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The English Element in the Main European Languages*

(Research in Progress)

1.

In Chapter II of his book *Words and Idioms* L. Pearsall Smith¹ states that the infiltration of the English language into the continent of Europe is closely connected with the so-called "discovery of England" which corresponds in date with the period (the end of the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth century) when European nations began to borrow English words in ever-increasing numbers, not merely terms of trade and shipping, but words of a much more important kind.² England was discovered for Europe, Smith goes on, by Voltaire and Montesquieu in whose writings a whole new world was found, a civilization, a language, a literature, a science, a philosophy, a system of government, hitherto unknown. Smith also emphasizes the contrast between the great English words which reached the Continent at this period and the humble trade terms, the names of boats and fishes, which had been borrowed in the previous centuries. It was in the eighteenth century that the real invasion of English words began.³

Smith has pointed out that the "main deposit of English words and English meanings left in French and German by influences from England" came during the eighteenth century. He also states that "in the other languages of Europe, in Italian, Spanish and Portuguese, in Danish, Dutch, Swedish and Russian, the English deposit is very much the same".⁴ On the whole these countries have followed the examples of Germany

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¹ L. P. Smith, *Words and Idioms*, London, 1948.⁵

² *Ib.*, p. 44.

³ *Ib.*, p. 45.

⁴ *Ib.*, p. 57.

and France in their appropriation of English terms. English nineteenth century contributions to the general European vocabulary are even more numerous. Moreover, we can say that in the twentieth century, and especially in the post second world war period, English contributions to European languages are even more numerous and linguistically more interesting and important.

It is here on this basis that I decided to organize a research project some eight years ago. Then I was interested primarily in the English element in Serbo-Croat and wanted to give my contribution to the history of English words on the Continent. I accepted as the starting point that I should study English contributions to the general European vocabulary which then served as a central pool from which various European languages could borrow English words and meanings. Yet my primary aim was to show English contributions to the Serbo-Croat vocabulary.

At the same time, however, I became interested not only in the infiltration of English words into Serbo-Croat but also in some theoretical features which accompany such an infiltration. The first problem I discussed then was the *phonetic compromise*.⁵ Dealing with this problem I came into contact with other languages and their loan-words and extended my project to what I call now the English element in several European languages.

Later, in 1961, the Council and Foundation for Scientific Research of the Republic of Croatia decided to support my project and give regular annual financial help to cover material expenses. Then I concentrated on two things: a) I tried to build up a method whose main principles could be used in my research, and b) I began to collect English loan-words in various European languages which would serve as the corpus of my research. The latter offered some problems as I had to collect all the sources of information for various languages including Serbo-Croat. To cover the latter I started reading old Croatian newspapers and journals as well as present-day printed sources.

This coincided with the opening of a new graduate course in linguistics in whose curriculum one of the main subjects was Languages in Contact or Linguistic Borrowing. Three graduate students of mine decided to specialize in it and chose their theses from this field and began to work under my supervision. These graduate students collected a more or less complete list of works dealing with this question. Three theses have resulted from their work: 1) *English Element in the Standard*

⁵ Rudolf Filipović, "The Phonetic Compromise", *Studia Romanica et Anglica Zagrabiana* (SRAZ), 1958, No. 5, pp. 77—88.

Serbo-Croatian (1832—1850);⁶ 2) *English Element in Serbo-Croatian Sports Vocabulary*;⁷ 3) *English Element in Hungarian and Finnish*.⁸ Their work is based on my theoretical discussion of the principles of linguistic borrowing which appear in a book⁹ and six articles.¹⁰

Two years later another group of my graduate students chose theses from the same field: two of them continued the study of the English element in 19th century Croatian, and the third decided to study the English element in present-day Russian. Parallel with the work done by my graduate students of English linguistics in the course of the last six years, a large number of my undergraduate students in their study of the history of English on the Continent have been studying the English element in various European languages writing their linguistic essays in my seminar on English linguistics.

In other words, I have planned to examine the English element in a limited but representative number of European languages to get the basis for my synthesis which I call the *English element in European languages: theory and practice*. I want to cover four groups of languages: Germanic, Romance, Slavonic and Finno-Ugric and I have made a choice of languages in each group. In the Germanic group of languages we are studying the English element in German, Dutch, Swedish and Norwegian; in the Romance group we are completing our study of the English element in French, Italian, Spanish and Roumanian; in the Slavonic group we are studying the English element in Serbo-Croat, Russian, Czech and Polish; in the Finno-Ugric group of languages we have studied the English element in Finnish and Hungarian.

In deciding which languages to introduce into my corpus I have followed some definite principles. In some cases it was

⁶ Dora Riffer-Maček, *Engleski element u standarnom hrvatskosrpskom jeziku u doba njegovog stvaranja na području Hrvatske (1832—1850)*, Unpublished M. A. Thesis, Zagreb University, 1963.

⁷ Ivana Vidas-Velčić, *Engleski element u hrvatskosrpskom sportskom vokabularu*, Unpublished M. A. Thesis, Zagreb University, 1965.

⁸ Eva Kobersky, *English Element in Finnish and Hungarian*, Unpublished M. A. Thesis, Zagreb University, 1965.

⁹ R. Filipović, *The Phonemic Analysis of English Loan-Words in Croatian*, Zagreb, 1960, 137 pp.

¹⁰ R. Filipović, "The Phonetic Compromise", *SRAZ*, 1958, No. 5, pp. 77—88; "Consonantal Innovations in the Phonological System as a Consequence of Linguistic Borrowing", *SRAZ*, 1959, No. 7, pp. 39—62; "Phonemic Importation", *SRAZ*, 1960, Nos. 9—10, pp. 177—189; "The Morphological Adaptation of English Loan-Words in Serbo-Croat", *SRAZ*, 1961, No. 11, pp. 91—103; "Principi lingvističkog posuđivanja I — Fonološki aspekt", *Filološki pregled*, Beograd, III, 1965, 1—2, pp. 117—131; "Principi lingvističkog posuđivanja II — Morfološki aspekt", *Filološki pregled*, Beograd, IV, 1966, 1—2.

the importance of the language in the family of European languages like those in the Romance group; in the others we were led by some characteristics of the language that can be relevant to our research on the levels on which we are working.

2.

In my attempt to describe the linguistic procedure of the process of linguistic borrowing I have started from, among others, two of the best known linguists who dealt with languages in contact, Einar Haugen¹¹ and Uriel Weinreich,¹² not, of course, neglecting the work done by several others like Louis Deroy,¹³ Hans Vogt,¹⁴ and Leo Pap.¹⁵

I have also been using the material collected and discussed by various linguists dealing with the infiltration of English into some European languages.¹⁶ Apart from that, groups of our students have been reading printed material and newspapers in these languages and collecting English loan-words used in the last five or six years. Having done this we hope to have a comparatively rich but still limited corpus of English infiltration in European languages chosen as the subject of our research. We hope to have several thousand cards on which English loan-words will be recorded in contexts explicit enough to serve our purpose, which really means that such material will offer enough information for our study.

My research is being done on three levels: phonological, morphological and semantic; lexical material is being examined separately as a whole since I wish to have a separate chapter on international words. In this chapter I want to show which English words have become part of the so-called European common vocabulary. As I have said above, I am trying to fix English contributions to the common European pool which is

¹¹ Einar Haugen, *The Norwegian Language in America*, Vols. I—II, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1953.

¹² Uriel Weinreich, *Languages in Contact*, New York, 1953.

¹³ Louis Deroy, *L'emprunt linguistique*, Paris, 1956.

¹⁴ Hans Vogt, "Language Contacts", *Word*, III, 1954, 2—3.

¹⁵ Leo Pap, *Portuguese-American Speech*, New York, 1949.

¹⁶ Cf. Paul Barbier, *English Influence on the French Vocabulary*, S. P. E., Tract No. VII, 1921, 41 pp.; S. P. E., Tract No. XIII, 1923, 28 pp.; Broder Carstensen, *Englische Einflüsse auf die deutsche Sprache nach 1945*, Heidelberg, 1965, 296 pp.; Fraser Mackenzie, *Les relations de l'Angleterre et de la France d'après le vocabulaire I*, Paris 1939, 334 pp.; Aasta Stene, *English Loan-Words in Modern Norwegian*, London—Oslo 1940, 222 pp.; R. W. Zandvoort, *English in the Netherlands*, Groningen 1964, 88 pp. The complete bibliography of the works consulted has appeared in my article on *Languages in Contact* in *Suvremena lingvistika*, No. 4, Zagreb, 1966.

open for borrowing to all European languages whenever a need appears.

In my analysis of the borrowed material in each language on the phonological level, I have followed three main principles:

First I have been interested in seeing how the phonological structure of loan-words has been formed from the stage of completely foreign — original — form to the complete integration into the native phonological system of the language concerned. Here three elements are taken into consideration: a) types of phonemes used in the lending and borrowing languages; b) distribution of phonemes in the two languages in contact; c) the system of accent.

In the formation of the phonological structure of an English loan-word in various European languages the basic factor that determines the structure is the phonological system of the receiving language. The reason for this is the general principle according to which foreign words build up their phonological form according to the pronunciation of the receiving language. This means that an English loan-word can be made up either of the phonemes which exist in the receiving language or an English phoneme has to be imported with the loan-word. As the latter occurs very seldom and is restricted to some special cases following some strict principles, my analysis indicates that in the majority of languages which come into contact with English and borrow English words in their phonological adaptation *transphonemisation* takes place. This is the most common case in my investigation. I have followed the system that I earlier used in my analysis of English loan-words in Serbo-Croat.¹⁷

To begin with, I have found it necessary to describe the phonological system of the receiving language and compare its features with the phonological system of English. This has been done on three levels: a) the description of phonemes; b) the distribution of phonemes; c) the accentual system. My analysis has shown that in the phonological adaptation languages behave in four different ways: 1) English phonemes have equivalents in borrowing languages and there is no transphonemisation; 2) English phonemes have no equivalents and they are transphonemized and replaced by phonemes of the borrowing language; 3) English spelling has directly or indirectly influenced the formation of the phonological form of loan-words; 4) an English phoneme has been kept in the loan-word as an innovation in the phonological system of the borrowing language.

The second point of my interest is how languages that have been in contact with English exceed the phonetic compromise. In the process of adaptation and integration into the structure

¹⁷ R. Filipović, o. c., note 9.

of the borrowing language, English words go through various stages. In the stage in which English words with their phonemes and accentual peculiarities "do not fit the phonetic habits and are so changed as to do as little violence as possible to these habits",¹⁸ we have phonetic compromises.

Here languages offer some interesting features, most of which have been identified and fixed by the help of native speakers as informants. One of the features that occurs in this process and seems to me of primary linguistic interest is the clash between the phonetic compromise and the innovations in the system.¹⁹ In the great number of languages I have examined, the phonetic compromise appears to be a transition stage between a completely foreign and a completely assimilated native status; it does not live for long and disappears as soon as the borrowed word has become common enough to be widely used and consequently completely adapted. The phonetic compromise can take three forms: a) English phonemes remain unchanged for some time; b) English phonemic distribution is present although it is foreign to the system of the borrowing language; c) English accentual system and its peculiarities are kept for some time.

If in the process of adaptation (which leads to a completely assimilated native status which English words usually acquire), the form of the phonetic compromise is kept, then we see innovations in the phonological system of the borrowing language. Innovations can undergo all three forms of the phonetic compromise. The first is not very common; it does, however, occur in some languages we have analyzed. The second form offers more varieties than the other two; it is seen in the phonemic redistribution. While the new distribution of phonemes in loan-words represents a feature which characterizes foreign words in several languages the distribution of phonemes in clusters is our special interest. There is a tendency to reduce the non-native clusters which are one of the forms of the phonetic compromise. This brings about parallel uses or double forms of some English loans and innovations to the system of the borrowing language.

The third form, a foreign accentual system in loan-words, is, I believe, in proportion with the number of speakers who can speak English and are inclined to follow its pronunciation. This refers in the majority of languages to the place of accent in loan-words. An extra feature in the third form represent those examples which have been taken into a tone language. Here, apart from the place of accent, we notice that in the course of their adaptation English loan-words acquire an entirely new

¹⁸ E. Sapir, *Language*, New York, 1921, p. 210.

¹⁹ This question will be discussed on another occasion.

system of tone accent (as in Swedish and Serbo-Croat²⁰). Various non-structural reasons may be responsible for the new accentual form, and I have made some efforts to classify them.

Importation of English phonemes into borrowing languages in question as another feature of innovations in the phonological system takes place more rarely and depends on several factors. The number of English phonemes imported into European languages is very small and limited. Very few languages on one side and very few English phonemes on the other can fulfill the conditions for this feature of linguistic borrowing.²¹

3.

On the morphological level of my study of the English element in some European languages, I have followed general principles that govern the morphological adaptation of loan-words. My analysis indicates that: 1) English, as well as other languages, does not influence other borrowing languages very considerably in the sphere of morphology; 2) English has not exerted a morphological remoulding of any European language; 3) the transfer of English morphemes into European languages is extremely rare; 4) English loan-words in European languages have been grammatically — morphologically adapted to the morphological system of the borrowing language.

Starting from the generally accepted principles in the sphere of morphology, I have analysed English loan-words in various European languages and found that English words from the morphological point of view either retain their English forms in the borrowing languages or are adapted according to the morphological system of the borrowing language. In order to get some concrete results of morphological adaptation I have analysed three main parts of speech: substantives, adjectives and verbs. They have offered enough examples showing some very typical features of morphological adaptation.

In my analysis of substantival loans I have paid special attention to three main properties of English substantives: gender, number and case. In the process of adaptation of English loan-words European languages show numerous interesting features. One of them is the integration of English nouns into the gender category of the borrowing language. Since English substantives in their passing into European languages have to adapt their natural gender to the system of grammatical gender,

²⁰ Cf. R. Filipović, *o. c.*, note 9, Chapter VIII — *Stress in English Loan-Words in Croatian*, pp. 60—81.

²¹ Cf. R. Filipović, "Phonemic Importation", *SRAZ*, 1960, Nos. 9—10. pp. 177—189.

they have to be reassigned to one of the three grammatical genders. The assignment of gender depends on various factors.

In languages where there is a "masculine tendency" the majority of English loan-words can be assigned to masculine gender. But in such cases I have examined all other factors that can have some connection with the assignment of gender, as for instance, word endings. In some cases the nominative form of the English loan-word may be the result of a contamination between the English loan-word and the native term of similar meaning. This is the case with languages that have various endings in the nominative form.

My special interest, however, is in the investigation of the declension of loan-words. The majority of the borrowing languages and their substantives follow the general, above mentioned principle: that the English loan-word will be morphologically adapted and will follow the system of declension of the borrowing language. Although it is generally agreed that the transfer of bound morphemes is extremely rare, my corpus offers some cases which belong to the importation of foreign inflections. The English plural ending *-s* may denote the plural of a loan-word (as in Italian *i films*) or may be kept as an integral part of the word without any function. This means that the English plural is borrowed as a singular and that the native plural ending is added when such a word is used in the plural (as in Serbo-Croat *keks — keksi, drops — dropsi*).

In the process of morphological adaptation derivation presents some specific features. English suffixes may be kept and represent innovations in the system of derivation of the borrowing language. There is, however, a tendency to adapt them and the borrowing language substitutes its native suffixes for English ones. This can result in two parallel forms of the same word, one form ending in an English suffix and the other ending in a native suffix forming a loanblend derivative. Juxtaposition as a form of composition is very common in word formation in the majority of the borrowing languages. In some of them it is an innovation in the system of composition and very often appears in the hybrid form.

English adjectives pass into a borrowing language in two main ways: they either appear without suffixes, which means that they have not been morphologically adapted, or take adjectival suffixes from the borrowing language and become completely morphologically adapted like all native adjectives. The number of the former group is very restricted while the number of the latter is practically unlimited.

Verbs are always given native inflection and are completely adapted to the morphological system of the borrowing language. Once an English verb has been adopted it takes a

verbal infinitive suffix and receives a complete verbal inflection from the borrowing language. In discussing English verbal loan-words in Slavonic languages I have dealt with a verbal category of aspect which offers some interesting features. In this category the adaptation is not always complete and some tendencies appear which may have even some important effect on the verbal system of the borrowing language.²²

4.

In my study I have also paid some attention to semantic borrowing. I have followed the theoretical approach of three main authorities in this field (Einar Haugen, Uriel Weinreich and Louis Deroy) and have applied it in my practical analysis. Yet my main interest is the semantic adaptation of English loan-words in European languages. By this I mean whether, and if so how, English words in their passing into the borrowing language change their meaning. Here it is important for me to know whether an English word has been borrowed by a language directly from English or through one or more intermediary languages. The degree of its change of meaning may depend on several factors, two of which are: 1) whether the word is used in common everyday speech, and 2) whether it has gone through several languages before it has reached the language under analysis.

The changes of meaning I have observed in my corpus are: a) the degree of change of meaning; b) restriction of meaning; c) extension of meaning. The reasons for these changes are various and most of the changes depend on non-linguistic factors. There is, however, a general tendency, and my corpus confirms it, that words denoting everyday commodities and those belonging to everyday life often offer very provocative examples of semantic changes, while words belonging to technical language tend to keep their meaning unchanged.

5.

In my corpus English loan-words in various European languages have been classified according to the area in which they generally occur. In this way several groups of words have emerged. Some of them are very rich in number and the others

²² Cf. Th. F. Magner, "Aspectual Variations in Russian and Serbo-Croatian", *Language*, 39, 4, pp. 621—630. R. Filipović, "Principi lingvističkog posuđivanja II — Morfološki aspekt", *Filološki pregled*, Beograd, IV, 1966, 1—2.

are rather poor. The relation between the two shows what the English contribution to the common European vocabulary has been. I will mention here only a few of the richest groups: 1) food and drinks; 2) sports and games; 3) science and natural science; 4) social life and dress; 5) trade and economics, banking, measures and money; 6) philosophy and religion; 7) politics and law; 8) transport, etc.

Some of these groups have been the subject of some special studies of ours, as for instance sports vocabulary. Such special studies of some of these areas complete the general survey of the English element in European languages and serve as one of the elements which I propose to base my synthesis on.

6.

A special part of my investigation of the English element in European languages is the spelling of loan-words. In some of the examined languages this question is of great importance. Sometimes I have had to deal with the interdependence of the phonological form and the spelling of the loan-word. The spelling of loan-words may depend on the English traditional spelling or on the pronunciation of the word in English which is then transcribed by means of the native alphabet in the nearest possible way. No definite rules can be derived from my analysis but several types of spelling emerge in the majority of languages.

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As a conclusion I wish to emphasize that my first aim is to thoroughly analyze English loan-words in the main European languages and to compile a survey of grammatical features of English loan-words. In the synthesis that will follow, I propose to present all the features that either the languages of one group or all the European languages I have examined have in common. In the Vocabulary I hope to show how many languages have accepted one particular loan-word and how its meaning has behaved in some of them.

As I am not sure that my book will be printed soon I have decided to make public the results of my research in various stages. In this first stage I have chosen to discuss the method rather than the results of my research. The second report or stage will provide more concrete results of my work comparing English loan-words in various languages of the same group or in languages belonging to any two groups under study. The third and last report will then be rather a long summary of my synthesis. Needless to say this will be shorter if there is a good chance of publishing the book or longer if not.