Chapter 1

The Hegemony of English and Determinants of Borrowing from Its Vocabulary

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Since the second half of the 20th century English has become a global lingua franca. Whereas Mandarin remains the world’s most widely spoken first language, English has emerged as the world’s first choice as a second language; more importantly, it is by now the principal means for international communication. The effect of English does not end with its wide usage. With its rise, English has come to serve many languages as a source for intensive lexical borrowing, reflecting the importance and status it holds as a leading language. This ongoing process, however, has not been uniform. Certain societies have offered resistance to the spread of English and a reluctance to borrow its vocabulary. Others have embraced English, making English loan words an important part of their vocabulary, using it in codeswitching, and even adopting it as their main language.

The Italian phrase lingua franca (literally Frankish language), which now denotes English as a leading language, referred originally to the hybrid language created and used in the Mediterranean area. From early times, seamen and merchants in certain Mediterranean ports used a mixture of languages, predominantly Italian, but with many lexical elements from Greek, Spanish, Arabic, Turkish and French, for communicating with each other (Cifoletti, 1989; Schuchardt, 1980). Although the term means literally ‘European language’, it arguably narrowed down to Romance-based pidgin (e.g. Minervini, 1996). Evidently, there was nothing distinctive about the Mediterranean lingua franca, and other hybrid languages, often linguistically defined as pidgins and creoles, emerged in many other places where people speaking different languages intermingled for a prolonged length of time (Gilbert, 2002; Jahr and Broch, 1996; Mühlhäusler, 1986; Sebba, 1997).
These forms of mixed and simplified language were not the only means of intergroup communication. In many places where speakers of different languages met they chose to speak one language. Usually it was the language of the majority, although in some cases numerical advantage did not play a crucial role, but the importance of the culture or nation to which the speakers belonged did. Over the years, the term lingua franca gained an additional meaning: now, it also denotes a leading language, not a hybrid but a proper language, which serves as a medium of communication between speakers of different languages in a given region or setting. In the Middle East it was Accadian, then Aramaic, then Arabic and finally the Ottoman Turkish; in some parts of Eurasia and North Africa Greek was the lingua franca for more than a millennium after the death of Alexander the Great. In East Asia classical Chinese played a similar role for thousands of years, mainly in a written form, until the late 19th century, whereas throughout much of the American continent, from California to Patagonia, Spanish has been used since the age of exploration. After the Napoleonic wars French served as the lingua franca of imperial diplomacy, as well as the principal choice of communication among the European aristocracy. More recently, for a short period (about four decades starting from 1945) Russian enjoyed similar importance in the Soviet bloc, stretching from East Germany to Mongolia. While virtually not a spoken tongue, Latin served as a key language of religion, government and scholarship throughout Europe of the medieval era, and as late as 1687 Isaac Newton wrote his first major work, *Principia*, in this language – but not his second!

**English as a Lingua Franca**

The rise of English during the last two centuries to its present position has been nothing less than spectacular. In 1780 the second American president, John Adams, predicted that English is destined ‘to be the next and succeeding centuries more generally the language of the world than Latin was in the past or French in the present time’ (quoted from McCrum *et al.*, 1986: 239). Adams reasoned that the increasing population in America, its inhabitants’ universal connection with their mother countries, and the global influence of England would inevitably make English a leading language. The realisation of this prophecy was not as self-evident as it seems in retrospect today, even for the mere fact that in 1780 English had fewer than 15 million speakers, spread sparsely over England, Scotland, Ireland, the USA, Canada and the Caribbean. Half a century later the German linguist Jacob Grimm stated that English ‘may
with all right be called a world language; and, like the English people, appears destined hereafter to prevail with a sway more extensive even than its present over all the portions of the globe’ (quoted in Trench, 1881: 44). Neither Adams nor Grimm lived to see their prophecies come true, but a few decades later some early but promising precursors of English linguistic hegemony were more than visible.

During the late 19th century English began to replace French as the lingua franca of Western Europe, and while Russian aristocrats regarded the latter as their language of choice well into the Bolshevik Revolution, their ruler, Tsar Nicholas II, displayed a clear preference for the former. Earlier, during the 18th and the 19th centuries, English had already established its position as the lingua franca of North America and the Indian subcontinent. Whereas in North America most of the population used English as their first language, in the Indian subcontinent only a small fraction did so. In the latter case English was the language of the British rulers but was gradually adopted by the multilingual locals for intergroup communication. British imperial hegemony and huge colonial possessions during the late 19th century were undoubtedly a major determinant in facilitating the spread of English at that time, but not the only one. After WWI, and particularly after WWII, American economic hegemony and growing political and cultural importance proved the main spur for the spread of English, and the USA became the cultural and linguist harbinger of the English language.

In the postwar era the combined impact of these two nations has brought English to a new and unprecedented position, not only for its geographical spread and the number of its speakers, but for its overall significance. It has assumed the role of the world’s lingua franca. Today English is the preferred language of communication at virtually any international meeting hosting representatives of more than a number of nations, and at many regional meetings as well. English speakers can be found in almost any corner of the globe and English is now the dominant or at least one of the official languages in over 75 states and territories (Conrad & Fishman, 1977; Crystal, 2003b) in which at least 1.6 billion people live (Sullivan, 1991). More than 70% of scientific publications and the vast majority of the leading scientific publishers are at present in English (Ammon, 1996).

Similarly, about 80% of Internet sites are in English, and most of the programming languages used are based on English. Furthermore, although the number of English speakers as a first language is approaching 400 million, and a similar number of speakers use it as a
second language (mainly in the Indian subcontinent), it is possible that in sum nearly two billion of the approximately six billion people who inhabit the globe are able to communicate in English in varying levels of competence (Crystal, 2003b; Dalby, 2004). In this sense, English can be viewed, as McArthur (2002) suggested, as the sole representative of ‘a universalizing complex’ – a new and extreme category on a continuity where the world’s languages are arranged. While English has many variants, it has emerged recently also in a new and generalised form known as International Standard English, which offers a standard and secured pattern of communication to all English speakers (McArthur, 2002). This pattern can be found on many of the services offered on the Internet (e.g. Google, America Online), in global media services (e.g. CNN, BBC), at airports and other locations where English is used in a multilingual context.

Research on the Global Spread of English: From World Englishes to English Loan Words

In the last three decades much research has been conducted on the position of English as the world’s lingua franca and the processes associated with it. Many linguists have focused on description and analysis of the large number of varieties of Englishes used, in predominantly English-speaking countries, in places where English is still used as part of the British or American legacy, and in any other culture (e.g. Crystal, 2003b; Kachru, 1982, 1986, 1992; Viereck et al., 1984; Watts & Trudgill, 2002). The growing interest and academic importance of this topic is evident in the activity of two academic journals, both established in the early 1980s: English World-Wide: A Journal of Varieties of English and World Englishes. The former focuses on the dialectology and sociolinguistics of the English-speaking communities (native and second-language speakers), while the latter is committed to the study of varieties of English in their distinctive cultural, sociolinguistic and educational contexts, with emphasis on cross-cultural perspectives and identities.

A related field of research is the study of English as a foreign second language, often simply known as English Language Teaching (ELT) or Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). The main focus in this field is on teaching English to non-native speakers, and although this goal is purely educational, it enhances the diffusion of English as a global lingua franca. There are thousands of publications on this topic, including the academic journal Teaching English as a Second or Foreign
Language (TESL-EJ) – a quarterly disseminated electronically from Berkeley, California, since 1994. The concept of ‘English as a second language’ represents for many its positive facet: a language bringing people together and mediating between cultures in conflict. This has been one of the major goals of teaching this language for many years at schools all over the world (cf. Block & Cameron, 2001). For others, however, the same type of English, an all-out global mode of communication, is not always seen as a blessing but as a threat. Some see it as the epitome of Anglo-American imperialism, the bridgehead of a linguistic invasion aimed at world domination, or at least a constant reminder of its ongoing postcolonial legacy (e.g. Pennycook, 1994, 1998; Phillipson, 1992).

Others regard globalising English as undemocratic since it creates a structure of linguistic hierarchy, which enhances the cultural dominance of English-speaking countries, particularly the USA and Britain (e.g. Tsuda, 1986, 2000). In the current critical milieu, it is no wonder that the spread of English is also associated with language death, a phenomenon that takes place in several forms. Contact with English-speaking people has led in some cases to marginalisation of local languages, as has occurred among speakers of various Austronesian languages in the Pacific Ocean, and in other cases to the virtual eradication of the local population, thereby bringing about the death of their language as well, as has happened in North America and Australia (e.g. Crystal, 2000; Nettle & Romaine, 2000).

Another aspect of the spread of English is research on codeswitching and codemixing, which form the actual context in which borrowings are used. Codeswitching is the use of various linguistic units, usually but not only from two participating grammatical systems within a speech event, and its usage is motivated by social and psychological factors (Ritchie & Bhatia, 2004). Codemixing is similar in form and motives to codeswitching, but whereas the former is intrasentential and is constrained by grammatical principles, the latter is intersentential and may be subject to discourse principles (Ritchie & Bhatia, 2004). In the present framework, we do not need to contrast codeswitching with codemixing. Indeed some scholars (e.g. Gumperz, 1982) consider them one entity, a ‘situational shifting’. In any case, codeswitching and – mixing phenomena alike provide the theoretical linguistic basis for the use of borrowed words in the absorbing language.

The alter ego of English in this context is the plethora of all the remaining languages of the world, and indeed much research is devoted to the attitudes of other languages to English. Although there are perhaps
more than 6000 of them, only a few hundred have more than one million speakers, and far fewer than a hundred languages receive academic attention regarding their current plight (cf. Flaitz, 1988 on the attitude to French). This attention focuses on one level on codeswitching, and on another level on language planning and policy regarding the incorporation of English lexicon. While the usage of English lexicon in various languages has been the focus of much research, some has been done on the rejection of English lexicon, known as purism.

The study of codeswitching and codemixing has emerged mainly due to research on its occurrence in English mixed/switched with another language (e.g. Blom & Gumperz, 1972) and is thus related to our present theme. Over time, various theories of codeswitching and mixing structures and functions have developed (MacSwan, 2004). Studies of bilingual/trilingual/multilingual language acquisition have shown that codeswitching and codemixing exist in young children’s speech from a very early age (McLaughlin, 1984; Zentella, 1997) and are assumed to be due to the structuring of the language systems in the brain and the efficiency with which each language structure can be applied when necessary. This structuring operates in young and adult bilingual speakers. Based on these facts, the borrowing process and loan word use are natural, which explains their frequency in bilingual communication. As codeswitching and codemixing reflect the psycholinguistic effect of the interaction between languages on bilingual speakers’ behaviour, they complement the sociolinguistic effect of societal language policy on speakers’ linguistic behaviour.

The spread of English is closely related to policies and attitudes of speakers of those languages, as well as some institutions designated to deal with language planning, that is, with the deliberate, systematic change of language form or use (cf. Bauman, 2004; Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997; Spolsky 2004; Wright, 2004). Such policies are an important aspect of the reception of English, either by encouraging its acceptance or by rejecting it through legal and cultural means. This issue has also benefited from the activity of the academic journal Language Problems and Language Planning (LPLP). This journal focuses on language policy and relationships within and among language communities, particularly in international contexts, and in the adaptation, manipulation and standardisation of languages for international use. Purism, a derivative and often the consequence of language policy, appears at present to have a strong association with English, at least indirectly. This is because some perceive it as a destructive check to the further spread of English, while others see it as a necessary evil (e.g. Pergnier, 1989). There have been a
number of studies on policies of purism (e.g. Jernudd & Shapiro, 1989; Thomas, 1991), especially in France and Germany (e.g. de Saint-Robert, 2000; Langer & Davies, 2005; Plümer, 2000), but also in some other nations (e.g. Wexler, 1974).

Several studies have examined the dissemination of English use in general and English loan words in particular, resulting in some cases in dictionaries or other compilations, for example, in French and Japanese (e.g. Görlich, 2003; Höfler, 1982; Kamiya, 1994; Lorenzo, 1996; Miura, 1979; Picone, 1996). In a more inquisitive though less systematic manner, Fishman, Cooper and Conrad conducted the first substantial worldwide survey on the spread of English, and in 1977 published their findings (Fishman et al., 1977a). Their book comprised miscellaneous case studies, some descriptive, others more quantitative; overall, they illuminated the growing position of English. A decade later Viereck and Bald (1986) edited another wide-ranging book on the contact of English with other languages. Their impressive volume dealt with 29 societies on four continents, but it neither examined them systematically nor attempted to draw any general conclusions from the vast evidence it adduced. Later Phillipson (1992) examined the spread of English in a comparative study, but his focus on colonialism intentionally excluded the examination of other, perhaps not less important, factors that may determine attitudes to English.

More insightful for our case is the study on the spread of English conducted by Rubal-Lopez (1991; Fishman & Rubal-Lopez, 1992) for her doctoral dissertation. Using quantifiable indicators and regression analysis of sundry variables in 121 non-English-mother-tongue countries, the study confirms the initial hypothesis that linguistic heterogeneity, colonialism and economic development are the most significant predictors of the spread of English. Rubal-Lopez also identified the degree of English-language institutionalisation, the lack of developmental orientation and the percentage of students sent to acquire their education in Anglo-American institutions as additional predictors. Nineteen years after their first book, Fishman and Conrad, this time together with Rubal-Lopez (1996), edited another grand survey on the status of English in the 1990s. Based on 20 case studies of different former British and American colonies, their volume confirmed its assumption that English was ‘still’ spreading in the non-English-mother-tongue world, and that this spread was not orchestrated in an exploitative manner but due to Anglo-American engagement in the modern global economy. Fishman and his associates observed additional forces outside the English world, such as
tertiary education and local mass media, which contribute to this ongoing process.

In an extension of her original study, Rubal-Lopez (1996) examined the effect of a long list of parameters (independent variables) on four features (dependent variables) reflecting the spread of English in a given country: (1) the percentage of tertiary students studying in English-mother-tongue countries; (2) the percentage of English-language newspapers; (3) the percentage of the value of printed matter exported from the USA; (4) the percentage of English book titles published. While this study is commendable for its scope, methodology and conclusions, it seems that the author did not distinguish sufficiently between determinants and mediating variables correlated with the spread of English. The level of tourism to Anglophone countries, to take one example, may increase the tendency to use English simply for the need to communicate. However, usually it is also associated with a relatively strong economy and an openness characterising developed democratic values – variables with similar if not more significant causal relations with the spread of English.

As for the spread of English loan words, the most extensive and systematic study from a comparative perspective has been the single research project led in the late 1990s by Görlich, together with more than 20 scholars. This team examined the lexical impact of English on 16 major European languages, representing the various regions and language families of continental Europe, and produced a dictionary of some 4000 items (Görlich, 2001) as well as an annotated bibliography of European Anglicisms (Görlich, 2002a). Even more relevant for our study, Görlich and his team authored a highly systematic summary of the influence of English on those languages (Görlich, 2002b). Each chapter consists of a history of contact of the language under discussion with English, pronunciation and spelling of Anglicisms common in that language, their morphology, their usage and the way borrowing affects the meaning of loan words. This research project is unquestionably a model for any future study of Anglicisms and the effect of English on other languages. Nonetheless, to date no comprehensive cross-cultural comparative and systematic study has been conducted to examine the motives for and determinants of borrowing English loan words. One exception is Kowner and Rosenhouse (2001), who compared attitudes to English loan words in Japan and Israel, thereby providing an explicit but preliminary insight into a number of determinants of policies and attitudes to lexical borrowing across cultures.
Lexical Borrowing: Motives and Means of Dissemination

Lexical borrowing is a widespread activity, practised ever since the first encounter between people speaking different languages in pre-historic times. It occurs when speakers of a language begin to incorporate into their own lexicon, or metaphorically ‘borrow’ (without the need for permission) a foreign word (‘loan word’). The process of borrowing requires at least some contact between the two languages, rudimentary understanding of the meaning of word and a minimal tendency to bilingualism. These nominal requirements may lead to occasional borrowing of a few words, but in many cases end with massive borrowing, amounting to thousands of words. This is the case with English, which adopted tens of thousands words from French following the Norman conquest of England in the Middle Ages, and with Modern Japanese, which has borrowed close to 30,000 loan words, mainly from English, since the onset of Japan’s modernisation in the latter half of the 19th century (cf. Hock & Joseph, 1996; McMahon, 1994).

Lexical borrowing from English in modern Japanese reveals some of the general characteristics of the borrowing process. It covers, to mention only a few domains, 52% of flower names, 35% of vegetable names and 24% of animal names (Morimoto, 1978). At the same time, only a few adverbs or prepositions in Japanese are borrowed. A different and atypical situation is found in Hebrew, which in addition to many borrowed nouns, but not many plants or animal names, has adopted numerous adjectives and adverbs (Kowner & Rosenhouse, 2001). Indeed, languages tend to borrow mainly nouns, and to a lesser extend verbs and adjectives. They tend to resort to loan words in fields related to technology, sciences, leisure activities and fashion, but shun basic vocabulary such as natural geographic phenomena, pronouns and body parts.

Several motives for adopting loan words are common to almost all languages, and all are relevant to English, thereby contributing further to its current position. All motives, we presume, are associated with some reward, either to the borrowing language or (at least) to the person using the loan words. The following three motives are the most fundamental, but their effects vary in different languages and cultures due to their interaction with other social and political circumstances as well as the character of their relations with English-speaking societies.

Need to coin new terminology and concepts. Every living language faces a need for constant coining of new notions due to technological and cultural changes. Life involves the development of material and spiritual
products of the given culture, or of others imported from a foreign

culture. In certain periods the need for new notions is especially strong,
as in the case of sudden exposure to a more advanced culture or in the
case of accelerated technological change, as has in Western Europe since
the 18th century and in other areas more recently. Borrowing words and
terminology from another culture in which they are already established
may satisfy this need partly or fully. English in this sense has been the
perfect choice. Not only is it the mother tongue of some of the most
advanced societies and developed economies, but it also has a rich
vocabulary, perhaps the richest in the world, as a number of scholars
have emphasised recently in accounting for the success of English (e.g.
Bryson, 1990; Claiborne, 1983).

Tendency to emulate a dominant group. Human groups, perhaps like
primate groups in general, have the tendency to imitate others who seem
worthy of emulation. Animals tend to imitate dominant individuals,
whereas in mankind this tendency has been expanded to the cultural
imitation of entire dominant groups. This association encompasses
elements from the language of the dominant group.

Tendency to create a special jargon in closed groups. Various groups in any
culture seek ways to distinguish themselves from the rest of the
population. The sociologist Georg Simmel (1904) postulated that fashions
develop for this reason, and language has an important role in the creation
of such differences. Borrowing from a prestigious language often serves as
a means to highlight the uniqueness and progress of the borrowing group,
which is often a closed elite group. This trend is typical among
professional groups, such as physicians, engineers and lawyers, but also
among youth groups, who use a prestigious foreign language as a marker
of uniqueness. Apart from providing elevated status, borrowing such
terms often reflects the need to communicate topics that are unknown and
uninteresting for those who are not members in the same professional or
social group. English – the language used at almost any international
professional meeting but also at the leading venues of current popular
culture – offers a rich vocabulary for the creation of such jargon.

The dissemination of English loan words depends also on the
availability of means of communication. At present the following means
seem the most relevant.

Direct communication. The level of exposure to English due to colonisa-
tion is evidently connected to lexical borrowing (Rubal-Lopez, 1996).
Direct communication may also occur due to the military presence of
troops from an English-speaking country. More commonly is may be due
to tourism from an English-speaking country to a non-English-speaking
country or vice versa, with the wish of tourists from non-English-speaking countries to communicate with their English-speaking hosts.

**Mass media.** Since the early 20th century, English-speaking countries, the USA in particular, have led many trends in the global dissemination of information and popular culture. This was facilitated by radio broadcasting in English (e.g. the BBC, Voice of America), especially during WWII. The successful American film industry has presented the American lifestyle, along with its language, practically to the whole world. Later on, as the TV system developed, the role played by the movies reached spectators even in their homes. The last two decades witnessed the emergence of computers for personal use and the spread of the Internet. Currently the electronic communication media, i.e. the Internet and the World Wide Web, have become the central means of cultural influence of the English-speaking community and a motive for learning its language. The media tend to disseminate the vocabulary of the modern discourse in general and the elite’s discourse in particular, which is inevitably the English vocabulary. In many countries English-speaking channels are available because of their relatively low price and their cultural attractiveness.

**The education system.** The education system serves as a central socialisation agent of the community for the dissemination of traditional and modern content and topics. In some cases the education system enhances and encourages the acquisition and dissemination of foreign words that have been absorbed by certain social classes, and in many other cases it is the main means for learning English as a second language. However, in cultures where an obvious purist tendency exists, the education system may serve to decrease the use of words borrowed from English.

### Determinants of Adoption of English Loan Words in Contemporary World Languages

Numerous determinants exist for borrowing English vocabulary by other languages, the majority of which are by-products of the motives and means presented above. The following section presents some of the major determinants, which will be examined in detail in each of the case studies in the subsequent chapters.

**Modernisation and economic development.** The borrowing process involves contacts between members of various societies, including travelling abroad and direct exposure to English and its native speakers. In addition, societies entering modernisation are under greater pressure for lexical terminology. Economic development, and especially exporting
to Anglophone countries, were found to increase pressure for use of English in schools (Fishman et al., 1977b).

**Prestige.** Linguistic adoption partly stems from a tendency to imitate a dominant group speaking a language considered to enjoy greater prestige than the speaker’s native language. Lexical borrowing from such a group carries with it some of the concomitant prestige. Its acquisition depends on the cultural and historical background of the contacts between the borrowing language and English, the cultural and economic gaps between them, and the existence of a competing cultural-linguistic community that may decrease the effect of borrowing from English. The need for greater prestige associated with lexical borrowing is often associated with intragroup motivation, but occasionally it may be relevant for intergroup relations, notably in an ethnically heterogeneous society.

**Ethnic and linguistic diversity.** In places where ethnic and linguistic heterogeneity exist (e.g., India, African countries, former Yugoslavia, Israel), English can serve as a partially or fully linking language between the different language communities (cf. Fishman et al., 1977b). The penetration of English as a second (or third) language strengthens the use of English vocabulary in the local language. Changes in the status of one local language within a political or social framework may strengthen or weaken the use of English for communication between speakers of different language communities.

**Nationalism.** Nationalistic beliefs and policies tend to strengthen language purism and weaken the tendency to adopt loan words. French policies at present are only a mild example of this tendency; in the 1930s it was imperial Japan that attempted to drive out English words from its national language.

**Cultural threat.** Perceptions of cultural threat may also yield pressures toward linguistic purism simultaneously aimed at weakening the penetration of the English language. Developments in Israel and France, for example, may serve as examples of such defensive sentiments.

**National character.** Communal psychological features, such as obedience and conformity by the language community, may enhance processes of lexical borrowing, as witnessed in Japan, for example. In other periods this feature may lead the same community to processes of purism.

**Existence of regulatory linguistic establishments.** Language academies are meant to help the national language by creating a language policy as part of the attempt to strengthen nationalism. Thus, language academies tend to enhance purism and to weaken linguistic adoption of loan words by coining original substitutes. The Academy of Language in Addis Ababa is a good example of this role. The closure of this institution in 1991 for
political reasons helped to weaken the status of Amharic and strengthen processes of English word adoption in Ethiopia (Teferra, 2002). At the same time, regulatory linguistic institutions may also help by post factum confirmation of long established words in the language borrowed from English and their dissemination in official publications. But note that the official attitude of language academies to foreign word borrowing often contradicts the actual behaviour of the language speakers, who unwittingly absorb the foreign words.

Hypotheses

To create a framework for a comparative study, we use the foregoing analysis to derive several predictions regarding the attitudes to English loan words discovered in our case studies. Our predictions relate to three aspects of the borrowing process:

A. Predictions related to the fundamental motives for borrowing:
1. The greater the need to coin new terminology, the greater the tendency to borrow English loan words.
2. The greater the tendency in a given society to emulate other groups, the greater the tendency to borrow English loan words.
3. The more specialised and closed a group (society) is, the greater is its tendency to borrow English loan words.

B. Predictions related to means of dissemination:
4. The more contacts a society has with Anglo-American culture and the English language, past (e.g. through colonial rule) and/or present (e.g. tourism, Anglo-American military or economic presence), the greater the tendency to borrow English loan words.
5. The more exposed a society is at present to English via the mass media (TV programs, films, satellite channels, English-language newspapers), the greater the tendency to borrow English loan words.
6. The more advanced the educational system, higher education in particular, the greater the tendency to borrow English loan words. This is also valid for tertiary education: the greater the number and ratio of students studying in Anglo-American institutions of higher education, the greater their tendency to borrow English loan words even when they are back in their home countries.

C. Predictions related to features of borrowing:
7. The more recent the stage of modernisation in a given society, the greater its need for an updated and fresh vocabulary.
8. The higher the prestige of English in a given society, the higher the chances of its linguistic adoption. More specifically, the closer the contacts between the borrowing language and the English language, the more extensive the borrowing from English. The wider the cultural and economic gaps between the two languages, and the lesser the influence of a competing cultural-linguistic community, the stronger the effect of this determinant.

9. The greater the ethnic heterogeneity and linguistic diversity in a given society, the greater the tendency to resort to English and to adopt English loan words.

10. The weaker nationalistic beliefs and policies, the greater the propensity to borrow loan words.

11. The lesser the perception of cultural threat in a given culture, particularly vis-à-vis the English language and the Anglo-American culture, the greater the tendency to resort to lexical borrowing from English.

12. The greater the conformity and obedience in a given society, the greater the capacity to adopt lexical loan words, if this is the cultural trend at the time.

13. The lesser the control of regulatory linguistic institutions, the greater the tendency to resort to lexical borrowing from English.

14. If borrowing from English is national policy, the greater the control of the regulatory institutions the greater the tendency to resort to lexical borrowing from English.

The Present Book

This volume was conceived to account for determinants of and motives for contemporary lexical borrowing from English, using a comparative approach and a broad cross-cultural perspective. By systematically analysing a large number of case studies of different languages used in a large variety of countries, we sought to isolate for the first time a number of enhancing or inhibiting factors that may explain the current pattern of borrowing from English, and to understand the way they interplay. This is facilitated by a careful choice of languages and cultures, which represent a wide variety of language families, political systems, economic developmental stages and historic relations with the English language and the Anglo-American world.

This process uses lexical items from one (dominant, superstratum) language within the grammatical system of another (subdued) language.
The twelve case studies in the present volume describe processes in certain languages as case studies which are structured in a similar fashion, in order to facilitate a thematic comparison. These chapters are limited to single lexical items, namely words, and the processes involved in them, largely leaving out other domains such as syntax. Although the impact of English is clearly not limited only to one section of vocabulary or language structure, this focus was imposed on the authors of the chapters to allow interlingual comparisons and concentrate on the determinants of lexical borrowing and the linguistic and cultural impact of this process.

While the languages discussed in the 12 chapters below are only a tiny portion of the world languages, they were carefully selected to represent six different language families and subgroups: Indo-European (French, Dutch, Persian, Icelandic and some Indian languages), Semitic (Hebrew, Arabic and Amharic), Finno-Ugric (Hungarian), Sino-Tibetan (Chinese in Taiwan) and Altaic (Japanese). Among these, Indian languages, and to a lesser extent Hebrew and Arabic, are languages spoken in countries which were under British rule in the past, whereas Japan was under American occupation for almost seven years. We assumed that if basic linguistic features and processes are revealed and converge to yield similar results when languages so different are compared, they will probably indicate major common (universal) sources of these processes. In the concluding chapter we examine our basic assumptions and attempt to show that this path is not only interesting but also fruitful.