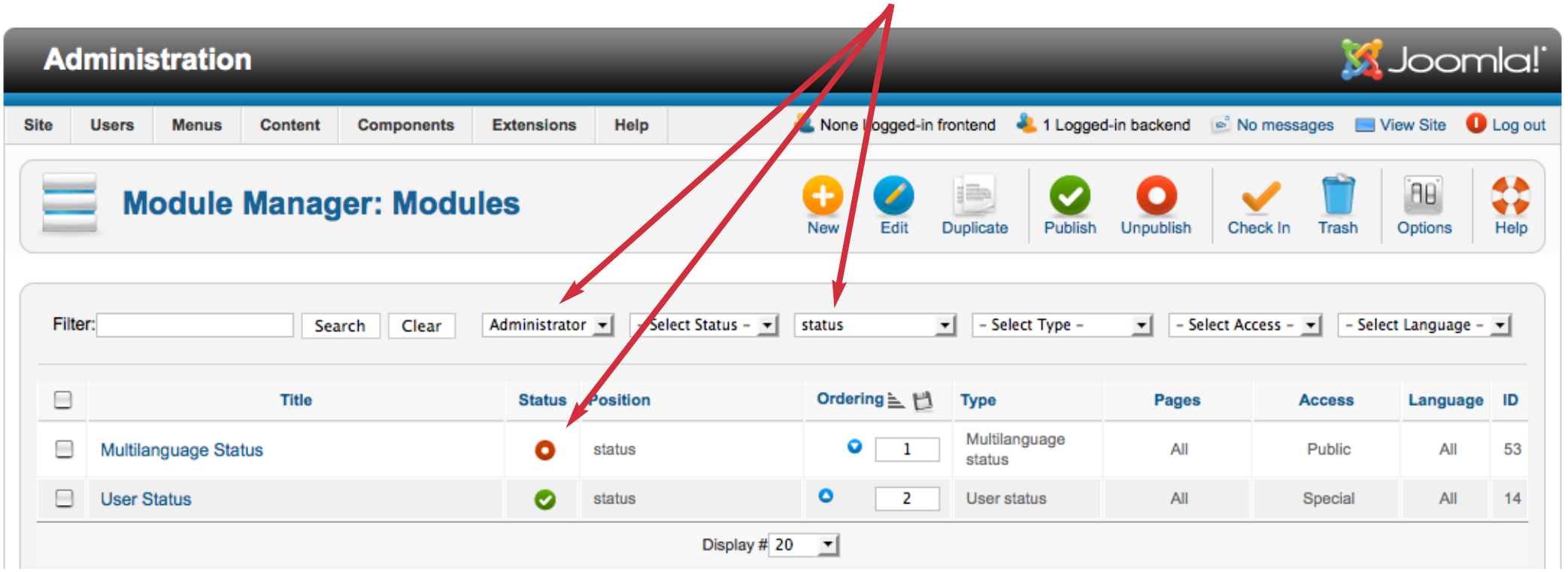
The Menu Manager displays the associated menu items



New in 1.7.1

A new module has been added in 1.7.1 to check a number of multilanguage variables and display errors if necessary.

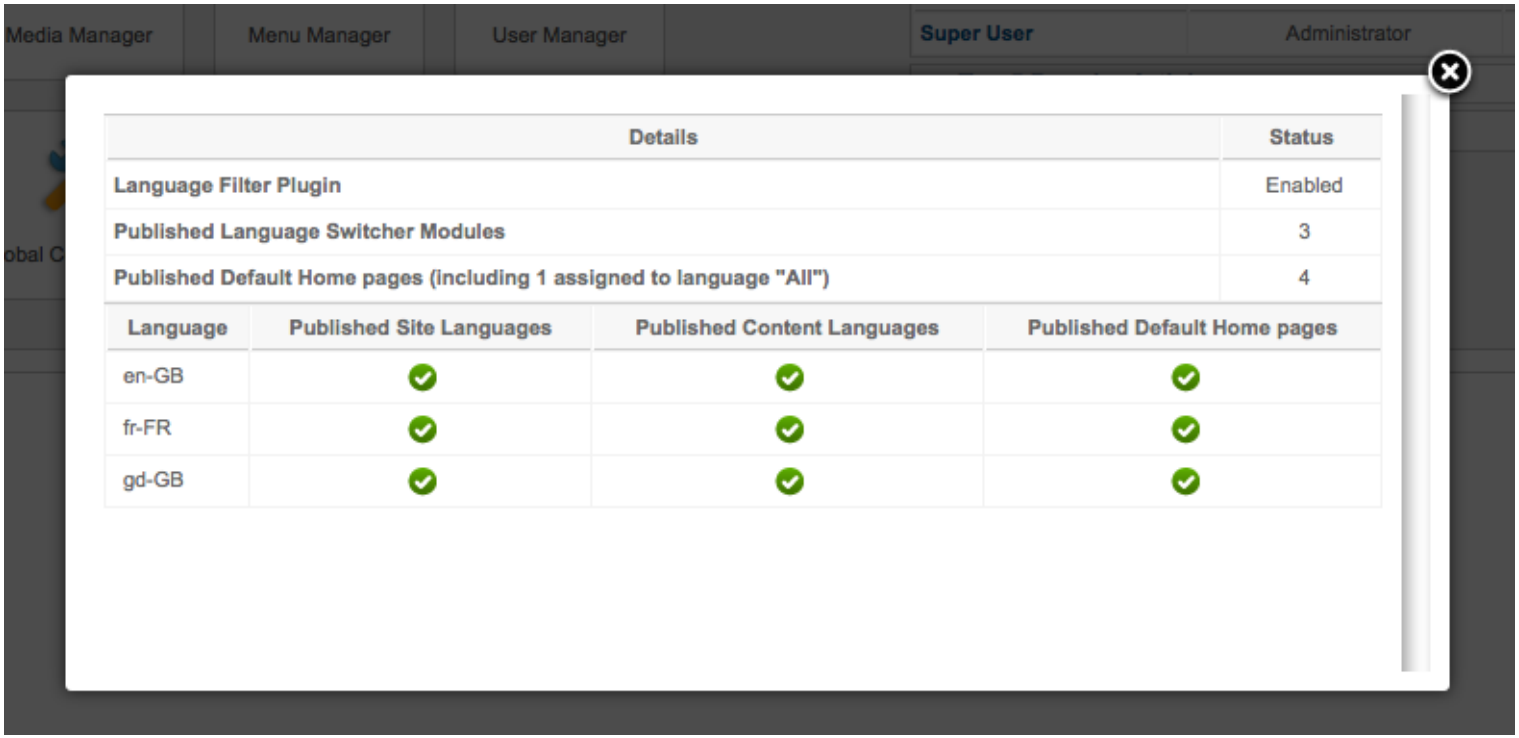
1. Go to Module Manager, filter by Administrator and “status” position, publish the module.



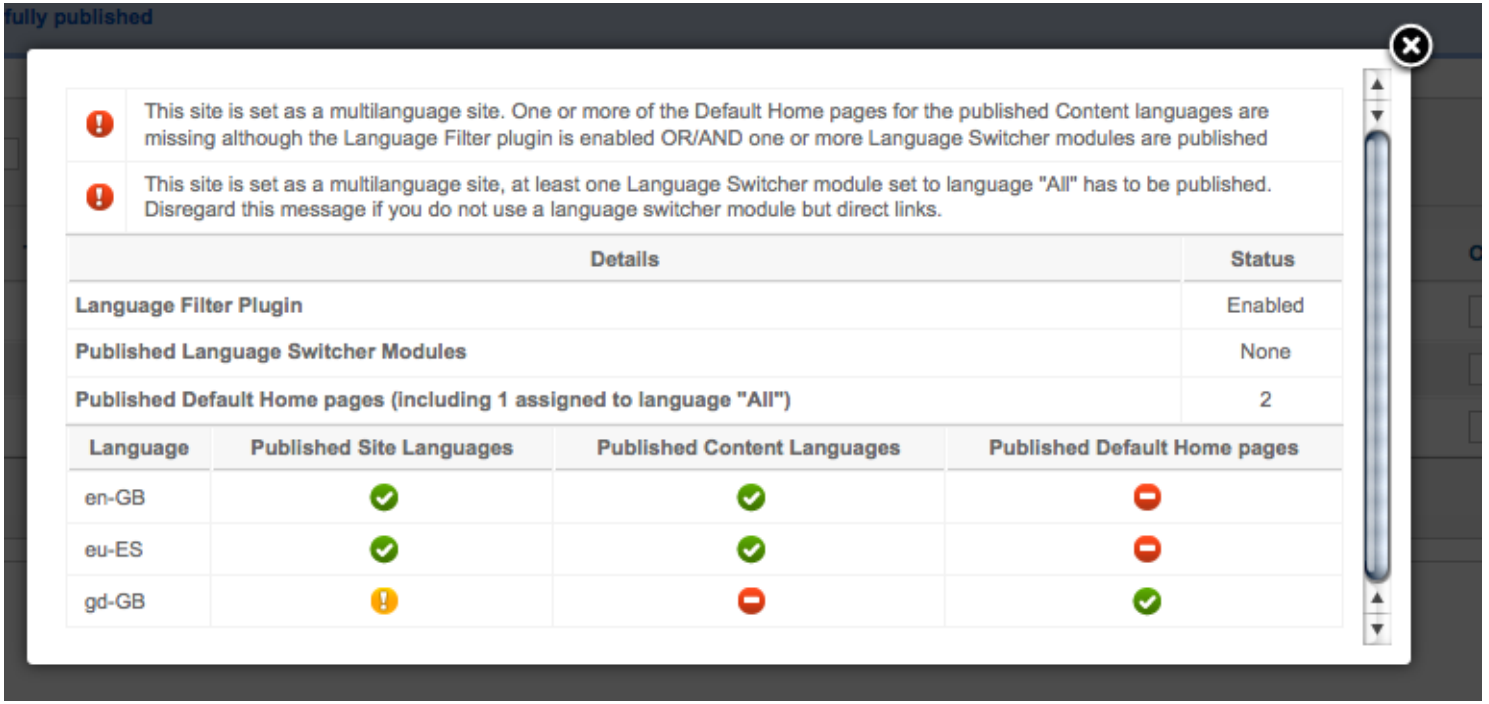
2. The module displays in the status bar.

3. If the site is a monolanguage site, the modal will display

4. If all the multilanguage variables are set OK, one will get:

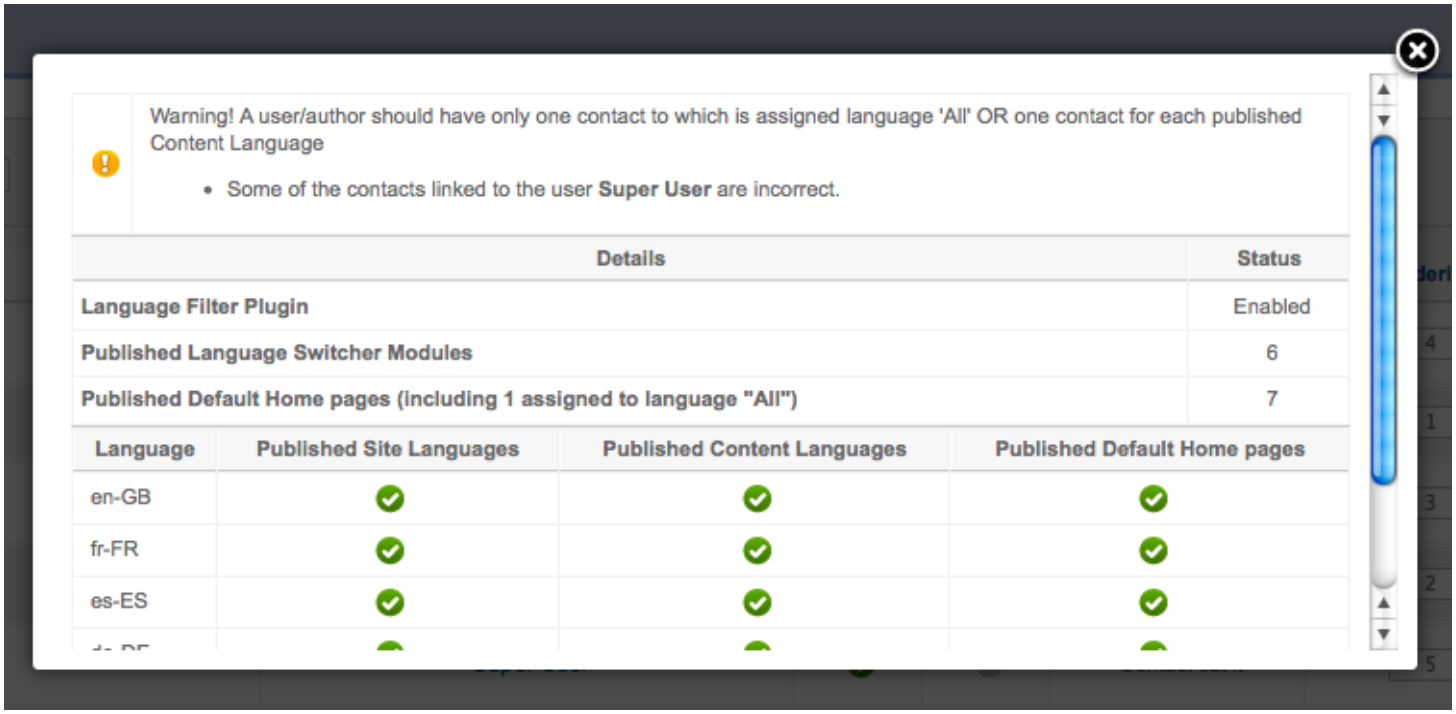


5. If something is wrong somewhere *except for the structure of categories/items and specific issues for some templates*, one may get that kind of display:



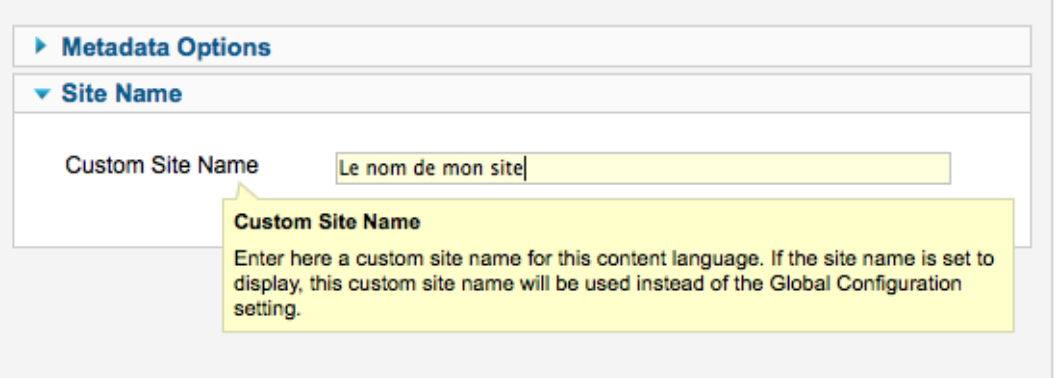
New in 1.7.3

The module will display an error
if any contact linked to a user/author is not set correctly



New in 1.7.3

It is now possible to define a Site Name per Content Language.



Before setting the site online, check the following:

1. Are the desired Content Languages published?

2. Are the related Site Languages installed and activated?

3. Are the Default Home Page menu items for each Content Language present and published?

4. Are the Menu modules which display these Default Home Pages present and published?

5. Is there a specific menu containing a Default Home Page menu item to which is assigned language "All" and its Menu module unpublished?

6. Are the 'Language Switcher' modules present and published?

7. Is the 'Language Filter' system plug-in activated?