

## ROMANIAN LANGUAGE AGAINST THE ANGLO – AMERICAN INFLUX LIMBA ROMÂNĂ ÎMPOTRIVA AFLUXULUI ANGLO- AMERICAN

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### Article History

Received : 02/06/2022

Accepted : 05/06/2022

Published : 07/06/2022

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### Abstract

This article is a succinct approach to the importance of the Romanian language and the diversity of changes it suffered throughout the process of Anglicization. We have also highlighted the fact that the influence of the English language has led and still leads to the vocabulary internationalization that enriches the common language, as well as the specialized language, and facilitates the communication between professionals of various fields of activity. This way, the number of neologisms in contemporary Romanian language has increased because all the words borrowed from English are neologisms. This massive borrowing of Anglo-American terms has manifested the most during the recent decades and has led to major changes in both the Romanian common lexicon and the specialized language.

**Keywords:** lexical influx, process, Anglicisms, language, internationalization, neologisms.

## Introduction

The current period is one of the great and diverse changes, in which human communication is characterized by a real explosion of ideas, and new notions in technology or science, which is reflected in a new way of thinking, acting, and rendering them by original means of expression.

The use of English goes hand in hand with contemporary globalization. English has become the primary language used for international communication in a world that is deeply wired. How did this happen? English started to become important and valuable and people speak it either because it is their mother tongue or because they have learned it due to the high demand imposed upon them by the globalized world.

A significant example would be one of the most common international areas, airports. It is easily noticeable that English is spoken as a *lingua franca* there and, because of its global spread and accessibility it is assumed that all passengers will understand it. The spread of English in the context of globalization gave rise to a new phenomenon called *Anglicization*, i.e. different cultures exerting their own influence on the English language, adapting it through a filter that consists of their own culture, accent, and even language.

Framed in the Romanian linguistic system, lexical innovations become true structural and functional units, but many Anglicisms remain phonetically and morphologically badly adapted to the structure of the Romanian language, some of them missing even in lexicographic works: boarder, boy band, blog cover, college-shirt, challenge, fresh, roll on, review, modeling, office, hair-style, maxi-single, track, nick-name, outfit, fulltime, party time, songwriter, laptop, target, T-shirt, shaping, stick, up-grade, writing, online, offline.

Linguists' views on accepting or rejecting Anglicisms are divided. Most of them (Mioara Avram, Ștefania Isaac, Georgeta Ciobanu, Adriana Stoichițoiu-Ichim, etc.) rather showed permissiveness in their normative recommendations but opted for the imposition of strict patterns of morphological adaptation of these words. A contrary opinion is that of the late senator and linguist George Pruteanu who wants all the new words to be written in Romanian. We cannot write in French, Hungarian, or English Romanian. As long as it exists, the Romanian language must be written in

Romanian. In all cases where it is possible without significant losses, any newly taken word must be integrated into the system, assimilated, according to the rules of writing and pronunciation of the Romanian language. In the age of globalization, which we are living in now, this must happen much more promptly, more

quickly, and a serious role is played, on the one hand, by the press, on the other, by normative works, and dictionaries. If they still propose, out of inertia or shyness, to write, in Romanian, the look or the site, they do a disservice to the Romanian language. A language is not enriched with Xenisms, with words that remain foreign. It is not possible for large areas of the Romanian language to be, graphically, "colonies". George – Mihail Pruteanu reproaches the new edition of the DOOM that it officially legitimizes the Romglish phenomenon, that he recommends the English writing of some words felt like Romanian. Thus, he considers the recent Anglicisms would easily adapt to the Romanian language.

English language has had and continues to have a great impact on many of the languages that are spoken today, one of them being the Romanian language. This influence can be the result of a great number of factors, such as colonial domination over a vast area, the military presence during World War II, intense economic and cultural relations, etc.

Romanian language has proved to have a big capacity of assimilating words borrowed from other languages, like English and French especially. Therefore, the number of Anglicisms is increasing and is entering more and more fields of activity.

However, we have to highlight the fact that the influence of the English language has also led and still leads to the vocabulary internationalization that enriches the common language, as well as the specialized language, and facilitates the communication between professionals of various fields of activity. This way, the number of neologisms in the contemporary Romanian language has increased because all the words borrowed from English are neologisms. Thus, we can say that these loans and influences are necessary and even positive at times. We just do not have to exaggerate and use them anytime and anywhere.

The massive borrowing of Anglo-American terms has manifested the most during the recent decades and has led to major changes in both the Romanian common lexicon and the specialized language.

Still, the influence of the English language hasn't manifested only in Romanian and French, but also in most European languages, thus representing an international or at least European phenomenon.

According to language registers, Anglo-American terms have different functions. Youngsters use a variety of Anglicisms to express their social attitudes, such as cool, clean, smart, and feeling, but also to name some objects they use or they are interested in (MP3 player, computer, walkman, etc).

Maurice Pergnier also stated that Anglicisms are not used for their intrinsic value but for the emblematic one.<sup>1</sup> The sociolinguistic use of Anglicisms symbolizes teenagers' need to distinguish their language from one of the adults or of other social groups. They tend to use Anglicisms as symbols of appurtenance to a social class delimited by age or a social category. Due to the birth of the

<sup>1</sup> Pergnier Maurice, *Les anglicismes*, Presses Universitaires de France, 1989, p.129.

Internet and its global spread, Romanian teenagers got access to American and British culture, which influenced the way they talk and also the way they behave. As Manuel Castells points out: *"Interactive computer networks are (...) shaping life and are being shaped by life at the same time"*<sup>2</sup>.

There is a clear tendency of Romanian contemporary language to absorb, integrate and adapt rather quickly to English loanwords. First, the borrowed words appear in their phonetic shape and the speakers preserve the original pronunciation, but later, the great majority of speakers, not knowing English, adapt the pronunciation of the Anglo-American terms to the Romanian phonetic system.

The adaptation process is tackled as a complex phenomenon – phonetic and orthographic changes are correlated to the morphologic changes as interdependent elements of a single whole. Such adaptations occur frequently due to the fact that translating an English word to Romanian would require more than one word in Romanian (sometimes it takes around three words in Romanian to translate one English word), which obviously takes more time and effort. Hence, Romanians prefer the English terms. A term like this is "weekend", which is translated to Romanian is "sfârșit de săptămână". Usually, people prefer "weekend" over the Romanian version.

Due to the developing complexity of the adaptation of the English words in Romanian, there is a growing tendency to approach this process as a whole system of changes taking place at various levels, reflecting the actual development of language phenomena.

The complex changes occurring in the contemporary Romanian linguistic system have raised some problems involved in the adaptation process that must be analyzed within a larger context against the general background of the language borrowing process.

The integration of Anglicisms is viewed against the general development of various borrowings in Romanian language. The linguistic analysis of the borrowing process refers to the phonetical and phonological level, the grammatical (mainly morphological) level, and the semantic one.

Lately, most of the papers concerned with Romanian words of English origin are articles dealing especially with the great number of recent borrowings, which are partially assimilated and often misused.

The borrowing process of Anglicisms is favored by the 'openness' of our language to receive foreign words. At the same time, it is influenced by the peculiarity of Romanian to keep its Latin (Romance) character unaltered even if the penetration of English elements into Romanian contemporary language is a dynamic process.

The Internet is a predominantly English-language space. As sociologist Claudia Ghisoiu stated on Radio Romania International: *"About 85% of the information found on the Internet*

<sup>2</sup> Castells, Manuel, *The rise of the network society: second edition, with a new preface*.2012, p. 2. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

is in English, and this is an effect of globalization. That is why around 1.5 billion people throughout the world speak English, at a certain level. In order to navigate the Internet one needs to understand English.<sup>3</sup>

The influence of the Internet and of globalization in Romania isn't only a matter of language, but also of culture. Romanian people who spend their time on the Internet will assimilate not only English language skills but also cultural aspects from the American and British cultures. For example, Romanian youths prefer Valentine's Day over the Romanian equivalent of "Dragobete" mostly because American Valentine's Day is more popular. It can be found online easily, and it is obvious that #ValentinesDay on Instagram is catchier than #Dragobete.

The borrowing and language adaptation of neologisms is also facilitated by the fact that in the Romanian language there were similar words in form and with the same meaning<sup>4</sup>.

Thus, in the field of computer science and computer games, examples include terms such as game (fun activity, especially for children), mouse (computer peripheral device that can move the cursor on a computer screen), chat (friendly discussion, a discussion which is done by changing electronic messages), player (the person who practices a certain type of game), joystick (the lever that controls the movement of images on an electronic screen or in mechanical games), setting (ambiance, space within which an image is contained), sequel (continued), online and offline (equipment, device or data processing mode connected or disconnected, respectively, directly to the computer).

Music has its specific terminology by inserting Anglicisms such as a star (prominent personality in music, cinema, etc.), singles (when talking about a music disc, with only one song on each side), hit (hit song, hit), clip (a sequence of video sequences, made to promote a song, a politician, a product). Food and beverages led to the introduction of Anglicisms, such as cheeseburger (cheese sandwich), chips (trade name for french fries), hamburger, cornflakes (popcorn), ketchup (spicy tomato juice sauce, vinegar, and spices), whiskey (brandy), brandy (cognac). Also, related to this field, we notice more and more frequently the preference for using Anglicisms to the detriment of the Romanian equivalents: shopping (cumpărături), shop (magazine), supermarket (magazin universal).

Fashion and cosmetics have not been reluctant to consider Anglicisms either. Examples are many: look (înfățișare, aspect), fashion (modă), gloss (luciu de buze), casual (îmbrăcăminte de zi), office (îmbrăcăminte pentru serviciu), trench (pardesiu), make-up (machiaj), trend (tendință, evoluție a unui fenomen), outfit (ținută),

styling (coafură), blush (fard de obraz), beauty-tips (sfaturi pentru înfrumusețare).

The main ways through which Anglicisms enter the contemporary Romanian language are media and the press, which do not always translate but borrow without changing anything. This way, the lexical influx of Anglo-American terms is broadcast to a very large audience.

But we cannot only blame the journalists and the TV presenters because they are only trying to get the public's attention and gain popularity. They can only maintain this popularity if there is a certain relation of complicity between the listener and the presenter/writer. However, this complicity has to admit the important role that media people have because they do not only introduce and spread Anglicisms, but they also validate them.

The newspapers, even the most serious ones, are responsible for affecting Romanian language by speculating the Anglo-American terms. Unfortunately, there are less and less newspapers which try to transmit the message correctly, without using these "abusive transcodes"<sup>5</sup>.

There can be posters or advertisements where the Anglo – American terms firstly appear. The advertising campaigns sometimes choose to use an English term instead of using its Romanian equivalent. This advertisers use Anglicisms because this way, the advertisement will make their products or what they promote look more appealing and it will attract the audience more and make it interested in (e.g.: "Outdoor în 3 pași", instead of saying,, În aer liber în 3 pași").

Another contemporary Romglish phenomenon is the half-Romanian and half-English poetry trend. *Flick Domnul Rimă*, a very famous radio and Internet celebrity, periodically posts poetry on his Facebook page. Flick is a Romanian artist whose talent is to compose rhymed poetry. The interesting aspect is that he can make rhymes between Romanian and English words, mixing the two languages very well. The following example of such rhymes is taken from his Facebook page: "Sorry, I was nesimțit/ Că I came nepregătit..." (which translates to: "Sorry for being an asshole/That I came unprepared."). His audience is quite big and consists not solely of youths, which means that actually, more and more people in Romania understand English at the moment, which is clearly an effect of the Internet and also of the globalization growing in Romania<sup>6</sup>.

Therefore, Romanian is not actually threatened by Englishization and the occurrence of Romglish might just end up being a passing phase. Even so, in present-day Romania we must admit that Romglish is real and that it makes the newer generations more prone to combining Romanian with English. On the other hand, it is not the only language that has changed in Romania, due to globalization we also see more and more American trends making it across the ocean, to Romania.

<sup>3</sup> Radio Romania International. (2017). Radio Romania International - Romglish and its Users. [online] Available at: [http://www.rri.ro/en\\_gb/romglish\\_and\\_its\\_users-10302](http://www.rri.ro/en_gb/romglish_and_its_users-10302) [Accessed on 18th February 2022].

<sup>4</sup> Cosniceanu Maria, *Încadrarea lingvistică în realitățile europene în viziunea academicianului Nicolae Corlăteanu*, Editura A.S.E.M., 2001, p. 123.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*, p.156.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.digitmagazine.com/articles/romglish-englishization> (Accessed on 3rd March 2022).

The majority of English loanwords present in Romanian most recent press pages, not yet recorded in the dictionaries, as well as the numerous English technical terms that have enriched the Romanian technical vocabulary represent a large figure. Also, mass media played a major role in using English words that manage to enter the Romanian language via oral sources.

Of course, the use of English words is explained, on the one hand, by the speaker's desire to impress, to show that he knows a foreign language, but also, on the other hand, to attract attention, to give color to the message. The snobbery of such uses should not be encouraged, as in such cases, the message and, consequently, the communication is often seriously affected and, ultimately, ineffective.

So, which are the advantages of Anglicisms? They did not cause an "alteration" of the Romanian language, but, on the contrary, they contributed to a permanent renewal and reconstruction, to its semantic and stylistic nuance, to the modernization of the lexicon, due to the fact that the language is a living being that evolves with each passing day, being seen, at the same time, as an aspect of linguistic creativity<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Fercu Ion, *Anglicismele, o modă în presa adolescentină*, Cotidianul Deșteptarea, 20 februarie 2014, Bacău.