

L'ANALISI LINGUISTICA E LETTERARIA

FACOLTÀ DI SCIENZE LINGUISTICHE E LETTERATURE STRANIERE
UNIVERSITÀ CATTOLICA DEL SACRO CUORE

2

ANNO XXVIII 2019

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“DRINK WINE, NOT LABELS”: A LEXICOLOGIST’S INSIGHT INTO ‘SUPER TUSCANS’¹

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UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI TORINO

Following an overview of Super Tuscan wines, this study aims at providing a definition of the pseudo-Anglicism ‘Super Tuscan’. In addition, by resorting to lexicographic and corpus data, the frequency of ‘Super Tuscan’ is measured, its spelling variants are traced and the date of first attestation in both Italian and English is determined. Finally, this article considers whether the term ‘Super Tuscan’ might have turned, via de-terminologization, into a word also known and used by non-connoisseurs.

Nel presente contributo si intende prendere in esame il fenomeno dei vini Super Tuscan da un punto di vista enciclopedico nonché lessicografico. Inoltre, dopo aver chiarito l’etimologia del falso anglicismo ‘Super Tuscan’, ne viene calcolata la frequenza e se ne stabilisce la prima attestazione con l’ausilio di corpora concernenti sia l’italiano sia l’inglese. Si tenta infine di appurare se il sintagma in questione sia da considerarsi un termine enologico vero e proprio o se abbia permeato l’uso comune attraverso un processo di determinologizzazione.

Keywords: corpora, dictionaries, false Anglicisms, ‘Super Tuscan’, wine terminology

¹The quotation “Drink wine, not labels”, inserted in the title, has been attributed to Maynard Andrew Amerine (1911-1998), professor of Viticulture and Enology at the University of California at Davis. Thanks are due to the anonymous reviewers of this article for their valuable comments on the initial draft and precious suggestions on key bibliographic material.

1. Introduction

As attested by Speranza and Vedovelli², Gilardoni³ and Coticelli Kurras⁴, the presence of English lexis in Italian wine terminology is not at all widespread. Indeed, the Italian language still seems to dominate this niche sector⁵. However, curiously enough, the false Anglicism ‘Super Tuscan’, which *de facto* never appears on wine labels⁶, denotes a style of Italian wine that became popular in Tuscany in the late 20th century. Consequently, this confirms that ‘Super Tuscan’ represents one of the rare instances in which English or, more precisely, English-looking words are found within the specialized language used to describe wine in Italy.

After providing a definition of ‘Super Tuscan’, both encyclopedic and lexicographic, and using dictionaries to corroborate its pseudo-English status, the primary aim of this study is to reconstruct the etymology of ‘Super Tuscan’, a term coined in the 1970s by certain Tuscan wine makers: these vintners decided to bypass the restrictive legislation governing the production of Chianti so as to distinguish their modern, tailor-made wines, usually obtained by blending international grape varieties, from the inexpensive, low-quality ones traditionally associated with the label ‘vino da tavola’, En. ‘table wine’, which they were forced to put on their bottles. In

² S. Speranza – M. Vedovelli, *Seduzione e informazione: il risvolto dell'etichetta. Note per una enogrammatologia*, in *Agricoltura e alimentazione tra diritto, comunicazione e mercato. Atti del Convegno “Gian Gastone Bolla”*, Firenze, 9-10 novembre 2001, E. Rook Basile – A. Germanò ed., Giuffrè, Milano 2003, pp. 49-104, p. 75. It must be noted that Speranza and Vedovelli specifically focus on the lexis of “enogramma”, En. ‘oenogram’ or ‘enogram’, coined by combining It. ‘eno-’ (En. ‘oeno-’ or ‘eno-’), meaning ‘wine’, and It. ‘-gramma’ (En. ‘-gram’), meaning ‘writing’, a proper textual genre constituted by the language appearing on both the front and the back labels of wine bottles (*Ibid.*, pp. 59-60, p. 63).

³ S. Gilardoni, *I nomi dei vini italiani. Tra denominazioni di origine, marchi aziendali e marchi di prodotto*, “Lingue e Linguaggi”, 22, 2017, pp. 113-136, <http://siba-ese.unisalento.it/index.php/lingueilinguaggi/article/view/18351/15748> (last accessed April 10, 2019). Actually, Gilardoni analyzes a subset of wine terminology, namely “commercial names in the Italian wine sector, that is the names used by wineries to identify their products and introduce them into the market” (*Ibid.*, p. 113).

⁴ P. Coticelli Kurras, *Dal Drivecaffè alla Snackerina... Neoformazioni dei marchionimi italiani: tendenze a cavallo del secolo*, in *Il linguaggio della pubblicità italiano e tedesco: teoria e prassi – Italienische und deutsche Werbesprache: Theorie und Praxis*, P. Coticelli Kurras – E. Ronneberger-Sibold ed., Edizioni dell’Orso, Alessandria 2012, pp. 85-103.

⁵ By analyzing a sample of 335 brand names of Italian wines, Gilardoni found that they are mostly created by means of Italian lexical elements – more than 70%, followed by Latin – 7%, and Italian dialects – about 6% (S. Gilardoni, *I nomi dei vini italiani. Tra denominazioni di origine, marchi aziendali e marchi di prodotto*, p. 120). English brand names rank within the remaining 17%, which, however, also includes other languages, such as German, Ancient Greek, Arabic, Spanish and French (*Ibid.*, pp. 122-124). In line with Furiassi (C. Furiassi, *Italianisms in Non-Native Varieties of English: A Corpus-Driven Approach*, in *Challenges for the 21st Century: Dilemmas, Ambiguities, Directions. Papers from the 24th ALA (Associazione Italiana di Anglistica) Conference*, G. Di Martino – L. Lombardo – S. Nuccorini ed., Edizioni Q, Roma 2011, vol. 2, pp. 447-456), who emphasizes that the food sector is one of the semantic fields, alongside music and art, in which the English language is mostly characterized by Italianisms, Gilardoni’s (S. Gilardoni, *I nomi dei vini italiani. Tra denominazioni di origine, marchi aziendali e marchi di prodotto*) findings prove that Italian still acts as a prestigious donor language – by lending a larger number of words to English instead of borrowing them – also in the wine sector.

⁶ To the author’s knowledge, the only exceptions are the labels of a wine sold by the US-based chain Cooper’s Hawk Winery & Restaurants (*Cooper’s Hawk Winery & Restaurants 2005-2019*, <https://chwinery.com>, last accessed April 10, 2019) and another one commercialized by Italian chef and restaurateur Fabio Trabocchi; more precisely, the former includes the writing ‘SUPER TUSCAN’ and the latter ‘Super Tuscan’.

addition, by examining data retrieved from corpora of the Italian and the English language, the frequency of ‘Super Tuscan’ is measured and its numerous spelling variants are traced. Finally, some observations on its date of first attestation in both Italian and English are included.

2. *A definition of ‘Super Tuscan’*

The following sections, 2.1 and 2.2, provide a definition of ‘Super Tuscan’ from both an encyclopedic viewpoint, namely specifying its characteristics by resorting to world knowledge, and from a lexicographic perspective, expressly detailing its linguistic properties⁷.

2.1 Super Tuscan: the wine

Encyclopedically, ‘Super Tuscan’ is an unofficial term – neither a denomination *sensu stricto* nor a commercial name – referring to a particular category of various Italian red wines made in Tuscany by “rebel winemakers”⁸ since the 1970s. Their innovative style, conflicting with the over-restrictive wine regulations of the Sangiovese-based Chianti, broke traditional Italian wine-making practices by focusing more on quality than on tradition. Super Tuscans are usually made of international grape varieties based on the Bordeaux blend (mostly Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot). However, at times the blend may also include Sangiovese grapes. In general, regardless of the grape varieties employed, such wines are often matured in small, new oak barrels.

Notwithstanding their classification as VdT (Vino da Tavola) until 1992, due to their contravention of the stringent, tradition-focused DOC (Denominazione di Origine Controllata) laws, and then as IGT (Indicazione Geografica Tipica)⁹, a category that embraces

⁷ P. Stock, *The Structure and Function of Definitions*, in *Proceedings of the 2nd EURALEX International Congress. Zürich, 9-14 September 1986*, M. Snell-Hornby ed., A. Francke Verlag, Bern 1988, pp. 81-89, [http://www.euralex.org/elx_proceedings/Euralex1986/015_Penelope%20Stock%20\(Birmingham\)%20-The%20structure%20and%20function%20of%20definitions.pdf](http://www.euralex.org/elx_proceedings/Euralex1986/015_Penelope%20Stock%20(Birmingham)%20-The%20structure%20and%20function%20of%20definitions.pdf) (last accessed April 10, 2019).

⁸ K. Beavers, *What the Heck is a Super Tuscan*, “VinePair”, February 22, 2015, <https://vinepair.com/wine-geekly/what-is-a-super-tuscan-definition> (last accessed April 10, 2019).

⁹ Prior to the EU council regulation (EC) No 479/2008 of 29 April 2008 and the EU commission regulation (EC) No 555/2008 of 27 June 2008, which entered into force on 1 August 2009, Italian wines used to be classified – in ascending order of quality – into VINO DA TAVOLA (VdT), En. ‘Table Wine (TW)’, Indicazione Geografica Tipica (IGT), En. ‘Typical Geographical Indication (TGI)’, Denominazione di Origine Controllata (DOC), En. ‘Controlled Designation of Origin (CDO)’, and Denominazione di Origine Controllata e Garantita (DOCG), En. ‘Controlled and Guaranteed Designation of Origin (CGDO)’. On 8 April 2010, Italian legislation (DL n. 61) eventually implemented EU regulations, thus modifying the former classification as follows: vino, En. ‘wine’, vino varietale, En. ‘varietal wine’, Indicazione Geografica Protetta (IGP), En. ‘Protected Geographical Indication (PGI)’, and Denominazione di Origine Protetta (DOP), En. ‘Protected Designation of Origin (PDO)’. As a consequence, the label IGP substituted IGT, and the label DOP now incorporates both DOC and DOCG, labels whose use, however, is still allowed together or as an alternative to DOP. Lastly, it is worth pointing out that the earliest attempts at classifying wines according to their geographical provenance were made in 1926 by Pierre Le Roy de Boiseaumarié in the Châteauneuf-du-Pape area, and in 1927 by Joseph Capus, who extended the Appellation d’Origine Contrôlée (AOC) to the whole of France (P. Lukacs, *Inventing Wine: A New History of One of the World’s Most Ancient Pleasures*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York/London 2012, pp. 210-212).

more relatively relaxed production rules¹⁰, Super Tuscans have become increasingly popular in the international, upmarket wine-tasting world, thus constituting a limited but highly profitable export for Tuscany (and Italy in general). Notable pioneers are Sassicaia (Tenuta San Guido), which started being commercialized in 1972 when “[...] a marketing agreement was signed [...] for the 1968 vintage”¹¹, and Tignanello (Antinori), released in 1978 but whose first vintage – then called ‘Vigneto Tignanello’ – dates back to 1970¹².

Super Tuscan wines are prized and pricey because of the global recognition earned by some bottles; as a consequence, they are usually sold for high prices, which, however, may vary greatly depending on the vintage. Super Tuscans, being recognizable on their own merits by consumers, are a clear example of “wine branding”¹³ as they were conceived from the start for an affluent international market¹⁴ and are even considered by some as a form of investment¹⁵. Thanks to a successful marketing strategy, their value is indeed determined by American wine critics publishing outstanding reviews in the leading specialized magazines, i.e. *The Wine Advocate*¹⁶, *Wine Enthusiast*¹⁷, *Wine Spectator*¹⁸, to such an extent that some Super Tuscans were at one point being tailor-made to please both the critics and the American palate – in Larner’s words, “it’s no coincidence the term is in English”¹⁹.

On a final note, as duly noted by McNerney²⁰ and Biagiotti²¹, the eventual partial demise of Super Tuscan wines should be accounted for: indeed, they have been going into and out of

¹⁰ According to Ewing-Mulligan and McCarthy (M. Ewing-Mulligan – E. McCarthy, *Italian Wines for Dummies*, Wiley Blackwell, Hoboken 2001, pp. 167-169), most producers have recently brought their Super Tuscans back under legal regulations: the IGT Toscana was established in 1992, the DOC Bolgheri in 1994 and the DOC Bolgheri Sassicaia in 2013.

¹¹ M. Fini, *Sassicaia: Storia dell'originale supertoscane – Sassicaia: The Original Super Tuscan*, teNeues, Kempen 2017, p. 51.

¹² “Paradoxically, Sassicaia was considered merely a table wine until 1994, when Italian law decided to protect it with a DOC label, Denomination of Controlled Origin Bolgheri Sassicaia. International recognition came a decade later with the intervention of the European Community and the Ministry of Agriculture, which, with the passing from DOC to DOP (Denomination of Protected Origin), created exclusive protection for the wine of Tenuta San Guido, the DOP Sassicaia” (*Ibid.*, p. 69).

¹³ A. Rea – S. D’Antone, *La sistemicità presupposto del valore della marca territoriale. Un’analisi sul mondo del vino Made in Italy*, “Sinergie – Italian Journal of Management”, 83, 2010, pp. 179-200, p. 184.

¹⁴ M. Larner, *The Soul of the Super Tuscan*, “Wine Enthusiast”, August 12, 2013, <http://www.winemag.com/gallery/the-soul-of-the-super-tuscan> (last accessed April 10, 2019).

¹⁵ F. Di Lenardo, *Wine investment: Not only for connoisseurs*, “Wall Street International”, January 6, 2017, <https://wsimag.com/food-and-wine/22673-wine-investment> (last accessed April 10, 2019).

¹⁶ *The Wine Advocate*, <https://www.robertparker.com/articles/the-wine-advocate> (last accessed April 10, 2019).

¹⁷ *Wine Enthusiast*, <http://www.winemag.com> (last accessed April 10, 2019).

¹⁸ *Wine Spectator*, <http://www.winespectator.com> (last accessed April 10, 2019).

¹⁹ M. Larner, *The Soul of the Super Tuscan*.

²⁰ J. McNerney, *Super Tuscan Seconds*, “The Wall Street Journal”, February 29, 2012, <https://blogs.wsj.com/wine/2012/02/29/super-tuscan-seconds> (last accessed April 10, 2019).

²¹ L. Biagiotti, *Il vino toscano in America: “Anche qui ai supertuscan serve fare squadra per vincere”*, “La Nazione”, September 2, 2015, <http://www.lanazione.it/prato/cronaca/intervista-lucio-caputo-1.1262012> (last accessed April 10, 2019).

fashion in recent times to the advantage of other well-established Tuscan appellations of ever-improving quality, e.g. Chianti Classico²². By and large, according to Teague²³ and Asimov²⁴, at present some Super Tuscan are just follow-the-trend wines with little intrinsic value beyond the price.

2.2 ‘Super Tuscan’: the lexeme

From a linguistic perspective, ‘Super Tuscan’ is one of many oenonyms, It. “*enonimi*”²⁵, that is ‘wine names’. It is also a “false Anglicism”²⁶, as it is recognizably English in form, it is part of the Italian vocabulary but does/did not exist in English (see section 5.1 and 5.2).

With regard to the word formation processes involved in its coinage, ‘Super Tuscan’ assumes a dual nature: it may be viewed either as an Italian-made compound obtained by joining two genuinely English words, namely the combining form ‘Super’ plausibly meaning both ‘very good’ and ‘very expensive’, and the toponymic adjective ‘Tuscan’, or as a derivative realized by adding the prefix ‘Super’ to ‘Tuscan’ – indeed, the graphic form ‘Supertuscan’ is the most common one in Italian²⁷. This duplex option is motivated by the intrinsically ambiguous status of ‘Super’, which can be considered both an affix, more specifically a prefix²⁸, and a combining form²⁹. This controversy remains and seems to be, at least in practice, language-specific, as proven by the fact that the most widespread graphic realization is ‘Super Tuscan/s’ in English but ‘Supertuscan/s’ in Italian, as attested in corpus data (see section 5.2).

²² K. O’Keefe, *Rebels without a cause? The demise of Super-Tuscans*, “The World of Fine Wine”, 23, 2009, pp. 94-99, p. 99, <https://wsrgroup.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/super-tuscans.pdf> (last accessed April 10, 2019).

²³ L. Teague, *Are Super-Tuscans Still Super?*, “Food and Wine”, December 1, 2006, <http://www.foodandwine.com/articles/are-super-tuscans-still-super> (last accessed April 10, 2019).

²⁴ E. Asimov, *Are Super-Tuscans Still Super?*, “The New York Times”, April 13, 2009, <https://dinersjournal.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/04/13/are-super-tuscans-still-super> (last accessed April 10, 2019).

²⁵ The label “*enonimo*”, En. ‘oenonym’ or ‘enonym’, was created by combining It. ‘*eno-*’ (En. ‘*oeno-*’ or ‘*eno-*’), meaning ‘wine’, and It. ‘*-onimo*’ (En. ‘*-onym*’), meaning ‘name’ (A. Gałkowski, *Dalla Fiat alla Lavazza con una sosta dolce alla Nutella... La conoscenza dei nomi commerciali come elemento della competenza linguistica e interculturale in italiano L2*, “*Italica Wratislaviensia*”, 2, 2011, pp. 79-93, p. 83).

²⁶ C. Furiassi, *False Anglicisms in Italian*, Polimetrica, Monza 2010, p. 34.

²⁷ Plausibly, ‘Super’, being an internationalism, may also be classified as an Anglicism *per se*.

²⁸ J. Simpson – E. Weiner ed., *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1989-2019, <http://www.oed.com> (last accessed April 10, 2019).

²⁹ Prčić includes ‘super-’ among the “prototypical synchronic prefixes” typical of the English language (T. Prčić, *Prefixes vs Initial Combining Forms in English: A Lexicographic Perspective*, “International Journal of Lexicography”, 18, 2005, 3, pp. 313-333, p. 328). Pulcini and Milani add that “[...] unlike affixes (prefixes and suffixes), CFs [combining forms] seem to possess ‘full’ lexical meaning because in the classical languages they were independent words [...]. [...] this distinction remains controversial, especially if we shift our attention from the etymological sphere to the much more variable area of language use and lexical competence. The case of *super-* is, in this respect, emblematic, in that it derives from Latin *super* ‘above’ (invariable part of speech, adverb or preposition), and today is included in the category of CFs [...], but generally labelled as a prefix by most Italian dictionaries [...]” (V. Pulcini – M. Milani, *Neo-classical Combining Forms in English Loanwords: Evidence from Italian*, “ESP Across Cultures”, 14, 2017, pp. 175-196, p. 179). Yet, the fact that the *OED* also records “super” as an adjective meaning “[v]ery good or pleasant, excellent, superb, first-class” may support the claim that ‘Super Tuscan’ is a compound rather than a derivative.

All in all, whether ‘Super Tuscan’ is viewed as an “autonomous compound”³⁰ – a non-English compound formed with two lexical elements only found separately in English but whose compound form is a genuine Italian product – or as an “autonomous derivative”³¹ does not affect its being a fully-fledged false Anglicism. It must be emphasized that the decision to use a pseudo-English compound to denote – and even positively connote – certain Italian wines signals the explicit intent of Tuscan vintners to target a globalized English-speaking market from the start.

3. *Research aims, methodology and sources*

Lexicographic sources were exploited in order to qualify ‘Super Tuscan’, namely to verify whether the lemma is attested in Italian and English dictionaries and to report on what is known about its diachronic development. The general-purpose dictionaries considered are the following: *Devoto-Oli*³², *Gabrielli*³³, *Grande dizionario italiano dell’uso (GDU)*³⁴, *Sabatini-Coletti*³⁵, *Treccani*³⁶ and *Zingarelli*³⁷ for the Italian language and *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (AHD)*³⁸, *Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (CALD)*³⁹, *COLLINS COBUILD Advanced Learner’s English Dictionary (COBUILD)*⁴⁰, *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (LDOCE)*⁴¹, *Macmillan Dictionary Online (MDO)*⁴², *Merriam-Webster*⁴³, *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (OALD)*⁴⁴ and *The Oxford English Dictionary*

³⁰ C. Furiassi, *False Anglicisms in Italian*, p. 39.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

³² G. Devoto – G.C. Oli ed., *Il Devoto-Oli 2014. Vocabolario della lingua italiana*, Le Monnier, Firenze 2014.

³³ A. Gabrielli ed., *Grande dizionario italiano*, Hoepli, Milano 2011, http://www.grandidizionari.it/Dizionario_Italiano.aspx?idD=1 (last accessed April 10, 2019).

³⁴ T. De Mauro ed., *Grande dizionario italiano dell’uso*, UTET, Torino 2007.

³⁵ F. Sabatini – V. Coletti ed., *Il Sabatini Coletti Dizionario della Lingua Italiana 2008*, Sansoni, Milano 2007.

³⁶ *Il Vocabolario Treccani*, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, Roma 2003, <http://www.treccani.it/vocabolario> (last accessed April 10, 2019).

³⁷ N. Zingarelli ed., *Lo Zingarelli 2019. Vocabolario della lingua italiana*, Zanichelli, Bologna 2018.

³⁸ *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Boston 2019, <http://www.ahdictionary.com> (last accessed April 10, 2019).

³⁹ *Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2019, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english> (last accessed April 10, 2019).

⁴⁰ J. Sinclair ed., *COLLINS COBUILD Advanced Learner’s English Dictionary*, Harper Collins, London 2006.

⁴¹ D. Summers ed., *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, Pearson Education, Harlow 2009, <http://www.ldoceonline.com> (last accessed April 10, 2019).

⁴² *Macmillan Dictionary Online*, Macmillan, Basingstoke 2009-2019, <http://www.macmillandictionary.com> (last accessed April 10, 2019).

⁴³ P.B. Gove ed., *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary Unabridged*, Merriam-Webster, Springfield 2002-2019, <http://unabridged.merriam-webster.com> (last accessed April 10, 2019).

⁴⁴ *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2019, <http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com> (last accessed April 10, 2019).

(*OED*)⁴⁵ for English. The specialized dictionaries consulted are *Dizionario del vino (DdV)*⁴⁶ and *Il glossario del vino (GdV)*⁴⁷ for Italian and *The Dictionary of Italian Food and Drink (DIFD)*⁴⁸, *The Oxford Companion to Wine (OCW)*⁴⁹, *Oddbins Dictionary of Wine (ODW)*⁵⁰, *The Wine Advocate Glossary Terms (WAGT)*⁵¹, *Wine Enthusiast Glossary of Wine Terms (WEGWT)*⁵², *The Wine Snob’s Dictionary (WSD)*⁵³ and *Wine Spectator Glossary (WSG)*⁵⁴ for English⁵⁵. The bilingual Italian-English specialized glossary investigated is *Watson’s Wine Glossary (WWG)*⁵⁶.

Corpora catered for the quantitative features of ‘Super Tuscan’, namely its frequency in Italian and English, but were also used to detect possible orthographic variants in both languages. The Italian web-based corpus analyzed is the *Italian Web 2016*⁵⁷, accessible through *Sketch Engine*⁵⁸; the English corpora investigated are the *British National Corpus (BNC)*⁵⁹, the *Corpus*

⁴⁵ J. Simpson – E. Weiner ed., *The Oxford English Dictionary*.

⁴⁶ *Dizionario del vino*, 2018, <http://cucina.corriere.it/dizionario/enoglossario/index.htm> (last accessed December 10, 2018).

⁴⁷ M. Moretti ed., *Il glossario del vino*, 2004, <http://www.massimomoretti.it/vini/dizionario.asp> (last accessed April 10, 2019).

⁴⁸ J. Mariani ed., *The Dictionary of Italian Food and Drink*, Broadway Books, New York 1998.

⁴⁹ J. Robinson – J. Harding ed., *The Oxford Companion to Wine*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2015.

⁵⁰ S. Collin ed., *Oddbins Dictionary of Wine*, Bloomsbury Publishing, London 2004.

⁵¹ R. Parker ed., *The Wine Advocate Glossary Terms*, 2001-2019, <https://www.robertparker.com/resources/glossary-terms> (last accessed April 10, 2019).

⁵² *Wine Enthusiast Glossary of Wine Terms*, 2019, <http://www.winemag.com/glossary> (last accessed April 10, 2019).

⁵³ D. Kamp – D. Lynch, *The Wine Snob’s Dictionary, Volume 1*, “Vanity Fair”, January 1, 2007, <https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2005/11/winesnob200511> (last accessed April 10, 2019).

⁵⁴ *Wine Spectator Glossary*, 2019, <http://www.winespectator.com/glossary> (last accessed April 10, 2019).

⁵⁵ Despite being an “online dictionary of wine tasting for the French wine industry of Burgundy” (P. Leroyer, *Turning the Corpus into a Functional Component of the Dictionary: The Case of the Oenolex Wine Dictionary*, “Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences”, 198, 2015, pp. 257-265, p. 260), therefore not likely to include ‘Super Tuscan’ among its entries, it would have been convenient to include Leroyer’s *Oenolex Wine Dictionary* (P. Leroyer, *The Oenolex Wine Dictionary*, in *The Routledge Handbook of Lexicography*, P.A. Fuertes-Olivera ed., Routledge, London/New York 2018, pp. 438-454) among the specialized dictionaries consulted: unfortunately, this reference tool is not yet available.

⁵⁶ G.G. Watson, *Watson’s Wine Glossary*, 2015, <http://www.watsons-wine-glossary.it> (last accessed April 10, 2019).

⁵⁷ *Italian Web 2016 – Italian Web Corpus*, Lexical Computing, Brno/Brighton 2017, <https://www.sketchengine.eu> (last accessed April 10, 2019). The *Italian Web 2016* is a tokenized and lemmatized corpus of web-crawled texts gathered in 2016: it comprises 4,989,729,171 words.

⁵⁸ *Sketch Engine*, Lexical Computing, Brno/Brighton 2019, <http://www.sketchengine.co.uk> (last accessed April 10, 2019).

⁵⁹ M. Davies ed., *British National Corpus (BNC)*, Brigham Young University, Provo 2008-2019, <http://corpus.byu.edu/bnc> (last accessed April 10, 2019). The *BNC* is the reference corpus of British English *par excellence*: it contains 96,263,399 words and was compiled between 1985 and 1993.

of *Contemporary American English (COCA)*⁶⁰ and the *English Web 2013*⁶¹, also consulted via Sketch Engine.

Finally, as shown in section 5.3, a combination of dictionary- and corpus-based approaches led to ascertain the earliest written attestations of ‘Super Tuscan’ in both Italian and English sources.

4. Lexicographic analysis

As far as Italian general-purpose dictionaries are concerned, despite its absence from *Gabrielli*, *GDU* and *Sabatini-Coletti*, ‘Super Tuscan’ was found in *Devoto-Oli*, *Treccani* and *Zingarelli* – the latter being the only one recognizing its pseudo-English status. The following examples (1 to 3) show the microstructural features provided in the above dictionaries, including the date of first attestation:

(1)

supertuscan

/s' u: p. ərt. tʌskən in it. s. upert' askan/ s. ingl. (pl. *supertuscans*), in it. *s.m.*, *invar.*

Vino toscano di alta qualità prodotto al di fuori dei disciplinari doc e docg, spesso utilizzando vitigni internazionali in aggiunta o in alternativa a quelli tipici del territorio.

ETIMO Comp. di *super* ‘super’ e *tuscan* ‘toscano’

DATA 2006 (*Devoto-Oli* [bold type in the original text])

(2)

supertuscan

neologismo

2004 (*Treccani* [bold type in the original text])

(3)

supertuscan

supertùscan /super' tuskan, ingl. su: pə' tʌskən/

[vc. pseudo-ingl., comp. di *super-* e dell'ingl. Tuscan ‘toscano’ 1996]

s. m. (pl. inv. o ingl. *supertuscans*)

(*enol.*) termine usato spec. dalla stampa specializzata per indicare vini rossi toscani innovativi e di pregio che intenzionalmente non rientrano nella categoria dei vini docg e doc, limitandosi a una semplice indicazione geografica, in quanto utilizzano anche vitigni non previsti dai relativi disciplinari (in particolare Cabernet e Merlot rispetto al Sangiovese), e si caratterizzano gener. per nomi di fantasia (per es. *Tignanello*, *Sassicaia*, ecc.) (*Zingarelli* [bold type in the original text])

⁶⁰ M. Davies ed., *Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)*, Brigham Young University, Provo 2004-2019, <http://corpus.byu.edu/coca> (last accessed April 10, 2019). The *COCA* is a general corpus of American English, which includes 570,353,748 words to date (2019) – almost six times bigger than the *BNC*: its compilation started in 1990 and, being an open corpus, it is constantly updated.

⁶¹ *English Web 2013 – English Web Corpus*, Lexical Computing, Brno/Brighton 2013, <https://www.sketchengine.eu> (last accessed April 10, 2019). The *English Web 2013* is a tagged web-based corpus, which includes 19,685,733,337 words.

As for the Italian specialized dictionaries consulted, ‘Super Tuscan’ was found in *DdV* but not in *GdV* – see example 4:

- (4)
Supertuscan Vini toscani moderni, da selezioni di uve Sangiovese e internazionali, caratterizzati da alta consistenza. I Supertuscan sono vini di grande prestigio e qualità. (*DdV* [bold type in the original text])

‘Super Tuscan’ was recorded in *WWG*, the Italian-English specialized glossary investigated, which considers it an Italian term and provides no translation into English – see example 5:

- (5)
 It. **Supertuscan** ↔ En. **Supertuscan**
 Italian term (*WWG* [bold type in the original text])

Taking into consideration English general-purpose dictionaries, ‘Super Tuscan’ was not encountered in any of the following dictionaries, i.e. *AHD*, *CALD*, *COBUILD*, *LDOCE*, *MDO*, *Merriam-Webster*, *OALD* and *OED*, confirming that the phrase is not genuinely English or, at least, that it has not yet entered authoritative lexicographic sources of the English language.

Conversely, most English specialized dictionaries of wine, i.e. *DIFD*, *OCW*, *ODW*, *WEGWT*, *WSD* and *WSG* – with the notable exception of *WAGT*, record the entry ‘Super Tuscan’. The following examples (6 to 11) include the microstructural features provided in the above specialized dictionaries:

- (6)
Toscana [...] Many of Italy’s most renowned red wines – *Chianti Classico*, *Brunello di Montalcino*, *Carmignano*, and *Vino Nobile di Montepulciano* – are Tuscan. They are made from the *sangiovese* grape and have a *DOCG* designation. Tuscany has 7 *DOC* zones, but there have also been recent attempts by some of the region’s most notable producers to make big-bodied red wines of high quality, often with components of *cabernet sauvignon*, that do not fall under the *DOC* regulations, which have taken on the unregulated name “Super Tuscans.” (*DIFD* [bold type in the original text])

- (7)
Supertuscan, term sometimes used by English speakers to describe the innovative wines labelled as VINO DA TAVOLA made in the central Italian region of Tuscany which emerged in the 1970s. Prototype Supertuscans were TIGNANELLO and SASSICAIA, both initially marketed by ANTINORI. The Vino da Tavola denomination was replaced by IGT in 1994, but the term Supertuscan remains. (*OCW* [bold type in the original text])

- (8)
Supertuscan a premium Tuscan wine with an intense fruit and heavy oak character. The term was coined when the Marchese Incisa della Roc[c]hetta of Tuscany worked with Baron Philippe de Rothschild to bring new varieties of Cabernet Sauvignon grapevines into Tuscany. They aimed to concentrate not on the traditional Chianti wines of the

region but instead on high-quality, low-yield premium wines that have almost nothing in common with the traditional Chianti DOC requirements. They are labelled *Vino da Tavola*. Their changes have revolutionised the wine-making of the region. (*ODW* [bold type in the original text])

(9)

Super Tuscan A red wine from Tuscany that is not made in accordance with established DOC rules; often a blended wine of superior quality containing Cabernet Sauvignon and/or Merlot. (*WEGWT* [bold type in the original text])

(10)

Super Tuscan. Snob moniker for a superior class of unclassified red wine from Tuscany. Legend has it that a British writer coined the phrase in the 60s after tasting Sassicaia, a wine which, like its Super Tuscan brethren, was bafflingly labeled a *vino da tavola* – a humble table wine – despite its obvious world-class quality. [...] That Super Tuscan have since [the 1990s] skyrocketed into the high three digits in price is testament [...] to the supreme power of branding, even if the brand has a tongue-twisting name like Ornellaia or Tignanello. (*WSD* [bold type in the original text])

(11)

Super Tuscan: Wines from Tuscany made using international varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah rather than relying primarily on local varieties such as Sangiovese. Although their quality can be outstanding, these wines must be labeled with the lower levels of Italy's classification system, *Vino da Tavola* or *Indicazione Geografica Tipica*, since they do not conform to Tuscany's traditional winemaking practices. (*WSG* [bold type in the original text])

5. Corpus-based analysis

Table 1 lists the raw and normalized⁶² frequency scores of 'Super Tuscan' in the Italian and English corpora analyzed, namely *Italian Web 2016* (column 2), *COCA* (column 3) and *English Web 2013* (column 4) – the label n.f. (not found), appears wherever no hits are displayed. In order to retrieve every instance of 'Super Tuscan' in the corpora considered, each query had to include all its thirty possible spelling variants, i.e. solid compound, spaced compound and hyphenated compound, covering both singular and plural forms (column 1); also the presence or absence of capital initial in each part of the compound, i.e. <S> vs <s> and <T> vs <t> was monitored; in addition, fully capitalized compounds were accounted for.

⁶² In order to present normalized frequency scores, calculated on the total amount of words included in each corpus (see footnotes 57, 60 and 61), the label pmw (per million words) was used.

Table 1 - Frequency of ‘Super Tuscan’ in Italian and English corpora

<i>Spelling variants</i>	<i>Italian Web 2016</i>	<i>COCA</i>	<i>English Web 2013</i>
Supertuscan	277	n.f.	44
Supertuscans	85	n.f.	19
supertuscan	138	n.f.	11
supertuscans	41	n.f.	5
SuperTuscan	15	n.f.	15
SuperTuscans	14	n.f.	8
superTuscan	3	n.f.	n.f.
superTuscans	2	n.f.	n.f.
SUPERTUSCAN	8	n.f.	1
SUPERTUSCANS	2	n.f.	n.f.
Super tuscan	7	n.f.	1
Super tuscans	1	n.f.	n.f.
super tuscan	10	n.f.	3
super tuscans	5	n.f.	5
Super Tuscan	134	6	567
Super Tuscans	24	2	284
super Tuscan	2	1	59
super Tuscans	n.f.	1	24
SUPER TUSCAN	n.f.	n.f.	n.f.
SUPER TUSCANS	n.f.	n.f.	n.f.
Super-tuscan	1	n.f.	n.f.
Super-tuscans	n.f.	n.f.	1
Super-Tuscan	25	2	59
Super-Tuscans	1	n.f.	44
super-Tuscan	3	3	29
super-Tuscans	1	1	12
super-tuscan	1	n.f.	7
super-tuscans	n.f.	n.f.	n.f.
SUPER-TUSCAN	n.f.	n.f.	n.f.
SUPER-TUSCANS	n.f.	n.f.	n.f.
total (raw)	800	16	1,198
total (pmw)	0.16	0.03	0.06

5.1 Frequency

Table 1 provides a comparative overview of the presence and variability of ‘Super Tuscan’ in the languages considered. First of all, it should be mentioned that ‘Super Tuscan’

never occurs in British English: this is the reason why no data referring to the *BNC* is included in Table 1 – the fact that no occurrences were found in the *BNC* may be due to its collection period, which ends in 1993. Conversely, the fact that it is found in the *COCA*, representative of American English, confirms that Super Tuscan wines are conceived for the American rather than the British market.

It must then be realized how reduced the quantitative impact of ‘Super Tuscan’ is in both Italian and English, namely its low overall frequency – never approaching 1 every million words. Still, as expected, Italian, the language in which the term was coined, shows the highest frequency of ‘Super Tuscan’. In greater details, the presence of almost three times as many occurrences in the *Italian Web 2016* (0.16 pmw) as in the *English Web 2013* (0.06 pmw) demonstrates that ‘Super Tuscan’ is much more widespread in Italian than in English; furthermore, there being twice as many occurrences in the *English Web 2013* (0.06 pmw) as in the *COCA* (0.03 pmw) shows that ‘Super Tuscan’ is more likely to be used in English-language websites instead of other, more traditional text types.

5.2 Spelling variants

As for Italian, the most common spelling in the singular is ‘Supertuscan’ (277 hits in the *Italian Web 2016*) – see example 12, followed by ‘supertuscan’ (138 hits in the *Italian Web 2016*) and ‘Super Tuscan’ (134 hits in the *Italian Web 2016*). As far as the plural is concerned, in Italian ‘Supertuscans’ is much more likely to occur (85 hits in the *Italian Web 2016*) – see example 13, followed by ‘supertuscans’ (41 hits in the *Italian Web 2016*) and ‘Super Tuscans’ (24 hits in the *Italian Web 2016*). On the one hand, the solid-compound spelling ‘Supertuscan’ with capital initial is in line with the entries included in specialized dictionaries, i.e. *DdV*, and bilingual glossaries, i.e. *WWG*; on the other hand, the solid-compound spelling ‘supertuscan’ with small initial mirrors the entries included in general-purpose dictionaries, i.e. *Devoto-Oli*, *Treccani* and *Zingarelli*.

(12)

Il Tignanello rappresenta uno spartiacque nel panorama dei vini toscani. Nasce come Chianti Classico nel 1970 per poi, attraverso varie fasi, diventare il Supertuscan apprezzato nel mondo che tutti noi oggi conosciamo. (*Italian Web 2016*)

(13)

I Supertuscans rompono tutte le regole del fare il vino in Toscana. Per esempio, essi usano vitigni non tradizionali e non italiani. A dispetto della loro bassa classificazione ufficiale, il mondo del vino ha accolto con entusiasmo questi vini. (*Italian Web 2016*)

With regard to English, in the singular ‘Super Tuscan’ is the preferred choice by far (6 hits in the *COCA* and 567 hits in the *English Web 2013*) – see examples 14 and 15, followed by the hyphenated spelling ‘Super-Tuscan’ (2 hits in the *COCA* and 59 hits in the *English Web 2013*) and ‘super Tuscan’ (1 hit in the *COCA* and 59 hits in the *English Web 2013*) on an almost equal footing; as for the plural, in English ‘Super Tuscans’ is much more frequent (2 hits in the *COCA* and 284 hits in the *English Web 2013*) – see examples 16 and 17,

followed by ‘Super-Tuscans’ (44 hits in the *English Web 2013*) and ‘super Tuscans’ (1 hit in the *COCA* and 24 hits in the *English Web 2013*). The spaced-compound form ‘Super Tuscan’ coincides with some specialized dictionary entries, i.e. *DIFD*, *WEGWT*, *WSD* and *WSG*, but contrasts with others, i.e. *OCW* and *ODW*, where the solid-compound form ‘Supertuscan’ with capital initial appears – the same spelling variant used in Italian specialized dictionaries and glossaries, i.e. *DdV* and *WWG*.

(14)

Super Tuscan is an expression that exists only in English. In fact, these new oaky, vanilla-ish wines were designed precisely for the international market and especially for the American palate. (*COCA*)

(15)

“Super Tuscan” is essentially meaningless, a term used these days to vaguely describe virtually any blended red wine from Tuscany that contains, usually but not always, some non-traditional Tuscan varieties like cabernet and merlot. (*English Web 2013*)

(16)

Their father Piero [Antinori] joined the business in 1962, at age 24, and became president when his father retired four years later. He has been an instrumental force in propelling Italian wines from cheap straw-wrapped bottles of Chianti to world-class status vintages, with such exceptional labels as his pioneering Tignanello, the first of the “Super Tuscans”, and Solaia, the Cabernet Sauvignon-based red that wine critic Robert Parker Jr. has lauded as “one of the titans of Italy”. (*COCA*)

(17)

Furthermore, whilst Bordeaux has seen a drop in both interest and prices of late, the demand for and performance of the Super Tuscans has never been better. (*English Web 2013*)

It is striking that, in the *English Web 2013*, possibly because computer-mediated communication is less prone to following grammar rules, at times ‘tuscan’ displays “lack of initial capitalization”⁶³, as shown in the following cases: ‘Super tuscan’ (1 hit); ‘super tuscan’ (3 hits), ‘super tuscans’ (5 hits), ‘Super-tuscans’ (1 hit) and ‘super-tuscan’ (7 hits).

5.3 Earliest attestations

By examining the evidence available in both dictionaries and corpora, it appears that the earliest attestation of ‘Super Tuscan’ in Italian is 1996, at least according to *Zingarelli*, which antedates by almost a decade the years provided by *Treccani*, i.e. 2004, and *Devoto-Oli*, i.e. 2006. However, unexpectedly, the first written attestation in American English –

⁶³S.C. Herring, *Grammar and Electronic Communication*, in *Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics*, C.A. Chapelle ed., Wiley Blackwell, Hoboken 2012, pp. 2338-2346, p. 2339.

at least basing this assumption on the data retrievable from the *COCA* – is 1994, two years earlier than the first appearance in Italian.

In this respect, it is worth mentioning Fini's⁶⁴ observation, which supports the hypothesis that 'Super Tuscan' might have been coined in 1994 and adds that it may be attributed to an American author:

1985 was an extraordinary vintage and Sassicaia enjoyed the first of a long string of successes. [...] that memorable summer of 1985 contributed a lot, and also the one hundred points Robert Parker of the American *Wine Advocate* gave that Sassicaia vintage when he came to the tasting in 1994. Those were the years when America joyously discovered the quality of Italian wines and coined the term Supertuscan.

A further interesting hint on the coinage of 'Super Tuscan' is provided by *WSD*, which, though unseemly, attributes it to a British writer in the 1960s – see example 10. Finally, it is noteworthy that in a concordance line extracted from the *COCA* and dated 2005 – see example 14 – 'Super Tuscan' is said to be "an expression that exists only in English", which in fact is not true.

6. Conclusion

Nowadays, as confirmed by Durkin⁶⁵ and Furiassi *et al.*⁶⁶, the English language occupies a privileged position as donor language and is therefore prone to inventive manipulations by speakers of other languages⁶⁷. This may lead to the coinage of false Anglicisms, such as 'Super Tuscan', which are manifestations of language creativity, catalyzed by the flexibility and adaptability of English lexical material which is freely nativized by Italian speakers⁶⁸.

However, some of these typically Italian creations may be considered cases of "reborrowing of false Anglicisms"⁶⁹, that is lexical innovations coined in Italian and – only if globally successful – later "reborrowed by real English from pseudo-English"⁷⁰. As with the well-known culinary internationalism 'slow food', 'Super Tuscan' also belongs to this category. In addition, both 'Super Tuscan' and 'slow food' show that the directionality of

⁶⁴ M. Fini, *Sassicaia: Storia dell'originale supertoscane – Sassicaia: The Original Super Tuscan*, pp. 65-66.

⁶⁵ P. Durkin, *Borrowed Words. A History of Loanwords in English*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2014.

⁶⁶ C. Furiassi – V. Pulcini – F. Rodríguez González ed., *The Anglicization of European Lexis*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam/Philadelphia 2012.

⁶⁷ C. Furiassi – H. Gottlieb ed., *Getting to grips with false loans and pseudo-Anglicisms*, in *Pseudo-English: Studies on False Anglicisms in Europe*, De Gruyter Mouton, Boston/Berlin 2015.

⁶⁸ The considerable amount of spelling variants of 'Super Tuscan' in both Italian and English (see Table 1) may also be due to how speakers/writers, be they laypeople or subject-field specialists, manipulate wine terminology itself. Lehrer maintains that "[t]he professional expert's use of language is more precise than the ordinary wine-drinker's because it is necessary for him to communicate precisely" (A. Lehrer, *Talking about Wine*, "Language", 51, 1975, 4, pp. 901-923, p. 918). However, he also highlights that "[i]t often the case that scientific terminology later filters down to non-scientists [...]" (*Ibid.*, p. 920).

⁶⁹ C. Furiassi, *False Anglicisms in Italian*, p. 70.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

(pseudo-)borrowing – usually from English into Italian – is reversed in the semantic field of wine and food⁷¹ (see footnote 5).

Despite its reduced quantitative impact, namely its low frequency in both Italian and English, and the fact that it could be considered a neologism (see example 2), as it has only recently been included in Italian and English lexicographic sources alike, ‘Super Tuscan’ is a further sign of the influence of Italian on American culture, at least in the specialized fields of wine-making and wine-tasting.

Regarding the degree of specialization of ‘Super Tuscan’, found, on the one hand, in Italian general-purpose dictionaries, specialized dictionaries, glossaries and corpora, and, on the other hand, only in English specialized dictionaries and corpora – but not in general-purpose dictionaries, it should be regarded as a general word in Italian but still as a specialized term in (American) English. Presumably, in this case, “de-terminologization”⁷², the process by which a technical term is incorporated into general language as a widely known word, might have taken place only in Italian⁷³.

Finally, as a desideratum, it would be worth delving deeper into the etymology and the dating of ‘Super Tuscan’ since lexicographic sources and corpora in both languages seem partly in conflict. Moreover, due to the worldwide success of the wine itself, it would be interesting to check whether ‘Super Tuscan’ is also used in languages other than English, e.g. French, Spanish and German, thus resulting in a pseudo-English internationalism, namely an original false Anglicism that managed to proliferate and “spread across international boundaries”⁷⁴.

⁷¹ C. Furiassi, *False Italianisms in English Dictionaries and Corpora*, in *Language Contact around the Globe*, A. Koll-Stobbe – S. Knospe ed., Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main 2014, pp. 47-72, pp. 68-69.

⁷² I. Meyer I. – K. Mackintosh, *When terms move into our everyday lives: An overview of de-terminologization*, “Terminology”, 6, 2000, 1, pp. 111-138, p. 111. More accurately, according to Meyer *et al.*, de-terminologized words are “words that originated in a specialized field of expertise [...], but that have migrated into the vocabulary of the general, educated public” (I. Meyer – K. Mackintosh – K. Varantola, *From Virtual Sex to Virtual Dictionaries: On the Analysis and Description of a De-terminologized Word*, in *EURALEX’98 Proceedings. Papers submitted to the Eighth EURALEX International Congress on Lexicography in Liège, Belgium*, T. Fontenelle – P. Hilgsmann – A. Michiels – A. Moulin – S. Theissen ed., University of Liège, Liège, 1998, vol. 2, pp. 645-654, p. 645).

⁷³ In fact, the only general-purpose Italian dictionary which specifies “enol.”, En. ‘enology’ or ‘oenology’, in the entry ‘supertuscan’ is *Zingarelli* (see example 3).

⁷⁴ H. Gottlieb – C. Furiassi, *Getting to grips with false loans and pseudo-Anglicisms*, in *Pseudo-English: Studies on False Anglicisms in Europe*, C. Furiassi – H. Gottlieb ed., De Gruyter Mouton, Boston/Berlin 2015, pp. 1-33, p. 4.

MANIPOLAZIONI DEL DISCORSO
E TRASMISSIONE DEI SAPERI
Contributi linguistici, letterari e glottodidattici

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