

Some remarks on *A Usage Dictionary of Anglicisms in Sixteen European Languages*



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It is a well-known fact that only 3% of Old English lexis was of foreign origin. However, the situation was drastically changed by the end of a 1500 when 60% of vocabulary consisted either of Latin or of French-derived words (Görlach 1994: 224). It only indicates that then English could be characterised by a vast reception of foreign lexical items. Also at that time English exerted no impact on other languages. Therefore the famous observation of an English writer expressed in the 16th century was of no surprise:

The English tongue is of small reach stretching no further than this island of ours, nay not there over all (after Jespersen 1948: 227).

We can only wonder why Samuel Johnson in the *Introduction* to his *Dictionary* (1852) complained:

Our language, for almost a century, has, by the concurrence of many causes, been gradually departing from its original *Teutonick* character, and deviating towards a *Gallick* structure and phraseology, from which it ought to be our endeavour to recall it.

However, it was quite clear that a return to an exclusively or predominantly Germanic vocabulary was impossible at that period of time.

The position of English was to be changed only in the course of the 19th century and later (especially after World War II) when it became a donor language to a number of European tongues. This was due to the growth of the British Empire, the industrial revolution which took place in England as well as the subsequent economic development and success of the United States of America. These are the reasons why England is often referred to by some linguists as the Word Bank of English.

The influence of English on all the major languages used mainly in Europe led the great Dutch linguist R.W. Zandvoort in his article entitled *English linguistic infiltration in Europe* (1970) to appeal to scholars to write a comparative dictionary of anglicisms. However, neither he nor any of his contemporaries took the challenge. R. Filipovic⁹ was the only one who partly responded to the appeal by publishing the book *The English Element in European Languages* (1982). It consists of a number of articles devoted to the influence of English on some European languages. They are: Albanian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Romanian, Serbo-Croatian, Slovak and Turkish. However, nobody undertook the task of compiling a comparative

lexicon of anglicisms. This project was only realised by Manfred Görlach and fifteen other linguists (including the author of this paper) coming from sixteen European countries, which meant a description of the influence of English on sixteen European languages. The European tongues were chosen not only because of Zandvoort's appeal but also due to a certain degree of similarity holding between them. It remains undoubtful that the situation, for instance, in Canada is sociolinguistically different from Europe. The project was supported by Oxford University Press and as a result it was published there in 2001 and in 2005 (a paperback edition).

Thus, the following languages were taken into consideration: three Indo-European languages, namely Germanic (German – Ge, Dutch – Du, Norwegian – Nw, Icelandic – Ic), Romance (French – Fr, Spanish – Sp, Italian – It, Romanian – Rm) and Slavonic (Russian – Rs, Polish – Po, Croation – Cr, Bulgarian – Bg) and two other languages, that is Albanian (Al), Greek (Gr) as well as two Finno-Ugric languages: Finnish (Fi) and Hungarian (Hu), which is graphically presented by the following 'grid'. According to Görlach (1998: 211), the 'grid' is "beautifully iconic of the geography of Europe."

Ic	Nw	Po	Rs
Du	Ge	Cr	Bg
Fr	It	Fi	Hu
Sp	Rm	Al	Gr

The selection of the languages was dictated by the availability of the linguists willing to collaborate. Despite this random choice, the selection of languages allows to draw conclusions on the influence of English on different language families, Western vs. Eastern countries, regional comparisons (e.g. the Balkans), puristic vs. open speech communities. As can be easily noticed, languages which are in close contact with English, that is some Celtic languages or Maltese, have been excluded since it has been assumed that the linguistic situation there is different.

The collection of the data was ended in 1995. Although earlier anglicisms were included, the main stress was put on the lexis that entered the sixteen European languages after World War II. The English loans were basically collected from recent national dictionaries, although we were aware of the importance of text corpora, however, not all the languages in question had them, and as it is known there are always some doubts connected with the representativeness of corpora even while compiling national lexicons not to mention a cross-linguistic analysis. Therefore every scholar involved in the project had to rely on the data available to him (dictionaries of anglicisms if published in his/her country, national lexicons, dictionaries of foreign words, current press, etc. and his/her linguistic intuition).

It has to be explained what is meant by the term *anglicisms* in the discussed dictionary. They are words characterised by English phonetics and morphology that enter at least one of the sixteen selected languages. We exclude internationalisms (e.g. *telephone*), proper names (like *Greenpeace*), words of the so-called exotic origin enriching the European languages via English (e.g. *avocado*) as well as lexical items that are of restricted usage like hundreds of special terms related to computer technology. Only these words that are connected e.g. with computer science and are understood by an educated language-conscious native speaker are included in the *Dictionary*.

Let me now describe the scope of each entry. The headword consists of an English etymon followed by the specification of the part of speech it belongs to and all the meanings attested in the analysed languages. If they correspond to the senses found in English (*The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English* from 1995 is used as a reference), they are enumerated with respective numerals found in the British dictionary. If, however, there is/are some extra meaning/s used in any of the languages considered, it/they is/are added and accompanied by the following numeral or letter, e.g.

comfort *n.* 2a ‘physical well-being’, + 2c ‘mental well-being’, +6 ‘luxury’

concise *n.* + 2 ‘a dental filling’

escort *n.* 1. ‘one or more persons accompanying a person’, 2 ‘a person accompanying a person of the opposite sex socially’, +2a ‘an act of accompanying a person socially’

essay *n.* 1. ‘a composition, usu. short and in prose, on any subject’, +1a ‘a student paper’.

It is worth explaining that both derivatives and homonyms are treated as separate entries.

What follows is a general piece of information on the word’s history and its spread in Europe. However, it only concerns more important items, e.g.

aerobics

Though the word was coined in American English as a term used in astronaut training in the 1960s, the activity was popular in the late 1970s and became a craze in the early 1980s. During the 1990s the frequency of this word seems to have decreased in the media and in conversation.

aftershave

The spread of this term is noteworthy since perfectly adequate terms exist in all the languages under consideration. This word has been adopted as a more fashionable synonym. Existing native equivalents were therefore not prompted by English. The word became strikingly frequent after the 1950s and is now current in nearly all the European languages. No calques have been formed, except when prompted by restrictive policies, as in French. The currency of the word is remarkable as the two parts of the compound are otherwise infrequent.

football

This word for soccer was almost universally adopted into Continental languages from the late nineteenth century onwards, but was later replaced by calques in some. With

the advent of the American game the distinction was made by accepting the loanword for the latter, or by using the related term ↑*rugby*, or adding ‘American’ (cf. ↑ *American football*). Out of context, ambiguities remain, *soccer* (the normal unambiguous term used in Britain for the national variant) not having been adopted.

The sign ↑ indicates that the word constitutes a separate entry in the *Dictionary*.

forsythia

The shrub was named after William Forsyth (1737–1804), botanist in charge of the Royal Gardens at St. James’s and Kensington. The loanword was apparently transmitted through botanical literature; the fact and the word’s neo-Latin form have allowed its pronunciation to be influenced by the phonetics of the individual receiver languages. The word has remained exotic, but has lost its English character.

As far as the description of anglicisms found in individual languages is concerned, it is worth pointing to the organization of the entry:

1. The spelling of a particular English borrowing if different from the English etymon is indicated; if both graphic forms are accepted, this is shown by <= E>; if only English spelling is used, the English form is skipped.

2. The pronunciation of a particular borrowing if different from the model is marked; if both pronunciations are possible, this is shown by [= E]; if English phonetics is more or less followed, this piece of information is omitted.

3. The morphological remarks – since a great majority of words constitute nouns,¹ therefore the most frequent type of information concerns the gender, countability, pluralization, etc. of nouns but e.g. in the case of adjectives it is indicated whether it is declined (at least in some language).

4. The approximate time of adoption of a given item – the date is suggested in a very general way: beginning (beg), middle (mid), end (end) of the century unless we are confronted with very recent loans whose time of introduction to respective languages is easily identified as is the case of the loanword *AIDS* (1980s).

5. This is an optional piece of information as it concerns mediating languages, e.g. the loan *chuligan* < E *hooligan* entered Polish via Russian, which is shown in such a way: via Rs.

6. The degree of assimilation is suggested by the following abbreviations:

- – the loan is not present in the language described
- o – the lexical item is a quote and thus it is used only by bilingual speakers
- ø – the word is a foreignism, which means that it refers to British and American contexts
- 1 – the borrowing is characterised by restricted usage
- 2 – the item is fully accepted and thus characterised by wide distribution, however, it is felt to be a borrowing
- 3 – the loanword is so well assimilated that it is not recognised to be of English origin
- 4 – the word has got the status of a semantic borrowing
- 5 – the loan is not of English origin in the individual language, e.g. 5 La indicates that it is a Latin borrowing.

All this is schematically marked by means of diagrams which, however, include a more simplified version of degrees of assimilation, namely: a white square stands for fully assimilated loans, slashes in the square suggest restricted usage, a black square indicates that the English word is not used in the individual language. Again, let's have a couple of examples (cf. the 'grid' above, which shows the distribution of languages):

pantry

Ic	Nw	Po	Rs
Du	Ge	Cr	Bg
Fr	It	Fi	Hu
Sp	Rm	Al	Gr

paperback

Ic	Nw	Po	Rs
Du	Ge	Cr	Bg
Fr	It	Fi	Hu
Sp	Rm	Al	Gr

song

Ic	Nw	Po	Rs
Du	Ge	Cr	Bg
Fr	It	Fi	Hu
Sp	Rm	Al	Gr

sorry

Ic	Nw	Po	Rs
Du	Ge	Cr	Bg
Fr	It	Fi	Hu
Sp	Rm	Al	Gr

7. The usage restrictions concern:

Field:	hist = historical (obsolete concepts or objects) lit = literacy tech = technical (denoting specialist vocabulary like computer technology)
Medium:	writ = written (the word is used only in the written version of the individual language)
Region:	reg = regional (the word's usage is restricted to regional varieties of the standard language)
Register:	coll = colloquial jour = journalese sla = slang you = youth (the usage is restricted to the younger generation) derog = derogatory euph = euphemistic fac = facetious pej = pejorative
Status:	ban = banned (the usage is restricted by legislation) mod = modern obs = obsolescent rare = infrequently used

It should be explained that borderline cases are represented by e.g. 0 > 1 mod, uncertainty by a question mark, as in 2 tech?, restrictions may be combined, for instance 1 you obs.

8. Optionally, a native equivalent is given with the information of its frequency:

- < = the non-English word is more acceptable
- > = the English borrowing is more frequent
- = = the two words are equally often used.

If, however, the word is calqued on English, it is preceded by one of the following: trans (translation), rend (rendition), creat (creation). If only the meaning is borrowed from English, it is indicated by the label 'mean' (meaning).

9. Optionally, derivatives formed on the ground of the individual language are mentioned. They are preceded by an arrow (→) accompanied by the information concerning the part of speech they belong to.

Having provided a detailed description of the entry, let's quote some examples:

folklore *n.* 1 'the traditional beliefs and stories of a people; the study of these', +2 'traditional songs and music'

A loanword accepted into practically all European languages in the late nineteenth century/early twentieth century. The term was coined in 1846, obviously calqued on the German *Volkskunde* (cf. ↑*folksong*), in the puristic tradition of nineteenth-century English.

Ge [folklo:rə] F [U] end I9c, +2(3) → *-istisch* adj. **Du** [fɔ̃lklo:rə] C [U] I9c, +2(3) → *-istisch* adj.; *-ist* n. **Nw** [fɔ̃lklo̩:re/-lu:re] M [U] beg2oc (I) < *folkeminne* → *folklorisk* adj.; *folklorist* M **Ic** *fólklor* [foũklor:r] N [U] mid2oc, I(I coll) < rend *þjóðfr* **Fi** [fɔ̃lklo̩:R] M [U] end I9c, I, +2(2) → *folklorique* adj.; *folkloriste* M; *folkloriser* v.; *folklorisation* n. **Sp** < = E > /*folclore* M, I88os (2>3) → *folklóricol/folclorico* adj.; *folclorista* n. **It** < = E > /*folclore* [fɔ̃lklo̩:re] M [U] end I9c (3) → *folclorico/folcloristico* adj. **Rm** *folclor* N [U] end I9c, via Fr (3) Rs *fol'klor* M [U] beg2oc, +2(2) → *-ist* M, *-istika* F; *-nyī* adj. **Po** *folklor* [folklor] M [U] beg2oc (3) → *-ysta* M; *-ystka* F; *-ystyka* F; *-ystyczny* adj. **Cr** *fólklor* M [U] beg2oc, +2(2) → *-ist* M; *-an* adj. **Bg** *folklor* M [U] beg2oc, via Rs, +2(3) → *-en* adj., *-ist* M; *-istka* F; *-ristika* F **Fi** [fɔ̃lklo̩:r] 2oc (2) → *folkloristiikka* n. **Hu** *folklór* [fɔ̃lklo:r] [U] end I9/beg2oc (3) = *néprajz* → *-ista* n.; *-iszitikus* adj. **Al** *folklor* [folklor] M [U] beg2o (3) **Gr** *folklor* N [U] beg2oc, via Fr (2) → *-ikós* adj., *-ismos* M

globe-trotter n. ‘a person travelling widely’

This word was widely accepted in early twentieth-century Europe, and is fully integrated (cf. the German pronunciation and Slavic derivatives) but also has many calques coexisting with it.

Ic	Nw	Po	Rs
Du	Ge	Cr	Bg
Fr	It	Fi	Hu
Sp	Rm	Al	Gr

Ge [glo:bətrotə] M, pl. Ø, beg2oc (2) = trsl *Weltenbummler* → v. **Du** [ɔ̃lo:bətrɔ̃tər] C, beg2oc (2) = *wereldreiziger* **Nw** [= E, glu:-b(e)trɔ̃ter] M, pl. *-e*, beg2oc (I tech) → *globetrotterisk* adj. **Ic** - < *heimshornaflakkari* **Fr** *globetrotter* [glɔ̃btɔ̃tɔ̃tɔ̃tɔ̃tɔ̃t] M/F, end I9c (I obs) **Sp** - < trsl *trotamundos* **It** [globtrɔ̃tter] M/F, pl. Ø/-s, I90os (I) < rend *giramondo* **Rm** [= E] M, mid2oc? (0>I) **Rs** *globtrotter* M, pl. -y, I99os (I jour) **Po** *globtroter* [gloptroter] M, beg2oc (2) → *-ka* F; *-stwo* N [U]; *-ski* adj. **Cr** *globtroter* M, pl. *-i*, beg2oc (2) → *-ka* F; *-ski* adj. **Hu** [glo:btrɔ̃tər] pl. *-ek*, beg2oc (I arch) < világjáró **Gr** - < trsl *kosmoghyristisl-ismenos*

goal n. 2a,b ‘the place where the ball has to be sent to score’ (ballgames), 2d ‘a point won’

This word became well-established in early football terminology, and though competing with native equivalents in some languages, has survived very well – as have, in a more restricted way, the compounds ↑*goalgetter** and ↑*goalkeeper*.

Ge [go:l] N, pl. *-s*, mid2oc (r reg/obs) < *Tor* **Du** [go:l] C, beg2oc (2) **Nw** [= E] M, pl. *-er*, beg2oc (2) < *mål* N → *gålle* v. Ic - < rend *mark* **Fr** [gol] M, end I9c (I ban, obs) <

but **Sp** *gol*, M, pl. *-es*, beg2oc (3 tech) < 2a,b: *metallportería* → *golear* v; *goleador* n. **It** < = E >/*gol* [g□l] M, pl. Ø, I90os (3) = *rete* F **Rm** *gol* [gol] N, beg2oc, 2a,b,d(3) **Rs** *gol* M, pl. *-y*, beg2oc (3) **Po** *gol* [gol] M, beg2oc, 2a,b,d(3) **Cr** *gol* M, pl. *-ovi*, beg2oc (3) **Bg** *gol* M, pl. *-al-ove*, beg2oc, 2d(2) → *-ov* adj. **Hu** *gól* [go:l] pl. *-ok*, end I9/beg2oc (3) **Al** *gol* [gol] M, pl. *-a*, beg2oc (I tech) **Gr** *gol* N, beg2oc (2) → *goltzi̇* M

pack ice *n.* ‘an area of large crowded pieces of floating ice in the sea’

The distribution is characterized by the native look of the word in Germanic languages (which makes its status as an anglicism difficult or impossible to determine) and widespread clipping, which was at least partly mediated through French (cf. ↑*pack*). **Ge** - < trsl *Packeis* **Du** *pakijis* (5) **Nw** (o) < *pakkis* (4) **Ic** - < *ishella* **Fr** *pack* M, I9c (I tech) **It** *pack* [pak] M, pl. Ø, end I9c (I tech) **Rm** *pack* [= E] N, pl. *-uri*, I96os, via Fr (2 tech) **Rs** *pak* M [U] end I9c (I tech) < trsl *pakovyĩ lěd* **Po** *pak/pakajs* [pak/pakais] M, beg2oc (I tech) **Bg** - < trsl *pakov led*

It goes without saying that English loans have got different distribution. For instance, the word *AIDS* is found in eleven languages and in five tongues it is calqued. On the other hand, the item *down* is present only in seven languages whereas it is absent from nine.

The loans do not only differ in distribution but also in the degree of assimilation. Generally, we can state that older loans are better adapted on the phonetic and graphic levels whereas more recent borrowings follow their English models. The assimilation on the morphological plane is different in different languages. For example, the attribution of grammatical gender in German is quite complicated whereas it causes no difficulty in Polish (cf. Carstensen’s research from 1980 and Maczak-Wohlfeld’s, forthcoming). The formation of plural usually is an easy task, however, the phenomenon of double plural is present in most languages, similarly to the occurrence of the so-called continental anglicisms or pseudo-anglicisms like *dancing* < E *dancing hall* or *smoking* < E *smoking jacket*. Relatively infrequently English morphemes are used to form new words: the morpheme *-gate* (‘an affair’, after *Watergate*) being the best illustration of it. In most cases fewer meanings of English words are attested in the borrowing languages although occasionally a new interpretation is given, e.g. the English word *pony* refers to fringe in German.

Apart from the qualitative analysis, which has been very briefly presented above, the quantitative influence should be discussed. In order to conduct it, one letter, that is *N*, has been chosen. It contains 51 headwords out of about 4000 attested in *A Usage Dictionary of Anglicisms in Sixteen European Languages*. It is interesting to note that there are only seven headwords present in all the selected languages, like *nylon*, *nonsense*. On the contrary, only six headwords are attested in one language, e.g. *nap* in Norwegian or *night life* in German. In most cases it is difficult, if not impossible, to account for this fact. Only some examples are evident, e.g. names of units like *newton* or words denoting certain phenomena as is the case of *Negro spirituals* that are found in all the sixteen languages. But why is the borrowing *night life* used in German only

whereas the loan *night club* is attested in nine languages? Similarly, why is the word *notebook* found in nine tongues and the lexical item *notepad* in five languages? Do their semantics play a role? Or why is the item *nylon* present in twelve languages but the loanword *nylons* in four tongues? Is it due to the fact that the former is shorter than the latter?

In conclusion, it should be claimed that on the whole the influence of English on the European languages, although it is evident, in fact it is not as great as it is often suggested. If we realise that about 4000 anglicisms have been collected in the analysed languages versus their total vocabulary, it is clear that they constitute only a minute fraction of the lexis. Therefore we should not be worried about the “immense” impact of English on the European languages as it is often maintained. Also we should not be worried by the claim put forward by some linguists who suggest that English is a threat to ethnic languages and as such it will replace them.

Notes:

1. As Haugen (1950) claims it was already in 1881 when the well-known American linguist Whitney concluded that nouns are most often borrowed words. Verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, and interjections (in that order) are less frequently taken over from one language into the other.

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**ԴԻՏԱՐԿՈՒՄՆԵՐ
«A USAGE DICTIONARY
OF ANGLICISMS IN SIXTEEN LANGUAGES»
ԲԱՌԱՐԱՆԻ ՄԱՍԻՆ**

Չողվածագիրը բառարանի ընծեռած նյութի հիման վրա փորձում է պարզել, թե ինչքան է անգլերենի ազդեցության չափը ժամանակակից 16 եվրոպական լեզուների բառային կազմի փոփոխության վրա: Լինելով եվրոպական լեզուներում կիրառություն գտած անգլիաբանությունների բառարանի համահեղինակներից մեկը՝ նա նշում է, որ այն 4000 անգլիաբանությունները, որոնք տեղ են գտել բառարանում, մեծ թիվ չեն կազմում տվյալ լեզուների բառապաշարում: Չեղինակը եզրակացնում է, որ անգլերենի ազդեցությունը այնքան էլ մեծ չէ, ինչպես կարծում են որոշ լեզվաբաններ, և, հետևաբար, անհանգստացալու հարկ չկա: