ROMGLISH IN ECONOMY, BUSINESS AND MEDIA. A THEORETICAL APPROACH

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Abstract: This paper analyses several studies on the influence of English in Romanian in the language of economy and business, on the one hand, thus dealing with a specialised vocabulary. On the other hand, the language of the printed and audio-visual press offers a clear perspective on the current status of the language, being the most accurate illustrator of the evolutionary pattern of the Romanian language.

Keywords: Romglish, lexical influences, media, economy, business

1. Business and Economy – a Specialised Anglophile Vocabulary

The economic branch of the specialised part of the language must be taken into consideration when dealing with the influence of English in the Romanian vocabulary. It is part of the technical-scientific style and one of the most "complex and varied of the professional languages, its word-stock encompassing a collection of terms that are specific to the various activities of the branches of economy […], combining a language of its own to other fields of research such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, informatics"[1].

The fact that it is impossible at this point in time to talk about an isolated, national economy, without placing it in a regional, if not global context is more than obvious. This is why this specialised vocabulary contains such an extensive array of internationalisms, the English ones bearing the highest frequency[2].

The current socio-economic climate is favourable for the acceptance of new lexical units in this particular field of activity. The vocabulary of the new, socialism-liberated economy of Romania has to renounce several of its outdated terms and create new ones, fit to describe the realities of today. With the emergence of several new fields of activity (management, marketing, economic informatics etc.), new lexical items are needed to pinpoint certain semantic units. This fact, combined to the increasingly internationalised economy has led to an expected and predictable reality: more and more lexical items are taken from English to elude the necessity of creating a new word in our language[3].

1.1 Specialised Terminology and Borrowings Proper

It is important to take a glimpse at the two different types of words taken from English. First of all, there are the borrowings proper – words that have been in the general use of the public for some time now and appear in dictionaries and have been adapted to an extent to the spelling, phonological and/or morphological system of Romania. This is the case of *weekend*, which in the DOOM[2] is given the plural form of a neutral noun – *weekenduri*. Furthermore, words like *cool*, *party*, *job*, *OK* etc. are used more and more extensively by the public, making them closer to the status of a borrowing proper even if they might not be coined as such by a dictionary.

On the other hand, a large array of terminological units pertaining to the field of economy may appear in specialised dictionary. Since they are not adapted in either way to the Romanian language

[1] Athu, op. cit, p. 25
[2] Id., p. 41.
[3] Cf. Athu, p. 27

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system and are not even in general use, I believe that they might be, at the most, called specialised borrowings.

1.2 The Specialised Word-Stock and Its Adaptability

Talking about two languages with very distinct spelling systems – the phonetic spelling of Romanian as opposite to the etymological one of English, adapting the graphical representation of an English word to the Romanian system is very difficult. The adaptation to the Romanian spelling system of borrowings proves to be more effective if the word has been used in the common language for a longer period of time. Again, if we look in DOOM[2], we find that the recommended forms of *sandwich* are *sandvici/sendviș*. Despite the attempt of the Romanian Academy to norm the use and the spelling of English borrowings, most speakers will prefer to render it in the original graphical form. This might be due to the increasing literacy in English of the average Romanian correlated to the exponential increase in advertisements displaying the proper English forms of certain day-to-day realities.

According to Cristina Athu, the current tendency of the users of English words in the field of economy is to maintain the etymological spelling of their terminology. This is due to the fact that adapting them to the Romanian spelling system would prove to be too difficult and it is entirely unnecessary. Furthermore, the fact that most of these lexical items are internationalisms and have entered the specific terminology by means of the written form make adapting their graphical forms even in the future highly unlikely[4].

If we take a glimpse at the vast number of terms that are indexed in Cristina Athu's work (p. 42, 43), we find that most of them are nouns or noun phrases: *browser*, *benchmark*, *blue-chips*, *boom*, *futures*, *contingent compensation*, *deadline*, *dumping*, *factoring*, *fees*, *hedging*, *rebound*, *salesman* etc. They are subjected to some extent to Romanian morphological rules, i.e. they can be put in a plural form and suffer the definite article[5].

Thus, it is safe to speculate on the fact that at least for the time being, English words that are entering the Romanian lexicon will not suffer any alteration in respects to their spelling and pronunciation. This pseudo-adaptation in respects to their morphology merely stresses the ease with which this process is taking place.

2. Linguistic Impact on the Media and Public Reactions

As it was previously stated, the language present in newspapers, radio and TV shows is comprised of the most natural speech acts that can be properly recorded. If we want to take a glimpse at the state of the language in a certain period of time, the language press is one of its most vivid aspects. It is in a manner of speaking, a snapshot of its evolutionary pattern, since words that are coined by dictionaries must have been in use for some time beforehand.

2.1 The Language of the Media or the Pre-Coining of English Borrowings

Taking into consideration these two types of English words used by the Romanian speakers, I have chosen to make a comparative analysis of lexical items that appear in two important works dealing with the influence of English in Romanian: Adriana Stoichițoiu-Ichim's *Vocabularul limbii române actuale* (The Vocabulary of the Contemporary Romanian Language) and Georgeta Ciobanu's *Romanian Words of English Origin*. The latter offers a view on how the number of English loanwords has increased over several years and the route which was taken by said words to enter the language. First of all, it is worth mentioning that at the in the 20th century, Romanian linguists strongly believed that borrowings proper were made first of all in the vocabulary of sports, while the rest of the borrowings came into Romanian mainly via French[6]. This is due to the fact that in order to consider a word of foreign etymology a borrowing proper, the two languages in question must have been in direct contact. This took place in Romania especially during and after the Second

[4] Cf. Athu, pp. 90-95
[5] Cf. Athu, ch. 6
[6] Ciobanu, p. 58

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World War, with a perpetually increasing influence in the last two decades[7]. Georgeta Ciobanu states that in 1931, some 40 words of English origin were indexed in the IED, of which I have spoken before. In 1958, 60 actual loanwords and 13 internal linguistic creations based on them were mentioned in the DCR. Then, the author finds that the major dictionaries printed in the in the 1980s have around 800 entries of English origin. This is an extraordinary increase, the number of borrowings being over 100 times larger than that of '58[8].

Romanian Words of English Origin presents the author's own corpus of Anglicisms, which renders 1,200 entries, selected from written and oral sources from the 1980s up to 2004, when the book was printed. Ciobanu mentions that roughly 10% of these entries were taken from the printed press of the late 1990s and early 2000s[9].

To prove the fact that not all the English words that circulate in the press can be pointed out in a study, I have chosen to compare the two aforementioned works. In order to make the comparison clearer, I will place the terms in a table constructed below.

	Type of loanword, according to field of interest (Stoichițoiu-Ichim) and the word itself		Present in Georgeta Ciobanu's work
1	Economy, finance, commerce and the terminology of professions	Baby-sitter/baby-sitting	×
2		Broker	✓
3		Dealer	✓
4		Drive-in/drive-through	✓
5		Duty-free/duty-free shop	×
6		Futures	×
7		Non-profit	×
8		Rating	×
9		Telebanking	×
10		Electronic banking	×
11		Tour-operator/turoperator	×
12		Voucher	×
13	Technical terminology	Airbag	×
14		Hard (<hardware)	✓
15		Soft (<software)	✓
16		Lap-top	×
17		Screening (medicine) > ro. *a scana*	✓
18		Shipping	×
19		Site (internet)	×
20		Walkman	✓
21	Communications and press	Banner	×
22		Clip	×
23		Hot line (*hot-line*)	×
24		Help-line	×
25	Education and research	Curriculum > ro. also the adj. curricular	×
26		Grant (also appears in official documents of the State)	×
27		Master (<Master of Arts/ Master of Science)	×
28	Fashion, entertainment,	Body (clothing)	×

[7] Id., p. 59
[8] Id., pp. 59-60
[9] Id., pp. 65-67

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29	gastronomy	Bodypainting/Body-painting	×
30		Fan club	×
31		Grill (only the object itself)	✓
32		Roll on (only for recipients of cosmetic, medical products)	×
33		Stick (for deodorants)	×
34		Stripper (the feminine derives from French)	✓
35		Top (both for ranking and for a piece of clothing)	✓

First, a number of explanations must be given about the manner in which Adriana Stoichițoiu-Ichim has structured and differentiated the lexical items in different classes. According to her, there are two major types of borrowings, seen from a socio-cultural perspective. This restates Sextil Pușcariu's division of all borrowings into *necessary* and *luxurious* ones. The first category implies that the loanwords either have no correspondent in the Romanian linguistic reality or provide certain advantages in matters of precision, internationalisation, expressivity etc. to the native term. The luxurious Anglicisms are "useless or, in some cases, harmful borrowings" since Romanian already has a lexical item to describe the semantic value(s) of the loanword[10].

Before analysing the results of the comparison, let us take note on the other types of borrowings that the author found in her research. An important sub-type of the necessary borrowings is that of the stylistic ones, offering foreign connotations to the speech act. During the communist era, they were mainly bookish words, pertaining only to travel journals or specialised publications (cinematography, music, sports etc.). to give only some of the examples of dr. Ichim, words like *rancher*, *hold-up*, *brain-drain*, *gossip-columnist* (with its romanianised version, gossipist) *look*, *soap-opera*, *sequel* have appeared in the press of the '90s. Apart from these, several more words that envisage the local colour of a certain place in the Anglophone space are preferred to their Romanian counterparts in order to further pinpoint the belonging to the English or American space of that which a lexical item describes: *pub*, *hot dogs*, *hamburgeri* (again, suffering morphological modifications according to the Romanian system), *junk food*, *court dramas*, *killer*, *rancher*, *peanuts* (when describing an American event taking place on the Romanian territory), *high-life*, *boss*, *sexy*, *OK* and so on[11].

On the other hand, the author describes several superfluous borrowings, or luxurious, as she calls them. They are the lexical items which have been borrowed and used in the press without am actual need since Romanian had previously had terms which its speakers used with the same meaning. These are *advertising*, *nurse*, *showroom*, *salesman*, *shop*, *shopping*, *super-/mini-market*, *briefing*, *press release*, *key-note*, *key-speaker*, *training*, *workshop*, *item*, *visiting professor*, *chairman*, *exit-poll*, *staff*, *casting*, *romance*, *team*, *goalkeeper*, *fashion*, *toast*, *steak*, *snacks* and many others. Due to the fact that they do not offer novelty in terms of semantics or do not restrict the semantic field of a pre-existent term, they are believed by the author to be part of an *anglomania*, a trend that seems to be very vivid and with many followers in all strata of society[12].

Let us now go back to the comparison of terminology present in the two books mentioned before. I have analysed only the necessary borrowings, as they were defined, categorised and exemplified by dr. Ichim. Out of 35 items, only 7 were mentioned in the 1,200 items-list presented by Georgeta Ciobanu. Since both works were printed at the beginning of the 21st century (the first in 2004 and the latter in 2007), it is safe to conclude that a thorough analysis of the English borrowings in Romanian has not yet been made. This is not due to the lack of interest, but rather to the lack of a

[10] Cf. Stoichițoiu-Ichim, ch. 5
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.

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consistency in the criteria and research methodology of the existent papers. This, in turn, is a cause of the high abundance of anglophile loanwords and their continuous deluge in the day-to-day speech of the common Romanian citizen. Basing my opinion on several aspects mentioned before, as is for instance the fact that through their use in the post-communist press several English words have entered the daily speech of the people, I would state that the extensive presence of certain foreign words in the press ensures their future coining as borrowings.

2.2 A Newspaper of the Maramureș County and the Language of Young Journalists

In a 2007 collections of studies, entitled *Style and Language in the Romanian Mass-Media*, coordinated by Ilie Rad, Oliviu Felecan publishes a study concerning *The Style and Language of the Youth in the Written Press of Maramureș*. His study is centred on the analysis of the most important newspaper of the county, *Glasul Maramureșului*. It was chosen due to the fact that every Monday, it has a page where high-school pupils, chosen from schools in Baia Mare have the opportunity to publish their attempts at journalistic writings. The examples here are abundant, as it would be expected, coming from a generation that was born in the time of the highest influx of Anglicisms in Romanian. Aside from using Anglicisms, the young generation was and still is an important part of the process through which English words enter the Romanian language. *OK*, *play-backeri*, *warm-up*, *DJ-ului*, *show-ul*, *after hour*, *chill out*, *cool*, *metal*, *punkrock*, *hardcore*, *power pop*, *week-end*, *live*, *playback*, *fanclubul*, *backstage*, *boy-band-urilor* are some of the examples offered by Oliviu Felecan[13]. Interestingly enough, many of the lexical items are subjected to morphological changes, while others are erroneous in form.

It is not the adaptation or lack thereof of said loanwords to the Romanian inflectional system or their graphical (in)adequateness that sets the youth aside from the other speakers of Romanian. They differentiate themselves due to their highly more extensive use of English words and particularly due to the use of entire phrases in the middle of their speech act: "La urma urmei, *the show MUST go on*", "A mai încercat cineva să *be gone in 50 seconds*?", "Parcă tot e mai bine să pleci vreo 4-5 ani *far away from parents*", "*First of all*, fiecare elev a trebuit să scrie pe o hârtiuță [...] *Then*, să dea o notă...", "Iar acum, *back to school everyone*"[14]. The most interesting fact concerning these occurrences is that they have no other use except that of providing the text with a peculiarity of style.

Apart from the extensive use of Anglicisms, the texts presented by Felecan show that the English spelling is not adapted to the Romanian one except in situations where mockery is intended: "Credeți că angajarea ar trebui să se facă în funcție de IQ? [...] fie *aichiu-ul* ignorant, că tot ar crește rata șomajului"[15]. Here, we can clearly see that a Romanian orthography is used to render the English sounds, but taking into consideration the context and the opposition *IQ-aichiu*, the intention of the author becomes clear.

It comes as no surprise, then, that for this generation Romanian spelling takes on some English characteristics. For instance, the [ʃ] sound is rendered in Romanian only with the letter *ș*. Felecan provides us with examples where it is graphically rendered by the English version *sh*: *asha*, *nashpa*[16]. The reason behind this is not that of economy of text, as it might be with the next example offered in the study, but it is again, a manner in which this age-group choses to emphasise their uniqueness. The author provides another example of the English spelling system influencing the young journalists – "k-lumea" for *ca lumea*. In my opinion, he commits an error in this situation, because the letter *k* does not render in English the [kʌ] group of sounds. This is, in fact, a result of the need of economy of text in the age of the mobile phone texting, since the letter *k* in the Romanian alphabet is indeed pronounced in the same manner as *ca*, i.e. [kʌ].

[13] Felecan, Oliviu, *Stilul și limbajul tinerilor din presa scrisă maramureșeană*, p. 271-273. In Rad, Ilie (coord.), *Stil și limbaj în mass-media din România*
[14] Id., pp. 272-273
[15] Id., p. 275
[16] Ibid.

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Seeing this vast amount of evidence from across the press, both younger and older users of *Romglish*, it is clear that the press and the economic stage are very suitable environments for English words to prosper and develop into an important part of the Romanian vocabulary.

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