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## CONTENTS

### Foreword

Hamid Abdalla Arabi

*Move analysis of the discussion section in Arabic and English Research Articles*

Paola Brusasco

*Action around the green table: adapted English verbs in Italian Texas Hold'em blogs and forums*

Stefania Consonni

*'You may need to read this leaflet again': epistemic and deontic modality in US vs. Italian antidepressant Patient Package Inserts*

Cristiano Furiassi

*Wine terminology across cultures: the case of the pseudo-English internationalism Super Tuscan*

Pietro Manzella

*Blowing the whistle across languages, issues arising from the translation of 'whistleblowing' in sustainability reports in Italian and English*

Licia Masoni

*Fairy tales as metaphorical reflective narratives in EFL teacher training*

Neslihan Onder-Ozdemir and Huseyin Ozdemir

*Empirical research articles in Applied Mathematics and Economics: two under-researched disciplines*

Margaret Rasulo

*Speaking for, acting for and standing for the best interest of 'the people': a cross-cultural analysis of political representation in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis*

Michele Russo and Mariantonietta Fiore

*A cross-cultural study of rural and urban landscapes in Russian and British poetry of the Romantic Age*

Notes on contributors

Instructions for contributors

# ACTION AROUND THE GREEN TABLE: ADAPTED ENGLISH VERBS IN ITALIAN TEXAS HOLD'EM BLOGS AND FORUMS

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## Abstract

The proliferation of modern-day online gambling – one of the consequences of the spread of Internet technology – has generated international communities of practice. In particular, the variety of poker known as Texas Hold'em has attracted millions of professionals and amateur players due to its potential for big wins and the online opportunity to qualify for the World Series of Poker in Las Vegas and similar tournaments in various countries. The American origins of the game, the need to abide by rules set by the Poker Tournament Directors Association (the only internationally acknowledged body), and the role of English as a lingua franca in the jargon of players have resulted in heavy Anglicization of this form of specialized Italian discourse through direct and indirect lexical borrowing. Following a preliminary study of Texas Hold'em Anglicisms in Italian dictionaries and in the translated version of the Poker TDA regulations (Brusasco 2018), this paper focuses on adapted loan verbs in Italian specialized blogs and forums. While the presence of Texas Hold'em Anglicisms in Italian dictionaries is negligible, the translated TDA regulations show frequent borrowings, a tendency that seems even more marked in blogs and forums. To test the hypothesis of an increasingly Anglicized jargon used by experts in their online exchanges, an *ad hoc* specialized corpus of such texts written in Italian has been collected. Their highly codified language has been analysed, with particular focus on the integration processes (Heath 1984; Wichmann and Wohlgemuth 2008) affecting a number of verbs denoting the key moves – e.g. *bet*, *fold*, *raise*, *call*, *check* – which in their morphologically adapted English-Italian forms might suggest a tension between the participants' desire to be recognized as knowledgeable authorities and the need to be understood by less competent players. Drawing on Bolander (2013), the paper also reflects the use of Anglicisms as markers of authority and expertise in computer-mediated communication.

## 1. Introduction

The spread of the Internet over the last few decades has determined important technology-related changes in most areas of life, which in turn affect the communicative practices and language contact that, to various degrees, have always characterized international exchanges in commerce, politics, knowledge, and culture. The 24/7 availability, borderless communication and potentially infinite reverberation provid-

ed by the Internet have stretched the very notion of contact, while at the same time multiplying the exposure to different languages and practices. Thus, new words and concepts have entered the lexicon of most languages, although the scale of the flows between donor and recipient languages varies greatly depending on the quantity of material available online, power, prestige and different attitudes towards foreign influences. Lexical borrowing – one of the main outcomes of contact, at the same time a marker of and a contribution to language change – has been studied extensively (see Haugen 1950; Weinreich 1953; Lehmann 1962; Anttila 1989; Winford 2003, among others). A traditional distinction opposes ‘necessary’ to ‘luxury’ borrowings, with the former referring to foreign terms borrowed to identify new concepts or innovations for which the recipient language has no word, and the latter to words introduced alongside already-existing lexical items, often for reasons of prestige or brevity. Such labels, however, have been questioned in recent years because they imply a purist, judgemental stance which does not consider the stylistic and communicative needs of speakers (Onysko and Winter-Froemel 2011; Furiassi, Pulcini and Rodríguez González 2012). Onysko and Winter-Froemel (2011) and Winter-Froemel (2017) advocate a categorization in more neutral terms and suggest the labels ‘catachrestic’ as against ‘non-catachrestic’, thereby taking into consideration the pragmatic dimension of borrowing and focusing on language users’ reasons for borrowing, i.e. on the process rather than the product.

While language contact is a universal phenomenon, English has been the main source language in terms of borrowing, mainly for reasons of prestige, economic power, technological innovation, political and cultural influence, especially via the USA. Italian, whose ‘hospitality’ has often been remarked (Pulcini 2002; Sabatini 2008; Pulcini 2019), has been fairly open to Anglo-American terms, ideas and practices. A trend which began with modest numbers of loanwords recorded between the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries, and initially curbed by the influence of French (Pulcini 2017), the borrowing of Anglicisms has continued to grow, peaking in the twentieth century, with a notable increase and a shift in geographical provenance due to American post-war initiatives to aid reconstruction first and then by the widespread desire to pursue American living standards as promoted through cinema, television, consumer goods and, more recently, the Internet. Among the fields of experience most affected by contact in recent years are science, technology and entertainment (Pulcini 2017), within which sport takes up a major quota.

As specific types of borrowings, Anglicisms are thus the linguistic signs marking the changes a society undergoes under the influence of English-speaking cultures, notably the USA and Britain. From a linguistic point of view, Görlach (2001: xviii) identifies as Anglicisms both those words whose form – in spelling, pronunciation, morphology – is distinctively English and words that, despite their origin, are used “in a non-English way”, as is the case – with reference to the findings of the present study – with the adjective ‘loose-aggressive’, which in the Italian language of Texas Hold’em is used both as an adjective (e.g. *strategia loose-aggressive*) and as a noun, as in *giocare contro un loose-aggressive* (i.e. play against a loose-aggressive [opponent]). Words containing Latin or Greek elements, even when their spread has been mediated via English (e.g. *telefono*), are instead labelled ‘internationalisms’ and therefore excluded.

Anglicisms can be adopted in their original form and grammatical category or adapted to the recipient language to various degrees – phonetically, orthographically and

morphologically. Pulcini, Furiassi and Rodriguez González (2012) distinguish between ‘direct’ borrowings – which, although clearly retaining their English origin, can take different forms as loanwords, false loans and hybrid loans – and ‘indirect’ borrowings, whose appearance does not immediately reveal their foreign source as they have undergone a translation process. This can be a literal transposition of form and meaning, producing a calque, or a somewhat freer process resulting in loan renditions and loan creations; in other instances, it can involve a semantic shift whereby the new meaning conveyed by a foreign term is ‘translated’ (in its etymological sense of ‘carrying across’) to a word that already exists in the recipient language. In the present corpus, examples of direct borrowings are the non-adapted loanwords ‘fish’ (the noun denoting a weak or naïve player) and ‘bankroll’ (the amount of money somebody is willing to spend on the game), the adapted yet recognizably English-derived noun *whinatore* (somebody who bemoans his/her losses at poker), and the hybrid ‘*tavoli cash*’ (tables which are ‘open’ in terms of time and number of players, as against tournaments, which are more structured). Examples of indirect borrowings are calques like *squali* (from ‘sharks’, i.e. strong, crafty players) and *carte comunitarie* (from ‘community cards’, i.e. the five cards turned on the table), the loan rendition of ‘small blind’ as *piccolo buio*, and the loan creations *carte private* and *carte personali* from ‘pocket cards’, i.e., the two face-down cards each player is dealt. There are also cases of semantic loan: for example, the adapted verb *settare*, a loanword recorded in the Italian dictionary *lo Zingarelli 2018* as dating back to 1988 and meaning *impostare, organizzare* (‘set up, organize’), in Texas Hold’em refers to the action of creating a three-of-a-kind combination by using one’s two pocket cards plus one picked up from the table; another example is *rollato*, the past participle form of *rollare*, which – used as an adjective to describe a player who has an adequate amount of money to play a certain tournament – is completely detached from its traditional meanings of hand-rolled tobacco or the oscillating movement of ships.

An initial study of Anglicisms in the language of Texas Hold’em (Brusasco 2018) reviewed the terms recorded in the main dictionaries of Italian and those used in the official regulations and glossary of the national authority, Federazione Italiana Gioco Poker (FIGP). Quantitative data from the dictionaries examined – *Grande dizionario italiano dell’uso* (2007), *lo Zingarelli 2018. Vocabolario della lingua italiana* (2017), *il Devoto-Oli. Vocabolario della lingua italiana* (2016), and *il Nuovo Sabatini Coletti. Dizionario della lingua italiana* (2013) – resulted in 46, 54, 40 and 34 poker terms respectively. Of these, 9 (in the GDU), 6 (in Zing), 2 (in DO) and 8 (in SC) are non-adapted Anglicisms, with only two – ‘bluff’ and ‘poker’ – appearing in all four dictionaries (Brusasco 2018), as Table 1 below shows.

However, despite the lexicographic scarcity of poker Anglicisms, 97 word types were used in the FIGP regulations (*ibid.*). A subsequent perfunctory check against online texts addressing players and commentators revealed a specialized language so heavily reliant on field knowledge and English to be hardly comprehensible to the monolingual layperson. Hence the hypothesis that the online community draws on and dynamically appropriates English to a much greater extent than the FIGP regulations and glossary would suggest.

This paper focuses on the use of adapted English verbs in online communications in Italian by and among Texas Hold’em players with the aim of testing the initial impression of a heavily Anglicized jargon against real data, i.e. a mixed corpus of specialized blogs and forums compiled and analysed using Sketch Engine. While the number of

	GDU	Zing	DO	SC		GDU	Zing	DO	SC
blind				✓	poker	✓	✓	✓	✓
blue chip				✓	showdown	✓	✓		✓
<b>bluff</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	strip poker	✓			
Caribbean poker	✓				titanic	✓			
crack	✓	✓		✓	A (Ace)		✓		
flush	✓			✓	J (Jack)		✓		
highball		✓			K (King)		✓		
jackpot		✓		✓	Q (Queen)		✓		
over	✓								

*Table 1.* Non-adapted poker Anglicisms recorded in the dictionaries examined

Anglicisms is striking, verbs have been selected because they suggest an ‘advanced’ stage of borrowing (nouns usually being the first loanwords), especially when they are integrated in the inflectional system of the recipient language. While digital spaces featuring Texas Hold’em are manifold, ranging from tweets to virtual worlds, Italian blogs and forums have been chosen as samples of language usage based on a shared code, yet dynamic and free of the formality and prescriptive nature of the Federation’s regulations. By showing the speakers/writers’ linguistic behaviour, these digital texts allow for an analysis of linguistic facts at the level of *parole* and, in line with Winter-Froemel’s (2017) focus on the pragmatic dimension of borrowing, they might provide some insight into the ways Anglicisms are used and what their perceived or desired effect may be.

The paper is divided into four parts. The first is a short introduction to the world of Texas Hold’em: how it became popular, the move to online gambling, and a description of the game. The subsequent section deals with the characteristics of blogs and forums, discussing their general textual conventions and providing a few examples. Then the methodology used to collect and analyse the texts is described, and finally the findings are presented and discussed.

## 2. Texas Hold’em: an overview of the game

In the world of gambling, poker is probably the prototypical game. While its origins are uncertain, poker has spread hugely since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, often appearing in the fictional worlds of films and novels as one of the symbols of both the Wild West and organized crime in North America. Poker started to attract growing numbers of players and audiences after the 1973 CBS Sports coverage of the World Series in Las Vegas. The televised version – later taken up by ESPN, which still covers it today – transformed a five-year-old event with seven players into a mass phenomenon now grown to a 40-day tournament involving tens of thousands of players from all over the world

and culminating in a Main Event which in 2018 spanned from July 2 to July 14 and involved 7,874 participants, with the winner cashing in well over nine million dollars<sup>1</sup>.

Besides the effect of television, such figures are largely the result of the evolution from land-based casinos to virtual ones made possible by Internet technology. The late 1990s saw the birth of Planet Poker, the first online poker room, soon followed by many other dedicated websites which generated substantial flows of money. Despite stricter regulations enforced by governments and the shutdown of the three largest online poker providers by the American Department of Justice in 2011, the sector is still thriving and websites have multiplied. Italian players, moreover, often resort to online poker rooms as – despite the existence of between 500 and 1,000 circles and clubs<sup>2</sup> – the law authorizes gambling only in the four casinos on the national territory. The crucial pull factors of online platforms, however, are playing at speed, ubiquity and convenience (Pescatori and De Toffoli 2009), i.e. the possibility of playing up to 100 games per hour, participating in various tables at the same time, and being able to play wherever an Internet connection is available. All this, plus the potential for quick gains and the internationalization of the game with online satellite tournaments qualifying to live events, has generated a large community that gambles and interacts largely on the web.

The digital medium has brought about changes in playing strategy too: while the chance component of the game is undeniable, statistical and especially mathematical approaches have been developed as online players can only rely on the mathematical information and betting patterns of their opponents, not on the visual, auditory and psychological insights one can gain at a live table. Playing on a computer, it is easier to collect and analyse data, a task for which poker odds calculators such as PokerStove and PokerTracker have been created (DiTullio 2010).

Texas Hold'em is played with one deck of cards. A hand begins with two players placing 'blind' bets before any cards are dealt, then the dealer gives each player two face-down cards. A round of betting follows in which each player can *call* (place the same bet as the last player in order to see the next card), *raise* the bet, *check* (defer betting to the next round), or *fold* (relinquish their cards and abandon the hand). The bets constitute the *pot*, i.e. the money eventually awarded to the winner. The dealer will then put three community cards face-up on the table (the *flop*), followed by a fourth (the *turn*) and a fifth and final one (the *river*), with betting rounds alternating between steps. The aim is to obtain the best possible five-card hand by any combination of the two personal cards and the community cards on the table. The combinations are strictly codified and range from the *royal flush* (ace to ten of the same suit) down to *one pair* (two cards of the same rank) in decreasing value.

### 3. Forums and blogs: some features

The various types of computer-mediated communication people engage in mostly take place through discourse and leave textual traces (Herring 2004). The types of texts

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.wsop.com/wsop/history.asp> [24/06/2018]; <http://www.wsop.com/2018/> [30/07/2018].

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.pokeritaliaweb.org/piw-editoriali/30564-poker-editoriale-legalizzare-il-poker-live-nei-circoli-italiani.html> [28/06/2018].

considered in this paper – forums and blogs – are now well-established formats dating to the mid-1970s and late 1990s respectively.

Forums are discussion webpages where people can post messages or launch new topics, or ‘threads’, which usually need to be approved by moderators before they can appear online. Dedicated to specific areas of interest, forums can be hierarchically divided into subforums, which in turn can contain various topics. Because they are content-specific, posts often show evidence of a shared specialized language or jargon, as is the case with Texas Hold’em.

Blogs – the clipped version of the compound ‘weblogs’ – are personal webpages meant for a wide readership where contents, displayed in reverse chronological order, are frequently added by authors, who may or may not invite comments and responses. Miller and Shepherd define them as “complex rhetorical hybrids” (2004, quoted in Bolander 2013: 10) related to various genres which “include the journal or diary; the log; filtering, collecting and recording services (for example clipping services and the commonplace book); pamphlets, broadsides, opinion columns and editorials; and devices used to filter information, and online directories” (*ibid.*).

For the purpose of the present research, forums and blogs have been sampled together since, when revolving around Texas Hold’em, they often show overlapping functions: besides reports of personal gambling experiences or opinions, blogs at times include strategy advice; conversely, longer posts in strategy forums may tell about the writer’s participation in gambling events or sessions. Given this similarity of content, a decisive factor in the choice to include blogs was that the texts thus gathered helped to overcome the obstacle posed by the limited number of forums (or threads within) accessible to unregistered users.

Both ‘outputs’ – to use a label suggested by Crystal (2011: 10) as a neutral umbrella term for digital texts whose linguistic homogeneity has not been established – share some traits typical of Internet language. Among these, Crystal (2006; 2011) points out the speed of change, the possibility of tracking the first recorded use of a term, and the frequent anonymity or self-created identity of contributors, which jeopardizes the interpretation of language usage since situational factors like age, gender and class may be unknown or faked. A crucial aspect is also the influence of the medium on language itself, as it is to be expected that technical constraints and possibilities affect language use in terms of, for example, text length, structure, and ways of addressing readers.

Another aspect to be considered is the fact that language on the Internet displays mixed characteristics belonging to both writing and speech, with one prevailing over the other depending on the nature of the output: while digitally mediated reference publishing and advertising are close to traditional writing, which is “space bound, static, and permanent” (Crystal 2011: 17), emails, chats, and instant messaging are more similar to speech, i.e. “time bound, dynamic and transient” (*ibid.*). Forums and blogs place themselves between these two extremes and while the time factor is strong, the pressure is reduced because questions do not usually address anyone in particular, and answers or comments can be delayed, i.e. asynchronous.

Forums, meant as discussions, involve exchanges much like face-to-face conversation, and tend to show informality, looser structure and boosters, i.e. lexical items or graphic conventions that have come to represent prosody, such as emoticons, capitalizing for emphasis and anger, or typographical reproduction of prosodic features such

as the repetition of a letter or punctuation mark to symbolize exaggeration or exasperation, as in *Bastaa bastaaa* [...]! and *Complimenti ancora per la notte degli assi!!!!*<sup>3</sup>. Blogs are more authorial and self-contained as answers are optional; therefore, they show fewer traits of orality, but their structure and content vary greatly and so does their compliance with the rules of standard written language (*ibid.*: 21).

Overall, “Internet language is better seen as writing which has pulled some way in the direction of speech rather than as speech which has been written down” (*ibid.*). In the corpus created for this study, the sentences in which most Anglicisms appear suggest a stronger slant towards spoken communication. Participants’ identities are mainly constructed as experts dispensing knowledge, players swapping suggestions and opinions, and novices asking for advice, which denotes a shared acknowledgement of power relations, but this type of analysis is beyond the scope of the present paper.

#### 4. Corpus and methodology

In order to gather a significant amount of data and analyze them objectively, Sketch Engine was used to create an *ad hoc* corpus, TexasH\_Corp, made up of relevant pages from websites catering for Texas Hold’em players not just in terms of gambling opportunities, but also with a strong textual component featuring news, strategies, commentaries, forums and blogs. The initial decision to handpick posts in blogs and forums using what were meant to be representative yet unbiased criteria (recent publication – between 2017 and 2018; at least five answers or comments; discussion of strategy and advice without long sequences of card symbols representing hands) was abandoned due to the limited size of the resulting corpus (59,000 words and 72,606 tokens) and out of concern that, by selecting the texts for the corpus, a kind of experimenter-expectancy effect would ensue, whereby the findings could not but confirm the initial hypothesis of a pervasive use of Anglicisms by Texas Hold’em players. Therefore, a second corpus was created by selecting the ‘Web search’ option combined with six seeds so as to target relevant texts – ‘Texas Hold’em’, ‘scuola’, ‘forum’, ‘blog’, ‘discussioni’, ‘strategie’. The maximum number of URLs per search was set at 20 and a list containing the most prominent Texas Hold’em websites was added so as to exclude those sites which are only gambling platforms<sup>4</sup>. According to the ‘About us’ section of each of the selected sites – [www.assopoker.com](http://www.assopoker.com), [www.italiapokerclub.com](http://www.italiapokerclub.com), [www.italiapokerforum.com](http://www.italiapokerforum.com), [www.pokeritaliaweb.org](http://www.pokeritaliaweb.org), [www.italiapoker.it](http://www.italiapoker.it), [www.pokerlistings.it](http://www.pokerlistings.it), <https://it.pokerstrategy.com>, [www.pokerstars.it](http://www.pokerstars.it) – the first five are Italian, while the remaining three are localized versions of international websites. The inclusion of Italian websites was important to ensure the presence of original texts, given the expected larger number of borrowings and calques in pages translated either by poker experts who use English in international tournaments or by software drawing on relevant sentences and segments

<sup>3</sup> “Enoughh enoughhhh [...]!” (<http://www.italiapokerforum.com/discussioni-general/55576-hold-em-manager-e-davvero-utile.html> – my translation) [19/12/2018]. “Congratulations again on the night of aces!!!!” (<http://www.italiapokerforum.com/filippo-driveon-candido/8654-mi-presento.html> – my translation) [19/12/2018].

<sup>4</sup> The websites indicated appeared among the top results of a search for ‘Texas Hold’em’ via Google, Bing and StartPage.

circulating on the web or stored in translation memories, which again are likely to show a higher than normal frequency of English terminology.

TexasH\_Corp consists of 163,827 words (202,040 tokens) with a lexical diversity or type-token ratio of 81%, not too dissimilar from the 85% characterizing itTenTen16, an almost 5-billion-word corpus of Italian texts collected from the Internet. TexasH\_Corp was analysed digitally and manually. Various functions of *Sketch Engine* were used to generate wordlists, identify keywords, isolate verb forms and check their use in context. A substantial degree of manual analysis was carried out to identify English borrowings within the wordlists, disambiguate heteronyms such as ‘sale’, ‘dire’ and ‘prime’<sup>5</sup>, and look for inflected forms of adapted loan verbs. To do so, after scanning the wordlist, an initial search was carried out by generating a list of words ending in ‘-are’ – the infinitive suffix characterizing the largest group of regular verbs in Italian and the one usually added to foreign verb stems when they are integrated into the language – with minimum frequency set at three occurrences. Then, as the Italian verb system relies on a large number of endings characterizing person, tense, mode and sometimes gender, more specific searches followed, carried out using the character ‘\*’ wildcard added to the borrowed English stems in order to find inflected forms. Considering that some borrowed verbs might have escaped the initial ‘-are’ search if they appear only in inflected forms in the corpus, the procedure was extended to the key actions in Texas Hold’em – bet, fold, call, raise, check – and to a few other adapted verbs which had been noticed during previous KWIC checks. Finally, the presence of Italian equivalents was ascertained through single searches using the ‘Concordance’ function.

## 5. Findings

As expected, computer-mediated communications among and for Texas Hold’em players show a much higher degree of terminological borrowing than revealed by the previously mentioned analysis of dictionaries and FIGP regulations. The *Sketch Engine*’s function ‘Wordlist’ applied to TexasH\_Corp (minimum five occurrences, functional words excluded) yielded 3,444 word types, which, manually analysed, revealed around 350 English words pertaining to the game (excluding disclaimers, legal warnings, and very general terms like ‘email’ or ‘web’), i.e. a remarkable 10%.

The search based on the criteria ‘ending in ‘-are’ and ‘minimum frequency 3’ yielded a list of 180 infinitives, manually cleared of words meeting the criteria yet belonging to other grammatical classes, like the adjective *particolare* (‘particular’) or the noun *mare* (‘sea’). Apart from the well-established *bluffare*, which is recorded in the main dictionaries of Italian as first used in 1918, a manual review identified the 11 adapted verbs listed in order of frequency in Table 2, with the Italian rendering of ‘to bet’ and its more specific varieties expressed through compounding – ‘cbet’, ‘c-bet’, ‘3bet’, ‘3-bet’, ‘4bet’, ‘4-bet’, ‘donkbet’ and ‘valuebet’ – grouped in one slot.

<sup>5</sup> Because of identical spellings in both English and Italian, a few heteronyms in the corpus might have been included among the borrowings. Context revealed that they were actually Italian words. As for the examples quoted above, *sale*, /sale/ in Italian, is 1) a noun meaning ‘salt’, and 2) the third person singular of the verb *salire* (to go up, to climb); *dire*, /dire/ in Italian, is a verb meaning ‘to say, to tell’; *prime*, /prime/ in Italian, is a feminine plural adjective meaning ‘first in chronological order’.

<i>foldare</i>	41
<i>*bettare</i>	26 ( <i>c-bettare/cbettare</i> 9; <i>3bettare / 3-bettare</i> 6; <i>donkbettare</i> 4; <i>valuebettare</i> 2)
<i>grindare</i>	13
<i>callare</i>	6
<i>flattare</i>	6
<i>limpare</i>	6
<i>shippare</i>	5
<i>tiltare</i>	5
<i>checkare</i>	4
<i>floppare</i>	3
<i>multitablare</i>	3

**Table 2.** Adapted English verbs found in the infinitive form

The top positions are occupied by the verbs which denote the two crucial moves in the game: *foldare*, i.e. abandon a hand, and *bettare*, i.e. bet and continue. The verbs representing the options for a player who intends to stay in a hand – *callare*, *raisare* and *checkare* – appear far less frequently or even less than three times. All the stems in the list above are used by native speakers of English as verbs, both in the language of Texas Hold'em to designate specific actions in specific contexts or stages of the game and in general English with very different meanings. The only exception is 'multitable', a compound combining the neo-classical *multi* and 'table', whose adjectival use in the phrase 'multi-table tournament', or MTT<sup>6</sup>, has given rise to 'multitabling'. Neither term appears in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (hereafter OED), in *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language* or in online dictionaries, but on Texas Hold'em websites ([www.poker-king.com](http://www.poker-king.com), [www.upswingpoker.com](http://www.upswingpoker.com), [www.cardschat.com](http://www.cardschat.com), among others) the former refers to live tournaments played at many tables, which are reduced as players are eliminated from the game until only one table – and eventually the winner – remains; the nominalized 'multitabling', instead, mainly refers to online play and seems to be rarely used as a finite verb, although this would require a specific wider search. Italian players might have adapted it without even considering grammatical class, but rather by analogy with other English verbs denoting both the activity and the action by a human subject, as is the case with 'grind' in the following examples: "For most players, though, *grinding* is the best approach to achieve steady earnings [...]"<sup>7</sup>, and "The expectation that you'll just sit down behind your desk and *grind* for eight hours, seven days a week is at best somewhat unrealistic"<sup>8</sup> (italics added). Italian users might have assumed that 'multitabling' has its infinitive in 'to multitable', thus adapting it with the regular ending *-are* and inflecting it like all the other verbs.

<sup>6</sup> <https://acronyms.thefreedictionary.com/Multi-table+tournament> [03/08/2018].

<sup>7</sup> <http://pokerinbox.com/grinding-strategies/> [06/08/2018].

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.pokervip.com/strategy-articles/texas-hold-em-no-limit-advanced/effective-grinding> [06/08/2018].

The next step was to use the concordancer and the character “\*” wildcard to search for inflected forms of the infinitives listed above, plus a number of other verbs deemed important in the game or noticed during previous browsing of TexasH\_Corp. Table 3 synthesizes the conjugated verb forms found, indicating tense, mode, and number of occurrences.

Stem	Occ.	Inflected forms (Occ.)
fold*	100	Infinitive: <i>foldare</i> (41) Present indicative: <i>foldo</i> (19); <i>foldi</i> (2); <i>folda</i> (19); <i>foldate</i> (1); <i>foldano</i> (3) Past participle: <i>foldate</i> (1); <i>foldato</i> (1) Future: <i>folderà</i> (5); <i>folderemo</i> (2) Present subjunctive: <i>foldi</i> (2) Imperative: <i>foldate</i> (3)  Infinitive: <i>overfoldare</i> (1)
*bett*	73	Infinitive: <i>*bettare</i> (24) Pres. ind.: <i>betto</i> (2); <i>betti</i> (1); <i>betta</i> (4) Pres. subj.: <i>bettiate</i> (2) Gerund: <i>bettando</i> (2)  Pres. ind.: <i>c-betto</i> (1); <i>c-betta</i> (2); <i>c-bettano</i> (2) Past part.: <i>c-bettati</i> (1)  Past part.: <i>cbettato</i> (2)  Pres. ind.: <i>3betto</i> (3); <i>3betta</i> (1); <i>3bettiamo</i> (4); <i>3bettate</i> (1) Past part.: <i>3bettato</i> (3) Fut.: <i>3betteremo</i> (1) Ger.: <i>3bettando</i> (1)  Infinitive + object pronoun: <i>3-bettarlo</i> (1) Past part.: <i>3-bettato</i> (1)  Pres. ind.: <i>tribetta</i> (3); <i>tribettano</i> (1) Past part.: <i>tribettato</i> (1)  Infinitive: <i>4bettare</i> (2) Infinitive + obj. pron.: <i>4-bettarvi</i> (1) Pres. ind.: <i>4betta</i> (2)  Pres. ind.: <i>donk-betta</i> (1)  Pres. ind.: <i>overbetta</i> (1)  Infinitive: <i>valuebettare</i> (2)
grind*	25	Infinitive: <i>grindare</i> (13) Infinitive + obj. pron.: <i>grindarli</i> (2) Pres. ind.: <i>grindo</i> (2) Past ind.: <i>grindava</i> (1) Fut.: <i>grinderò</i> (1) Ger.: <i>grindando</i> (6)

limp*	19	Infinitive: <i>limpare</i> (6) Pres. ind.: <i>limpo</i> (2); <i>limpa</i> (4) Past part.: <i>limpato</i> (1); <i>limpati</i> (2) Fut.: <i>limperemo</i> (2) Past ind.: <i>limpava</i> (1) Ger.: <i>limpando</i> (1)
chec*	14	Infinitive: <i>checkare</i> (4) Pres. ind.: <i>checko</i> (1); <i>checka</i> (3); <i>chekbiamo</i> (1); <i>checkano</i> (2); Past part.: <i>checcato</i> (2) Ger.: <i>checkando</i> (1)
flatt*	11	Infinitive: <i>flattare</i> (6) Pres. ind.: <i>flatto</i> (1); <i>flatta</i> (3) Past part.: <i>flattato</i> (1)
multitabl*	11	Infinitive: <i>multitablare</i> (3) Pres. ind.: <i>multitablo</i> (1); <i>multitabla</i> (3) Past ind.: <i>multitablavo</i> (1) Ger.: <i>multitablando</i> (3)
run*	11	Infinitive: <i>runnare</i> (1) Pres. ind.: <i>runno</i> (1); <i>runna</i> (1) Pres. subj.: <i>runni</i> (2) Past subj.: <i>runnasse</i> (1) Past part.: <i>runnato</i> (4) Ger.: <i>runnando</i> (1)
ship*	11	Infinitive: <i>shippare</i> (4) Pres. ind.: <i>shippo</i> (3); <i>shippa</i> (2); <i>scippa</i> (1) Past part.: <i>shippato</i> (1)
hit*	10	Pres. ind.: <i>hitti</i> (1); <i>hitta</i> (1); <i>hittate</i> (1); <i>hittano</i> (1) Past part.: <i>hittato</i> (4); <i>hittata</i> (1) Fut.: <i>hitteremo</i> (1)
rais*	10	Infinitive: <i>raisare</i> (2) Pres. ind.: <i>raisi</i> (2); <i>raisa</i> (3) Past part.: <i>raisato</i> (2); <i>raisati</i> (1)  Infinitive: <i>checkraisare</i> (1); <i>check-raisare</i> (1)
flop*	9	Infinitive: <i>floppare</i> (3) Pres. ind.: <i>floppi</i> (1); <i>floppate</i> (1); <i>floppano</i> (3) Ger.: <i>floppando</i> (1)
call*	8	Infinitive: <i>callare</i> (6) Pres. ind.: <i>calla</i> (2)
push*	8	Infinitive: <i>pushare</i> (2) Pres. ind.: <i>pusho</i> (2); <i>pusha</i> (4)
outplay*	7	Infinitive: <i>outplayare</i> (2) Past part.: <i>outplayato</i> (1); <i>outplayati</i> (2) Ger.: <i>ouplayando</i> (1); + obj. pron.: <i>ouplayandomi</i> (1)
barrel*	5	Infinitive: <i>barrellare</i> (2) Pres. ind.: <i>barrella</i> (2) Past part.: <i>barrellati</i> (1)

exploit*	5	Infinitive: <i>exploitare</i> (2); + obj. pron. <i>exploitarli</i> (1) Pres. ind.: <i>exploita</i> (1), <i>exploitiamo</i> (1)
roll*	5	Past part.: <i>rollato</i> (2); <i>rollati</i> (3)
tilt*	5	Infinitive: <i>tiltare</i> (5)
set*	4	Infinitive: <i>settare</i> (1); + obj. pron.: <i>settarla</i> (1) Pres. ind.: <i>setti</i> (1); <i>setta</i> (1)
shov*	4	Pres. ind.: <i>shova</i> (1) Fut.: <i>shoveremo</i> (3)
muck*	3	Infinitive: <i>muckare</i> (2) Pres. ind.: <i>mucka</i> (1)
shark*	3	Infinitive + obj. pron.: <i>sharkarmi</i> (1) Imper.: <i>sharkate</i> (1); + obj. pron.: <i>sharkami</i> (1)
skill*	3	Past part.: <i>skillato</i> (1); <i>skillati</i> (2)
snap*	2	Pres. ind.: <i>snappano</i> (1) Past part.: <i>snappato</i> (1)
squeez*	2	Infinitive: <i>squeezare</i> (1) Pres. ind.: <i>squeezano</i> (1)

**Table 3.** Conjugated forms of adapted loan verbs in TexasH\_Corp

Of the 25 verbs listed, only ‘bet’, ‘raise’ and ‘call’ appear in the OED with the label ‘games’ or ‘poker’, while the vast majority are defined as part of the general lexicon. Almost all of the verbs in Table 3 are verbs in English too, and in most cases borrowing has happened by replacing the adapted words and maintaining the same syntactic function as in English. There are, however, a few cases – *rollato*, *sharkare* and *flattare* – where the Italian adaptations are the results of verbalization and clipping.

*Rollato* and *skillato*, the two terms found only in the past participle, share but a superficial similarity. The latter is a calque of ‘skilled’, used in the same adjectival function in both languages. *Rollato*, instead, is related to ‘bankroll’, i.e. the amount of money a player has for a table or a tournament, and is used as an adjective with the positive connotation that the amount of money available is suitable or substantial. In the English of Texas Hold’em, ‘roll’ only appears in the compound ‘freeroll’, i.e. a tournament with no entry fee, and in ‘slow roll’, i.e. the strategy of having the opponent wait long before showing one’s winning hand, used also as a verb. The loanword ‘roll’, resulting from the elision of the first element of the compound, ‘bank’, is not used in English with the same meaning and is therefore a false Anglicism. *Rollato* shows a strong appropriative move: seeing or hearing ‘[slow] rolled’ in English might have supported its coinage by analogy with other past participles, but dropping the modifier of the compound ‘bankroll’ (probably because of the un-Italian consonant cluster ‘nkr’ and for brevity) and giving the term a new, localized, meaning suggests a growing degree of lexical integration. The following example from TexasH\_Corp illustrates both loans: “È quasi monotono affermare ‘giocate rollati’, ma i players che prestano attenzione a questo

*aspetto sono sempre troppo pochi. Avere piena padronanza del proprio roll evita molti grattacapi*”<sup>9</sup> (italics added).

In Texas Hold'em, a ‘shark’ is a very skilled, cunning player; in the Italian jargon, the same word co-exists with its literal translation *squalo*, a well-established metaphor also in general language referring to an aggressive, ruthless person, especially in financial matters. In English, ‘sharking’, used both in gaming and in live tournaments like billiards or poker, mostly denotes fraudulent behaviour which can manifest itself in various ways. Its Italian adaptation, *sharkare*, refers instead to the action of consulting an online provider of statistics and information about gamblers, Sharkscope, as in “[...] *il mio profit non è malaccio... però non vivo di rakeback ma di profit puro... chi vuole può sharkarmi*”<sup>10</sup>. The trade name has been clipped and verbalized, and the resulting adaptation has brought about a semantic narrowing that often characterizes loans.

*Flattare* derives from ‘flat call’ (a player’s decision to simply call on the flop or turn when a raise would be expected), a noun phrase which is mainly used as a verb, as in “When my opponent raised on the flop I just flat called” or “you may notice that the strong players at your table are flat calling raises from fish”<sup>11</sup>. It is also used in Italian as a verb, but only the adjective ‘flat’ is kept and verbalized, as in “*Giovanni Safina tribetta a 30.000 con. Rossi flatta*”<sup>12</sup>. The more general verb head is dropped since it already exists on its own (*callare*) and refers to the standard move, whereas the adjective that qualifies it becomes the distinctive lexical item to be adopted and adapted.

Overall, many of the verbs listed in Table 3 have been borrowed, because they allow players to express, through one word only, notions or actions that in Italian would need a much longer periphrasis. Table 4 shows a comparison between the borrowings, with occurrences including all their inflected forms, and the Italian equivalents found by consulting online glossaries<sup>13</sup>, followed by the number of occurrences in TexasH\_Corp.

Out of the five key moves, four have one-word equivalents shared with traditional poker – *puntare*, *chiamare/vedere*, *rilanciare*, *passare* – which prevail over the adapted loanwords as they are effective on all levels – brevity, meaning and usage. Conversely, the fifth option, *lasciare la partita/abbandonare la mano* is more frequently expressed

<sup>9</sup> “It’s almost banal to say ‘play with a suitably sized bankroll’, but the players who pay attention to this are always too few. Having full control of your bankroll avoids a lot of headaches” [my translation]. <http://www.pokeritaliaweb.org/strategie/poker-mindset/19075-errori-comuni-poker-live-online.html> [22/08/2018].

<sup>10</sup> “My profit is not too bad... and I don’t live on rakeback but on sheer profit... you can look me up on Sharkscope” [literally, ‘you can shark me’; my translation]. <http://www.italiapokerforum.com/discussioni-general/36006-chi-sono-secondo-voi-i-pi-forti-grinder-online-emergenti-2.html> [22/08/2018].

<sup>11</sup> <http://dictionary.pokerzone.com/Flat+Call> [17/08/2018]; <https://pokercopilot.com/poker-statistics/squeeze-bet> [17/08/2018].

<sup>12</sup> “Giovanni Safina 3-bets to 30,000. Rossi flat calls” [my translation]. <http://www.italiapokerforum.com/ipo-11-luglio-2013/56952-blog-diretta-ipo-campione-d-italia-day-2-a-7.html> [17/08/2018].

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.pokernews.it/poker-termini/>

<https://www.snai.it/poker/dizionario>

<http://www.pokertexano.name/dizionario-poker-texas-holdem.php>

<https://www.pokerstars.it/poker/terms/>

<http://www.italiapokerclub.com/notizie-poker-holdem/2103/glossario-dei-termini-del-poker-texas-holdem/>

Adapted verb	Italian translation	Occ.
<i>Bettare</i>	<i>Puntare</i>	132
<i>Raisare</i>	<i>Rilanciare</i>	73
<i>Callare</i>	<i>Chiamare; vedere</i>	65
<i>Skillato/i</i>	<i>Competente/i</i>	1
<i>Checkare</i>	<i>Passare;</i>	43
<i>Rollato/i</i>	<i>Avere a disposizione un bankroll; avere risorse sul proprio conto</i>	33
<i>Exploitare</i>	<i>Sfruttare</i>	28
<i>Tiltare</i>	<i>Andare in tilt; essere alterati dopo una sconfitta importante</i>	26
<i>Shippare</i>	<i>Vincere un torneo</i>	19
<i>Pushare</i>	<i>Andare/fare all-in</i>	18*
<i>Shovare</i>	<i>Andare/fare all-in</i>	18*
<i>Foldare</i>	<i>Lasciare la partita/il tavolo; buttare/gettare le carte</i>	15
<i>Limpare</i>	<i>Chiamare prima del flop; entrare nel piatto pre-flop con call anziché rilancio</i>	8**
<i>Grindare</i>	<i>Giocare a lungo, con minimo rischio e piccoli guadagni;</i>	/
<i>Floppare</i>	<i>Chiudere un punto al flop; andare all-in al flop</i>	6
<i>Barrellare</i>	<i>Fare una puntata post-flop</i>	4**
<i>Outplayare</i>	<i>Giocare una mano meglio dell'avversario e indurlo in errore; buttarlo fuori</i>	4
<i>Settare</i>	<i>Chiudere un set (tris composto dalle 2 carte personali più 1 al flop)</i>	4
<i>Multitablare</i>	<i>Giocare su più tavoli contemporaneamente</i>	3
<i>Runnare</i>	<i>(bene/male): Avere una serie di mani forti/deboli e vincite/sconfitte;</i>	/
<i>Hittare</i>	<i>Legare qualcosa al flop; centrare; ricevere un aiuto dal flop</i>	2
<i>Muckare</i>	<i>Buttare/gettare le carte nel mucchio senza mostrarle</i>	2
<i>Sharkare</i>	<i>Interrogare un database sulle prestazioni degli avversari al tavolo</i>	1
<i>Snappare</i>	<i>Chiamare istantaneamente; fare una call istantanea</i>	1
<i>Squeezare</i>	<i>Fare un forte rilancio in steal pre-flop</i>	1
<i>Flattare</i>	<i>Chiamare senza rilanciare dopo il flop</i>	/

\* As 'pushare' and 'shovare' are synonyms, the same equivalent has been given.

\*\* The wording was somewhat different and the meaning had to be inferred.

**Table 4.** Italian equivalents of the adapted verbs and their frequency in TexasH\_Corp

through the synthetic adapted Anglicism *foldare*. Generally speaking, the more detailed the meaning, the higher the recourse to English, as the lower part of the table shows.

So far, orthography seems to have hardly been affected by adaptation: graphemes and digraphs such as 'k', 'y', initial 'h', 'sh', central position 'ee', which are not Italian

and therefore make a word immediately recognizable as foreign, have been maintained. The only exceptions found in TexasH\_Corp are the inconsistent spelling of *checkare* and *shippare*, which apparently reflect widespread ‘mistakes’ bemoaned by professionals<sup>14</sup>. As to the former, the inflected forms *checcato* e *chekiamo* may suggest greater integration through both the Italian consonant doubling ‘cc’ to render the sound /k/, and the informal SMS-like use of ‘k’ to replace Italian ‘ch’, /k/. At present, both forms show only a partial move towards Italian orthography, as a transparent reading of the first syllable would sound /ke/. In time, if speakers cease to perceive the word as English, we might see its fully Italian grapheme-to-phoneme transcription as *ceccato*, i.e., /ʃɛkkato/. *Shippare* derives from the celebratory sentence ‘Ship it’ said by the winner of a tournament (or hand) to request that the money or chips be sent to him/her. In its adapted form, the object pronoun ‘it’ is dropped and replaced either by a noun or Ø object, thereby widening the meaning to ‘win’, as in “*In evidenza al 4° posto Luckyluk89 che nella stessa giornata shippa anche il Need For Speed €10,000 superando un field di 196 giocatori*”<sup>15</sup> and “*A fine mese a Venezia per la Tilt Poker CUP di Snai Poker e speriamo di shippare, poi vi offro la colazione il 2 maggio*”<sup>16</sup>. Its alternative, *scippare*, is the way the sound /ʃ/ is orthographically realized in Italian; funnily enough, the verb already exists and denotes the action of bag-snatching, but it is also used in sports when an expected victory is ‘stolen’ at the very last minute or by unfair arrangements: while the homophony may contribute to the full integration of the term, the English spelling may be retained to avoid casting doubt on the merit of a win.

Heath (1984) observed regularities in the productive processes through which borrowings are introduced into recipient languages; these so-called ‘routines’ frequently include “recurrent L1 frames involving native verbs like ‘to be’, ‘to do’, ‘to make’, ‘to go’ in auxiliary function” (*ibid.*: 374), and thematizing affixation “permitting further inflection for borrowed verbs” (*ibid.*: 373), like *-ieren* for German, *-er* for French, and *-are* for Italian. Similarly, Wichmann and Wohlgemuth (2008) identify four main strategies through which verbs are borrowed: the light verb strategy, indirect insertion, direct insertion and paradigm transfer. By comparing the FIGP official regulations and TexasH\_Corp, it is possible to see that verbal borrowing has happened mainly by means of the first two strategies, which still coexist and can be interpreted as marking different stages of integration. The light verb strategy “most often involves a verb meaning ‘to do’ for the integration of loan verbs” (*ibid.*: 93), and is used in the regulations in relation to the main moves: *fare call*, *fare check*, *fare raise*, *fare fold*, etc. In the corpus, these forms coexist with verbs which are the result of ‘indirect insertion’, whereby an affix is added that acts as a recognizable marker of class-of-speech membership and invites further inflection, as is the case with *callare*, *checkare*, *raisare*, *foldare* and the like. Direct insertion, “whereby the loan verb is plugged directly into the grammar of the target

<sup>14</sup> See for example the list of words discussed at <http://www.pokeritaliaweb.org/piw-editorial-i/22417-quali-sono-i-termini-pokeristici-piu-storpiati-dai-giocatori-italiani.html> [22/08/2018].

<sup>15</sup> “In 4<sup>th</sup> place is Luckyluk89, who on the same day also wins the €10,000 Need for Speed topping a field of 196 players” [my translation]. <http://www.pokeritaliaweb.org/poker-online/poker-mtt-report/11621-poker-online-italia-triplete-assocapitoli.html> [23/08/2018].

<sup>16</sup> “At the end of the month, Snai Tilt Poker Cup in Venice: let’s hope I’ll win, then on May 2 I’ll buy you breakfast” [my translation]. <http://www.pokeritaliaweb.org/strategie/135-scuola-poker/15292-sonia-pongaccia-virgilio-studio-post-flop-preparo-per-poker-live.html> [23/08/2018].

language with no morphological or syntactic accommodation” (*ibid.*: 99) might be the strategy used in the following three examples, the only such instances in the corpus: 1) *SB fold e kerosky [sic.] call però poi in effetti è il raiser che fa allin per primo... come è possibile??*<sup>17</sup>; 2) *Quando un avversario prima di noi rilancia possiamo reagire in 3 modi: fold, call, 3bet*<sup>18</sup>; 3) *Lui chiama, turn blank il tipo overbetta e su piatto da 120\$ fa 200\$, lui call*<sup>19</sup>. These sentences, however, are not unambiguous: while syntactically ‘fold’ and ‘call’ occupy verb position and function, the informality and chat-like speed of the digital medium, especially in 1) and 3), might justify the elision of *fare* (‘do’, ‘make’), in which case the borrowing strategy would still be based on a light verb.

The different strategies at work in the FIGP regulations as against online exchanges probably depend on both the greater caution with terminology of the former given their official status, and on the three to four years separating them from the texts in TexasH\_Corp, during which the game has continued to grow in popularity. The ‘indirect insertion’ and even ‘direct insertion’ found in blogs and forums can be read as both the result of players’ increasingly dynamic, functional and appropriative attitudes to language, and as a deeper integration of such verbs in Italian.

## 6. Conclusion

TexasH\_Corp is characterized by a much higher presence of Anglicisms than the official FIGP regulations. The analysis of the corpus has shown that players and commentators communicate mainly informally, including acronyms, terms, spelling and typographical strategies reproducing orality; they share a specialized jargon that draws abundantly on English terminology, dynamically adapting verbs at morphological, semantic and syntactic levels.

A number of factors may determine such a high degree of permeability to English: 1) Texas Hold’em originated in the USA, which implies that many terms were borrowed to denote innovations, i.e. the peculiarities of the game; 2) the first and still most famous tournament, the WSOP, takes place in Las Vegas; 3) the rules of the only internationally acknowledged ruling body, the TDA, are written in English; 4) English is the language used at international live events; 5) in many countries, including Italy, the law prescribes that online poker rooms where real money is gambled be reserved to nationals, but apparently players can physically register in an open-market country and subsequently play on international platforms, where again English is the *lingua franca* of the game<sup>20</sup>; 6) the Texas Hold’em community is extremely varied in terms of

<sup>17</sup> “SB *fold* and *kerosky call* but then in fact it is the raiser that *does allin* first... how is it possible??” [my translation; the literal rendering is meant to show the ungrammaticality and unidiomaticity of the Italian sentence]. <http://www.italiapokerforum.com/discussioni-general/19312-che-cosa-un-donk-4.html> [20/08/2018].

<sup>18</sup> “When an opponent before us raises we can react in 3 ways: *fold, call, 3bet*” [my translation; as above]. <https://www.pokerstarsschool.it/forum/blogs/prasty22/2134951-cash-game-la-3bet-preflop> [20/08/2018].

<sup>19</sup> “He calls, *turn blank* the guy overbets and brings a \$120 pot to \$200, he *call*” [my translation; as above]. [https://www.assopoker.com/live/blog660blog-zum-una-giornata-a-las-vegashtml\\_3055/](https://www.assopoker.com/live/blog660blog-zum-una-giornata-a-las-vegashtml_3055/) [20/08/2018].

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.pokerstarsschool.it/forum/benvenuti-nel-forum-intellipoker/supporto-problemi-tecnici/domande-su-pokerstars/2143198-pokerstars-net> [10/08/2018].

social class and education level, but many younger online players declare themselves university students or graduates, which suggests a greater familiarity with English.

On a general level, economy is certainly a key reason for borrowing, since many of the adapted verbs found do not have a one-word equivalent in Italian and would need to be translated with a periphrasis. Prestige and belonging also play a role: authority is the result of material and virtual factors, and is built outside the forum or blog – through televised events, online wins or dedicated rankings. Based on the acknowledgment of mastery at Texas Hold'em, the forum or blog is a space where power relations are so clear that agreement and disagreement, praise and criticism are rarely mitigated. Players who use specialized English terms or their adapted form, or even introduce new ones, prove to be 'in the know', which confers them some authority. Mastering *pokerese* – as practitioners call it – is both one of the skills required and a sign of belonging to the in-group, which seems to take pride in the obscurity of its Anglicisms and adaptations, as can be seen from the series of five articles in *Il giornale del poker* ([www.ilgiornaledelpoker.com](http://www.ilgiornaledelpoker.com)) dedicated to 'inglesismi' [sic.] in 2016, and in the various ItaliaPokerTube videos where casino players are asked to explain English specialized terms and receive a 'pass' or 'fail' mark.

The verbs identified here could be checked against the many dedicated videos covering live tournaments, providing tutorials to beginners or even testing players on their knowledge of specialized terminology<sup>21</sup>; a phonetic survey might show whether the current inevitable substratum influence of Italian is moving towards greater or full integration, or instead, as a kind of interlanguage in second language acquisition, will progressively lead to 'proper' – presumably American – pronunciation.

Also, surfing the net, dedicated Texas Hold'em websites show many more verbs which have been borrowed and are currently used in the Italian specialized jargon (for example, *bustare*, *whinare*, *braggare*), which suggests that a larger corpus gathering articles, blogs and forums is probably needed in order to be truly representative.

While future research could also involve another level of analysis of the corpus by applying the wider framework of CMDA (Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis) to deal with issues of register, coherence, identity, gender and social attitudes to the game, the observations made so far might suggest stretching the notion 'necessary loan' to cover a situation where borrowing happens not so much because of inner linguistic needs, i.e. gaps in the recipient language, but rather because of outer pragmatic necessities, English being the indispensable medium for both credibility within the community and actual participation in the game.

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<sup>21</sup> See, among others, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YA0i\\_6V8DZA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YA0i_6V8DZA)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ohVUV4GSR90>  
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