

# The Language of Youth and Anglophilia in Italian, French and Spanish

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# THE ROLE AND FUNCTION OF ENGLISH BORROWINGS IN ITALIAN YOUTH PODCASTS

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**ABSTRACT** • This paper illustrates a sample of anglicisms extracted from a corpus of podcasts addressed to adolescents and young people. One of the sources is the Italian radio Radioimmaginaria, which is produced and managed by teenagers and the other is an independent podcast called Facciamolo, focussed on sex and psychological issues related to the world of youth. The analysis of the data has shown that the majority of loanwords are non-adapted (83%). Adaptation is mainly applied to verbs, in compliance with the Italian verb system, and nouns can be creatively modified according to Italian morphological and lexical patterns. Particular attention is paid to the areas of interest in which anglicisms are used and to English-induced neologisms that are not yet recorded by Italian dictionaries, their meaning and context of use. The analysis confirms that the youth language exploits the power of anglicisms to talk about things and values that are shared by their own speech community and at the same time by the international community that offers the strongest cultural model to their generation.

**KEYWORDS** • Anglicisms; Youth language; Podcasts.

## **1. Youth language and the appeal of English**

The younger generations are known to be the drivers of change and innovation in many forms of social behaviours. To communicate among themselves they have a special taste for new, creative, humorous, and even rude and defiant language. According to Tagliamonte (2016), the desire to be a member of a group and the preference for expressive means shared by your own peer group begins very early in life, in fact, from adolescence, which can be placed around the age of 13. This feature seems to be part of human nature, cutting across languages and cultures (Radtke 1993), although the cross-generational gap

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<sup>1</sup> S. Cicillini was responsible for sections 3, 4, 5 and 6; V. Pulcini drafted sections 1, 2 and 7.

may be differently expressed in diverse social contexts and linguacultural backgrounds (Svendsen, Jonsson 2024). The age group that is normally considered to be that of teenagers spans from 13 to 19, but differences have been described between individuals or narrower age ranges, such as pre-adolescence (10 to 11-years-olds) or later adolescence (15 to 17-years-olds) (Tagliamonte 2016). The United Nations defines youth as the groups of young people between the ages of 15 and 24, though in many countries the age of 18 is considered the threshold beyond which you are an adult (at least from a legal point of view).<sup>2</sup> Post-adolescents are supposed to move away from the identification with a peer-group to adhere to a more stable neo-standard language variety (Radtko 1993), but they may retain patterns of vocabulary typical of their own *teen talk*, which have become more mainstream in the course of time.

The study of youth language in Italy received a great boost in the 1970s and 80s. At present a large body of literature on this topic is available (see Radke 1993; Nesi 2022). The language of Italian youth has been defined as a register variety with its own peculiar features, mainly informality, liveliness and expressivity, whereby young people share their own code of communication in order to stand out from adult speakers. Youth language makes large use of special terminologies, especially from ICT, social media and music genres, and displays a marked creative, playful taste (and even transgressive flair) in the making of hybrid compositions, in the exploitation of slogans, in the use of fragmented speech, hyperbolic expressions and foreign words, English in particular. As a language variety, not only does youth language reveal the speaker's affiliation to a particular social group but is also characterized by specific contextual and interactional conditions and topics of conversation that are common among young people such as friendships, love, sex, entertainment, to quote a few recurrent ones, showing a trend towards a self-centered approach to one's own personal life. To sum up, youth language can be defined as

[...] uno stile comunicativo proprio di adolescenti e post-adolescenti, un sotto-codice esclusivo o semi-esclusivo utilizzato nelle relazioni di gruppo, che pertanto conserva ancora funzioni caratteristiche e si distingue da altre varietà grazie a una serie di particolarità di natura essenzialmente lessicale e fraseologica e a peculiari procedure di esecuzione nella realizzazione degli scambi verbali. (Bellone, in Nesi, 2022: 26)  
 [[...] a communicative style peculiar to adolescents and post-adolescents, an exclusive or semi-exclusive sub-code used in group interactions, which therefore still retains characteristic functions and is distinguished from other varieties by a number of peculiarities of an essentially lexical and phraseological nature and peculiar execution procedures in the realization of verbal exchanges.]

In this paper the focus is on the role (why they are used) and function (how they are used, both denotatively and connotatively) of English-induced borrowings in youth language, as one of its characteristic features, although not the only one, as noted above. Indeed, English is the strongest donor (or inspiring) language of our age, and the younger

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/youth> (accessed 6 June 2024)

generations are both attracted by and exposed to the influence of English (Aiello 2018). In fact, the Italian school-age population now receives a minimum of 10 years of English, which makes it the primary foreign language in compulsory education (Schirru 2019). Nowadays young people have greater opportunities of ‘internationalization’ already in their teens than in the past through personal traveling and school mobility programmes. They are immersed in a ‘global’ culture and continuously receive input from the borderless world of social media. Research has confirmed that the language of young people is highly ‘Anglicized’ both in face-to-face and online communication. Using English is ‘cool’, because it adds a touch of modernity and trendiness to what you say. The recourse to anglicisms for expressive purposes also characterizes the sociolects of other communities of speakers like Italian influencers, microbloggers, rappers and video gamers, although research into these sociolects is only in its early stages (Pulcini 2023). The anglicisms that feature in youth language may have a fleeting nature like many other casual, short-lived borrowings and creative constructions that appear in the real or virtual landscape of today’s channels of communication (Pulcini 2023). Since creative formations tend to lose their markedness, only some resist the test of time and eventually filter through the other layers of language, to finally be assimilated into the common language and recorded in general dictionaries. For this reason, youth language is a rich store of neological creations and represents a potential reservoir for lexical innovation of the general language.<sup>3</sup>

## **2. Podcasting**

The data on youth language examined in this paper was taken from a sample of podcasts addressed to adolescents and youth at large. One of the sources is an Italian radio called *Radioimmaginaria*, which is produced and managed by teenagers (aged between 11 and 17). The other source is an independent podcast called *Facciamolo*, focused on sex and psychological problems related to the world of youth. A short introduction to this type of ‘auditory culture’ (Madsen 2009) and genre is therefore in order to mark the boundaries of the communicative style under investigation, further delimited by the age group involved.

Podcasting is a fairly new digital genre in today’s mediascape, which was introduced in 2004-2005 and rapidly acquired great popularity (Berry 2006; McHugh 2022). Although we live in a visual age, the power of voice has acquired a novel appeal for listeners of all ages. Podcasts are basically digital media files which contain an audio program, which can be broadcast through the internet. The word podcast is a blend of ipod and broadcast. The name ipod was that of a very popular portable media player created by Apple in the early 2000s which was subsequently replaced by other devices, mainly laptops and smartphones. In short, podcasts are based on audio as a ‘mode’ and digital devices as ‘media’.

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<sup>3</sup> [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/linguaggio-giovanile\\_%28Enciclopedia-dell%27Italiano%29/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/linguaggio-giovanile_%28Enciclopedia-dell%27Italiano%29/)

The development of digital technology, which allowed the streaming of traditional radio through digital devices beside the ‘old-time’ radio set, marked a revolutionary turn of audio production and distribution through the internet, which offered an unprecedented opportunity to non-professional producers to create their own DIY radio programmes and share them in the audiosphere. As stated by Madsen (2009: 1193), “amateur podcasts are making up a substantial portion of the total podcasts available”, although podcasts are now massively exploited by both citizen’s and public service broadcasting media.

As a genre, podcasts have their own identity and characteristics: they can be played and replayed many times; they can be listened to live or in asynchronous mode, being flexible in timing and scheduling, while people are moving in urban spaces, in the streets, in public spaces and on means of transport. The use of earbuds encourages a personal and even intimate mode of listening (Euritt 2023). Being a spoken genre, broadcast live, the delivery style of podcasts is characterized by a lively, informal and spontaneous tone. Since its introduction, podcasting has evolved into an audiovisual technology, as explained by Bonini (2022: 19): “Today a podcast is not an audio-based object anymore, but also a screen-based one. More and more it integrates visual components: a logo, an illustration, a video on YouTube, an account on Instagram and can take the form of a meme on the Internet.” Amateur podcast shows now available may address thousands of diverse topics and attract all sorts of consumers and ‘prosumers’, generally non-professional enthusiasts, from global to, more often, niche communities. A share of the target audience of podcasts is generations Z and Alpha,<sup>4</sup> that is, young people in their twenties (post-adolescents) and adolescents.

### 3. Data collection and methodology

The data analyzed in this study was collected from two Italian podcasts, namely Radioimmaginaria and Facciamolo. Radioimmaginaria (literally: Imaginary Radio) was founded in 2012 and is managed by teenagers, aged between 11 and 17. From the original source location in Bologna (Italy), this radio has attracted about 300 young people from other European countries and become a real European network of teenagers. Content is now available in five languages, namely Italian, English, French, Spanish and Albanian. The spirit of this radio is to give voice to teenage ideas, interests, problems, with no interference from adults. The episodes analyzed here have been randomly chosen from different thematic sections of Italian podcasts: 10 episodes belong to the section entitled “Adolescemi, idee per sopravvivere” [Adolescemi, ideas to survive]<sup>5</sup> and 8 episodes belong to “Cetacey, ragazz\* con i capelli blu” [Cetaceans, blue-haired youth],<sup>6</sup> all broad-

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<sup>4</sup> Generation Z includes anyone born from 1997 to 2012 and generation Alpha includes anyone born from 2012 to 2024.

<sup>5</sup> The word *Adolescemi* is a blend of ‘adolescent’ and ‘scemi’ (daft).

<sup>6</sup> Note that the spelling of the Italian word *cetacei* is ‘anglified’ with a final ‘y’.

cast between 2020 and 2024. Each episode lasts about 30' (see Appendix 1 for a title list of the episodes analyzed).

Facciamolo is a podcast radio managed by a young Italian psychologist and sex consultant, focused on the discussion and dissemination of themes related to sexual encounters and relationships among youngsters, examined also from social and psychological perspectives. The intent is to talk about these topics dispelling taboos in a direct and lighthearted way. Each podcast consists in a chat with invited guests, such as writers, youtubers, rappers, content creators and the like. Episodes vary in length, from 30' to 1h30', and are also available in video format (see Appendix 1 for a title list of the episodes analyzed).

These selected podcasts were listened to and extracts containing English borrowings were noted down, making sure that enough context would be available to understand the meaning (both denotative and connotative) of the borrowings. As shown in Table 1 the length of the audio corpus amounts to 13h58'46" (see Table 1). Subsequently a word list of 517 borrowings was created and each item was classified according to the typology defined in the WOW project, which distinguished between adapted, non-adapted borrowings, calques and semantic loans. Further distinctions have been made in our study to isolate abbreviations and phraseologisms.

The analysis of the 517 borrowings was carried out from two perspectives. First a typological classification was made, grouping loanwords (adapted and non-adapted), semantic loans and calques. Then the borrowings were grouped into thematic areas covered in the podcasts in order to identify their roles and functions in these fields of interest. Subsequently, we checked the recording of these borrowings in general Italian dictionaries, to separate integrated borrowings from neologisms. The Italian dictionary *Devoto-Oli* (2023) was taken as a reference source. When necessary, also *lo Zingarelli* (2023) was referred to. After this check, a short list of 188 neologisms was obtained. The analysis of neologisms was to some extent more problematic, as meanings were often unclear. To this end the *Slengo* dictionary (2024) was consulted. *Slengo* is a crowdsourced dictionary of terms and expressions belonging to specific jargons of the Italian language such as youth language, street talk, online communities, video games and hobbies. To sum up, the two main research questions of this study of English borrowings in young people's podcasts are the following:

RQ1: What are the roles and functions of English borrowings used by young people in thematic areas of interest encountered in podcasts?

RQ2: What are the most significant English-induced neologisms that characterize youth language in thematic areas of interest encountered in podcasts?



n.	Adolescemi	Cetacey	Facciamolo	
1	0.29.49	0.09.51	1.05.02	
2	0.29.41	0.09.31	0.34.01	
3	0.31.09	0.10.01	1.37.45	
4	0.30.54	0.10.25	1.11.02	
5	0.29.56	0.10.06	0.57.54	
6	0.32.13	0.09.51	0.57.41	
7	0.28.36	0.09.15	1.13.35	
8	0.32.45	0.10.02		
9	0.31.37			
10	0.26.04			
Total	5.02.44	1.19.02	7.37.00	13.58.46

Table 1. Sources and length of podcast recordings.

#### 4. Types of anglicisms in youth podcasts

The first step of the analysis was the typological classification of the English borrowings, which was carried out according to the categories defined in the WOW project, namely adapted, non-adapted loanwords, semantic loans and calques. Table 2 displays the distribution of these types in our podcast corpus. Confirming the findings of previous studies (Pulcini 2023) the largest percentage of borrowings (83%) are non-adapted loanwords, i.e., anglicisms formally identical to their English etymons which can be easily identified on the basis of their non-Italian appearance. The following items are examples of non-adapted borrowings featuring in the podcast corpus, which can be considered integrated into the Italian language: some are very old and some are very new lexical items, as indicated by the dates of first attestation in the general dictionary *Devoto-Oli* (2023): *partner* (1862), *fan* (1933), *challenge* (1940), *off limits* (1950), *follower* (1965), *hip hop* (1983), *spoiler* (1983), *account* (1988), *cool* (1988), *coming out* (1992), *tutorial* (1994), *transgender* (1995), *fashion week* (1996), *comfort zone* (1998), *dress code* (2004), *hater* (2009), *like* (2010), *social* (2010), *cisgender* (2013), *non-binary* (2020).

	Non-adapted	Adapted	Semantic loans	Calques	Total
Radioimmaginaria	168	19	7	9	203
Facciamolo	260	40	10	4	314
total	428	59	17	13	517
	83%	12%	3%	2%	

Table 2. Number of English borrowings and their typology.

The corpus also contains some abbreviations and acronyms, which can be included in the category of non-adapted loanwords – in the former each grapheme is spelt out, the latter is read as a word. Some common ones are LOL (Laughing Out Loud), pronounced ['lɔl] in Italian instead of [ˌelˌəʊˈel], and LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer); others are less common and specific to a field, like DM (direct message) in social

media; others belong to a more sectoral register like the acronym SWERF (Sex Worker-Exclusionary Radical Feminist).

The other types of borrowings, which are comparatively much less represented in our data are adapted loanwords (12%), followed by semantic loans (3%) and calques (2%). It is worth noting that a large number of adapted loanwords are verbs (e.g. *spoilerare*), which in Italian take inflectional endings to display tense, mood, number and gender (see section 6).

Another peculiar form of morpho-syntactic adaptation is the addition of suffixes, which in Italian can add particular expressive meanings to words (Grossmann, Reiner 2004). A very common diminutive suffix in Italian is *-ino*, which may carry a wide range of meanings, among which ‘small in size, young, cute’, or even ironic (sometimes also derogatory) connotations. Thus, we may explain the terms *threesomino* (threesome: ‘an occasion on which three people engage in sexual activity together’), *nudino* (‘a nude photo of yourself posted on social media’) as attempts to mitigate the reprehensible associations of these terms. The semantic connotation expressed by the derivational suffixes found in the podcast corpus are generally diminutive, as in *boxino* (box+ino, from English question box/question sticker: ‘interactive box to pose questions on Instagram’). A mitigating effect is also achieved with the use of the productive diminutive suffix *-etto* in the term *kinketto* (kink+etto), used in the podcast to refer to a sexual encounter done in a car and to the thrill involved, mixed with the fear of being caught by the police. The word *kink* is defined by *Urban Dictionary* as ‘a sexual taste’. Thus, kink+etto is a mitigated form of *kink*, in turn a clipped form of *kink sex*, defined by *Slengo* as ‘Termine che indica le pratiche sessuali ritenute non convenzionali. Si contrappone al termine vanilla sex.’ [Term referring to sexual practices considered non-conventional. Cf. vanilla sex]. Among other interesting derivatives we can also mention the term *boomerizzo* (boomer+ozzo) referring ironically to ‘old-fashioned’ generations (possibly the same age as the podcasters’ parents) who do not understand the importance for youngsters of talking to psychologists about their personal problems. By contrast, the word *spoilerone* (spoiler+one, literally ‘big spoiler’) exploits the Italian augmentative suffix *-one*. The Italian suffix *-ata* attached to a noun refers to an action (often negative) typical of the person or people designated by the base of the derivative. Thus, the noun *fangirlata* (fangirl + the suffix *-ata*) indicates a frivolous behaviour typical of fangirls. The modified verb *ghosticchiare*, obtained through the addition of the suffix *-icchiare* to the verb *ghostare* (from the English verb ‘ghost’) carries the meaning of the verb (‘If someone ghosts you, especially after a romantic relationship, they stop all contact with you without any explanation’, Collins) with a mitigated, possibly negative, connotation.

The category of semantic loans and calques are little represented in our corpus for several well-known reasons, i.e. they are not easily identified because they are formally Italian words. Moreover, when a word looks ‘suspiciously’ from English, further inquiry is needed to determine whether it is a real case of borrowing or a domestic creation. The borrowing process in a semantic loan involves the transfer of meaning from an English word to an already existing Italian one. An example from the podcast corpus is the Italian term *applicazione* or its clipped form *app*, which has developed a new ICT meaning from the English term *application* or *app* (‘a piece of software designed to carry out a particular

task’). This innovation was likely triggered by the influence of English, similarly to many ICT terms, although it could well be considered an autonomous semantic extension of the Italian word or an internationalism.<sup>7</sup> Other instances of possible semantic loans found in the audio corpus are *sito* (site), *serie* and *serie TV* (serial, TV serial), and *tossico* (toxic). As for the term *sito*, the influence of English is confirmed by the existence of the hybrid form *sito web*, from English *web site*. The Italian dictionary *Devoto-Oli* confirms that *serie* comes from English *serial*. By contrast, the figurative meaning of the word *tossico* (‘poisonous, dangerous’) is recorded as a figurative extension of the Italian word (as in the collocation *relazione tossica*) rather than a semantic borrowing from the English adjective *toxic*. Nevertheless, the cultural context in which *tossico* appears in our data shows that the influence of Anglo-American culture is indeed the carrier of a specific sense in the podcast chat. In fact, *tossico* is used in combination with *masculinity* (*mascolinità tossica* - both words are in the feminine gender). The podcasters define *toxic masculinity* as the stereotype of ‘manly men’ and macho culture, which, to the podcasters, is to be opposed. This expression is used with reference to artists (in this case the singer Harry Styles) who appeared in female clothes on a cover of *Vogue* and is known for his fight against *toxic masculinity*. Talking about these artists who combat against toxic masculinity, one of the podcasters says

(1) MARCO: hanno fatto un po’ di post nel corso dell’anno scorso ... gli artisti che hanno combattuto la mascolinità tossica. Ma che cos’è la mascolinità tossica? [...] questa idea che l’uomo debba essere forte, molto macho e che non si possa vestire come Harry Styles, con la gonna o con una maglietta comunque magari non so rosa [...] (Radioimmaginaria, ep. 18)

An interesting example of an Italian word that has developed a new, modern meaning is the term *storia* or *storia social* (social media story), a new digital genre consisting of the narration or visual representation of one’s own experience through texts, images, videos and music, which is posted and remains visible on social media such as Instagram and Facebook for a short time, normally only 24 hours. In this case, as well as in many other cases of semantic innovation, whether *storia* has taken its new meaning from English *story* or developed independently is open to debate. If a borrowing, it may be considered a calque (or loan translation) from the English term *story*. From a cultural point of view, this lexical item reflects young people’s tendency to focus on one’s own experience and share it with a wider community of users. Differently from posts, which remain online indefinitely, stories are more transient and volatile, like snapshots of events that are not worth surviving for long and can be readily replaced by others.

Among the few calques found in the podcast corpus, several are recorded in dictionaries and integrated into the Italian language: *omosessuale* (from homosexual); *doppio standard* (double standard); *zona di comfort* (coexisting with comfort zone);

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<sup>7</sup> Internationalisms are “lexical items that are similar in form and meaning across unrelated languages” (Pulcini 2023: 133).

*videogioco* (coexisting with *videogame*). Paradoxically the *Devoto-Oli* dictionary records the loanword *multiplayer* but not the calque *multigiocatore*, used in the podcasts. *Devoto-Oli* does not include the phraseologism *venire fuori dall'armadio* (to come out of the closet), but has *outing* and *coming out*, used in Italian in the phrases *fare outing* or *fare coming out*, corresponding to English 'come out'.

The second step of the analysis dealt with the separation of English borrowings recorded in Italian general dictionaries from items that are not recorded, which have the status of non-assimilated loanwords or neologisms. The proportion of these is 36% (188 items). However, some anglicisms featuring in the podcast corpus are recorded in dictionaries of youth slang such as *Slengo* (only for Italian) and *Urban Dictionary*, which indicates that these terms are still confined to small communities of practice. Furthermore, it is important to point out that many borrowings are hapax legomena (only 1 occurrence in the corpus): they appear to be introduced in youth talk for lexical foregrounding and can be categorized as code-switches and quotation words. Some instances play the role of pragmatic markers in discourse (e.g. how can I say, I don't know, just chatting, spread love, too much), enriching the lively tone of the conversation and enhancing the international vocation and profile of young people. The neologisms characteristic of teenager talk and their areas of interest, featuring a meaningful number of occurrences in the corpus, are illustrated in section 5.

## 5. Areas of interest

The thematic areas in which the 188 neologisms found in this study can be grouped are 'topic sensitive', i.e., they are related to the topics of conversation chosen by young people in the selected podcasts. For this reason, they have no statistical value as far as young people's interests are concerned. Despite this limitation, the areas of interest seem to mirror the ones described in the literature of adolescent and post-adolescent language: entertainment (especially music, concerts, video games); social media; relationships and sexuality; moods, attitudes and appearance. The research goal is to identify the English-induced neologisms used in these areas, define their meaning, explain their roles (why they have been chosen), their functions (denotative or connotative) and the cultural reasons for their use.

### 5.1. Music, concerts and gaming

In this group neologisms denoting music genres (crunk, dubstep, k-pop) and gaming (gamer, flash game and speedrun) appear to be the most numerous and frequent. K-pop is a music genre which originated in South Korea, now globally popular, also in Italy. K-pop artists are called *k-idols*, as they have been trained to become pop stars. In the podcast corpus several neologisms are connected to the world of *k-pop*, starting from *k-pop fans*, called *fanboy* and *fangirl*, in line with gender inclusive language, favourite k-pop singers (bias) and to gadgets related to fandom and concerts (photocard and standing sticker, hype, lightstick). The most representative lexical items are defined below and illustrated with some examples.

**bias** (ultimate and wrecker): ‘In k-pop the members of an idol group that is your favourite. A person may have one ultimate bias and many other biases from other idol groups, or only have one ultimate bias. This person is derived from ‘having a bias towards a particular person’.’ (Urban Dictionary)

(2) ELEONORA: Bias è una delle parole principali. [...] Bias è il tuo membro della band K-pop preferito. [...] C’è il bias ultimate che batte tutti i tuoi bias e c’è il bias wrecker [...] che invece ti fa un po’ titubare. [...] (Radioimmaginaria, ep. 26)

**hype**: ‘Grande attesa, talvolta gonfiata all’estremo, nei confronti di un nuovo prodotto di qualsiasi sorta (prodotto materiale, film, videogioco, album musicale e così via).’ (*Slengo*) [Great excitement, sometimes inflated to the extreme, caused by the release of a new product of any kind (material product, film, video game, music album and so on)]

**light stick**: ‘A flexible tube containing a fluorescent dye and two solutions which react together when mixed (by bending the tube and breaking a compartment containing one of the solutions) producing energy which activates the dye so that it emits light; = glow stick n. (b).’ (OED) K-POP groups may have their own official light stick, symbol of fans’ unity and strength.

**bomb** or **army bomb**: the name of BTS lightstick (BTS is a South Korean boy band).

(3) LUVI: Allora [...] quando vai ad un concerto cosa si deve avere?

Un elemento senza cui non puoi entrare [...]

CLAUDIA: Il light stick.

LUVI: Spieghiamo cos’è il light stick

CLAUDIA: Allora, la light stick è un bastoncino che si illumina e ogni gruppo ha il suo [...] Possono anche essere chiamate bomb. (Radioimmaginaria, ep. 26)

**photocard**: ‘a picture of a celeb on a small piece of card that is widely popular amongst the kpop community. Photocards are most commonly found in albums and are a popular trading item. Some people collect certain people’s photocards or even a whole group’s photocards.’ (*Urban Dictionary*)

(4) LUVI: Qualcuno vuole spiegare questa cosa che ho in mano?

ELEONORA: Una photocard del cantante, che appunto cambia da album a album, quindi tu non solo potresti rischiare di non prendere quello del tuo bias ma potresti rischiare di trovare quello tuo odiato e quindi devi ricomprarlo

LUVI: quindi è un po’ casuale (Radioimmaginaria, ep. 26)

**standing sticker**: a sticker of a k-pop celebrity that can be placed on a small stand.

(5) LUVI: Abbiamo un video dove mi mostreremo ciò che serve se volete essere fan del K-pop.

RAGAZZA: Ciao ragazzi, in questo episodio vi mostrerò cosa c’è nella mia borsa, K-pop edition. Tutto quello che voi dovete avere se siete dei gran fan del K-pop o in

alternativa quello che voi dopo aver visto questo video vorreste avere anche se non siete fan. [...] Qui ci sono quelli che si chiamano standing stickers, sono un po' diversi da quelli normali perché non si attaccano, [...] questi non si appiccicano, potete comodamente staccarli e farli stare in piedi su tutte le superfici che volete. A che cosa servono, vi chiederete voi? Non lo so, infatti sono ancora chiusi. (Radioimmaginaria, ep. 26)

**gamer:** '1. Persona che gioca molto ai videogiochi. 2. Chi di professione gioca ai videogiochi.' (*Slengo*) [1. A person who plays video games a lot. 2. A professional player of video games]

**flash game:** Online games that every early-mid 2000's kid grew up playing. (*Urban Dictionary*)

(6) FRANCESCO: Faremo un gioco che si chiama "the world hardest game" che è un flash game, ovvero uno di quei giochi che a cui si può giocare sul proprio browser. Molti di voi lo conoscono, molti no, ma lo vedranno in azione. (Radioimmaginaria, Come sopravvivere se hai un amico gamer)

**speedrun:** 'Termine che indica il completamento di un videogioco (o di una sua parte) nel minor tempo possibile.' (*Slengo*) [A term for completing a video game (or part of it) in the shortest possible time.] *Cfr. speedrunnare, speedrunner*

## 5.2. Sexuality, relationships

The podcast Facciamolo is focussed on relationships and sexual experiences among adolescents and young adults and is characterized by a very direct and uninhibited tone. The young invited guests featuring in the interviews freely talk about behaviours and attitudes toward sexuality that circulate in the world of youth, though not representing the ideas and experiences of all young people. What emerges is the acceptance of all types of sexual orientations, freedom and curiosity in experiencing sexual practices, as well as respect for individual choices in one's own sex life.

**body count:** 'Esprime il numero di persone con il quale si ha avuto un rapporto sessuale.' (*Slengo*) [Indicates the number of people with whom one has had a sexual relationship].

(7) LIVIO: Nel body count della vita, nel body count, puoi mettere anche quelli con cui hai fatto solo i preliminari. Mettiamoceli. (Facciamolo, ep. 1)

**rape culture:** 'A culture that casually promotes sexual assault and often involves victim blaming.' (*Urban Dictionary*)

(8) CHERRY: Oggi parliamo di rape culture, che è una serie di comportamenti e atteggiamenti molto radicati nella nostra cultura e che hanno il fine di giustificare la violenza sulle donne dicendo per esempio: "quanto hai bevuto"? o "com'eri vestita"? (Radioimmaginaria, ep. 6)



**bigender:** ‘of or relating to a person who simultaneously identifies with two genders’ (*Collins*)

**genderqueer:** ‘adjective 1. of or relating to a person who does not subscribe to traditional gender differences but identifies with both, neither, or a mixture of female and male genders. noun 2. such a person’ (*Collins*)

**foot fetish:** ‘A sexual attraction to usually women’s feet.’ (*Urban Dictionary*)

**omnisessuale:** (calque of omnisexual) ‘Omnisexual people have an attraction to all gender’s, but tend to like one gender more than the rest.’ (*Urban Dictionary*)

**polisessuale:** (calque of polysexual) ‘The attraction to more than one gender, with no limit on the gender spectrum.’ (*Urban Dictionary*)

**sex work(ing):** ‘any form of labor in relationship to selling intercourse. not to be confused with prostitution. Sex work can be either voluntary or forced, commonly through coercion or sex-trafficking. Can be empowering for those who make the active choice to engage in this genre of labor or tremendously disempowering for those forced into this type of work against their will.’ (*Urban Dictionary*)

(9) Sul sex working io penso sia anche molto impattante il fatto che ci sia questa diffusione [...] questa liberalizzazione per quanto bella possa essere [...] sicuramente scuote molto perché stiamo uscendo da quella che era la concezione del sex working classica tradizionale (Facciamolo, ep. 17)

**sex worker:** ‘side effect of the bourgeois fantasies of some latter-day feminists who greet prostitution and pornography with universal, and therefore unmerited, green lights.’ (*Urban Dictionary*)

### 5.3. Moods, attitudes, appearance

**bro code:** ‘Honored among bros, the obvious rules among bros, or guys in general.’ (*Urban Dictionary*)

(10) LIVIO: Volendo ci sono delle dark room dove succede il panico, esibizioni varie, molto figo, molto figo.

VILLABANKS: Però sono dei posti dove so che incrocio persone che conosco

LIVIO: Eh però c’è un bro code, ci stanno anche persone abbastanza conosciute e famose ma non si dice in giro, io non ho mai detto a nessuno se ho visto quella persona a quella festa. (Facciamolo, ep. 8)

**chill:** Aggettivo usato per descrivere una persona, un’atmosfera o una situazione rilassata, tranquilla e priva di stress e in generale piacevole. *Cfr. easy, cool* [Adjective used to des-

cribe a person, atmosphere or situation that is relaxed, calm and stress-free and generally pleasant.]

(11) LIVIO: Quindi te la vivi abbastanza serenamente, cioè ti ho sentito serena

CHADIA: Molto chill, molto chill. (Facciamolo, ep. 12)

**tone policing:** ‘the rejection of an argument on the grounds of the tone in which it is delivered rather than on the grounds of its content’ (*Collins*)

(12) MARIA: Il tone policing è quella fallacia logica per cui io non ascolto ciò che il mio interlocutore mi sta dicendo perché non mi piace il tono con cui lo sta esprimendo, quindi lo silenzio, o ancor di più in maniera estesa non mi piace la persona [...] in un mondo permeato dal tone policing. (Facciamolo, ep. 17)

**vibe:** ‘[usually plural] Vibes are the good or bad atmosphere that you sense with a person or in a place.’ (*Collins*)

(13) LIVIO: io ho tante amiche femmine [...] ho fatto il liceo delle scienze umane, poi psicologia, quindi sono cresciuto in mezzo a coetanee ragazze. Quando parlo di sesso con amici maschi c’è un po’ quel vibe che non ti devi vantare troppo se no passi per quello che scopa tanto [...] (Facciamolo, ep. 1)

#### 5.4. Social media

**content creator:** ‘Creatore di contenuti. Utilizzato per indicare chi crea contenuti su siti internet, come Instagram o YouTube.’ (*Slengo*)

[Content creator. Used to refer to someone who creates content on websites, such as Instagram or YouTube.]

**DM:** (direct message) (on a social network): ‘a message that can be read only by one or more named recipients’ (*Collins*)

**texting:** ‘Text messaging is sending written messages using a mobile phone.’ (*Collins*)

#### 6. Verb adaptation

Morpho-syntactic integration allows the creation of verbs which in Italian have inflectional endings to signal tense, mood, person, number and gender. The infinitive inflection applied to verbal loanwords is *-are*. The following are the verbal neologisms extracted from the podcast corpus:

**cringiare:** ‘Provare o provocare una forte sensazione di imbarazzo. Dall’inglese “to cringe”. Vedi anche “cringe”. Cfr. cringiata, cringe, cringianza’ (*Slengo*) [To feel or cause a strong feeling of embarrassment. From the English “to cringe.” See also “cringe.”]



(14) LIVIO: posto più strano dove l’hai fatto?  
 MARTINA: posto più strano [...] questa fa ridere [...] c’era un’altra persona nel letto che dormiva  
 LIVIO: ah ok. che sicuramente non ha fatto finta di dormire e il giorno dopo non ha cringiato. (Facciamolo, ep. 14)

**droppare:** ‘Nell’ambito musicale si riferisce anche al rilascio di una canzone/disco da parte di un artista’ (*Slengo*) [In the field of music, it also refers to the release of a song/record by an artist]

(15) LIVIO: Dobbiamo fare un annuncione, in tanti già lo sanno, stanotte esce il Doc 3, a mezzanotte, o all’una? Per San Valentino. Il doc è un appuntamento artistico musicale di singoli che Villabanks ci spara ormai da tre anni. Questo è il terzo anno?  
 VILLABANKS: Assolutamente  
 LIVIO: Parlacene un po’  
 VILLABANKS: Quello è un pezzone di base, prima ancora di essere il mio Doc, il Doc è una cosa della cultura hip hop [...]  
 LIVIO: San Valentino è vicino, quando lo droppi? [...] (Facciamolo, ep. 8)

**flexare:** ‘Showing off your valuables in a non-humble way’ (*Urban Dictionary*)

(16) LIVIO: giorni fa ho visto il post di una ragazza “mi sono laureata, mi sono fatta il culo per fare questa foto”, ed io volevo dirle, guarda, secondo me l’hai impostata un po’ male, in teoria ti sei anche laureata, non hai fatto solo la foto  
 MARTINA: però con i social quello fa tanto, ti dici “cavolo, finalmente posso dire al mondo che ho finito questa cosa” [...]  
 LIVIO: è vero, ci sta flexare la corona. (Facciamolo, ep. 14)

**freebootare:** (Freebooting) ‘Pratica disonesta consistente nel rubare un contenuto creato da qualcuno (solitamente un meme), ricaricarlo sul proprio profilo e spacciarlo per proprio. Cfr. *Freebooter*’ (*Slengo*) [Dishonest practice consisting of stealing a piece of content created by someone (usually a meme), re-uploading it to one’s profile and passing it off as one’s own.] From English freebooting: Taking online media and re-hosting it on your website. Engaged in piracy or plunder. (*Urban Dictionary*)

(17) LIVIO: Il giovedì faccio una rubrica su instagram che si chiama “esperienze bruttine” in cui chiedo alle persone di raccontarmi un’esperienza imbarazzante e goffa a letto, chiederei la tua.  
 MARTINA: Posso pensarci un attimo? Tanto questa la freebootano [...] (Facciamolo, ep. 17)

**leakare:** ‘Dall’inglese per “trapelare”. Quando del materiale non ancora uscito ufficialmente viene rubato e pubblicato online in via non ufficiale. Qualunque cosa può venire leakata: delle clip di un film o di un videogioco, la copertina di un album o anche intere tracce e via dicendo.’ (*Slengo*) [From English ‘leak’. When material not yet officially released is stolen and unofficially posted online. Anything can be leaked: clips from a movie or video game, an album cover or even entire tracks and so on.]

(18) LIVIO: Ultimamente sei stata in tendenza su Twitter [...] perché era successo che avevano leakato un tape, leakare è quella roba di parlare mezzo italiano mezzo inglese bruttissima e che vuol dire far uscire o diffondere non consensualmente una roba che tu avevi fatto sul WWF

MARIA: Per essere totalmente precisa e specifica, questo è accaduto sui canali della mistress con cui io ho collaborato (Facciamolo, ep. 17)

**namedroppare:** ‘If you say that someone name-drops, you disapprove of them referring to famous people they have met in order to impress people.’ (*Collins*)

(19) VILLABANKS: Il doc è una cosa della cultura hip hop, da piccolo ascoltavo Doc Cineco in Francia, dal nome si capisce, dottor ginecologo, è il suo nome d’artista. È un rapper anni ’90 che parlava di queste vicende amorose di zona, faceva molto ridere, molto figo. (...) Vedi i grandi fare queste cose e ti influenzano a morte. Anch’io volevo fare un episodio del Doc, vent’anni dopo Doc Cineco, un’altra generazione. Ho legato la roba di San Valentino che ho ripreso da Orelsan, che stimavo da bambino. Mo sto namedroppando tutti, per qualche infognato che se le va a cercare, sono tutte reference. (Facciamolo, ep. 8)

**ripostare:** ‘to post (a message) again on or via the internet’ (*Collins*)

**stannare:** ‘To be an overzealous or obsessive fan of someone, esp. a particular celebrity.’ (OED) This verb is recorded by *Slengo* as a derivative of the agent noun *stan*, which is defined as follows: ‘Fan maniacale di qualcuno o qualcosa, specialmente di una celebrità. Il termine deriva da un personaggio chiamato Stan in una canzone di Eminem, intitolata appunto “Stan”, il quale non avendo ricevuto risposta alle sue lettere indirizzate al rapper, per cui prova un’ossessione estrema, si suicida lanciandosi giù da un ponte con la propria auto con a bordo anche la moglie incinta.’ *Cfr. stannare*

[Maniacal fan of someone or something, especially a celebrity. The term is derived from character named Stan in a song by Eminem, titled “Stan,” who, having received no response to his letters addressed to the rapper, for whom he feels extreme obsession, commits suicide by driving his own car off a bridge with his pregnant wife also on board.]

(20) LUVI: Quindi, il bias [...] quando tu cominci a stannare [...] vuol dire diventare fan, cominci a stannare un gruppo, devi scegliere il tuo bias, cioè quello che ti attira di più (Adolescemi, ep. 36)

**tiktokare:** utilizzare il social network TikTok e creare contenuti con regolarità. [Use the TikTok social network and create content regularly.] (*Slengo* records the noun *tiktoker* but not the verb)

**ultimare:** to choose a particular artist as your favourite idol.

(21) ELEONORA: Ultimate o ultimare [...] Allora Ultimare, che significa? [...] Il bisogno di ultimare arriva quando c’è una persona che segue moltissimi o ha moltissimi

bias e tra questi bias tra questi gruppi deve scegliere il [...] quelli che preferisce di più e quindi si ultimano. (Adolescemi, ep. 36)

## **7. Discussion and final remarks**

In this paper the focus on adolescent and post-adolescent discourse in podcasts has allowed us to analyze the role and functions of anglicisms in a specific register, characterized by both the age dimension and a specific communicative genre. The choice of podcasts offered the opportunity to examine the phenomenon of English-induced lexical borrowing in informal, spoken interaction among Italian peers. Podcasts appear to be a good source of data for this analysis as through this medium teenagers and young adults talk about themselves and share their experiences and ideas with listeners in a spontaneous way (although they are aware of being recorded). The analysis of the audio corpus has yielded 517 borrowings, among which 428 (83%) are non-adapted loanwords, 59 (12%) are adapted, 17 (3%) are semantic loans, 13 (2%) are calques; overall, 188 of them (36%) are neologisms, not yet recorded by Italian general dictionaries. This figure proves that the language of young people is a productive source of lexical innovation and English is indeed a strong driver. The fast regeneration of youth language will eventually filter these terms and determine their survival or oblivion.

The reason why anglicisms are used by young people deserves particular attention. It is well-known that English nowadays is the strongest donor language in Italian and for the younger generations it is the most widely studied foreign language at school, if not the only one. The prestige of the English language is undeniable, and the use of English makes speech sound trendy and cool. However, the choice of English loanwords in young people's language appears to be dictated by reasons that are different from those of older speakers. Whereas for some adults the use of anglicisms is often motivated by 'snobbery' or 'exhibitionism', i.e., by the desire to add a touch of class to discourse, this may not be the case for teenagers and young people. The spontaneous, informal style of podcast chats leads us to believe that anglicisms seem to be naturally assimilated into young people's language as the expression of their culture and identity. First, anglicisms denote objects and concepts that characterize this community of speakers, which were born and raised as members of a 'global village' and allows them to talk about their favourite topics and values, as was noted for terms typical of k-pop music, concerts, fandom as well as activities that are carried out online and through social media. Furthermore, English words offer the opportunity to add to the expressivity, playfulness and informality that is typical of youth speech. Finally, the desire to belong to an international community is typical of the younger generations, in search of an identity, which explains the preference for the lingua franca that today offers the strongest cultural models for their generation.

As for the areas of interest covered in the selected podcasts, terms related to music and fandom are widely used; in our data the emphasis was on the world of k-pop music, k-idols, concerts and fans. Social media appears to be the medium through which information and communication is spread among teenagers and youth who, being digital natives, seem to be aware of the practicalities of online interaction, including illicit practices like freebooting (stealing content) and leaking (posting content not yet officially

released). English verbs are easily and naturally integrated into the morphosyntactic system of Italian, as shown in the selected examples. The choice of the podcast Facciamolo, focussed on social and psychological aspects of sexuality and relationships, allowed the collection of several anglicisms related to these fields. The role of English borrowings seems to be that of denoting specific sexual orientations (by-gender, genderqueer, polisessuale, omnisessuale) and practices (quickie, toy, one night stand). In the case of sexual terms, the use of English may function as a filter to lessen the impact of sensitive topics (though dealt with in a very uninhibited way in this podcast) and to offer neutral synonyms (e.g. sex worker) to negatively-connoted existing terms. Another linguistic strategy to mitigate the transgressive connotation of sexual terms is to add diminutive suffixes like *-ino* and *-etto* (nudino, threesomino, kinketto), although this feature may partly be idiosyncratic to the podcast host's communicative style. The data collected suggests that English is a language donor also in this peripheral but viral field of specialized discourse, but more data are needed to confirm this hypothesis.

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**APPENDIX 1.**  
**List of the podcasts analyzed**

<p>Radioimmaginaria</p> <p>PODCAST: ADOLESCEMI - IDEE PER SOPRAVVIVERE</p>	<p>01 Adolescemi - Come sopravvivere agli amici invasati? 03 Adolescemi - Come sopravvivere ai babbani 08 Adolescemi - Come sopravvivere agli haters dei videogiochi 12 Adolescemi - Come sopravvivere ai social 18 Adolescemi - Come sopravvivere al sessismo 21 Adolescemi - Come sopravvivere ai commenti negativi 25 Adolescemi - Come sopravvivere agli spoiler 26 Adolescemi - Come sopravvivere alla dipendenza da K-pop 40 Adolescemi - Come sopravvivere allo slang Adolescemi - Come sopravvivere se hai un amico gamer</p>
<p>Radioimmaginaria</p> <p>PODCAST: CETACEY - RAGAZZ* CON I CAPELLI BLU</p>	<p>Ep. 1   A B C LGBTQIA+ Ep. 2   Coming out o outing? Ep. 3   Non tutti gli eroi lo sono davvero Ep. 4   Il razzismo non esiste più? Ep. 5   Persone tossiche = ambiente intossicato Ep. 6   No significa No! Ep. 7   Odiare non è umano Ep. 8   La transessualità NON è un trend</p>
<p>Facciamolo</p>	<p>Ep. 1 FACCIAMOLO con Sofia Viscardi Ep. 4 FACCIAMOLO - Che vorremmo dire al partner? Ep. 8 FACCIAMOLO con Villabanks Ep. 10 FACCIAMOLO con Coco Rebecca Edogamhe Ep. 12 FACCIAMOLO con Chadia Rodriguez Ep. 14 FACCIAMOLO con Martina Socrate Ep. 17 FACCIAMOLO con Maria Sofia Federico</p>

**APPENDIX 2.**  
**Neologisms in the podcast corpus grouped in areas of interest**

Music, concerts, gaming	bias, bomb, crunk, droppare, dubstep, fanpage, fanbase, fanboy, fangirl, flashgame, gamer, hype, k-idol, k-pop, leakare, lightstick, lip synch, multigiocatore, photocard, speed run, standing sticker, sound, stannare, ultimare, wrecker
Sexuality, relationships	bestie, bi-gender, bullet, body count, close friends, dick pic, dick, family, family friendly, foot fetish, genderqueer, kink, kinketto, kinky, love bombing, mistress, no contact, nudino, omnisessuale, one night stand, polisessuale, queefing, quickie, rabbit, rape culture, sex influencer, sex work, sex worker, spinner, slash quirt, squirting, SWERF, threesome, threesomino, toy, venire fuori dall'armadio, workout
Moods, attitudes, appearance	appearance, boomerazzo, brother, bro code, burnout, chill, city boy, college drop out, coping, cowgirl, crazy, cringiare, doppio standard, fangirlata, flex, flexare, focussato, hangover, mindfulness, motivational, natural body building, nuanced, on fire, personal, photoshoot, picky, pressure, queen, self-presenting, spoilerone, tone policing, uncomfortable, vibe
Social media, technology	caption, calendar, chain, content creator, creator, direct, DM, freebotare, green screen, hating, namedroppare, rate, ripostare, snapshot, storia, story, texting, tiktokare, storia risposta
General	beef, black hole, blessing, blueprint, book, breakdown, chicken, comfortable, consistentemente, controversial, crispy rice, crispy rice disease, disclaimer, drop out, e-sport, edition, evidence-based, fast, flow, free, harness, host, international, layer, hot topic, life span, legalize, microdosing, open, open world, overrated, plant-based, popular, punch line, recap, red flag, reference, safe, shit, shit storm, sorry, spicy, street, suspicious, thanks, underrated, wave, west, wormhole, wrong, yes
phrases	can't wait, candy flip, feel free, for your information, how can I say, I don't care, I don't know, I have a question, I'm okay with it, in my books, just chatting, just kidding, let's go, LMAO, maybe it's time, question and answers, raise your voice, she knows, spread love, stay toxic, too much, what I eat in a day, win or learn