

# **Anglo-American Word Loan – a Challenge of Urban Linguistic Globalization**

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## **Abstract:**

*The present-day world has acknowledged that the linguistic phenomenon of vocabulary borrowings is explained by the recipient language in its need to describe new extra-linguistic facts properly. The new vocabulary items make a quick way to the host language to meet new needs to which they adapt more or less. But how strong is the need to borrow, and how often the Romanian recipient language gives up its own vocabulary items in favor of the foreign ones? This article makes reference to the impact that the Anglo-American word-loans have on present-day urban Romanian and on the cohabitation of parallel synonymous series. The authors raise questions about the scientific approach to classify the new incoming bulk vocabulary and their referentially synonymous semantics.*

## **Key words:**

***global linguistics, Anglicisms, urban language, linguistic innovation, language standardization***

The influence of English as an international phenomenon, reaching proportions that sometimes are defined as an invasion, is more and more often subject of debate. It is mostly those Anglicisms which raise problems of adaptation and assimilation to the Romanian language system, of direct or multiple etymologies and, not least, of semantically incorrect usage.

The rise of English as a "global language" has been reported as early as the '60s by Pierre Burney (Burney 105 and the following) in a work devoted to languages with international circulation, where the chapter on English was called "une même langue pour le monde entier". A picture of the extent of English influence on European languages stems from the annotated coordinated work of Manfred Görlach A. *Dictionary of European Anglicisms* dedicated to English language borrowings in 16 European languages including Romanian.

The reason for this abundance of borrowings and influence is also universal. The appearance of Anglicisms is determined by the need to refer to new extra-linguistic realities, in the context where human communication is characterized by a sheer explosion of ideas, new technical or scientific concepts which mirror a new way of thinking, action, and expression through original means. The phenomenon is felt not only

in specialized registers, but also in the common urban language which concerns us in particular.

In the context of globalization, which provides the conditions of the international spread of English as a "lingua franca", Romanian asserts its capacity to accept a large number of English loans and highlights its creativity through innovations arising from usage. Some of these loans have entered into a process of adaptation and assimilation in the Romanian language, but others have maintained their English form in both spelling and pronunciation. DOOM<sup>1</sup> has regulated the status of Anglicisms in this regard, distinguishing them from tailored loans. In Romanian linguistics, the phenomenon of English loans has been studied under various rubrics: etymology, phonetics, orthography, morphology, semantics, and stylistics.

Once entered into the Romanian language system, lexical innovations become stable structural and functional units, even if some Anglicisms remain phonetically and morphologically unadjusted to its structure, such as: *boy band, blog cover, college-shirt, challenge, fresh, roll on, review, modeling, office, hair-style, maxi-single, track, nickname, outfit, fulltime, party time, songwriter, laptop, target, t-shirt, shaping, stick, upgrade, writing, online, offline, etc.*

The linguists' opinions regarding the acceptance or rejection of Anglicisms are divided. Most of them<sup>2</sup> have recommended permissiveness in the regulatory aspect, but have opted for the imposition of strict patterns of morphological adaptation for these words. However, in linguistics, there have already been established two large classes of words of foreign source entered into the language: the *adapted* ones to the phonetic and morphologic systems, with derivational capacity which are no longer felt as foreign by speakers, such as *lider, miting, interes*) and the *not adapted* ones, that do not correspond morphologically to the recipient language, due to a *foreign phoneme* in their body. The latter are used only occasionally and the speaker, though not a specialist, can easily specify their origin (ex: *show, leasing, show biz*). Although Anglicisms are not adapted or incompletely adapted terms in the language system, specialized studies reveal that they can be regarded as having a phonetic spelling adaptable to the host morphologic rules, due mainly to their frequent urban use. Investigating the *adaptation* degree of English words in Romanian, it is obvious that the general trend of the current literary language is to keep the English loans as close as possible to the source language.

An important consequence of the massive invasion of English words into Romanian is manifested morphologically through their potential influence on the flexional nature of the Romanian language, which can loosen the specific grammatical structure identity of the recipient language. As to the meaning, they are generally matched to a Romanian synonym or similar phrase according to the lexical-semantic practice rules. The real or presumed etymology of the Anglicisms is an issue of language practice and expressive correctness. The status of an Anglicism is given by the distinction between the direct etymology – the English – and the indirect one – the French (ex: *bacon, menu, salad*,

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<sup>1</sup> *Dictionarul ortografic, ortoepic și morfologic al limbii române*, Bucuresti, Editura Univers Enciclopedic, 2005

<sup>2</sup> Romanian linguists and university teachers, members of the Romanian Academy

*restaurant, parliament, medal, soldier, finance, etc), the German (ex: *automat, boiler, cobalt, fest-ival, hamster, etc*), the Italian (ex: *geacă, broccoli, macaroni, pasta, opera, orchestra, concert, pistol, umbrella*, etc). In the absence of the formal or semantic clues, the distinction between clear Anglicisms and multiple etymologies is difficult. On the other hand, the distinction between genuine and pseudo-Anglicisms is also to be taken into account, as the following Romanian word samples traced back from French but treated as English: ex: *tenisman, golaveraj*. What worries us is not the inventory of Anglicisms acknowledged in Romanian, but their number in one text, their misuse, which endangers our understanding, as in the following Romglish samples:*

- România riscă procedurile de *infringement* pe media<sup>3</sup> .....
- ONG-urile vor primi *granturi*.....<sup>4</sup>
- “In retorică ne sunt arătate două moduri de creare a legilor scrise: pe de-o parte, cu ajutorul legiuitorilor, prudenței, înțelepți și *avertizați*, pe de altă parte, cu ajutorul imparțialității, dar nu a judecătorilor”<sup>5</sup>
- “*Focusul* nostru va fi pe costuri care ne vor afecta puterea în piață, ca de exemplu, costurile implicate de diverse reuniuni (transport, cazare, etc) ce pot fi *salvate* folosind teleconferințele sau conferințele WEB”<sup>6</sup>

We also note the divergent standardizing solutions, statutory or only proposed ones, considering the pronunciation and writing differences in English. Anglicisms provide the highest percentage of deviations from the Romanian phonetic and phonological system. The difficulties of adaptation to the Romanian flexional system are explained by the English and Romanian affiliation to different, distinct language families. The pressure of the Romanian language practice of analogy makes the morphological assimilation of Anglicisms challenge the Romanian spelling.

The adaptation and morphological classification of Anglicisms raise the issues of gender, enclitic articulation, number and case flexion in nouns. In the case of verbs borrowed from English, the –a ending Romanian conjugation is preferred:

<b>English</b>	<b>Romanian</b>
dribble	<i>dribla</i>
fault	<i>faulta</i>
shoot	<i>șuta</i>
print	<i>printa</i>
access	<i>accesa</i>

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<sup>3</sup> b1tv Stirile B1Tv 18.04.2013

<sup>4</sup> (b1tv Stirile B1Tv 18.04.2013)

<sup>5</sup> Simona Cristea: lect univ. Ph.D Sorbona; Facultatea de Drept, Universitatea București, DOCTRINE JURIDICE – ed. Universul Juridic ed a II-a, 2007-12-31,p 37)

<sup>6</sup>art. Afacerile Boehringer Ingelheim au trecut de 20 mil.€, Ziarul finançiar: Miercuri, 4 martie 2009, p. 9, Ioana David

mix  
clone

*mixa*  
*clona*

These terms are continually increasing due to computer language. The option for the fourth conjugation, usually with the suffix *-ui* is becoming popular: a *drincui* (*to drink*). As to the Anglicism semantics, the tracing back of the meaning origin is more difficult than that of the origin of words as lexical units. More than that, the multiple etymology is a reality that must be accepted, as is the case of the verb "to realize" *a-și da seama*, which is explained by both the direct English source and the French pathway. Both the semantic description of Anglicisms and the phonetic one are correct only if they comply with the language situation and indicate meanings existing in Romanian, the recipient language, as in *minicar* which means a small *train*.

Despite the attempt to stop the abusive entry of Anglicisms into Romanian, most linguists admit the benefits that the new lexical or phraseological units have when compared to the native ones, i.e. their mono-referential and mono-semantic nature, brevity, international identity. They prefer this category of terms in information exchange, technologies accessibility and acknowledge them as representing linguistic globalization through English.

The newly entered terminology in the Romanian business domain through the extension of multinational organizations, corporations, groups, etc., has also caused significant changes to the urban corporate language. The specific Anglo-American ethics of communication forms - the employment interview, business correspondence, etc. has entered the labor market. The sudden and intrusive invasion of corporate language has caused major changes not only in the types and communication strategies, but also in Romanian business culture climate. The language of management, project management or personnel recruitment represents a professional jargon based on specialized anglicized terminology which became necessary to express specific issues and relationships. It is not without importance the value code of this newly-born language, which becomes a recognition sign between those who belong to the same professional urban community. The presence of foreign managers has made English the official language of multinationals in Romania. Thus, the language "imported from the center" and jargon acronyms target the accommodation to the new corporate culture. The problem begins when the language becomes omnipresent and self-sufficient, and aims to solve all problems through new concepts through emblem-words. We recognize it by the numerous Anglicisms that are more or less adapted to the Romanian recipient language:

<b>English</b>
training
management
team-building
target
implementation
focus

<b>Romanian</b>
<i>training</i>
<i>management</i>
<i>team-building</i>
<i>target</i>
<i>implementare</i>
<i>focusare; centrare; concentrare</i>

as in the following:

"cum să-ți prioritizezi acțiunile"; "când ajungi într-o poziție relativ importantă, cert este că trebuie să prioritizezi") "how to prioritize your actions", "when you get a relatively strong position, the fact is that you must prioritize").<sup>7</sup>

A special interest of our research is represented by the so-called English language "false friends". They usually designate metaphorical terms existing in two different languages in an identical or very similar form, but having distinct meanings. Their new full settlement in the standard language is the result of the false similarity of their lexical families:

- *a agree/to agree, agreement/entertainment, dezagreement/disagreement* or
- *a aplica/to apply, aplicatie/application, applicant/applicant,*
- *a acomoda <Engl. to accommodate,*
- *audienta <engl. audience; influenta <Engl. influenza "flu"*

The acquisition of the new meaning is based on the linguistic copy phenomenon which is a typical linguistic transfer between cultures. These situations occur in TV film footage or in the press.

- "The Action Plan for aviary influenza"/ influenta aviara<sup>8</sup>

The semantic copy phenomenon of a word existing in language is also present in the case of the word support/support. Being easily recognized by speakers due to its formal similarity with the meaning "something that can be leaned on; a part or device used to keep a piece in a convenient position, to have a tolerant behaviour etc." (DEX 1996: 1043), the word *suport* is drawn to its figurative meaning of "help, support, prop", *a suporta <engl. to support "to finance"*

- "The investment would be supported by the sponsor of Poli Timișoara"

Such linguistic copies abound in many texts specific to workplace communication.

- "We invite you to make the most of this opportunity, if the company you run has commercial interests in this area."

## Conclusions

In most cases, the emergence of new meanings does not involve the signifier's change, which confirms the current language tendency to keep the English loans in a form as close as possible to the genuine English. The preservation of the English signifier and primary meaning is mainly explained by factors of a sociolinguistic nature.

The paradigmatic extension of meaning is close to a referential domain while maintaining the semantic core and neglecting peripheral signs present in the definition of the English dictionaries.

We conclude that RomEnglish does not threaten Romanian, given the language capacity to select word loans and standardize only the ones it deems to be referentially

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<sup>7</sup> Evenimentul zilei, 16.07.2007

<sup>8</sup> RTV, 24. 05. 06

necessary. The option for RomEnglish belongs to the individual or social-professional groups, to draw attention to a colorful message. But the snobbery of such uses should not be encouraged as it affects severely the message and hence makes communication ineffective.

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