

il

SUMMER 2002

AMADIO, INC.

# BOLLETTINO

INFORMATION AND TIPS ABOUT THE ITALIAN LANGUAGE

## Forestierismi

"Forestierismi" are words or terms borrowed from a foreign language and made part of the Italian language. When used in Italian, "forestierismi" acquire some traits and follow some grammatical rules of the host language. This issue of il Bollettino reviews the most common traits and rules as they apply to English borrowings.

### Introduction

Borrowing from other languages is not new to Italian. For example, Italian has always made use and still continues to use words, terms, and phrases that come from Latin and that have been fully incorporated in the language. For example:

Recitare il *mea culpa* = to confess one own sins  
Il reddito *pro capite* = the individual income  
Ottenere l'*imprimatur* = to get permission

Some of these Latin terms have actually become part of the English language as well, such as *factotum*, *status quo*, *habitat*.

In modern Italian most forestierismi come from the English language.

### English Words Acting as Nouns

Some English words used as Italian nouns have long been established (e.g., camping, hotel, jeans, playboy, etc.) others are more recent acquisitions (e.g., shopping, summit, teenager, zapping, etc.). They come from a variety of fields: music (album, band, blues, rap, etc.), entertainment (anchorman, best-seller, fiction, soap opera, etc.), sports (baseball, golf, hockey, motocross, etc.), business (budget, executive, leasing, manager, etc.), and technology (compact-disc, know-how, scanner, test, etc.).

When they are being used in Italian, English language words, like any other Italian word, are given a gender. This gender assignation is complicated by the fact that English words do not have gender. English words in Italian become masculine or feminine according to rules that are in part dictated by similarity in form or meaning with the Italian words that they are replacing. Although the general rule is that all English words ending in a consonant are masculine, there are many exceptions. For example:

*Continued on reverse side.*

**TIMING**

Taxi girl  
Favola Metropolitana

I nuovi abbonamenti  
GSM su misura

Giochi e test

EsageRate

ScriptTIM

Tutto ciò che avreste  
sempre voluto sapere  
sulla segreteria  
del telefonino

Timmy

TACS

**...PARTE L'ESTATE TIM!**  
CON TUTTE LE NUOVE TARIFFE GSM, TIMMY,  
SCRIPTIM E UNA STRAORDINARIA NOVITÀ: L'ATTIVAZIONE GRATIS ANCHE SUL TACS

**TIM**  
Telecom Italia Mobile

La gang  
La convention  
La corporation

Some English words are used with both genders:

Il clip or la clip (abbreviation for videoclip)  
Il e-mail or la e-mail (although mail without the "e" is always feminine)

As a general rule, English words in Italian are invariant, that is, they do not change when used in the plural. The distinction between singular and plural is made by modifying the article:

Il computer      i computer  
Il monitor      i monitor  
Lo sport      gli sport

But there are exceptions. Words less common, or of special use, tend to assume in the plural their original form:

Il broker      i brokers

Prefixes and suffixes, such as the diminutive, apply to English words as if they were Italian:

Il cockerino = the small cocker spaniel  
Il minitour = the small tour

### English Words Acting as Adjectives

When an English word is used in Italian as an adjective, it generally follows the position rule of the Italian language but is invariant, that is, it does not change with the gender of the nouns it is associated with. For example:

La musica pop = the pop music  
Vivere country = to live country style  
Spacciatori baby = drug dealers who are practically babies

Sometimes, however, such as in titles, headlines, or slogans, the full English construction is adopted:

Il Pavarotti-day =  
the Pavarotti Day  
La Club Tecno Story =  
the Club Tecno Story

Although rare, there are a few examples where the construction has been borrowed from the English language but the words used are Italian:

Il calciomercato =  
the soccer market

### Italian Words Based on English Words

Many English words undergo a full assimilation into the language by acquiring the form of an Italian word and then following the appropriate grammatical rules applicable to it. These new Italian words can be nouns, adjectives, or verbs. A few examples are:

Settato = set up (adjective)  
Settaggio = set up (noun)  
Settare = to set up

Chat = chat (noun)  
Chattare = to chat

Mixato = mixed  
Mixare = to mix

Scioccante = shocking  
Scioccare = to shock



### English Words with Acquired Different Meaning in Italian

Some English words being used in Italian have acquired a meaning completely different from their original one. For example:

il box = the garage (una casa con box = a house with garage)  
il night = the night club (andare in un night = to go to a night club)

### In Conclusion

Although there are some rules and guidelines, there are also many exceptions, and the correct use of English words in Italian translation will depend on the personal knowledge of translator and editor, who must know when it is better to leave a word or term in English or render it with an Italian translation.

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