ENGLISH INFLUENCES IN THE ROMANIAN MEDICAL VOCABULARY

Liliana Florina Andronache, Roxana Corina Sfetea
Lecturer, PhD, Prof., PhD, "Carol Davila" University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Bucharest

Abstract: The aim of the current paper is to discuss the Romanian medical words, namely their imminent influence by English in the context of linguistic and cultural globalization. Medical texts comprise numerous English words or words of English origin whose use in this developing field is constantly undergoing changes.

Keywords: English, Romanian, medical vocabulary, influence, borrowings.

Mass media is definitely one of the major sources of information nowadays, be it the written press, the internet or television. As Marshall McLuhan[1] used to say, "Media is the message", although he strongly believed in the power of the Internet and not so much in the influence of the written press, which he considered "cold" and very likely to perish.

Currently, people are more and more in a hurry, in this rapidly changing society, attempting to adapt to their daily needs: spending less time in traffic, using shorter and more rapid means of communication, trying to make themselves more easily understood by the others. For such purposes, communication has been and still is an essential part in everyone's life, in both its written and oral forms. Coming in contact not only with people of the same origin, but being able to interact with people from all over the world, requires the knowledge of at least one foreign language, English in most cases. Therefore, the contact between languages inevitably leads to the imminent use of borrowings.

The contracted forms, i.e. the abbreviations or acronyms, are the most likely to be borrowed from English, even if their translation into Romanian is different from the English one. For example, in Romanian we say *colesterol HDL* from the English *HDL cholesterol*, even though the English phrase is translated into Romanian and not borrowed: *High Density Lipoproteins* (Engl.) = *Lipoproteină de înaltă densitate* (Rom.). Similarly, we say *colesterol LDL* from the English form *LDL cholesterol*, whereas the English phrase *Low Density Lipoproteins* is translated into Romanian as *Lipoproteină de joasă densitate*.

Some other similar cases are presented below:

CP (Rom.) <*cerebral palsy* (Engl.) or *CP* (Engl.), although the Romanian translation is *paralizie cerebrală*

TSH (Rom.) <*thyroid stimulating hormone* (Engl.) or *TSH* (Engl.), although the Romanian translation is *hormon de stimulare tiroidiană*

IQ (Rom.) <*intellectual quotient* (Engl.) or *IQ* (Engl.) although the Romanian translation is *quotient intelectual* or *coeficient intelectual*

HIV (Rom.) <*Human Immunodeficiency Virus* (Engl.) or *HIV* (Engl.), although the Romanian translation is *virusul imunodeficienţei umane*

[1] See Rusu (2010: 89).

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hPP (Rom.) <*human pancreatic polypeptide* (Engl.) or *hPP* (Engl.), although the Romanian translation is *polipeptidă pancreatică umană.*

However, the English phrase is sometimes translated into Romanian, and then the acronym is formed from the Romanian translation. A good example is *deoxyribonucleic acid* (Engl.) contracted as *DNA* in English and translated into Romanian as *acid dezoxiribonucleic* (*ADN*).

In specialized fields like medicine, it is impossible for specialists not to come in contact with one another, irrespective of their origin or language spoken. It is a very well-known fact that the language spoken at most reunions, conferences and congresses is English, since it has become a universally understood idiom by people all over the world. Therefore, the use of borrowings and bilingual phrases is the result of linguistic contact. It is easily understood that borrowing words is not necessarily a mutual process, the target language being the one that borrows more words or phrases from the prestigious language and not the other way around (Staicu 2015: 205). Therefore, if we speak of English and Romanian, it is the latter that will benefit from the prestige English has earned in time and will borrow words and phrases, sometimes out of need and some other times for reasons[2] such as: the need to impress the interlocutor, the need to arouse the interlocutor's curiosity or for objective reasons such as: the need for precision, the need for a more efficient communication, and, last but not least, the need for introducing new concepts or ideas in case they are absent in the target language or replacing the obsolete ones.

New terms are constantly being "absorbed" in the Romanian vocabulary first of all due to the fact that medicine is in constant progress and evolution, new treatments or medicines being discovered every day.

However, we can conclude that words and phrases of English origin are either essential in the target language, therefore their use is a necessity or they simply replace an already existing Romanian equivalent, in which case their use is optional.

There is the tendency to borrow the English word despite the actual occurrence of its Romanian equivalent. For example, the frequent use of the word *amigdală* has never been an impediment for Romanians to borrow and further use the word *tonsilă*, which is the adapted form of the English *tonsil*.

Below, there are some examples of words (some of which have become part of phrases) of English origin that have entered Romanian due to the fact that they are more fashionable if used in their English form, although Romanians were already using some other ways of referring to the same thing. Thus, the English borrowings have come to be used simultaneously with their already familiar Romanian equivalents.

*un **blister** de medicamente = o folie de medicamente*
***pacemaker** (cardiac) = stimulator (cardiac)*
***planning** familial = planificare familială*
***lifting** = ridicare* (in the surgical or cosmetic fields)
***peeling** = descuamare*
***check-up** = examen medical*

A rather hilarious example that is worth mentioning to highlight the extreme situation the use of borrowings can lead to is one of the compounds of the word *vegan*, i.e. *vegansexual*[3], a word that defines "any vegan who refuses to have sexual intercourse with an omnivorous person".

There are cases when the English phrases are translated literally into Romanian, as it is the case of the so-called *fight-or flight response*, which is a reaction to stress, which in

[2] For a more thorough presentation of both objective and subjective "motifs" of borrowings, see Andronache (2014: 68-70).
[3] See Rusu (2010: 91).

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Romanian is used as *reacţia luptă sau fugi*. A similar example is *Adam's apple* (Engl.), literally translated into Romanian as *Mărul lui Adam*, which refers to the protrusion in the human neck.

Calques define the rendering of new meanings to already existing words in the target language, according to a foreign model. They should not be overlooked either. Some good examples of total calques are presented as follows:

test dublu-orb (Rom.)< *double-blind test* (Engl.)
fumător pasiv (Rom.)< *second-hand smoker (passive smoker)* (Engl.)
fumat pasiv (Rom.)< *second-hand smoke (passive smoke*) (Engl.)
fumător activ (Rom.)< *first-hand smoker* (Engl.)
fumat activ (Rom.) < *first-hand smoke* (Engl.)
celulă-ţintă (Rom.)< *target cell* (Engl.)

There are also some relevant examples of partial calques that are worth mentioning. They are called partial, because they partially render the English phrase into Romanian, by preserving part of it.

celulă ***stem***(Rom.)< *stem cell* (Engl.)
celulă ***NK***(Rom.)< *NK cell = natural killer cell* (Engl.)
celule ***gliale***(Rom.)< *glial cells* (Engl.)
cluster *de diferenţiere*[4](Rom.)< *cluster of differentiation* (Engl.)

On the other hand, there are a few English phrases that have been borrowed into Romanian due to their accuracy, which makes conversation (written or oral) shorter and more precise. Otherwise, in the absence of a short and precise phrase, the speaker should have used a longer explanation which is more time-consuming.

baby blues *= the post-partum depression of the mother*
back cross *= the genetic cross between a hybrid and a parent*
behaviorism *= theory that considers psychology as the science of behavior, ignoring conscience*
blotting *= the macromolecular transfer from a gel to a membrane, where it is fixed*
coaching *= the medical education of sick patients, mainly cancer patients*

Another category of borrowings which is worth discussing is that of necessary words taken from English in the absence of another word in Romanian to designate the specific thing or idea. A few examples of this category are presented below and they are divided into two categories, as follows:

(a) necessary and adapted to the Romanian morphological system for reasons such as: the need to include the verb in one of the 4 conjugations specific to Romanian in terms of their endings (*a computeriza* is included in the 1st conjugation of verbs); due to phonetic assimilation (*clonaj, cip*); due to the inexistence of double consonants in Romanian (*stres*); the unlikely probability for a feminine noun to end in a consonant (*clusterină*).

a computeriza[5] (Rom.) <*to computerize* (Engl.)
clonaj (Rom.) <*clonage* (Engl.)
stres (Rom.) <*stress* (Engl.)
cip (Rom.) <*chip* (Engl.)
clusterină (Rom.) <*clusterin*[6] (Engl.)

(b) necessary and not adapted to the Romanian morphological system
by-pass
handicap
marker

[4] Also used as *clasă de diferenţiere.*
[5] To process by means of a computer.
[6] It is a glycoprotein secreted by different tissues.

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placebo
screening

Despite the similarity in form, not always two words or phrases have the same meaning in two different languages. It is the case of the English word *excited*, whose meaning[7] is *happy* or *enthusiastic,* very often misunderstood in Romanian and translated incorrectly as *excitat* (*aroused* in English).

In **conclusion**, the process of borrowing words from languages that come in contact is inevitable, and it is more likely to borrow from prestigious languages which have the potential of becoming "universal" languages and not the other way around. Languages have a tremendous power of adapting to the needs of its people, thence the need to constantly borrow and sometimes adapt the borrowings.

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[7] See https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/excited.

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