ENGLISH: THE UNDERLYING TOOL OF THE GLOBALIZING PHENOMENON

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Abstract: All languages come in contact with one another whether the population of a given country likes it or not. However, it is true that there are several factors (geographic, political, historical, linguistic etc.) that make it even more likely for a language to be more thoroughly influenced than another. The present paper focuses on how Romanian has been influenced by English in the wide context of globalization.

Keywords: Globalization, English, Romanian vocabulary, impact, alteration

It its widest sense, *globalization* is a phenomenon that is neither restricted to a field of activity nor to a country or area. It occurs worldwide and it affects and influences everything and everyone to a certain extent.

The definition provided by a business dictionary[1] presents *globalization* as "The worldwide movement toward economic, financial, trade, and communications integration." It implies the opening of local and nationalistic perspectives to a broader outlook of an interconnected and interdependent world with free transfer of capital, goods, and services across national frontiers."

In an article entitled "Cultural imperialism", Andreescu[2] begins by providing what she also agrees to be a wide definition of *globalization*: "the worldwide diffusion of practices, expansion of relations across continents, organization of social life on a global scale, and growth of a shared global consciousness."

Globalization may be triggered by most of the factors mentioned above (to which we could add socio-political, military, cultural and why not religious factors), but it for sure would not have been possible without having any impact on languages. Therefore, globalization could not be completed without the English language, which, in exchange, has become *globalizing English* and it proved very helpful in the process of *globalization*. English is the key to *linguistic globalization*, being a very important part in (written and oral) communication, interaction and interdependence at a global level and even though *globalization* involves communication, it does not restrict to it. It was easily tolerated by most people and subsequently it become first prominent and later on dominant at an international level.

[1] Read more on http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/globalization.html (consulted on May 7, 2017).
[2]Ritzer (1996: 72) *apud* Andreescu (2014: 273).

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Linguistic globalization is negatively perceived by Bazaiti (2010) in his article entitled "Linguistic Globalization – The Challenge of the New Millennium", where he somehow blames English for the alteration of the languages it comes in contact with and which it influences to a certain extent: "The so-called English language pressure, influence and dominance over the other languages, which would be a great mistake to define them as inferior languages, is lately known as linguistic globalization."

Conversely, in his article called "The Globalization of Language. How important is learning a foreign language in a globalized world?", Baier (2001) insists on the need to have good knowledge of English in order to succeed in one's career. English has become the utmost requirement in all fields, even though not used on a daily basis: "In a global economy, English is certainly king, and knowledge of English is increasingly a prerequisite for a high-paying job and a career in a growing variety of fields. Speaking another language – from French to Mandarin Chinese – is becoming a luxury, not a necessity."

The need to learn English is triggered by all factors involved by the evolution of languages and it is urged by social life and norms. Topală (2006: 261) also reinforces some of the most obvious causes of the need for borrowing words: "Realităţile sociale, politice, economice, culturale impun împrumutul de cuvinte din engleză, în special prin mass-media[3]". This idea is also shared by Condruz-Băcescu (2013: 21): "The acceptance of a natural language as a unique tool for communication appears today as an objective need of contemporary social life."

It is not English that settles forcibly in the vocabulary of other languages. It is precisely these languages that are "forced" by external factors (such as social, political, economic and financial, cultural etc.) to adopt and include English words and phrases into their own vocabulary. It is the decision of each speaking nation what to do with them next: either to assimilate them or to preserve their foreign aspect and use them only when the situation becomes imperative. Great care should be given, though, to words already in use but still not yet included in the dictionaries of that particular language.

All Romance languages have been influenced by the language of globalization[4], i.e. English, one way or another and to different degrees. Romanian could not have been *the* exception. It was open to linguistic changes, which made it more flexible than other Romance languages under English influence.

When it comes to an open and dynamic language like Romanian, *linguistic globalization* is for sure not a bad influence. Romanian has always been open towards novelty. The perception of the English language as a source of linguistic inspiration and an unlimited resourceful "spring" of lexical borrowings has given Romanian the chance to adapt well to this trend of *globalization*, not to be left isolated among very purist languages that exhibit exaggerated care for their national linguistic legacy and perceive as harmful everything that comes from the outside, as a possible threat to national identity and morality.

Romanian researchers have slightly differently perceived and defined words and phrases of English origin. For example, *Anglicisms* are restricted in meaning in most works of Stoichiţoiu-Ichim. Consequently, she sees them as "împrumuturi recente din engleza britanică şi americană, incomplete sau deloc adaptate (ca atare, ele se scriu şi se rostesc în română într-un mod foarte apropiat sau identic cu cel din limba de origine[5]" Stoichiţoiu-Ichim (2007: 83).

[3] "Social, political, economic and cultural realities impose the borrowing of words from English, especially through mass-media" (author's translation).
[4] See also Andronache (2014), "The linguistic globalization of Romance languages under the influence of English", p. 392-398.
[5] "Recent loanwords from British or American English, incompletely or at all assimilated (thus, they are spelled and pronounced in Romanian in a very similar or identical manner to that of the language of origin." (author's translation).

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However, the author does not discard words such as *fan*, *job*, *hit*, *star*, *stress*, *şort* or *top* (very frequent and already assimilated in Romanian), whom she also refers to as Anglicisms, although not included in the definition of such terms.

Conversely, a very tolerant definition of Anglicisms belongs to Filipović (1990: 17 *apud* Ciobanu 2006: 61): "fiecare cuvânt preluat din limba engleză care desemnează un lucru sau un concept care aparţine civilizaţiei englezeşti; un astfel de cuvânt nu trebuie să fie de origine (provenienţă) englezească, dar trebuie să fi fost adoptat în limba engleză şi integrat în vocabularul englez[6]".

It is precisely this different perspective on Anglicisms in Romanian linguistics that Greavu (2011: 39) points at: "The lack of terminological agreement regarding the definition of Anglicisms is also reflected in the discrepancies existing between various quantitative studies on English loanwords in Romanian".

When approaching topics related to Anglicisms in Romanian, we should also consider and not leave to chance trends or phenomena like *Anglophilia* or *Anglomania*. *Anglophilia* and *Anglophile* indicate "great admiration for England and English things" (according to *Ologies & -Isms*[7], 2008 The Gale Group, Inc.).

Citing some of the dictionaries quoted by *the Free Online Dictionary*[8], *Anglomania* could be seen as:

- ✓ "A strong predilection for anything English" (*American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, Fifth Edition)
- ✓ "Excessive respect for English customs etc." (*Collins English Dictionary – Complete and Unabridged*, 12th Edition 2014, HarperCollins Publishers)
- ✓ "An excessive devotion to English institutions, manners, customs etc." (*Random House Kernerman Webster's College Dictionary*, 2010 K Dictionaries Ltd.)

Regarding those said above, Romania has somehow been divided into extreme parties: on one hand, there are people who overuse English words and phrases for the sake of conversation, which apparently becomes more attractive. It is precisely this category of users (i.e. the youngsters) who triggers what is now referred to as Anglomania. In simple words, it could be explained by excessive and obsessive use of words of English origin in daily discourses, discarding the possibility of using suitable words already available in their mother tongue instead. This choice in favor of the English vocabulary and detrimental to their mother tongue is sometimes motivated by the long or heavy Romanian words and phrases that could have been used instead of the simple, direct and precise Anglicisms.

On the other hand, there are the "English haters". Not only do they avoid the use of English words, but they also put the blame on them for the apparent loss of identity of their mother tongues. They perceive English as an ultimate threat to the Romanian vocabulary.

Nonetheless, in between these two extreme parties there are the linguists and the researchers in the field of languages. They do not fully declare themselves as being against the use and spread of English, nor do they declare themselves as big fans and lovers of English. They acknowledge the strength of English as a globalizing language and become tolerant in front of the

[6] "Each word taken from English which designates a thing or a concept pertaining to English civilization; such a word should not necessarily be of English origin but it should have been adopted in English and integrated in the vocabulary of the English language." (author's translation)
[7] *Apud* http://www.thefreedictionary.com/anglophilia.
[8] See http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Anglomania.

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inevitable. Among the linguists that share this opinion, it is worth mentioning Mioara Avram, Theodor Hristea, Adriana Stoichiţoiu-Ichim and, last but not least, Rodica Zafiu.

However, not all linguists agree that English is beneficial to the enrichment and renewal of the Romanian vocabulary. For example, Slama-Cazacu (2000: 123-153) considers that the spread of English is unfavorable for Romanian and sees the introduction of foreign words into the Romanian vocabulary as a "brutal invasion of foreign words".

In conclusion, despite the contrasting attitudes towards the English language and vocabulary and its gradual integration in Romanian, our language seems to cope well with the phenomenon of linguistic globalization. It does not fully embrace everything related to English (vocabulary, culture, customs and traditions), nor it vehemently opposes any of these. On the contrary, it adopts and preserves a decent and upright position in front of the globalizing force of English.

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