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The English Element in the Romanian Language

The paper aims at outlining the influence of the English element on contemporary Romanian, trying to point out some peculiarities of the borrowing process. From among the problems under analysis, we mention: the nature of the borrowing process and its evolution, the rate and dynamic character of the borrowing phenomena, integration of the English element in the Romanian lexis and the relationship with the international pool of Anglicisms, general peculiarities of the adaptation process and conclusions.

1. The study of the English element in the Romanian language has been a process in continuous development especially during the last two decades.

Although chronologically the English language is the last one among the modern languages (e. g. Italian, French, Russian, German) to contribute to the enrichment of contemporary Romanian, the presence of some thousands of Anglicisms (at least 3,000) in the general Romanian vocabulary, and many more scientific terms, represents a corpus worth considering.

Due to its geographical position, Romanian has been influenced directly by various languages belonging to different genetic types, and this has turned Romanian into a generous receiver, able to assimilate words from various languages. The impact of various linguistic influences has favoured the openness of our language to borrow foreign words, English words included. In the case of Romanian, its lack of resistance to borrowings (developed throughout the centuries) has proved to be helpful, favouring the integration of English elements.

There is one peculiarity we want to emphasize: as distinct from other Romance languages, Romanian has been isolated from western Romance for quite a long time, and, yet, the essential elements in the structure of Romanian have remained Romance; moreover, it has succeeded to preserve and even en-

rich its Latin elements. No language influencing Romanian has succeeded in altering its Romance character; the same peculiarity holds true for the English loanwords in Romanian. The English language has enriched the Romanian language with Latin elements, contributing, alongside other languages — e. g. Italian, French, Russian, German (Hristea, 1984) — to the re-Latinization of contemporary Romanian. (As far as English borrowings are concerned, re-Latinization refers to the presence of Latin elements, respectively Neo-Latin, borrowed from English into Romanian by means of words belonging to the international pool of words, considering these words contain Latin elements. The term Neo-Latin, commonly used in Romanian linguistics, corresponds to 'New Latin' in the English linguistic terminology).

The English elements were introduced into Romanian mainly by cultural borrowing or intermediary borrowing, beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century; the first clear contact occurred at the beginning of the twentieth century and continued until the First World War.

It was especially in the post-Second-World-War period that English contributions to European languages were more numerous and linguistically more interesting (Filipović 1966: 104); Romanian was not an exception to this trend either. In Romanian the post war period, and especially the last two decades, were the 'background' for a direct contact characterized by the presence of numerous English borrowings.

After 1989 social circumstances favoured increased contacts between Romania and many foreign countries, the English-speaking world included; consequently, a large number of Anglicisms and Americanisms were borrowed via written and oral routes.

2. This evolution of language phenomena is reflected in a natural way in the development of research on the English element in Romanian.

After the first few sporadic remarks on Romanian sports terms of English origin written in the late forties (Jordan, 1947), in the 60's there was an increase in the number of English words entering more and more fields of activity, consequently, bringing about an increase in the number of papers dealing with English loanwords in Romanian, namely, articles dealing with certain vocabulary sections and tackling different aspects of the adaptation process at the various language levels. Articles and studies, progress in the research work of the Romanian-English Contrastive Analysis Project, as well as subsequent syntheses (doctoral dissertations and books) preceded the inclusion of the Romanian language in the European Research Project »The English Element in the European Languages« directed by Rudolf Filipović. Our involvement in the study of the English element in Romanian represented a challenge for a number of reasons. The author of the present paper, as representative of the Romanian contribution to this Project, was confronted with the following:

— acceptance of collaboration to the Project was based exclusively on contributors' previous research results; hence, credit was not given by the Project director only to notorities in the field, but to everybody ready to observe the

Project principles and able to produce results as demanded by the high standards of the Project;

— the research task required reliable solutions and the results were to certify the validity of the Project principles and methodology as applied to a variety of European languages belonging to different language families;

— the results were to prove the peculiarities of borrowing English elements into Romanian, as well as those aspects aimed at outlining the universalia of borrowing English elements in all European languages.

3. Results of the study on the English element in Romanian were included in the second and third volumes (Băncilă–Chițoran, 1982), (Ciobanu, 1991) and have been pursued afterwards at all language levels; from among the existing results we mention »Dictionary of Anglicisms in the Romanian Language« (in press in Zagreb), »Anglicisme in limba română« (Ciobanu, 1996).

4. Whenever problems of languages in contact are dealt with, the most evident changes occur at the level of vocabulary (lexis). Therefore, in the following lines we try to outline problems related to this aspect.

To get a comprehensive picture of the English element in Romanian we analysed written and oral sources, respectively: all the dictionaries printed in Romania starting with the 50's, recent press pages — newspapers, magazines, almanacs printed in the last 5–6 years, studies and articles concerning English borrowings; oral sources were not neglected either — words transmitted orally by native speakers individually and over the radio and television, this being a rather recent peculiarity in the development of English borrowings into Romanian.

All the above-mentioned sources offered the possibility of establishing a corpus for analysis of about 1,500 words, representative for significant generalizations. (The Romanian words taken into consideration have either single or multiple etymologies, English being one of the source languages. Very often the structure of a word shows the participation of both an English source and its French counterpart in the shaping of the Romanian equivalent).

All in all, the borrowing process of English elements in Romanian can be labelled as a dynamic one, with an increasing rate over the last years, especially after 1989. To illustrate the development of the borrowing rate we mention some figures: 60 words in a Romanian dictionary printed in 1958 (DLRM), about 800 words in the main explanatory thesaurus dictionary of 1975 (DEX), approximately 450 more words added in a dictionary of recent words printed in 1982 (DCR), and almost 850 items added in the Supplement to the 1975 explanatory dictionary, printed in 1988 (DEX-S). Now there is almost no issue of dailies or weeklies printed nationally or locally without samples of Anglicisms.

To get a clear picture of the status of the English borrowed words, besides the borrowing rate, it is important to relate these elements to the rest of the Romanian vocabulary. Being neologisms, they belong to what is traditionally called the passive vocabulary. Neologisms first enter the passive vocabulary

and, afterwards, some of them enter the active vocabulary; some others never enter the active vocabulary, they keep a peripheral place in the system or even 'disappear' completely. To our estimation, involving the subjective factor inherent to this type of judgement, until 1989 about one fifth of the corpus of Anglicisms might be considered active vocabulary. After 1989, a lot of English words that have been introduced into Romanian could be labelled as 'fashionable', and it is usage that will decide their status in the language.

We have to consider that some of the borrowed words are adopted for their informative function, while other words are adopted because they are felt to be imbued with cultural and social prestige. The latter is the case with a lot of words borrowed after 1989, and a high degree of Anglomania justifies the use of very many terms in the language of music, sports, fashion etc.

If we consider the spheres of English influence on the Romanian lexis we distinguish:

1) the sphere of social and political activities and institutions, including also social communication, and

2) the sphere of science, technology, industry and trade.

Words under 1) are very typical of British and American customs, ways of life and institutions, and, consequently, preserve a particular air of 'Englishness' about them, even following their more or less stable integration into the Romanian language. Many of the terms in this category were also among the first to make their way into Romanian: political life and institutions; social life, customs and habits; sports and games; arts and culture.

Words in category 2) are mostly words of an international character, sometimes more difficult to analyse and ascertain as true English borrowings.

If we compare the above-mentioned classification with the general classification of English words in various European languages (Filipović, 1966) we find similarities; according to the areas in which they generally occur, the richest groups are: food and drinks; sports and games; science and natural science; social life, trade and economics, banking; philosophy and religion; politics and law; transport etc.

When we discuss borrowed words we also have to consider that in various languages the words borrowed from English are represented numerically in various ways in the different sections of the vocabulary; at the same time there are differences among the various sections.

Thus, for instance, in Romanian »most of the words borrowed from English belong to sports terminology« (Hristea, 1984: 50). 13% of the corpus words are sports terms (according to our counts). Among them one third (33%) are frequently used, and have already been integrated in the Romanian phonetic and morphological system. A high percentage (42%) is represented by less frequently used terms, as well as by some recent borrowings, partially adapted to the Romanian phonetic and morphological system. As for the rest of the Romanian sports terminology of English origin, (25%), these words have a very restricted usage and most of them still preserve a pronunciation similar to the English one.

If we refer, for instance, to music terminology borrowed from English — 7% of the corpus words, a lot of these words have preserved both the English spelling and a pronunciation similar to the English one, most of them being familiar to very few speakers, mostly to the connoisseurs.

The same situation holds true for the terms used in press pages, including very many words rarely or never used by speakers of standard Romanian; usually, newspaper people use such words quite rarely themselves. Most often these words preserve their English 'shape' in Romanian.

Knowing about the special attention paid nowadays to the role English plays in the formation of the so-called international vocabulary of science, technology and culture in its most general sense, we tried to relate the corpus of words of English origin present both in the Romanian language and in the European common vocabulary (Filipović, 1966), and we examined the existence of the respective words in French, German and Russian, checking up their etyma in up-to-date dictionaries (as a rule, most of our linguists observe as the main criteria for including a word in the international pool of words the following: the presence of a word in at least three important European languages; if possible, the three languages should belong to three different language families). According to our count in 1989, about 70% of the Romanian words of English origin under examination were present in French, German and Russian as well, that is, they belong to the European pool of Anglicisms, involving the Romanian language in the international circuit of languages.

5. A fair estimation of any linguistic impact when languages come into contact is given by an examination of the manner in which the borrowed elements are integrated in the receiving language.

All in all we can consider that most of the words borrowed from English into Romanian have already been integrated or are being integrated in the Romanian language system.

To prove this statement we select some of the conclusions resulting from our analysis of the adaptation process of Anglicisms in Romanian:

- in borrowing vowels there is a general effort to find the nearest possible counterparts in Romanian;
- for most of the diphthongs we notice the tendency to render the English diphthongs of the borrowed words by similar Romanian diphthongs;
- the English consonants fit easily into the Romanian system of consonants;
- in cases of stress changes, in most of the borrowed words stress was shifted to the last or last-but-one syllable, following patterns common to the Romanian system;
- most of the nouns joined the classes and sub-classes of the Romanian nominal system; moreover, they have entered the classes best represented numerically;
- the borrowed verbs have been easily adapted to the Romanian verb system.

The above-mentioned list is not aimed at giving the impression that English elements have been adopted and adapted indiscriminately and that the borrowing process was a mere transfer of elements from one language into another.

6. Out of these examples, adding the conclusions of the previously discussed problems concerning the penetration of English elements into Romanian, we can sum up by emphasizing a few main aspects:

1) the Romanian language in contact with English proves to be a generous receiver, ready to enrich itself continuously;

2) the English elements, like other foreign elements entering Romanian, are adopted and adapted to the Romanian language system, facing no resistance;

3) the borrowing of English elements does not alter the Romance character of the Romanian language;

4) the borrowing process of English elements into Romanian has some characteristics similar to other European languages in contact with English;

5) the influence of the English elements upon Romanian has turned from mere isolated examples of English loanwords into a phenomenon manifest at each language level.

Last but not least, the data mentioned above, representing results of the work done for years within the Project »The English Element in European Languages« directed by Rudolf Filipović, are also proof that no social circumstances, national or international (war conflicts, previous travel interdictions) could interfere with a solid research project. Also, it is a clear example that a project directed by a genuine European scholar — such as Professor Rudolf Filipović — goes beyond geographical boundaries and is meant to live forever through the people advised by him, ready, themselves, to advise the future generation as their master has taught them.

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Engleski element u rumunjskom jeziku

Cilj rada jest ocrtati utjecaj engleskoga elementa na suvremeni rumunjski jezik upućivanjem na neke posebitosti procesa posuđivanja. Među analiziranim problemima spominjemo sljedeće: narav procesa jezičnoga posuđivanja i njegov razvitak, stupanj i dinamički karakter pojava jezičnoga posuđivanja, integracija engleskoga elementa u rječnik rumunjskoga i njihov odnos prema međunarodnim anglicizmima, opće osobitosti procesa adaptacije.