Focus on Italian anglicisms  
a comparative study of three dictionaries  

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1. Introduction and aims of study

English has been the most important donor language for Italian in the second half of the 20th century, but its input has not been homogeneous. English words are far more numerous in certain areas of lexis (e.g. computer science, economics, advertising) than in everyday language; they are more typical of some speech styles (informal) and are used especially by particular social groups (e.g. business managers, computer experts, journalists). The massive presence of anglicisms in contemporary Italian is widely recorded by dictionaries of the language and other types of lexicographic works.

In my previous research on linguistic and cultural contacts between English and Italian (Pulcini, 1994; 1995; 1997), and especially in the course of my compilation of the Italian entries in UDASEL¹, I examined the entries for English loanwords in various dictionaries and glossaries² and found remarkable

1 UDASEL (A Usage Dictionary of Anglicisms in Selected European Languages, edited by M. Görlich, OUP, to be published in 1999) represents the first attempt to record the lexical input of English contrastively in 16 European languages (four Germanic: Icelandic, Norwegian, Dutch and German; four Romance: French, Spanish, Italian and Rumanian; four Slavic: Russian, Polish, Croatian and Bulgarian; four miscellaneous: Finnish, Hungarian, Albanian and Greek) up to the early 1990s. For an introduction to the general outline of this dictionary, see Görlich (1994).


differences. This fact gave rise to a basic preliminary question regarding the selection of anglicisms for inclusion in dictionaries.

To explore this phenomenon, three dictionaries were examined: Lo Zingarelli 1997. Vocabolario della Lingua Italiana (1996), Dizionario degli Anglicismi by G. Rando (1987) and A Usage Dictionary of Anglicisms in Selected European Languages by M. Gõrlach (forthcoming 1999). In spite of the evident differences, these three dictionaries seemed to be comparable as far as the coverage of anglicisms in Italian was concerned. This analysis starts with a preliminary classification of various types of anglicisms and subsequently considers how the different categories are treated by the dictionaries in question. Hopefully this analysis will provide a useful reference framework for future linguistic and lexicographic work on anglicisms.

2. Definition of anglicism

The meaning of the term anglicism is only apparently self-explanatory. Looking at definitions given by three different lexicographers, we find that they are similar but not the same. Zingarelli (1995):

anglicismo [fr. anglicisme. V. anglico] s.m. • Parola o locuzione propria dell'inglese entrata in un'altra lingua. SIN. Inglesismo.

anglismo s.m. • (raro) Anglicismo.

Rando (1987):

Per anglicismo (specificatamente anglicismo italiano) si intende ogni vocabolo o accezione di vocabolo che sia di origine inglese o che sia giunto nella nostra lingua tramite l'inglese nella varietà britannica e americana ma anche in quelle dell'Australia, del Canadà, del Sud Africa. (1987: XV-XVI)

Gõrlach (1994: 224):

An Anglicism is a word or idiom that is recognizably English in its form (spelling, pronunciation, morphology, or at least one of the three), but is accepted as an item in the vocabulary of the receptor language.

A common criterion of the above definitions is that the word should have English origin and should be accepted in the receivér language, i.e. Italian. In particular, Gõrlach's definition stresses the fact that the word should retain some

straniere in uso nella lingua italiana, Zanichelli, Bologna; Le Parole Straniere dello Zingarelli (cd-rom 1996);
3. Typology of borrowings

English borrowings may be typologically grouped into two broad categories: loanwords and calques. Other categories relevant to our analysis are: Anglo-latinisms, pseudo-loans and internationalisms.

3.1. Loanwords

The term English loanword (or loan) is used to denote English words which are borrowed by Italian either without any formal change or with adaptation to the orthographic and morphological rules of Italian. Word are borrowed together with their meaning for monosemic items (i.e. technical terms) but only with one or some of the original meanings for polysemic items. Phonetic adaptation to the pronunciation rules of the receiver language is always present, though in many cases it is minimal. Loanwords may be more or less integrated so that they may be perceived to be part of the language by its users, irrespective of their degree of adaptation (rock and roll is not adapted but fully integrated).

Examples:
- Unadapted: business, detective, smog, stock, tennis, test.
- Adapted loanwords: dollaro, rosbif (rosbiffe), gol (goal), manageriale, drenare.

3.2. Calques

Calques reproduce the English word (form and meaning or only its meaning) with indigenous elements. The following types may be distinguished:
- translations (complete or partial): lavaggio del cervello (brainwashing), football americano (American football);
- renditions (partial translation and partial free reproduction): compagnia aerea (airline), navetta spaziale (space shuttle);
• creations: *pallanuoto* (waterpolo), *salto con l'elastico* (bungee jumping);
• semantic: *conforto* (comfort), *rovescio* (backhand).

Because of similarities between English and Italian, some words can equally be classified as derivatives or calques, e.g. comfort/conforto, emergency/emergenza.

### 3.3. Pseudo-loans

Pseudo-loans are autonomous coinages which resemble but are not real English words. Examples: *recordman* (record holder), *autostop* (hitch-hiking), *spot* (television commercial), *slip* (panties), *speaker* (newsreader), *footing* (jogging).

### 3.4. Internationalisms

Internationalisms are words which share the same meaning and a similar form in different languages. Similarities across languages are common because of genetic links, mainly the Latin and Greek substratum, but international words may also derive from the influence of a strong donor language, such as English in the 20th century.

International words are, for example, German *nation*, English *nation*, Italian *nazione*, French *nation*, Spanish *nación* (Latin etymon: nātus, natiōne).

The boundary between international words and anglicisms is blurred in various instances, since many international words were originally coined in English contexts but usually on the basis of neo-Latin and neo-Greek elements (cf. affixes such as *bio-, micro- and -ite* in scientific and technical terminology).

On this question, Görlach's explanation is worth quoting (1994: 232):

> Words like *astronaut, automobile, deodorant, holocaust, microphone, photography, polisemy, stereo, studio, telegraph, telephone, television* and *telex* are international in a way that makes it less relevant to ask who coined them in what linguistic context. Since these words tend to be spelled and pronounced in agreement with national conventions, they are not felt to be 'English', and consequently are not subject to the same evaluation that words like *Teenager* or *Babysitter* may well be. Latinate internationalisms should therefore be analysed as a category distinct from anglicisms, unless they retain clear evidence of their English provenance, as German *Computer* does in its spelling and pronunciation.

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3 On internationalisms, see Petralli (1992).
If we take the Italian words microphone and computer, we may draw the same conclusion. **Microphone** (lt. microfono, Fr. microphone, Sp. microfono, Ge. mikrophon) has become an internationalism, in spite of the fact that it was coined by an English scientist in an English context; whereas **computer** is an anglicism in spite of its Latin etymology because, beside its context of origin, its form and pronunciation are still recognizably English.

4. Zingarelli 1996

Zingarelli is a general dictionary and its definition of anglicism is simple, although "parola o locuzione propria dell'inglese" ("word or phrase belonging to English") may sound ambiguous at first sight. Yet, examining the entries of foreignisms it is clear that this dictionary adopts a formal criterion: it labels as English (vc. ingl., i.e. 'English lemma'), only the words which retain their native English form, whereas for derivatives it cross-refers to the original headwords, as shown in the entry for scooter:

- scooter /'skuter, ingl. 'skuːtə/ [vc. ingl. dal v. fam. to scoot 'guizzar via'] s.m.inv.
- scooterista /skute'ristəl V. scuterista
- scuter s.m.l Adattamento di scooter (V.)
- scuterista o scooterista [dascuter, con-ista] s.m.e.f. (pl.m.-i)

This principle is further confirmed by the accompanying volume to the 1996 edition which gathers all the entries of foreign words included in the full version of the dictionary. This booklet is attached to a cd-rom which allows electronic research of entries. All the foreign words recorded amount to about 2.5% of all the entries (2,300 out of 134,000); the English ones are about 1.4% (1,887). In the introduction the publisher states:

... sono qui raccolte tutte le voci in cui compare la trascrizione fonematica del lemma in una qualunque lingua che non sia l'italiano o il latino. Perciò sono comprese parole come laser, basket e flambé di cui è ormai prevalente la pronuncia italianizzata, ma di cui è data nel vocabolario anche la pronuncia nella lingua di appartenenza. Non sono invece presenti parole come bar, ferodo e vermut la cui origine forestiera permane ormai solo a livello etimologico.

The criterion followed by Zingarelli is thus to consider as anglicisms the word which necessitate a phonemic transcription of the native pronunciation, accompanied by the Italian pronunciation, if notably deviant. This choice leaves a certain amount of arbitrariness. In fact, bar and film are not treated as
foreignisms, whereas sport is, in spite of the same degree of phonemic integration and presence of derivatives.

Zingarelli distinguishes between two- or three-word phrases ('loc.') from simple or compound words, e.g. situation comedy, self-made man (phrases), inter-rail, metal detector (compounds). This classification leaves some doubtful cases: for example it is questionable why crossover and cross-country should be labelled as phrases, whereas motocross and overdose are described as compounds.

Other labels used by Zingarelli present further problems. The label 'semi-ingl.' (semi-English or hybrid) is attributed to items having Latin/Greek elements without considering whether the word exists in English or it is an Italian coinage: it is the case, for example, of autogol and antitrust, both labelled as 'semi-ingl.', although the former is not an English word (and therefore a false anglicism, i.e. 'pseudo-ingl.'), whilst the latter is a current English word. Also footing and beauty-case, which are not English, are classified as such; for beauty-cases even the supposed English plural beauty-cases is given!4 Examples:

autogòl o autogol /'auto'gɔl, semi-ingl. 'auto'goul/ [comp. di auto- (1) e gol] s.m.inv.

antitrust /semi-ingl. anti'trast, anti'trast/ o anti-trust [comp. di anti- (2) e trust] agg. inv. l

footing /'futin(g), ingl. 'fu tin/ [vc. ingl. gerundio di to foot 'muovere i piedi', da foot 'piede' (V. football), ma l'uso sostantivato nella terminologia sportiva è un innovazione fr.]

beauty-case /'bju:tikeis/ [comp. con le vc. ingl. beauty 'bellezza' (dal fr. beauté e case 'cassetta' (dall'ant. fr. sett. casse)] s. m. inv. (pl. ingl. beauty-cases)

The number of anglicisms listed in Zingarelli does not really tell us much about their actual currency and incidence in Italian. Out of the 1,887 entries recognisably English in form and accompanied by phonemic transcription, perhaps the majority have a restricted use, and some even seem too technical to be included in a general dictionary, as for example asdic ('ecogoniometro'), batch processing and grader. This problem is dealt with by the insertion of special labels like 'elab.' 'med.', 'fis.', etc. (computing, medicine, physics, etc.) which indicate the field of usage but not the acceptability/currency value of the word according to usage frequency, style, mode, range of speakers, etc. A more refined classification could come from the data of a large corpus of spoken and written

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4 Some native English speakers living in Italy believe that beauty-case is an English word. We may hypothesise that beauty-case is an Italian word lent to English.
Italian, similar to the *Bank of English*, which would allow compilers to specify usage and style for each entry.

5. **Dizionario degli Anglicismi** (1986)

Rando includes in his definition of 'anglicism' all lexical items and meanings ('vocabolo o accezione di vocabolo') which have derived from English, thus including loanwords (unadapted and adapted) as well as hybrids, pseudo-anglicisms and calques; many entries are internationalisms.

This mixture of English loans and Italian calques is the most evident weakness of this dictionary of anglicisms. As Fanfani points out (1991), this dictionary draws freely on heterogeneous materials and gives an unrealistic impression of the complex phenomenon of word borrowing from English. In his review of Rando's dictionary, Fanfani lists in detail its main weakness, some of which are mentioned below:

1. the chosen headword is not always the most frequent one (e.g. English *electric chair*, which is not current at all in Italian, precedes the native 'sedia elettrica' or the English *elevator* prevails over Italian 'ascensore, montacarichi');
2. variants are archaic, popular or dialectal ('casimira' for *cashmere*, 'jobba' for *job*);
3. pronunciation variants are treated superficially;
4. dating is unreliable;
5. non-English words mediated into Italian through English are included (curry, bantam, commando);
6. calques and semantic loans, i.e. Italian words which have acquired new senses from English (*convenzionale*, as in 'arma convenzionale', as opposed to nuclear weapons) are included;
7. words which are wrongly thought of as English, usually French or of French derivation, or of uncertain derivation (forfeit, chance, pic-nic, vagone) are included;
8. calques or substitutes which are not related to English ('palleggio' for dribbling) are included;
9. false-anglicisms are included.

The dictionary also contains encyclopedic information on institutions, missiles and aircrafts, trademarks and geographical names, the choice of which appears to be unbalanced and random (including for example 'Casa Bianca' but not Buckingham Palace, Clarks but not Levi's) and quite a few highly technical acronyms.

In spite of all these weaknesses, Rando's dictionary remains the first attempt to show the linguistic contact between English and Italian. A second edition
based on new, rigorous criteria would be very useful, considering that quite a few updated glossaries have been published in the meantime.

6. A Usage Dictionary of Anglicisms

UDASEL is a "specialized" dictionary, focussing on anglicisms only. Its aim is to document "the lexical input of English into European languages up to and in the early 1990s (cut-off date 1995)" (UDASEL Guidelines).

The criteria adopted for the selection of UDASEL's entries were preliminary set by the editor on the basis of initial fieldwork studies involving informants of different nationalities and pilot studies on the project (Görlich 1994: 235-238). At the same time data were collected from general or special dictionaries, when available. The editor's trust in informants' introspection, especially on the question of currency and style values, is one of the peculiar features of UDASEL.

Görlich bases his definition of anglicism on formal criteria, considering it as a word which is "recognizably English in its form". Headwords are therefore English words, except for some false anglicisms, included for their currency, which are marked by an asterisk (e.g. dressman*) and foreign words which spread through English (and have an English form). Native equivalents (adaptations and calques) as well as derivatives appear in the dictionary at the end of each language entry (provided that at least one of the languages considered accept the anglicism in its unadapted form, otherwise the word is not included at all).

In principle, the following items are excluded or temporarily set aside in a Reject List:
1. internationalisms (see 3.4. above);
2. English words not likely to be used in non-English cultures (public school);
3. words which are too technical or extremely rare;
4. archaisms;
5. names (trademarks, product names, etc.) such as Wiskas, unless they have become common nouns, i.e. scotch (-tape);

5 "The comparative method and the time schedule have also precluded basing currency values on text corpora. There are doubts about the representativeness of corpora even for national dictionaries, and the methodological problem is immensely greater with any cross-linguistic analysis. Moreover for many languages here included such corpora would have had to be put together from scratch - so there was really no choice but to base statements on style/currency values on the introspection of the collaborators and their informants, combined with data in recent dictionaries." (UDASEL introduction, forthcoming, 1999).
6. hybrid compounds (pseudo-anglicisms made up of two English elements are accepted).

Even though rigid criteria for inclusion and exclusion of entries were preliminary set, many entries remain borderline and will possibly be removed before the dictionary is printed. One of them is the word *deodorant*, which has the same form and minor spelling and pronunciation differences in all the languages included except for Greek, and could be classified as an internationalism. Similar cases are: *boycott* (French loan from English), *celluloid* (coined in the U.S.) and *Devonian*, which seem to behave as internationalisms across various European languages but whose historical derivation from English contexts is more definite than that of *deodorant*. Other examples of words having international value are: *acre, apartment, daltonian, dollar, ebonite, freemason, hospice, intelligent quotient*, etc. However, in UDASEL the status of anglicism in at least one of the 16 languages is enough for the word to qualify as such, even if derived forms or calques are widespread in the other languages. It is necessary, then, to consider each entry from a wider linguistic perspective in order to evaluate its spread across various European countries.

As far as English words not used in non-English contexts, which are in principle excluded from UDASEL, we come across the same problem: from an Italian point of view the word *alderman* (member of an English council) may be thought of as alien, but in Finnish it refers to a Scandinavian institution. Similarly, dances which are by now completely forgotten in Italy (e.g. *hesitation*) may still be popular elsewhere in Europe. *Campus* and *college* are not yet used in Italian institutions (but creeping in), though they may be so in other European countries, but are extremely well known words in Italy. This criterion (see 2 above) should perhaps be applied loosely, thus considering the cultural aspects of linguistic exchanges between languages too.

The notion of technical word is another open question. How can one quantify how technical a term is? Surely a computer term like *cd-rom* is widespread in everyday speech whereas *debug* is likely to be known only to experts in that field (people may have heard the words but not know its meaning). Quite a few special terms related to navigation, sport, economics and the like contained in UDASEL seem extremely restricted in use (e.g. *dreadnought, diplexer, fish-eye lens, inbreeding, lewisite*, etc.); the same can be said for units of measurements (cf. *bell* – but the better known *decibel* is not included – *farad, henry, kelvin*, etc.)
7. Comparison between letter J entries

As an example, a comparison of the entries for letter J in Zingarelli, Rando's and UDASEL is shown (see Table 1). The choice of this letter was motivated by its relative brevity in number of entries.

The most problematic aspect of anglicisms encountered in Zingarelli's and Rando's dictionaries is that they only indicate fields of use (e.g. computing) but lack any indication of usage, so that highly frequent anglicisms appear together with very infrequent, highly technical or obsolescent words. In UDASEL this unbalance is solved by the use of numbers and letters to show usage and style: 1 indicates restricted use, 2 accepted currency, 3 word no more recognized as English (the word is felt to be integrated in the language); 'tech' stands for technical, 'mod' for modish, 'you' for youth speech, etc. The attribution of these codes was decided by collaborators and their informants on the basis of their native speaker competence; the risk of subjective evaluation cannot be avoided.

The words which were assigned value (3) — jazz, jeans, jeep, jolly, judo and juke-box — are well integrated into Italian and are not replaced with indigenous items. The words which were attributed value (2) are well known but replaceable with Italian equivalents — jazz-band (gruppo, orchestra jazz), jersey (maglia), jet (aereo), etc... The words which were given value (1) have a restricted use and are not well known. Style values refine the description of the entries, indicating, for example, that joint (marijuana cigarette) is a slang word, jingle (short verse used in advertising) is rare and jodhpurs (long breeches for riding - word of Indian origin) is restricted, rare and obsolescent. The dictionary also gives Italian equivalents of the quoted anglicisms, such as jazzista (for jazman) and derivatives (joule → joulometro); it gives adapted forms, such as giungla (jungle) and iuta/juta (jute), as well as words from other foreign words which spread through English, such as giunca (English junk, Malay words initially imported via Portuguese) and judo (from Japanese) and words umbiguously imported via French or English, like giuria (jury). All this information is provided by UDASEL but the headword for each entry is always the English etymon.

The words quoted in the three dictionaries considered are numerous, as opposed to the ones quoted in only two of them which have limited currency, apart from judo (which is surprisingly not quoted by Rando's) and joystick, which was attributed value (2) because of its recent spread in videogames. The words quoted in only one dictionary are even rarer and restricted to specialized usage (e.g. job sharing). The word JATO (jet assisted take-off) seems unmotivated, considering the high number of acronyms which are used in every field of technology. Jesus revolution is equally unmotivated, being linked to cultural information which is now obsolete. Finally, junior is included in
Rando's dictionary with the meaning of 'younger, less experienced' (as professional qualification and in sports): the treatment of this Latin word 'par excellence' as an anglicism may horrify Italian philologists; yet we tend to agree with Rando that recently some uses of this word have originated in English, and this is confirmed by the English pronunciation which alternated with the classical one ('dʒuːniə').

8. Conclusions

For any type of lexicographic work, the selection and collection if items is the most delicate task and is a decisive factor for the final result of the compilation. Our analysis stressed the centrality of a clear preliminary classification of anglicisms, although in many cases words may not fit into rigid categories, and a careful evaluation of criteria of inclusion.

If a new Italian dictionary of anglicisms should be compiled, the above discussion would suggest the following recommendations. Only unadapted loanwords should be headwords, whereas adapted anglicisms, calques and derivatives should be dealt with separately. When a word has undergone adaptation or calquing it is no longer an anglicism and should be considered an Italian word in its own right. Only words which are no longer perceived as English in provenance should be excluded. Anglicisms should be carefully distinguished from international words. Non-English words should be included if the form and the pronunciation of the loanword is clearly English. Proper names (institutions, products, etc.) should not be included because it would be impossible to be exhaustive and a dictionary should not include encyclopedic information (unless it means to be so). Conversely, they should be included if they have become common nouns. As far as technical words are concerned criteria are difficult to establish, due to their rapid spread. Corpora of spoken and written Italian would provide essential information on currency, style and frequency values of words.
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