

**The Use Of The English Language  
In Romanian Magazines: Necessity Or Luxury?**

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**Abstract**

*The process of globalization provides the conditions of the international spread of English as a "lingua franca"; in this context our language asserts its capacity to accept a large number of English loans and highlights its creativity through innovations arising from usage. While some of these loans enter into a process of adaptation and assimilation in the Romanian language, others maintain their English form in both spelling and pronunciation. But how strong is the need to borrow, and how often the Romanian recipient language gives up its own vocabulary items in favour of the foreign ones?*

*This article is concerned with the use of English in Romanian magazines. In order to support my research, I studied five Romanian magazines, (Capital, Casa Lux, Unica, Click! Sănătate, Auto Motor și Sport), which due to their uninterrupted circulation and broad coverage in terms of topics discussed, give a reliable picture of the on-going contact between English and Romanian. The intention of my analysis was to see which of the English words found in the corpus are assimilated and recorded in Romanian dictionaries and under what category of Anglicisms (luxury or necessary) they fall, and, finally, to list their frequency.*

**Keywords:** *English language, Americanization, Romanian language, Anglicism*

### **Introduction**

When we speak about Romania, it is not improper to say that the English language appears to be equally established and available in all media forms. Exposure to English via entertainment media goes beyond music; the television and film industries contribute to opportunities for Europeans to have contact with English also. Music, television and film are not the only media influenced by American cultural products and by English. In the following, I consider the internet, radio, and print media, all of which are similarly rich in opportunities for contact with English, especially for teenagers. English-language films, television programming, computer games, music, billboards and magazines as well as newspapers all provide exposure to English outside of school and contribute to the further spread of English

The occurrence of the English language in Romania began because of England's supremacy in Europe, but in the 20th century English assumed a stronger presence on the continent, and not solely due to British activity. The signs of the American culture in our country cannot be denied or overlooked. The way people dress, eat, speak and communicate, spend their

holidays, buy things, decorate their homes, work and relate to each other, all these are marked by this influence. The movies, TV series and TV shows Romanians watch, the music they listen, the entertainers and celebrities they cherish and admire, almost all of these come from the United States. But, in my opinion, the most important American reality embedded in our society is the medium through which all of the above are acquired, namely the English language. Without forgetting the role of England in the distribution of English throughout the globe, it must be emphasized the point that the United States' social rank as a super power was the factor that consolidated the language's status as a modern *lingua franca*.

### **Necessary Anglicism vs. Luxury Anglicism**

When Romanian-English contact phenomena are discussed, a very often used term is that of *Anglicism*. The definition used and accepted in this paper is that given by Mioara Avram, who defines an Anglicism as “a linguistic unit (not only word, but also format, phraseological expression, meaning or grammatical construction) and even type of pronunciation and / or writing (including punctuation) of

English origin, regardless of the territorial variety of English, not only the British” (Avram, p.11). In the context of the emergence and growth of English as a global language following the spread and adoption of the American culture in many countries of the world, Americanization of language through the import of words and expressions in English can be described as a process that cannot be stopped and opposing the invasion of English terms into Romanian would have no effects.

Sextil Pușcariu classified anglicisms into *necessary Anglicisms* and *luxury Anglicisms*, (Pușcariu, as cited in Pop, Sim, p. 25). This is also the classification I will be using when presenting the practical part of my paper. The first category, that of *necessary Anglicisms*, is represented by “those words, phrases or phraseological units which do not have a correspondent in Romanian or which offer some advantage in use compared to the native term. In this line, Anglicisms are more precise, short but eloquent, and in wide circulation. Their motivation lies in the novelty of the referent.” The second category, *luxury Anglicisms*, is represented by “unnecessary borrowings connected to the subjective tendency of some social categories to individualize them linguistically in this way.

Such terms simply double the Romanian words, without adding any further information.” (Pop, Sim, p. 25).

### **Case studies: Anglicisms in five Romanian magazines**

Bearing in mind the factors that contributed to the Americanization of our language and the two kinds of Anglicisms presented earlier, I think it is pertinent to move on to the next part of my research, which contains the analysis of five Romanian magazines (*Unica, Click! Sănătatea, Capital, Casa Lux* and *Auto Motor și Sport*), in regards to the use of English words and phrases in their articles. The intention of my analysis was to see which of the English words found in the corpus are assimilated and recorded in Romanian dictionaries and under what category of Anglicisms (luxury or necessary) they fall, and, finally, to list their frequency. I included all of these aspects in the tables designed for each of the magazines studied.

*Capital* is a Romanian financial magazine first launched in 1992, which covers aspects of politics, business and finance. The total amount of English single words and phrases occurring in the Romanian economic magazine named

Capital is 41 on a total of 32 pages, A4 format; out of these 32 pages, 2 of them were dedicated to advertising. Some of the most common English nouns in the studied corpus, meaning CAPITAL magazine, include *business, online, retail, leasing* as well as other words which have already been adopted in the language, being actually recorded by older dictionaries (DEX 1975), as *trend, dealer, cash, software, supermarket*. I have chosen to include them in the present study because, even if they existed in Romanian before 1989, I believe that they have gained currency since. However, the other words that show a low frequency of occurrence, i.e. less than 4-5 occurrences, are used to designate new concepts, objects, activities, etc which are new to the Romanian society, thus being prototypical examples of cultural loans. Such recent borrowings include *startup, e-commerce, newsletter, breaking-news, brief*, etc.

*Auto Motor și Sport* is the first car magazine launched in Romania in 1997. The total amount of English single words and phrases occurring in this publication is 96 on a total of 114 pages, A4 format; out of these 114 pages, 8 of them were dedicated to advertising. Some of the most common English nouns in the studied corpus include

*infotainment, touchscreen, facelift, smartphone, etc.*, as well as other words which have already been adopted in the language, being actually recorded by older dictionaries as *feedback, display, online, update, business*, etc.. The other words that show a low frequency of occurrence are used to designate types of cars as *pick-up, crossover, bubble car, plug-in-hybrid car*, etc. or technological terms as *dock, drive-by-wire, turbo lag, twin-scroll turbo, common rail, shooting brake*, etc.

*Casa Lux* is the first interior design magazine launched in Romania in 1994. The total amount of English single words and phrases occurring in this publication is 48 on a total of 114 pages, A4 format; out of these 114 pages, only 3 of them were dedicated to advertising. It can be observed that more than half of the Anglicisms are terms related to interior design. Some of the most common English nouns in this number include *dining, vintage open space pattern, etc.*, as well as other words which have already been adopted in the language, being actually recorded by older dictionaries as *brand, living, look, showroom*, etc.. The other words that show a low frequency of occurrence are used to designate new concepts, objects, activities, etc which are new to the Romanian society, thus being

prototypical examples of cultural loans as *e-book*, *DIY*, *rattan*, *post-and-beam*, *shuttle*, etc.

The magazine *Click! Sănătate* deals with health and food news, fitness, lifestyle trends, etc. The magazine's topics range from diet to dealing with life issues such as relationships and stress; it offers fashion and beauty tips, various food recipes, and articles that can encourage people to be happy and healthy. The total amount of English single words and phrases occurring in this publication is 5 on a total of 82 pages, A5 format; out of these 82 pages, only 3 of them were dedicated to advertising. One aspect that I think must be praised is related to the low frequency of Anglicism in this publication: out of these 5 words 3 of them are recorded in Romanian dictionaries: *marker*, *fast-food* and *online*, while the other 2, one is used in the magazine's title *Click!* and the other one, naming a microwave program, is found between parentheses: *defrost*. Thus, I can affirm that this number of the magazine *Click! Sănătate* shows a great care of the quality of its articles but also a kind of consideration for the Romanian language.

The second glossy fashion magazine launched in Romania in 1997, *Unica* focuses on beauty, fashion, lifestyle, trends,

entertainment and women's health. The total amount of English single words and phrases occurring in this publication is 124 on a total of 146 pages, A4 format. But I think it is important to underline the fact that out of these 146 pages, 40 of them were dedicated to advertising. The majority of the English words from this issue is related to fashion, beauty and make-up; some of the most common English words and phrases in this issue include *beauty*, *fashion*, *glitter*, *blush*, *gloss smokey eyes*, etc., as well as other words which have already been adopted in the language, being actually recorded by older dictionaries as *look*, *showroom*, *shopping*, *cool*, *brand*, *party*, *eyeliner*, etc.. The other words that show a low frequency of occurrence, less than 2, are used to designate new concepts, objects and activities, but also to name different kinds of haircuts, make-up techniques or outfits: *shooting*, *travel*, *office casual*, *multitasking*, *smokey eyes*, *lady pearl*, *anti-aging*, *butterflied*, etc.

The magazines mentioned contain Anglicisms falling under all of these categories:

**Fashion, Beauty, Trend and Lifestyle:** *look*, *beauty*, *glitter*, *party*, *eyeliner*, *gloss*, *glam*, *sexiness*, *waterproof*, *wellness*, *the braid*, *the dream catcher*, *the*

*top knot, dressing, primer, catwalk, cat-eye, outfit, lifting, anti-aging, smokey eyes, hobby, etc.*

**Interior design:** *Vintage, cosy, dining, living, homey, retro, pattern, patchwork, knitted, built-in, handmade, rattan, post-and-beam, open space, etc.*

**Travel and Sports:** *leasing, facelift, city break, travel, off-road, on-road, rally-raid, cockpit, hatchback, fuel cell, intercooler, common rail, roadbook, touring, cruise control, etc.*

**Business and Technology:** *business, online, retail, marketing, dealer, site, cash, gadget, incoming, desktop, smartphone, link, wireless, back up, touchscreen, touchpad, display, hardware, software, Bluetooth, low cost, gateway, mouse, click, device, website, boost, etc.*

**Entertainment:** *breaking-news, showroom, influencer, infotainment, social media, etc.*

**Other:** *Hippie, lounge, Pin-up, butterflyed, fast-food, parenting, feedback, etc.*

More than 95% of the borrowed English words are used unmodified, without any change in their formal structure, without translation or inverted commas e.g.: *leasing, facelift, incoming, newsletter, display, touchscreen, beauty, look, fashion,*

*showroom, travel, live, lifestyle, dressing, deadline, cosy, finish, etc.* Although many of these words have a Romanian equivalent, the tendency is to use them in their original form and structure.

Out of all five magazines, only in *Auto Motor și Sport* I found one word, *downsizing*, accompanied by its translation between parentheses. Also in the number of *Unica* magazine *anti-aging* is used without inverted commas or in Italics, and immediately after, in the same article, the author uses its Romanian equivalent *anti îmbătrânire*.

Sometimes the words and phrases are placed between inverted commas, which suggest that they are regarded as foreignisms or quotations: e.g., *“butterflied”, “boost”, “best in class”, “fun”, “falcon”, “superbike”, “made in USA”, “fuel cell”, etc.* But what is interesting is the fact that sometimes the same phrase (*fuel cell*) is used firstly between inverted commas and then without quotation marks or in italics.

Sometimes the definite article or the marker of the plural form is separated from English nouns by a hyphen which indicates that users still regard it as a non-native word: e.g. *e-commerce-ul, dream team-ul, pick-up-ul, pick-up-uri, workshop-uri, e-book-uri, site-uri, etc.* But there are also

cases when the separation hyphen is non-existent as in: *waypointuri*, *shootinguri*, *patternuri*, *touchpaduri*, etc., this choice pointing maybe to the fact that the respective words are not considered as foreign as the others.

Many words as *online*, *business*, *showroom*, *smartphone*, *look*, *trend*, *brand*, *designer*, *wireless*, *feedback*, *display*, etc., appear in more than one of the studied magazines.

Popular phrases and collocation like *Life's a roller coaster*, *Supergirls don't cry* (line from a 2000 song by Reamonn) or *like a virgin* (line from a 1984 song by Madonna) are present without inverted commas, translation or at least references to their origins. The phrase - "*Happy Wife, Happy Life*" appears between inverted commas but without any translation.

In regard to those borrowings that have the lowest frequency, appearing only once in the five magazines, Alina Greavu mentions that they have received different names in the language contract literature: nonce loans, spontaneous borrowings or speech borrowings being inherent elements in the speech of some bilinguals, rather than a matter of the language as a whole (Greavu, p. 6).

## **Conclusions**

These lists show that many of the words that have a very high frequency of occurrence are used to designate concepts, objects or activities from the field of fashion, car industry, business, and economics as well as from other related fields, e.g. information technology, entertainment. These Anglicisms are prototypical examples of cultural loans, and their adoption into the language can be regarded as being a necessity, i.e. they have an instrumental role in filling lexical gaps in the vocabulary of Romanian. Such loans appear as a result of an attempted cognitive simplification on the part of the speaker, who tries to find the simplest linguistic strategy in naming new things, as it is easier and more economical to use ready-made designations than to coin new words. Examples in our corpus include *Bluetooth*, *email*, *site*, *leasing*, *fast-food*, *fuel cell*, *update*, *gadget*, etc., to name just a few.

However, other frequently used words have perfectly acceptable synonyms in Romanian. Although they have a cultural content too, these words can be described as redundant, as they do not fill any lexical gaps in the language but rather double already existing words. They have a symbolic rather than a referential value,

being indexical of a higher social status, fashion and prestige usually associated with English as the lingua franca of the contemporary world. Such borrowings are known in the literature as gratuitous or unnecessary loans, and are usually condemned by language purists as reflecting a poor knowledge of one's native language, linguistic snobbery or simply laziness, haste and the law of least effort.

The quantitative analysis of Anglicisms in the studied corpus has shown that only a relatively small proportion of these words have a high frequency of occurrence, more than 50% of all English words being used merely once or twice in the data. Such a limited usage could reflect the new character these words have in the language, or merely the fact that the concepts they are used to designate were not very often discussed in the studied corpus. The relatively large proportion borrowed words have in the total number of words in the corpus seems to testify to an increasing intensity of contact between English and Romanian, and may point towards an upward trend in the phenomenon of borrowing between the two languages. Although at a more detailed level of analysis, the borrowed words can be broadly divided into necessary and unnecessary

loans, this distinction is empirically weak as the line separating the two classes remains arbitrary and therefore difficult to draw.

To conclude our discussion on the impact of Anglicisms in the studied corpus of *Capital, Casa Lux, Unica, Auto Motor și Sport and Click! Sănătate magazines*, it is very clear that present-day Romanian is faced with a very distinct upward trend in this phenomenon. Lexical borrowings and loan translations have always been the main processes by means of which a language has enriched its vocabulary. Today the assimilation of Anglicisms in modern Romanian which has been discussed in this paper is not a slow process anymore, but an unstoppable one. Human society is changing very fast: new technologies are being developed; the internet and computers are increasingly taking hold of every segment of society – so there is no stopping or going back. Language cannot and should not lag behind the evolution of our society.

I would like to come to an end of this paper by saying that the English borrowings shouldn't be considered a threat to Romanian, given the language capacity to select word loans and standardize only the ones it deems to be referentially necessary. The option for Romglish belongs to the individual or social-professional groups, to

draw attention to a colourful message. But the snobbery of such uses should not be encouraged as it affects severely the message and hence makes communication ineffective. The English language and American culture cannot and should not be blamed for their inappropriate influence on the Romanian language. Their influence is undeniable and inevitable and it is often beneficial for the language. What really matters is the attitude Romanians have towards their own language and culture.

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