

Borrowings from and in the English Language



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In this paper, the light will be shed on the words that English has borrowed from other languages and the words that are borrowed from the English language. The reasons for borrowing will be explained and special emphasis will be put on Anglicisms that have become a part of the Croatian language.

Unlike other languages which enrich their vocabulary by direct mapping from the English language, the English language had to come up with new word coins and had to create its own abbreviations and acronyms. The words *scuba* and *laser* are acronyms and *radar* and *smog* are so-called portmanteau words (Filipović, 1996), which are created by combining 2 words (smog = smoke and fire or lunch = breakfast and lunch). However, prior to the creation of the above-mentioned portmanteau words or acronyms, English had to find its way around to describe, for example, authentic nature. *Berries* are described by the words nut and berry; the exotic nuts such as *coconut* and *peanut* are named by the analogy with walnut and chestnut. The words *grapefruit*, *eggplant*, *blackbird* and *dandelion* were descriptively created. The word *fly* had become a synonym for something that flies, but also a suffix for the flying bugs or fireflies or it can be etymologically associated with butter, as in the word *butterfly*. The word *fish* has been used with other animals that are not related to fish such as *jellyfish* or *crayfish* (Kovačić, 2007).

English language has always been open to accepting words from other languages. Crystal (2003: 23) talks about 350 languages whose elements have become an integral part of the English language. However, an important question that needs to be answered is: why, when and how does English language borrow words from other languages? According to Baugh and Cable (1993:1), cultural diversity that results in words which find their way through in the English reminds us that the history of English language is actually the story of cultures in contact over the years. Hence, apart from linguistic reasons, extralinguistic reasons (political, economic, social, technological and military), that played an important role in borrowing words from other languages, have to be taken into account too.

Usually, one needs to name a term or an item for which the recipient language does not possess the required expression. For instance, words such as *rakija*, *tamburica* are typical for the Croatian language and culture and, accordingly, there are no English equivalents for these words. Words are borrowed from almost every walk of life such as trade, war, science, art, literature, food, etc. The English language has been changing since the Shakespearean time. British people had been migrating around the world (to the USA, Australia, New Zealand, India, Asia and Africa). Thus, the language changed, developed and borrowed the words from other local languages. For example, lexemes such as *kangaroo*, *koala* and *boomerang* originate from the Australian Aboriginal language whereas the words *juggernaut* and *turban* have Indian roots.

There are many French words that are still used in the English language and in his work *Language: An Introduction to the Study of Speech* (1921) Sapir describes mutual influences of languages indicating that French dominance over the English language lasted for 300 years, starting from 1066 when England came under the administration of the speaking area of the Norman people. During that time, about 10 000 French words entered English language, out of which 85 % was of Latin origin. French language is still the main source of new words, apart from specific terms used in science/technology which are still borrowed from classical languages.

Most British population still used its Anglo-Saxon language, but this language was influenced by the ruling elite, which resulted in the formation of doublets. There were words for meat eaten only by the noblemen and for animals that were bred by peasants: *beef/ox*, *mutton/sheep*, *veal/calf*, *pork/pig*. The words of French origin often refer to abstract notions or elaborate notions that are more abstract than their Anglo-Saxon equivalents such as *freedom/liberty*, *justice/equity*, *aid/help*, *view/sight*...and are hence less often used in everyday language. This is not the case with some other English words of French origin such as *table*, *chair*, *car*, *city*, *fruit*, *juice*, *journey*, *travel*, *stay*, *wait*, *country*, *very*, *real*, *people*, *just*, *fine*, *able*, *use*, *part*.

All these types of English have mixed up as a result of the increased communication, travelling, radio, television, the use of mobile devices and the Internet. Consequently, people in Great Britain speak both American and Australian English due to the

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existence of American and Australian TV programmes. English language is influenced in the same way by other languages (French, German, Spanish, Italian, Arabian) and is therefore subjected to changes.

English language is a world language, but many of its users are not familiar with its origin. It is mostly of West Germanic origin. However, since it is comprised of almost 250 000 words, only a small number of those are of Germanic origin. Namely, English language contains a lot of borrowings from almost 50 other languages (data about other languages which influenced English can be found in Figure 1). Looking at the frequency of words used in English, it can be noticed that German words play an important role in English, i.e. constitute basic English vocabulary. These are mostly one-syllable words such as *man, house, go, see, in, and, good, etc.*

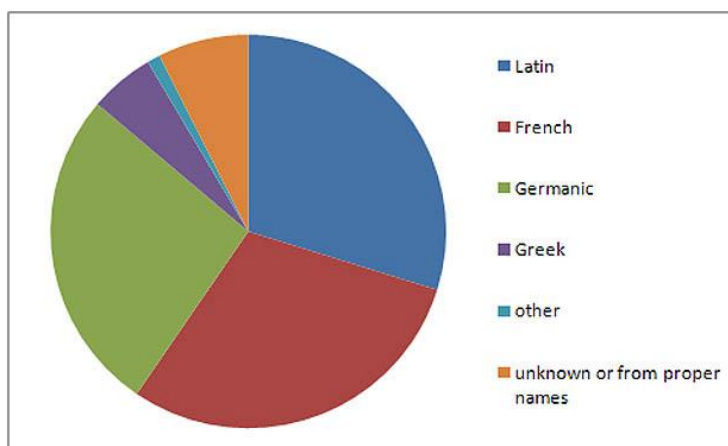


Figure 1: The most important languages that influenced English language

Old English or Anglo-Saxon entered the English language from northern Germany and southern Scandinavia and was brought to England by German settlers in the 5th and 6th century. This West Germanic language acquired some Latin words because Romans ruled England before them. A minority of words was acquired from Celts and in the 8th and 9th century the second wave of migration occurred. Namely, Scandinavians from Denmark and Norway won and colonized some parts of England and the words from their languages (Old Norse) entered English language which is witnessed by the presence of words such as *bag, call, die, egg, get, husband, knife, mistake, skirt, take, want.*

English language is rich with words of Greek and Latin origin although they are not present in English as a consequence of migration. German tribes had already used many Latin words before they reached England. Some of those words are *cheese, fork, kitchen, table, and wine.* Christian monks are responsible for words like *church, mass, priest* and *school.*

A great number of Greek and Latin such as *democratic* and *enthusiasm* were acquired during the period of the Renaissance. From the period of the industrial revolution up to now, science and technology have contributed to the creation of many words of Greek and Latin roots such as *analysis, data, experiment* and *theory.*

It is also worth mentioning that a great number of Latin and Greek words can be found in all European languages and that they make up the basic international words that are a part of the *Mini Dictionary of International Words*¹.

Some loanwords of Croatian, Serbian and Bosnian origin are:

cravat from Croat

paprika from *пaпpиka* *папpиka* = capsicum, or *пaпap* / *пaпap* = black pepper

rakia from *paкиja* / *paкиja*

slivovitz from *шливовица* / *шливовица* = plum rakia

tamburitza from *тамбурица* / *тамбурица* = little tambura

tesla named after Nikola Tesla

uvala from *уваля* / *уваля* = a large elongate compound sinkhole

vampire from *вaмпирa* / *вaмпир*

Suffixes used for the formation of the names of places *-by, -thorpe, -gate* originate from Scandinavian languages while the bound morphemes *-ism, -ize* stem from Greek and the morphemes *-age, -ance/-ence, -ant/-ent, -ity, -ment, -tion, con-, de-* and *pre-* originate from Middle-Anglo-French borrowings. The assumption that Russian expressions used in the English language of cooking have kept their original forms is confirmed and evidenced by the following words - *bitok, coulubiak, kasha, kefir, medovukha,*

¹Retrieved from http://www.ghs-mh.de/migration/projects/language/la_uk_1.htm, 22 July 2022

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piroshki, vareniki (Rata, Perković, 2008). Although Russian words have been used for a long period of time in English, they have still not gone native and sound foreign, which is evidenced by a small number of compounds (*borsheh/ borscht belt* or *borscht circuit* and *vodka martini*).

In the next part of this paper, words borrowed from English and used in other languages will be discussed. Namely, Bosnian, Slovene, German and Rumanian with a special emphasis on the Croatian language.

There are few factors that cause the increase in the use of Anglicisms in Bosnian and these are globalization, easy access to media such as television, social networks, the Internet, many foreign companies that operate in Bosnia and Herzegovina, etc. The latest Anglicisms are used in their original form, i.e. do not go through the process of adaptation in the recipient language. This is particularly evident in commercials which are not understandable to people who do not speak English. There is a problem because Anglicisms are not adapted to the Bosnian press at the orthographic level.

Pelidija and Memišević (2006) describe justified reasons for the usage of Anglicisms which are conditioned by the linguistic context, i.e. the need to name new cultural and technical terms. The same authors also talk about the non-justified interlinguistic reasons for using Anglicisms such as prestige, fashion, etc. They also emphasize the importance of the assessment of the necessity of the usage of Anglicisms in written media in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as the consistency of their adaptation at the orthographic level (etymological and phonetic). Canagarajah (1999) points out that learning the English language has become controversial since it imposes propaganda and ideology of dominant social groups.

When discussing the influence of English on the Slovene language, in her paper *English Language Globalism* Čepon (2006) is concerned about the English language globalism as a result of the politics of the most powerful countries in the English-speaking area. The same author also seeks the answer to the following question: if an ideology is conveyed in English, is it in the interest of both the recipient and the provider or is this process aimed at the expansion of capital?

In her paper, *Slovene-English Language Contact: Lexical, Syntactic, Pragmatic and Intercultural Aspects* (2006) Šabec investigates the lexical, syntactic, pragmatic and intercultural influences of English on the Slovene. Šabec (2006) concludes that the influence of English on Slovene vocabulary is evident in different areas of life, particularly in the media and in the spoken discourse of the young. In terms of syntax, it is evident that English has influenced the word order of Slovene language and when discussing pragmatic aspects the influence of English on Slovene can be observed in the use of second person pronouns as terms of address used by younger speakers. As far as intercultural aspects are concerned, they are evident in advertising strategies since English is used in TV commercials and newspaper ads to convey universal messages and give viewers/readers a feeling that they are a part of the global consumer family.

As for the German language, Hocenski et al. (2009) emphasize that Anglicisms appear in their original etymological form or are adapted to a language on a morphological, lexical and orthographic level. The same authors point out that the awareness of the German speakers should be raised so that they use their language on every possible occasion apart from those cases where the German language does not have its own name for the specific object or concept.

The authors of the paper *On English Loanwords in the Romanian of Tourism (Sites of Travel Agencies in the District of Timis)*, highlight the problem of pseudoanglicisms, i.e. English borrowings that do not exist in English dictionaries such as *ticketing* and *catering* and are derived from English verbs *to ticket*, *to cater*. In their attempt to explain why Anglicisms are used in the Romanian language although there are their corresponding equivalents in Romanian, Rata and Petroman (2006) point out to the economy of the language, i.e. the fact that English expressions are much shorter than Romanian, which can be explained by the notion to provide as much information as possible at very short notice.

The next part of the paper will focus on the Croatian language, i.e. the words borrowed from English and used in the Croatian language.

One of the most important features of the modern Croatian language is the extensive and diverse vocabulary. Croatian language has borrowed many words from various languages and has adapted them to its own rules, sometimes completely, sometimes partially. The presence of English in the Croatian language has to be considered from a historical, cultural and sociolinguistic view. Languages have always borrowed concepts and words from other languages. The reasons why Croatian language has borrowed a great number of words can be found in the history of Croatia. It is a well-known fact that Croatian language was influenced by Italian, German, Hungarian, Turkish and lately, English language because different parts of Croatia belonged to the Habsburg Monarchy (until 1918), Venetian Republic (until 1797) and the Ottoman Empire (until 1699) (Runjić-Stoilova, Pandža, 2010: 229; Brdar, 2010: 217).

At the beginning of the 19th century (Nikolić-Hoyt, 2005), and especially after the 2nd world war, English language began to penetrate different languages, including Croatian. Namely, during that period of time, the English-speaking countries, especially Great Britain and the USA became the most powerful forces in novel communication technologies. However, English entered Croatian language for linguistic (the need to name novel objects and concepts) and interlinguistic reasons (novel trends) (Nikolić-Hoyt, 2005: 355).

It is a common practice to use the national language in education and culture. The countries such as Germany, England, Italy, France, Spain and Russia filled the lexical gaps in their languages with new words even before the 19th century. In Europe, English as a foreign language, was introduced into schools at the end of the 17th century with the aim to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge about other cultures and communication outside national borders.

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English language is nowadays undoubtedly, the world's most used language in international communication. Most other languages are exposed to the strong influence of the English language on a daily basis. The reasons for that can be found in the usage of modern technology, film, television, the Internet and mobile devices which have brought the world, culture and linguistic assimilation closer to people (Perković et al., 2011).

Specific examples of lexical forms of English borrowings from different areas are listed in the next part of the paper.

Examples from the area of agriculture, mostly of Latin and Greek origin, used in Croatian language are:

agriculture (lat. grč<lat.) – *agrikultura, poljoprivreda* (Croatian);

economy (grč. oiko) - *ekonomija*;

ecology (grč. oiko) – *ekologija* (Croatian);

embryo (grč. <sr. lat) – *embrio* (Croatian);

extraction (lat.) – *ekstrakcija* (Croatian);

fertilization (lat.) – *fertilizacija* (Croatian);

photosynthesis (grč.) – *fotosinteza* (Croatian)

galactose (grč.) – *galaktoza* (Croatian);

hydrometer (grč.) – *hidrometar* (Croatian);

cholesterol (grč) – *kolesterol* (Croatian);

contraction (lat.) – *kontrakcija* (Croatian)

English borrowings from the area of electrical engineering are:

accumulator – *akumulator* (Croatian);

converter – *konverter, pretvarač* (Croatian);

detector – *detektor* (Croatian),

Examples from the area of economy are:

businessman – *biznismen*;

brand – *brend, prepoznatljiv proizvod*,

The words that are borrowed from the area of computer programming are:

bug – *bag*;

file – *fajl*;

font – *font*;

modem – *modem*;

scanner – *skener*;

server – *server*

download – *downlodati*;

e-mail – *mejlati*;

forward – *forwardirati*,

to surf (the Internet) - *surfati* (po internetu);

to like – *lajkati*

to print – *printati*

The words from everyday life used in Croatian language are:

life – /*laif*/

message – /*mesidz*/

cash – /*keš*/

freak – /*frik*/

party – /*parti*/

friend – /*frend*/

loser – /*luzer*/

song – /*song*/

bike – /*bajk*/

fighter – /*fajter*/

events – /*iventi*/

shopping – /*šoping*/

new look – /*novi luk*/

coffee – /*kofi*/

to move – /*muvati se*/

to be in, out – *biti in/out*/

the adjectives:

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cool – *kul*
full – *ful*
best – *best*
fancy – *fensi*
trendy – *trendi*

The prepositions **in** and **out** are used as adjectives in Croatian language:

The job which has long been considered “in” in Manhattan is a dog-walker.

Posao koji se na Manhattanu odavno smatra “in” je – šetač pasa.

Hierarchy is definitely out, and the cooperation has become a real brand.

Hijerarhija je definitivno “out”, a suradnja postaje pravi brend. (Sočanac, 2009)

It is, however, possible to replace a preposition *in* with the adjective *modern*, and a preposition *out* with the adjective *obsolete*.

Modal verb **must** is used as a noun in Croatian language:

Black dress is a must this summer. – Crna haljina je apsolutni must ovoga ljeta.

The adverbs borrowed from English and used in Croatian are the following:

Too much - /tu mač/

By the way – /baj d vej/

The phrases:

This is a shortcut. – Ovo je shortcut.

Shit happens! – Sranja se događaju.

I'm in a bad mood today. – Danas sam u bedu.

English borrowings are adapted to Croatian language on a morphological level by adding the Croatian suffix *-ica* for feminine gender - *trendseterica, frendica, head-hunterica*.

Furthermore, English abbreviations are used in Croatian language too and these are *CV, DJ, DVD, IQ*.

English language has also influenced Croatian syntax which is evident in the word order:

This is the best film I have ever seen. – Ovo je najbolji film koji sam gledala ikad (ever), instead of (...koji sam do sada gledala...)

Passive is used instead of active: *Rečeno mu je (He was told) instead of They told him. (Rekli su mu.)*

The use of the possessive pronouns:

He is drinking his coffee. Pije svoju jutarnju kavu instead of Pije jutarnju kavu.

My mother told me a story. Moja majka mi je ispričala priču instead of Majka mi je ispričala priču. (Raos, 2006)

The study about taboo language was conducted at the Faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences in Osijek with the aim to show how the students misuse the pragmatic forms of taboo language. The participants in this study were 33 students 3rd-year students of the English language and literature (Zlomislčić, 2006). The corpus for this study was gathered through transcripts made during classroom discussions at the Faculty. The words which were used by the students were:

Jesus! Idiot! Shut up! Blood! Shit! God! Screw you! Don't give a shit! Bloody hell! Crap! Drop dead!

When asked about the sources of taboo language they use, the students named the following: cinema, TV, friends, the street, classrooms, the Internet, newspapers and magazines. The reasons why they use these words are because they are very useful when expressing strong emotions (anger, pain, frustration), and they are used for fun and to attract attention. Interestingly, they said that they preferred using English over Croatian taboo words because these words lack the emotional connotation in their mother tongue. On the other hand, native speakers of English prefer using less offensive words instead of taboo words.

In his paper where she wrote about justified and unjustified reasons for using Anglicisms in Croatian language, Drljača (2011: 58) said that borrowed expressions often remain used in the corresponding language because the speakers of the language in question perceive them as close, precise and clear even though there are corresponding native substitutes and because it is possible to create novel terms from foreign expressions. For instance, in Croatian language it is possible to create a new term from the Anglicism *hardware* whereas the same is not possible from the native expression. The same goes for the Anglicisms *brand, hit, look* and *trend*, which are used not only in Croatian, but in other languages too because they are easier to remember, they sound better and are more practical than the corresponding compound words used in other languages. The simplicity of making compounds in English language such as *wannabe, English-have-not, English-only* also contributes to the economic use of the English expressions because these compounds would otherwise have to be translated with the whole sentences or syntagms in other languages.

Furthermore, Drljača (2011: 61) also claims that the prestige of the English language and culture can be described by the necessity of people to show that they are modern, knowledgeable, educated, sophisticated, well-informed, cool and trendy. Young people are especially susceptible to using Anglicisms, especially those from 12 to 30 years of age. Moreover, young people often use acronyms such as *OMG, LOL, BT, FYI, BFF* in order to shorten the time of conveying the message or to hide something from their parents (Čurković, Grbaš Jakšić and Garić, 2017). Table 1 shows some popular acronyms used by young people in Croatia.

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Table 1. Examples of popular acronyms used by young people in Croatia

Acronym	The meaning of the acronym	Croatian translation
OMG	Oh, my God	O, moj Bože
LOL	Laughing out Loud	Smijati se glasno
FYI	For Your Information	Za tvoju informaciju
BFF	Best Friends Forever	Zauvijek najbolji prijatelji
BTW	By the way	Usput
ASAP	As soon as possible	Što je prije moguće
YOLO	You only live once	Samo jednom se živi
THX/THNX	Thank you	Hvala

One of the reasons why Anglicisms are used is because they are neutral, i.e. they are necessitated as euphemisms by the corresponding language (Weinreich, 1953: 58). English expressions are often wanted and needed because, unlike native expressions, they are excluded from traditional, cultural and emotional connotations. For instance, English expression *single* is completely neutral whereas Italian expressions *scapolo* and *zitella* sound offensive (Damiani-Einwalter, 2002: 86). In Japanese and Indian, English borrowings are used when talking about sexuality and illnesses (Kachru 1986: 10). It seems that the informative power of the language is lost when words are borrowed from other languages. It is no wonder, therefore, that a lot of vulgar and swear words from English are used in other languages because they sound less offensive than their native equivalents. In addition, the use of some lesser-known or extended domestic substitute for an Anglicism may seem marked or ideologically coloured when compared to the usage of the word which originates from English, which has gained its neutral status due to its expansion and daily usage. Anglicisms are used by scientists and experts in different fields because of their international status. English borrowings are also present in advertising with the aim of arising interest for the product that is advertised, as well as in the naming of companies and crafts (Drljača, 2011: 62).

In her article *Croatian Creation – Linguistic Structure of Croatian Brand Names* Singer (2006) says that in the age of globalisation when Coca-Cola represents the USA, Mercedes Germany...the name of the brand often promotes the entire country. Since the USA and other countries of English-speaking area are often a symbol of progress, sophistication and prestige, Croatian products such as Kiss, Queen, Fantasy, etc. often get foreign names. Opačić (2006) points out that the main reason why Croats are fascinated by everything which comes from abroad is that they are easily impressed and influenced by everything foreign.

Prof dr. M. Tomašević from the Department of Marketing at the Faculty of Economy in Zagreb says that professionals, i.e. people who work in the economy are hasty in accepting foreign expressions since these expressions are very convenient and easily understandable. Each organization or speciality creates its own nomenclature. This may not be such a big problem in colloquial speech, but in public speech or formal writing there is a problem of underestimating the language. It might be that these loanwords used for prestigious reasons are not always necessary, but it is believed that it does not make them unnecessary, especially considering the whole range of speaker's language and socio-psychological needs, might it be to express oneself precisely, economically, creatively or just the need for luxury.

According to Težak (2004), it is not necessary to translate every English expression, especially if it fits the Croatian phonetic, morphological or syntactic system and if the translated equivalent would not contribute to the understanding of the corresponding term.

Anglicisms often bring about different connotations and associations whereas the same is not possible by their domestic replacements (Zlomislić, 2006). It is, therefore, wrong to claim that they are used at the expense of domestic terms. It can be concluded that the speakers do not only find it easier to express themselves using borrowings than their domestic words but also by the choice of the corresponding borrowing the speaker is also able to express the part of the content (Drljača Margić, 2011). Apart from that, one needs to be careful when introducing domestic words as a replacement for Anglicisms in order not to lose the original meaning of the word. On the other hand, young people are inclined to using Anglicisms and there is a danger of pushing some Croatian expressions out of the language which could result in impoverishing Croatian language making it a "dead" language. That is the reason why young people should be made aware of the need to retain the integrity of our language using Anglicisms only if necessary and as means of enriching the language.

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