# NEOLOGISMS IN ADOLESCENTS' LANGUAGE

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**Abstract**

Neologisms represent approximately one third of the Romanian contemporary vocabulary but they occupy a much larger place in adolescents' language. The English influence is observed as an over-linguistic stratum phenomenon. The Anglicization follows the social and cultural norms and also the linguistic norm that adjust the motivation and function of the borrowings.

Barbarisms are words that haven't been adjusted to the Romanian language system, yet. Their use is determined by the individual or group psychology and to a lesser degree by the linguistic norms.

**Key words**: *adolescent, Anglicism, connotation, denotation, informatics, barbarism*

**Résumé**

Les néologismes répresentent approximativement un tiers du vocabulaire de la langue roumaine contemporaine, mais détiennent un poids plus grand dans le langage des adolescents. L'influence de l'anglais fonctionne comme phénomène de superstrat. L'anglicisation est gouvernée par les standards sociaux, culturels, mais aussi linguistiques du groupe qui ajuste la motivation et les fonctions des emprunts linguistiques.

Les xénismes sont des mots qui ne se sont pas encore adaptés au système du roumain. Leur usage est déterminé par la psychologie individuelle ou de groupe et moins par les standards linguistiques.

**Mots-clef**: *adolescent, anglicisme, barbarisme, conotation, dénotation, néologisme, xénisme*

Neologisms represent approximately one third of the Romanian contemporary vocabulary and they belong to adolescents' common language; they use them freely, without any adaptation effort.

Neologisms are words or phrases, which have recently appeared in a certain language. They may be borrowed from other languages or they may

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be created by internal means. The old words which have received a new meaning or a new usage are considered to be neologisms as well.

All speakers' and especially adolescents' motivation to use neologisms derives from: a) their wish to be original and different from those who do not use neologisms; b) their wish to soften up the toughness of the genuine words. Ovid Densusianu used to give his students an example which can be given today, too: the replacement of the word *foolishness* with the word *nonsense*; c) the necessity of naming a new thing, a recently founded institution, in the context of social life: television set, computer, aircraft, etc.

Adolescents do not perceive the following words as neologisms: *to abandon*, *subscription*, *account*, *aquarium*, *agency*, *to approve*, *basketball*, *cable*, *gift*, *computer*, *square*, *grey*, *sink*, *preliminary examination*, *computer*, *composition*, *congruent*, *accountant*, *corner*, *Pragner sausage*, *decree*, *dribbling*, *equilateral*, *equation*, *to free*, *fault*, *football*, *goal*, *bay*, *laboratory assistant*, *liqueur*, *match*, *underground*, *offside*, *overcoat*, *plate*, *polo*, *pressing*, *thriving*, *radio*, *remaining for the second year in the same class*, *ring*, *rugby*, *score*, *set*, *start*, *pen*, *supporter*, *shock*, *driver*, *kick*, *socket*, *taxi*, *tennis*, *type*, *volleyball*, etc.

The explanation is a simple one: these words denote realities that belong to different fields from adolescents' everyday life: the sports domain, the school life domain, the domain of the objects that have become familiar to them. Obviously, from the linguistic point of view these words are neologisms, but nowadays adolescents have known these objects since they were born so they do not perceive them as new objects, but as ordinary ones.

This fact shows that society and language evolve together: language is adjusted to and reflects the tendencies of everyday experience, undergoing a leveling process in the general context of globalization.

After 1990 many English words have penetrated various domains of activity. The adolescents' jargon has received tens of words borrowed from the English language out of the need of individuals to be up-to-date and to be looked up to as persons who master a linguistic code which cannot be understood by everybody.

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The borrowing of Anglo-American terms took place even in the fifth decade of the twentieth century. Almost all the European languages received Anglo-American words so this is not a fact which can be considered specific to the evolution of the Romanian language.

The Anglicization can be defined as the present-day tendency of languages to be influenced, mainly concerning vocabulary, by the English language, which manifests itself as an over linguistic stratum phenomenon. This can be noticed in different languages which aren't genealogically kindred. So, we can talk about an internationalization of this phenomenon.

The Anglicization follows the social and cultural norms, which adjust the motivation and the function of the borrowings. The linguistic norm is also very important. In presentday Romanian language the over linguistic stratum is reduced when compared to the entire vocabulary.

Anglicisms can be described as maladjusted borrowings, of English origin. Other definitions discriminate between necessary Anglicisms and "luxury" Anglicisms, emphasizing the importance of using the former when there is no corresponding word in the mother tongue, at the same time, they disapprove of the usage of the latter, as they belong either to linguistic snobbery or to ephemeral fashion.

English words are not adapted to the phonetic characteristics of the Romanian language. They have generally kept both their lexical form and their primary pronunciation.

Adolescents and other people use the denotative Anglicisms, which don't usually have Romanian equivalents, with the same ability with which they use the connotative Anglicisms.

Many denotative anglicisms belong to the following domains of material or spiritual life: a) Sports: *baschet*, *baseball*, *box*, *bowling*, *canoe*, *carting*, *club*, *corner*, *cros*, *derby*, *dribbling*, *drive*, *doping*, *fault*, *fotbal*, *jogging*, *KO*, *meci*, *rafting*, *schi*, *skateboard*, *snowboard*, *start*, *suporter*, *time-out*, *volei*, etc.; b) Technology: *cuter*, *drive-in*, *flash*, *hard*, *soft*, *airbag*, *controller*, *digital*, *dolby*, *hi-fi*, *hi-tech*, *input*, *LCD*, *LED*, *a scana*, *silicon*, *stand-by*, *tuner*, *tuning*, *walkman*, *Xerox*, *zoom*, *clip*, *compact disc*, *computer*, *disc*, *dischetă*, *display*, *e-mail*, *joystick*, *laptop*, etc.; c) Economy: *bancnotă*, *business*, *businessman*, *cash*, *cent*, *dealer*, *dolar*, *duty-free*, *job*,

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*leasing*, *management*, *manager*, *sponsor etc.*; d) Food and drinks: *bitter*, *chips*, *coca-cola*, *cocteil*, *drink*, *hamburger*, *popcorn*, *ketchup*, *snack etc.*; e) Cosmetics*: after-shave*, *roll-on*, etc.; f) Clothes: *bikini*, *blazer*, *blue-jeans* etc.; g) Other fields: *bodyguard*, *fair play*, *fan*, *fifty-fifty*, *happy-end*, *hipi*, *hobby*, *hot*, *killer*, *lady*, *living*, *miss*, *modelling*, *night-club*, *number one*, *OK*, *play-back*, *play-boy*, *pop*, *puzzle*, *roll on*, *scuter*, *sex-simbol*, *sexy*, *shop*, *superman*, *supermarket*, *top*, *trend*, *VIP*, *week-end*, etc.

The connotative Anglicisms allow the adolescents to understand one another everywhere, according to a pattern which was imitated by the fashion magazines or the special magazines for teenagers. Television has an important role in promoting these Anglicisms.

The language of the young ladies who want to become "popular" is full of anglicisms such as: *beauty*, *brand*, *chic*, *cool*, *family*, *fashion*, *hair stylist*, *life*, *look*, *picnic*, *shopping*, *style*, *story*, *trend* which replace the Romanian equivalents: *frumusețe*, *marcă*, *draguț*, *frumos*, *familie*, *modă*, *coafeză*, *viață*, *aspect*, *cumpărături*, *stil*, *poveste*, *tendință*.

Some Anglicisms are used in order to show the fact that the speakers belong to a certain group or the fact that the speaker is trendy. Obviously, these words could be replaced by a Romanian word. Here comes an enumeration belonging to various domains concerning music: *backing vocals* (Rom. *acompaniament vocal*), *sound* (Rom. *sunet*), *house music*; concerning sports: *back flip* (Rom. *săritură cu bicicleta peste cap*), *bar spin* (Rom. *învârtirea ghidonului*), *bike* (Rom. *bicicletă*), *goal keeper* (Rom. *portar*), *hubguard* (Rom. *aparatoare pentru butuc*), *Ollie* (Rom. *săritură ollie*), *peg* (Rom. *support de metal*), *rodeo* (Rom. *săritură rodeo*); concerning fashion: *fashion*, *trend*; concerning technology: *a tuna* (< the English word *tune*) meaning "altered, improved" and has adjusted to the Romanian phonetic system, *tuning* denotes the action. This word is very much used by young people; it was formerly used to denote improved cars or cars with changed engine parameters. Now it is used to denote other objects, even beings. Everything that is altered changed is *tunat*. *Fetițe tunate* is a collocation which denotes young women who have undergone aesthetic surgery, possibly silicone implants.

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Barbarisms (also called foreign words) are borrowed from other languages. They haven't been adjusted to the Romanian language system yet.

Taking into account the fact that vocabulary is dynamic, this situation is of course, a transitory one. After a while barbarisms can become Americanisms or Anglicisms, due to their morphological assimilation. Some of these words are very frequent in spoken language and undergo different semantic changes. It is very difficult to place them in one of the above mentioned categories because of the fact that vocabulary is very dynamic[1].

The teenagers use barbarisms out of reasons related more to individual or group psychology and less to linguistics. Barbarisms from informatics, a domain very much appreciated by adolescents, appear frequently in their speech: a *hosta/a hostui* < Engl. *to host* (Rom. *a găzdui*), *nickname* (Rom. *poreclă*), *enter* (Rom. *a deschide un program, a valida o comandă*), *a şerui* < Engl. *to share* (Rom. *a împărți*), etc.

Adriana Stoichițoiu Achim contradicts the author of DCR: *cash, jogging, puzzle, show, staff, story, summit, talk-show, trend, master, racket, supermarket, are not barbarisms, but Anglicisms, while fan, job, hit, star, stres, şort, top* are not Anglicisms but borrowings "already assimilated and frequently used in the spoken language, too"[1].

*Mouse* is a small object connected to the computer by a wire which causes a cursor to move so that choices can be made within the program in use. The term comes from English where it means "a small furry animal with long tail, related to but smaller than a rat"; being used to denote the device because of its resemblance with the small furry animal. This word entered informatics technology through meaning expansion, by metaphoric means. This term entered Romanian and Italian, too but in French it was translated: *souris*. The plural of *mouse* is *mice* (a noun having an irregular plural) and it raised adjustment problems among Romanian speakers.

They first tried the plural *mouse-i*, read [mauşi], then *mausei*, read [mauşi]. $DEX_2$ stated the plural mouse-uri as correct while DEX, didn't state the word at all. *Site*, having the plural *site-uri* and pronounced [sait], is

[1] Adriana Stoichițoiu Ichim, *Vocabularul limbii române actuale. Dinamică, influențe, creativitate*, Bucureşti, Editura All, 2001, p. 83.

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a term taken, as it is, from English, meaning “space on the internet”. *Shortcut/scurtătură* can be found in the English phrase *to take a shortcut* “to take the shortest way” meaning “to take the shortest way to a destination”; *to create a shortcut to a file* “a crea o scurtătură către un fişier”.

One can find other anglicisms from informatics in adolescents’ language, too: *driver* is a special program; (*a*) *buta* < Engl. *to boot* means to load an operating system for a computer from a disk into the computer’s memory; *a bana* < Engl. *to bane* (having banned as past participle which also means “to prohibit”). This means “to block the access” in virtual space communication. This verb has adapted to the spelling of the first conjugaion verbs, ended in *-a*, and it can be conjugated in all moods, tenses and persons. Many grown-ups don’t know it, but Internet users use it frequently in their virtual communication. Teenagers have taken it with its meaning “to stop/to block”. *A seta* means “to establish the function parameters”, this has shifted from informatics terminology into daily language. *Inbox* means “the box containing online messages”. The verb *to inbox* is created by those who surf the internet and it means “to fill the message box”. The verb is wrongly associated with the Romanian verb *a boxa*, due to its phonetic form, but it’s totally different in meaning, so that young people use the verb *a inboxa* referring to “hitting somebody with one’s fist”. *A se reseta* means “to take something from the beginning”. The teenagers use the phrase *a da reset* for “to estimate a situation, a fact, etc. once again”.

Maybe, by using these terms they feel closer to a prosperous, tempting, open world which offers them the mental comfort generated by an illusive superiority manifested in front of adults or other inexperienced teenagers.

The computer field is new in itself and very attractive. The terms belonging to informatics generate an interchange of particularities between machine and man, the machine being the one which offers its qualities to man. This is an indirect acknowledgement of the computers capacity to be efficient, rapid and complex.

The association of the English words with the significance of a Romanian word, which is based not on their meaning but on their form,

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generates ludicrous or ironic effects. Teenagers know the real meaning of the English word, therefore they use it wrongly on purpose.

The vocabulary used by adolescents is characterized by expressiveness and linguistic innovation; it can hardly be considered argot, jargon or common language, because it is a combination of these.

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