

English Loanwords in Some Romanian Online Newspapers and Magazines

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Abstract: The contemporary Romanian society is characterised by extreme social, economic and technical dynamism that favours the borrowing of foreign words. As English is the foreign language most frequently learned and used by native Romanians, it is no wonder that many English words have entered the everyday Romanian language. The present article analyses the use of English loanwords in some Romanian online newspapers and magazines, and puts forward some concluding remarks.

Keywords: donor language, loanword, newspaper, magazine, online, recipient language.

1. Introduction

The 18th century Industrial Revolution marked the beginning of intensive and extensive cultural, social, economic, political, legal, technical and even religious exchanges among countries. Such a situation caused the emergence of a ‘lingua franca’, i.e. “a ‘contact language’ between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common (national) culture” (Firth 1996: 240). Nowadays, English is considered to be the ‘contact language’ or the ‘global language’ as Crystal (2012) calls it.

In this context, it is no wonder that also the Romanians prefer to use English in the various international exchanges they have both in informal and in formal settings. This is also favoured by the fact that, according to the 2012’s “Key Data on Teaching Languages at Schools in Europe” published by The Education, Audiovisual and

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Culture Executive Agency of The European Commission, English is the most taught foreign language in the Romanian public schools, followed by French and German (http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/key_data_series/143EN.pdf).

Besides the use of English for private and professional communication, other factors may contribute to the borrowing of foreign words in Romanian (Hristea 1984: 39-40), such as:

- the continuous scientific and technical development;
- the cultural and religious exchanges;
- the political, social and economic changes;
- the political, social and economic relations among countries;
- the change in the people's perspective on life.

The present paper focuses on the English loanwords present in thirty Romanian online newspapers and magazines. The loanwords are analysed in terms of the speech category to which they belong, and of their frequency. Finally, some relevant conclusions are drawn.

2. Defining and classifying loanwords

The words taken from one language and transferred into another are called 'loanwords' or 'borrowings'. The use of such a term is rather metaphorical, because, as Crystal (2005: 126) points out, the language that imports foreign words does not also return them:

When one language takes lexemes from another, the new items are usually called *loanwords* or *borrowings* – though neither term is really appropriate, as the receiving language does not give them back. (Crystal 2005: 126)

The language that lends a word to another language is called donor, source or original language, and the language that borrows this foreign word is called recipient, target or replica language (Fasold & Connor-Linton 2006: 294; Furiassi Pulcini & Gonzales 2012: 12). The borrowed lexemes may take several forms in the recipient language, as Haugen (1950: 210-231) aptly suggests. They may be loanwords, loanblends and loanshifts. Loanwords have the same form and meaning both in the donor and in the recipient language. Loanblends are made up of a part borrowed from the donor language and a part belonging to the recipient language. Finally, loanshifts copy only the meaning of the donor language lexeme.

3. English loanwords in some Romanian online newspapers and magazines

The analysis of thirty Romanian online newspapers and magazines was carried out in September 2014. (The newspapers and magazines are listed in the Annex.) We were interested mainly in the English loanwords, i.e. in the foreign words

that have the same form and meaning as in the donor language. To complete our study we also checked some of the latest dictionaries dealing with the loanwords in Romanian (Ciobanu 1996, Dejica 2013, Dimitrescu, Ciolan & Lupu 2013, Marcu 2007).

We grouped the identified English loanwords into three classes: adjectives and adverbs, nouns and noun phrases, verbs and phrasal verbs. As belonging to the first class, the following adjectives and adverbs were spotted: casual, chic, classic, classy, collection, cool, easy, email, fitness, funky, fresh, fulltime, glam, nude, offline, online, second-hand, sexy, skinny, single, slim, smokey, stylish, sun-kissed, trendy, and wireless.

The second class comprised the English nouns and noun phrases listed alphabetically in the table below:

airbag	desktop	jeans	play list	social media
arcade	device	job	pocket-size	software
aqua park	discount	jogging	pony tail	song writer
baby	display	kit	pool	soul
babysitting	drag and drop	hair-stylist	powder	spam
backstage	dress	hit	quiz	speaker
banner	drive-in cinema	hot line	rating	star
beauty	duty-free shop	label	remix	start-up
blush	DVD	laptop	review	steward
body	entertainment	laundry service	rock	story
blog	eye-liner	life	room-service	streaming
blogger	Facebook	like	statement	tag
boom	Facebook-feeds	link	stick	target
brainstorming	fashion	live music	supermarket	team-building
boyfriend	freestyle	look	sailing	tip
browser	fun	lounge	science	track
burger	fun fact	love	screening	travel
business	gadget	make-up	scrub	trench
cardigan	glamour	marketing	scuba diving	trend
career	grill	mascara	selfie	trick
casting	hair	modeling	server	T-shirt
catwalk	hardware	mountain bike	Service charge	TV
CD	high definition	multiplayer	sex-appeal	twist
click	high performance	must-have	shooter	update
club	high-tech	nails	shopping	upgrade
college	hippie	news	showbiz	vintage
cloud	hipster	newsletter	single	voucher
comment	hobby	office	site	web
computer	home	open bar	skill	webcam
cover	icon	outfit	smartphone	web developer
cruise	inbox	party	SMS	weekend
cycling	internship	party girl	snake print	window
derby	infinity	PC	snowboard	work
designer	jazz	piece	snowmobil	yacht

Table 1. English nouns and noun phrases used in some Romanian online newspapers and magazines

Finally, in the last class, only a few verbs and phrasal verbs were singled out: to feature, to leather up, to look, to rebrand, to plug in.

From the identified 202 English loanwords, 26 were adjectives/ adverbs, 171 were nouns/ noun phrases and 5 were verbs/ phrasal verbs. In other words, as shown in Chart 1, 85% of the English loanwords present in the analysed Romanian online newspapers and magazines were nouns/ noun phrases, 13% were adjectives/ adverbs and only 2% were verbs/ phrasal verbs. This obviously means that there is nowadays an overwhelming tendency to use English nouns or noun phrases in the Romanian online press.

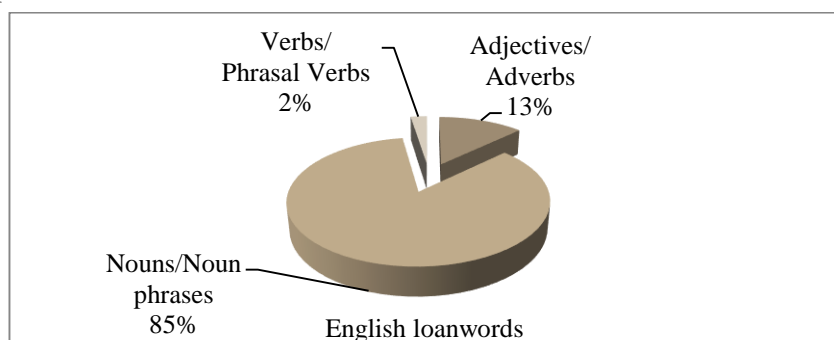


Chart 1: English loanwords in some Romanian online newspapers and magazines

4. Conclusion

The present article pointed to the context in which English became a 'lingua franca', and as such adopted also by Romanians for their private and professional communication. We showcased various factors that influence the borrowing of foreign words by a recipient language, and defined loanwords, loanblends and loanshifts. Then, two hundred and two English loanwords were singled out in thirty Romanian online newspapers and magazines analysed in September 2014. The loanwords were grouped in three classes: adjectives/ adverbs, nouns/ noun phrases, verbs/ phrasal verbs. The result of the analysis outlined that 85% of the English loanwords were nouns/ noun phrases, 13% adjectives/ adverbs and only 2% verbs/ phrasal verbs. It became thus obvious that the contemporary Romanian online press abounds in English nouns and noun phrases and that there is a tendency to accept English nouns or noun phrases more easily into the Romanian language than any other speech category.

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Annex: Romanian Online Newspapers and Magazines

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