LEXICO-SEMANTIC ERRORS DUE TO THE MASSIVE INFLUENCE OF ENGLISH UPON ROMANIAN AND ITALIAN PRESS

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Abstract: The present paper has a normative character, and it aims to illustrate and alert the readers about the use of lexical and semantic errors in Romanian and Italian written press and, at the same time, to attempt to account for some of the reasons of these errors.

Keywords: pseudo-Anglicism, false friends, Italian, Romanian, English influence.

The present paper aims to identify lexico-semantic errors (**pleonasms**, **"false friends"** and **pseudo-Anglicisms**) in a limited number of texts in Romanian and Italian written press, by which regular usage registers diversions from the norm. Some of the errors discussed are illustrated in contexts extracted from both Romanian and Italian publications, consulted online. The words extracted from Romanian and Italian newspapers are accompanied by references to the lexicographic resources mentioned.

The borrowings which have a neologistic characteristic are predominantly reflected in the areas of interest on which mass-media highly insists. Consequently, the language of mass-media represents a never-ending spring of English words and expressions, of linguistic innovations spread by means of communication (both written and oral).

The **pleonasm** is defined in DEX as follows: *speech errors consisting in using together words, phrases, sentences etc. with the same meaning (French: pléonasme).*

Some of the **causes of using pleonasms** are listed in *the Dictionary of pleonasms*[1] by Doina Dascălu (no year). Among these there are: the need to persuade the interlocutor, to be more convincing; the intensity of the meaning, the explanation of the meaning *(x, that is y)*; lack of attention; weakening of self-control; ignorance or, in other words, unacquaintance with the meaning of the words.

In Romanian, the English word *board* (plural *boarduri*) may appear in pleonastic phrases such as *board de conducere*, despite the fact that the word itself has the meaning of "consiliu de conducere", but because of the lack of knowledge regarding its exact meaning, people get to frequently use the Anglicism incorrectly.

(1) *„Îl invit pe domnul Vulpescu să ni se alăture în acest demers de privatizare cu un sfat, o vorbă bună sau, de ce nu, cu un post în* ***board-ul de conducere****", a declarat Diaconescu după anunţul preşedintelui OPSPI.* (www.gandul.info, 21.09.2012)

Among other pleonasms which are frequent in Romanian, there are phrases which comprise the word of English origin *cash* (Anglicism, invariable adjective, adverb, neuter noun, articulated form *cash-ul*) such as *bani cash*, but the speakers ignore the exact meaning of the word, that of *bani gheaţă.* The situation is similar to the Italian one, where both the pleonastic phrase *denaro cash* and the Italian one *denari in contanti/ denaro contante* are used. Another Anglicism which is abusively used is *hobby* (plural *hobby-uri*), often associated

[1] For more explanations and examples, see Doina Dascălu, *Dicţionar de pleonasme*, Editura Vox, Bucureşti, no year, p. 6-8.

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with the adjective *preferat*[2], in Italian *hobby preferito*. Another pleonastic phrase spread in Romanian through mass-media is *cutremur de pământ* (English *earthquake*). The phrase closely translates the English compound, but its rendering in Romanian is pleonastic.

(2) *Aşa că toţi cei dornici să ajute parlamentarii liberali sunt bine-veniţi: se acceptă donaţii pe card,* ***bani cash****, cecuri în alb şi bonuri de masă, ba chiar şi haine second-hand, da' să fie fracuri!* (www.academiacatavencu.info, 1.02.2012)

(3) *Come ridurre l'uso eccessivo del* ***denaro cash*** (www.corriere.it, 22.08.2012) „How to reduce the excessive use of cash"

(4) *Goana după vrăjitoare.* ***Hobby-ul preferat*** *al preoţilor inchizitori* (www.adevarul.ro, 13.09.2011)

(5) *Tanto da far sì che non volesse più recarsi non solo alle partite di pallavolo, il suo* ***hobby preferito****, ma addirittura neanche a scuola.* (www.ilgiornale.it, 30.11.2012) "So that he did not want to join the volleyball matches, his favourite hobby, nor even school"

There may be frequent situations of pleonastic repetitions, such as *să înceapă începând*, which actually belong to the category of semantic pleonasm[3], which may occur due to paying less attention to speech and writing in general, due to the desire of using loan words (sometimes too many, without even noticing) and also due to the semantic confusion regarding certain words.

Another example of a semantic pleonasm is frequently seen and in this case the meaning expressed by a compound with the prefixes *hiper-*/*super-* (Romanian) and *iper-*/ *super-* (Italian) is reiterated through the use of a determiner. Therefore, the cases when one comes across a phrase like *cel mai mare hipermarket/ supermarket* (Romanian) or *il più grande ipermercato/ supermercato* (Italian) become more and more frequent. This case illustrates the lack of awareness of the meaning of the prefixes and the carelessness in using English compounds which, irrespective of the meaning, can be easily associated with an adjective which repeats the meaning expressed by the noun.

(6) *Împreună cu soţia primarului din Roman, Loredana Leoreanu, Elena Udrea a descins în* ***cel mai mare supermarket*** *din oraş şi a umplut mai multe sacoşe cu tot felul de bunătăţi, cu care şi-a cinstit apoi stafful de campanie.* (www.libertatea.ro, 03.12.2012)

(7) [...] *dal 1996 negli ultimi due mesi dell'anno si trasforma nel* ***più grande supermercato*** *al coperto* (www.ilgazzettino.it, 20.01.2014) "[...] ever since 1996, in the last two monts it becomes the largest covered supermarket"

"False friends" represent one of the frequent linguistic errors in the context of the lexical phenomenon of inter-linguistic and intercultural mediation between English, Italian and Romanian.

According to Pulcini (2002), they represent autonomous creations of a language which resemble the English words from a formal point of view, but which in fact are not part of the vocabulary of the language of origin. We do not totally agree with this confinement of false friends and we consider that the author refers rather to pseudo-Anglicisms.

"False friends" usually involve finding some equivalences between two words in two different languages, similar in form, but whose meaning is completely different: *a aprecia* (Romanian) = to cherish somebody/ something < *to appreciate* (English) = to consider; *magazin* (Romanian) = shop < *magazine* (English); *librărie* (Romanian) = bookshop < *library* (English); *evidenţă* (Romanian)/ *evidenza* (Italian) = keeping track < *evidence* (English) = prrof; *a declina* (Romanian) < *to decline* (English) = to refuse etc. Based on the examples

[2] See Dorin Uritescu, *Dicţionar explicativ de pleonasme efective*, Editura All, Bucureşti, 2006.
[3] *Ibidem*

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given, it is obvious that "false friends" of English origin are less frequent in Italian than in Romanian. One of the reasons of the wrong use of these words is the insufficient knowledge of English and the belief that these pairs of words are similar both in form and meaning. Despite all that, for example, the word *magazin(e)* has become familiar in the title of many Romanian magazines: *Protv Magazin*, *Revista Magazin* (a relatively redundant name), *Business Magazin*, *Magazin Istoric* etc.

(8) *„Cred că s-au obişnuit cu prea multe cupluri care, după ce se despart, aruncă cu noroi, dar noi nu facem parte din această categorie", a declarat Marius Moga pentru* ***ProTvMagazin***. (www.libertatea.ro, 07.08.2012)

(9) *[...] alţi şase, între care premierul britanic,* ***au declinat*** *invitaţia, relatează AFP, potrivit Mediafax.* (www.romanialibera.ro, 30.11.2012)

In the attempt of finding a comprehensive definition of **pseudo-Anglicisms**, we can state that they are words with a similar form to the English one, but they are not seen as being part of the English vocabulary by native speakers, being hard to understand, and therefore, avoided. We can include words[4] like the following *recordmen*[5] (Romanian plural *recordmeni*; English *record-holder*)/ *recordman* (Italian), *happy-end* (Romanian plural *happy-enduri*; English *happy-ending*)/ *happy end* (Italian), *ticket restaurant*[6]. The list is not comprehensive. There are many other such words: *autostop*[7] (Romanian, plural *autostopuri*; Italian - invariable, English *hitchhiking*), *dinner jacket*[8] (English *tuxedo*), *afro-look**[9], *after-ski**[10], *after-sun**[11], *airfresh**[12], *babydoll**[13], *autotraining**[14], etc. These last six are marked with an asterisk in DEA, which indicates their absence from English, not being registered in $DOOM_2$ either.

It is also worth mentioning the definition of false-Anglicisms provided by Klajn (1972): "Un vero pseudoanglicismo, o falso prestito […] sarebbe una parola ritenuta inglese, ma che in inglese non esiste affatto. Tali esempi non si trovano, ma di pseudoanglicismi è lecito parlare in due casi: *a*) se la parola usata in italiano ha un significato talmente diverso da quello originale da non essere più sentita come semplice mutamento semantico, ma come un lessema nuovo; b) se l'italiano adopera un composto o locuzione creata con elementi inglesi, i quali però in inglese non formano un insieme[15]."

[4] The examples are taken from Cristiano Furiassi, *False Anglicisms in Italian*, Editura Polimetrica, Milano, 2010, p.13.
[5] $DOOM_2$ also registers the female form, *recordmenă*, with the plural form *recordmene*. Mioara Avram, *Cuvintele limbii române între corect şi incorect*, Editura Cartier, Bucureşti, 2001, p. 195 recommends the form *recordman*.
[6] Not registered in $DOOM_2$. In Romanian, the phrase *ticket restaurant* has come to be used in the same context with the Romanian translations *tichet(e) de masă* or *bonuri de masă*. Still, there are cases when the Romanian phrase *tichet de masă* is exclusively used: *Ultima indexare a* ***tichetelor de masă*** *a avut loc în martie 2011.* (www.evz.ro , 09.11.2012)
[7] In the lexical family of the word, we can also include *autostopist/ă*, registered in $DOOM_2$.
[8] Not registered in $DOOM_2$.
[9] DEA, Manfred GÖRLACH (ed.), *A Dictionary of European Anglicisms. A usage dictionary of Anglicisms in Sixteen European Languages*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2001, p. 3 marks the occurrence of the compound *Afro-look** in Italian under the suggested form (male noun, invariable, technical), while in Romanian there is only the abbreviated form *Afro*. The authors of DEA mark the compound with an asterisk, thus including it in the category of pseudo-Anglicisms.
[10] DEA, Manfred GÖRLACH (ed.), *A Dictionary of European Anglicisms. A usage dictionary of Anglicisms in Sixteen European Languages*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2001, p. 3-4 also registers the translation *doposci* (Italian) and the assimilated form *apreski* (Romanian < French *après-ski*). In both cases, the apparently English word is more rarely used.
[11] DEA, Manfred GÖRLACH (ed.), *A Dictionary of European Anglicisms. A usage dictionary of Anglicisms in Sixteen European Languages*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2001, p. 4 registers the occurrence of the word in Italian, indicating it as being less frequent than the translation *dopo-sole*. The dictionary makes no reference to Romanian.
[12] DEA marks the word as being a male invariable noun in Italian, but it makes a supplementary mention regarding its meaning, *deodorant*. The dictionary does not add any information about Romanian.
[13] According to DEA, the word appears as a male invariable noun in Italian and it is not mentioned in Romanian.
[14] Even if DEA registers the Italian translation *training autogeno*, it makes no reference for Romanian.
[15] *Apud* Ivan Klajn, 1972, *Influssi inglesi nella lingua italiana*, Casa Editrice Leo S. Olschki, Firenze, 1972, p. 101.

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(10) *În ceea ce priveşte expunerea la soare, pentru a evita cojirea pielii, imediat după expunere se recomandă aplicarea unei creme* ***after sun****, hidratante (prin care se reface nivelul de apă din piele).* (www.romanialibera.ro, 10.09.2012)

(11) *Excursiile lungi, făcute cu* ***autostopul****, uneori chiar în echipe de câte şase, sunt de mult timp la modă în Europa de Vest.* (www.romanialibera.ro, 29.07.2010)

(12) *Bluzele* ***babydoll*** *trebuie să îţi amintească de bujorii roz de trandafiri.* (www.romanialibera.ro, 08.02.2012)

(13) *Numărătoarea inversă a început! „The Artist" speră la* ***un „happy end"*** *hollywoodian.* (www.libertatea.ro, 25.02.2012)

(14) *Una lacrima di Charlene per l'happy end della favola senza emozione* (www.lastampa.it, 3.07.2011) „A tear shed by Charlene for the happy ending of the fairy tale without emotion"

(15) *Blondul ales de Rihanna pare inspirat după cel purtat de Rod Stewart. Până acum, Riri avea părul şaten închis, adoptând* ***un look afro***[16]. (www.adevarul.ro, 05.02.2012)

(16) *Vor fi liste comune, în care liderii Noii Republici se vor regăsi alături de cei ai compromisului PDL şi de partidul care are în frunte pe* ***recordmanul***[17] *traseismului politic.* (www.libertatea.ro, 25.02.2012)

(17) *Tragedia alle Bahamas: muore* ***recordman*** *di apnea* (www.corriere.it, 19.11.2013) "Tragedy in Bahamas: a record holder dies of apnea"

Starting from Furiassi's theory (2010: 19-20), the following compounds refer to **pseudo-Anglisicms** and can be included in their series of synonyms: *false Anglicims* or *false Anglicisms*, *quasi-English words*, *pseudo-English*, *pseudo English words*, *pseudo-English loans*, *pseudo Anglicisms*, *pseudoanglicisms*, *pseudo-anglicisms* or *Pseudo-Anglicisms*, *pseudo-English words*. Besides the ones mentioned, the same author adds another short list of Italian phrases with the same meaning: *falsi anglicismi*, *falsi anglismi*, *pseudoanglicismi*, *pseudoanglismi*, *anglicismi apparenti* - English-looking words (Furiassi 2010: 110).

A first step in avoiding and eliminating pseudo-Anglicisms represents the attempt of translating them or finding a proper equivalent for them in the target-language.

Gusmani (1973:106) resumes the talk about false loan-words, which he defines as „parole che hanno l'aspetto di forestierismi o sono addirittura identiche, in apparenza, ad un termine straniero, ma che in realtà sono state create indipendentemente da un modello straniero preciso[18]". Such an example can be found in a book by William Ward (1993), called *Getting it Right in Italy*. A good example is the wrong use of the phrase *prodotto leader* by the Italians, when in fact the correct form in the language of origin is *leading product*.

In the volume *False Anglicisms in Italian*, following the steps of his tutor and colleague, Virginia Pulcini[19], Furiassi (2010) makes a detailed classification of false-Anglicisms, which he sees as a sub classification of false friends – an extremely frequent and popular phrase in English – which we intend to present as follows.

Thus, some pseudo-Anglicisms are based on the derivative criterion, and the word attributed by Furiassi is that of **autonomous derivatives**. Others are formed through composition, **autonomous compounds**, through **compound ellipses** or **clipping**. The present

[16] The compound *afro-look* was submitted to Romanian regulations, and therefore the noun precedes the adjective, *look afro.*

[17] Although DOOM2 registers the Anglicisms with a phonetic spelling, *recordmen*, the frequent form in use is *recordman*. Despite that, one should bear in mind that both words are inexistent in the language of origin.

[18] Author's note: "Words which apparently resemble or are identical to foreign words, but which in fact have been created independently according to a given foreign pattern".

[19] She has focused on the study of the impact of English upon Italian ever since 1994, as it appears in the foreword of Furiassi's volume, who has adopted the work of Pulcini as a model. He was also inspired by the complex volume of Görlach dedicated to the same topic of Anglicisms in 16 European languages.

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paper aims to discuss only the last two means of pseudo-Anglicism formation mentioned, namely **ellipse** and **clipping**. Still, we should mention that the procedures of shortening the words/phrases do not always give birth to words which do not exist in the language of origin. Some good examples are *bus*, *modem* and *pub* (examples seen in Suciu (2009:66-67)), which exist in English and which represent the clipping of the following words: *omni**bus***, ***mo****dulator*-***dem****odulator* and ***pub****lic house*. Despite the fact that they can be used at the same time with the original phrases, the clipped words are much more frequent given their availability, concision and the flow of information grated by their use in communication.

The ellipse is the consequence of semantic crowding of one structure or phrase often formed by a noun and an adjective. The determiner is avoided through ellipse, fact which triggers the insertion of the ellipse in the morphological category of the noun, phenomenon which is also known by the name of *substantivization of the adjective*[20].

From a more comprehensive point of view, the ellipse involves "the reduction of the phrase to the minimum" by eliminating the unnecessary words. (Iordan, 1943: 273)

The pseudo-Anglicisms formed through **ellipse**[21] involve the removal of the suffix –*ing*, unlike the English word which is characterized by the presence of this ending. A good example which may better explain this phenomenon is the English compound *happy ending*, which has started to be wrongly used in Romanian and Italian with the form *happy end*.

Moreover, **clippings** involve the shortening of words. Even if at the beginning, most clippings were applied to French load-words, at present there are clipped English words which have entered the Romanian vocabulary. One or more sequences "which lack the meaning from their lexical basis, which is usually a word, or which may also be a constant phrase" are eliminated though clipping. (Suciu, 2009: 63)

In English, the same concept may be explained through the following words: *truncation, clipping, clipped words* or *shortenings.*

Clipped words are not as frequent as ellipses. An example of a clipped word is *grep* (Romanian) resulted from the shortening of the English compound *grape-fruit*[22].

Therefore, out of the desire to replace the English words and phrases with their translation or approximate meaning, given the connotation or the stylistic role which the word can achieve, the availability and the modernity of the English word and, last but not least, the need to avoid repetition, the written press often spreads many lexical-semantic errors, which the reader takes as being correct. This scattering of wrong words and phrases is due to rush, lack of knowledge or ignorance of the meaning.

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[20] See Vasile ŞERBAN, Ivan EVSEEV, *Vocabularul românesc contemporan. Schiţă de sistem*, Editura Facla, Bucureşti, 1978, p. 156 for a more thorough discussion.
[21] *Apud* Filipović (1985: 249-251).
[22] DOOM2 registers both the clipping *grep* (fruit, plural *grepuri*), and the phonetically assimilated word, *grepfrut* (plural *grepfruturi*).

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