

# Danish Echoes of English

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## *1. Toward a systematic approach to Anglicisms*

The present dominance of Anglo-American culture is recognized worldwide as having a huge impact on the way national cultures and languages change nowadays. Not surprisingly, with the influx of English-inspired language features (in the following referred to as Anglicisms) there follow extensive language-political discussions among concerned laymen, scholars and politicians in the speech communities affected. Unfortunately, such discussions often lack coherent terminology, and statements are seldom based on a sound empirical foundation.

Against this background, this paper seeks to:

- (a) establish a comprehensive – as well as comprehensible – typology that will accommodate the bewildering variety of Anglicisms found in contemporary usage the world over, thus constituting a common denominator for future debates on the influence of English, and
- (b) illustrate how language corpora may be fruitfully exploited to yield the empirical data necessary for promoting genuinely scholarly discussions and sustainable language policies.

Before elaborating on these two points, I will provide the reader with an outline of the present language-political climate in a speech community strongly influenced by English, and then use this to distill a working definition of the key notion dealt with in this paper: Anglicism.

## *2. Danish attitudes to Anglicisms*

In a European context, most observers agree that Denmark is less prone to linguistic purism than the other Nordic countries (Hansen & Lund 1994; Brunstad 2001). Although the Danish Language Council, *Dansk Sprognavn*, engages in regulating the morphology and orthography of English loans, Danish language authorities do not mind the influx of

English loanwords as such; “autoriteterne forholder sig nærmest rent iagttagende over for de leksikalske ændringer.” (Galberg Jacobsen 1994: 25)<sup>1</sup>

Not only are Anglicisms officially welcomed in Denmark; even where prescriptive measures are indeed taken, official language policies differ from those elsewhere in Scandinavia: modern English loans retain their original spelling, just as the nouns among them often keep their plural *-s* (Brunstad 2001: 172). And to a large extent, these policies reflect the attitudes of young Danes: “Det ser ud til at unge danske sprogbrugere i overvejende grad er tilhængere af engelsk flertalsbøjning og engelsk stavemåde af engelske lån.” (Heidemann Andersen: 2002:145). However, apart from the plural *-s*, which is seen by some as a new Danish plural morpheme, English inflectional suffixes are *not* imported together with the loanwords proper. Or, as stated in the conclusion of an impressive empirical study on the inflection of Anglicisms in Danish: “Ingen engelske bøjningsendelser synes ligefrem *resistente* over for det danske bøjningssystem.” (Bønlykke Olsen 2002: 99)

In Sweden, a study on the translation into Swedish of the Anglicisms in a contemporary Danish novel finds that the Swedish translator has limited the number of English-sounding items in her translation, and wisely so, since “English is much more common in Danish than in Swedish”:

När nu engelska är långt vanligare i danska än i svenska, speciellt i talspråket, borde detta ge utslag i översättningen genom att man inte låter alla engelska uttryck vare kvar. (Lindgren 2001: 269)

It may be true that, due to the minimal Danish orthographical adaptation of loanwords, modern texts in Danish *look* more English than similar texts in Norwegian and Swedish, but taking the multi-faceted nature of Anglicisms into consideration, it seems foolhardy to talk about “det faktum att man i danskan sedan några decennier använder mer engelska än man gör i svenskan” (Lindgren 2001:267).

Regrettably, in the Nordic countries no comparative studies on the use of English have been conducted so far, but a usage study scrutinizing the entire range of anglophone features – from simple loanwords to loss of domain – will very likely find Swedish, Danish and Norwegian equally imbued with

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<sup>1</sup> Realizing that the translation of quotations is a sensitive issue – especially when dealing with Danish sources in an English-language paper discussing domain loss caused by English – I have tried to strike the balance between catering for (Scandinavian) readers who read Danish and would hate repetitious literal translations, and non-Scandinavian speakers who need some code-breaking. Accordingly, I have worked the gist of the Danish quotations into the text immediately before or after all quotations in Danish.

Anglicisms. The primary conditions for this Scandinavian openness to English language features are equally present in all three speech communities:

- the high and unchallenged prestige of English in all corners of society,<sup>2</sup>
- the enormous popularity of Anglo-American media products,
- the intensive teaching of English at all age levels,
- the extensive international personal and business contacts of wide segments of the population,
- the close inter-Germanic relationship between English and the Scandinavian languages.

None of the three Scandinavian countries are culturally isolated, and in none of them have there been erected any substantial barriers between the national language and English; any fundamental differences between them when it comes to *de facto* English influence are thus unlikely.

In Denmark, in the last couple of years, we have witnessed a heated debate on the future of the national language, with most participants judging the present English influence as – to put it mildly – the greatest challenge of all. A recent report from the Ministry of Culture stating the need for an official Danish language policy (Lund et al. 2003) considers the English influence on Danish to be part of a global multi-cultural trend. In its introduction, the report sees the quest for a Danish language policy as a reflection of the generally held view that the use of Danish is no longer a matter of course in Denmark:

Det danske Kulturministeriums oplæg til en dansk sprogpolitik afspejler en udbredt opfattelse af, at det ikke længere er en selvfølge, at der fortrinsvist tales dansk i Danmark. Engelsk er blevet et alternativ på flere områder, og der høres mange forskellige sprog i det mere multikulturelt prægede Danmark.

What is referred to in this official report is the very topical issue of domain loss (cf. also Preisler 1999 and 2003; Jarvad 2001). It is worth noting that with this report, for the first time since the English influence was felt in the country (see the discussion in Section 5 of this paper), Denmark commits herself to language-political self-assertion. This apparent “awakening” of Scandinavia’s most laissez-

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<sup>2</sup> Already more than forty years ago, this central, “irrational” reason behind the Scandinavian import of English items – especially in business and advertising – was pointed out: “Det engelsk-amerikanske innslaget i handel og reklame er særlig sterkt. Det botnar i første rekke i ei sterk tru på at engelsk *sel* betre enn det heimlige målet; engelsk har det reklamefolka kallar *snob value*.” (Hellevik 1963: 66).

faire speech community is perhaps expressed most clearly in the report's section on higher education, with its typographically emphasized recommendation for maintaining Danish as the main language of instruction in colleges and universities – something which would previously have been considered an over-reaction – or a joke: *Udvalget anbefaler, at dansk (...) sikres en placering i de videregående uddannelser som hovedsproget i undervisningen.* (Lund et al 2003:30)

Three years earlier, a Danish-based, yet English-born anti-laissez-faire language politician had threatened with disaster scenarios if such action against language death was not taken:

Shakespeare's "Hamlet" is a tragedy that ends with the stage littered with corpses. If a linguistic rerun of this scenario in Denmark is to be avoided, much more resolute language policy [than that suggested in Davidsen-Nielsen et al. (eds.) 1999] is needed. (Phillipson 2000: 150)

It remains an open question whether the recent initiative by the Danish Ministry of Culture will save many linguistic lives. As long as the future of Danish rests with the Danish people – a population increasingly familiar with English – and Denmark stays a political democracy, the only thing that might topple the continuing anglophone influence would be a downfall of Anglo-American cultural dominance – not a very likely scenario.<sup>3</sup>

As a senior researcher at the Danish Language Council put it long before the present debate:

På det sproglige område stikker der lidt af en anarkist i de fleste danskere. I Danmark har vi praktisk talt ingen levende tradition for at kæmpe for nationalsprogets eksistens. Vi aner ikke hvad det vil sige. Derfor ville vi heller ikke ane hvordan vi skulle bære os ad med at bekæmpe den engelsk-amerikanske påvirkning hvis dét skulle gå hen og blive et sprogpolitisk krav. (Bojsen 1989: 3)

Only fortress-like isolation and severe anti-English sanctions are sure to keep Phillipson's "linguistic corpses" from littering the Danish stage as long as English remains the world's undisputed language monolith.

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<sup>3</sup> A prospective near-future rival to English is Arabic, representing an Islamic culture which is now the only vocal challenge to Anglo-Saxon "globalization", and thus a language with an enormous potential for covert prestige in the eyes of non-anglophone subcultural and linguistically trend-setting groups the world over. So far, apart from a few "tasty" words like *kebab* and *shawarma*, recent Danish loans from Arabic mostly represent notions related to religion and politics – words with somewhat sinister connotations in Danish, e.g. *fatwa*, *ayatolla*, *imam*, *sharia*, *intifada*, *sunna*, *burka*, *talebener*, *al-Qaeda* and, perhaps the most dramatic of them all, *jihad*.

### 3. Getting the definition right

In the ongoing transnational debate concerning English-language influence on other languages, several concepts need clarification. Before establishing a working definition of the central term “Anglicism”, three recurrent concepts and presuppositions will be isolated and scrutinized:

- (a) *English*. In language-political discussions, the word “English” – in Danish “engelsk” – rarely refers to England as such; usually it does not even point to Britain. The geographical entity involved here is, little wonder, the United States. Today, in most countries “influence from English” means (linguistic) influence from the USA, the dominant anglophone nation ever since the decline of the British empire. For most of the twentieth century, and especially since the breakthrough of sound film in Hollywood around 1930, Britain has played second fiddle in the spread of Anglo-Saxon values and linguistic features – although in almost all European countries most teachers of English still try to emulate a British, or rather RP, pronunciation in their daily work. Ironically, the debate in non-anglophone countries concerning “English” influence bears a remarkable resemblance to the present English (i.e. British) debate on Americanisms.
- (b) *Post-war influence*. For decades now, most studies have focused on the influence of English after the Second World War. This may be relevant for Americanisms, but although Britain is now merely “aiding and abetting” in the global conception of local Anglicisms, the groundwork was done long before the wave of English loanwords hit foreign shores after WWII.<sup>4</sup> As early as in the early nineteenth century, the ruling classes in most European countries had adopted English “country” terms and habits, including everything from the word “gentleman” to sports (and terms) like tennis and golf. At the same time, through maritime contacts, countries like Norway and Denmark introduced masses of English loanwords, and even “modern” phenomena like code-shifting were found among trendy Scandinavian seamen.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Especially in Germany, the impact was strongly felt at an early stage (Dunger 1899); referring to the period before 1914, a later observer noted that “the flooding of German life and the German language with English had reached such an extent that the whole situation for Germany appeared almost threatening” (Stiven 1936: 101, cited in Viereck 1986: 110).

<sup>5</sup> An interesting example of this “premature” phenomenon is found in a booklet on Danish military slang (Larsen 1895: 29), where Danish naval seamen “understreger deres sammenhæng med søen” (= emphasize their sea cred) by using English expressions like “Take it easy!” and “(to) go on shore” instead of equivalent Danish expressions.

- (c) *Loanwords*. Several studies on Anglicisms, including most Anglicism dictionaries (with Sørensen (1997) as a notable exception) limit themselves to discussing “loans” from English, although thousands of Anglicisms are not direct loanwords, but belong to one of the many other categories of Anglicism (Sørensen 1997: 18). A second point to be made here is that Anglicisms are not loans to be paid for or handed back to English at a later stage. Instead, they can be seen as either “stolen goods” or rather – since it takes two languages to produce an Anglicism – as the fertile offspring of voluntary intercourse between English and other languages.<sup>6</sup>

What is, then, a reasonable definition of Anglicism? In order to cover the entire spectrum of present-day influence from English, the notion of Anglicism should be defined as *any individual or systemic language feature adapted or adopted from English, or inspired or boosted by English models, used in intralingual communication in a language other than English*.

This definition is wider than those used in most older works on English influence, but as the number of linguistic and discursive fields influenced by English keeps increasing internationally, all-inclusive definitions are needed, and they tend to gain ground nowadays.

In Denmark, this trend is found not only in the works of Fritz Larsen and Knud Sørensen (Larsen 1994 and Sørensen 1986, 1997 and 2003), but also in Denmark’s most recent encyclopedia (*Gyldendals Leksikon på Krak*, 2003, and only accessible online), whose entry for “anglicisme” reads:

**anglicisme**, overførelse af et sprogligt træk fra engelsk til et andet sprog, fx Venligst vent i stedet for Vent venligst.

In literal translation, the entry says: “*Anglicism*, transfer of a linguistic feature from English to another language, e.g. Kindly wait instead of Wait kindly.” (Of course, the English trigger here is the construction “please wait”.)

#### 4. *Creating a taxonomy of Anglicisms*

With my above definition in mind, and partly drawing on the typological framework in earlier papers (Gottlieb 1999, 2001a and in press), I will now establish a tripartite typology of Anglicisms with special reference to contemporary Danish. It looks as follows:

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<sup>6</sup> The foreign soil in which the English seeds are sown is the very reason why quite often, when translating into English, the best rendering of an Anglicism is not the “same” expression in English.

category	type	Danish examples	English trigger
Overt lexical borrowings	Single-word unit	<i>branding</i>	<i>branding</i>
	Multi-word unit	<i>still going strong</i>	<i>still going strong</i>
	Sub-word unit	<i>mega-</i>	<i>mega</i>
Covert lexical borrowings <sup>7</sup>	Single-word unit	<i>splejse</i>	<i>splice</i>
	Multi-word unit	<i>Stop en halv!</i>	<i>Stop and haul!</i>
Loan translations	Compound substitute	<i>kernefamilie</i>	<i>nuclear family</i>
	Multi-word substitute	<i>få enderne til at mødes</i>	<i>make ends meet</i>
Hybrids	Partial loan translation	<i>computerskærm</i>	<i>computer screen</i>
	Amalgamation	<i>softkernebrød</i> (kernebrød = whole meal bread)	<i>soft</i> (ice cream, etc.)
Pseudo-Anglicisms <sup>8</sup>	Fossilization	<i>butterfly</i>	<i>butterfly tie</i> (now obsolete, replaced by <i>bow tie</i> )
	Semantic change	<i>overhead</i>	<i>overhead</i> (= <i>slide</i> , <i>OHP transparency</i> )
	Lexical contamination	<i>stationcar</i>	<i>station wagon</i> (US); <i>estate car</i> (UK)
	Inflectional contamination	<i>autobahns</i> (German loanword with English plural ending)	<i>(highway)s</i>
	Morphological change	<i>fit for fight</i>	<i>fighting fit</i>
	Jocular derivation	<i>webmoster</i> (literally: web auntie)	<i>webmaster</i>

<sup>7</sup> These “camouflaged” loans are most recently discussed in Hamburger (2003).

<sup>8</sup> This buccaneering category, with its Danish manifestations, is treated in Jarvad (1998).

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Table 4b: REACTIVE ANGLICISMS				
category	type	anglicism	Danish standard	English trigger
Semantic loans	Extensions	<i>Jeg elsker dig!</i>	<i>Hav det godt!</i>	<i>Love you!</i> [= goodbye]
	Reversions	<i>overhøre</i>	<i>høre</i>	<i>overhear</i>
	Limitations	<i>morgen</i>	<i>formiddag</i>	<i>morning</i>
	Doubles <sup>9</sup>	<i>misse</i>	<i>gå glip af</i>	<i>miss</i>
Orthographic loans	Changed spelling	<i>litteratur</i>	<i>litteratur</i>	<i>literature</i>
	Changed punctuation	<i>Den erfarne amerikanske senator, Joseph Biden, har en anden udlegning.</i>	<i>Den erfarne amerikanske senator Joseph Biden har en anden udlegning.</i>	<i>... American senator, Joseph Biden, has ...</i>
Phonetic loans	Phonetic changes	<i>unik</i> pronounced as [you'nik]	[oo'nik]	<i>unique</i>
	Prosodic changes	falling intonation in exclamations	slightly rising intonation	Standard American intonational pattern
Morpho-syntactic calques <sup>10</sup>	Phraseology	<i>tone ned</i>	<i>nedtone</i>	<i>tone down</i>
	Constructions	<i>en ven af mig</i>	<i>en af mine venner</i>	<i>a friend of mine</i>
	Word order	<i>Dog, han vil ikke...</i>	<i>Han vil dog ikke ...</i>	<i>However, ...</i>
	Prepositional choices	<i>ud af vandet</i>	<i>op af vandet</i>	<i>out of the water</i>
	Valency	<i>Ring en ekspert</i>	<i>Ring til en ekspert / Tilkald en ekspert</i> <sup>11</sup>	<i>Call an expert</i>
Translationese <sup>12</sup>	Favoured cognates	<i>annoncere</i>	<i>meddele</i> (= announce) ( <i>annoncere</i> = <i>advertize</i> )	<i>announce</i>
	Default equivalents	<i>tilbringe</i>	<i>tilbringe, være (hos)</i>	<i>spend</i>

<sup>9</sup> This usually ignored subcategory (in Danish: "dubleringslån") is discussed in Gottlieb (2001b).

<sup>10</sup> Anglicisms of this category are especially numerous in translations (cf. Busk Rasmussen 2004).

<sup>11</sup> The lexeme *ekspert* is a favored cognate in its own right, competing with the established Danish term *fagmand*, originally a Germanism.

<sup>12</sup> For a discussion of this category of Anglicisms, common in translations, see for instance Aijmer (2001).



category	Danish example	pragmatic context
Tags	, <i>okay?</i>	Standard Danish oral interpersonal assurance formula.
Sentence-internal shifts	... <i>musikjournalister, som ikke respekterer, at prøve-tryk er for your ears only.</i>	Trendy journalese addressing a youthful audience.
Bilingual wordplay	<i>There is something rotten in Nyhavn</i> (on a political clean-up campaign poster displaying a rat, in Danish <i>rotte</i> )	Common linguistic device in Danish commercial punchlines and political slogans.
Sentence-shaped shifts	Way to go, girl!	The final words in a Danish music review.
Total shifts	[Danish websites in English.]	Addressing Danes and foreigners through English-only communication.
Domain losses	<i>Layout Construction: A Case Study in Algorithm Engineering</i>	Title of an academic research paper written by four Danish scientists. [80-90% domain losses in computer games, scientific papers, pop lyrics and certain business documents; more moderate losses in domains like advertisements, commercial brands and film titles.]

#### 4.1. Explaining the categorization used in the taxonomy

Although the taxonomy presented above consists of three main categories, it rests on a two-by-two categorization of the field. This categorization has been made using two distinctive features:

- the distinction found in my Anglicism definition above – between, on the one hand, items that are either *adopted* (i.e. retained, and thus obviously of English heritage) or *adapted* (i.e. “camouflaged” or literally translated into the recipient language) and items that are *inspired* or numerically *boosted* by English language phenomena.
- the distinction between items relating to what I will term *microlanguage* (including morphemes, phonemes, lexemes, phraseology and syntax), and those that belong to the *macrolanguage* (phenomena found at clause, sentence or text level).

The reason why my categorization has yielded a tripartite taxonomy – and not four main categories – is the following: I have not considered macrolanguage Anglicisms of a reactive nature, a potential category which I consider almost impossible to operationalize – it is hard to say with certainty when a sentence or a text (type) is inspired or boosted by English, unless of course one would consider individual translations or genres that display many translations worthy of inclusion.

The table below presents a brief overview of the main layout of the taxonomy used in this paper:

	Sub-clause items	Clause, sentence and text items
Adapted or adopted from English	Active Anglicisms	Code-shifts
Inspired or boosted by English models	Reactive Anglicisms	[not included in present model]

It is my hope that readers will find the sub-categories intuitively comprehensible, as each category is exemplified, and the English trigger behind each (Danish) example is given – something which is especially needed when dealing with adaptations, items which by definition hide their English ancestry to native speakers and foreign observers alike.

In the taxonomy, some of the terms are well established and universally agreed upon – e.g. semantic loans and morpho-syntactic calques – while others are new (sentence-internal vs. sentence-shaped shifts, for instance). Finally, there are terms that are debated, yet too established to deserve being discarded altogether: I have decided to stick to “borrowings” and “loans” and refrain from using the neologism “import words”, although it represents the critical stance to the notion of “borrowing” which I myself advocate (cf. the discussion above.).

It is perhaps worth noting that although the great majority of Anglicisms represent both the oral and the written mode, the typology above also includes those types that are only recognizable in the written mode (i.e. orthographic loans) or the oral mode (phonetic loans).

Hopefully, one of the advantages of my tripartite model of Anglicisms is that it makes it easier to delimit code-shifting when

investigating and discussing English influence. The notion of code-switching (or -switching) has remained one of the most disputed concepts in contact linguistics (cf. Johansson (2002: 96), who rightly criticizes the labeling of items like “jobba” in normal Swedish discourse as code-switching). Even established experts in the field may find it difficult to distinguish between loans and code-switching:

There is no absolute boundary between the extraneous elements in code-switching and loan-words (direct loans). Loan-words can be said to be the institutionalization of code-switching, and there is no objective way to determine at what point a foreign element has become an institutionalized part of the recipient language. (Larsen 1994: 22)

As this passage demonstrates, a simple and operational definition of the phenomenon is much needed.

### *5. Anglicisms: Cuckoos or multiple births? Some Danish examples*

In a world dominated by anglophone culture – not least in Denmark, with close links to Britain for at least 200 years, and to the US for more than a century – Anglicisms have long been present at practically all levels of language (cf. Tables 4a, 4b and 4c). An impressive amount of the words that enter the Danish language are indeed Anglicisms. A recent listing of new words in Danish – compiled by a researcher at the *Dansk Sprogævn* – includes 135 neologisms introduced in Danish from 1998 through 2003 (Nørby Jensen 2004). Of these 135 new words, all documented in Danish general-language corpora, only 44 turned out *not* to be Anglicisms. In other words, 91 of the items listed are Anglicisms, which means that 67 % of the present lexical growth of Danish is triggered by English.

Although the English influence on Danish may not have become monumental before the end of the Second World War, it certainly did not appear overnight, and the “modern” dynamic and leisure-like connotations of anglophone elements were established already before World War I (Dahl 1956). However, apart from a contribution by Otto Jespersen (1902), the question of English influence on Danish drew little academic attention in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – the first scholarly paper on the subject was published during WWII (Dahl 1942).

Earlier in this paper, we have discussed specific reasons for the growing impact of English worldwide, but the mechanics of English influence can also be explained along with other types of language change. As Jean Aitchison sees it, a shift of paradigm is on the way in historical linguistics:

Sounds and words do not gradually “turn into” one another, as had been assumed. Instead, a new sound or meaning creeps in alongside the old, and co-exists, sometimes for centuries. Eventually, the intruder takes over, like a young cuckoo pushing an existing occupant out of the nest. Yet even the young cuckoo idea is now recognized as over-simple. Multiple births – several new forms – may arise, and co-exist for a long time. Then eventually, one is likely to win out. (Aitchison 2004: 4)

Simple or not, the “cuckoo paradigm” is fascinating to both traditionalists and iconoclastic observers of language change, and this paradigm is probably what lies behind the worries of those linguists and others who warn against laissez-faire attitudes toward Anglicisms.

In Denmark, Knud Sørensen has expressed deep concern for the uncritical use of “unnecessary” Anglicisms that serve no purpose in the recipient language. In his final remarks in what remains the most thorough discussion of Anglicisms in Danish – and following up on his earlier book (Sørensen 1973) – he issues a warning against “overflødige og udanske udtryk”:

Efter min opfattelse er det ikke rimeligt at indføre anglicismer, hvis de begreber, de betegner, allerede er repræsenteret af danske udtryk, som betyder det samme: hvorfor *sideeffekt*, når vi har *bivirkning*? (Sørensen 1995: 221)

I will briefly deal with the notion of “unnecessary” loans before looking closely at Sørensen’s example. As with all things human, there is indeed a reason for even “unreasonable” behavior, including that of using the “unnecessary and un-Danish expressions” criticized above.

Only language features that are considered attractive to the speaker will be selected by that speaker, and in Scandinavia large segments of the population – notably the young – find that “unnecessary” Anglicisms may add flavor and prestige to what they say or write – a highly sensible strategy for people in the process of carving out a niche for themselves in the chaotic adult world. In isolation, the English-

sounding items may not signal prestige, but the contexts in which they first appear often do the job. To cite a Norwegian expert on Anglicisms, Anne-Line Graedler:

For at påvirkning skal skje, må det finnes brobyggere som har kjennskap til mer enn ett språk, og brobyggerne må ha nok prestisje til å påvirke andre. Det som ikke er kjent, kan ikke bli lånt; og det som er kjent, blir ikke lånt hvis det ikke blir oppfattet som verdifullt. (Graedler 2002: 81)

Graedler here demonstrates that exactly *that* which is considered valuable (to trend-setting users) in a speech community is what will enter that community – simple knowledge that ought to put an end to all discussions concerning which Anglicisms to accept, and which to condemn.

Returning now to the example chosen by Sørensen in his above-cited epilogue (“why use *sideeffekt* in Danish when we have *bivirkning*”), the way the terms are used in fact disproves his statement. A search in the Danish *Korpus 2000* – with 28 million running words, representing most major genres of contemporary written Danish<sup>13</sup> – shows that the collocates of *bivirkning* typically belong to the realm of medicine and carry a negative semantic load, whereas the contexts in which *sideeffekt* appears represent a much wider range of communicational settings, giving *sideeffekt* a neutral, often even positive semantic quality. This present division of labor in Danish differs from the situation in English, where the meaning of “side-effect” – uncontested by synonyms – is less specific than that of “bivirkning” in Danish. However, “side-effect” mostly holds negative connotations – something which one can easily ascertain by a quick search in the British National Corpus (<http://sara.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/lookup.html>).

Below are the first twenty-two concordance lines of each of the two Danish near-synonyms, as retrieved by the search engine of *Korpus 2000*:<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Free online access to *Korpus 2000* and its ten year older sister corpus, *Korpus 90*, at [www.korpus2000.dk](http://www.korpus2000.dk). Publications referring to the compilation and use of these corpora, and on the Danish corpus-based dictionary *Den Danske Ordbog* (Hjorth & Kristensen et al. (eds.) 2003-2004), at [www.dsl.dk/ddo\\_litteratur.htm](http://www.dsl.dk/ddo_litteratur.htm).

<sup>14</sup> As *Korpus 2000* and *Korpus 90* are lemmatized language corpora, all eight nominal forms of the search words “bivirkning” and “sideeffekt” are retrieved in the search process. In the tables, some of the original KWIC (Key Word in Context) concordance lines have been shortened to fit the page format.

Table 5a: *Korpus 2000* search for “bivirkning”: First 22 hits out of 355

uden de sundhedsskadelige bivirkninger som antibiotikaens dokumentation for, at lægemidler ikke har værre bivirkninger end konkurrerende lægemidler .  
vil vi få midler som med relativt få bivirkninger kan bruges mod alverdens lettere psykiske lidelser  
som "Dirty Drugs" på grund af de voldsomme bivirkninger .  
stoffer i hjernen, hvilket medførte så alvorlige bivirkninger , at kun meget syge patienter kom i  
Den nye medicins færre bivirkninger betyder , at lægerne også begynder at udskrive  
under mistanke for at kunne medføre alvorlige bivirkninger .  
Lykkepiller giver bivirkninger .  
Men det er hverken risikoen for bivirkninger eller afhængighed , der udløser den dybeste skepsis  
år har midler , som med meget få bivirkninger kan fjerne de fleste ubehagelige stemningslejer , og  
at udvikle et middel , som uden nogen bivirkninger kunne fjerne al angst , tristhed og depressioner  
eneste lægemiddel , der ikke er fundet nogen bivirkninger ved  
en kunstig ledvædske , som uden de traditionelle bivirkninger giver smertelindring og øget bevægelighed .  
Bivirkningerne diarré , kvalme , uro og søvnforstyrrelser er  
sammenholdt med gammeldags stoffers bivirkninger .  
tid , og den kan undertiden have uønskede bivirkninger .  
redde tre - fire menneskeliv om året uden bivirkninger " , siger udvalgsformanden .  
men massiv oplysning om sovemedicinens bivirkninger .  
om de følte sig godt tilpas, om bivirkninger som træthed , uoplagthed og svimmelhed .  
rentefradraget , uden der opstår store og negative bivirkninger på boligmarkedet " , siger Torben M .  
med medicin og lukker øjnene for medicinens bivirkninger , selvom de kan være ligeså slemme som  
afviser dog , at Serdolect har alvorlige bivirkninger .

The most frequent collocation in the 355 concordance lines is “alvorlige bivirkninger” (18 hits), and other frequent adjectives include “negative”, “uheldige”, “unødige” and “voldsomme”. Not a single positive adjective is found, and the basic form – the lemma represented in a dictionary – is rare: the search found only 53 instances of “bivirkning”. The determinate singular form, “bivirkningen” accounted for 4 hits only, leaving 298 instances of the plural forms of the word.

Table 5b: *Korpus 2000* search for “sideeffekt”: All 22 hits out of 22

Men der kan være positive	sideeffekter .
Væskeophobning er for eksempel en udbredt lønkroner , så er det jo en positiv	sideeffekt .
Den bedre vejledning har så positive	sideeffekt .
samtidig give en større konkurrence og som	sideeffekter , idet den kvalificerede del af arbejdsstyrken forøges
Det har hidtil mest været kommissionens	sideeffekt gøre det muligt at trimme koncernen endnu mere
Den uheldige	sideeffekter som korrupsion , nepotisme o.l. og ikke den
det , og så har hæshed i øvrigt den	sideeffekt af kædernes salgsvir er , at kunden fristes
Men det markedsføringsmæssige er en	sideeffekt , at man pludselig bliver gjort opmærksom på
Og derfor kan PensionsInfo også have den	sideeffekt .
Efterfølgende beskriver han de positive	sideeffekt , at flere i tide begynder at spare mere
Som en	sideeffekter , da man ved anvendelsen af søvand til
Det havde dog den	sideeffekt af fusionen peger Jens Kampmann på , at "
på fabrikkerne har i årenes løb som en	sideeffekt , at det for alvor skubbede til hans egne
30 procent , og samtidig får man en	sideeffekt vist sig nyttig i den civile trafik .
" socialarbejdere " - men hvor en betydelig	sideeffekt i form af ti procent flere hestekræfter fra
En	sideeffekt af deres idrætslige engagement er af socialt
holds 15 deltagere , har haft en positiv	sideeffekt af angrebene , som USA ikke ønsker ,
dansk industri , er det en ualmindelig positiv	sideeffekt : Lederne holder kontakten ved lige efter
at de fleste virksomheder oplever positive	sideeffekt ved Øststrøten .
til en mindstepris med den ikke uinteressante	sideeffekter ved EGA-indsatsen i form af færre sygedage ,
en afgørende betydning , ikke kun som	sideeffekt , at Vesteuropa gennem landbrugsordninger kunne
	sideeffekt af fromhed .

As is evident from this search, the connotations of the term “sideeffekt” are indeed positive; actually, the Danish adjective “positiv” is the most frequent *partner in crime* here: we find our lemma modified by “positiv” no less than 7 times out of 22. And not only are the semantic properties of “sideeffekt” the reverse of those of “bivirkning” (“an unexpected benefit” as opposed to “something dreaded and undesired”); in contrast to the established term “bivirkning”, the term “sideeffekt” is most often used in the singular form: it accounts for 17 out of the 22 hits.

This example of semantic field division between an established expression and a – sometimes stigmatized – newcomer may not be prototypical of the Anglicism situation in Denmark today, but having conducted a number of similar searches in Danish corpora and text archives leads me to the conclusion – which really only corroborates old lexicological knowledge – that outside the realm of specialized language, “synonyms” never stay synonymous. Whenever “unnecessary” Anglicisms gain ground, they owe this to their users’ desire to either fill connotational or pragmatic voids, or to expand or specialize existing semantic properties.

However, what may from the intruder's point of view constitute semantic expansion may very well, viewed from the existing language system, look like a loss of semantic nuances. When, for instance, as a consequence of prolonged and intimate contacts with the semantic distinctions in English, some Danes are now starting to use the Danish word *morgen* synonymously with English *morning*, i.e. including the (working) day before lunch, the term and concept *formiddag* – literally “fore-noon” – may lose some of its home turf. Yet, it is my firm belief that if an English-inspired neologism – in this case *morgen* in the “late” sense – turns out to be successful in the Danish language system, there must be some advantage for those who use it; if not, they would stop doing so.

But most candidates for acceptability and survival do not make it; the bulk of new Anglicisms are more like Aitchison's multiple births – cod roe might be a better metaphor here – than cuckoos. As elsewhere in nature and society, for every success there are several abortive attempts at fame and glory.

### 6. *Survival of the fittest? A hierarchy of success*

For the great majority of Anglicisms in Danish, the road to acceptance goes from the bottom and up – starting with membership of category 4 below. Very few items enter mainstream Danish directly (categories 1 and 2), and most of those which do are English borrowings designating phenomena that suddenly enter the daily lives of Danes: words like *tacos*, *trip hop*, *browser* and *dvd*. As should be obvious from the discussion above, items which refer to something already known are forced to fight their way up the ladder, or perish.

Table 6: The Anglicism ladder of success

<p><b>ACCEPTED ITEMS (established Anglicisms):</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Integrated items</b> (<i>not</i> intuitively identified as English loans): Danish <i>bive</i> &lt; from English <i>beave</i></li> <li><b>Naturalized items</b> (identified as English loans and commonly accepted): Danish <i>weekend</i></li> </ol> <p><b>NON-ACCEPTED ITEMS (peripheral Anglicisms):</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Implants</b> (English-sounding, accepted by certain user groups only): Danish <i>hænge ud</i> &lt; <i>hang out</i></li> <li><b>Interfering items</b> (often slipshod solutions, including mistranslations): Danish (<i>militære</i>) <i>barakker</i> &lt; (<i>military</i>) <i>barracks</i>; correct term: <i>kaserner</i> (an established Germanism)</li> </ol>
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Extending the natural metaphors used in the four terms above, you could say that these four categories represent not only a cline in terms of acceptability, but also a Darwinist race for survival, with many Anglicisms beginning their lives as interfering items, which – as in the above example – may mislead the unsuspecting reader (“barakker” are simple one-story houses: *prefabs*). Some interfering Anglicisms – in written sources often initially identified by quotation marks or italics – are later promoted to the status of “implants”. Out of these only few become naturalized, or – what happens rarely now in semi-bilingual Denmark – end up as fully integrated items. As we saw in the case of *sideeffekt*, many of the non-accepted items make it up the ladder by wedging themselves into Danish, thus contributing to semantic – including stylistic – differentiation.

The watershed between general acceptability (and thus idiomaticity) and the lack of it runs between types 2 and 3 above. In other words, we find non-idiomaticity whenever English words or constructions are copied in situations where their semantic content could have been expressed idiomatically, with existing (Danish) words or constructions. But as stated earlier, prospective Anglicisms often die young. One example of such an item lacking the “talents” for acceptance is the item *dobbeltlagsvinduer*, an ad hoc translation of “double-glazing” used once (in 1998) by a Danish London newspaper correspondent apparently forgetting the Danish term *termoruder* (literally, “thermo-panes”).

However, previously successful Anglicisms sometimes end up sounding unidiomatic and may eventually become obsolete. Examples of this are the original football term *corner*, which was soon replaced in Danish by *hjørne(spark)*, and *all right*, now obsolescent and yielding to *okay*.

## 7. *Not all is English that glitters*

When encountering Danish constructions that display English-looking features, one should not automatically categorize every such instance as a clear-cut Anglicism. In several ways, modern Danish and English move along the same path – something which is especially felt in the use of genre markers and other stylistic devices.

As a case in point, both Danish and English offer two genitive constructions, a synthetic one (“America’s bravest”; “Danmarks ungdom”) vs. an analytic construction (“the roof of the building”; “toppen af isbjerg”). Traditionally, Danish has favored the synthetic construction –

even with non-animate agents. Against this background, generations of Danish learners of English have been taught to use the synthetic construction only when animate agents are involved, e.g. to say “my uncle’s car”, but “the trunk of this car” (not “this car’s trunk”). However, in modern Danish – as was already pointed out almost forty years ago<sup>15</sup> – people sometimes utilize the analytic construction for non-animate agents, thus partly emulating the English distributional paradigm, and constructions like “taget på huset” have established themselves as alternatives to the synthetic genitives of the type “husets tag”.

As can be seen from the figures in the table below, the new, “English-style” genitive in non-animate contexts<sup>16</sup> has far from ousted the established, “all-Danish” construction. Expressed in marketing terms, it has obtained a share of around 20 percent:

Table 7: Danish genitive like *s* with non-animate agents

sources	Synthetic genitive	analytic genitive
	“non-animate” + <i>s</i> + <i>tag</i> (N)	<i>taget</i> (N) <i>på</i> + “inanimate”
ADL (c. 1800-1920) <sup>17</sup>	28 (100%)	0 (0%)
<i>Korpus 90</i> (1983-1992)	69 (82%)	15 (18%)
<i>Korpus 2000</i> (1998-2002)	61 (73%)	22 (27%)
<i>Google</i> (as of October 21, 2003)	474 (86%)	80 (14%)

<sup>15</sup> In a column from 1964, professor of Danish, Erik Hansen, in discussing analytic vs. synthetic constructions, placed the pro-analytic tendency among Danish language users as a “movement away from usage reminiscent of German or Latin, toward one which is more Anglo-Saxon.” (“En bevægelse bort fra en sprogbrug, der minder om den tyske eller latinske, mod en mere angelsaksisk.” Hansen 1973: 46). Sadly, this historical perspective is often missing in the debates on contemporary Anglicisms.

<sup>16</sup> All searches were made by combining the search node “tag” or “taget” with each of the following frequent collocates (with and without the genitive -s): *huset, bygningen, kirken, stalden, skuret, udhuset, carporten, garagen*.

<sup>17</sup> The ADL, or *Arkiv for Dansk Litteratur*, is an online compilation of a large number of Danish literary classics. For copyright reasons, contemporary works cannot be included in this public-domain text archive, accessible at [www.adl.dk](http://www.adl.dk). Unfortunately, no corpora or online databases represent Danish language between c. 1920 and 1983.

Admittedly, it is logically impossible to prove that this analytic construction has managed to establish its niche of roughly a fifth of the “grammatical Danish market” only because its English equivalent is subliminally present in the minds of those Danes who use it. Still, I would consider it a reactive Anglicism, and thus a candidate for inclusion in the “favoured cognates” subcategory (cf. Table 2).

### 8. *The roots of anglicification in Denmark*

While English shares many lexical features with French at the same time as it displays a rudimentary Germanic grammar, German and Danish are “hard-core” Germanic languages, and until a few decades ago, nobody would deny that Danish has much more in common with German than with English. Not only are the roots of modern Danish closer to those of modern German; Danish language history in the last 800 years tells of an almost constant impact on Danish from its big, ever-watching brother south of the border. This German influence peaked in two periods – the 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries saw a massive influence from *Plattdeutsch* (a.k.a. Low German),<sup>18</sup> while later centuries meant very close contacts with *Hochdeutsch* (High German) – and changed Danish dramatically in the process (Winge 2000). Not only did this mean a large percentage of German loans in the Danish language, it also meant that a significant portion of the population did not – or could not – speak Danish. Among the German-speaking groups were many of the most powerful people in the country, including several Danish kings and high-ranking members of the court, not to forget a significant proportion of the country’s artists, merchants and craftsmen.

The wars involving Denmark and Germany – one in 1848-1850, one in 1864 (which led to German annexation of a quarter of the Danish territory), WWI 1914-1918, and finally the German occupation 1940-1945 – may have built up the Danish animosity toward German language and culture which is still felt today, even

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<sup>18</sup> So massive, in fact, that Low German shared all the domains of Danish and managed to influence the Danish core vocabulary, including words for family members, highly frequent verbs and adjectives, etc. However, as Danish Germanist Vibeke Winge has aptly put it: “Dansk kunne assimilere disse lån og gik ikke til grunde af den grund.” (Danish managed to assimilate these loans and still did not perish), (Winge 2000: 41, my translation).

among young people, despite the fact that the Danish and German cultural and political landscapes are probably more alike now than ever. So, what has changed is, sadly, not the negative attitude to German (and to Danish teachers of German), but rather the cultural and linguistic power of German. Even *die Wende* in 1989-1990 altered nothing in this respect; people still don't watch German films, and apart from "über" and a few other recent German loans – some of which are borrowed from American English – German holds no influence on present-day Danish, a fact recognized by all and lamented by some of those who worry about the seemingly perpetual Anglo-American dominance.

But until Hitler's defeat in Stalingrad in 1943, German was indeed considered the main threat to the "purity" – a notion that never had any bearing in linguistic realities – of Danish. While Germany was still enjoying military success, and in the midst of the German occupation of Denmark, a Danish linguist wrote:

"Vi må lære av tyskerne at tage vare på modersmålet og bruge danske (nordiske) ord vor vi kan. I Hansa-tiden var nederlaget nær, og i fremtiden truer det fra samme side. *Intet andet tungemål end tysk er farligt for vort* – især plattysk (...). Derfor må vi være vågne. *Fremmede ord av græsk-romansk oprindelse (som sympati, interesse) gør os ingenting. Men tysk kan overvalde os. Let glider tyske ord ind på danske tunger*, og de er ikke lette at kende som fremmede ord fordi de i reglen har tryk på 1. stavelse ligesom danske – i modsætning til græsk-romanske ord der tydeligt manifesterer sig som fremmede ved trykket." (Togeby 1942: 7; emphasis added, while maintaining the author's "reformed" spelling.)

In English, the italicized passages say: "No other tongue than German is dangerous for ours (...). Foreign words of Greco-Latin origin (like "sympathy", "interest") do us nothing. But German can overwhelm us. German words slip easily into Danish mouths (...)." This author may have been right at the time, but he was soon proven wrong by the intensified post-war anglicization – a trend prophesied almost a century before by none other than N.F.S. Grundtvig, church-founder and the epitome of Danish nationalism in the nineteenth century. In one of his many essays, he stated: "Nu (...) vil det være os til ligesaa meget Gavn at knytte os til Engælenderne, som det har været os til Skade (...) at knytte os til Tydskerne." (Grundtvig 1849: 181). (It will be just as beneficial for us to associate with the English now as it has been disastrous for us to associate with the Germans.) He continues:

Sammenligner vi nemlig først *Sprogene*, da maae vi ikke alene finde, at det Engelske Sprog, trods alle de fremmede ord, Det mere har belæst sig med end optaget i sig, ligger igrunden vort Modersmaal langt nærmere end det Høitydske, men, hvad der er det vigtigste, at, om det end lærdes i alle vore Skoler og laae alle vore Skibsfolk og Købmænd paa Tungen, kunde det dog aldrig blive farligt for vort Modersmaal, medens derimod en sørgelig Erfaring har lært os, at vort Modersmaal kun ved et stort Vidunder har undgaet at fortrænges af det Høitydske baade i Kirken og Skolen og i hele den dannede Kreds af Folket.

According to Grundtvig, a man who still holds more mental power over the shaping of Danish identity than any other person, dead or alive, not only is English closer to Danish than is German, but his primary argument for persuading the Danes (who apparently are always in search of linguistic and cultural role models) to emulate English is – ironical as it may sound today – that even if English “was spoken by all our sailors and merchants, it could never constitute a threat to our mother tongue”. Many of his followers may disagree today, but he was so prolific as a writer that his pro-English views have hitherto gone unnoticed in Danish discussions on language politics.

By the time Grundtvig wrote this article, Danish had already borrowed more than a hundred English words. As early as in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, 79 words had been imported from English, with an additional 319 words borrowed during the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Sørensen 1997: 3). By the year 1900, the total figure was 398 – surpassing by far Otto Jespersen’s estimate of some seventy English loanwords (Jespersen 1902, cited in Haugen 1978: 81) but in perfect keeping with a Norwegian count reported in 1940, listing 531 English loanwords (Stene 1940/1945: 210).

Since 1945, due to the massive influx of Anglicisms all over Scandinavia, such counts – already somewhat naive before the war – have become increasingly difficult to make. However, the three modern Scandinavian dictionaries of Anglicisms all list more than 2,000 items. The following table (based on Gottlieb 2002) compares these Nordic titles with the world’s largest work on Anglicisms,<sup>19</sup> the German *Anglizismen-Wörterbuch*:

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<sup>19</sup> By sheer volume, this German-only dictionary is bigger than even Görlach’s ambitious 16-language Anglicism trilogy (Görlach 2001, 2002a and 2002b).

Table 8: Anglicism dictionaries compared

Author(s)	Title	Year of publication	Entries	Pages
Broder Carstensen, Ulrich Busse & Regina Schmude	Anglizismen-Wörterbuch: der Einfluß des Englischen auf den deutschen Wortschatz nach 1945	1993-1996	c. 3,500	1,752 (3 vols.)
Knud Sørensen	A Dictionary of Anglicisms in Danish	1997	6,180	405
Anne-Line Graedler & Stig Johansson	Anglisisme-ordboka. Engelske lånord i norsk	1997	c. 4,000	466
Bo Seltén	Ny svengelsk ordbok	1993	2,093	200

To the uninitiated observer, the entry figures would mean that Danish is indeed richer in Anglicisms than the other languages represented. However, as always in lexicography, definitions and resources are as important as “objective” linguistic data, so one should be careful not to draw conclusions from lexicographical evidence about lexical realities. In the case of *A Dictionary of Anglicisms in Danish*, Knud Sørensen employed a wider definition of “Anglicism” than did his Swedish, Norwegian and German colleagues. He included, among other types, verbs with English-inspired valency patterns, certain morphosyntactic calques and older, even obsolescent, borrowings – all very relevant to the description of linguistic influence from English. The other dictionaries are more post-war oriented (cf. the title of the German dictionary) and use more conservative criteria for inclusion, hence the limited number of entries for Swedish, Norwegian and German.

Today, German is as influenced by English as is Danish. This means that, paraphrasing the earlier-cited anti-German(ism) statement, “no other tongue than English is dangerous for ours” (a belief found in, for instance, Davidsen-Nielsen & Herslund (1999) and Rask (2000)<sup>20</sup>). However, some

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<sup>20</sup> This title – an alphabetical listing of words which the author believes should be banned – includes only Anglicisms, in stark contrast to earlier collections of “words to avoid”: Hjortø (1933) warned against hundreds of Greco-Latin loans, along with a few English borrowings (*bacon, slum, weekend*, etc.), while Tøgeby (1942) primarily wanted his readers to ostracize German loans.

thought should be given to the fact that, except when denoting new phenomena and thus adding to the Danish vocabulary, successful Anglicisms tend to compete with, and often replace, established Germanisms in Danish (cf. Gottlieb (forthcoming)).

### *9. The future of Danish: Use it or lose it*

More than twenty years back, when discussing the prospects of a future English-derived Danish, Fritz Larsen prophesied that “it would sound like a bad translation from English” (Larsen 1982: 145) and continued:

If this prospect is obnoxious to some, it is a sobering thought that so much of what we now consider good old Danish must at one time have sounded like a bad translation from German.”

A statement like the one just cited may offer some comfort to the concerned observer of English-inspired language change in Scandinavia. One may also find consolation in the fact that English has had no trouble surviving, in spite of its many early loans from French – something that has earned English the label “a semi-Romance language” (cf. McArthur 2002: 135). However, as with drugs and other substances, what is found stimulating in small doses may kill in large quantities – especially in suicidal hands – and language death in Scandinavia should by no means be ruled out. In Denmark, we have witnessed dialects dying out, as their speakers switched to Standard Danish – sprinkled with a few regiolectal features. It is now suggested (see Hjarvard 2004) that a similar shift is immanent, as ambitious Danes jockey for international positions by conducting all their communication in English. The central question is: will Scandinavians – who, in less than one generation, will all be able to speak English – really continue to use their own language in all situations? If the present tendency to lose certain domains (ranging from scientific discourse to computer games) gains momentum, the Scandinavian languages will lose so much prestige among their own users that they deteriorate into folklore and cease functioning as all-encompassing vehicles of communication.

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