Linguistic Globalization And The New Romanian Wooden Language

Camelia FIRICĂ

Universitatea „Spiru Haret", Facultatea de Ştiinţe Juridice, Economice şi Administrative
"Spiru Haret" University, Faculty of Juridical, Economic and Administrative Sciences
Personal e-mail:cameliafirica56@gmail.com

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As everywhere, words of English origin, used as such, as linguistic calques or adapted to the native languages, entered Romanian and settled comfortably in people's vocabulary as a mark of democracy that had to manifest at linguistic level, too, after years of totalitarianism when communication used to be achieved in a rudimentary, inexpressive way through linguistic clichés meant to conceal reality.

Unobtrusive at first, when used just in contexts strictly related to certain fields, Anglicisms were taken by common language, gained ground and are, at present, used without discernment, becoming commonplace in everyday speech.

The paper approaches the impact the excessive use of words of English origin has lately had upon the quality of the Romanian language which takes steps from the old wooden language of communism to a new one that abounds in lexical creations imitated after English words.

Keywords: Anglicisms, globalization, wooden language, linguistic calques, lexical cliché

Motto
"…we have several words, but we use less."
Radu Paraschivescu

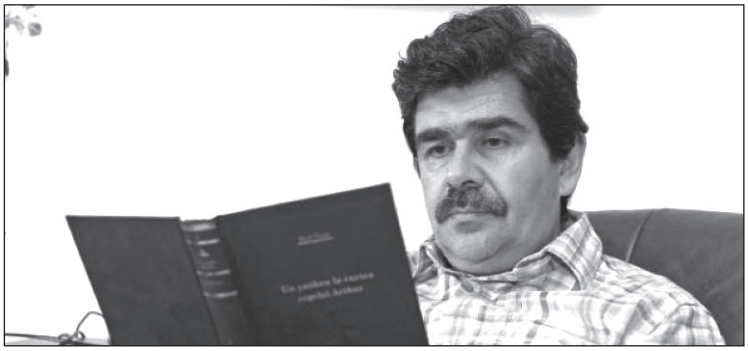
Introduction

If in a totalitarian society the wooden language served a standardized communication achieved through standard formulas void of content and expressiveness which sent to a rudimentary semantic universe, lately the Romanian language has come to mirror a uniform way of thinking.

Standardized formulas have gained ground and imposed themselves in recent decades on one hand because of the frequency of their use and, on the other, because of the alleged prestige or authority of sources such as the mass media, the representatives of the economic, political or social spheres, the Internet and electronic communication.

A new type of communication - which abounds with loanwords, lexical or semantic calques - "imitations of English structures - which intervene even where not needed and which alter the existing structures of the language and words combinations" (Zafiu 2015), internal lexical creations, semantic evolutions - different from the one that used a closed, impoverished and repetitive lexicon, token of the rigidity of the wooden language imposed by the communist regime, dominates at present the Romanian linguistic landscape.

Romanians are facing the paradoxical situation where they added other wooden languages - used in multinational companies, in sales, finance and economics (Paraschivescu 2015) - to the wooden language peculiar to the way of speaking during a totalitarian regime.



Sursă foto: http://ampress.ro/radu-paraschivescu-pastila-de-limba-cuvinte-anapoda-epic/

Between wood and tin

The propensity for neologisms taken either from British or American English proves the impact - manifest in all languages as a consequence of linguistic globalization - the political, economic and social contexts have upon language.

Linguists worldwide do not question those neologisms, mot-témoins, that "witness a particularly significant change in social history", (Geeraerts 2010) that reflect a "society's economic, political, social, moral, aesthetic state at a given time" (Matoré 1948) and whose use is justified by linguistic or extra-linguistic causes.

In Romania, for example, the fact that "the term «leader» imposed itself as mot-témoin of the post-December media is explained mainly by extra-linguistic causes, of a sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics nature: the impact of English as the «language of globalization»; the international character of the word; the favourable social connotations associated with prestigious environments; the need to replace terms considered «compromised» (for example conducător - associated with Nicolae Ceaușescu), improper or "obsolete" by abusive use. The old age in use; the French origin of the word; the perfect fit in the Romanian language system; the comprehensive significance allowing various contextual updates are some of the favourable linguistic factors. As to the extralinguistic causes, some belong to the political and social domain while some may be related to the specificity of the post-December Romanian media. At political and social levels, the status of English as lingua franca or «language of globalization» is the main reason". (Stoichițoiu- Ichim 2002:3)

Most of these mot-témoins were assimilated by Romanian, adapted according to the language spelling and phonetic rules (lider, miting, congresman - for leader, meeting, congressman) and used as such, despite a tendency - token of linguistic snobbery - to "reanglicize" some of them by turning back to the etymological spelling (leader, meeting, congressman). (Stoichițoiu- Ichim 2002:3)

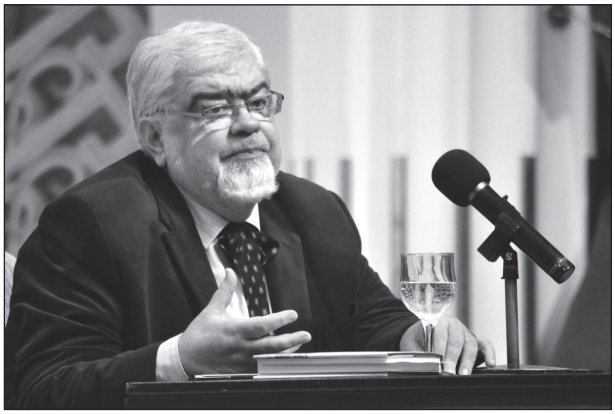
Some Anglicisms that naturalized in Romanian were a prerequisite as they came to fill wide denomination gaps in politics, economics, finance, banking, in technical, scientific and cultural fields, in everyday life and entertainment industry which the wooden language of the communist period failed to cover. Nevertheless, necessary and legitimate in specialized language, since the English terms - international and easily recognizable by professionals - render the exact meaning or notion, many loanwords have crossed the border to common language.

The issue under discussion is the indiscriminate, obsessive use of certain English words or phrases very frequent and noticeable in the way of speaking of mass media and multinationals staff, because here is where "the problem begins (as with the wooden language of communism) when the jargon becomes ubiquitous and self-sufficient, when its use seems to solve all the problems, and the conceptual cloud created by the emblem words is taken as reality." (Zafiu 2010)

Some loanwords - semantic calques after English, or unprofessional, inadvertent, perfunctory translations of English words or phrases - broadened their meaning and replaced, without justification, existing Romanian words, many of which came into language, via French, as early as the XVIIIth century. The result is that "too many lexical units, consecrated in our linguistic code with a certain meaning, are used with a new sense, imitated after a foreign model." (Gruiță 2006, apud Dragomirescu and Nicolae 2011:21)

Taken by the media - particularly television - that acted as channels of transmission, and spread on the internet, these new linguistic creations, most often outcome of a smattering of English, and to a certain extent, of an improper knowledge of Romanian, have given rise to an intolerable type of speech, which, unfortunately more and more urban speakers embraced under the influence of "a phenomenon of contamination characteristic to semantic innovations". (Zafiu 2017).

As a proof of blatant snobbery, of the preciousness



Sursă foto: https://cronicaromana.net/2014/11/24/andrei-plesu-va-fi-librar-pentru-o-zi/

of style, of the urge to speak in a lofty way, to use sophomoric formulas instead of simple ones, neologisms instead of native words, every media person, employee of a corporation, public figure or politician hardly ever speaks about a situație prielnică, ocazie fericită, prilej favorabil, șansă (the English opportunity covers all the forenamed meanings). Oportunitate, instead, has become commonplace - a semantic calque that gave to the Romanian noun oportunitate (timely, opportune, inherited from the Latin opportunitas, by French pathway - opportunité) a new meaning (chance, possibility) after its foreign correspondent - opportunity (also of Latin origin, as a matter of fact). "But this is how fashion is so we do not like «posibilitate» anymore, we want «oportunitate», that is why in newspapers, there appear, in literal translation, clumsy texts such as: «Un pesimist vede o dificultate în fiecare oportunitate; un optimist vede o oportunitate în fiecare dificultate» (A pessimist sees a difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees an opportunity in every difficulty)." (Condrea 2002.)

Similar cases, typical examples of semantic calques after English, which duplicate the already existing words, are:

- determinat - after the English determined - used instead of ferm, hotărât, decis (Romanian for resolute): Sunt determinată să-mi cumpăr o rochie nouă (I'm determined that I buy a new dress), Victor e un tip determinat de felul lui (Victor is a determined guy in his own way) (Paraschivescu 2014); according to dictionaries the Romanian determinat has only the sense of defined, specified, established, settled; similarly, the noun determinare - came to be largely used under the influence of determination: Au arătat [...] aceeași determinare care i-a făcut campioni (They showed [...] the same determination that made them champions). (Academia Română mai 2011:17)

- provocare - meaning instigation to violence, reckless or dishonest action - under the influence of the English challenge acquired a positive sense and denotes a desirable difficulty, which is a test for one's abilities or character, or a stimulus for favourable development (Dragomirescu and Nicolae 2011:70): Astăzi însă provocarea lui este să mănânce singur (Yet, today his challenge is to feed himself). (Academia Română 2016:20)

- locație - a calque after the English location used instead of the Romanian loc - place; based on the mere formal resemblance with its English model, the Romanian locație - tenancy, lease; rent paid for certain things taken into temporary use (in legal field) - has no common meaning with location. Nonetheless, its broad use determined its enlisting in the Explanatory Dictionary of the Roman Language (Rom. Dicționarul explicativ al limbii române - DEX). The use of the word is considered (Popescu 2008) justified in technical, legal contexts but disavowed in a common language context: Orice copil întrebat va descrie o locație de poveste. (Any child will describe a fairy location.), Invitații au fost profund impresionați de locație. (The guests were deeply impressed by the location.)

- acceptanță - borrowed from English (acceptance) the word is legitimate with its specialized senses in certain fields where it means endorsement; what is hardly admissible is its use, in the highfaluting language of the media people, as a substitute of the Romanian word acceptare (consent, acknowledgement, approval): Nu putem promova o astfel de resursă fără acceptanța publicului. (We cannot promote such a resource without public acceptanc) ;

- capabilitate - after the English capability - to render someone's skill or moral or intellectual ability to do something designed in Romanian by a fi capabil, a avea capacitatea de a...(to be able to...); thus, statements such as: el are capabilitatea de a îndeplini această sarcină (he is able to fulfil this task) instead of el este capabil să îndeplinească această sarcină are very often met in everyday speech;

- dedicație - after dedication instead of dăruire (abnegation); Atâta dedicație rar s-a mai pomenit (So much dedication has rarely been seen) (Academia Română martie 2011:20). In Romanian dedicație means: a text written on a book or an object;

- expertiză - after expertise - used when they speak about someone's competence or skill in a particular field, instead of experiență, competență; the Romanian word expertiză - was borrowed from French and refers to "a technical research made by an expert, at the request of a judicial or prosecution body or of parties, upon a situation, problem, etc. whose clarification concerns the solving of a case"; (Academia Română 2009)

- confortabil - borrowed from French, the Romanian word refers to something that offers comfort but, for reasons beyond understanding, it is more and more used in the phrases a fi confortabil cu..., a se simți confortabil cu... copied after to be/ feel confortable with...; in statements such as: 'Nici eu nu sunt confortabil cu toată discuția asta cu clasa Economy (I myself am not comfortable with all this discussion about Economy class) , El a adăugat că nu s-a simțit „foarte confortabil" să discute separat cu cei doi (He added he did not feel "very comfortable" to discuss separately with the two) , the adjective has come to determine not the noun that expresses the source of comfort, but the very person who enjoys comfort. (Dragomirescu and Nicolae 2011:40) Not to mention preț confortabil (convenient price) that has completely taken the place of preț convenabil in the way of speaking of those who work in media, corporations, finance, banking etc.

Creations like these, copies of their English equivalents, launched in the public space because of the journalistic manner of looking for bombastic synonyms - "the truth is that it is not the fault of the words, but of the speakers who are not well informed" (Graur 2009:10) - as well as their obsessive use, part of our daily reality - are annoying, felt as inadequate, inappropriate, largely commented and criticized in scientific paper and works.

Focusing on themselves over the client, reader or audience with the manifest intent to impress and not to inform, to manipulate, to disguise the obvious, the truth, the unaccomplished, a danger of some sort (Veres 2008:147) or merely their lack of proficiency are reasons for such a manner of speaking of most opinion makers.

For those outside a field of activity, the language specific to certain social categories sounds like a foreign language. It is understandable that any person unfamiliar with either the jargon of a certain domain or English thinks "they speak another language" as long as: "They no longer say, as they «formerly» used to, that something are sau n-are sens. Why? Because we know a smattering of English. They say face or nu face sens. They do not say conținu", but content, not provocare, but challenge, not a actualiza, but a apdata, not a şterge, but a deleta, not hotărât", but determinat." (Pleşu 2017)

The mass media and corporate language or the language of the new representatives of the power, reformers of the wooden language (Țâra 2011:329) interlarded with English words, or jargon terms which are either poor translations or linguistic calques after English, have all the ingredients that turn Romanian into something that is far from being understood or digested by ordinary people, into what is called Obscurity Trap - jargon, wordiness, evasiveness. (Fugere et al. 2005:11)

Being too eager to obtain information instantly and easily to take up reading seriously or to open a dictionary, the nowadays speaker has come to use, out of a herd mentality, a language that has changed its status, from a wooden one, which, paradoxically, some of them did not know or witnessed, stuck in formulas empty of content and expressiveness, to "a tin one" which, in its turn, "sounds hollow". (Pleşu 2017)

Conclusions

All these excesses of fashionable terms, among which Anglicisms are particularly noticeable, all these obsessive lexical clichés that characterise the discourse of recent years, (Zafiu 2003) that have entered common usage and became annoying by stereotypy - a phenomenon that, as a matter of fact, was not imposed by force but voluntarily assumed - turned language into "a very strange combination of either wooden language sawdust, or Anglo-Romanian jargon, or ridiculous affectation by which diverse half-learned persons meant to polish themselves with a kind of cultural layer after December 89". (Paler 1997)

The language deliberately spoken in the "public space invaded and contaminated by imposture [...] is a modified, refined, embellished version of the wooden language used in communism that cultivates [...] a void and sterile public discourse" (Manea 2007) where information is confusedly worded, phrases are incoherent and elliptical but necessarily speckled with English words or linguistic calques, which replace existing words and give Romanian a polish of tin (Pleşu 2017).

We conclude, being honest with English - a language that in its turn borrowed massively from the languages of the peoples it was in contact with - that it is a very useful language for the world we live in, but NOT (Pruteanu 2006) when it is used in inextricable combinations alongside Romanian words.

Note:

1. Rodica Zafiu, Noua limbă a românilor. Gândul, interview by Andreea Ofițeru, 1 March 2015, available on web at: http://www.gandul.info/interviurile-gandul/noua-limba-a-romanilor-lingvista-rodica-zafiu-explica-la-interviurile-gandul-cum-am-ajuns-sa-vorbim-si-sa-injuram-romglish-13874343
2. Radu Paraschivescu, Ce limbă mai vorbesc românii azi?. Gândul, interview by Andreea Ofițeru, 24 May 2015, available on web at: http://www.gandul.info/interviurile-gandul/ce-limba-mai-vorbesc-romanii-azi-scriitorul-radu-paraschivescu-dupa-90-anumite-cuvinte-au-fost-eliberate-din-captivitate-acum-avem-mai-multe-limbi-de-lemn-14317315
3. Dirk Geeraerts, Theories of Lexical Semantics. Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 95, available on web at: https://books.google.ro
4. Georges Matoré, La Mesure en Lexicologie, Thalès, Vol. 5 (1948), pp. 8-15, p. 10, available on web at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/43855294?seq=3#page_scan_tab_contents
5. Adriana Stoichițoiu- Ichim, Influența limbii engleze în terminologia politică a românei actuale, Aspecte ale dinamicii limbii române actuale, (coord. Gabriela Pană-Dindelegan), Bucureşti: Editura Universității, 2003, pp. 299-322.
6. idem, p. 305
7. "A word is borrowed from English when there is a need to fill empty spaces in the vocabulary of the receiving language. Since in languages which are in contact with English there do not exist equivalent words for the transferred objects and concepts which have to be named, the simplest way of naming them is to borrow their name from the donor language." Rudolf, Filipović. 2000. Historical-Primary Etymology vs. Secondary Etymology of Anglicisms in European Languages. In Olga Mišeska Tomić, Milorad Radovanović. History and Perspectives of Language Study: Papers in Honor of Ranko Bugarski. John Benjamins. p. 205.
8. Rodica Zafiu, Despre îmbunătățirea continuă focusată, Dilema veche, nr. 327, 20 - 26 May 2010, available on web at: http://dilemaveche.ro/sectiune/tema-saptamanii/articol/despre-imbunatatirea-continua-focusata
9. according to: Radu, Paraschivescu (2017). Pastila de limbă. „Fried crap" sau engleza lăutărească din meniurile românești, 12 noiembrie 2017. Available at http://www.digi24.ro/magazin/timp-liber/cultura/pastila-de-limba-fried-crap-sau-engleza-lautareasca-din-meniurile-romanesti-827550
10. Gligor Gruiță, Moda lingvistică 2007. Norma, uzul şi abuzul. Pitești, Paralela 45, 2006, apud Adina Dragomirescu, Alexandru Nicolae, 101 greşeli de lexic şi de semantică. Cuvinte şi sensuri în mişcare. Bucureşti, Humanitas, 2011, p. 21.
11. "What is more alarming is that, nowadays, a disturbing element - the media, television, in particular - has occurred in the ordinary circuit of language in nature. If in former times, language mistakes functioned on the Darwinist principle of natural selection, where only the strong enough survived, at present, through the instrumentality of television, any stupidity may prevail. Normally, a deviation used to become general and imposed itself only in the course of time - and if it had enough force to convince everyone. But with the help of television, every stupid thing reaches to everyone's ears instantly and, moreover, it benefits from the persuasive power the model exerts. Therefore, «locație» meaning a «place», which is used several times by a reporter who, without having much to say, wants to be more skilful than the others, gets to obtrude instantly on general consciousness. " Cezar Paul-Bădescu. 2006. Ca și chestie, Dilema Veche, Anul III, no.123 - 02 iunie 2006. Available at: http://dilemaveche.ro/sectiune/mass-comedia/articol/ca-si-chestie
12. Rodica Zafiu, Femei asumate, Dilema veche, nr. 688, 27 April – 3 May 2017, available on the web at: http://dilemaveche.ro/sectiune/tilc-show/articol/femei-asumate
13. Pretentious sentences such as: Pot exista niște oportunități care apar la orizont (There may appear some opportunities on the horizon - our translation) are rebuked by the Romanian Academy. Academia Română Institutul de Lingvistică „Iorgu Iordan – Al. Rosetti", Rezultatele Monitorizării Posturilor De Radio Şi De Televiziune, noiembrie 2016, p. 22, available on the web at: http://www.cna.ro/IMG/pdf/Raport-01-30_noiembrie-2016.pdf
14. Iraida Condrea, Adaptarea cuvintelor împrumutate, Limba Română, no.1-3, anul XII, 2002, available on the web at: http://www.limbaromana.md/index.php?go=articole&n=2862
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17. Academia Română Institutul de Lingvistică „Iorgu Iordan – Al. Rosetti", Rezultatele Monitorizării Posturilor De Radio Şi De Televiziune, noiembrie 2016, p.20, available on the web at: http://www.cna.ro/IMG/pdf/Raport-01-30_noiembrie-2016.pdf
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19. according to: Locații pentru nunți memorabile: https://nuntainnatura.treehouse.ro/
20. according to: Iulian Iancu, România nu poate promova gazele de șist fără acordul populației. https://www.money.ro/iulian-iancu-romania-nu-poate-promova-gazele-de-sist-

fara-acordul-populatiei/
21. Academia Română Institutul de Lingvistică „Iorgu Iordan – Al. Rosetti", Rezultatele Monitorizării Posturilor De Radio Şi De Televiziune, martie 2011, available on the web at: http://www.cna.ro/IMG/pdf/Raport_monitorizare_martie_2011_070611.pdf
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24. according to: Dragnea, mediator in ALDE: "Nu mi-a fost confortabil, nu sunt consilier matrimonial", Ziua News, 22 martie, 2017; Available at: http://www.ziuanews.ro/politica/dragnea-mediator-in-alde-nu-mi-a-fost-confortabil-nu-sunt-consilier-matrimonial-658653
25. Adina Dragomirescu, Alexandru Nicolae, cited work, p.40.
26. Alexandru Graur, "Capcanele" limbii române, Bucureşti, Humanitas, 2009, p.10
27. The idea that the use of English loans is a technique of manipulation by which some inconvenient realities are concealed is also supported by Tatiana Slama Cazacu. "By this «stratagem» [the abuse of foreign terms, especially English], they either cover unpleasant realities, or (the word being unknown) they prevent the understanding of a situation, or, in any case, they attempt, by way of linguistic cosmeticism, to change the image of certain facts, actions, objects compromised by a political, technocratic, commercial authority. " Slama-Cazacu, Tatiana. 2000. Stratageme comunicaționale și manipularea, Iași, Editura Polirom, p. 51-52, apud Stoichițoiu-Ichim, Adriana, cited work, p.14.
28. Luis Veres, Limba de lemn, propaganda şi franchismul, in Rad, Ilie, Limba de lemn în presă, Bucureşti, Tritonic, 2009, p. 147.
29. in English to make sense or not. The Romanian phrase a avea sens - is rendered with the verb to have, while a face sens is a lexico-phraseological calque of the English phrase to make sense.
30. calque after to update.
31. calque after to delete.
32. Andrei Pleşu, Noua limbă de tinichea. Dilema veche, 2 June 2017, available on the web at: http://dilemaveche.ro/sectiune/dileme-on-line/articol/noua-limba-de-tinichea
33. Professor Zafiu labels this as: „a «wooden language» (which some call corporate language), made up of a collection of mandatory optimistic clichés (challenges, opportunities, teamwork, positive thinking, team building, focus, prioritization, expertise, total dedication)". Rodica, Zafiu (2010). Neglijență generalizată, Dilema veche, no. 314, 18-24 februarie 2010. Available at: http://dilemaveche.ro/sectiune/tema-saptamanii/articol/limba-expresia-societa%C8%9Bii
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35. Fugere Brian, Hardaway Chelsea, Warshawsky Jon, Why Business People Speak Like Idiots: A Bullfighter's Guide, New York, Simon & Suchster, 2005. p. 11, available on the web at: https://books.google.ro/books?id=G5Hpi6zVl0UC&printsec=frontcover&dq=jargon&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=herd&f=false
36. Andrei Pleşu, cited work.
37. Rodica Zafiu, Păcatele Limbii: Provocare, România Literară, no. 27, 2003, available on the web at: http://www.romlit.ro/provocare
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