CURRENT ORIENTATIONS IN ONOMASTIC RESEARCH: USER NAMES

ALINA BUGHEŞIU
Technical University of Cluj-Napoca
North University Center of Baia Mare

1. Preliminary remarks

1.1. *English as a lingua franca*

The past decades have brought about a dramatic increase in the number of English language speakers, who have acquired this linguistic code either as a first or as a second language. English has spread throughout the world, leaving its mark on all the languages it encountered on its way, while being itself subject to change through *simplification, reduction* and *interference / admixture* (Trudgill 2000: 165)[1]. It has claimed a key status in various fields (from technology to economy, politics, entertainment, etc.), and has ensured its position as *lingua franca* in the "tremendously complex web of villages, towns, neighbourhoods, settlements connected by material and symbolic ties in often unpredictable ways" (Blommaert 2011: 1). This network began to encompass countries such as Romania only rather recently; in the case mentioned, it happened after the fall of the communist regime and along with the opening of the borders that has been professed massively from the 1990s onwards. Naturally, it is the mass media that played a significant part in the advertising of a more individual-driven and less constricting lifestyle, thereby giving access to a type of culture that focuses on consumption, and to the English language that is the typical vehicle of this dynamics.

The English "invasion" is remarkably visible in the perimeter of the contemporary Romanian language, in which we can find lexical structures that are fully / partially adapted to the autochthonous system of communication, while there exist others that continue to be regarded as foreign words, and hence only used for the stylistic effects they can produce (Stoichiţoiu Ichim 2006: 226-227). The undeniable openness of the Romanian language – i.e. the hospitability it displays in relation to the assimilation of new words (Avram and Sala 2000: 146-147) – has been deemed disreputable, an instance of linguistic snobbery that is believed to lead to the "hybridisation" of Romanian (Slama-Cazacu 2000: 127). Nevertheless, the

[1] Trudgill (2000: 165-167) considers that the three aforementioned operations underlie the process of *pidginisation* that a language undergoes in its development into a *lingua franca*. By getting rid of the grammatical irregularities and redundancies, a language's social functions are, in time, reduced. If one is to add to this the interferences determined by contacts established with other languages, the result lies in different forms of a language, "which vary from time to time and from speaker to speaker" (167).

BDD-V916 © 2012 Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 17:01:17 UTC)

importation of elements from the English word-stock was also considered an attempt to keep pace with the changes going about in the bigger picture, and to prove the power of adaptability that defines the Romanian language and culture implicitly. The embracing of English words, especially in the cases for which the Romanian lexicon includes equivalents or alternatives, is motivated by the terms' suggestive power: they are associated with progress (Crystal 2010: 83), with the Western outlook on life, which in most cases refers to the American civilisation and the myth of the individual that is prosperous and healthy, simultaneously coping with a demanding job and a comforting private life. At social level, these are the perks that we seem to believe we get by using English, not necessarily as a foreign language, but as a "mother tongue" we claim our right to, as inhabitants of one pixel of the global network.

1.2. *Language contact and contact language*

The process of globalisation, in the context that is of interest to us on the occasion of this study, describes a "*cadru stimulativ* pentru asimilarea în română a unor termeni, expresii şi tipare lingvistice cu *circulaţie internaţională*" [stimulating frame for the assimilation into Romanian of terms, phrases and linguistic patterns that enjoy an international circulation] (Stoichiţoiu Ichim 2006: 23-24, my translation), and through which we assert our belonging to the *global village*. Therefore, the influence English has on the Romanian language is not restricted to a particular domain; it is manifest in several (if not in all) areas of knowledge[1], as there is not one field that could be said to function independently of human contact across cultures and languages, or completely isolated, for that matter. All of these fields are channels that mediate the language contact and establish a particular relationship between the cultures that they represent, which function as two distinct but related points of a continuum[2].

Although initially one could claim that terminologies specific to the domains which borrow the largest number of English items have a relatively minor impact on the great majority of speakers and on the standard national language, for their usage is limited to the corresponding communities of individuals that share akin communication skills and motivations in the field (Stoichiţoiu Ichim 2006: 13-14), this is a statement that barely holds today. On the one hand, we must take into consideration that English has become the most taught second-language in Romania, so there is quite an impressive number of Romanians who speak this language fluently enough to understand more than the basics and who can therefore comprehend some words from specialised terminologies (which is not to say that they are able to use them as professionals from those domains of activity). On the other hand, the diversification of the mass media and the accessibility of the Internet have enabled intra-language varieties and foreign (i.e. English) elements to mix. To begin with, the linguistic codes that result from such language contact situations were employed (hence understood) only within small, well-delineated groups, namely by people who used this type of language on a regular basis: at work, with friends etc. This manner of speaking and/ or writing apparently develops a behaviour that is similar to jargon. Still, words and phrases that are

[1] In this respect, see especially Avram (1997), Avram and Sala (2000), Stoichiţoiu Ichim (2001: 83-118, 2006a).

[2] In the context of globalisation, two cultures in contact are not perceived in opposition (Culture 1 vs. Culture 2); their interaction follows a metonymical type of correlation, with one assuming the dominant position (inflicting the most significant amount of influence), while the other essentially acts as a recipient, actively adjusting external elements into its own paradigm. This *pars pro toto* connection does not entail that the contact is unidirectional; its functionality is easier to trace in the culture in which the borrowed elements are more numerous and more frequently employed.

BDD-V916 © 2012 Editura Universității din București
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 17:01:17 UTC)

particular to it are increasingly being used in casual speech, sometimes even in contexts that would request the use of standard language. A closer look would without much ado reveal that the introduction of English items in the linguistic system used in various real life situations comes natural; whether directly (through unadapted loans) or indirectly (through borrowings and calque formations), there are contexts in which English is a default setting. These are the contexts in which the unmarked linguistic choice – the behavioural routine that establishes and whose use represents a group's common ground (Myers-Scotton quoted in Coulmas 2010: 13) – is an instance of multilingualism. In other words, in the situations mentioned, communication is only seldom a matter of monolingual interaction; rather, it is an intersection and interference of codes that interplay[1]. An example in this respect is the space of virtual communication, and one of the indices of this type of linguistic behaviour is the user name that an individual goes by in the virtual environment[2].

2. Onomastics in the context of language contact

2.1. *Virtual communication as an instance of code-switching*

Online communication is a sample of *mixed syntax* (Slama-Cazacu quoted in Milică 2009: 168), a hybrid of oral and written discourse, which involves in its achievement – for the sake of expressivity – mechanisms designed to compensate for the lack of extra- and paralinguistic means of expression that are normally embedded in speech. Emoticons, preset simple/ complex audio messages, various background designs, avatar images and a vast array of fonts, all contribute to the sending of a message and to the affirmation of one's *virtual identity* in an environment that is otherwise rather austere (Scheidt 2001: Introduction). Instant messaging clients, online platforms of communication, blogs, forums and the like, are all meant to boost the speed and efficiency of establishing and maintaining human relationships beyond the limitations of space and time. While doing so, they also tend to hinder the natural occurrence of face-to-face interaction, alter its pragmatic and functional aspects, and interfere in the linguistic dimension of one's discourse.

What defines *computer-mediated communication* is the constant change of registers:

> "ilustrată prin varietatea lexicală a elementelor utilizate de emiţători în replicile lor: termeni tehnici, argou, jargon, neologisme, xenisme etc. În comunicarea prin intermediul programelor interactive, influenţa limbii engleze a determinat apariţia jargonului informatic, limbaj al cărui vocabular este format din neologisme şi multe xenisme, neadaptate încă la sistemul flexionar al limbii române" [illustrated by the lexical variety of the elements used by senders in their utterances: technical terminology, argot, jargon, neologisms, xenisms etc. In the communication that is mediated by interactive programs, the influence of the English language has determined the appearance of IT jargon, a language variety whose lexicon includes new words and many foreign loans, which are yet unadapted to the flexional system of the Romanian language] (Milică 2009: 169, my translation).

---

[1] By *code*, I do not mean only a distinct language, but also any of the numerous varieties that it subsumes (Coulmas 2010: 110).

[2] The present study deals with one of the topics investigated within *Unconventional Romanian Anthroponyms in European Context: Formation Patterns and Discursive Function*, a research project developed in the "Human Resources" program, aiming at the stimulation of the building of young independent research teams (TE), code PN-II-RU-TE-2011-3-0007, project manager: Assoc. Prof. Daiana Felecan.

BDD-V916 © 2012 Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 17:01:17 UTC)

Nonetheless, while it may be true that digital communication is based on specialised IT language, we must take into consideration the fact that the dissemination of the Internet and the developments in the field of communication technology have made the usage of the corresponding terminology less group-dependent.

According to Zafiu (2001: 87), there are three instances of IT language: (a) a scientific language used in specialised translations and publications (books and articles); (b) a jargon variety employed by specialists, but which does not observe the norms to the same extent as the previous category (hybrid forms are common in this case); (c) an area of interference between the terminology in question and common language (the terms' grammatical status suffers from inevitable simplification and their meaning is often subject to extension). There exists of an ever-growing number of English borrowings in the Romanian language from the field of IT, some of which – such as *click, e-mail, hacker, hot-line, ID, laptop, mouse, nick, software* (Stoichiţoiu Ichim 2006a: 17) – are common occurrences in casual, everyday language, especially with young people, who represent not only the majority of users of online communication programs and platforms, but also the most ardent promoter of this type of human interaction. Thus, stylistically speaking, virtual communication is

> "o manifestare particulară a unui complex de norme ale conversaţiei familiare, în care se reflectă varietatea de tip diatopic (vorbirea citadină), diastratic (limbajul tinerilor) şi diafazic (limbă literară, argou, jargon, limbaj vulgar)" [a particular manifestation of a complex of norms regarding familiar conversations, which reflect the employment of three types of linguistic varieties: diatopic (urban slang), diastratic (youth language[1]) and diaphasic (literary language, argot, jargon, vulgar language)] (Milică 2009: 170, my translation)".

As the two codes that allow for such varieties to occur are Romanian and English, the finite product is most often a conscious blend of the two languages, either for practical reasons (the equivalent of the English specialised term is not yet sufficiently adapted to the Romanian language)[2], or for expressive reasons (for special effects). Such an acknowledged blending is an instance of code-switching, perceived, in this context, as a means of communicating creatively and of asserting one's identity, indexed, to this end, through the employment of *user names.*

---

[1] *Teenspeak* is the so-called jargon used by young people; it includes English terms from domains that the youth are interested in (IT, as well as music, film, fashion, art, sports, entertainment, human relationships etc.), along with elements from vernacular English: *casual, cool, feeling, funny, glossy, ID, light, look, make-up, new-entry, nick, OK, outfit, party, styling, trendy* (Stoichiţoiu Ichim 2006a: 23).

[2] Romanian everyday speech is teeming with English terms whose use in certain current phrases proves that they are undergoing assimilation as we speak: *a da* ***accept / add / buzz / ignore / like / search****, a face* ***comment*** (Zafiu 2001: 90-91). Besides these, one must also pay attention to other English words that are typical of computer-mediated communication and which are used by Romanian teenagers in other contexts, as well. Casual speech underlines the increasing frequency in the usage of words like *avatar, ID, smiley, status, buzz, profil,* or of acronyms like *lol* "*l*augh *o*ut *l*oud", *dnd* "*d*o *n*ot *d*isturb", *brb* "*b*e *r*ight *b*ack", *hb* "*h*urry *b*ack", *wtf* "*w*hat *t*he *f*uck", which have determined the appearance of similar formulas in Romanian (*cf* "*c*e *f*aci", *cv* "*c*e*v*a", *lma* "*l*a *m*ulţi *a*ni", *ms* "*m*e*s*i", *nb* "*n*oapte *b*ună", *npc* "*n*-ai/*n*u-i *p*entru *c*e", *nush* "*nu* ştiu" etc.). For more on this topic, see Bugheşiu (2010: 51-54).

BDD-V916 © 2012 Editura Universității din București
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 17:01:17 UTC)

2.2. ***User names as markers of language contact***

In the space of virtual communication, identity is an extremely flexible concept, being expressed through a system of signs (audiovisual and linguistic) that translate the subjective assessment a person makes in relation to himself/ herself. Avatars, status messages and user names are markers of social and individual identity in the digital environment, where we are free to experiment with how it actually is to be different from what we are on a day-to-day basis in the real world, not only once, but as many times as we feel comfortable. In the virtual space, "identity change is possible" (Coulmas 2010: 174), and it does not require the effort it presupposes in reality. On chats, forums or blogs, to a much greater extent than in the physical world, what we are is what we make of ourselves: "'identity is neither categorical nor fixed: we may act more or less middle-class, more or less female, and so on, depending on what we are doing and with whom'" (Schiffrin quoted in Coulmas 2010: 178). Therefore, what we communicate is as important as how we choose to communicate it. At the level of language, identity in virtual communication is created and permanently confirmed through what may appear as code-switching, a language option that becomes the unmarked choice of the context in question. We simultaneously claim our individual identity and our belonging to the Internet generation by interstitially using, in appropriate situations, certain varieties of Romanian and English. In the perimeter of this system of communication, the most salient indexical value is that of user names.

Whether called "handle", "nickname" (short "nick"), "id" (from "identification") or "user name", virtual names perform the highest degree of individualisation in the medium they represent. Being closest to pseudonyms, nicknames and bynames (or sobriquets), electronic names are secondary forms of onymic reference. And just like pseudonyms and bynames, they are defined by the dimension of self-attribution (which implies that the name-giver and the name-bearer are the same person). Lakaw (2006: 1-2) argues that, in the context of electronic communication, the English *nickname* has been subject to a process of *semantic expansion*, which has enabled it to mean "a self-chosen name", in addition to the etymological meaning (i.e. "secondary, additional name") it is generally known by (*Online Etymology Dictionary*, "nickname" http://www.etymonline. com/index.php?allowed_in_frame=0&search=nickname& searchmode=none). Thus, over time, *nickname* became the common term for the type of onymic designation technically entitled "user name". Furthermore, the notion was borrowed as such (i.e. it was *adopted,* not *adapted*) from the *lingua franca* of the new social reality it stood for (namely from English, as the language of globalisation and of the Internet), in all the languages (and cultures) that witnessed the widespread dissemination of computers and of the Internet.

As names, virtual anthroponyms are proprial structures, although they may derive from both common and proper one-word, phrasal or sentential formulas. The onymic status they enjoy underlines their ability to mark *unique reference*, but in the manner of prototypical forms of designation (Greenbaum 1996: 97). As opposed to other onomastic variants but similar to trade names, user names must be unique in a given context; no program, forum or blog will allow the coexistence of two or several identical names, and this accounts for the variety of signs that contribute to their making: alphanumeric characters, punctuation marks, basic geometrical forms or pictographs, displayed in curious positions: *Aliss* ☮, ˚ ♥ *Criss* ♥ ˚, *CRISS* ♥, *_LaЯysa* ·, *Oanana* ♥, *Raisa* ♥, ˚◦ ¤ • *Th3a* • ¤ ◦ ˚, *TwoDoR, vasi_sm3k3rul, xoxo*[1],

[1] Meaning "hugs and kisses"; the *x* symbolizes "kiss", while the *o* – "hug". See *Urban Dictionary*, "xoxo" (http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=xoxo) and *Wikipedia*, "Hugs and kisses" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hugs_and_kisses).

BDD-V916 © 2012 Editura Universității din București
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 17:01:17 UTC)

xtinna12[1]. Virtual onomastic formulas have a high individualising potential; not only is the entity they designate perceived as an individual – and not as member of a class (Crystal 1994: 112) –, but, moreover, there is no possibility for them to be recurrent.

Usually there is a complex process of selection that underlies the choice of a user name, especially since, in the virtual space the name will be used, it will become the symbol for the individual bearing it, and it will trigger associations that are related to that individual, either from the other interlocutors' shared experience with the name-bearer, or from the presuppositions the name itself generates for the interlocutors (the name-form or the meaning of the word from which the onymic tag derives)[2]. Therefore, before opting for a certain name, the issue of identity is thoroughly considered, it is evaluated and re-evaluated, in order to decide what features of one's personality should be highlighted through the name, and whether these should be envisaged so that they distort or reflect reality. According to the degree to which they reflect their bearers' true identity or, on the contrary, they underline shifts that users choose to adopt in representing themselves, virtual names express different levels of identity change:

(1) *Zero modification*. In this case, users choose to derive their handles from their real forenames (full variants or hypocoristic forms) and/ or surnames, which often occur in combinations with numbers (expressing the users' birthday, their lucky number or the year when the nickname was chosen), for stylistic effects, as well as due to the politics of online communication programs/ platforms (the principle of uniqueness): *Aly, Andrew, Angi, bianca_denisa, BreNda, katrina_kris, lau_ady; Breban, Jurjel, Mureşan, Onea; alex_bancos, ardeleanarmand, costelmiholca, csendesmaria, iosifserban, matesanvladut, roxybpop; adi_mihali08, ady_adriano2200, adynutzza9, allexutsa18, andreea_danyela1995, andy170495, brandy_holliday6814, carla_alx95, denisa_denisa_11, dora.ioana93, elyy16, georgeta_narcisa75, ionut_bodea54, iulian.farcas2011, jeorjeta94, kitty20594, les_flo08, mara_maria_11, mariamarisa95, maya_2011, oana_695, ovi7_2005, ralu33, ramonike_23, roxy09_roxy09, sivle.iulian.18, szabo_ghitza2010, timys_timi2000*. The identity marked through names of this kind corresponds to the bearers' official identity, even in the case of the handles that derive from hypocoristic forms (which give one the feeling of a warm, friendly, familiar environment).

(2) *Medium modification*. This group consists of virtual anthroponyms that have the structure [forename/ hypocoristic form + qualifying element/ phrase]. As regards their position, the two parts of the onymic reference are flexible. Most of the items that can be placed under this heading have the forename/ hypocoristic form in Romanian, while the qualifier appears in English: *ancutzika_free, andyblue_high, andy_ja_rule, crista_crazygirl, cristi_gangsterul_iulian, ghost_cristina, ionut_lost, iulian_gagicaru_bossu, little_criss, maria_smekera, maya_nebuna, miki_frumushika204, notalone_raul16, sorina_papusica, sweet_girl_laura, tina_brunetica_cool*.

(3) *Constructed virtual identity*. Handles that fall into this class point to an identity that usually keeps nothing from the official identity (hence the lack of connection between the

---

[1] According to *The Free Dictionary* (http://www.thefreedictionary.com/xmas), the *x* is borrowed from *Xmas*, and it represents "Greek chi, the first letter of *Χριστος*, 'Christ.' In this use it is parallel to other forms like *Xtian*, 'Christian.' But people unaware of the Greek origin of this *X* often mistakenly interpret *Xmas* as an informal shortening pronounced /eks'məs/. Many therefore frown upon the term *Xmas* because it seems to them a commercial convenience that omits Christ from Christmas".

[2] For the proprial status of virtual anthroponyms, as well as for a comprehensive theory of proper names, see Van Langendonck (2007).

BDD-V916 © 2012 Editura Universității din București
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 17:01:17 UTC)

virtual name and the official one). Nevertheless, there are also users who construct virtual identities that are connected to the real one through the fact they tend to emphasise certain individual traits the onomastic agents find representative of their personality, often to the point of idealizing these personal traits. When choosing a name whose function should be to this end, users have in mind a *super-addressee*, an "evaluating authority" (Blommaert 2011: 39) that they invest with the ability to sanction what they aim to convey through the selected name. Sometimes, the intended associated meaning is salient: *hotlittle_darling, jesus_of_streetball, Mr. Smiley Smile, My Super Sweet Girl, purely.indecent, Răsfătzata lui Ubithu, u_biker_2010, un_pustan_nebun, xtreme_punk4ever* (pointing to physical appearance, attitudes, favourite pastime activities, fields in which the user is skillful). In other instances, the names are cryptic; their symbolic potential is so vast that such names urge us to communicate with their bearers just to see if the presuppositions we have made regarding them are confirmed. Names like *Atractie dincolo de mormant, blind_woman, blue_angel_andrada, cocostarc52, corpus_nocta_nazrathiem, IMPOSIBILUL DEVINE POSIBIL, schizopath_kid, trascutza, u_know_wot2000, white.angel_x, x_justmemory_x* are intentionally ambiguous.

Most of the user names recorded are the result of language contact, of a dynamic interference between English, as a foreign language (L_2, the source language), and Romanian, as a first language (L_1, the target language)[1]. This contamination occurs both consciously – as a result of second-language acquisition, in the manner it is implemented in official, institutional environments – and unconsciously, due to the permanent contact that young people have with English in the media, on the Internet, in the music they listen to, in their groups of friends etc. Especially as regards this age group, the ubiquitous character of the English language in the Romanian landscape has led to a contamination between the two languages along two lines of negative transfer, revealing that, during the process of language learning, there are structures that have not been acquired appropriately in either of the two languages (L_1 and L_2). On the one hand, the (rather limited) knowledge of English has affected negatively those structures in Romanian whose acquisition was not solid to begin with. Thus, we find:

- *(-i-) > (-y-)*: *Crysty, floryn_g22, grygoreples*;
- *c (ca/că, ch* from *che*) *> k*: *ankutzika_free, bazata_ioneluka, dulcik_paula24, karly_1iunie, kalinush, maria_smekera, nyku_nix;*
- *ţ > tz, ş> sh*: *ametzita92, radu_matiash, siminutzaaa*.

On the other hand, certain spelling and grammar rules that the respondents had acquired in an earlier stage of their second-language learning were extrapolated to all (apparently) similar situation, so that we can come across:

- *alin.ryder (*ryder < rider)*;
- *canndy Gherasim* (**canndy < candy)*;
- *I WaItInG In The Dark* (incomplete present progressive form, omitting the auxiliary);
- *just.starss (*starss < stars)*;
- *kage_in_the_underground (*kage < cage)*;
- *karlla.kidd (*kidd < kid)*;

[1] The examples I focus on in this study are from a corpus made up of nicknames used by teenagers (i.e. students from several secondary schools in Baia Mare, Romania) on *Yahoo! Messenger* and *hi5*. These students have all studied English as a second language since they were in kindergarten, so they already have at least 10 years of (official) experience in the use of this language.

BDD-V916 © 2012 Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 17:01:17 UTC)

- *shadow_scarry_night_metal (*scarry < scary)*.

Nevertheless, all these forms – that are grammatically discordant – support communication, as they prove the connection established between different varieties of the two languages. According to Matras (2011: 74), as long as these types of structures "do not result in incomprehensibility and a breakdown of communication, one might instead view them as *enabling* factors that allow language users to create bridges among different subsets within their overall repertoire of linguistic forms, and to use these bridges to sustain communication".

I also draw attention to the occurrence of a number of cultural insertions, either in the shape of English cognates of Romanian anthroponyms (e.g. *Andrew*), or as English cultural names from various domains: music industry (*andy_ja_rule* < Ja Rule, *Beebs*, *Bieber* < Justin Bieber), film industry (*Banderas23* < Antonio Banderas, *Stewie* < Stewie, a character in an American animated sitcom), religion (*jesus_of_streetball*), computer games (*Shadow Lancer, world_Of_cs* < World of Warcraft + CounterStrike). Such names are chosen for the association of prestige they convey; they claim their users' belonging to the Western global society.

3. Conclusion

In the virtual environment, "you are (or become) what you speak, and speaking it (mysteriously) transforms you into what is indexically suggested by the speech" (Silverstein quoted in Blommaert 2011: 55). In what concerns user names, from a semiotic perspective, one may consider them identity indices that reveal the new cultural frame to which the chosen identity (real or imaginary) subscribes: the global, virtual environment, deeply marked/ defined by the English language and the American lifestyle. Linguistically, user names are also indices of language contact through the two languages – i.e. Romanian and English – that are involved in their creation, the mixture of which is the *unmarked choice* of young people in the contemporary Romanian society. This mixture and fluctuation of codes depends, as Matras (2011: 107) points out, "on a variety of factors, among them their [the users'] confidence in the two languages, their relation to the interlocutor's expectations concerning language use, as well as any constraints imposed by the interaction setting, by the goals of language mixing, and by the type of structures that it involves".

ONLINE SOURCES

Online Etymology Dictionary, http://www.etymonline.com/index.php
The Free Dictionary, http://www.thefreedictionary.com/
Urban Dictionary, http://www.urbandictionary.com/
Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Avram, Mioara, 1997, *Anglicismele în limba română actuală*, Bucureşti, Editura Academiei Române.
Avram, Mioara, Marius Sala, 2000, *May We Introduce the Romanian Language to You?*, Bucureşti, The Romanian Cultural Foundation Publishing House.
Blommaert, Jan, 2011, *The Sociolinguistics of Globalization*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
Bugheşiu, Alina, 2010, „Virtual Anthroponymy: A Socio- and Psycholinguistic Approach to Names in the Virtual World", in Oliviu Felecan (coord.), *Onomasticon I. Studii despre nume şi numire*, Cluj Napoca, Editura Mega, p. 49-64.
Coulmas, Florian, 2010, *Sociolinguistics: The Study of Speakers' Choices*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

BDD-V916 © 2012 Editura Universității din București
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 17:01:17 UTC)

Crystal, David, 1994, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
Crystal, David, 2010, *English as a Global Language*, 2nd edition, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
Greenbaum, Sidney, 1996, *The Oxford English Grammar*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
Lakaw, Alexander, 2006, „Hiding behind nicknames. A linguistic study of anonymity in IRC chatrooms", retrieved from http://lnu.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2:206935.
Matras, Yaron, 2011, *Language Contact*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
Milică, Ioan, 2009, *Expresivitatea argoului*, Iaşi, Editura Universităţii "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" din Iaşi.
Scheidt, Lois Ann, 2001, „Avatars and Nicknames in Adolescent Chat Spaces", in *Gender and Computerization*, Spring 2001, retrieved from http://loisscheidt.com/working_papers_archive/Avatars_and_Nicknames.pdf.
Slama-Cazacu, Tatiana, 2000, *Stratageme comunicaţionale şi manipularea*, Iaşi, Polirom.
Stoichiţoiu Ichim, Adriana, 2001, *Vocabularul limbii române actuale. Dinamică, influenţă, creativitate*, Bucureşti, All.
Stoichiţoiu Ichim, Adriana, 2006, *Aspecte ale influenţei engleze în româna actuală*, Bucureşti, Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti.
Trudgill, Peter, 2000, *Sociolinguistics. An Introduction to Language and Society*, 4th edition, London, Penguin Books.
Van Langendonck, Willy, 2007, *Theory and Typology of Proper Names*, Berlin/New York, Mouton de Gruyter.
Zafiu, Rodica, 2001, *Diversitate stilistică în româna actuală*, Bucureşti, Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti.

CURRENT ORIENTATIONS IN ONOMASTIC RESEARCH: USER NAMES

(*Abstract*)

In the current context, whose dimensions are essentially determined by the processes subsumed under the phenomenon of globalisation, the linguistic and extralinguistic spaces are subject to continuous and fundamental reevaluations and reorganisations. The unprecedented changes that have occurred starting with the second half of the past century (especially in the field of IT, but also in economy, social systems and politics) have changed the way in which human relationships are perceived, and the coordinates that underlie them. As an alternative to the conventional types of communication, the availability of the Internet imposes a new medium of expression, a *virtual* one that is extremely flexible and adaptable, meant to meet current communicative needs.

The implications of virtual communication can be noticed at a linguistic level, in general (*chat*-like interactions determine significant changes in the grammatical structures that one comes across in traditional, conventional speech acts), and at an onomastic level, implicitly and particularly, in the facilitation of the occurrence of a new naming pattern, the *user name*. As this onymic type is not typical of the autochthonous socio-cultural and linguistic realities, the peculiarities it develops in the landscape described by the contemporary Romanian language derive, on the one hand, from the Anglo-American system of onomastics which it comes from (and through which it enters the local frame). On the other hand, they result from the intercultural and interlinguistic connections that are favoured by the context of globalisation and the development of communication technologies. Therefore, my paper explores the onymic category of user names, from the viewpoint of language contact, aiming at the definition and the characterisation of this nominal variety, starting from an illustrative onomastic material.

BDD-V916 © 2012 Editura Universității din București
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-10-30 17:01:17 UTC)