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## RECENT ENGLISH BORROWINGS IN THE LANGUAGE OF YOUNG POLES

### NAJNOWSZE ZAPOŻYCZENIA ANGIELSKIE W JĘZYKU MŁODYCH POLAKÓW

**Abstract:** People have always borrowed what they needed, both things and words. Language contact has launched a plethora of different phenomena, of which word borrowing seems to be a conspicuous and very influential process. This article is intended to delve into the problem of English loan words in the language of young people in Poland. We shall establish the most recent contributions to Polish that are regularly used by young people and point out the channels through which borrowings enter the language. Further, some light will be shed on the frequent forms of adaptation loans undergo. Finally, young people's attitudes towards borrowings will be presented as well as the influence of loan word usage on the process of communication.

**Key words:** English, borrowing, language contact, communication, young people's speech

**Abstrakt:** Głównym celem artykułu jest analiza jednego z najważniejszych zjawisk związanych z kontaktem językowym – zagadnienia zapożyczeń językowych. W centrum uwagi znajdują się najnowsze zapożyczenia z języka angielskiego w komunikacji polskiej młodzieży. Materiał badawczy został pozyskany za pomocą ankiety internetowej, w której wzięło udział 76 osób w wieku od 15 do 30 lat, głównie studentów lubelskich uczelni wyższych. Zebrane dane pozwoliły na ustalenie listy najczęściej używanych anglicyzmów, motywacji dla ich stosowania oraz zbadanie wpływu na komunikację młodych ludzi. Analizie poddano także wskazane przez respondentów adaptacje, jakim podlegają te wyrazy we współczesnej polszczyźnie.

**Słowa kluczowe:** język angielski, zapożyczenia, kontakt językowy, komunikacja, język młodzieży

### 1. Introduction

Language contact inevitably leads to the process of word borrowing. In this article, the language of young Poles will be examined in terms of

the English loan words they employ. We shall present and analyse the results of our questionnaire-based research conducted among university students exhibiting differing levels of English proficiency. The major aims of the study are to construct an inventory of the most popular English borrowings found in young people's speech and to analyse linguistic adaptations the loans undergo. Finally, attitudes of young Poles will be explored towards the use of borrowings in their everyday interactions and the impact they have on the effectiveness of communication.

The article is organized as follows. We start by defining the concepts of borrowing and Anglicism as well as specify the major types of borrowings. Then, the speech of young people will be briefly characterized. In the research methodology section the major research questions, hypotheses, tools and research participants will be discussed. We shall also outline the procedure of the research project. Next, research findings will be displayed in the form of tables and diagrams, discussed and interpreted. We shall conclude by presenting the inventory of the most recent English borrowings indicated by the survey respondents, examine their occurrence in the National Corpus of the Polish Language and indicate adaptations the loans undergo in young people's conversations.

## 2. Theoretical considerations

### 2.1. Borrowings: Definition and types

Local proximity of countries, intense trade, political and cultural contacts inevitably lead to the rise of lexical borrowings. Neighbouring languages influence each other though the impact of the country that is dominant, for example in terms of military power, will definitely be more extensive. In the contemporary globalised world, with quick information exchange, intense growth of social media and easy intercultural contact, the development of various loanwords should come as no surprise.

As explained in Bradbery (2020), the concept of borrowing can be understood as taking words, and ideas from another language or another person's work and using them in your own language or work. The term 'borrowing' comprises a variety of language elements such as sounds, morphemes, words, set-phrases or idiomatic expressions, meanings, and syntactic structures taken from linguistic systems other than ours.

We distinguish several types of borrowings. *Direct borrowings* are adopted directly, either without any changes in their original form or with only small alterations, as in *komputer* 'computer', *bank* 'bank' or *party* 'party'. As argued by Katamba (1994, p.133), 'a word may be passed indirectly like a relay baton from one language to another, and to another, e.g. *kahveh* (Turkish) > *kahva* (Arabic) > *kof-*

*fię* (Dutch) > *coffee* (English). This is called *indirect borrowing*. *Semantic loans* involve the extension of the original meaning of a Polish word under the influence of English. According to Haspelmath and Tadmor (2009, p.14), 'it is —the transfer of meaning without the transfer of words.' Thus, the meaning of the verb *definiować* was extended from 'to define' to 'make up or establish the character or essence of'. *Hybrids* are a type of loanwords in which the phonemic shape of a word has been imported only partly and the rest of the unit constitutes the native portion. For instance, in the word *ciucholand* 'a shop with second-hand clothes', morphemic substitution has operated independently of the phonemic one. We also encounter language *calques* which mirror the original construction by means of some native elements, as observed in the Polish expression *wydawać się być jakimś* 'to seem to be'. Borrowed syntactic structures or *syntactic borrowings* can be defined as 'the reproduction of certain syntactic patterns from a donor language in a recipient language.' (Górnica, 2020, p.12). A good example of this process are nominal modifiers which are characteristic of English, as in *credit bank*, and which are now often heard in Polish conversations, e.g. *biznes informacja* 'business news'.

Mott and Laso (2020, p. 155) propose another classification of borrowings:

- Loanwords - adopted wholesale, with little phonological or morphological change,
- Loan creations - new coinages made from loan material,
- Loanblends - adopting only part of the form of a foreign lexical item,
- Loan shifts - borrowing the meaning, but preserving the native form,
- Pure loan translations (calques), where the original morphemes are translated item by item.
- Loan renditions, in which the translation of the foreign word is freer and less than literal,
- Semantic loan (semantic calque), a native word undergoes extension of its meaning on the model of a foreign counterpart.

The borrowing paths underlying the adoption of new lexical forms from the donor language interweave with often complex reasons for using foreign items. Tarev (2012, p. 945) divides these into extralinguistic and linguistic proper. The former category includes such reasons as the cultural influence one nation exerts on another, oral and/or written contacts between two countries, increasing interest in learning languages and the prestige of a given language. The list below includes the reasons that Tarev (2012, p. 945) labels as linguistic proper.

- lack in native language of equivalent words for the new object or concept,
- tendency to use one loan word instead of descriptive phrases,
- the desire to improve and preserve the communicative distinction of lexical units, which is achieved through elimination of polysemy or homonymy in the recipient language,

- the need to specify the appropriate meaning, to distinguish some shades of meaning through attaching them to different words,
- tendency to expressiveness, that leads to the appearance of foreign-language stylistic synonyms,
- lack of mother tongue potential to create derivatives on the basis of similar words existing in the language
- accumulation in the recipient language of words, which are characterized by similar elements, that is the way of morphemes and derivational elements borrowing.

In the following section the concept of *Anglicism* will be defined and briefly characterized.

## 2.2. Anglicisms

Mańczak-Wohlfeld (2010, p. 10), defines *Anglicism* as a ‘lexical unit that is characterized by English phonetics and morphology and (which) has made its way from English to Polish’. This process can also be called adoption, because the speakers adopt some elements from other languages to their own (Haugen, 1950, p. 231). Loanwords can be referred to as Anglicisms based on the origin of the borrowing. The criterion of the origin of the loan pertains to the etymology of the item and the way it went through the process of borrowing to the recipient language. Witalisz (2016, pp. 19–20) explains that an Anglicism is an item which satisfies one of the following criteria.

(1) it is of English origin and was directly borrowed from English, e.g. *surfing* <*surfing* (direct contact),

(2) it is of English origin, but was borrowed through another language, e.g. German or French, e.g. *beefsteak* <German *Beefsteak* <English *beefsteak* (indirect contact, complex),

(3) it is not of English origin, but was borrowed through English which had borrowed it earlier, e.g. (the last source of language contact) *tomahawk* <*tomahawk* <algon. *Tāmähāk*.

Otwinowska-Kasztelanic (2000) maintains that there are three types of lexical borrowings from English to Polish: loanwords, loanblends and loan-shifts (calques and semantic loans).

Spahiu and Nuredini (2023) point out that adaptations of *Anglicisms* refer to the changes that English words or phrases undergo when they are adopted into another language. These adaptations can include changes in spelling, pronunciation, grammar, and meaning to comply with the conventions of the recipient language. English lexemes more or less adapt to Polish spelling, phonological and morphological rules.

The borrowings can exhibit varying degrees of assimilation. The criterion of the degree of borrowing assimilation indicates how deeply a given loan is rooted

in the recipient language. In terms of the degree of assimilation, such units are divided into unassimilated borrowings and assimilated borrowings, among which we list partly or fully assimilated loans. Unassimilated borrowings are characterized by unchanged graphic or phonetic form and are generally perceived as foreign elements. Partially assimilated loans are already rooted in the system of Polish, but differ from native words in terms of for example limited inflection. This is the reason why speakers perceive them as foreign. By contrast, fully assimilated loans have polonised graphic, phonetic and morphological form and are semantically clear. Hence, speakers treat them as native elements. Unassimilated loanwords retain the status of unchanging quotations (*Fremdwörter*). Additionally, Haugen (1950) argues that the transfer of the original form of a foreign word (importation) to the native language can take place. In loanwords that have been assimilated, their original form becomes adapted to the structure of the recipient's language (substitution). Adaptation can occur on four levels: graphic, phonological, morphological and semantic. In this case, therefore, we are no longer dealing with the transfer of the original form of a word, but with its graphic, phonological, morphological and/or semantic substitution. (Mańczak-Wohlfeld, 1995, pp. 16–17).

In what follows an attempt will be made to establish the major features of young people's language, which, as we believe, can throw some light on the types of borrowings they use as well the extent to which their speech is affected by English loanwords.

### **2.3. Young people's language**

As noted in Nortier and Svendsen (2015), 'the language of young people is central in sociolinguistic research, as it is seen to be innovative and a primary source of knowledge about linguistic change and the role of language'. In Poland the language of young people began to undergo rapid transformation after 1989, the year which marked the fall of communism and, consequently, breaking away from isolation. From that time onwards, language ease of manner became a sign of freedom. Young people's talk freely expressing their opinions and beliefs also influenced the language of their parents and teachers and many words and expressions originally attributed to the young came to be used in their elders' casual speech. Additionally, the changes we now observe in young people's conversations are caused by an ever increasing tempo of life.

The language of young people can also be referred to as slang which is defined as 'very informal language that is usually spoken rather than written, used especially by particular groups of people'.<sup>1</sup> It is characterized by the use of words, phrases and expressions of an ephemeral, temporary, short-lasting character. It is also often

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<sup>1</sup> SLANG | English meaning - Cambridge Dictionary

humorous and expressive. A specific kind of language serves to signal one's belonging to a concrete group of people and is itself the feature identifying this group. As mentioned above, young people's language expresses their ease of manner by containing elements of irony, black humor and expressions with considerable emotional load. Young speakers use words which are either positively or negatively marked and employ numerous synonyms, eg. the word *pieniądz(e)* 'money' can be referred to as *kasa*, *kasiora*, *flota*, *hajs*, *peeleny*, *szmal*, *kesz*, and other. Young people are inclined to break the rules and avoid political correctness. They call things what they are, expressing themselves bluntly, without too many euphemisms. Conversations between young people are usually short and meaning gets compressed. Widespread use of shortened forms of words (e.g. *cze* 'hi' instead of *cześć* 'hi', *fiza* 'physics' instead of *fizyka* 'physics') enables faster and simpler communication. This form of communication is particularly popular in social media interactions where even whole phrases become compressed to a few sign-long acronyms.

Another important feature of young people's speech is their use of English borrowings,<sup>2</sup> which derives from their interest in new trends, fashions, technical discoveries, new technologies which come to Poland predominantly from English-speaking countries, the US in particular. Anglicisms soak into young people's language from commercials, song lyrics, computer games or movies. These loanwords are often adapted to the Polish orthography and morphology, as in *lajtowy* 'simple, easy' or *biforka* 'pre-party'. Young people also often employ vulgarisms, which might follow from their expressiveness and high emotional load.

To sum up, the language of young people seems to be the manifestation of their creativity and search for identity. It is also the reflection of their interest in everything that is modern, new, fresh that has the potential to set them apart from the old generation's norms, conventions and stereotypes. This specific kind of talk strengthens group bonds and signals one's individual unique identity.

### 3. Methodology

The present study is of qualitative character. There were four major aims of the research we undertook:

- To determine young people's opinions and experiences concerning their use of borrowings
- To compile a list of most frequent and most popular English loanwords young people use
- We tried to determine the types of adaptations the loanwords used by young people undergo.

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<sup>2</sup> For more information on borrowings in informal speech, see Zabawa (2012).

- We assigned the borrowings compiled to loanword classes and checked their occurrence in the National Corpus of the Polish Language.

The data were collected through an online semi-structured questionnaire addressed to young people aged 15 - 35.<sup>3</sup> The respondents were students of Lublin universities and their friends. The questionnaire consisted of 30 questions, of which some were open and some represented the multiple choice type (closed-ended), where certain options to choose from were available. In this way it was possible for us to obtain both qualitative and numerical data. The questions were formulated both in Polish and English. The survey was anonymous and was prepared by means of Google Forms. It was opened on October, 24th 2024 and closed on November 10th. Overall, 76 respondents completed the questionnaire.

The questions included in the survey can be arranged into the following groups:

- I. Of the informative character
- II. Of the attitude examining character
- III. Of the data aggregating character

Our intention was to determine the motivations that lie behind loanword usage, establish the inventory of most popular loans as well as examine adaptation types these forms undergo when employed in casual Polish speech. In what follows, we present our findings in the form of tables and graphs. Further, the discussion and analysis will follow.

#### **4. Research results**

In this section the results of our questionnaire-based research will be presented. First of all, it needs to be stated that out of 76 people who completed the questionnaire, 73.7% are women and 25% men. One person declared to be non-binary. All of the respondents are of Polish nationality. As far as their age is concerned, 73.7% of the participants are between 18 and 24 years old, 15.8% between 25 and 30, 6 people are below 17 and 2 people above 30. 59.2% declare to have secondary education. These people are most probably students. 32.9% have higher education, whereas 4 people have only elementary education. The majority of the respondents are well familiar with English as 44.7% of them represent the advanced level of English proficiency and 50% know English at the intermediate level. Only 3 people declare to be beginners. Importantly, 84.2% of the survey participants have a regular contact with the English language since 53.9% of them speak English almost every day and 30.3% speak it either very frequently or frequently. Only 3 people have sporadic contact with English.

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<sup>3</sup> The questionnaire is available under the link [English borrowings in the language of young people – Formularze Google](#)

71 respondents provided their definitions of the concept of *borrowing* which indicated the most significant aspects of this phenomenon:

- It is a linguistic concept
- It is a word adopted from a foreign language
- It is often changed orthographically or/and phonetically
- It is often used in the original form
- It has the original meaning but its morphological form is adapted to Polish
- It is used both in spoken and written language

When asked about the frequency of using borrowings, 49.3% of the respondents declared to use them every day/very frequently, 29.3% chose the option 'pretty frequently' and 20% 'sometimes'. The young people were also asked to indicate 3 main reasons for using borrowings. 72.4% of the respondents use English borrowings automatically. 56.6% confessed that borrowings express their thoughts in a better way. The third position was taken by the answer 'I like English' (51.3%). The lack of Polish equivalents was chosen by 46.1% of the respondents. Interestingly, the least popular answer was 'I want to be trendy' as only 4 people selected it. Only 15.8% of the respondents need to speak like their friends who use borrowings.

In answer to the following question, the young people indicated situations in which they use borrowings. They could choose three main answers. Their responses were as follows.

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| – In casual speech but not in formal situations                  | 80.3% |
| – Mainly messaging my friends                                    | 69.7% |
| – Mainly when talking to family, friends and people I know       | 63.2% |
| – In social media conversations                                  | 47.4% |
| – Both in casual speech and in formal situations                 | 14.5% |
| – In all everyday conversations, irrespective of my interlocutor | 9.2%  |
| – I do not use them even though I know them                      | 1.3%  |

Next, by allowing them to choose three main options, we learned how borrowings enter the language of young people. Below the results are presented.

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| – Internet                              | 97.4% |
| – The speech of friends and colleagues  | 61.8% |
| – Movies                                | 56.6% |
| – Mass media (television, radio, press) | 55.3% |
| – Games                                 | 52.6% |
| – Books                                 | 7.9%  |
| – The language of parents and teachers  | 2.6%  |

The respondents were then enquired which borrowings they use the most frequently. The table below arranges the loans into four categories – words, phrases, acronyms and clipped forms. In brackets the number of mentions is indicated.



**Table 1. Categories of borrowings used by Poles and their frequency**

Loanword		Phrase/clause	Acronym	Clipped forms
amazing (2)	noise (1)	ain't no way (1)	BFF (1)	delulu (4)
anyway (1)	nope (3)	by the way (3)	BTW (5)	rel (1)
bestie (6)	okay (1)	come on (1)	FR (3) (1)	sus (1)
bet (1)	outside (1)	Goddamn (2)	IDC (1)	
bitch (1)	period (4)	happy end (1)	IDK (13)	
bye (1)	queen (1)	I don't know (4)	IMO (5)	
chipsy (1)	random (1)	I know (1)	IMHO (1)	
cool (1)	randomowo (1)	just relax and chill out(1)	IRL (1)	
cringe (16)	real (1)	kinda (1)	LOL (8)	
crush (2)	really (1)	let me know (1)	OK (2)	
damn (1)	reference (1)	love you (1)	OMG (12)	
deadline (1)	sad (2)	my friend (1)	TBH (7)	
easy (1)	same (6)	no way (2)	TV (1)	
event (5)	selfie (2)	of course (2)	W/E (whatever) (1)	
fancy (3)	shit (1)	oh my God (6)	WTF (8)	
feedback (1)	shopping (1)	oh shit (1)	YOLO (1)	
for real (1)	slay (23)	tell me (1)	BFF (1)	
f*ck (7)	smart (1)	to be honest (1)	BTW (5)	
girl (1)	snack (1)	what the fuck (1)		
girls (1)	stalker (1)	what the hell (1)		
happy (1)	team (1)	what the hell are u doing (1)		
hello (2)	true (1)	you know (1)		
hey (1)	unboxing (1)			
hi (1)	vibe (1)			
homie (1)	weekend (4)			
imagine (2)	Well (1)			
jogging (1)	wh(a)at (3)			
komputer (1)	whatever (4)			
like (1)	why (1)			
literally (1)	yapping (1)			
lovely (1)	yass (1)			
matching (1)	yes (1)			
maybe (1)	yep (1)			
Mood (2)				

Subsequently, a list of 20 English borrowings was presented and the respondents were asked to indicate whether they are familiar with them or not. Below we specify the percentages expressing people's knowledge of the loanwords, where the highest in the table is the best known one and the lowest the least frequently recognised:

**Table 2. Young people's familiarity with popular English borrowings**

<b>Loanword</b>	<b>People who know it</b>
WTF	98.7% (75)
OMG/Oh my God	97.4% (74)
Sorry	96.1 % (73)
BTW/By the way	96.1% (73)
F*ck	94.7% (72)
IDK/I don't know	94.7% (72)
Cringe	93.4% (71)
Whatever	93.4% (71)
Shit	93.4% (71)
Selfie	92.1% (70)
Same	92.1% (70)
Like	92.1% (70)
Baby	90.8% (69)
Event	89.5% (68)
Bestie	89.5% (68)
FR/For real	88.2% (67)
IMO/In my opinion	86.8% (66)
Slay	86.8% (66)
TBH/To be honest	85.5% (65)
Imagine	84.2% (64)

The borrowings used by the respondents on a daily basis are included in the following table. It turned out that 13 people use either all or almost all of them.

**Table 3. Borrowings used on a daily basis**

<b>Loanword</b>	<b>Number of mentions</b>
<i>I</i>	2
baby	4
bestie	8
BTW/By the way	12
cringe	12
event	4
FR/For real	4
f*ck	16
IDK/I don't know	20
imagine	5
IMO/In my opinion	11
like	7
OMG/Oh my God	18
same	13
selfie	4
shit	7

1	2
slay	21
sorry	17
TBH/to be honest	6
whatever	7
WTF	18

As for the respondents' use of acronyms, the answers revealed that 19.7% of them use full phrases more frequently, 21.1% opt for acronyms and as many as 59.2% use both forms, depending on a situation. 8% indicated that acronyms appear mainly in speech, 36% chose the option 'both in spoken and written language' and 54.7% use acronyms mainly in written language. One person denied using any acronyms at all.

When we talk to young people, we notice that sometimes they pronounce foreign words in a native-like manner and other times polonised forms appear. Hence, our following question dealt with this problem. We found out that 9.2% of the survey participants use polonised forms, 46.1% try to stick to the original pronunciation, whereas 42.1% use either original or polonised forms, depending on a borrowing. One person indicated that the choice of the form depends on his/her interlocutor. Another respondent remarked that some loanwords require that we pronounce them with the English accent (e.g. *slay* or *whatever*).

The respondents were also asked to give examples of adaptations of English borrowings to the rules of Polish. The students provided vocabulary items which exemplify the following processes.

- Polonized pronunciation, e.g. *Internet* 'Internet' – e.g. penultimate stress, pronouncing [r], spelling-pronunciation, e.g. *balon* from 'baloon', *super* from 'super', final obstruent devoicing as in *dżins* 'jeans'
- Polish verb conjugation (the addition of thematic elements and inflectional endings): *cringuje mnie jego zachowanie* 'his behavior cringes me', *zbanował mnie* 'he banned me'
- The addition of Polish perfectivising prefixes, e.g. *z-*: *zblendować* 'to blend', *zmiksować*, to mix'.
- Polish noun declension, manifested by cumulative exponents of case, number and gender as in *smartfon*Ø 'smartphone.NOM.SG.MSC' – *smartfonie* 'smartphone.LOC.SG.MSC' – *smartfonem* 'smartphone.INS.SG.MSC', *eventy* 'event.NOM.PL.MSC).
- Creating adjectives from nouns and verbs, e.g. *cringe* > *cringeowy*, *swag* > *swagowy*, *crash* > *kraszowany*.
- Creating adverbs from adjectives based on foreign roots, e.g. *randomowo* from *random*.
- Adding expressive derivational suffixes (e.g. *baby* > *bejbik*, *selfie* > *selfiak*, *sorry* > *sorki*).

- Creating nominalizations (action nouns) from Polish verbs by means of the English suffix *-ing*, as in *leżing*, *smazing* ‘lying, frying’.
- Creating words from whole phrases – *omajgot* from ‘Oh my God’

The respondents also provided examples of borrowings which they use exclusively in the original form.

(1) Borrowings used in the original form according to the respondents

Anyway, audiobook, awful, baby, barbeque, barber, bestie, bitch, BTW, by the way, caring, catering, cool, cringe, crush, event, football match, for real, f\*ck, honestly, IDK, I don’t know, IMO, Karen, ketchup, keyboard, killer, literal, LOL, manicure, meaningless, mindset, news, okej, oh my God, OMG, pathetic, period, pizama, same, selfie, shit, shopping, slay, to be honest, TBH, true, t-shirt, weekend, WTF, whatever, what the hell, wow.

One of the most important issues we wanted to determine through this survey was the list of borrowings which are the most popular among young Poles nowadays. Below we present an exhaustive inventory of those, as indicated by the respondents:

(2) Recent most popular borrowings

bestie, best friend, bet, BTW, cringe, crush, damn, dayum, drunk, event, FR, f\*ck, GG, hug, imagine, IDK, IMO, like, LOL, ngl, no way, Ohio, OMG, party, rage, real, rel, same, selfie, shit, sigma, Skibidi toilet, slay, sorry, TBH, thx, Walter White (Włodzimierz Biały), whatever, what the f\*ck, where r u, WTF, yessir.

We also explored the degree of mutual understanding between the older and the younger generation in terms of interactions containing recent English borrowings. Almost half of the respondents (48.6%) admitted that they would have to explain what they mean in order for their parents to understand the message. One third of the survey participants (31.1%) claim that there might appear certain problems in reaching mutual understanding. Only about 19% of the respondents would have no problems with being understood.

Answers to the last question reveal that, according to the young people, borrowings are:

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| – A natural phenomenon                                | 86.5% |
| – Helpful in forming positive interpersonal relations | 43.2% |
| – An element of group identity                        | 43.2% |
| – A threat to one’s native language                   | 27%   |
| – A cause of misunderstandings                        | 14.9% |
| – A sign of good education                            | 8.1%  |
| – A sign of poor education                            | 1.4%  |
| – A sign of higher intelligence                       | 1.4%  |
| – A sign of spending a lot of time in social media    | 1.4%  |

The results of the survey-based research will be subject to closer analysis in the forthcoming discussion.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1. Attitudes to borrowings and their usage

Even a quick glance at the results of the survey reveals that borrowings are a well-established element in young people's interactions. It is noteworthy that as many as 72.4% of the respondents admit that English loans crop up in their speech automatically, whereas more than a half of the research group use them to convey their thoughts and intentions more effectively. That does not seem surprising since our survey participants are people aged 15 – 30 with frequent, daily, contact with the English language. 44.7% of them represent the advanced level of English proficiency and as many as 50% admit to knowing English at the intermediate level. We believe that in the contemporary globalized world, where English has become the lingua franca of international and intercultural communication, the language elements naturally enter young people's speech. Unsurprisingly then, 86.5% of the respondents perceive the use of loanwords as a natural phenomenon and 43.2% regard borrowings as helpful in establishing positive interpersonal relations and a sign of group identity. Interestingly, only 4 participants employ foreign words to be trendy or up-to-date.

Further, it turned out that English borrowings enter young people's language mainly from Internet (97.4%) and the speech of their friends (61.8%). Polish Ministry of Digital Affairs indicates in its national report "Nastolatki 3.0" (Teenagers 3.0) that young people spend 5 hours and 36 minutes in Internet every day.<sup>4</sup> During weekends, this time rises to 6 and a half hours. This factor appears to heavily influence young people's frequent use of English words. Our data also allow us to discern that many of the loanwords used by the young are in fact vulgar words. The ministerial report throws some light on this fact indicating that every sixth of Polish teenagers is unable to decide whether the language they meet on webpages is vulgar and aggressive or not. Moreover, over 40% of 13-year-olds have witnessed verbal abuse in the internet. Thus, it seems quite probable that early immersion in such language environment might have a negative impact on the type of language forms used in one's everyday communication.

Our findings also disclose a rather positive attitude of the respondents to the process of borrowing. Only one third of the survey participants perceive this phenomenon as a threat to their mother tongue. Further, young people see little or no correlation between the use of loanwords and one's level of intelligence or education. Borrowings are perceived as a desirable, interpersonal bonds strengthening phenomenon within a peer group. However, when asked about the influence of loanwords on their interactions with parents or teachers, the young respondents

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<sup>4</sup> Nastolatki w internecie. Ile czasu spędzają w sieci i co tam robią? Jakie treści oglądają dzieci i młodzież? Szokujące wyniki badań | Strefa Edukacji

notice certain problems. As many as 48.6% of the survey participants would have to explain what they mean when using loanwords in order to be well-understood by their older interlocutors. Another 30% admit that they expect certain communication problems caused by borrowings in their conversations with parents. This seems to follow from varying degrees of English proficiency characterizing the young and the elderly, on the one hand, but also from a pretty extensive use of slangish expressions by young people.

Finally, the data indicate that the English borrowings occur mainly in casual speech (80.3%) and in text messages with friends (69.7%). 63.2% of the respondents admitted that loanwords appear in their conversations with people they know – family members and friends. These language forms are also used in social media interactions (47.4%). The features of informal speech seem to account for the employment of borrowings. Namely, it is casual, spontaneous and quick. Informal conversations are also flexible and dynamic. People exchange personal messages instantaneously and in a carefree way. Hence, the use of borrowings shared by one's peer group, makes the person feel safe and well-understood. Loanwords appear to replace often more complex, longer and less precise ways of expression in one's mother tongue. For instance, *hejter* 'hater' is shorter and 'semantically more compact' than *człowiek, który nienawidzi, prześladowa, krytykuje* 'someone who hates you, stalks you or criticizes you'. Young people want to get their message through quickly and effortlessly.

In sum, the respondents perceive borrowings as a natural, spontaneous phenomenon allowing them to communicate more effectively with members of their peer group, though possibly leading to problems when talking to their elders.

## 5.2. The linguistic aspects

In what follows the loanwords indicated by the respondents will be analyzed in terms of transformations they undergo in Polish and categories they represent. Also, the National Corpus of the Polish Language search will help us establish the number of occurrences of the most popular loanwords in the existing database.

Interestingly, 46.1% of the respondents revealed that they try to employ the original pronunciation of English borrowings. Only, 9.2% prefer the polonised forms, whereas 42.1% would choose either the original or polonised versions, depending on a word. The analysis of the examples of adaptations specified by the respondents indicates the operation of the following processes.

- Polish verb conjugation
- Polish noun declension
- Polonised pronunciation

- Derivational suffixes
- Creating words from whole phrases
- Creating adjectives from nouns and verbs
- Creating nominalisations from Polish verbs by means of the English *-ing* ending
- Creating adverbs by adding Polish endings
- Pluralising English nouns by adding Polish suffixes

Thus, young Poles freely add Polish verbal endings to the English verbs, e.g. *cringuje*, *cringował*, ‘he cringes/cringed’, use perfective forms of the verbs as in *zbanować* ‘to ban’ by adding the prefix *z-*. They also attach various case affixes to the English nouns as in *look*, *lookiem*, *looku* ‘look nom./acc./gen.’ Further, Polish derivational endings are added to the English forms to create new words (e.g. in *debeściak* ‘the best one’ the suffix *-ak* is added to the adjective to create a noun). Moreover, the process of merging items building a whole phrase into a single word can be observed as in the form *omajgot* ‘Oh my God!’ Also *debeściak*, represents the merger of the English definite article *the* and the superlative form *best*. Further, English nouns and verbs can serve as bases for creating adjectives, as in *cringe* > *cringeowy*, analogically to *kwiatowy* ‘flowery’. Similarly, the Polish adverbial ending *-owo* is used in such forms as *randamowo* ‘randomly’, which reflects the process of word formation active in Polish *odruchowo* ‘impulsively’ and *wzrokowo* ‘visually’. Interestingly, also the English affixes can attach to the Polish forms. Notice the use of *-ing* in *leżing* ‘lying’, *plażing* ‘lying on the beach and sunbathing’, *smazing* ‘frying in the sense of sunbathing’. Note that the suffix is added to both verbs (as in English) and nouns. Finally, plural forms arise through the attachment of the Polish plural suffixes to English nouns, as in *eventy* ‘events’, *chipsy* ‘chips’ or *snacki* ‘snacks’.

The vast majority of the borrowings mentioned in the survey belong to the category of loanwords which, as indicated by Mott and Laso (2020, p. 155), are ‘adopted wholesale, with little phonological or morphological change’ (see the table in Section 4). Importantly, these items are direct borrowings from English. However, some of the forms belong to the class of hybrids or loanblends. In such items, some of their constituents are native and some foreign. We believe that the words *debeściak* ‘the best one’, *lovki* ‘someone I love’, *afterek* ‘a party after a party’ or *bejbik* ‘babe’ belong to this group. It also has to be admitted that the lexical material gathered by means of the survey does not contain any examples of loan shifts, pure loan translations, loan renditions or semantic calques.

To round up this language-oriented discussion, we present the results of the corpus search we conducted involving the most frequently indicated English borrowings in the speech of young Poles. We shall consider the 15 most popular lexical forms indicated by more than 3 research participants.

**Table 4. The most popular borrowings used by young Poles and their token frequency in the NKJP corpus<sup>5</sup>**

Loanword	Number of survey mentions	Full Corpus search results	Present-day use
slay	23	47	0
sorry	23	21956	+
cringe	16	5	1
IDK	13	55	0
OMG	12	1234	+
LOL	8	8674	+
WTF	8	430	+
f*ck	7	1942	+
TBH	7	13	0
bestie	6	1469	0
Oh my God	6	97	+
BTW	5	23738	+
event	5	870	+
IMO	5	21585	+
whatever	4	1674	+

In the second column of the table we specified the number of survey participants who confessed to using a given borrowing. As can be seen above, the words *sorry*, *slay* and *cringe* considerably outnumber the remaining loanwords. The acronyms IDK (I don't know) and OMG (Oh my God) are used the most frequently. The third column indicates the results of the National Corpus of the Polish Language (NKJP)<sup>6</sup> search. We specified the raw results, i.e. all the mentions of a given item irrespective of its contexts or meanings. We intend to delve into the details of these results in a forthcoming study. What these data reveal is pretty rare occurrence of the forms such as *cringe*, *slay*, *IDK* and *TBH* (to be honest) in the database whose collection contains texts until the year 2010.

The more specific corpus-based information concerning the borrowings in question is included in the rightmost column of the table. More precisely, the results provided here are based on the manual search and analysis of the mentions of the 15 most popular borrowings indicated by the survey participants. The symbol + means that a given lexical form appeared at least once with the meaning(s) indicated by the survey participants. It is noteworthy that the forms: *slay*, *IDK*, *TBH* and *bestie* ('the best one') had not been used until 2010 with the meanings defined by the respondents. The word *cringe* has one such mention and entered the Polish speech in 2004.

<sup>5</sup> We ordered the borrowings from the most frequently mentioned to the least popular one. Also, it has to be explained that the term 'present-day use' is employed here in the sense of meanings and contexts in which the borrowings are used by the young people who participated in the survey.

<sup>6</sup> Available at Narodowy Korpus Języka Polskiego - NKJP



## 6. Conclusion

The major outcome of the survey-based research reported on in this article is a list of the most recent English borrowings used by the students of Lublin universities. We determined the borrowing paths and young people's motivations for using foreign words, their impact on their communication and adaptations these items undergo when used in everyday interactions. Thus, we learned that Polish students are well familiar with English which serves as a donor language. Young people employ English borrowings almost automatically in their everyday conversations to convey their meanings and intentions more effectively. 86.5% of the respondents perceive the use of loanwords as a natural phenomenon and 43.2% find them helpful in establishing positive interpersonal relations and a sign of group identity. Further, it was established that borrowings enter young people's language mainly from Internet (97.4%) and the speech of their friends (61.8%). Loanwords from English are mainly heard in casual speech (80.3%) and they are frequent in text messages (69.7%).

Regarded from the linguistic perspective, recent borrowings undergo a number of adaptations: phonetic, morphological, semantic and syntactic. The respondents declared that when using English loanwords, they tried to stick to the English pronunciation as much as possible. It is interesting though that in the case of acronyms, on some occasions they employ the English pronunciation and on other Polish, depending both on their interlocutors and speech situations. Other grammatical adaptations we have determined involve Polish verb conjugation and noun declension rules modifying English words, the use Polish derivational suffixes, creating Polish adjectives from English nouns and verbs, adding the *-ing* ending to Polish verbs, Polish plural suffixes to English nouns and merging items of English phrases to create single words. The semantic adaptations refer to either the broadening or narrowing down the meaning of the original words but these phenomena were not subject to any closer analysis in this paper. They will be dealt with in the forthcoming study which constitutes the second stage of our research project. Finally, we conducted a corpus-based search using the National Corpus of the Polish Language to examine the use of the most recent loans from English therein. We established that words such as *slay*, *cringe*, *bestie* and the acronyms *IDK* and *TBH* are not found there.

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