Linguistica Silesiana nr 42, 2021
ISSN 0208-4228
DOI: 10.24425/linsi.2021.137235

RADOSŁAW DYLEWSKI
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań
dradek@amu.edu.pl

ZUZANNA WITT
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań
zuzwit@st.amu.edu.pl

POLISH LOANWORDS IN ENGLISH REVISITED

The impact of the Polish language on the English lexical fabric, although unimpressive, is worth noticing. However, thus far it has not been a source of interest of many scholars. The present paper aims at discussing Polish loanwords that have found their way into the English language; this is done by means of collecting alleged loanwords from an array of sources (dictionaries, subject literature, and the Internet) which are later verified against, *inter alia*, such etymological dictionaries as the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Next, in order to assess their scale of use, selected items are checked in a number of corpora available online. The research concludes that there are 33 direct borrowings from the Polish language (belonging to 8 semantic categories) present in English, and nearly half of them are yet unattested in the *OED*.

Keywords: *loanwords, borrowings, Polish loans in English*

1. Introduction

The lexis of the English language has been under heavy influence of various languages for centuries. Nonetheless, the impact of Slavic languages has undoubtedly been rather insignificant when compared to the influence of, for instance, such Romance and Germanic languages as French, Latin and German respectively. When one focuses solely on the influence of Polish, its contribution to the development of the history of the English language is far from impressive. This state of affairs is by no means surprising as it stems from such geo-historical and linguistic reasons as spatial distance, relative lack of direct language contact

and, importantly, the low standing of the Polish language in the English-speaking countries. All these factors have surely resulted in its meager influence on the lexicon of English.

However, there are a number of items which permeated the lexical fabric of English. Some of these items are a result of transfer of Polish (historical) functions, institutions, positions, canine breeds, etc. which have no direct equivalents in English (for example, *sejm* or *owczarek*). Others, in turn, resulted mainly from the presence of a sizeable Polish community (preponderantly in the US), the cuisine of which, due to the lack of unequivocal equivalents, transferred the names of the selected dishes to English (these are, for instance, *pierogis*).

Even though all of these loanwords do not constitute a prominent contribution to the history of English, some of them are interwoven into English lexicon. Thus far, however, they have not drawn enough of scholarly attention. Hence, this paper aims at plugging this void by presenting a brief, but hopefully succinct, sketch of the Polish contribution to the development of English word stock which is to be achieved by means of the data culled from selected dictionaries, existing subject literature, and Internet sources.

2. Terminology and methodology

The term *borrowing*, at first glance relatively easy to define, might pose certain terminological problems. The authors of the present paper follow Durkin's (2014: 3) approach, who claims:

> In linguistics, the term 'borrowing' describes a process in which one language replicates a linguistic feature from another language, either wholly or partly. The metaphorical use of the word 'borrowing' to describe this process has some well-known flaws: nothing is taken away from what is termed the donor language, and there is no assumption that the 'borrowing' or 'loan' will ever be returned. In many ways, the idea of influence would be more appropriate. However, the term 'borrowing' has been firmly entrenched in linguistics as the usual term to describe this process since the nineteenth century, to the extent that most linguists no longer even think of it as a metaphor.

We, in line with Durkin's (2014: 3) approach, do not "attempt to change the fundamental terminology of the discipline", but keep "to the basic framework of borrowing, donors, recipients, and loans". Also, in the body of the paper we will use the terms *borrowing*, *lexical borrowing*, *lexical transfer*, *loan*, and *loanword* interchangeably.[1]

[1] After Dylewski and Bator (in press).

Next, we recurrently use the terms *direct borrowing* and *indirect borrowing.* The difference between the two can be explained in the following manner:

> If a language takes a word directly from another, as English got *omelette* from French, we call what happens DIRECT BORROWING. But in other cases a word may be passed indirectly like a relay baton from one language to another, and to another, e.g. *kahveh* (Turkish)>*kahva* (Arabic)>*koffie*>(Dutch)>*coffee* (English). This is called INDIRECT BORROWING. If a word is directly borrowed the chances of its undergoing drastic phonological modification are considerably less than those of a word that is indirectly borrowed. Anyone can see that French *omelette* and English *omelette* are evidently related. But I suspect many Turkish speakers would not recognise English *coffee* as a word originating from *kahveh*. For by the time *kahveh* had gone through Arabic and Dutch to reach English it had undergone considerable phonological changes, which are partly reflected in the spelling. Each time a word passes from one language to another, its pronunciation is adjusted to make it fit into the phonological system of the recipient language. (Katamba 1994: 133)

The focus of the paper lies solely on borrowings proper (thus *calques*, *semantic borrowings* or *borrowed syntactic structures* are disregarded due to the reason that they, to our knowledge, are non-existent in the English language).

As for the paths of borrowings, they have been dealt with, *inter alia*, by Görlach (1997: 131), who provides the following tripartite classification:

> 1. The coexistence of two spoken languages (in mixed speech communities and border regions): transferred items will normally be integrated; the impact may be restricted to certain domains, often affecting daily life.
>
> 2. Distant contact (for example the import of foreign goods and their names) restricts the impact to lexis; transfer can happen over great distances, in written form and does not require bilinguals.
>
> 3. Borrowings from book languages: transfers are notably based on written forms and not well integrated; later contact with the spoken medium can lead to corrections, especially in pronunciation.

In the case of Polish-English language contact, with English being the recipient language of certain lexical items, we can talk mainly about distant contact as well as borrowing from book languages (which resulted in the appearance of such words in English as *Piast*, *krakowiak* or *mazurka*). However, in the case of Polish communities in the US and hence the appearance of certain elements of cuisine bearing Polish names in the American variety of English, we can talk about Görlach's Type 1.

Generally, the paper is to present direct borrowings from Polish to English: it is done on the basis of the lexical material collated from the *Oxford English Dictionary*[2] (*OED*), the *Green's Dictionary of Slang* (*GDOS*),[3] Varchaver and Moore (2001), subject literature, *Wikipedia*, and various Internet sources.[4] In order to verify the provenience of the garnered items whose origin is supposedly Polish, we mostly rely on:

– the etymological information offered by the *Oxford English Dictionary* for the alleged loans which have been recorded in sources other than the *OED* (these items *per se* are to be found in the *OED*, but have not been classified as direct loans from Polish in this source);

– two Polish etymological dictionaries in the case of items (so far) unattested in the *OED*: Brückner (1927), Boryś (2005) as well as the dictionary of Polish (*Słownik Języka Polskiego*) edited by Droszewski (it is an on-line dictionary also containing etymological information).[5]

Next, in the body of the paper we adopt Podhajecka's (2002) approach and lay emphasis on those lexical items which were directly transmitted from Polish to English. We also pay heed to loans thus far unattested in the *OED*, their origin(s), as well as their occurrence in the English language: we check their use in a number of corpora available online. These corpora represent various time periods and varieties of English;[6] these are: the *Corpus of Historical American English* (*COHA*),[7] the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (*COCA*), the *TIME Magazine Corpus* (*TMC*),[8] the *Corpus of American Soap Operas*,[9] *Early English Books Online* (*EEBO*),[10] the *British National Corpus* (*BNC*),[11] the *TV*

[2] https://www.oed.com.
[3] https://greensdictofslang.com.
[4] The Internet oftentimes provides anecdotal lexical evidence of Polish>English lexical transfers.
[5] http://doroszewski.pwn.pl.
[6] Mainly American, but also British and Canadian.
[7] https://www.english-corpora.org/coha/.
[8] The TIME corpus is based on 100 million words of text in about 275,000 articles from *TIME* magazine from 1923–2006, and it serves as a great resource to examine changes in American English during this time.
[9] https://www.english-corpora.org/soap/. "The SOAP corpus contains 100 million words of data from 22,000 transcripts from American soap operas from the early 2000s, and it serves as a great resource to look at very informal language" (date of access: 05.02.2021).
[10] Available at "https://www.english-corpora.org/eebo; The "open source" version available there "contains 755 million words in 25,368 texts from the 1470s to the 1690s" (date of access: 05.02.2021).
[11] "The British National Corpus (BNC) was originally created by Oxford University press in the 1980s – early 1990s, and it contains 100 million words of text texts from a wide range of genres

Corpus,[12] the *Movies Corpus*,[13] and the *Strathy Corpus of Canadian English* (*Strathy*).[14] Additionally, in the case of older or historic items, we inspect *Chronicling America, Historic American Newspapers* (*HAN*).[15] The *HAN* is an Internet-based and searchable database of American newspapers containing newspaper issues published between 1690–1963. If need be, other Internet sources are consulted.

3. Loans of (alleged) Polish origin

3.1. Loans of Polish origin – the *OED*

The use of advanced search options[16] in the *Oxford English Dictionary* allowed for the retrieval of 23 items of Polish provenance:[17] *bigos* (< etymon: Polish *bigos*. 'In Polish cookery: a traditional stew of cabbage and meat');[18] *bobac* (also: *bobaque*; etymology: < Polish *bobak*. 'A burrowing-squirrel found in Poland and adjoining countries, called also Polish Marmot'); *catastrophism* (etymology: < catastrophe n. 3 + *-ism* suffix; ([after Polish *katastrofizm*[19] (A. Hertz 1932, in Droga No. 6)]. 'A literary movement characterized by its pessimistic vision, associated with the Żagary group of poets in Poland in the 1930s') and *catastrophist* ([After Polish *katastrofista*. 'A writer associated with the Żagary group in Poland in the 1930s'); *cryosphere* (after Polish *kryosfera*, in English modelled on a Polish lexical item. 'The part of the earth's surface where water exists as ice; the entire region of the natural environment that is below 0°C, esp. permanently'); *gmina* ('A local division of the Polish administrative organization'); *krakowiak* (also: *krakowyak*. < etymology: Kraków (English Cracow), a city and region in southern Poland. 'Polish folk dance'); *kromeski*

(e.g. spoken, fiction, magazines, newspapers, and academic)" (https://www.english-corpora.org/bnc; date of access: 05.02.2021).

[12] "The TV Corpus contains 325 million words of data in 75,000 TV episodes from the 1950s to the current time" (https://www.english-corpora.org/tv; date of access: 05.02.2021).

[13] "The Movies Corpus contains 200 million words of data in more than 25,000 movies from the 1930s to the current time" https://www.english-corpora.org/movies/.

[14] "The Strathy Corpus of Canadian English is a product of the Strathy Language Unit at Queen's University. The corpus contains 50 million words from more than 1,100 spoken, fiction, magazines, newspapers, and academic texts" (https://www.english-corpora.org/can; date of access: 05.02.2021).

[15] Available at: https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov.

[16] This dictionary enables its users to confine the search to the regional origin of a given term.

[17] Place-names (like *Kashube* and its derivatives: *Kashubian* and *Kashubish*) have been excluded. Also, adjectives derived from names associated with Polish culture (in its broad sense), have not been taken into account, for instance *Chopinesque*.

[18] All definitions in this paragraph are taken from the *OED*.

[19] Italics by the authors.

(also *crom-*, *-esque*, *-esqui*, *kromesky*; < etymology: Polish *kromeczka*, little slice.[20] 'A croquette made of meat or fish minced, rolled in bacon or calf's udder and fried'); *mazurka* (1) (< etymon: Polish *mazurka*. 'A lively country dance in triple time for couples, originating in Poland in the 16th cent., in which the dancers characteristically tap their heels or stamp their feet on the accented beat') and *mazurka* (2) ('a piece of music intended to accompany such a dance, or composed in its rhythm, with a strong accent on the second (sometimes the third) beat of the bar'); *mereology* (< Polish *mereologia* (S. Leśniewski 1927 (in form *mereologja*), in *Przegląd Filozoficzny* 30 166), irregularly < ancient Greek *μέρος* part … + *-ologia*. 'The formal study of the relations between parts and wholes'); *oberek* and *obertas* (< etymons: *oberek* and *obertas* respectively. 'A lively, twirling Polish dance in triple time, related to, though usually faster than, the *mazurka*'); *ogonek* (< etymon: Polish *ogonek*. 'A diacritic resembling a hook (˛), which is placed beneath a letter'); *owczarek* (< etymon: Polish *owczarek*. 'Any of several breeds of sheepdog originating in Poland; a dog of one of these breeds. Usually with distinguishing word indicating a particular breed'); *Piast* (< etymon: Polish *Piast*. 'A member of the first Polish royal dynasty; a person descended from this dynasty. Also more generally: any Polish-born candidate at a royal election'); *pierogi* (also: *perogi, perogie*, *perogy*, *pierogi, pierogie*, *pierogy*, *pirogi*, *pirogie*, *pirogy*; U.S. regional – *padogie* (Pennsylvania), *pirohi*, *pirotti*;[21] < etymon: Polish *pierogi*. With plural agreement, or collectively. 'A dish, of Polish and Eastern European origin, consisting of small, usually semicircular, dough cases or dumplings filled with any of a variety of savoury or sweet fillings, and cooked by boiling or steaming; (also) such dumplings individually'); *polka* ('a woman's tight-fitting jacket, usually knitted, fashionable in the 19th cent.' – this meaning most probably stems from the specific use of *polka*/*Polka* = a feminine noun meaning a *Polish woman*); †*pospolite*[22] (< etymon: Polish *pospolite*. 'A Polish militia, consisting of the nobility and gentry summoned to serve for a limited time'); *rendzina*: even though the dictionary gives the following etymons: Polish *rędzina*, Russian *rendzina*, German *Rendzina*, it unequivocally states that it is a borrowing from Polish (etymology: < Polish *rędzina* (16th–17th cent.; -ędz- is pronounced /endʒ/. 'A fertile, lime-rich soil which occurs typically under grass or open woodland on relatively soft calcareous bedrock (e.g. chalk and some limestones) and has

[20] *Oxford Reference* (https://www.oxfordreference.com, s.v. *kromeski*; date of access: 17.09.2020), however, provides information concerning its equivocal origin: it was adopted either from Russian or Polish; other on-line dictionaries, for example www.dictionary.com (s.v. *kromeski*), provide the following: "C19: from Russian *kromochka*, diminutive of *kroma* = slice of bread".

[21] Please note that "some forms may reflect transmission via another language (in the case of *pirohi* perhaps Ukrainian)" (*OED*, s.v. *pierogi*).

[22] As indicated, the word is no longer in use, but for literature and historic sources.

a dark, crumbly, humus-rich surface layer above a softer, pale, calcareous layer formed by the breakdown of the underlying rock'); *robotnik* (< origin: A borrowing from Polish, combined with English elements. Etymology: < Polish *robotnik* worker (< *robota* work …+ *-nik* suffix), in later use sometimes analysed as < *robot* n.2 + *-nik* suffix. … 'A serf; a worker, esp. one who mindlessly obeys authority'); *sejm* ('In Poland: a general assembly or diet; a parliament; spec. (since 1921) the lower house of the Polish parliament'); *szlachta* ('The aristocratic or land-owning class in Poland before 1945'); *zloty* (< etymology: Polish *złoty*, <*złoto* gold, cognate with Russian *zóloto*. '(a) A gold or silver coin of monarchic Poland'. '(b) The monetary unit of the Polish republic; a note or coin of the republican currency').

3.2. Loans of (alleged) Polish origin – other dictionaries

Green's Dictionary of Slang lists the following items which have been recorded in informal English and whose provenience is allegedly Polish: *boobatch* (< ?Polish = *grandfather* (*US*). 'An old Polish immigrant'); *bujok* (adj.) (< possibly of Polish origin. 'A dismissive epithet'); *cossack* (<proper name *Cossack*, the Turkish tribe living to the north of the Black Sea, who were organized into cavalry and fought for the Polish, then the Russian army; ult. Turki *quzzaq*, adventurer, guerrilla. 'A police officer, esp. one used to break a strike'); *dupa* (< Polish *dupa*, little ass (*US*). 'The buttocks, the posterior; often used as an affectionate term, esp. among Polish speakers or the families of Polish immigrants'); *kielbasa* (< Polish *kielbasa*, a highly seasoned garlicky sausage, usu. poached before it is eaten (*US*). 'A penis; also attrib.'); *marrowsky* n., also medical Greek, *mowrowsky* (< ? proper name of a Polish count, poss. Count Joseph Boruwlaski. Popularized by medical students at University College in Gower Street, London. 'A form of slang whereby the user transposes the initial letters of adjacent words; also attrib.; thus *marrowskying*, using this language'); *schmutter* n. (also: *shmuter*, *shmutter*; < Yid. *shmatte*, rags, ult. Polish *szmata*,[23] a piece of cloth, a rag. 'Clothes, orig. cheap but latterly used irrespective of quality'); *Zinski* (< the *-zinski* ending of many Polish surnames (*US*). 'A generic name for a Polish immigrant').

Bliss in his 1966 dictionary provides only one entry of Polish origin – *mazurka* – which entered English lexicon in the course of the 19th century.

Varchaver and Moore (2001) in their dictionary oriented at rather lay publicity[24] whose aims are described in the foreword in the following manner:

[23] This dictionary suggests it is an indirect borrowing via Yiddish.

[24] "This is not a dictionary of academic terms you might have been expected to learn in school. Nor is it a dictionary directed to travelers in foreign lands from which you are supposed to learn scores of terms about ordering your dinner in restaurants, or learning to get about in a train

> Thousands of words in American English have foreign sources, such as *dollar* or *ketchup*, but their meanings have become so thoroughly absorbed into our everyday language that they are no longer classified as foreign. In this *Browser's Dictionary of Foreign Words and Phrases*, the authors have stressed foreignness by choosing words that are relatively recent additions to the language. They have also included some older adopted words that have different or expanded meanings in current usage.

give the followings words as the ones taken over from Polish (or Polish and some other Indo-European language): *baba* (French, but from the Polish language) – 'old woman, grandmother'; *babka* – 'a yeast cake'; *kishkes*, *kishka* (Yiddish, from Polish) – 'a gut casing filled with fat, onion, flour, seasonings, etc., and roasted. By extension, a slang term meaning guts; the innermost parts'; *knish* (Yiddish, from Polish) – in Jewish cuisine, 'a roll or turnover of bread dough stuffed with meat, potato, or buckwheat, baked or fried'; *mazurka* (from Mazovia, a district in northern Poland) – 'A vigorous Polish folk dance in ¾ time, usually danced by couples, or the music for such a dance'; *schav* (Yiddish, from Polish) – 'in Jewish and eastern European cooking, a sorrel soup usually served cold with the addition of sour cream, chopped egg, etc.'; *tchotchke*, *chotchke* (Yiddish, from Polish) – 'a cheap trinket, ornament, or souvenir. A knickknack. Also written *tsatzke*'. The said dictionary also provides *uhlan* – 'a lancer and cavalryman, originally of the Polish army, later prominent in the German army', however, it is simultaneously indicated that it is a lexeme which entered English via German from Polish and Turkish; *yarmulke* – 'a small, round skullcap worn by males during Jewish religious ceremonies, and by some Orthodox or Conservative Jews during prayer and religious study' (an indirect borrowing: from Polish, Ukrainian via Yiddish). As the list above indicates, a number of items classified by Varchaver and Moore (2001) as allegedly Polish were transferred to English via Yiddish.

3.3. Subject literature

As said earlier, the English language has been an intense borrower for centuries. When it comes to the languages which left their most profound impress on English lexicon, Figure 1 presents 25 most prolific donor languages (according to the results of the study based on the 3rd edition of the *OED* conducted by Durkin and published in 2014):

---

station, or arguing with concierges about the state of your hotel room or the high amount of your bill. It is, rather, a dictionary to help you elucidate what you come across every day in newspapers or hear on television" (Varchaver and Moore 2001: v).

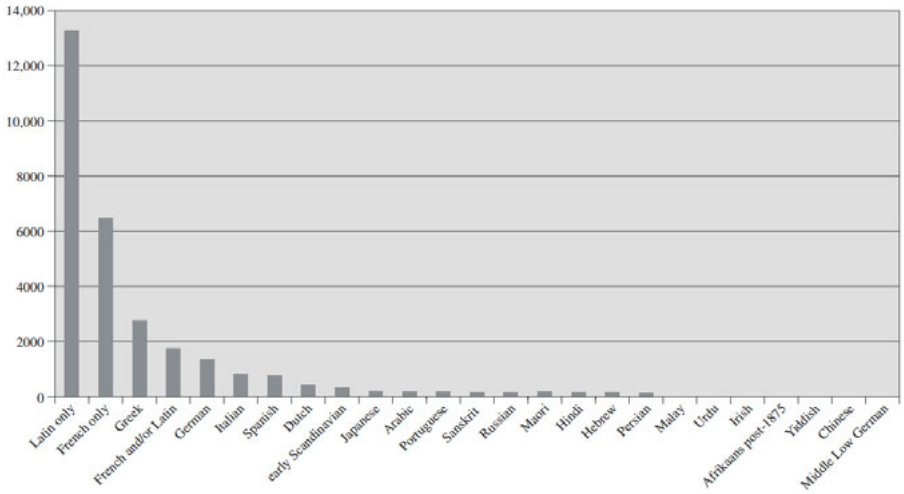

Figure 1. Totals of loanwords from the 25 most prolific inputs in *OED3* (Durkin 2014: 25).

The contribution of Slavic languages is rather insignificant (when compared to, for instance Latin, French or Greek), with Russian[25] leading the way with approximately 140 lexical items which enriched English.

In the 3rd edition of the *OED* Durkin identified approximately 20 loans of Polish origin[26] (see Figure 2):

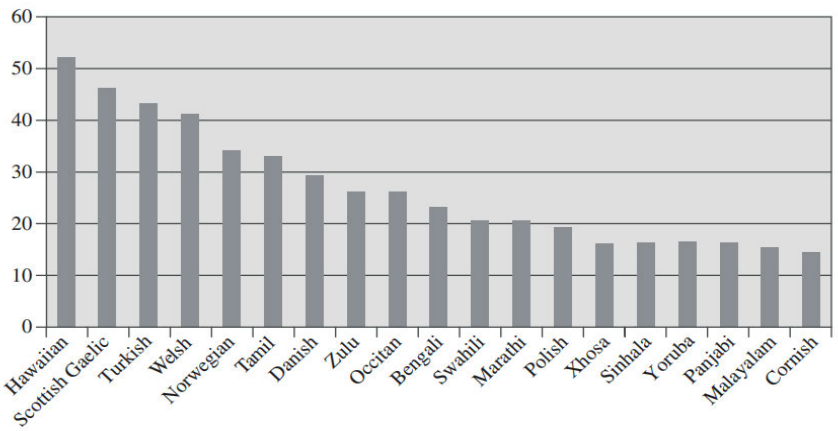

Figure 2. Donor languages with less prominent lexical influence on English (Durkin 2014: 27).

[25] Interestingly, Russian is seated between Sanskrit and Maori when it comes to the number of words borrowed into English and outnumbers, for instance, Hebrew.
[26] However, he does not list them.

Polish influence on English lexicon is not prominent and Polish *per se* sits in Figure 2 between such exotic languages as Marathi and Xhosa.

While discussing the history of foreign words in English, Serjeantson (1961: 210) briefly touches upon borrowings from Slavic languages and posits that

> English at no time adopted many words from Slavonic and only two or three are used at the present time without direct reference to Russia, or Poland, etc. Those which are now most familiar are *sable*, *polka*, *mammoth*, *astrakhan*, and even these are hardly in constant, popular use. There is, however, a certain number of Slavonic, chiefly Russian, words which may be considered as more or less anglicized in form if not in application, almost all of the borrowed since 1550.

Although Serjeantson's focus is primarily on Russian, amidst lexical transfers from this language it is possible to find one word of Polish origin, namely *mazurka* (she gives its first attestation from 1818).

Podhajecka (2002), in her article devoted in its entirety to loans from Polish in English and based on the 2nd edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary*,[27] identifies 19 items[28] being direct lexical transfers from Polish: *bobac*,[29] *britzka*, *gmina, hetman*, *kielbasa*, *Krakowiak*, *kromesky*, *macrolide* ('any of a class of antibiotics containing macrocyclic lactone rings'),[30] *Mariavite* ('a member of a mystical Polish Christian sect professing particular devotion to Virgin Mary, founded in 1906'), *mazurka*, *oberek*, *obertas*, *Piast*, *Polack*, *polka*, *pospolite*, *sejm*, *szlachta*, and *zloty.*

3.4. Internet sources

Wikipedia (s.v. *English words of Polish origin*), next to such items as *bigos*, *mazurka*, *oberek*, *ogonek*, *rendzina*, *sejm*, *zloty*, gives the following items which "derive directly from Polish. Some of them are loanwords in Polish itself"

---

[27] The article is based on the 2nd edition of the *OED* – the discrepancies between Podhajecka's results and ours stem, for the most part, from our use of the 3rd edition of the *OED*, which is an ongoing, on-line project (for more information, see: https://public.oed.com/history/oed-editions/preface-to-the-third-edition/).

[28] Podhajecka (2002: 332) makes reference to Hughes (2000), who claims to have identified 127 borrowings from Polish in the *OED*. Podhajecka, however, rightfully points out to the fact that Hughes used unclear criteria to pinpoint the lexemes of Polish origin; she also speculates that Hughes' substantial number of supposed loans from Polish results from an automatic identification of loans by their origin in the electronic version of the dictionary.

[29] Since the majority of Podhajecka's (2002) loans overlap with the ones included in Section 3.1., we only provide here the meaning of the three which do not.

[30] Podhajecka's article is in Polish. The definitions used there have been drawn from the *OED* and translated by her. Here we use the definitions taken directly from the *OED*.

(*Wikipedia*, s.v. *List of English words of Polish origin*):[31] *babka cake* (etymology < Polish *babka* ('yeast cake'), or diminutive of *baba* ('old woman'). 'A leavened coffee or rum cake flavored with orange rind, rum, almonds, and raisins'); *borscht* (etymology < Polish *barszcz*. 'Beetroot soup'); *britzka* (etymology < Polish *bryczka*, diminutive of *bryka* ('wagon'). 'A type of horse-drawn carriage'); *bryndza* (etymology < Polish traditional crumby type cheese. 'Polish traditional cheese'); *intelligentsia* (etymology < Polish *inteligencja*. 'Educated social class'); *kasha* (etymology < Polish *kasza*. 'Buckwheat grain porrige type'); *kabanos* (etymology < Polish *kabanos*. 'Type of thin dry sausage'); *kevlar* (etymology < from the name of Stephanie Kwolek, a Polish scientist. 'Syntetic fiber'); *kielbasa* (etymology < Polish *kiełbasa* (sausage') ← Turkish *kül bassï* ('grilled cutlet') ← Turkic *kül bastï: kül* ('coals, ashes') + *bastï,* ('pressed (meat)') from *basmaq* ('to press'); or from Hebrew *kolbasar* ('all kinds of meat'). 'A seasoned smoked Polish sausage'); *klotski* (etymology < Polish *klocki*, plural of *klocek* ('toy block'). 'A sliding block puzzle'); *konik* (etymology < Polish *konik*, diminutive of *koń* ('horse'). 'A horse breed'); *krówka* (etymology < diminutive or *krowa*, 'cow'. 'Polish fudge type sweet'); *kujawiak* (etymology < from the Polish region of Kujawy. 'Polish national dance'); *make-up* (etymology < notion introduced by Maxymilian Faktorowicz. 'Art of face painting'); *makowiec*/poppyseed cake/bread (etymology < from Polish *mak* ('poppyseed'). 'Type of rolled cake/bread'); *marrowsky* (etymology < a Polish count's surname. '*Dated* – a spoonerism'); *oscypek* (etymology < Polish *oscypek,* smoked cheese from the Tatra region. 'Polish traditional smoked cheese'); *paczki* (etymology < Polish *pączki*, plural of *pączek* ← diminutive of *pąk* ('bud'). 'A Polish jam-filled doughnut'); *rogal* (etymology < Polish *rogal* - from *róg*, 'horn'. 'Polish crescent roll'); *solidarnosc* (etymology < Polish *solidarność* ('solidarity'). 'Political movement'); *spruce* (etymology < Polish liet. *z Prus*, 'from Prussia'. 'A type of a pine tree'); *starka* (etymology < Polish *stary*, 'old'. 'Aged strong alcohol'); *vodka* (etymology < Polish *wódka*, diminutive of *woda*, 'water', invented in pagan Poland. 'Alcoholic drink'); *zubr* (etymology < Polish *żubr*, European bison. 'European bison living in Poland's primeval forest'); *żurek* (etymology < Polish *żurek*. 'Polish traditional sour type soup').

Other sources[32], mainly Internet articles on or touching upon Polish loans in English, next to some of the items already listed above, provide the following

[31] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_English_words_of_Polish_origin; note that only words marked by *Wikipedia* as borrowed directly are given here.

[32] For instance, Mikołaj Gliński "7 words in English you didn't know came from Polish" (published on-line on April 7, 2017); available at: https://culture.pl/en/article/7-words-in-english-you-didnt-know-came-from-polish (date of access: 20.02.2021) or https://aploqtranslations.com/8-english-words-of-polish-origin/ (date of access: 20.02.2021). The (alleged) loans from Polish garnered in this paragraph have been culled from these two Internet sources (definitions provided here have also been taken from these two Internet sites). Of course, there

words of supposedly Polish origin: *gherkin* – 'pickled cucumber'[33] (< "The word was most likely borrowed from the Germanic languages (German: *Gurke*), which themselves most likely took it from one of the Slavic languages, and probably from the Polish *ogórek*, as Poland is geographically closest to Germany"); *horde* ('a wandering tribe or large number (usually of people)');[34] *quark* – 'a type of skimmed-milk cheese, linked to the Polish word *twaróg*' ('curd cheese'), *sabre* (< "originates from the Polish word *szabla*, which describes the same weapon. According to *Wikipedia*: 'English sabre is recorded from the 1670s, as a direct loan from French, where the sabre is an alteration of sable, which was, in turn, loaned from German *Säbel*, *Sabel* in the 1630s. The German word is on record from the 15th century, loaned from Polish *szabla*, which was itself adopted from Hungarian *szabla* (14th century, later *szablya*)")[35]; *schlub* – a Yiddish word which supposedly goes back to the Polish word *żłób* ("it refers to someone clumsy, stupid or unattractive"); *vitamin* ("the word, initially in the form 'vitamine', was coined by a Polish biochemist, Kazimierz Funk, who was the first to formulate the concept of vitamins").[36]

4. Discussion

In the analytical part of the paper, the alleged Polish provenance of items given by sources other than the *Oxford English Dictionary* will be verified against this dictionary (whose etymological reliability is hard to undermine). Next to the said verification, the presence of some alleged borrowings from Polish in English will be checked in corpora available on-line as well as a repository of early American newspapers (*HAN*) – the latter source is assumed to give evidence pertaining to historic borrowings of Polish provenience in English. Additionally, should the need arise, other (Internet) sources will be consulted.

---

are more lists of Polish borrowings in English available on the Internet – the items present there, however, do overlap with the ones discussed in the present sub-section, thus there is no need to make reference to them.

[33] Or "a young green cucumber, or a cucumber of a small kind, used for pickling" (*OED*, s.v. *gherkin*).

[34] Here, the author admits that the word is of uncertain origin – it is "related to Middle French *horde*, German *Horde*, Polish *horda*, and Russian *орда* (*orda*)".

[35] https://aploqtranslations.com/8-english-words-of-polish-origin/ (date of access: 20.02.2021).

[36] Gliński (2017), on-line article, also gives *vodka*. Nonetheless, at the same time he states that the derivation of the word is obscure: "We will never know what the ultimate source for *vodka* making its way into the English language – many say it's from Russian, while others (yes, us Poles) will argue both the word (it's *wódka*) and drink were surely invented in Poland" (original grammar and spelling retained) (https://culture.pl/en/article/7-words-in-english-you-didnt-know-came-from-polish; date of access: 25.02.2021).

4.1. Origin of alleged Polish loans (loans with discrepant etymological information in the OED)

4.1.1. Loans of multiple or uncertain origin

A number of items which are oftentimes said to be of Polish origin could actually derive from more than one language. The first example is *babka*: according to the *OED* (s.v. *babka*, n.), it is an item of multiple origins. It is partly a borrowing from French and partly a borrowing from Polish (< etymons: French *babka*; Polish *babka*. Etymology: < French *babka* (1832 or earlier) and its etymon Polish *babka* (although this is apparently first attested later: 1898 or earlier) in same sense, ultimately < the Slavonic base of Polish *baba* BABA *n.*[3] + a diminutive suffix forming nouns. Compare Czech *babka* (a kind of cake)). *Britchka* (also: *britska*, *britzka*, *britzska*) might be either a borrowing from Russian or from Polish < etymons: Russian *bričка*; Polish *bryczka*) (*OED*, s.v. *britchka*). Polish *bryndza* comes from Romanian *brinze* (Brückner 1927: 43, s.v. *bryndza*) or *brinza*[37] – the term might have gotten to English either via Polish (*bryndza podhalańska*) or via Slovak (*Slovenská bryndza*). Next, there is *gherkin,* whose ultimate origin is unknown:

> Etymology: < early modern Dutch *gurkkijn, *agurkkijn (now gurkje, augurkje), diminutive of agurk, augurk (also shortened gurk), cucumber; the proximate source is uncertain (compare German gurke, earlier also gurchen, Swedish gurka, Danish agurk), but the word must have been indirectly adopted from some Slavic language: compare Slovene ugorek, angurka, Polish ogurek, ogorek, Czech okurka, Serbian ugorka (the Hungarian ugorka, Lithuanian agurkas, Latvian gurkjis, are adopted from Slavic) (*OED*, s.v *gherkin*).

Hetman ('a captain or military commander in Poland and countries formerly united or subject to it; whence subsequently retained as a title among the Cossacks') – which is sometimes listed amongst supposed Polish loanwords in English – has also a complex origin (*OED*, s.v. *hetman*): < Polish *hetman captain*, *commander* = Bohemian *hejtman*, Little Russian *hetman* (Russian *ataman*). Believed to be derived from German *hauptmann* captain, apparently through early modern German *heubtmann* and Bohemian *heitman*;). Next, *kielbasa* (also: *kielbasi*, *kielbasy*, *kolbasa*, *kolbassa*, *kolbasi*) might have gotten to the English language from two languages, Polish (*kiełbasa*) and/or Russian (*kolbasa*).[38]

---

[37] https://sjp.pwn.pl/doroszewski/bryndza;5414970.html (date of access: 03.03.2021).

[38] The *OED* gives the first attestation of kielbasa from the 1950s. An earlier (1946) attestation of *kolbassa* can be found in the *Corpus of Historical American English*.

The next loan which is said to derive from Polish is *marrowski* (and *marrowskying*) – the *OED* (s.v. *marrowsky*) says that the term is of unknown origin. The dictionary gives the following example at the same time claiming that the supposed connection with Joseph Boruwalski is unsubstantiated:

(1) 1923 Notes & Queries 27 Oct. 331/2 In my childhood an old cousin used to entertain me with what we now call spoonerisms, but which she termed *morowskis*…Her mother (who dated from the eighteenth century) had taught her the game, stating that the original perpetrator of these strange transpositions was a Polish Count, who was well known in London society of that period.

Surprising as it may seem, *Polack* – (n. and adj. 'Now derogatory and offensive. 1. A native or inhabitant of Poland, a Pole.; 2. In Jewish usage: a Jewish person from Poland. Now rare. 3. N. Amer. A Polish immigrant; a person of Polish descent') (*OED*, s.v. *Polack*) – is a borrowing from Polish, but "also partly a borrowing from Italian (etymons: Polish *Polak*; Italian *polacco*): Next, *uhlan* (also: *ulan*, *houlan*, *hulan*. 'A special type of cavalryman or lancer in various European armies (originally in Slavonic countries, esp. Poland; subsequently *spec.* in the German Empire (1871–1918)') has the following etymology:

< French *uhlan*, *hulan*, *houlan*, German *uhlan*, *ulan* (Danish and Swedish *ulan*, Italian *ulano*), < Polish *ułan*, *hułan* (Czech *ulan*, *hulan*, Serbian *ulan*, Russian *ulan*),

< Turkish *oghlān* (popular *ōlān*), "son, youth, servant" (*OED*, s.v. *uhlan*).

Boryś (2005: 666, s.v. *ułan*) confirms that Polish *ułan* (earlier *hułan*) is a borrowing from Turkish. Also, according to Doroszewski's on-line dictionary (s.v. *jarmułka*), *jarmułka* – a skullcap worn by male Jews and also an *iron jarmułka* worn by light cavalry – is of Turkish provenance, where Turkish *jagumurłuk* meant *hood*. The *OED*, however, provides the following etymology of *yarmulke*:[39] < Yiddish *yarmolke*, probably ultimately < post-classical Latin *almucia*, *armutia* hood … via Polish *jamułka*, *jarmułka* = *skullcap*.

Finally, *zubrowka*, which is "vodka flavoured with the stalks of *Hierochloe australis*, a central and eastern European species of sweet-grass" derives from: Polish *żubrówka*, Russian *zubrovka* (derived respective forms of Polish *żubr*, Russian *zubr* = European bison) (*OED*, s.v. *zubrowka*).

[39] A skullcap worn by Jewish men during prayer and other religious services and rituals, and by strictly Orthodox Jewish men at all times; a kippah (*OED*, s.v. *yarmulke*, n.). It ought to be mentioned that the word has a plethora of variant forms: *jarmolka*, *jarmulka*, *jarmelka*, *yamalka*, *yamalke*, *yamelke*, *yamolke*, *yamulka*, *yamulkah*, *yamulke*, *yarmelka*, *yarmelkah*, *yarmelke*, *yarmelkeh*, *yarmolka*, *yarmolke*, *yarmolkeh*, *yarmulka*, *yarmulkah*, and *yarmulkeh.*

4.1.2. Indirect loans from Slavonic languages (via Yiddish)

This sub-section groups items which are ascribed Polish origin in some of the sources given in section 3.2., but whose etymologies (according to the *OED*) prove different. Into this category fall: *kishke* (also: *kischtke*, *kishka, kishke*, *kishkeh*, *kishker*, *kishkus*. '1. In singular and plural. slang. The stomach or belly; the guts. 2. Jewish Cookery. A type of sausage with a savoury stuffing of meal or flour, onions, and fat' (*OED*, s.v. *kishke*)), *knish* ('a baked or fried dumpling of flaky dough typically filled with potato, cheese, or meat' (*OED*, s.v. *knish*)), *schav* (also: *shchav*, *shav*, or *shtshav*. 'A sorrel soup'), and *tchotchke* (also: *chotchke*, *tchotchke*, *tchotchkeh*, *tchotchkies* (plural), *tsatske*, *tsatskeh*, *tsotskeh.* '1. Colloquial (originally and chiefly North American) – An object which is decorative or amusing rather than strictly functional; a trinket, knick-knack; 2. In Jewish usage: a pretty or attractive girl or woman' (*OED*, s.v. *tchotchke*)). These items are borrowed from Yiddish, which, in turn, adopted them from Slavonic languages and not necessarily from Polish.

4.1.3. Indirect loans from Polish (via Yiddish)

Unlike in the preceding sub-section, here we have two loans of (probably) Polish origin which were borrowed by English via Yiddish. These are *schlub* and *schmutter*: *schlub* (colloquial and originally US. 'A worthless person, a fool, a loser, a jerk; an unkempt, slovenly, or plain-looking person' (*OED*, s.v. *schlub*)) is a borrowing from Yiddish, the etymon of *schlub* being *zhlob* probably coming from Polish *żłób*. A similar scenario is observable in the case of *schmutter* (also: *shmuter*, *shmutter*, *schmatte*, *schmattah*, *schmotta*, *schmottah.* 1. colloquial (originally and chiefly in Jewish usage): 'A piece of cloth, esp. one of inferior quality; a rag. Also more generally: a garment; (as a mass noun) clothing' and 2. figurative: 'rubbish; a piece of rubbish') where Yiddish *shmate* (*rag*) might derive from Polish *szmata* (*rag*)) (*OED*, s.v. *schmatte*).

4.1.4. Origin other than Polish

As for *borsch* (also: *borscht, borshch, bortsch*), *kasha*, *vodka* and *zubr*, the *OED* gives an unambiguous Russian origin of these items. Next, *intelligentsia* (also: *intelligencia*, *intelligentcia*, *intelligentzia*, *intelligenzia*) is also an example of a borrowing from Russian, but it ultimately comes from classical Latin (probably via Polish *inteligencja*); the Russian word was also borrowed into other European languages (*OED*, s.v. *intelligentsia*).

Cossack (also: *Cassacke, Cossache, Cossaque, Cassok, Kosack, Cosack, Cosak, Cossac, Cossacque, Kossak, Kozack, Kozak*), according to an *OED* entry (s.v. *Cossack*, n.), is of Turkish origin: "Turki *quzzāq* adventurer, guerrilla. 'In India it became common in sense of predatory horseman, freebooter'". Next,

horde (also: *orda*, *horda*, *hord*, *hoord*) which is recurrently given as a borrowing from Polish, constitutes a case of a lexical transfer from a Turkic language via Latin.

Spruce, in turn, derives from a proper name (*OED*, s.v. *spruce*): it is a variant or alteration of *Pruce*, former name of Prussia in English. "Variants in *S-* of the name of Prussia are frequent in texts from England from the 14th cent. to the 17th cent.", also "…the Middle English surname Ricardus le *Sprus* (1327), which may imply earlier currency of the noun in a sense 'person from Prussia'" (*OED*, s.v. *spruce*). The dictionary provides further etymological details: "The origin of the initial *S-* of the country name is unclear. It has been suggested that it may reflect misanalysis within English of a construction in a language spoken in the course of Hanseatic trade, such as Polish *z Prus* from Prussia or Middle High German *das Priuzen* Prussia, *des Priuzens* (genitive) of Prussia. However, the initial *S-* of the English name may simply be an excrescent phonological development" (*OED*, s.v. *spruce*).

Macrolide, *quark* ('curds, cottage cheese, curd cheese'), and *sabre* (also: *saber*) are not borrowings from Polish either. The former two are loanwords from German: the etymon of English *macrolide* is German *Macrolide* (*OED*, s.v. *macrolide*), whereas the etymon of *quark* is German *Quark*, *Quarg*; the origin of *quark* might be sought in "a West Slavonic language (perhaps Lower Sorbian *twarog*), cognate with Upper Sorbian *twaroh*, Polish *twaróg*, Czech *tvaroh*, Russian *tvorog, of uncertain origin*," (*OED*, s.v. *quark*). The etymology of *sabre* looks as follows:

> Etymology: <French *sabre* (17th cent.), an unexplained alteration of *sable* (Oudin 1640: compare Spanish *sable*) <German *sable* (now *säbel*), whence SABLE *n.3* The ultimate source is probably to be sought in some Oriental language; forms with initial /ʃ/ are found in Hungarian *száblya* (whence perhaps Italian *sciabla*, SHABLE *n.*) and Polish *szabla*; the Russian *sablja* may be from German (*OED*, s.v. *sabre*).

Boryś (2005: 590, s.v. *szabla*) maintains that Polish *szabla* is of oriental origin, as it possibly derives from the Tungus languages.

Kevlar (also: *kevlar.* 'A strong synthetic fiber') was developed by Stephanie Louise Kwolek (see Section 3.2.), an American chemist born to a Polish immigrant family, but it seems to be an invented word of no etymology[40]; finally, the only element linking the next word, *vitamin*, with Polish is that the name *per se,* as well as the concept of *vitamin,* are credited to Kazimierz Funk (anglicized as Casimir Funk), a Polish Jewish biochemist.[41] Such a premise is obviously not sufficient to classify this item as a borrowing from Polish.

[40] Also see: https://www.etymonline.com, s.v. *Kevlar*.
[41] *Wikipedia*, s.v. *Casimir Funk* (date of access: 27.02.2021).

Finally, *Mariavite* – denoting 'a member of a mystical Polish Christian sect professing particular devotion to Virgin Mary, founded in 1906' (*OED*, s.v. *Mariavite*, n. and adj.)[42] – whose origin is to be traced to Polish cultural context, is a borrowing from Latin (etymon: Latin *Mariavita*).

4.2. Alleged loans from Polish unattested in the OED

The items which have not found their way to the *Oxford English Dictionary* and which are given in the Internet sources are: *kabanos* (also: *cabanossi*), *klotski*, *konik, krowka* (also: *krówka*; plural: *krowki*, *krówki*), *kujawiak*, *makowiec*, *oscypek* (also: *oszczypek*), *paczek* (also: plural, *paczki*), *rogal*, *starka*, and *zurek* (also: *żurek*, *żur*, *zhur*, *zhurek*). The word *golobki* ('Polish stuffed cabbage rolls'), in turn, has surfaced in the corpora consulted – its presence is confined to context discussing or listing elements of Polish American cuisine.

As for words of alleged Polish origin listed in the *Green's Dictionary of Slang*, it is *boobatch, bujok, dupa* and *zinsky* (also: *zinski*)[43] which are not given in the *OED*.

All these items have been checked against the selected corpora as well as the *HAN*; also, whenever applicable, other Internet sources have been consulted. Table 1 presents the results of the search:

Table 1. Items of alleged Polish origin unattested in the *OED* and checked against the selected sources

loan:	*COHA*	*COCA*	*Times Maga-zine*	*CASO*	*EEBO*	*BNC*	*The Movie Corpus*	*The TV Corpus*	*Strathy*	*HAN*	*Internet*
boobatch	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
bujok	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*[44]	-
dupa	-	*v*	-	-	-	-	-	*v*	-	*	*v*
golobki	*v*	-	-	-	-	-	-	*v*	-	*v*	*v*
kabanos	-	*v*	-	-	-	*v*	-	*v*	-	-	*v*
klotski	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*v*
konik	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*v*

[42] It might also mean: "of, relating to, or belonging to the sect of Mariavites".

[43] Neither has the informal American meaning of *kielbasa*, namely *penis*, which can be illustrated by the following quotation retrieved from the *TV Corpus*: "You just sowed a ton of seed. Hey, speaking of sowing seed, Jenny, you want a bite of my *kielbasa*? Hey, man, Tug, inappropriate. Aren't we above the penis jokes? The *TV Corpus*; Source: *The League*, Episode: „The Tailgate", 2012, s.v. *kielbasa*).

[44] An asterisk indicates that a given item is too informal to appear in the *HAN*.

Table 1. cont.

loan:	*COHA*	*COCA*	*Times Magazine*	*CASO*	*EEBO*	*BNC*	*The Movie Corpus*	*The TV Corpus*	*Strathy*	*HAN*	*Internet*
krowka	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*v*
kujawiak	-	-	-	-	-	*v*	-	-	-	*v*	*v*
makowiec	-	*v*	-	-	-	-	-	*v*[45]	-	-	*v*
oscypek	-	*v*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*v*
paczek	-	*v*	-	-	-	-	*v*	*v*	*v*	*v*	*v*
rogal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*v*
starka	*v*	*v*	*v*	-	-	-	*v*	-	-	-	*v*
zinsky	*v*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*v*
zurek	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*v*

The sub-sections to follow group the set of alleged borrowings from Polish according to their provenance; this is done in order to fish out direct borrowings of Polish origin in English.

4.2.1. Direct loans from Polish

This sub-section comprises 10 items which seem to have been transferred to English directly from Polish: *dupa*, *golobki*, *konik, krowka, kujawiak*, *makowiec*, *oscypek*, *paczek*, *rogal*, and *zinsky*.

The first item, *dupa* (< Polish *dupa*. 'Ass; (*US*) the buttocks, the posterior'), is a well-established informal word in Polish.[46] When it comes to its use in American English, it often appears as an affectionate term, esp. among Polish speakers or the families of Polish immigrants.[47] Interestingly, the term *dupa* was elicited during fieldwork for the *Dictionary of American Regional English* in the following context:

(2) Qu. X35, Joking words for the part of the body that you sit on—for example, "He slipped and came down hard on his _____."[48]

Apparently, some Polish Americans provided the term *dupa.* Additionally, the entry *dupa* can be found in *Urban Dictionary* (s.v. *dupa*):[49]

[45] In the same source as in the *COCA*.
[46] It is present neither in Boryś (2005) nor Brückner (1927). Doroszewski does not provide information on a non-Polish derivation of the word, thus we assume its Polish origin.
[47] *GDOS*, s.v. *dupa*.
[48] https://www.daredictionary.com/view/dare/ID_00017140 (date of access: 10.03.2021).
[49] https://www.urbandictionary.com, s.v. *dupa* (date of access: 10.03.2021).

(3) *Dupa* is a Polish word for ass. You might hear it in places consisting of third or fourth generation immigrants from Europe like Cleveland Ohio.

As evident in the attestations above, the usage of the item is confined to users of Polish descent. Example (4) retrieved from the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* confirms this assumption:

(4) That's funny. I haven't heard the term "*dupa*" since my Polish grandmother (*COCA*,[50] s.v. *dupa*).

The next word, *golobki* ('a dish made of minced meat mixed with groats or rice and wrapped in cabbage leaves'),[51] is not listed amongst the borrowings from Polish in either of the inspected sources, it did however surface in the consulted corpora as well as the *Historic American Newspapers* (see Table 1). It apparently is a low-frequency lexical transfer appearing in contexts related to Polish cuisine (see Example 5):

(5) The flowers were red and white, the colors of the national Polish flag, and the food included Polish ham and two special Polish dishes, bigos and *golabki* (*Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers. Evening star. [volume]* (Washington, D.C.), 23 July 1959. Lib. of Congress). [52]

Konik, a diminutive form of *koń* ('horse'), is used in more specialized equestrian jargon, as the example below indicates (note that it is a horse breed name, oftentimes appearing in conjunction with *horse*):

(6) We investigated the genetic diversity of Polish *Konik* in sire lines. The Polish *Konik* horse is a Polish native horse breed of a primitive type and is one of the breeds managed via a conservation program.[53]
(4) Over the past decades there has been semantic confusion about the use of the words *Konik* and Tarpan. *Konik* horses are not direct descendants from the Tarpan, the European wild horse, as is often stated. The last Tarpan in the wild was killed in 1879 in Western Russia, while the last captive Tarpan died in Moscow zoo in 1905 (photo left). In the 1930s a new breed called

[50] Source: blog available at: http://www.mediaite.com/tv/democratpollster-to-meygn-kelly-panel-media-guilty-of-corruption-of-the-first-order-for-protecting-obama/, 2012.
[51] The entry *gołąbki* is present in Brückner (1927, s.v. *gołąb*), who does not clearly address its origin. However, he gives the Russian name of the dish, namely *hołubci.* The spelling *golabki* indicates their Polish origin.
[52] https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1959-07-23/ed-1/seq-29/.
[53] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7552212/, summary (date of access: 26.02.2021).

Konik emerged in Poland. The official local name for *Konik* horses is "*Konik* Polski", literally "little Polish horse".[54]

(Polish) *konik* appeared only on the Internet, as Table 1 indicates.

Similarly, *krowka* (< a diminutive of *krowa* = *cow*. 'Polish fudge, toffee candy') has not been instanced in any of the consulted corpora, neither in the *Historic American Newspapers* (see Table 1). It appears, nonetheless, on the Internet, especially in the Polish American context:

(8) If you recognize the remnants of a recent trip to Jana's Bakery in Phoenix, you'll know what this recipe is about. *Krówki* – Polish cream fudge made with milk or cream, sugar, and butter. It's so simple and so good![55]

Kujawiak (< the region of Kujawy in Cental Poland. 'Polish folk dance') seemingly ought to have found its place in the *OED*, next to such items as *krakowiak* and *mazurka.* Nevertheless, it has been recorded in two corpora (see Table 1 and Example 9).

(9) Occasional fluffs, then, are an endearing reminder of natural fallibility, but insecurities elsewhere are less acceptable. The *Kujawiak* and Obertass Mazurkas again reflect Wieniawski's heritage, and are played with more devil- may-care abandon than the Polonaises (*BNC*; *Gramophone. Harrow: General Gramophone Pubcs Ltd*, 1992, s.v. *kujawiak*).

Makowiec (< Polish *mak* = *poppy seed*. 'Poppy seed roll') has been found in some of the consulted corpora (see Table 1 above). Its usage is illustrated by Example 10:

(10) This building comes down in one week! It's gon na take a lot more than piernik and *makowiec* and some three-legged horse to stop it! (*COCA*; *Quantum Leap*, s.v. *makowiec*).

Paczek (also plural: *paczki*. 'Found in Polish cuisine: deep-fried pieces of dough shaped into spheres and filled with confiture or other sweet filling')[56] can be found in the majority of consulted sources. Its usage is illustrated below:

(11) You got ta try[57] the *paczki*. Okay? It's my grandmother's recipe, the orange zest... just... Mr. Kowalski, what do you propose to offer the bank as collateral? (*The Movies Corpus*; Source: *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, 2016, s.v. *paczki*).

---

[54] https://truenaturefoundation.org/konik-horses-are-not-tarpans/ (date of access: 26.02.2021).
[55] https://polishhousewife.com/polish-cream-fudge/ (date of access: 26.02.2021).
[56] *Wikipedia* (s.v. *pączki*).
[57] Original spelling was retained here.

The next borrowing, namely *oscypek* (also plural: *oscypki*. < 'Smoked cheese made of salted sheep milk'),[58] has been promoted by the community of Polish highlanders in Chicago. Its use is illustrated by Example 12:

(12) *Oscypek*, she says slowly. It's the name of a cheese made from the milk of mountain sheep and smoked in the chimney between the two rooms. I buy three (*COCA*; FIC: *The New Yorker*, 2001 (Dec.), s.v. *oscypek*).

Oscypek has been infrequently attested in the consulted sources.

Rogal – possibly due to its having their (approximate) equivalent ("crescent roll") has not been recorded either in the consulted corpora or digitized American newspapers. It is subject to explanation in the English language version of *Wikipedia* which is indicative of its rarity in English.

Zinski (also: *zinsky*) is according to the *Green's Dictionary of Slang* (s. v. *Zinski*, n.), a historic generic name for a Polish immigrant existing in American English. The same source as the one quoted by the *GDOS*, namely *Torchy* by Sewell Ford (1911), is also used in the *Corpus of Historical American English*:

(13) You couldn't blame him; for the bunch wa'n't fit for the ash hoist. They were *Zinskis*, about twenty of' em, countin' women and kids (*COHA*; *Torchy*, 1911; s.v. *Zinski*).

(14) Here, "says I", rushin'up and jammin' the cane into his hand, "hold that till I come back!" and before he has time to pipe off the bunch of Polackers that's come to a parade rest around us, I makes a dive in amongst the cars and beats it down Broadway. Nah, I don't know what becomes of him, or the *Zinskis* either. All I know is that I'm twenty to the good, and that Cousin Clifford's been shipped back to Bubble Creek, glad to get out of New York alive (*COHA*; *Torchy*, 1911, s.v. *Zinski*).

Since, as Table 1 indicates, *zinsky* has been recorded only in the *Corpus of Historical American English* in just one source form 1911, it might be an outdated and rare item. This claim is corroborated by the absence of reliable attestations of the noun referring to Polish immigrants in the US on the Internet.

4.2.2. Words of uncertain or multiple origin

In this sub-section one can find 4 items: *kabanos*, *klotski*, *starka*, and *zurek*.

The first item, *kabanos* (*cabanossi* or *kabana*), derives from *kaban* (*hog*) which, in turn, comes from Turkish (via Russian) *kaban* (*hog*, *wild boar*) (Brückner 1927: 211, s.v. *kaban*). Its usage is illustrated below:

[58] Although Polish *oscypek* has its Slovak cognate *oštiepok*, the lexical contribution of Slovak here is very dubious, taking into account, for instance, the English spelling of this borrowing.

(15) Thank you. What have you brought? Cheese and *cabanossi*[59] on biscuits. I was going to put cocktail onions on… (The *TV Corpus*,[60] s.v. *cabanossi*).

Most plausibly, this lexical item has been transferred to English via Yiddish – for instance, *Wikipedia* (s.v. *kabanos*) says that certain versions of *kabanos* constutute a part of Jewish cuisine and are staples in kosher meat markets and delicatessens.

The next one, *klotski* (< Polish *klocki*, ultimately derived from German *kloz* = *stump*, *log*.[61] 'Sliding block puzzle'), enjoys certain popularity in English due to its presence in on-line gaming nomenclature, for example:

(16) Classic *Klotski* with more than 400 levels. *Klotski* is a sliding block puzzle. The object of game is to move the largest block to the bottom middle location. Tap the block to slide it horizontally or vertically to empty space.[62]

(17) *Klotski* is a sliding puzzle, where the goal is to move the red block to the exit at the bottom of the board. It may sound easy but it can be pretty difficult.[63]

As *Wikipedia* (s.v. *klotski*) states: "the earliest known reference of the name *Klotski* originates from the computer version for Windows 3.1 by ZH Computing in 1991, which was also included in Microsoft Windows Entertainment Pack. The sliding puzzle had already been trademarked and sold under different names for decades, including *Psychoteaze*, *Square Root*, *Intreeg*, and *Ego Buster*. There was no known widely used name for the category of sliding puzzles described before *Klotski* appeared". This borrowing has not been recorded in either of the inspected corpora.[64]

Starka – an alcoholic beverage – has been known both in Poland and Lithuania for centuries; there is no certainty as to the plausible route of this item to the English language. *Starka* has been found in some of the consulted corpora; its use is illustrated below (note the context of Russian-sounding names of beverages):

(18) Vodka comes in dozens of flavors; from the mellow, amber-colored Starka, to fiery Pertsovka with a hot, red pepper floating in the bottle, to the cool, lemony Limonnaya (*COHA*; *Boston Globe*, Apr 11, 1982, s.v. starka).

---

[59] The orthographic form *cabanossi* seems to undermine its Polish provenience.

[60] Further information – for example, the exact source of the quote – cannot be retrieved from this corpus.

[61] Boryś (2005: 235, s.v. *kloc*).

[62] https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/p/classic-klotski/9wzdncrdr919?activetab=pivot:overviewtab (date of access: 26.02.2021).

[63] https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.alcamasoft.juegos.klotski.android&hl=en&gl=US (date of access: 26.02.2021).

[64] Its absence in the *HAN* is obvious, since *klotski* appeared in English at the end of the 20th century.

Żurek is the diminutive form of *żur*. *Żur* derives from German *sūr* (nowadays *sauer*) and has been present in West Slavic languages (Brückner 1927: 668, s.v. *żur*). It might have been transferred to English not only via Polish, but also via Belarusian. Possibly due to its having an (approximate) equivalent: *sour rye soup*, *żur* does not witness popularity in English and has not been recorded either in the consulted corpora or digitized American newspapers. It is, nonetheless, subject to explanation in the English language version of *Wikipedia* and can be spotted on websites devoted to Polish American recipes (which indicates its sporadic use in English).

4.2.3. Words of obscure origin/incidental use in English

This sub-section comprises two items retrieved from *Green's Dictionary of Slang*; the first loanword is *boobatch* – (< ? Polish = *grandfather* (*US*). 'An old Polish immigrant', *GDOS*, s.v. *boobatch*):

(19) N. Algren Never Come Morning (1988) 87: 'Jesus Kelly Christ! [...] I ain't gonna stay in here! Hey! You! *Boobatch*!' Bruno Bicek knew no better word to indicate a church-going, foreign-born Pole than '*boobatch*'. The *boobatch* made no reply (*GDOS*, s.v. *boobatch*, n.)

It is an obscure term attested in neither of the sources consulted. The alleged Polish origin (with a question mark in the *GDOS*) seems unfounded, its origin, however, might be of eponymous nature. The term might thus be derived from a Polish surname *Bubacz*. A search on the Internet did not allow us for the retrieval of any other instances of *boobatch*, hence its inclusion in the present sub-section.

The next word, *bujok* (adj), which, according to the definition provided by the dictionary, functions as a dismissive epithet, might be of Polish origin (see Example 20):

(20) J. Lait *Put on the Spot* 73: What's a *bujok* punk like you doin' with a redhead like that? (*GDOS*, s.v. *bujok*)

Its provenience is unclear, however – it might be a residue of a Polish dialectal (rural) term denoting an obese male (Grochola-Szczepanek 2012: 249); thus "a *bujok* punk" in Example 20 might be tantamount to "a *fat-bellied* punk". Other interpretations are also possible – in some Polish rural dialects the word *bujok* would denote 'an old bachelor'[65], in other: 'a vulgar, ill-mannered person'. The very last denotation is present in the dialect of Polish highlanders, who would

[65] Halina Karaś (ed). *Dialekty i gwary polskie. Kompendium internetowe*. An Internet source available at: http://www.dialektologia.uw.edu.pl/index.php, s.v. *bujok*.

form Polish communities for many decades in, for instance, Chicago. We are hence inclined to believe that the last scenario mentioned above seems the most probable.

4.3. Semantic categories

Even though the number of lexical transfers from Polish to English is not substantial, by grouping the set of recorded items into semantic categories we might indicate certain tendencies: more specifically, such an approach might allow us to point to the most productive fields when it comes to direct lexical transfers from Polish to English.

We still cling here to the bipartite division of loans from Polish; as for the loans recorded in the *OED* (23 cases of direct lexical transfers), the semantic categories shown in Table 2 are represented by the following borrowings: "attire" (*polka*), "cuisine" (*bigos*, *komeski*, *pierogi*), "currency" (*zloty*), "fauna and animal breeds" (*bobac*, *owczarek*), "historic terms" (*gmina*, *Piast*, *pospolite*, *robotnik*, *sejm*, *szlachta*), "music and dance" (*krakowiak*, *mazurka*, *oberek*, *obertas*), "specialized vocabulary (science and humanities)" (*catastrophism*, *catastrophist*, *cryosphere*, *mereology*, *rendzina*) and "other" (*ogonek*). The loans unattested in the *OED* (10 cases of direct lexical transfers) fall into the following categories: "fauna and animal breeds" (*konik*), "cuisine" (*golobki*, *krowka*, *makowiec*, *oscypek*, *paczki*, *rogal*), "historic terms" (*zinsky*),[66] "music and dance" (*kujawiak*), "other" (*dupa*). Table 2 shows the pooled results for the two respective groups of loanwords:

Table 2. Direct loans from Polish – semantic categories

Category:	Loans attested in the *OED*	Loans unattested in the *OED*	total
attire	1 (4.3%)	0 (0%)	1 (3%)
cuisine	3 (13%)	6 (60%)	9 (27.3%)
currency	1 (4.3%)	0 (0%)	1 (3%)
fauna and animal breeds	2 (8.7%)	1 (10%)	3 (9%)
historic terms	6 (26.1%)	1 (10%)	7 (21.2%)

[66] The presence of *zinsky* in the *COHA* (as well as in the *Urban Dictionary*, however, in a slightly different meaning) has been a decisive factor governing its inclusion here. Similarly, the presence of *dupa* in the *DARE* points to its use, although marginal, by speakers of American English (and hence the inclusion in this section). Cases of *boobatch* and *bujok* were nowhere to be found (but for *Green's Dictionary of Slang*), which governed our choice of omitting them from the discussion here (see: Section 4.2.3).

Category:	Loans attested in the *OED*	Loans unattested in the *OED*	total
music and dance	4 (17.4%)	1 (10%)	5 (15.1%)
specialized vocab. (science and humanities)	5 (21.7%)	0 (0%)	5 (15.1%)
other	1 (4.3%)	1 (10%)	2 (6.1%)
Total:	23 (100%)	10 (100%)	33 (100%)

Our conclusions are, when it comes to the lexical material retrieved from the *OED*, in line with Podhajecka's (2002: 336), who maintains that even though loans from Polish are not numerous, they do represent various areas of life (with a slight domination of the "historic term" category). If we, however, focus on the words (so far) not attested by the *OED*, we can see that the "victuals category" (shaded cell in the third column of Table 2) is the dominant source of vocabulary items which have started to be used – albeit infrequently and/or with an accompanying explanation/quantifier *Polish* – in (culinary) English.

5. Conclusions

English, being the *lingua franca*, consistently influences, especially lexically, many languages of the world. Due to its omnipresence, the transfer of English lexical items to numerous languages is widely recognized[67] not only by the academic community but also by the general public. However, seldom do they acknowledge the reverse phenomenon, namely the influence of various languages on English, not to mention the influence of Slavic languages.

The present paper is, to our knowledge, the second article-length effort to systematize the state of knowledge concerning the Polish lexical influence on English. As the examples above illustrate, the etymology of certain alleged Polish loanwords in English is more often than not unclear and there are only a few lexemes whose Polish origin cannot be argued. Moreover, due to a limited contact between Polish and English culture, many items were transferred indirectly and the importance of such languages as, for example, Yiddish must be considered. It should be underlined, however, that all in all there are certain items that found their way into the English language due to the Polish lexical influence (altogether 33 lexical items) and their existence can be attested in various dictionaries, corpora, and the Internet.

[67] See, for example, Görlach 2001 and 2002; Mańczak-Wohlfeld 2008; Mańczak-Wohlfeld and Witalisz 2019. For the influence of English on Polish, see, for instance: Mańczak-Wohlfeld 1995, 2006, 2010; Witalisz 2007, 2016; Zabawa 2012 and 2017.

References

Dictionaries, databases and corpora:

Boryś, W. 2005. *Słownik etymologiczny języka polskiego*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie.

Brückner, A. 1927. *Słownik etymologiczny języka polskiego*, Kraków: Krakowska Spółka Wydawnicza.

British National Corpus, https://www.english-corpora.org/bnc.

Chronicling America, Historic American Newspapers, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov.

Corpus of American Soap Operas, https://www.english-corpora.org/soap.

Corpus of Contemporary American English, https://www.english-corpora.org/coca.

Corpus of Historical American English, https://www.english-corpora.org/coha.

Dictionary of American Regional English, https://dare.wisc.edu.

Dictionary.com, https://www.dictionary.com.

Doroszewski, W. 1958–1969. *Słownik języka polskiego pod red. W. Doroszewskiego*. Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe. http://doroszewski.pwn.pl.

Early English Books Online, https://www.english-corpora.org/eebo..

Green's Dictionary of Slang, https://greensdictofslang.com.

Karaś, H. (ed.). *Dialekty i gwary polskie. Kompendium internetowe*. http://www.dialektologia.uw.edu.pl/index.php.

Movies Corpus, https://www.english-corpora.org/movies.

Online Etymology Dictionary, https://www.etymonline.com.

Oxford English Dictionary Online, https://www.oed.com.

Strathy Corpus of Canadian English, https://www.english-corpora.org/can.

TIME Magazine Corpus, https://www.english-corpora.org/time.

TV Corpus, https://www.english-corpora.org/tv.

Urban Dictionary, https://www.urbandictionary.com.

Secondary sources:

Algeo, J. (ed.). 2001. *The Cambridge History of the English Language. English in North America.* Volume 6. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bliss, A.J. 1966. *A Dictionary of Foreign Words and Phrases in Current English*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Durkin, P. 2014. *Borrowed Words. A History of Loanwords in English*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dylewski, R., and M. Bator (in press). The fate of mid-20th-century sports loanwords from English in Polish. *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia* 56(1).

Görlach, M. 1997. *The Linguistic History of English: An Introduction*. Oxford: Macmillan Press.

Görlach, M. 2001. *A Dictionary of European Anglicisms: A Usage Dictionary of Anglicisms in Sixteen European Languages*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Görlach, M. 2002. *English in Europe.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Grochola-Szczepanek, H. 2012. *Język mieszkańców Spisza: Płeć jako czynnik różnicujący*. Kraków: Polska Akademia Nauk/Instytut Języka Polskiego.

Hughes, G. 2000. *A History of English Words*. Chichester, UK; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Katamba, F. 1994. *English Words*. London: Routledge.

Mańczak-Wohlfeld, E. 1995. *Tendencje rozwojowe współczesnych zapożyczeń angielskich w języku polskim*. Kraków: Universitas.

Mańczak-Wohlfeld, E. 2006. *Angielsko-polskie kontakty językowe*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego.

Mańczak-Wohlfeld, E. 2008. Morfologia zapożyczeń angielskich w językach europejskich. *Studia Linguistica Universitatis Iagellonicae Cracoviensis* 125. 113–120.

Mańczak-Wohlfeld, E. (ed.). 2010. *Słownik zapożyczeń angielskich w polszczyźnie*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

Mańczak-Wohlfeld, E., and A. Witalisz 2019. Wpływ angielszczyzny na języki europejskie i nieeuropejskie w kontekście projektu GLAD (Global Anglicism Database). *Bulletin De La Société Polonaise De Linguistique, Fasc*. Lxxv: 99–110.

Podhajecka, M. 2002. Zapożyczenia polskie w języku angielskim na materiale Oxford English Dictionary (OED). *Język Polski* LXXXII(5): 330–337.

Romaine, S. 2001. Contact with other languages, In J. Algeo (ed.), *Cambridge History of the English Language.* Volume VI. *English in North America*, 154–183. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Serjeantson, M.S. 1961. *A History of Foreign Words in English.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Varchaver, M., and F.L. Moore 2001. *The Browser's Dictionary of Foreign Words and Phrases*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Witalisz, A. 2007. *Anglosemantyzmy w języku polskim – ze słownikiem*. Kraków: Tertium.

Witalisz A. 2016. *Przewodnik po anglicyzmach w języku polskim*. Kraków: Towarzystwo Miłośników Języka Polskiego.

Zabawa, M. 2012. *English Lexical and Semantic Loans in Informal Spoken Polish.* Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego.

Zabawa, M. 2017. *English Semantic Loans, Loan Translations, and Loan Renditions in Informal Polish of Computer Users*. Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego.