A *New Dictionary of Italian Anglicisms*: the Aid of Corpora

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Abstract
A repository of Definitional Contexts, even more than to be conceived of as traditional corpora, is very valuable tool for lexicography. This paper describes a corpus of Definitional Contexts, from the definition of the term to the description of the applications of the corpus in lexicography. The intended applications for the work, and how these affected the corpus design, are described. In addition, the methodology for corpus building and the corpus structure are outlined, and the preliminary results of the work in progress are presented.

1 Anglicisms in Italian

Nowadays Italians have become more and more proficient in English and the use of anglicisms both in the written and in the spoken language has become not only very common but also desirable to sound modern and competent in whatever topic we are dealing with, such as cinema, politics, beauty care, tourism, cars, to quote just a few.

Anglicism is a term used to label a word which is English in form (spelling and/or pronunciation) but is accepted in the vocabulary of the borrowing language, thus excluding other forms of borrowing such as calques and adaptations (Görlach 1994; 2003). The acquisition of anglicisms in Italian, which has undergone rapid acceleration since 1950s, is widely recorded by dictionaries of the language and other types of lexicographic works (Pulcini 1999). The number of anglicisms recorded in Italian varies from about 1,800 (according to a count done by Fanfani, 2002) to 5,510 (according to De Mauro-Mancini 2003), the latter figure having an impact of about 2% on the overall Italian lexicon, much to the relief of the alarmed domestic guardians of the Italian language.

The only dictionary exclusively devoted to anglicisms in Italian is Rando's *Dizionario degli Anglicismi nell'italiano postunitario* (1987). It is a pioneering enterprise but is by now rather dated. Its wordlist includes a mixed collection of unadapted and adapted anglicisms, hybrids, false-anglicisms, calques, internationalisms, encyclopedic information on institutions, trademarks and geographical names, the choice of which appears to be unbalanced and random (Fanfani 1991).

Lists of anglicisms are found in several dictionaries of foreign words, among which *Le parole straniere nella lingua italiana* (De Mauro-Mancini 2003), which appears to be the

most comprehensive and authoritative, being based on the unabridged *Grande Dizionario Italiano dell'Uso* (GDU, 2000), containing almost 250,000 entries. De Mauro-Mancini's first edition (2001) lists 4,320 anglicisms, and its second edition (2003) has 5,510. This may suggest that, over a time span of only two years, Italian has adopted as many as 1,190 new anglicisms.

Other important reference resources for finding anglicisms are general dictionaries of Italian such as *Lo Zingarelli 2006* (2005) which is updated every year and is well-known for its liberal policy of inclusion of neologisms and foreignisms.

Finally, Görlach's *Dictionary of European Anglicisms* (DEA, 2001) contains 3,800 anglicisms present in 16 European languages, 1,600 of which are recorded for the Italian language.

2 Phase 1: a comparison among existing lexicographic sources

The first phase of the project for the compilation of the *New Dictionary of Italian Anglicisms* began in 2003. The starting point was the research done by the present writer for the Italian entries of the DEA, which produced a wordlist of 1,600 anglicisms, all of which were retrieved from various dictionaries and glossaries available at the time of compilation (1994-99),[1] as well as from collection of new anglicisms from newspapers. Research was resumed in view of a second edition of the DEA. As described in Pulcini (forthcoming), a new survey on existing lexicographic resources was carried out, which included Rando's (1987), DEA (2001), De Mauro-Mancini (2001) and Zingarelli (2002), as well as the collection of small corpora of anglicisms by a team of students and collaborators at the University of Turin. The results of this comparative work produced parallel lists of anglicisms, a small sample of which is shown and discussed below.

Considering the compounds with *beach-* recorded in the four dictionaries (Table 1), we can see that De Mauro-Mancini's dictionary records five entries, namely **beach movie, beach soccer, beach tennis, beach volley** and **beachwear,** while the only entry found in the DEA (2001) and the Zingarelli (2002) is the compound **beach volley,** and Rando's dictionary has no entries.[2] The headword **beach movie** is a new addition to De Mauro-Mancini's new edition (2003).

RANDO 1987	DEA 2001	De Mauro-Mancini 2001 / 2003	Zingarelli 2002
		beach movie TS 1995	
		beach soccer CO 1998	

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[1] The aim of DEA was comparability across 16 languages rather than exhaustiveness. For this reason Görlach chose to work on a limited number of entries.

[2] **Beach movie**: "genere cinematografico che ha per oggetto vicende, spec. sentimentali e sportive, ambientate sulle spiagge della California e della Florida"; **beach soccer**: "tipo di calcetto giocato sulla spiaggia a piedi nudi"; **beach tennis**: "gioco simile al tennis praticato sulla spiaggia"; **beach volley**: "sport simile alla pallavolo giocato sulla spiaggia da squadre di due o tre elementi"; **beachwear**: "l'insieme degli articoli di abbigliamento per il mare" (De Mauro-Mancini 2003)

		beach tennis CO 1998	
	beach volley(ball) 1990s (1>2)	beach volley CO sec. XX	beach volley 1987
		beachwear CO 1995	

Table 1. Compounds with *beach-* recorded in four dictionaries

Another set of meaningful examples are the compounds with word *personal* (Table 2): all the four dictionaries agree on recording the word **personal computer**, while Rando's dictionary also has **personal selling**[3] and De Mauro-Mancini's also includes **personal computing, personal cooler, personal trainer** and **personal training**. Its new edition also has **personal banker**.[4]

RANDO 1987	DEA 2001	De Mauro-Mancini 2001/2003	Zingarelli 2002
		personal banker TS 2000	
personal computer 1979	personal computer 1980s (2)	personal computer TS inform. 1983	personal computer 1979
		personal computing TS inform. 2a metà sec. XX	
		personal cooler CO 1992	
personal selling 1960			
		personal trainer TS sport1998	
		personal training TS sport 1995	

Table 2. Compounds with *personal* recorded in four dictionaries

A first conclusion drawn from the initial comparative work is the richness of De Mauro-Mancini's dictionary as opposed to the others and the weakness of Rando's dictionary because of its chronological and methodological limits. This led to the exclusion of this dictionary from further comparisons. Most importantly, it was noted that the majority of the De Mauro-Mancini entries belong to technical and specialized fields (TS) and that the labels used define the field but not the usage frequency or the degree of acceptance of each item. Moreover, the label TS ('tecnico-specialistico') may lead to conclude that the use of the word is confined to specialists, which is not the case of many specialist terms, as the well-

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[3] **Personal selling**: "Metodo di vendita in cui i rappresentanti dell'azienda sollecitano i clienti andando a trovarli in casa o sul posto di lavoro." (Rando 1987)

[4] **Personal banker**: "promotore finanziario che, per conto di una banca, gestisce un rapporto personale con il cliente per trovare specifiche soluzioni di investimento"; **personal computer**: elaboratore elettronico, di piccole dimensioni, utilizzato da aziende e da privati per ricerche, calcoli, elaborazione dati, ecc.; **personal computing**: "uso del personal computer"; **personal cooler**: "condizionatore portatile per ambienti"; **personal trainer**: "allenatore di personal training"; **personal training**: "allenamento ginnico, atletico eseguito in casa propria, con un istruttore personale". (De Mauro-Mancini 2003).

known word **personal computer** shows.[5] The problem is evident also in the examples of Table 1, where **beach movie** is labelled as TS (presumably because it is restricted to the field of cinema), while **beach soccer, beach tennis, beach volley** and **beachwear**, which are all related to the field of sport, are considered to belong to the common vocabulary (CO).

The DEA's usage label system, on the contrary, has been purposefully devised in order to signal, first of all, the degree of acceptance of the word in the general language, and then the field of usage and other restrictions pertaining to the word. The label (2) given to **personal computer** indicates that "the word is fully accepted and found in many styles and registers, but is still marked as English in its spelling, pronunciation, or morphology;" (Görlach 2001: xxiv).[6]

At the end of Phase 1, comparative tables were available, listing anglicisms included in the dictionaries discussed above, except for Rando's.

3 Aims and size of a dictionary of anglicisms

The size of the wordlist of a dictionary is a macrostructural feature which is planned by the compiler before anything else. As Béjoint (2000: 140) explains, while "old-time lexicographers did not ask who the users were and what they wanted [...] The trend has now been reversed, with lexicographers trying to find out who their users are and what they need." Thus, modern lexicography has overcome the dilemma between *exhaustiveness* and *representativeness* by tailoring the size of the dictionary to the needs and expectations of the target audience.

In view of the compilation of the *New Dictionary of Italian Anglicisms*, it is believed that the target user of such a dictionary is likely to be an educated Italian speaker who is familiar with the language of the mass media and also possesses a certain proficiency in the English language. He/she will be interested in finding or clarifying the meaning of an anglicism encountered in the written or spoken media, or checking any of its formal features (spelling, pronunciation, grammar, usage).[7] Being proficient in English, or a learner of English, he/she may also be interested in finding out whether the anglicism has the same meaning as the same item in English or if the word is used formally in the same way and pragmatically in the same context.[8]

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[5] The other labels are: FO, fondamentale; CO, comune; AU, alto uso; AD, alta disponibilità; BU, basso uso; OB, obsoleto; RE, regionale.

[6] The other labels are: 0, the word is known mainly to bilinguals; Ø, the word is known but is a foreignism; 1, the word is in restricted use; 3, the word is not (or is no longer) recognized as English. The label used for "the degree of acceptance" appears along with another label for "usage restrictions", signalling field (historical, literary, technical) medium (written), region (regional, dialectal), register (colloquial, journalese, slang, youth), style (derogatory, euphemistic, facetious, pejorative), status (banned) and currency (archaic, modish, obsolescent, rare). For example, the word **server** is attributed *I(tech)*, meaning "restricted use in the technical field of computer technology".

[7] Research has confirmed that search for meaning is the primary need of dictionary users (Béjoint 2000; Svensen 1993).

[8] In Italy, English is studied not only by students in schools and universities, but by workers in many different walks of life, for working and professional needs.

If such is the profile of the target user of a dictionary of Italian anglicisms, the size of the wordlist should be large enough to record anglicisms which are likely to be encountered in the written and spoken media by *the average educated user*. Thus, a dictionary of this kind would serve the users better by focussing on the *common core* of Italian anglicisms, rather than quoting archaisms which are obsolete, casuals, quotation words typical of journalese and advertising, which are too ephemeral to be considered stable and representative in Italian; but especially highly technical terms, which are the vast majority of anglicisms today and are likely to appeal to a very limited audience of specialists.

To comply with these aims, the large database of over 5,000 anglicisms obtained at the end of Phase 1 of the project would need to be reduced and refined, so that the wordlist would respect the criterion of *representativeness*, i.e. "that the word or expression occurs with a certain frequency in the general use of the language" (Svensen 1993: 42).

These criteria are easier said than done, as it were. On the basis of the comparison of dictionaries, we may establish that **beach volley,** which is quoted by three dictionaries, is more representative than **beach tennis** and **beach soccer,** quoted only by one dictionary, as a sport played on the beach. The same can be said for **personal computer**, which is recorded by four dictionaries against the other compounds which are recorded by one dictionary only. In order to gain a better picture of the acceptance and frequency of anglicisms, the aid of corpora was resorted to.

4 Phase 2: corpus query
4.1 Sample words

Phase 2 of the project, which is currently under way, consists of checking the occurrence of the potential anglicisms in corpora of Italian. Although some linguists question the reliability of corpora, where these are available for the language considered, the evidence drawn from them is a precious help for looking up words, evaluating their frequency and taking examples of authentic use in context.

For the present work two corpora have been considered, namely a corpus of Italian newspaper articles compiled in 2003-2004 (the HF corpus)[9] and a corpus of Italian used by newsgroups (NUNC).[10]

Table 3 and Table 4 show the results obtained for the sample anglicisms discussed above, i.e. the compounds with *beach-* and *personal* in the HF corpus and in the NUNC respectively:

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[9] The HF corpus (from the names of its compilers, Knut Hofland and Cristiano Furiassi) was compiled at the University of Bergen, Norway in 2003-2004. It contains 19.47 million words of newspaper articles from three Italian daily newspapers, *la Stampa*, *la Repubblica* and *il Corriere della Sera*. (Furiassi-Hofland, forthcoming)

[10] The NUNC (Newsgroups UseNet Corpora) is a multilingual suite of corpora based on the language of newsgroups, freely available and queriable online. Devised by Manuel Barbera and a team of linguists and computer scientists at the University of Turin, the NUNC was started in 2002, and is currently growing in size and in the number of languages involved. There are already some betas available for testing (Italian, UK English, French and Spanish). The Italian general corpus contains 237,401.299 words.

	HF	frequency/million words
personal computer	268	13.8
beach volley	43	2.2
personal trainer	29	1.5
personal computing	3	0.15
beach soccer	2	0.1
beachwear	2	0.1
beach movie	-	-
beach tennis	-	-
personal banker	-	-
personal cooler	-	-
personal selling	-	-
personal training	-	-

Table 3. Number of occurrences and frequency/million words
of some sample anglicisms in the HF corpus.

	NUNC	frequency / million words
personal computer	334	1.4
beach volley	76	0.3
personal trainer	26	0.01
beach soccer	15	0.006
personal training	9	0.003
personal computing	4	0.001
beachwear	1	0.0004
beach movie	-	-
beach tennis	-	-
personal banker	-	-
personal cooler	-	-
personal selling	-	-

Table 4. Number of occurrences and frequency/million words of
some sample anglicisms in the NUNC corpus.

The results confirm what was concluded from the comparative work, namely that the most frequent words in Italian are **personal computer** and **beach volley**. The figures also indicate that **personal computer** is far more frequent than **beach volley** (13.8 against 2.2 per million words in the HF corpus). The words **personal trainer, personal computing, beach soccer and beachwear** are present in both corpora, while **personal training** appears in the NUNC but not in the HF corpus. **Beach movie, beach tennis, personal banker, personal cooler** and **personal selling** do not appear in either corpora.

These data lead us to some preliminary conclusions. First of all, the confirmation of **personal computer** and **beach volley** as the two most frequent anglicisms in the sample is a

comforting finding, in that it reconciles the native speaker's intuition, the lexicographic and the corpus evidence. As far as the other words are concerned, they are all "possible" anglicisms and their meaning is quite transparent. However, if corpus evidence is to be taken as a criterion, the first set of compounds (**personal trainer, personal computing, beach soccer** and **beachwear**) should be included in the dictionary, while the second set (**beach movie, beach tennis, personal banker, personal cooler** and **personal selling**) should be excluded, and **personal training** remains a borderline case.

The second problem is a statistical one, namely the significance of the frequency figures obtained. How frequently should a word appear in order to qualify as an accepted anglicism instead of a casual? How significant is 0.0004 per million words scored by the anglicism **beachwear** in the NUNC? This is a problem which is not of central concern in the present analysis but should be considered carefully if corpus evidence is taken as a criterion of selection.

A third problem is connected with the representativeness of the two corpora chosen for the query, which have given similar ranking of the words considered but radically different frequency scores. In fact, the anglicisms **personal computer** and **beach volley**, for example, are respectively 9 times and 7 times more frequent in the HF than in the NUNC. A possible explanation may be that the HF corpus contains newspaper articles covering a balanced range of topics related to current affairs and popular culture; instead the NUNC contains language used by members of newsgroups, i.e. individuals discussing topics often on a personal basis. Hence we may hypothesise that in such a communicative context an Italian speaker will tend to use the more informal expression "computer" or "PC" instead of the full standard form "personal computer". As to **beach volley**, its frequency is much higher in the HF because newspapers regularly publish sports pages, while in newsgroup discussions the topic of sport may be more occasional. In conclusion, since different corpora will produce different results depending on their contents, it is essential that the type of corpus selected for the query should be representative of the type of language which we want to analyze in order to yield reliable evidence.

4.2 More recent anglicisms

Considering that the two corpora have been compiled very recently (2002-2003), another query was made with a set of new anglicisms adopted in the 1990s and 2000s, some of which are quite well-known to the average Italian speaker. The results are listed, in order of frequency, in Table 5 and Table 6:[11]

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[11] **Provider**: "fornitore di accessi a Internet"; **spam**: "messaggio di posta elettronica o articolo che viene inviato contemporaneamente a molti destinatari e newsgroup che non hanno alcun interesse a riceverlo"; **serial killer**: "pluriomicida che agisce sempre con le stesse modalità, compiendo crimini spinto da pulsioni patologiche"; **devolution**: "nel linguaggio politico e giornalistico, decentramento dei poteri dallo stato alle regioni"; **reality show**: "format che ha come protagonisti persone comuni e non attori protagonisti"; **spammimg**: "lo spedire indiscriminatamente nella posta elettronica di altri o in newsgroup messaggi inutili e non richiesti"; **exit poll**: "sondaggio elettorale basato su interviste fatte ai votanti all'uscita dai seggi, condotto al fine di diramare con relativa approssimazione i risultati del-

	HF	frequency/ million words
provider	399	20.5
spam	320	16.4
serial killer	298	15.3
Devolution	175	9
reality show	172	8.8
Spamming	131	6.7
exit poll	104	5.3
mobbing	51	2.6
golden share	37	1.9
question time	34	1.7
tex-mex	20	1
outing	11	0.5
aquagym	4	0.2
anti-age	3	0.15
e-zine	1	0.05
aero-dance	-	-
Backspace	-	-
Carpool	-	-

Table 5. Number of occurrences and frequency/million words of
some recent anglicisms in the HF corpus.

	NUNC	frequency/million words
provider	7036	29.9
spam	6256	26.3
Spamming	1072	4.5

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le elezioni, appena concluse le operazioni di voto"; **mobbing**: "spec. in ambienti di lavoro, persecuzione ed emargi-
nazione nei confronti di un singolo individuo da parte del gruppo in cui è inserito"; **golden share**: "speciale azione
del capitale di una società privatizzata che il governo trattiene per sé, con un valore simbolico, per impedire l'acqui-
sizione del controllo di questa da parte di una persona o di un gruppo di investitori e garantire gli interessi pubblici";
question time: "polit., seduta del parlamento in cui i parlamentari rivolgono a un ministro del governo in carica do-
mande e interrogazioni sull'attività del suo dicastero"; **tex-mex**: 1 "genere di musica statunitense che a partire dagli
anni '60 mescola il rock and roll, il blues e il country con i ritmi latinoamericani" 2 "gastr., di cucina tipica della zo-
na di confine tra il Messico e il Sud degli USA, caratterizzata da aromi piccanti"; **outing**: "coming out" ("il rendere
pubblica la propria appartenenza a una categoria oggetto di tradizionale emarginazione"); **aquagym**: "ginnastica che
si pratica immersi nell'acqua, spec. a tempo di musica"; **anti-age**: "spec. di trattamento o prodotto cosmetico, che
attenua o previene i segni dell'invecchiamento"; **e-zine**: "in Internet, rivista multimediale contenente articoli, inter-
viste, fotografie, pubblicità, ecc."; **aero-dance**: "tipo di ginnastica aerobica in cui la parte danzata e musicale ha una
particolare rilevanza"; **backspace**: "nelle tastiere del computer, comando che determina la cancellazione del caratte-
re posto prima del cursore" (De Mauro-Mancini 2003). **carpool**: "gruppo di persone che compiono abitualmente un
tragitto analogo e si accordano per l'uso di una sola automobile" (Zingarelli 2002).

Devolution	958	4
serial killer	307	1.2
Mobbing	225	0.9
reality show	141	0.5
outing	121	0.5
exit poll	50	0.2
Backspace	46	0.1
question time	27	0.1
e-zine	25	0.1
golden share	20	0.08
aquagym	1	0.004
aero-dance	-	-
anti-age	-	-
Carpool	-	-
tex-mex	-	-

Table 6. Number of occurrences and frequency/million words of
some recent anglicisms in the NUNC

This set of examples produced figures which are on the whole higher than the previous one, which confirms that these words are generally more frequent. What the data also confirm is that current words such as **provider, spam, serial killer, devolution** rank at the top of the lists of both corpora. **Reality show, spamming, exit poll, mobbing, golden share, question time, outing, aquagym** and **e-zine** appear in both corpora, **anti-age** and **backspace** only in one (the first in the HF and the second in the NUNC), and finally the words **aero-dance** and **carpool** are absent from either corpora. As was concluded from the analysis of the previous sample items, in spite of the uncertainty in the interpretation of the statistical figures, the corpus findings provide a cline of currency and frequency of the anglicisms considered.

6 Conclusion

The results obtained from the query of corpora will be a useful index in establishing criteria of representativeness for the compilation of the wordlist of the *New Dictionary of Italian Anglicisms,* although various questions related to the representativeness of corpora and the interpretation of the frequency scores are still to be answered. However, it is believed that a corpus-driven approach for identifying anglicisms in real use is a promising methodology for drawing up a profile of potential anglicisms in terms of currency and use. The exploitation of corpora for describing languages has become indispensable in today's research but the real interpretation of statistical data needs further consideration. *Ad hoc* corpora of 'non-specialized' articles focussing on specific fields (computer science, politics, entertainment, etc.) may also be compiled to get a better picture of the status of anglicisms in specific domains. Corpus linguistics can indeed be an invaluable support to already existing resources in lexicography, provided that it is adequately monitored by the lexicographer's expertise and intuition.

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