A Dictionary of European Anglicisms: A usage dictionary of Anglicisms in sixteen European languages

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The publisher calls this dictionary “the first of its kind.” The editor has compiled data from sixteen European languages to show the lexical influence of English upon these languages up to the early 1990s. Data was collected from a corpora of English words appearing in print in four German languages (Icelandic, Norwegian, Dutch, and German), four Slavic languages (Russian, Polish, Croatian, and Bulgarian), four Romance languages (French, Spanish, Italian, and Romanian), and an assortment of four others (Finnish, Hungarian, Albanian, and Greek). Decisions as to which languages to use were made based upon availability of collaborators and also on those which favored a maximal number of contrasts. The Concise Oxford Dictionary (COD) is signaled as the “point of departure” for the definitions which are listed.

There are sixteen different bits of information potentially found for each entry. These are:

- the English etymon (lemma)
- part of speech label
- meaning(s) listed, with numbering to account for various uses in COD
- description of the history and distribution, often accompanied by a grid (illustrated below)
- language name sigils, or symbols
- spelling
- pronunciation
- inflection for nouns
- pluralization for nominals
- date when the term became frequently used or accepted
- route of transmission (if not a direct borrowing from English)
- meaning(s) according to attestation of lemma frequency
- degree of acceptance within the language community
- usage restrictions, such as historical, literary, regional variety
- native or non-English equivalent
- derivatives
The dictionary is enhanced by the use of a geographically aligned distribution grid. For the groupings of the Germanic, Slavic, and Romance language families, the four languages accounted for within each of the families are aligned according to geographical orientation. Thus, the top left grid of four includes Icelandic in the top left (or northwest) of the quad, Norwegian in top right position (or northeast), Dutch in bottom left (southwest) and German in bottom right (southeast). The Slavic languages are similarly arranged in the top right quad grouping, and the same holds for the Romance language in the bottom left quad grouping. The four “other” languages are similarly arranged in the bottom right quad according to general geographical orientation, with Finnish in top left, Hungarian top right, Albanian and Greek on the bottom left and right respectively.

Additionally, the squares representing each language are either white, black, or shaded according to whether or not there is an English-based equivalent and to what extent the equivalent is found. This somewhat clever configuration and coloring allows the investigator to see at a glance the influence of English upon the corresponding language.

For example, in the following grid associated with the English word *computer*, the investigator notes that all languages except Icelandic and Finnish have an anglicism in use. One notes this is true for those two languages by the blacked-out squares. The language squares which are shaded, namely Norwegian, French, and Spanish, have restricted uses of the anglicism. The rest of the squares are white, and this indicates that the word *computer* is fully accepted in these languages.

For the entry under *PC*, the editor notes both the third COD entry of ‘personal computer’ and the fourth of ‘political correctness’ are in use among these European languages. There is universal acceptance by the sixteen languages of the first sense listed (and the abbreviation *PC* is preferred rather than *personal computer*). However, the occurrence of *PC* to refer to political correctness is not common, overshadowed by the widespread use of the abbreviation for personal computer. Also, because of the universal acceptance of *PC* in these languages, a quad grid is not included, as all the languages indicated would simply be designated by white squares.

In addition to cataloguing usage the editor shows the development of certain anglicisms in corresponding languages. For example, *painkiller* in Bulgarian has come to designate ‘jack-of-all-trades’. This former trade name for a medicine was adopted into German as a ‘pain expeller’, but then acquired a generic use of ‘problem-solver’ in Bulgarian, which is noted by the publisher as “the only sense that survives in common, mainly ironic use.”
This volume will be a major resource for those scholars researching the influence of English upon major European languages. Also, the lover of words who uses this dictionary for personal development will be surprised to discover the influence of English in other languages and how hundreds of English-based lexical forms have been adopted and developed throughout Europe.