ADAPTATION OF ENGLISH-ORIGIN WORDS TO THE ROMANIAN PHONOLOGICAL AND GRAPHICAL SYSTEM[1]

Abstract*: Within the present linguistic context, the process of foreign words intake, namely English-origin borrowings, has gradually increased and its result may be seen in their adaptation to the Romanian phonological and graphical systems. The present article proposes the analysis of a number of English-origin words selected from MDN (2007), letter D, as far as their phonological and graphical adaptation is concerned. The results of this analysis determined the following categories of English-origin borrowings: a) unadapted English-origin borrowings, b) partially (phonetically) adapted English-origin borrowings, and, last but not least, c) completely (phonetically and graphically) adapted English-origin borrowings. Thus, out of a total number of 129 English-words selected from MDN (2007), letter D, 48 have not been adapted to the Romanian phonological and graphical systems, 30 have been adapted only phonetically, while 51 (most of them) have been completely adapted to the Romanian pronunciation and spelling. The fact that the number of completely adapted English-origin words is greater than the one of partially or unadapted English-origin words to the Romanian pronunciation and spelling system represents another reason that leads us to believe that Romanian continues to be a fertile ground that facilitates the foreign words intake (of English-origin mainly) and, also, their adaptation to its morphological and lexical systems.*

Keywords*: English, borrowings, adaptation.*

The relatively universal promotion of internationalisation and globalisation, together with the technical and scientific progress over the past decades, proved to be quite a favourable ground for a rapid intake of English-origin words, thus reflecting the outstanding changes taking place within the social and material cultures of various communities all over the world. Despite this universality of the phenomenon of language changes, the adaptation types and methods of new words considerably varied from one language to another. Any language reflects upon the lifestyle of its speakers: their social organisation, their political system, their economy, their philosophy, their art, their customs, that altogether make up the culture of a certain special community. And, just like lifestyles change, language changes as well: "There can never be a moment of true standstill in language. Like everything else, it gradually transforms itself over centuries" (Aichison, 1991: 59). The causes of linguistic change cannot be clearly determined, in spite of numerous existing explanations. The majority of researchers have claimed that present changing processes cannot be observed – that, what we may actually observe and analyze represents the consequences of these changes. Still, at present, this changing process is seen as a kind of flip-flap between old and new, this process ending when *the new* replaces *the old* (Fromkin et. Al., 1990: 299). In other words, if the new form, whether phonological, morphosyntactic, lexical or semantic is spread enough, then we may state that the change is in progress, while if the new form replaces the old one, then the adaptation process is complete.

If we take a look at the English influence upon Romanian, we consider necessary to include this phenomenon within the context of linguistic globalisation. This fact is due to the great number of English and American origin borrowings that have entered most of the European languages, especially after World War II. The present article proposes the analysis of a number of English-origin borrowings selected from

[1] Oana Badea-Voiculescu, University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Craiova, o_voiculescu@yahoo.com.

BDD-A5872 © 2011 Universitatea din Pitești
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.244 (2026-11-10 06:00:30 UTC)

MDN (2007) – *The Comprehensive Dictionary of Neologisms*, letter D, as far as their phonetic and graphical adaptation is concerned. The results of this analysis have determined the following categories of English-origin borrowings, according to the criterion of phonological and graphical adaptation to the Romanian system:

1. unadapted English-origin borrowings – those words of English origin that have been taken both with their original English spelling and their English pronunciation:

dance [d e n s] < engl. *dance [d e n s]*
dancing [d e n s i n g] < engl. *dancing [d e n s i ŋ]*
dandy [d e n d i] < engl. *dandy [d e n d i]*
darling [d a r l i n g] < engl. *darling [d a: r l i ŋ]*
dead-heat [d e d - h i t] < engl. *dead-heat [d e d – h i t]*
deadweight [d e d u e i t] < engl. *deadweight [d e d w e i t]*
deadwood [d e d u d] < engl. *deadwood [d e d w: d]*
dealer [d i l ă r] < engl. *dealer [d i l ə: r]*
dealing [d i l i n g] < engl. *dealing [d i l i ŋ]*
debater [d i b e i t ă r] < engl. *debater [d i b e i t ə: r]*
debye [d i b a i] < engl. *debye [d i b a i]*
deeptank [d i p t a n c] < engl. *deeptank [d i: p t æ n k]*
dem [d e m] < engl. *dem [d e m]*
design [d i z a i n] < engl. *design [d i z a i n]*
designer [d i z a i n ă r] < engl. *designer [d i z a i n ə: r]*
deuce [d i u s] < engl. *deuce [d i u s]*
digit [d i g i t] < engl. *digit [d i ʤ i t]*
digger [d i g ă r] < engl. *digger [d i g ə: r]*
dining-room [d a i n i ng – r u m] < engl. *dining-room [d a i n i ŋ – r u: m]*
dip [d i p] < engl. *dip [d i p]*
dirt-track [d ă r t- t r e c] < engl. *dirt-track [d ə: r t – t r æ k]*
dirty [d ă r t i] < engl. *dirty [d ə: r t i]*
disc-jockey [d i s c – d j o c h e i] < engl. *disc-jockey [d i s c - ʤ o k e i]*
discount [d i s c a u n t] < engl. *discount [d i s k a u n t]*
display [d i s p l e i] < engl. *display [d i s p l e i]*
dixieland [d i x i l e n d] < engl. *dixieland [d i x i l e n d]*
dixie lander [d i x i l e n d ă r] < engl. *dixie lander [d i x i l e n d ə: r]*
dogger [d o g ă r] < engl. *dogger [d o g ə: r]*
dolly [d o l i] < engl. *dolly [d o l i]*
Dorking [d o – k i n g] < engl. *Dorking [d o: k i ŋ]*
dreadnought [d r e d n o t] < engl. *dreadnought [d r e d n o t]*
dressing [d r e s i n g] < engl. *dressing [d r e s i ŋ]*
drift [d r i f t] < engl. *drift [d r i f t]*
drink [d r i n c] <engl. *drink [d r i n k]*
drive [d r a i v] < engl. *drive [d r a i v]*
drive-in [d r a i v i n] < engl. *drive-in [d r a i v i n]*
drivelob [d r a i v l o b] < engl. *drive lob [d r a i v l o b]*
driver [d r a i v ă r] < engl. *driver [d r a i v ə: r]*
drugstore [d r a g s t o r] < engl. *drugstore [d r a g s t o: r]*
drum [d r a m] < engl. *drum [d r a m]*

BDD-A5872 © 2011 Universitatea din Pitești
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.244 (2026-11-10 06:00:30 UTC)

drummer [d r a m ă r] < engl. *drummer [d r a m ə: r]*
dry [d r a i] < engl. *dry [d r a i]*
dry farming [d r a i f a r m i n g] < engl. *dry farming [d r a i f a: r m i ŋ]*
dumping [d a m p i n g] < engl. *dumping [d a m p i ŋ]*
duplex [d u p l e c s] < engl. *duplex [d u p l e k s]*
durham [d a r h ă m] < engl. *durham [d a r h ə m]*
duty-free [d i u t i f r i] < engl. *duty-free [d i u t i f r i:]*
dyke [d a i c] < engl. *dyke [d a i k]*

2. partially (phonologically) adapted English-origin borrowings – those words of English origin that have kept the English spelling, but have been adapted to the Romanian pronunciation, and, as a result, they are pronounced phonetically:

dacron [d a c r o n] < engl. *dacron [d e i k r ə n]*
dais [d a i s] < engl. *dais [d e i z]*
dakota [d a c o t a] < engl. *dakota [d e i k o t a]*
decadal [d e c a d a l] < engl. *decadal [d e c ə d e l]*
decorticator [d e c o r t i c a t o r] < engl. *decorticator [d i c o r t i k e i t ə: r]*
decumbent [d e c u m b e n t] < engl. *decumbent [d i c a m b ə n t]*
derby [d e r b i] < engl. *derby [d ə: r b i]),*
derelict [d e r e l i c t] < engl. *derelict [d e r ə l i c t]*
developer [d e v e l o p e r] < engl. *developer [d i v e l ə p ə: r]*
devon [d e v o n] < engl. *devon [d e v n]*
diagnostician [d i a g n o s t i c i a n] < engl. *diagnostician [d a i ə g n o s t i ʃ ə n] dianoetic [d i a n o e t i c]* < engl. *dianoetic [d a i a n o u e t i k]*
dibol [d i b o l] < engl. *dibol [d i b ə u l]*
digital [d i g i t a l] < engl. *digital [d i g i t l]*
dingo [d i n g o] < engl. *dingo [d i n g ə u]*
disco [d i s c o] < engl. *disco [d i s c ə u]*
dispersional [d i s p e r s i o n a l] < engl. *dispersional [d i s p ə r j ə n l]*
diversionist [d i v e r s i o n i s t] < engl. *diversionist [d a i v ə r j ə n i s t]*
dogmatician [d o g m a t i c i a n] < engl. *dogmatician [d o g m ə t i ʃ n]*
dolby [d o l b i] < engl. *dolby [d o l b a i]*
dominion [d o m i n i o n] < engl. *dominion [d ə m i n i ə n]*
donor [d o n o r] < engl. *donor [d a n ə r]*
dragster [d r a g s t e r] < engl. *dragster [d r æ g s t ə: r]*
dres [d r e s] < engl. *dress [d r e s]*
dribling [d r i b l i n g] < engl. *dribbling [d r i b l i ŋ]*
driling [d r i l i n g] < engl. *drilling [d r i l i ŋ]*
dublin [d u b l i n] < engl. *dublin [d a b l i n]*
dum-dum [d u m d u m] < engl. *dum-dum [d a m d a m]*
dunit [d u n i t] < engl. *dunit [d i u n i t]*
duran [d u r a n] < engl. *duran [d u r æ n]*

3. completely (graphically and phonologically) adapted English-origin borrowings – English-origin words that have been completely adapted to the Romanian pronunciation and spelling, undergoing both phonetic and graphical changes as well:

3.1. Engl. *y* -- Rom. *i*

dacriom < engl. *dacryoma*

BDD-A5872 © 2011 Universitatea din Pitești
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.244 (2026-11-10 06:00:30 UTC)

dicarboxilic < engl. *dicarboxylic*
dinatron < engl. *dynatron*
dinghi < engl. *dinghy*

3.2. Engl. *s* – Rom. *z*
decizional < engl. *decisional*
dezamidază < engl. *desamidase*
dezobedient < engl. *disobedient*
digitizor < engl. *digitisor*
dizabilitate < engl. *disability*

3.3. Engl. *ll* – Rom. *l*
decolator < engl. *decollator*
dol < engl. *doll*
dolar < engl. *dollar*

3.4. Engl. *ph* – Rom. *f*
diafon < engl. *diaphone*
diagraf < engl. *diagraph*
diamorfină < engl. *diamorphin*
digraf < engl. *digraph*

3.5. Engl. *–ation* – Rom. *–are*
deprivare < engl. *deprivation*
descaladare < engl. *de-escalation*
deserializare < engl. *deserialization*
dextrinizare < engl. *dextrinization*
dezalcalizare < engl. *dealkalisation*

3.6. Engl. *e* – Rom. *ă*
definibilă < engl. *definible*
dermopunctură < engl. *dermopuncture*
draglină < engl. *dragline*

3.7. Engl. *ou/ o* –Rom. *u*
dublou < engl. *double (scull)*
duglas < engl. *douglas*
dulcimer < engl. *dolcimer*

3.8. Other changes
dejalen < engl. *delaine*
deontologism < engl. *deontology*
dermatografie < engl. *dermatography*
desanta < engl. *descent*
detectiv < engl. *detective*
detectivism < engl. *detective* + *-ism*
detectivist < engl. *detective* + *-ist*
deuteriu < engl. *deuterium*
devoțional < engl. *devotional*

BDD-A5872 © 2011 Universitatea din Pitești
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.244 (2026-11-10 06:00:30 UTC)

dialingvistică < engl. *dialingustics*
digoxină < engl. *digoxin*
dischetă < engl. *diskette*
disconfort < engl. *discomfort*
disconter < engl. *discounter*
dispecer < engl. *dispatcher*
dispecerat < engl. *dispatching*
docar < engl. *dog-cart*
docher < engl. *docker*
doctorizare < engl. *doctor treatment*
doc < engl. *dock*
dronă < engl. *drone*
duant < engl. *duad*
dublu-casetofon < după engl. *double-cassette (recorder)*

Therefore, out of the total number of studied words, we established the existence of forty-eight English-origin words that have not been adapted (yet) to the Romanian pronunciation and spelling, thirty English-origin words partially (phonologically) adapted and fifty-one English-origin words completely (graphically and phonologically) adapted to the Romanian language system, as it may be easily seen from the table below:

Table 1. Results of the phonological and graphical analysis performed upon English-origin words selected from MDN (2007) -- Letter D

Total number of English-origin words, MDN (2007) – Letter D	Unadapted English-origin words	Partially (phonologically) adapted English-origin words	Completely (phonologically and graphically) adapted English-origin words
129	48	30	51

The fact that the number of completely adapted English-origin words is greater than the one of partially or unadapted English-origin words to the Romanian pronunciation and spelling system represents another reason that leads us to believe that Romanian continues to be a fertile area that facilitates the foreign words intake (of English-origin mainly) and, also, their adaptation to its morphological and lexical systems. Our belief is that there should be preserved both the English pronunciation and spelling only in those English-origin words that pertain to some specialized languages, needed for filling up some terminological gaps, as these terms are considered to be part of an international specialized language.

Conclusions

Within the present context of globalisation and internationalisation, the continuous intake of new words (mainly of English origin) has been developed in accordance with the technical and scientific progress, both nationally and internationally, as well. Preserving their Romanian specificity, the studied English-origin words have been adapted (or not) to the phonological and graphical systems of the Romanian language, by undergoing graphical, phonological changes or none at all,

BDD-A5872 © 2011 Universitatea din Pitești
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.244 (2026-11-10 06:00:30 UTC)

during their adaptation process. Thus, out of a total number of 129 English-origin words selected from MDN (2007), letter D, 48 have not been adapted to the Romanian phonological and graphical systems, 30 have been adapted only phonetically, while 51 (most of them) have been completely adapted to the Romanian pronunciation and spelling. In conclusion, the great number of completely adapted English-origin words, both graphically and phonologically, once more points out the fact that the Romanian language is capable of integrating and adapting new words of foreign origin, a process that may go on over a longer or shorter period of time, depending on the speakers' attitude regarding the so-called invasion of English and American origin words in the last decades.

Bibliography

Aichison, J., *Language change - Progress or Decay?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991: 59-89

Bogdan, Mihail, "English Loan Words in Romanian", ACILX, 4 : 741-744, 1970

Badea-Voiculescu, Oana, „Privire bibliografică asupra anglicismelor în limba română", Analele Universității din Craiova, Seria Ştiinţe Filologice.Lingvistica, Editura Universitaria Craiova, An XXXI, Nr. 1-2, 2009

Badea-Voiculescu, Oana, „Observații asupra necesarului neologic", Analele Universității din Craiova, Seria Ştiinţe Filologice.Lingvistica, Editura Universitaria Craiova, An XXXII, Nr. 1-2, 2010

Ciobanu, Georgeta, *Adaptation of the English Element in Romanian,* Timişoara, Editura Mirton, 1997

Fromkin, V., Blair, D., and Collins, P. *An introduction to Language* Harcourt Australia Pty Ltd NSW, 1990:295-300

Popa, Ion, Popa, Marinela, *Limba română. Gramatică, fonetică, vocabular,* Bucureşti, Editura Niculescu, 2008

Stoichițoiu-Ichim, Adriana, *Aspecte ale influenţei engleze în româna actuală,* Bucureşti, Editura Universității din Bucureşti, 2006.

Sources

MDN (2007) -- Marcu, Florin, *MDN, Marele Dicţionar de Neologisme,* Bucureşti, Editura Saeculum Vizual, 2007

The New Webster's Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language, New York, Gramercy Books, 1997.

On-line References

Hallo Dictionar Online www.hallo.ro, 2010/07

Language Borrowing, http://enjoywords.com/loanwords.html, 2008/01.24

Slama-Cazacu, Tatiana, *Identitatea limbii române şi politica lingvistică europeană*, www.kappa.ro-lit615-07.html, 2008/01/21.

BDD-A5872 © 2011 Universitatea din Pitești
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.244 (2026-11-10 06:00:30 UTC)