

Division of Labour: the functions of pragmatic borrowings from English in weak contact situations

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It is well established that in many languages in the world, English serves as a rich source of vocabulary, especially within domains such as technology, popular culture, advertising, tourism, and so on (see, for example, Crystal 2003, Hoffmann 2011, Leppänen & Nikula 2007). This type of borrowing, involving English (or other languages) a foreign language, has been called “weak language contact.” Less well explored in such settings are elements which are not domain specific and are used across social groups, especially in informal settings. For example, English-sourced discourse markers and pragmatic particles--a general classification which include such forms as expletives, politeness markers, fillers, and focus particles--generously pepper the spoken and written discourse of people of all ages in settings such as Finland, where there is a generally high level and penetration of English as a foreign language. Recent work has referred to this phenomenon as “pragmatic borrowing,” a term which Andersen (2014) defines as “the incorporation of pragmatic and discourse features of a source language (SL) into a recipient language (RL)” (Andersen 2014: 17).

In this paper, I first provide background information about pragmatic borrowing, drawing examples from several languages. I then focus specifically on pragmatic borrowings from English into Finnish, with linguistic examples that are not domain specific, including politeness markers, prepositions, and idioms. Through these examples, I illustrate the distinct social, pragmatic, and even grammatical properties of these pragmatic borrowings in Finnish, with a goal of explaining how these borrowings have become resources in Finnish that complement the existing (native) Finnish forms.

Andersen, G. (2014). Pragmatic borrowing. *Journal of Pragmatics* , 67, 17-33.

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Hoffmann, Z. (2011). *Ways of the World's Words: Language Contact in the Age of Globalization*. Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang.

Leppänen, S.;& Nikula, T. (2007). Diverse uses of English in Finnish society: discourse-pragmatic insights into media, educational and business contexts. *Multilingua* , 26 (4), 333-380.