

# INVESTIGATING LOAN WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS IN TOURISM DISCOURSE: A CORPUS DRIVEN ANALYSIS ON THE BBC-TRAVEL CORPUS

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## Abstract

The concept of language contact has been investigated by linguists and researchers in many domains, textual genres and languages (Yule, 1996; Cortese and Hymes 2001; Pinnavaia 2001; Carstairs McCarthy, 2002; Kennedy, 2003; Matthews, 2005), and associated with numerous different communicative situations, forms, and functions related to the use of foreign words in a text. However, the definition of language contact emerging from all these studies is not always a clear-cut one, since there is often an overlap of situations which can describe the presence of foreign words in a text, and the same process of linguistic borrowing is under constant evolution due to social and cultural changes in the relation between host and foreign languages or in the conceptual evolution of a particular topic. The following paper will discuss these numerous implications in one specific linguistic domain, namely the language of tourism. After a brief account of the theoretical framework related to this phenomenon (Dann, 1996; Cappelli, 2013), the paper will present the results of a corpus driven analysis carried out on an English corpus of travel journalism, with the aim of identifying the most significant contexts of employment of this linguistic technique and its functions. The study will focus in particular on the relationship between the use of foreign terms to indicate specific topics and destinations described in the texts of the corpus and their related discursive environments, in order to investigate whether loan words and expressions may be considered a pragmatic marker of social attitude in tourist discourse underlining implied different approaches towards specific themes and destinations.

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**Keywords:** Tourism discourse, phenomena of language contact, corpus linguistics

## **Introduction: Language contact and tourism discourse**

The use of foreign words in written and oral communication represents an important stylistic feature employed considerably throughout time and across different genres, registers and linguistic domains in order to fulfil specific communicative functions, such as referring to or introducing new cultural-specific entities and/or concepts related to foreign cultures, conferring an exotic and sophisticated flavour to the text or also a sort of formal importance through the presence of unknown and particular foreign terms. The interplay of functions, situations and genres related to the use of foreign words in written and oral communication has resulted in a similarly numerous amount of linguistic analyses and classifications of the phenomenon, sometimes with overlapping definitions. For instance, Kennedy (2003) and Yule (1996) deal with this phenomenon in relation to the property of word formation in a given language performed through the use of foreign words, while Carstairs McCarthy (2002) focuses in particular on the morphological peculiarities of foreign terms borrowed into English. Matthews (2005) suggests a deeper tripartite distinction among the concepts of calque, borrowing and loan word, defining calque as “a word or expression which has been formed by translation of a corresponding word or expression in another language” (ibid.: 45), borrowing as “the introduction into a language a of specific words, constructions or morphological elements of a language b” (ibid.: 41), and employing the term loan word to refer to “anything introduced into a language by borrowing from another language” and can thus result into a wide array of situations including “loan translation (= calque), loan shift (change of meaning under the influence of another language), loan concept or semantic loan (concept introduced by borrowing), loan blend (blend of which one element is foreign) and so on” (ibid: 211). Pinnavaia (2001: 69-70), employs the term borrowing recalling a more classical taxonomy:

“there is the loan or loan-word, that consists of a relatively faithful imitation of the form and meaning of a foreign lexeme, there is the loan translation that reproduces a foreign lexeme by using native material only; there is the semantic loan that reproduces only the content of a foreign lexeme [...] and lastly the loan blend that is either a compound or derivative, in part calque and in part loanword [...]”.

The notion of borrowing has also been considered in a translational perspective by Venuti (1995) who, in his diachronic analysis of the canonised practices characterising literary translations into English, identifies borrowings as a powerful foreignizing resource to reduce “translator’s invisibility” (ibid: 1) and domesticating translational canons in the Anglo-American literary systems, in order to “register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign texts, sending the reader abroad” (ibid.: 20).

The use of loan words and its related wide range of functions and stylistic effects represent an important linguistic feature also in tourism discourse. Many authors have extensively analysed phenomena of language contact in restricted case studies or in relation to specific language pairs and domains. Within the Italian linguistic Academia, Francesconi (2007) analysed the use of Italian borrowings in the English language of tourist gastronomy, while Margarito (2000 and 2007) focused on the use of stereotypical Italian borrowed expressions employed in French tourist discourse to describe Italian destinations. In particular, amongst these numerous works, Dann (1996) and Cappelli (2006, 2013) provide the key definitions and theoretical framework responding to the research objectives of the present study. Dann (1996: 183-185) considered “the use of real or fictitious foreign words”, including in some case even “a manipulation of the vernacular” as one of the main techniques of tourism discourse, used mostly in the “domain of gastronomy” with the aim of providing “local colour” to the text, allowing its “poetic treatment” and making it “both ego-enhancing and memory sustaining”. Cappelli (2013: 263) investigates the various forms of language contact in a work based on a corpus of “English tourism materials about Italy”, focusing on the use of Italian-English language crossing in tourism discourse and providing a detailed classification of its related functions and discursive environments. Instances of language contact in tourist texts are extremely salient to the reader, and for this reason they manage to perform the phatic, poetic and expressive functions identified by Dann as convergent properties<sup>1</sup> of the language of tourism, in the sense that the presence of loan words and expressions guides “the reader’s attention to the extra meaning attached to the foreign words chosen, or to writer’s choice to use them” (Cappelli, 2013: 360). In fact, through a precise selection of foreign terms and expressions a writer of tourist texts provides a specific view of the culture and features of a destination (expressive function) by simultaneously catching the reader’s attention (phatic function) and making him/her reflect on the implied cultural value of the terms (poetic function). Furthermore, language crossing instances work as authenticating linguistic devices reinforcing the “authenticity perspective” (Dann, 1996: 6) of the language of tourism.

The following study will investigate these implications through a quantitative and qualitative classification of language crossing instances identified in a corpus of English travel journalism, namely the BBC-travel corpus (BTC). With the aim of going beyond current traditional analyses of

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<sup>1</sup> Dann (1996: 34-67) identified a series of convergent and divergent properties which are typical of the language of tourism. Convergent properties include: Jacobson’s communicative functions, structure, tense and magic; while divergent properties are represented by: lack of sender identification, monologue, euphoria and tautology.

the phenomenon of language contact in tourism discourse, usually based on investigations of specific single etymologies of loan words or on their semantic domain classification, this paper will try to delineate a more comprehensive outline of the use of loan words and expressions in English travel journalism by identifying a series of etymological, semantic and discursive environment features which, as will be later demonstrated, may be significantly influenced by several linguistic and extra-linguistic factors.

### **1. Phenomena of language contact in the BBC-travel corpus: description of the corpus and research methodology**

The BTC was created in July 2012 by downloading 572 travel articles from the BBC Travel web site. The articles were written in English by a variety of authors<sup>2</sup> in cooperation with Lonely Planet travel guide book and digital media publisher. The corpus comprises 468,254 tokens (types 36,498; TTR 7.79) and the texts were PoS-tagged by means of the CLAWS part-of-speech tagger. The corpus was tagged using the C5 tagset with vertical output. Using a specifically designed perl script<sup>3</sup>, the number of tokens and types for each part-of-speech was quantified, identifying sixty-two categories.

The present work focuses on the word class of nouns since, as expected, their related data showed a considerable presence of foreign terms. The list of nouns was analysed by means of the WordSmith Tools (3.0), using in particular the Wordlist and Concord applications to select and verify the concordancing patterns of each foreign word retrieved in the BTC. PoS-tagging enabled the fast retrieval of neutral, singular and plural common and proper nouns (tokens: 150,114; types: 20,088). After this procedure, loan words were manually identified and checked by means of Wordlist, in order to retrieve real loans and exclude from the analysis biased data slipped through during the tagging procedure, such as toponyms and personal proper nouns. The total number of loan words thus resulted in 442 types (1.21% of the overall corpus types and 2.25% of the total amount of noun types). By further analyzing the collocational context of these terms by means of Concord, what emerged was that their surrounding discursive environment varied considerably according to the destination or the specific contents/domain described in the text, including loan terms marked by explicit translations, comments, peculiar punctuation and other features, or left in the text without any supplementary explanation. These aspects seemed

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<sup>2</sup> The texts included in the BTC were written by 185 different authors, including single-authored contributions and texts co-written by two or more authors.

<sup>3</sup> The perl script used to quantify the types and tokens for each part-of-speech was written by my colleague, Dr. David Brett (Department of Humanities and Social Studies of the University of Sassari - Italy).

to suggest that English tourism discourse reserves a different treatment and pragmatic attitude in the use of loan terms according to the perceived cultural distance between the target readers and the tourist attraction/destination described in the text, thus revealing an implied different stylistic approach influenced by cultural and extra-linguistic factors.

In order to investigate these implications in greater detail, we analysed the contextual environment around each loan word retrieved in the corpus, classifying them according to the following types of situations:

- Naming and translating (NT), occurring when loan terms were immediately followed by explicit translations, marked or not by brackets, commas, inverted commas etc, and by synonymic English terms, paraphrases and/or clear explanations of their meaning, as shown in the examples below:
  1. But the biggest attraction is the endangered ballena franca austral (southern right whale). [Argentina]
  2. learn Rejang, a dance so holy that it can only be enacted within temples. [Indonesia]
  3. Borsch, which originated in Ukraine, is not just beetroot soup, but one of the cornerstones of Ukrainian cooking. [Ukraine]
- Pure loans (PL), referring to the use of foreign lexical and idiomatic material without any immediate corresponding translation or explanation into English, as reported in the following concordance lines:
  4. The Largo dos Guimarães, a tiny plaza where the bonde stops, [...] [Brazil]
  5. [...] you can be pretty sure she is a tourist who is paid to be made up as a geisha, and not a real maiko or geiko! [Japan].
- Loan blends (LB), in which borrowed foreign terms were combined with explanatory lexical items or morphological elements in English uncovering or suggesting their original meaning, as illustrated below:
  6. The explosive colours, the botanicas shops selling spell components for use in voodoo[...] [USA]
  7. But remember: half the fun of bàcaro-hopping is discovering new places for yourself. [Italy]
- Integrated borrowings (IB), identifying those foreign terms and expressions related to tourist topics nowadays integrated in the English lexicon<sup>4</sup> and nonetheless highly noticeable in the

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<sup>4</sup> Loan terms were classified as integrated borrowing by checking their etymological origin on the Oxford English Dictionary (online version) <http://www.oed.com/> [last accessed: January 2013].

linguistic context of the message, as shown in the following examples:

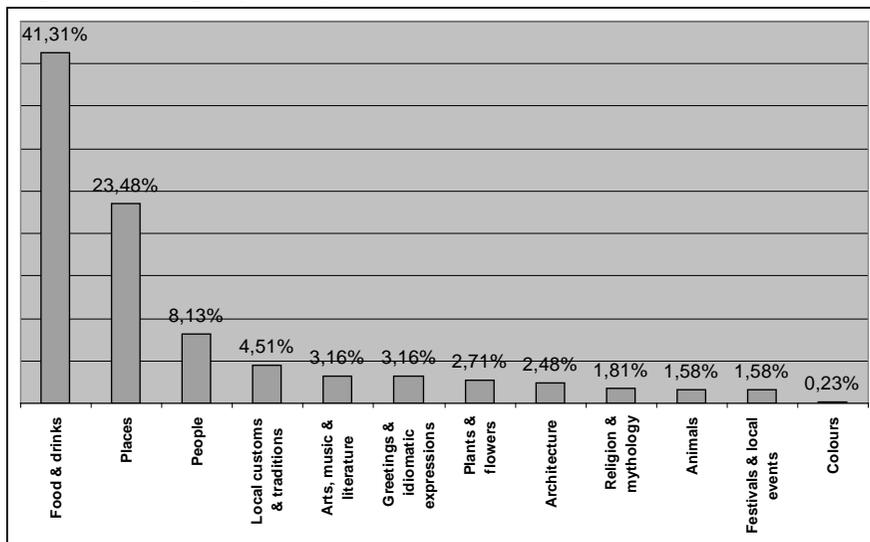
8. [...] the Italian brio, urban bonhomie and original décor are as authentic as it gets. [Australia]
9. Ha Giang is the final frontier for motorbiking aficionados in Indochina. [Cambodia].

The analysis also highlighted some hybrid situations, such as loans preceded by naming and translating strategies (defined as inverted NT), or loan blends combined with naming and translating strategies, following (LB – NT combined) or preceding (LB – inverted NT) the loaned element of the expression. All these specific situations will be presented and explained more deeply in the following sections.

## 2. Description of the results

### 2.1 BTC loan words and expressions: semantic domains and related discursive environments

The instances of loan types identified in the BTC revealed as expected a large variety of topics and semantic domains, ranging from specific national traditions, places and culture-bound features, to more generic fields including, for instance, food and drinks or different kinds of objects. As illustrated in the graph below, foreign loan words were more predominant in the semantic field of food and drinks, thus confirming the observations already made by Dann (1996) and Cappelli (2013) followed by places and to a far lesser degree by the other semantic categories identified in the corpus such as people, objects, local customs and traditions and so on.



Graphic 1: BTC loan words and expressions – semantic categories %

What clearly emerges from these data is that the most relevant discursive environment for each semantic category is that of naming and translating. With an overall percentage of 55.09 %, this strategy is evidently considered to be the most effective and reliable strategy through which loan words and expressions are included in tourist texts. In fact, by means of naming and translating writers of tourist texts manage to balance the employment of foreign terms and consequent strangerhood perspective by providing guided interpretations of the foreign elements borrowed from the languages of the promoted destinations, thus “lead[ing] tourists and readers in their discovery of the host country, while, at the same time, ‘protecting’ them by making the unknown familiar and desirable” (Cappelli, 2013: 359). As shown later in the analysis, beside these promotional properties, naming and translating environments can also be employed with advisory functions, for instance when they are used to explain and clarify specific habits, traditions and cultural aspects of the hosting country (expressed by means of loan words) with the aim of warning and protecting tourists and thus prevent wrong behaviours or potentially dangerous situations.

Categories	NT	inverted NT	PL	LB	LB – NT combined	LB – inverted NT	IB	Total
Food & drinks	48.35%	4.40%	13.74%	4.40%	1.10%	0.55%	27.47%	100%
Places	53.27%	5.61%	23.36%	1.87%	-	-	15.89%	100%
People	39.47%	5.26%	10.53%	10.53%	2.63%	-	31.58%	100%
Objects	55.56%	3.70%	11.11%	3.70%	3.70%	-	22.22%	100%
Local customs & traditions	66.67%	4.76%	4.76%	4.76%	9.52%	-	9.52%	100%
Arts, music & literature	50.00%	-	7.14%	14.29%	-	-	28.57%	100%
Greetings and idiomatic expressions	50.00%	7.14%	7.14%	7.14%	-	-	28.57%	100%
Plants & flowers	38.46%	7.69%	-	23.08%	-	-	30.77%	100%
Religion & mythology	50.00%	12.50%	-	-	-	-	37.50%	100%
Animals	42.86%	14.29%	14.29%	-	-	-	28.57%	100%
Architecture	38.46%	7.69%	7.69%	7.69%	7.69%	-	30.77%	100%
Festivals & local events	57.14%	14.29%	-	-	-	-	28.57%	100%
Colours	100.00%	-	-	-	-	-	-	100%
Overall % in the BTC	49.78%	5.31%	13.72%	5.09%	1.55%	0.22%	24.34%	100%

Table 1: BTC loan words and expressions – semantic categories and related discursive environments percentages

By observing the results from each category, NT and inverted NT represent the most common discursive environments in all fields, reporting higher or majority percentages in comparison to other typologies of discursive environments, particularly in strongly culture-bound topics, such as local customs & traditions, festival & local events (see examples 10 and 11), and highly referential categories, such as places, objects and food & drinks (examples 12 to 15) most likely because these semantic domains are perceived to be those which tourists need to be most clearly informed about:

10. Churches conduct mass at dawn, rich with aguinaldos (Puerto Rican Christmas carols)[...] [Puerto Rico]
11. The islands' sheltered waters also attract chow lair (sea gypsies) who live in a village onshore [...] [Thailand]
12. There are free live concerts all over the city, with either brass bands (bandas) or drummers and vocalists (blocos) [...] [Brazil]
13. This old-fashioned cafeteria is a surviving milk bar (bar mleczny) [...]. [Poland]
14. Ladies have to don the traditional abaya – the loose black robe that is worn by women in the Gulf – and cover their hair. [Abu Dhabi]
15. With a forkful of the apple cake or apfelkuchen, as Berliners would have it [...] [Germany]

On the contrary, the percentage of pure loan instances is not very high (overall average: 13.72%), thus suggesting that in tourism discourse loan terms are preferably used by balancing the lure of foreign lexicon without compromising readability or imposing a sense of “inferiority” (Dann, 1996: 183) on the reader by means of obscure and unexplained linguistic items. PL terms and expressions identified in the corpus mainly related to the categories of places, animals, food & drinks and objects (see e.g. 16-19) thus outlining an association with everyday and familiar topics for the target reader, as the examples below demonstrate.

16. Mealtimes are spent with Centre staff, most often Argentinean asado under the Patagonian stars. [Argentina]
17. A hint of the Islamic influence still remains at Can Curreu, one of the island's first agroturismos when it opened in 1997 - the door handles on each of the 17 bedrooms are the shape of the hand of Fatima. [Spain]

In the above examples, the meaning of the loan is not explicitly given, but it can be evoked by a process of lexical framing (Minsky 1975; Fillmore 1976) activated by the surrounding context. In fact, in example 16 the term *mealtime* suggests the reader the semantic domain of food & drinks

to which the loan *asado* refers to, while in example 17 the words *handles* and *bedrooms* help the reader in associating the term *agroturismos* to a type of accommodation.

Cognitive framing was often reinforced in many instances of the BTC PL environments through loans closely preceded (e.g. 18) or followed (e.g. 19) by other paragraphs containing naming and translating strategies that managed to reduce the alienating effect of PL and facilitate the process of understanding of the loan term.

18. After sunset, there is a euphoric iftar, or meal, to break the fast, [...] [...] After an iftar of dates, soup or savoury snacks, people of all ages binge on sweets until the late-night feast – [...] [Morocco]
19. Throughout the city, it is customary for Venetians to duck into the nearest bàcaro for a drink and a bite, [...] [...] Typically, a bàcaro is an animated hole-in-the-wall decorated with wine bottles and perhaps a few stools or small tables. [Italy]

Loan blends, also combined with naming and translating strategies following or preceding the loaned element of the expression, reached a total of 6.86% of the corpus discursive environments. The semantic categories with the highest percentages of LB and LB derived situations were those of plants & flowers, local customs & traditions, arts, music & literature, people and objects, as shown in the examples below. By further reinforcing blends with an inner (see e.g. 21 and 23) or preceding (see e.g. 22) translation of the loaned term, the alienating effects of these expressions was considerably reduced without losing the persuasive effect carried out by the presence of a catchy foreign term in the text. Consequently, by providing a partially assisted interpretation of foreign blended terms, loan blend discursive environments activate processes of lexical framing and mitigate the distancing impact of loan expressions by involving readers in the inferential discovery of foreign words meaning and of their destination-linked origins, thus representing a discursive alternative to direct naming and translating strategies.

20. Barasti huts made from palm fronds were cool and easy to construct. [Dubai]
21. In the fort's courtyard are several small wooden boats and traditional barasti (palm-leaf) houses. [Dubai ]
22. In addition to its standard line-up of a pilsner-style (rubia), extra dark bock (negra extra) and wheat (trigo) beers, the brewery also produces a chili pepper beer (con aji picante). [Argentina]
23. Both natural events bring the Japanese out en masse to celebrate the changing seasons, with hanami (cherry blossom viewing) parties [...] [Japan]

Finally, the analysis also revealed a considerable amount of integrated borrowings (24.34%) related to the semantic categories taken into account in this work. IBs were identified by checking the etymological origin of each loan word on the Oxford English Dictionary<sup>5</sup>. Their high frequency within the BTC tourist related topics suggests that English tourist discourse tends to resort to the appealing power of foreign words also by making use of this type of term that, even if integrated in the English lexis, can still evoke exotic and mysterious images in the reader's mind, thus triggering his/her curiosity and reinforcing the persuasive function of tourist texts. The majority of IB instances in the BTC occurred in the categories of religion & mythology, people, architecture, plants & flowers, greetings & idiomatic expressions, arts, music & literature, festival & local events and food & drinks as shown in the following selection of examples:

24. We find humble shophouses like Roti Mataba [...] Or renowned Thip Samai, a vision of inferno, open burners showering the pavement with sparks. [Thailand]
25. The 800 sq km reserve is also home to nilgai, sambar, chital (spotted deer), wild boar and numerous species of bird [India].
26. [...] Pierre Charles L'Enfant, a confidant of George Washington, who in 1790 was given carte blanche to design the city from scratch. [USA].
27. La Reina del Sur (Queen of the South), for instance, is a popular narco novela airing on Telemundo. [Mexico]
28. Bun oc are boiled snails [...], placed in a bowl of rice vermicelli and snail consommé poured over. [Vietnam]
29. Want to steam away the travel grime in Istanbul's famed hamams – but confused by the rituals? [...] [Turkey]
30. Foreign otaku (geeks) should definitely hit Akihabara and Shinjuku for manga and electronics. [Japan]

In examples 31 and 32 it is possible to notice that very often integrated borrowings were accompanied by direct translations of their meaning, even if their degree of assimilation in the English lexis should have not required any supplementary explanation to foster the readability of the text, as demonstrated in the previous examples 29 and 30 in which the terms hamam and manga have been respectively employed without any additional translation or description.

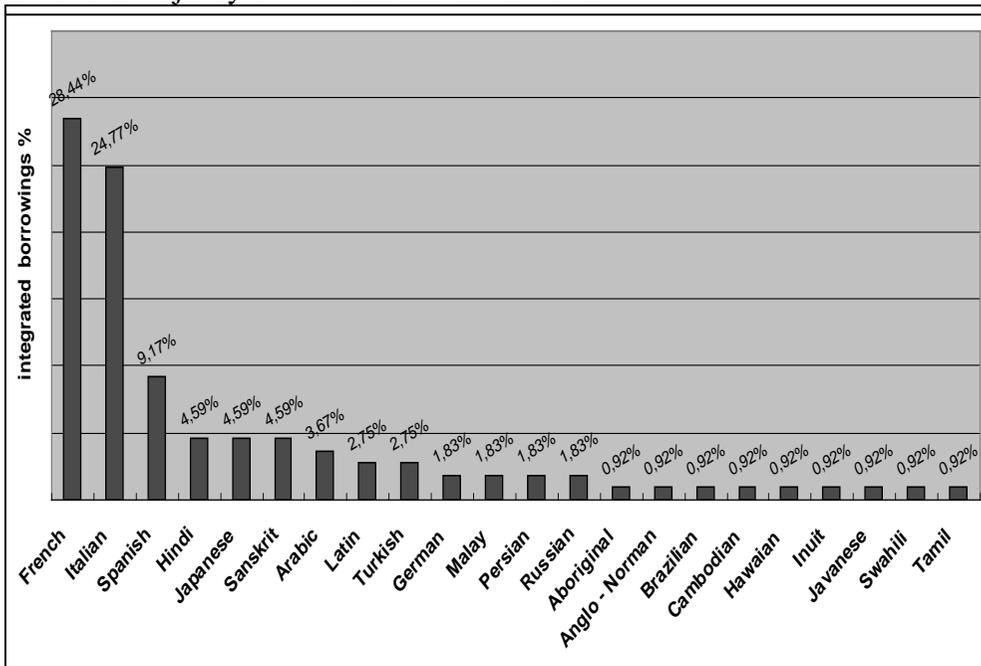
31. Features include cave hamams (Turkish baths), rock-cut arches, walls patterned with volcanic colour-banding and [...]. [Turkey]

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<sup>5</sup> Oxford English Dictionary (online version) <http://www.oed.com/> [last accessed: January 2013].

32. [...] an otaku is someone (generally male, but not always) who devotes considerable time and energy to watching anime, reading manga (Japanese comics) and playing video games. [Japan]

Another interesting aspect of the use of integrated borrowing in the BTC concerns the etymological origin of these terms. As shown in the graph 2 below, French, Italian and Spanish are the main three languages from which the majority of IB instances came from.



Graphic 2: etymological IB classification in the BTC

The frequency with which these three languages are resorted to seems to suggest an implied closer understanding of the cultural and linguistic features representing these countries on behalf of the target English speaking public, and for this reason the use of integrated borrowings from French Italian and Spanish has been consistently employed throughout the corpus also to describe concepts and topics related to other destinations, as reported in the following examples (33 to 35)

33. I am able to sate myself with a very small order of Hainanese chicken rice, in portions that are by Singapore standards barely an aperitif. [Singapore]

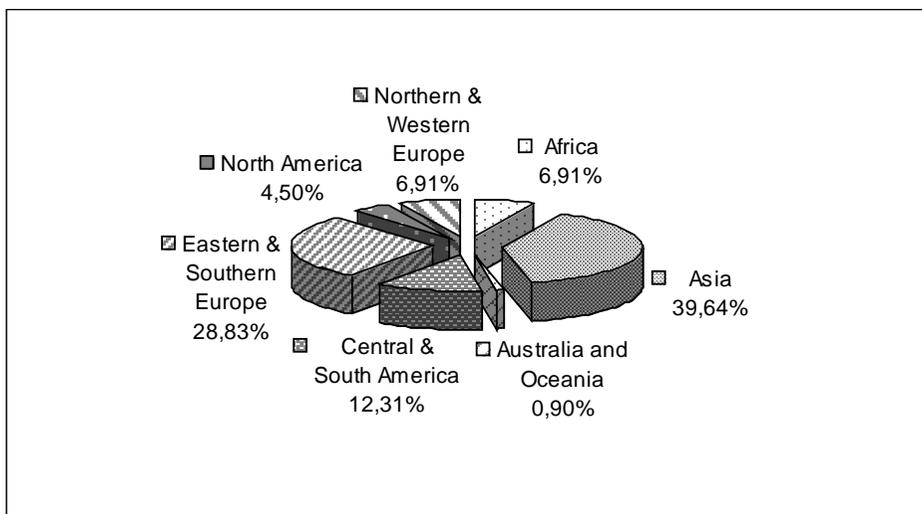
34. [...], surfers can ride on 6ft-high artificial waves, rent a beachfront cabana or private villa to be treated like royalty for a day [USA]

35. Seattle's outdoor aficionados - who tend to be health conscious and environmentally-minded - have always held their bicycles dear. [USA]

## 2.2 Tourist destinations and related loan words and expressions discursive environments

The second part of the analysis took into account the relationship between the destinations described in the texts of the BTC and the related distribution of loan words and expressions discursive environments, with the aim of identifying potential patterns of implied preferences towards the treatment of loan materials potentially influenced by cultural and/or extra linguistic factors.

The destinations were grouped into seven categories representing their continental dislocation, as illustrated in the graph below, reporting also the related percentages of loans instances. More precisely, since loans related to European countries represented 35.74% of the corpus and there were relevant differences between the data related to Northern & Western Europe and Southern & Eastern Europe, we decided to apply such a division in order to analyse more deeply the cultural and linguistic implications associated to with this partition.



Graphic 3: percentages of BTC loan words and expressions based on destinations

The following chart reports the percentage relationship between destinations and the discursive environments of the BTC loan words and expressions. Integrated borrowings were not included in this classification because their use was not always linked to a specific destination since, as previously mentioned, their degree of assimilation within the English language allowed their employment across different countries not necessarily corresponding to the etymological origin of the terms.

Categories	NT	inverted NT	PL	LB	LB – NT combined	LB – inverted NT	Total
Africa	70.83%	4.17%	12.50%	8.33%	4.17%	-	100%
Asia	70.71%	9.29%	5.00%	12.14%	2.86%	-	100%
Australia & Oceania	66.67%	0.00%	0.00%	33.33%	-	-	100%
Central and South America	56.82%	13.64%	25.00%	2.27%	-	2.27%	100%
Eastern & Southern Europe	66.02%	3.88%	25.24%	4.85%	-	-	100%
North America	37.50%	-	50.00%	12.50%	-	-	100%
Northern & Western Europe	52.17%	-	39.13%	-	8.70%	-	100%
Overall % in the BTC	64.88%	6.80%	18.13%	7.93%	1.98%	0.28%	100%

Table 2: percentages of BTC loan words and expressions based on destinations and related discursive environments

Similarly to the previous classification based on semantic categories, the percentage of naming and translating and inverted naming and translating reached the highest values (71.67%), followed by the pure loan (18.13%), loan blend and loan blend derived (10.19%) discursive environments. By further analysing the distribution of these terms based on destinations, NT and inverted – NT strategies were the predominant discursive contexts in African (70.83%) and Asian (70.81%) destinations, followed by Eastern & Southern Europe (66.02%), Australia & Oceania (66.67%), Central & South America (56.82%) and finally by Northern & Western Europe (52.17%) and Northern America (37.5%). The unexpectedly high results of Australia & Oceania, which include mainly English speaking countries, should be read by taking into account the low number of foreign word instances related to these destinations, which amounted to the 0.90% of the entire corpus and comprised just a few cases of aboriginal or vernacular terms thoroughly translated or blended to other English explanatory words. On the contrary, the categories that included a majority of non-English speaking countries recurred almost systematically with naming and translating contexts around loan words (see also previous examples 10 to 14), thus outlining an implied cultural approach on behalf of tourist texts writers who, by means of NT strategies, manage to mediate the perceived cultural and linguistic distance between these nations and related loan words and English speaking target readers.

Pure loan percentages seem to confirm this perspective because they are higher in categories including English speaking countries, such as North America and Northern and Western Europe, and comprise instances referring mainly to more common and everyday life topics such as places and food & drinks. These data seem to indicate a more confident approach in the employment of loan words when these can be supported also by linguistic and cultural proximity factors which facilitate the understanding of their meaning for an English speaking public, such as their spelling and morphological structure, which in most cases was similar to that of the corresponding English terms (see examples 36), or the reference to terms related to everyday life situations of non-English speaking communities living in these areas, such as the use of French loan expressions in Canada (e.g. 37) or the presence of Spanish food terms in the USA deriving from the culinary traditions of local ‘Spanglish’ communities (e.g. 38 and 39).

36. Antique shops surround the good value Hôtel Edmond Rostand, in the elegant quartier des antiquaires. [France]
37. One lovely place to stay is the historic auberge Saint-Antoine, formerly the site of an archaeological dig. [Canada]
38. [...] non-traditional toppings like artichokes or Mexican carne asada or Thai spices. [USA]
39. Chef and owner Johnny Hernandez addresses me through the steam rising from arrachera en salsa de tomatillo [...] [USA]

The percentages of PL discursive environments progressively decreased in Central & South America (25%) and Southern & Eastern Europe (25.24%), displaying the lowest levels in Africa (12.5%) and Asia (5%), which consequently are still perceived to be the most exotic and unfamiliar destinations. Finally, the distribution of loan blends and LB derived environments displayed the highest values in Australia & Oceania for the reasons previously mentioned, more or less equal proportions across Asia (15%) Africa (12.5%) and North America (12.5%), and the lowest rates in Eastern & Southern Europe (4.85%) and Central & South America (4.54%). On the whole these discursive contexts were the least frequent ones in the corpus (an overall 10.19% compared to the 71.68% of NT strategies and 18.13% of pure loan instances), thus mainly representing an alternative to provide balance and vary the recurrent employment of naming and translating strategies.

## Conclusion

With the aim of discovering potential patterns of social attitudes in tourist discourse realised by means of foreign words employed by the wide range of authors of the *BTC* texts, the study identified the main discursive environments surrounding the phenomena of language contact in a corpus of

English travel journalism, and the way in which their discursive environments may vary according to the specific topics and destinations described in a tourist text.

What emerged is that naming and translating strategies are the most frequent discursive contexts both in terms of semantic categories and destinations, particularly for those topics and locations perceived as being the most culturally distant or deemed to be the most functionally urgent and important for the potential tourist to fully understand. These strategies manage to mediate between the appeal of the unknown and need for reassurance, between strangerhood effects and authenticity perspectives, thus allowing a deeper awareness and comprehension of the cultural features, habits and traditions of a hosting country and facilitating tourists in their interactions with local people and customs. Pure loans represented the opposite discursive context in the *BTC* and was associated mainly with semantic categories relating to everyday life and familiar topics, or to countries considered to be culturally closer to the linguistic and cultural background of an English speaking public, thus indicating that the choice of loan words or expressions left alone in a sentence is predominantly influenced by the perceived cultural and linguistic proximity to the themes or destinations described. Amongst these contrasting situations, loan blends and LB derived environments displayed the lowest frequency percentages in each semantic category and destination comprised in the corpus. Nonetheless their presence conveyed an alternative compromise to balance the alienating effect of PL instances or the potentially patronizing approach of NT contexts, thus representing a sort of continuum between NT and PL discursive environments. Finally, the etymological origin of the majority of integrated borrowing identified in the *BTC* mirrored the implied proximity between French, Italian and Spanish derived elements and Anglophone culture, thus denoting a closer understanding of the cultural and linguistic features of these countries amongst the target English speaking public.

In conclusion, this analysis has attempted to demonstrate that the employment of loan words and expressions represents a feature of tourism discourse which may reveal deep intercultural and linguistic implications able to shape and create a specific perception of tourism-related realities. Further investigation will be needed to verify whether similar trends may emerge from larger corpora of English tourism discourse, or in other languages in order to have an even deeper awareness on the importance of language contact as a “multifaceted sociological phenomenon that takes into account different cultural interpretations and their correspondingly diverse linguistic articulations” (Dann and Parrinello, 2009: 339).

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