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Review article

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The frequency of English loanwords in written Polish

On the basis of the examination of several Polish dictionaries of frequency and one recent lexicon of foreign words used in the mass media it is concluded that though the influence of English on Polish is considerable, there is no danger that Polish will be submerged by English as some scholars claim.

As far as I know hardly any investigation of the problem, indicated in the title of the present article, has been conducted. Occasionally, a linguist has made a comment on the frequency of loanwords in the Polish language.¹ For example Damborsky (1974: 347) claims that in the only available Polish dictionary of frequency by Kurcz, Lewicki, Sambor and Woronczak (1974-77), in the part devoted to the lexicon of the press, out of every four entries there are three words of Polish origin and one borrowed lexeme. In turn, Zagrodnikowa (1978: 18) calculates that if we analyse the language of the press, every second lexeme is Polish and every second word is of foreign origin; however, if we take into consideration other texts, the situation looks different, namely three Polish lexical items are balanced with only one loanword.

Apart from these general observations other Polish linguists have led more detailed investigation concerning the distribution of borrowings from different languages in Polish. At this point it is worth mentioning the article written by Kuroczycki and Rzepka (1979). They discuss the occurrence of Russian loanwords in Polish on the basis of the quoted dictionary of frequency. They conclude that out of almost 70000 words listed in the lexicon 136 items constitute Russianisms (99 words and 44 derivatives).² Also the authors of the afore-

1. The situation looks different in the case of the analysis of the frequency of Polish vocabulary, i. e. when no particular attention is paid to loanwords. At this point such works as for instance *Słownik języka Adama Mickiewicza* (1962-83), *Słownik języka Jana Chryzostoma Paska* (1965-73), or *Słownik polszczyzny XVI w.* (1966-) may be mentioned. In these lexicons the frequency of occurrence of each entry is suggested after the headword as the first piece of information. Also some more general works on this subject are worth naming, such as the books written by Zgółkowska (1987), Kurzowa (1991) and other Polish linguists.
2. According to the authors of the cited article the borrowing is distinguished on the basis of its last source of contact. Therefore for Kuroczycki and Rzepka (1979) such words as *chuligan*

mentioned article pay attention to the extension of these borrowings. It turns out that Russianisms most frequently occur in artistic prose and they are traced less often in the following types of writing: drama, journalism, popular science texts, and small press news.

In turn, while analysing the frequency of Ukrainian loans, Kuroczycki, Rzepka and Walczak (1983) claim that in the cited lexicon of frequency 162 Ukrainianisms are attested (101 words and 61 derivatives). The results concerning their extension are similar to the ones that apply to Russianisms, namely Ukrainian loanwords are most frequently found in artistic prose and they less often occur in drama, popular science texts, journalism, and small press news.

As far as the frequency of English loans in Polish goes, only one article has appeared. This is Zarębina's (1974) publication where she analyses one part (*Book VII*) of *Pan Tadeusz*, the famous epic poem written by Adam Mickiewicz. The linguist concludes that out of 191 loanwords only one Anglicism is found in the analysed text, namely the lexeme *dżokej*. (E *jockey*). It may be interesting to note that the majority of loans that constitute 45% of borrowings are words of Latin and Greek origin.

In order to answer the question concerning the frequency of English loans in the Polish language I have consulted the modified version of the cited dictionary of frequency, that is *Słownik frekwencyjny polszczyzny współczesnej* by Kurcz, Lewicki, Sambor, Szafran and Woronczak (1990). Although the lexicon appeared six years ago, the authors analyse the data collected in the years 1963–67. Therefore, it is evident that the results of my investigation cannot be fully satisfying as this comparatively new lexicon is in fact outdated. The same observation concerns the other dictionary of frequency written by Imiołczyk (1987). Its scope is different from Kurcz et al.'s (1990) lexicon since Imiołczyk does not construct his range lists on the basis of continuous written texts as Kurcz et al. do but on the basis of five dictionaries of foreign languages, two lexicons of the Polish language and Kurcz et al.'s (1974–77) dictionary of frequency. The material analysed by Imiołczyk again goes back to the sixties and seventies. Unfortunately, no other lexicon of frequency has been published in Poland so far.³

To get a general idea concerning the frequency of English loanwords in the Polish language I have checked the range list of absolute frequency in Kurcz

(E *hooligan*), *kombajn* (E *combine*) or *snajper* (E *sniper*) are considered to be Russianisms. See the opposite view expressed, among others, by Fisiak (1962), Filipović (1972), or Mańczak-Wohlfeld (1995) who call such items Anglicisms.

3. Zgórkowa's (1983) work might constitute an exception but it is devoted to the analysis of the frequency of spoken language, which is not the subject of the present article, and it is equally outdated since her material was collected in the period from 1974 to 1976. She recorded discussions, small talk, etc. produced by 150 people who had graduated from at least secondary school. Altogether 100 000 words were recorded, however, the range list consists of over 1000 lexical items. It includes six Anglicisms, namely: 267 *klub* (E *club*) — 40, 495 *film* — 19, 717 *telewizja* (E *television*) — 13, 735 *autobus* (only the second part of the compound is of English origin — *bus*) — 12, 924 *serwis* (E *service*) — 9, where the first numeral indicates the range number and the second one the number of occurrences.

et al. (1990). It appears that out of 10355 enumerated lexical items 59 constitute English loans (40 words and 19 derivatives). The list is the following:

663	<i>klub</i> (E <i>club</i>)	95 ⁴
1076	<i>sportowy</i> (E <i>sport</i> , adj.)	61
1078	<i>dolar</i> (E <i>dollar</i>)	60
1225	<i>budżet</i> (E <i>budget</i>)	52
1244	<i>autobus</i> (E <i>bus</i>) ⁵	51
1532	<i>wagon</i>	42
1795	<i>telewizyjny</i> (E <i>television</i> , adj.)	36
2176	<i>tramwaj</i> (E <i>tramway</i>)	29
2348	<i>film</i> (E <i>cinematographic</i>)	26
2945	<i>rekord</i> (E <i>record</i>)	20
3025	<i>halo</i> (E <i>hallo</i>)	19
3155	<i>jacht</i> (E <i>yacht</i>)	18
3408	<i>bar</i>	16
3611	<i>konduktor</i> (E <i>conductor</i>)	15
3987	<i>budżetowy</i> (E <i>budgetary</i>)	13
4126	<i>raid</i> (E <i>raid</i>)	13
4384	<i>rower</i> (E <i>bicycle</i>)	12
4421	<i>tramwajowy</i> (E <i>tramway</i> , adj.)	12
4423	<i>tunel</i> (E <i>tunnel</i>)	12
4554	<i>kombajn</i> (E <i>combine</i>)	11
4563	<i>kuter</i> (E <i>cutter</i>)	11
5061	<i>trener</i> (E <i>trainer</i>)	10
5433	<i>sportowiec</i> (E <i>sportsman</i>)	9
5464	<i>trening</i> (E <i>training</i>)	9
5995	<i>tankowiec</i> (E <i>tanker</i>)	8
6216	<i>eskalacja</i> (E <i>escalation</i>)	7
6239	<i>hokejowy</i> (E <i>hockey</i> , adj.)	7
6283	<i>kraksa</i> (E <i>crack</i>)	7
6448	<i>plastyk</i> (E <i>plastic</i>)	7
6554	<i>rekordowy</i> (E <i>record</i> , adj.)	7
6822	<i>autokar</i> (E <i>car</i> 'coach' ⁶)	6
6839	<i>bokser</i> (E <i>boxer</i>)	6
6844	<i>brydz</i> (E <i>bridge</i>)	6
6847	<i>bunkier</i> (E <i>bunker</i>)	6
6944	<i>hall</i> ⁷	6

4. On the left side of the English borrowing the range number is suggested whereas on the right side of the Anglicism the number of absolute occurrence is quoted. If the numeral indicating the number of occurrence happens to be identical for some items, then they are enumerated in alphabetical order. The range list consisting of over 10 000 items has been constructed on the basis of 500 000 words found in different written varieties of Polish, however, those lexemes that have occurred less than four times have been eliminated.

5. See the remark concerning the item *autobus* in note 3.

6. Only the second part of the compound is of English origin.

7. Note the spelling of the loan. Nowadays this borrowing is often polonized and thus written as *hol*.

7151	<i>parking</i> (E <i>car park</i>)	6
7162	<i>plastyczny</i> (E <i>plastic</i> , adj.)	6
7396	<i>toast</i>	6
7841	<i>jazzowy</i> (E <i>jazz</i> , adj.)	5
7870	<i>koks</i> (E <i>coke</i>)	5
8550	<i>weekend</i>	5
8726	<i>zoo</i>	5
8960	<i>emiter</i> (E <i>emitter</i>)	4
8961	<i>emitować</i> (E <i>to emit</i>)	4
8962	<i>emitowany</i> (E <i>emitted</i>)	4
9033	<i>hokeista</i> (E <i>hockeyist</i>)	4
9106	<i>koktail</i> (E <i>cocktail</i>)	4
9119	<i>koncern</i> (E <i>concern</i>)	4
9168	<i>leader</i> ⁸	4
9184	<i>lord</i>	4
9451	<i>partnerka</i> (E <i>female partner</i>)	4
9705	<i>radar</i>	4
9706	<i>radarowy</i> (E <i>radar</i> , adj.)	4
9726	<i>relaks</i> (E <i>relax</i>)	4
9734	<i>rowerowy</i> (E <i>bicycle</i> , adj.)	4
9735	<i>rowerzysta</i> (E <i>cyclist</i>)	4
9876	<i>sweter</i> (E <i>sweater</i>)	4
9931	<i>tenisista</i> (E <i>tennis player</i>)	4
9953	<i>tunelowy</i> (E <i>tunnel</i> , adj.)	4
9958	<i>twist</i>	4

Although the above list, outdated, is not fully adequate, it indicates a general tendency connected with the frequency of English borrowings in Polish. It shows that most of the listed borrowings are well-adapted. This is the reason why they are not even felt as loans by Poles not knowing English since their spelling and pronunciation agree with the rules of Polish, they follow Polish grammar and their meanings are obvious to every Pole. The percentage of derivatives is fairly high as it constitutes almost 50% of the listed words of English origin, which could have been predicted since loans that are often used tend to be better assimilated to the system of the borrowing language. This means that thirteen derived words are present in the range list whereas their corresponding full forms are missing there, e. g. we find the lexeme *filmowy* (E *cinematographic*) but not *film* or *sportowy* (E *sport*, adj.) and *sportowiec* (E *sportsman*) but not *sport*. Just two derivatives display the same frequency as their corresponding full forms, *emiter* (E *emitter*), *emitować* (E *to emit*), *emitowany* (E *emitted*). There are only four derivatives that are less often used than their full equivalents, e. g. *budżetowy* (E *budgetary*), *rekordowy* (E *record*, adj.). Another interesting observation concerns the semantics of the Anglicisms in the analysed range list. They are mainly connected with sport like *sportowiec* (E *sportsman*) or *bokser* (E *boxer*) — 15 items, transport, e. g. *tramway* (E

8. It is worth pointing that at present the loanword is spelt according to the patterns of Polish, namely as *lider*.

tramway), *tunel* (E *tunnel*) — 14 words, entertainment, e. g. *weekend*, *relaks* (E *relax*) — 9 lexical items. Other semantic fields are exemplified by single items, e. g. clothing (*sweter* — E *sweater*) or monetary system (*dolar* — E *dollar*).

Similar conclusions may be drawn from the analysis of the range list found in the above mentioned lexicon by Imiołczyk (1987). His range list consists of over 5000 items. The following Anglicisms are mentioned:

137	<i>tramwaj</i> (E <i>tramway</i>)	5.42 ⁹
218	<i>film</i>	5.25
219	<i>telewizor</i> (E <i>television set</i>)	5.25
224	<i>dolar</i> (E <i>dollar</i>)	5.24
239	<i>telewizja</i> (E <i>television</i>)	5.22
928	<i>rower</i> (E <i>bicycle</i>)	4.65
1383	<i>sportowy</i> (E <i>sport</i> , adj.)	4.46
1767	<i>bar</i>	4.32
2475	<i>klub</i> (E <i>club</i>)	4.12
2540	<i>sportowiec</i> (E <i>sportsman</i>)	4.10
3863	<i>strajk</i> (E <i>strike</i>)	3.74
3866	<i>spiker</i> (E <i>speaker</i>)	3.74
4885	<i>befszyk</i> (E <i>beefsteak</i>)	3.27

Comparing both lists, we readily observe two facts:

1) Similar tendencies connected with the assimilation of English loans.

2) Some borrowings are found in both sources, like *tramwaj* (E *tramway*), *rower* (E *bicycle*), *bar*. It is interesting to note that Imiołczyk's list, although more modest as far as the number of Anglicisms goes (thirteen items), contains five lexemes not present in Kurcz et al.'s (1990) list. They are: *film*, *telewizja* (E *television*), *strajk* (E *strike*), *spiker* (E *speaker*) and *befszyk* (E *beefsteak*), which may be accounted for by the reference to different sources.

In general, it may be deduced that the number of English borrowings in the Polish language is not very high. This observation is supported by the examination of two more recent dictionaries. The first is a minimum lexicon of Polish by Kurzowa and Zgółkowa (1992) consisting of 1520 entries of the highest frequency. Only twelve English loanwords are included there. They are: *autobus* (E *bus*), *bar*, *dżem* (E *jam*), *eksporter* (E *exporter*), *film*, *klub* (E *club*), *komputer* (E *computer*); *kontener* (E *container*), *parking* (E *car park*), *rower* (E *bicycle*), *tramwaj* (E *tramway*), and *wagon*.¹⁰ The second is Markowski's (1995) dictionary of foreign words used in the mass media. This book contains 1100 words of foreign origin most often used in the television, radio and press. As we are told in the preface to the lexicon, Markowski has tried to include as many English loans as possible. Despite that only 126 borrowings and 11 semantic loans from English are found there. This only constitutes over 10% of foreign words included in the lexicon. The majority of lexemes are borrowings from Latin and, less frequently, from Greek.

9. See note 4 for the explanation of the meaning of numerals.

10. Note the items not mentioned in the analysed dictionaries of frequency, that is *dżem*, *eksporter*, *komputer*, *kontener*.

On the basis of the above remarks and calculations it may be concluded that though the influence of English on Polish is considerable, it is lower than the impact of classical languages. Therefore it seems that the observation of some linguists, that Polish will be submerged by English, is exaggerated.

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Frekvencija anglicizama u pisanom poljskom jeziku

Na temelju istraživanja nekoliko poljskih čestotnih rječnika i jednoga novijeg rječnika stranih riječi korištenih u masovnim medijima zaključuje se da — usprkos činjenici što je utjecaj englesko- na poljski značajan — ne postoji opasnost da engleski istisne poljski.