



ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](https://www.sciencedirect.com)

Journal of Pragmatics

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/pragma](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/pragma)

## Macaroni English goes pragmatic: False phraseological Anglicisms in Italian as illocutionary acts<sup>☆</sup>

Cristiano Furiassi\*

Università degli Studi di Torino, Italy

### ARTICLE INFO

Article history:  
Available online xxx

Keywords:  
False phraseological Anglicism  
Illocutionary act  
Italian  
Pragmatic Anglicism  
Pragmatic salience

### ABSTRACT

Taking the notion of pragmatic borrowing as a starting point, the aim of this article is to assess the pragmatic salience – more specifically the ability to perform illocutionary acts – of the two false phraseological Anglicisms found in Italian, i.e. *fly down* and *I know my chickens*. Typical of what may be referred to as *macaroni English*, false phraseological Anglicisms are Italian-made idiomatic phrases which look and sound English, but do not exist or are used with a different meaning in the English language. Examples are extracted from Italian newspaper archives and web-based corpora; in addition, a qualitative analysis is carried out by means of lexicographic sources, combining data from monolingual dictionaries of English and Italian, Italian-English bilingual dictionaries and dictionaries of idioms and slang. This study includes the frequency of the false phraseological Anglicisms under scrutiny, the typical contexts in which they occur, suggested Italian translation equivalents, as well as the indication of the corresponding illocutionary acts performed. Despite the low quantitative impact of false phraseological Anglicisms on Italian, their attestation further demonstrates how English itself not only is undoubtedly Italians' favorite donor language, but also acts as a model which inspires English-like phrasemes, hence showing the openness of the Italian language to the pervasive presence of English in everyday usage.

© 2018 Elsevier B.V. All rights reserved.

### 1. Introduction

Nowadays, the “Anglicization” (Pulcini et al., 2012: 1) or “Anglification” (Gottlieb, 2012: 175) of Italian – and many other recipient languages – is so pervasive that units larger than words or compounds, i.e. phraseological Anglicisms, are borrowed from English alongside single lexical items, namely Anglicisms. Phraseological Anglicisms (Pulcini et al., 2012: 13), more so than Anglicisms proper, seem capable of originating pragmatic Anglicisms (Andersen, 2014: 18) as they may promulgate illocutionary acts (Searle, 1969, 1975, 1976).<sup>1</sup> Indeed, whereas non-phraseological Anglicisms, being mostly

<sup>☆</sup> Thanks are due to the anonymous reviewers and the special issue editors, in particular Elizabeth Peterson, for their valuable comments on the initial draft of this article and precious suggestions on key bibliographic material.

\* Dipartimento di Lingue e Letterature Straniere e Culture Moderne, Via Sant’Ottavio 20, 10124 Torino, Italy  
E-mail address: [cristiano.furiassi@unito.it](mailto:cristiano.furiassi@unito.it).

URL: <http://www.lingue.unito.it/persona/cristiano.furiassi>.

<sup>1</sup> Core terminological issues tackled in this article are explained in detail in Section 2.

nouns, tend to conform to the “hierarchy of borrowability” (Muysken, 1981) more strictly, phraseological Anglicisms often contain verbs, the predominant word class capable of performing illocutionary acts, e.g. *give me/gimme five*. In other words, the fact that phraseological Anglicisms may include a verb increases their likelihood of being used as illocutionary acts.<sup>2</sup>

Phraseological and pragmatic aspects do not seem to have been widely discussed in the otherwise prolific literature on Anglicisms published to date (see Furiassi, 2015: 263–277), at least not jointly in a single study. In order to bring together both analytical frameworks, and in line with Andersen's (2014: 18) view of “pragmatic borrowing”, the aim of this article is to assess the “pragmatic salience” (Errington, 1985: 294; Brown, 1990: 99; Næss, 2011: 322) of false phraseological Anglicisms in Italian (Furiassi, 2010: 34), that is, Italian-made idiomatic phrases which look and sound English but are not attested in the English language, i.e. *fly down*, It. lit. ‘vola basso’, En. “fly low” (OED), and *I know my chickens*, It. lit. ‘conosco i miei polli’, En. “to know one's onions” (OED).

Regardless of their pragmatic potential, these two false phraseological Anglicisms coined in Italian may be referred to as instances of “inglese maccheronico” (Bressan, 2006: 315), En. lit. ‘macaroni English’, (mis)translations of Italian phrases into English made by Italian speakers<sup>3</sup>: it may be argued that such speakers are either not proficient (enough) in English or, alternatively, that highly proficient Italian speakers of English capitalize on their language skills, thus aiming at a humorous response, which presupposes the existence of a certain degree of bilingualism or at least a frequent contact – direct or indirect – between Italians and the English-speaking world.<sup>4</sup>

According to Furiassi (2017: 42), who carried out a joint corpus- and dictionary-based study of phraseological Anglicisms in Italian, they may be classified into three types – A, B and C. The author identified eight (A) ‘real’ phraseological Anglicisms used as pragmatic Anglicisms *sensu stricto*, which are capable of performing illocutionary acts<sup>5</sup>: 1) (*and the winner is ...*), 2) *don't try this at home*, 3) *give me/gimme five*, 4) *it's not my business*, 5) *keep calm and ...*, 6) *take it easy*, 7) *the show must go on* and 8) *welcome to ...*. He also detected six (B) ‘real’ phraseological Anglicisms not used as pragmatic Anglicisms *sensu stricto*, meaning that they are unable to perform illocutionary acts but are rich in other pragmatic functions<sup>6</sup>: 1) *day by day*, 2) *just in time*, 3) *ladies and gentlemen*, 4) *last (but) not least*, 5) *made in ...* and 6) *on the road*. Finally, he traced three (C) false phraseological Anglicisms used as pragmatic Anglicisms *sensu stricto*: 1) *don't expand yourself*, 2) *fly down* and 3) *I know my chickens*.<sup>7</sup>

Whereas Furiassi (2017) focuses on ‘real’ phraseological Anglicisms and only acknowledges the existence of false phraseological Anglicisms, the novelty of this article relies on the illocutionary aspects of *fly down* and *I know my chickens*, false phraseological Anglicisms detectable in contemporary Italian but yet not recorded in Italian monolingual dictionaries.<sup>8</sup>

Although false phraseological Anglicisms are quantitatively limited, their raw frequency is measured, the typical contexts of occurrence are presented and the “illocutionary act” (Searle, 1975: 344) performed is indicated. The aim is to look at how false phraseological Anglicisms are pragmatically situated in Italian newspaper archives and web-based corpora.

<sup>2</sup> Although, “Searle observes, nothing rules out the possibility of there being illocutionary acts that are not named by a verb [...]” (Green, 2015), in fact “[i]n both Austin and Searle's approaches the recognition of intention was closely correlated with the use of illocutionary verb, a verb used in the first person, singular, present tense, indicative mode, passive voice [...]” (Osika, 2008: 38). See also Condoravdi and Lauer (2011: 150) for a summary of “explicit performatives”, where it is stressed that “performative utterances are performances of the act named by the performative verb”.

<sup>3</sup> The OED dates *macaroni* to 1764 and defines it as “[a] dandy or fop; spec. (in the second half of the 18th cent.) a member of a set of young men who had travelled in Europe and extravagantly imitated Continental tastes and fashions”. According to McNeil (2000: 382), “[i]n performing the artificiality of language, the macaroni frequently exaggerated the artificiality of its actual production; his speech itself was considered unusual and affected”. When referring to language, *macaroni*, now obsolete but first attested in this sense in 1884, indicates “[a] mixture of languages used in macaronic verse” (OED). Indeed, in Italian, the adjective *maccheronico*, from Latin *macarōnicū(m)* (GDU), refers to “[...] “macaronic” poetry, which was a burlesque of Latin forms, designed to be witty. [...] The term “macaronic” had been first used in the 1490s to describe [...] Italian poetry in which Latin forms were mixed with the vernacular, the latter being given correct Latin endings. [...] the function of macaronic verse in Middle English was in some cases to satirize the true Latin [...]” (McNeil, 2000: 381). In its extended Italian use, *maccheronico* frequently appears in the collocation *inglese maccheronico*, En. lit. ‘macaroni English’, a label coined on purpose by the author for the title of this article.

<sup>4</sup> The humorous response at times implied by utterers of false phraseological Anglicisms falls within the wider linguistic phenomenon of wordplay. Indeed, according to Knospe et al. (2016: 1), “[...] the act of playing with words becomes manifest in a range of humorous forms of language use (e.g. [...] ludic word creations). [...] that involve manipulating formal and semantic aspects of lexical units [...]”. In addition, as shown in some of the examples included in Subsections 4.1 and 4.2, “[...] wordplay [...] can also fulfill other rhetorical functions, for instance as a pragmatic device for positioning a speaker in a conversational situation or in front of an audience” (Knospe et al., 2016: 1).

<sup>5</sup> The label *sensu stricto* is used throughout this article to denote cases of English or pseudo-English phraseology that not only may be used pragmatically in the broad sense but are also endowed with the distinct ability to perform illocutionary acts in Italian. On the other hand, *sensu lato* refers to all other instances of ‘real’ or false phraseological Anglicisms which may display pragmatic features but that, however, are not capable of performing illocutionary acts specifically.

<sup>6</sup> In addition to the various pragmatic functions listed in Section 2.5, others include “providing emotional or positive connotations, or [...] highlighting an ironic, parodic or humorous [sic] aim [...], to achieve conciseness, emphasis and variety of expression, or even to avoid ambiguity” (González Cruz and Rodríguez Medina, 2011: 262).

<sup>7</sup> It seems that false phraseological Anglicisms in Italian are always used with illocutionary nuances (see Section 4) whereas ‘real’ phraseological Anglicisms may perform illocutionary acts, e.g. *the show must go on*, classified by Furiassi (2017: 55) as a representative (stating) and/or directive (ordering), or may not do so, e.g. *ladies and gentlemen*. In fact, for instance, if *ladies and gentlemen* is uttered by an Italian show host instead of It. *signore e signori*, this is likely to be pragmatically relevant only in so far as it grants the speaker a greater allure, a sense of modernity and a stronger appeal on the audience.

<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, in spite of the fact that *don't expand yourself* may be spotted in conversations taking place between Italians, no occurrence was found in the sources investigated (see Section 3). Consequently, the analysis of *don't expand yourself* is not included in this article.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7297227>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/7297227>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)