

LEXICAL LOAN, CULTURAL OVERTONE

Daniela ȚUCHEL

1. Introduction

In cultural terms, the influence of Anglo-American life is obvious in the number of lexical loans accompanying the development of speculative thought and scientific ideas in today's Romanian environment. We shall proceed to analyze loans in relation to *transmorphemization*, which points to degrees of morphological substitution of (in our case, English) loan words when brought into Romanian. In *primary adaptation*, the vast majority of such words remain at the stage of zero substitution; fewer cases than those cover the loan words undergoing complete transmorphemization. The innovative potential of the recipient language is shown in the stage of *secondary adaptation* in which the process of word-formation is very much alive: learned words of Greek and Latin origin are replaced by the corresponding Romanian lexical elements. Between these extremes – zero and complete processes – exists what has been dubbed compromise substitution or *compromise transmorphemization*.

The working techniques that take excellent effect nowadays and can enrich lexicographic products are based on two associations. On the one hand, there is a phonology-lexicology tandem, as explained by R. Filipović (1972) quoted by Ciobanu (2004: 32-33) and giving three classes of items – loanwords, foreign loans and foreign words. On the other hand, there is a lexicology-semantics tandem, as explained for instance by Vasiliuță (2000: 17): "Unul dintre obiectivele importante ale semanticii structurale este identificarea trăsăturilor care funcționează în raporturile opozitive între lexeme, în particular în interiorul unei paradigme. Structura calităților semantice contextuale este una combinatorie, ceea ce vrea să spună că sistemul semic este primordial; efectele de sens sunt obținute prin articularea specifică a semelor într-un semem." (One of the main objectives for structural semantics is to identify those features taking effect within opposite relations between lexemes, specifically inside a paradigm. The pattern of contextual semantic features is combinatorial, which means to state the primordial role of the system of semes; the meaningful effects are obtained by semes characteristically joining one another in sememes.)

Stepping ahead from conventional to non-conventional vocabulary, we would like to revive interest in the generic title for an academic event, the sixth edition of an international symposium of *Cultural Gerontology*, hosted by Spain in October 2008. We enjoy the idea of paying attention to a gerontological branch for the study of words that get substituted for by coinage and loans. Today's speakers of Romanian show a gusto for 'raw' forms, for usage that evinces a lack of adaptation. Mihail Bogdan (1970) had a study dealing with English loan-words and his main conclusion was that the examples he selected to discuss "lie on the periphery of everyday vocabulary". This conclusion can be contradicted today. 'Gerontologically affected' items have to be rejuvenated and promoted from peripheries to centres of a variety of domains. We dare say that at present, in the development of the

lexicon, we are already *past* the first signs of integrating Anglicisms and we witness the development that takes many words from specialized areas to the common vocabulary of, it is true, younger Romanian speakers.

2. Terminological proposals

Although the notion of andragogy has been around for two centuries, the work of Malcolm Knowles (1970, 1984) made it particularly popular in North America and Great Britain. The central query is whether adult education requires special features, methods and pedagogical philosophy.

A large area of an adult or advanced learner's vocabulary is accounted for by what is understood to be *incidental learning*. Its opposed concept is *intentional learning*. The former occurs in an early stage when teaching and learning are focused on L2 words matched with their L1 translations. In advanced stages, L2 learning, usefully ushered in by the translation technique, proves insufficient and occasional learners (such as senior people facing foreign loans) need to do more than just to see forms and hear pronunciations. They cannot, in many cases, over-rely on translation; they are helped along by paraphrase and additional information on contexts of use and possible connotations. Further elaboration may be offered by the lexical association of the newly met words with other L2 words that people already know.

Compared to incidental learning, repeated exposure to words combined with marginal glosses throw light upon the usefulness of bilingualized dictionaries, described as doing the job of both a bilingual and a monolingual dictionary. As reference tools, bilingualized dictionaries and electronic ones have recorded widespread use among young people (who may also have specific dictionary software), providing good examples of intentional learning. When faced with new words, especially foreign words, many adults would sooner see incidental learning occurring to bring them the reward of understanding.

We would rather refer as well to *learning by impregnation*, extrapolating its existing description from what goes on between children and family members in rural areas: the former learn by observing the latter and imitating them, practically repeating chains of particular gestures to acquire private knowledge in domestic spaces. Therefore, the transmission of know-how by impregnation presumes both corporal and intellectual training common in a group culture. When impregnation does not take effect, an instructor is needed to transmit know-how and this situation can be described as *transmission by coaching*. In interaction with speakers or users of English, many Romanians suffer transmission by impregnation: this is so because their knowledge construction is rooted in work and in social relations. When children or teenagers exclaim 'wow' and 'cool' every now and then, their elderly relatives will copy the youthful exclamations with an intuition of the contextualized meanings. The elders incur the risks of an alienation process for not having had helpful apprenticeship inside their formal education. And yet, the impregnation with computer language is easily observable, facilitated also by the fact that the target words do not have several meanings. Let us examine, for instance, the following quotation from Vintilă Mihăilescu (DV # 268, 03 April 2009): "Mă alimentează B. cu ultimele știri și evenimente 'antropomorfe', îmi trimite *link-uri* G. din celălalt capăt al lumii, *zapez* și eu seara, obosit, în fața calculatorului." The words emphasized by us display the compromise transmorphemization we have mentioned, but in an unexplainable way they are not entries in any Romanian dictionary we have looked up. Eventually we can retrieve the verbal meaning of *link* in DTER, <a stabili o legătură (în programare)> and the approximated meanings recorded for *a zapa* in DIP: <1. A ucide; 2. A distruge; 3. A închide (televizorul, etc)>, none of which matching the transparent context of the quotation discussed. The online synonyms confirm the Romanian: to carry off, cut down, destroy, dispatch, slay, and so on, from which we retain the idea of force or particular energy that is being spent in the act.

Ultimately, we have come across what fits the Romanian context in paraphrase number six proposed online for *zap*: to skip over or delete (TV commercials), as by switching channels or pushing a fast-forward button on a playback device. We come up with one more contextualization of the Anglicism: “chiar și pentru cei care o urăsc și schimbă postul (prostul?), adică, deh, *zappează*, este o formă de comunicare” (RL #35/4 sept. 2009, p. 3). The career of *zap* in Romanian usage (even with erroneous doubling of consonant as before) goes in parallel to what happens in Internet messages applying ever newer contexts for the verb, such as reference to “habits that zap your energy”, whereas alliteration is never amiss (“sneakily zapping your zip”).

We also note that many self-conscious users of loans choose the stylistic colour of irony or sarcasm, while explanatory, like in the foregoing example or in the next example. Neagu Udrioiu, in a recent radio interview, said at one moment: “să ne manifestăm, să *performăm*, cum se zice astăzi”. Thus, we have illustrated a transmorphemized item resulting from secondary adaptation.

The emergence of digital, computerized and networked information in the latter part of the twentieth century has imposed terminology of the new media. Even the traditional printing press has been transformed into new technologies provided by Adobe Photoshop and desktop publishing tools. *Desktop publishing* does not require a dictionary entry because it is self-explicit in the age of the computer. Its components, taken in separation, would have been intelligible centuries ago while excluding the possibility of interpreting them as a complex construction. In DIP, the phrase is simply translated as “printare” with a puzzling bracketed specification: “de calitate superioară”. However, one year before, another dictionary (DTER) was more successful when translating *desktop publishing* by “tehnoredactare computerizată”, unnecessarily opening brackets too, with “pentru tipărirea de materiale cu caracter profesional: cărți, ziare, reviste, etc”.

By the side of computer science, tourism is another generous supplier of cross-cultural contacts. Foreign holiday-makers or, in specific terminology, international tourists, choose to travel when the amount of contact with members of the host culture is limited. Yet, the hotel staff and airport personnel are expected to speak their visitors’ language or an international idiom while their own indigenous culture exerts less of a shock to visitors. There is, anyway, a mutual fear of sharpening the negative stereotypes. Interactions are uneven at a variety of levels: informatively, economically, and, clearly, in matters of time spent in the respective area. To carry out an exchange and a negotiation is an obvious attraction, if possible with gratification for both tourists and hosts. All Romanians – without any pronunciation unease – refer to *low cost* instead of “economicos” and *all inclusive* instead of “cu servicii incluse”.

Another domain exploited by seekers of novel vocabulary is psychology. For instance, let us focus on the case of Charvet. Shelle Rose Charvet is an internationally renowned expert in influencing and persuasion. She indirectly is one of the major promoters of the pair *proactive-reactive* into Romanian vocabulary, particularly since her great book “Words that Change Minds: Mastering the Language of Influence” was translated and published in Romania in 2006. Her basic observation is that there are people who enjoy high levels of energy, are fast in making decisions, speak in short clear straightforward linguistic constructions – they are the proactive. Opposed to their typology are the reactive, who will take long spans for thinking things out, over-analyzing before acting, speaking in long, incomplete sentences, forgetting to make their speech poignant and relevant. Many interlocutors can adopt alternatively one conduct or the other. If they are consistently on one side, they are very likely to experience a sense of discomfort with their opposite. The Romanian pair *proactiv-reactiv* is eagerly carried by our television astrologers into their current expression and is supplied by the DEX online as taken over from French. This latter source indicates *proactiv* to be paraphrasable as “care are efect asupra altui lucru” and *reactiv* as “referitor la reacțanță/rezistență în fizică”. More helpful for the elucidation of *proactiv* is

the explanation of the collocation “inhibiție proactivă”: “inhibiție care duce la uitare, dar și care este exercitată cu cunoștințele actuale asupra cunoștințelor ce urmează să fie recepționate”. In everyday occurrences, we witness the specialized sense of *proactiv* to be made an adhoc synonym of *pozitiv* via phonic proximity.

A wished-for speed (or plainness or efficiency) can be carried over to the situations in which the message is conveyed with a touch of humour. A fervent analyst of vocabulary rejuvenating itself is Rodica Zafiu in RL. Here is a succinct report of how the linguist approaches the topic “Taguri” (RL #15/17 April 2009: 15). The word is necessary when someone tries to organize a linguistic material under way towards giving the final touch to the research before print. “Tag” has Romanian corresponding translations: etichetă; cuvânt cheie. DOOM has not included it (yet) but the word is useful because of its circulation and contextual pressures in its source-language, because of its shortness and simplicity, because it is both technical and comfortable and handy for users. The word has been taken over as such, has been inflected in Romanian, has derived its verb “a tăgui” and its noun “tăguială”, which proves perfect integration into our morphological system. There is also a tendency to use the form *tagging* to denote action in Romanian texts, e.g “De ce a devenit tagging ATIT DE POPULAR?” Defining the term runs as follows: 1. “Ce este un tag? Un cuvânt definitiv pentru un subiect anume. Pot fi mai multe taguri pentru un subiect. Acest subiect ar avea ca tag chiar cuvântul tag”. 2. “Ce este un tag? *Keyword* (cuvânt-cheie) asociat unui conținut pe internet (articol, fotografie, videoclip etc.) prin care îi ajuți pe utilizatori să înțeleagă mai ușor ‘despre ce este’ conținutul respectiv. Exemplu: unei fotografii cu tine la schi în Bucegi poți să-i adaugi tag-urile *ski, Bucegi, 2006*”. Such keywords can shift from referring to the content of the respective message to mentioning a generic topic. “Ce cuvinte îți vin în minte când spui România? Cu ce asociezi România? Poți să o definești în câteva cuvinte? Atunci te invităm să completezi *tag-uri pentru România, acum, înainte de ziua națională*.” There are situations when the word departs from its original application, somewhat changing the meaning, for instance: “Pe mine de ce nu mă tăguiește nimeni? Și când am fost tăguită într-un final, nu am mai avut timp să răspund.” The quotations above are found by R. Zafiu on the Internet. Their meaning instability is offered an explanation: the computer domain is dynamic and its users are young people.

As a comical example of how speakers allow forms of communication - previously separate - to overlap and interconnect, we can discuss *cafting* together with Rodica Zafiu (RL #29/ 24 July, 2009). The linguist is concerned with the recent *-ing* term - half jocular, half slangy - which is “cafting” instead of “cafteală”. The origin of the verb “a cafti” cannot be indicated; it could be gypsy or pseudo-gypsy idiom. However, the researcher takes no risks and informs that philologists being focused on gypsy terms in Romanian have never mentioned this particular verb. R. Zafiu suggests that the verb could be linked to the phrase “a lua un caftan” (synonymous to “a căftăni”), both the verb and the noun coming from a Turkish word. In its literal meaning, the message is that someone is invested with a rank, boyar or prince. An ironical use is made obvious if one thinks of the secondary metaphorical meaning of “a căftăni”, which is “a bate”. “A cafti” could be the shortened or the remade form of “a căftăni”, which is nonetheless a mere hypothesis to be further questioned. By regression, the name of the action first called “cafteală” is “caft”. To it, a funny pseudo-Anglicism has been added of late: “cafting”, for instance the title “Cafting între două mirese” in *Jurnal Național* 13.02.2008. This wording has a touch of humour for assigning to an old scuffle the modern appearance of a sport.

The tabloid *Cancan* (August 2, 2009) writes that a particular, at first sight unintelligible, Romanian term - “crășming” - once recently coined and accepted by urban speech, points to an activity parroting ‘clubbing’ (what ‘clubbers’, customers of nightclubs do), with the small difference of physical location. Yet, with the new media, physical location is less significant than social relationships. The cutting edge of this word is simple to see if we get to the

essential information: a governmental councilor, by the name of Andreea Vass, seems to be a good promoter of visits to pubs. As a general conduct, news writers are utterly critical of politicians and lash out at them urbanely with lexical invention. Gabriel Giurgiu (DV # 268/ April 3, 2009) makes a reference to “vremea ficusului” (the days of the ficus, the figtree time), hard to decode even for those steeped in Romanian culture. But the author himself explains: the change of governments spells out the political necessity to keep a low profile and shows a unique concern for positioning ornamental plants in and out of office rooms – a pretence of work in an idle period. (La “vremea ficusului” (pentru connaisseuri, asta e perioada de schimbare de guvern, când lumea își mută ficusul dintr-un birou în altul), e mai potrivit să stai cumișel și să “calci apa”. Nu e cazul să te afirmi, că nu știi exact ce au “ăștia” în cap. Rezultatul: până de idei în administrație, lincezeală, ne facem că muncim, adică un soi de paralizie enervantă.)

An unsurmised arrival in present-day Romanian philology is Arthur Beyrer. He is a Berlin specialist in matters of Romance languages (including Romanian; he studied in Bucharest in the fifties of the past century with professors Iorgu Iordan, Al. Rosetti, Dimitrie Macrea, Boris Cazacu). He is writing to RL (#15/ 17 April, 2009) on the matter of internationalization of American English, an effect of globalization. The title of the article is “Ne americanizăm?” His statement in reply to the title-question is: “Nu chiar cu totul. Mai sunt glosotopi care rezistă” (ibid: 19). Beyrer devises the term of *glosotop* to denote, in specialist communication, an inventory of words that have become current practice for a recognized group of communicators (a mixture is managed here between examples of a loanword which is the English element and the loanword which is the Romanian word of English origin). To us, the glosotop is synonymous to “jargon”. Beyrer acknowledges that he addresses the issue of Anglo-American loans having already been the object of study for reputed philologists, such as Mioara Avram, Adriana Stoichițoiu-Ichim, and Theodor Hristea. A number of syntagms are – for Beyrer – a translational must for the adepts of globalization so as to be given a corresponding English expression, because they come from new social realities and facts in Romania: aurolacii, programul “lapte și corn”, centrele de zi, medicamente compensate, indexarea pensiilor, medicul de familie, asociația de locatari, poliția de proximitate. A.B. says that the cultural, and implicitly lexical, impact is ostentatious and unavoidable (“Influențele culturale, prin urmare și verbale, sunt evidente și de neocolit”). Our question is: which of his own and some other illustrations come from inadequate transpositions from English, and which indicate new aspects in the life of the community and are untranslatable? We native speakers strive not to kill the idea through an excessive linguistic mass, the way a body’s figure can be turned ugly by excessive frills and lace. Whereas bilingual dictionaries usually provide just an L1 synonym, we mean to try the presentation of bilingualized dictionaries including L1 synonyms, as well as L2 definitions and L2 sentence examples. Some of the combinations may prove to be a temporary and circumstantial lexical yoking together of lexemes. Modernizing and updating our vernacular may happen through the use of a neologism inside the compactedness of a relatively recent construct or a direct calque.

It seems bilingualization is produced largely in response to local pressures. Steps forward are noticeable in Romanian lexicography, if we come to think only of a progress from the rather simplistic treatment in LBLE edited on two columns corresponding to L1 and L2 and with every line translated tenaciously, even when the transposition presupposes no difficulty. For instance, to pick at random, one might do without *doctor of medicine* turned into “un doctor în medicină”, but, further down, *medicine-man* is helpfully translated as “vraci”. The step forward we alluded to can be felt with an inspection of GERDI, laboriously working upon the lexical material on three columns: the expression in English, the translation into Romanian and the exemplification going back to English, though true bilingualized dictionaries require the version in Romanian for the English exemplification as well.

3. Conclusion

Romanian as a recipient language is blatantly eager to introduce terminological innovations – and the analysis of this process is part of the research presupposed by a philological branch dubbed Contact Linguistics, with the following obligations of research: sources, stages of borrowing, stages of the adaptation process, general adaptation tendencies. In the wake of the phenomena signaled above, users of Romanian have high expectations to be appropriately helped along by updated dictionaries, for increasing their own linguistic performance.

References

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Abbreviations

- DEX: *Dicționarul explicativ al limbii române*, Ediția a doua, Academia Română, Institutul de lingvistică „Iorgu Iordan”, București: Editura Univers Enciclopedic, 1998
DIP: I. Panovf, *Dicționar englez-român și român-englez*, București: Editura Lucman, 2005
DOOM: *Dicționar ortografic, ortoepic și morfologic al limbii române*, Ediția a doua, Academia Română, Institutul de lingvistică „Iorgu Iordan – Al. Rossetti”, București: Editura Univers Enciclopedic, 2005
DTER: C. Cincu et al. *Dicționar tehnic englez român*, Ediția a II-a, București: Editura Tehnică, 2004
DV: *Dilema Veche*
GERDI: Săileanu, C. & Poenaru V. *The Great English-Romanian Dictionary of Idioms*, București: Editura Coresi, 2007
LBLE: E. Iarovici & R. Mihăilă-Cova. *Lexicul de bază al limbii engleze*, București: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1979
RL: *România literară*