



THE USE OF ANGLICISMS WITH CORPORATE STAFF AND YOUTH NOWADAYS

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Abstract *The present paper analyses the use of six English verbs and phrases in Romanian which have barbarically been introduced into everyday language by corporate staff and young people today. Research is based on a questionnaire survey that was filled by 25-35 aged people in three different companies, as well as 18-25 aged students. The article focuses on the grammatical changes that occur when introducing foreign terms, as well as the users' preference and reasons for using a mixture of English and Romanian words and phrases into Spoken Romanian.*

Key words:

Anglicism, spoken language, business English

JEL Codes:

Z1

1. Introduction

The idea of this article has blossomed due to the observation of more and more frequent uses of some verbs and verbal phrases belonging to the category of Anglicisms, encountered mostly within the social group of corporate employees, and later with young students. Thus, the study discusses the use of six English verbs and phrases in Romanian which have penetrated the everyday spoken language. Therefore, the analysis started from a survey that was filled by 25-35 aged people in three different companies, as well as 18-25 aged students.

2. Literature Review

The process of renewing the vocabulary of a certain language is an imminent phenomenon, if we take into account the fast globalization of today's society. Therefore, the Anglicisms which have invaded the Romanian language are either naturalized or still being part of the category of foreignisms, or xenisms (Kiraly: 1984). Most Romanian linguists, among whom Mioara Avram (1997), Ștefania Isaac (2004), Georgeta Ciobanu (1996) and Adriana Stoichițoiu-Ichim (2007) do permit the use of Anglicisms and have tried to categorize them.

Although the subject of Anglicisms invading the all the other languages and Romanian in particular has been widely approached, the author of this paper has noticed that all Romanian linguists mainly discussed the noun category of Anglicisms and focused mainly on the orthographic issues during the naturalization process. Therefore, the present article is more interested in the

verb category and the replacement of certain Romanian verbs with their English equivalents, or by mutilating the Romanian verbs so as to resemble the English ones.

3. The Research Methodology

The research methodology of this article is based on a questionnaire delivered to specific sets of subjects, which include a group of office workers aged between 25 and 35 in three different companies from Romania and another set of people aged between 18 and 25, who are students in the field of economics and who aspire to be members of the previous group. As most of the literature approaches mainly the noun Anglicisms, the present questionnaire comprises six English verbs and phrases which are employed and modified in three different types.

4. The Use of English Verbs in Everyday Spoken Romanian

This article presents the changes which occurred in the use of everyday spoken Romanian due to the office business language introduced in Romanian corporations. The language of business is English; thus, all multinational companies that came to Romania during the last twenty three years have brought a set of English terms which are used inside the company, starting with the names of the various positions and company departments and ending with the activities and processes the staff operate with every day. Therefore, due to English-based documentation and multinational collaboration, the company rules, instructions and main activities are often described in

English and never translated into Romanian, even if all employees are Romanian.

However, besides the actual business English which is untranslatable, and universally agreed to be used as such, there are a few English verbs which have penetrated the everyday spoken language and have barbarically modified the use of Romanian. This use has acquired a certain level of “coolness” for those who use it, as the multinational companies which invented it offer the most wanted jobs among Romanian youth. This phenomenon has spread as the employees who speak “Romglish” do not only use this type of language at the office. They have already incorporated it into their way of speaking and it has become a trademark for the corporate clerk who represents a high standard for young people in search of a good job.

All these premises have been proven by circulating the survey under the form of 7 questions which asked the interviewed subjects to specify the percentage of their everyday use of the variants *a face sens* vs. *a avea sens*, *a fi determinat* vs. *a fi a fi hotărât*, *a oferi suport* vs. *a sprijini*, *a bucuri/a bookui* vs. *a rezerva* or *a înregistra*, *a se focusa* vs. *a se concentra* and *a se decide* vs. *a se hotărî*. As most of the Romanian linguists discussed mainly the noun Anglicisms, the present research analyses six English verbs and phrases which are employed and modified in three different types:

- The first category is represented by incorrect translations: the first verb in the questionnaire is a non-Romanian translation of the English idiom “to make sense”, which is used as “*a face sens*” instead of the Romanian phrase “*a avea sens*”; the second phrase is another wrong translation of “to be determined” as “*a fi determinat*”, instead of “*a fi hotărât*”; and the third mistranslated verb is “to offer suport” as “*a oferi suport*” instead of “*a sprijini*”/ “*a susține*”/ “*a ghida*”.
- The second category is marked by two verbs which are not translated, but grammatically modified according to the Romanian conjugation: “*a bookui*” from “to book”, employed both with the meaning of “to reserve” and “to fill in”; and “*a se focusa*” from “to focus”. The second verb is also changed to become a reflexive verb, so as to follow the pattern of the Romanian equivalent “*a se concentra*”. Therefore, the English verb “to book” acquires the person morphemes of the fourth verb conjugation in Romanian, while the verb “to focus” is modeled according to the first conjugation pattern of Romanian verbs. Therefore, both verbs fall under the two categories of conjugation according to which verb Anglicisms are modeled (Athu: 2011, 140-142).
- The third category is an abnormal use of the Romanian verb “a decide” changed into “a se decide”, which is modified according to the reflexive form of the

other Romanian verb “a se hotărî”. This use is rather strange, as the English verb “to decide” is not reflexive at all.

According to Adriana Stoichițoiu-Ichim (2007) the lexical innovations are real structural and functional units, but many Anglicisms remain phonetically and morphologically inadequate to the Romanian language. Thus, the survey tests the preference of Romanian users for these terms by giving examples in sentences, not only asking if a certain verb is used instead of another and tries to explain why these inadequate terms do penetrate the spoken language.

Therefore, after the data has been processed, the author has come up with a surprising outcome for the first category. Thus, even if the phrase that was most encountered and noticed as misused in very day speech was “*a face sens*”, the results prove that corporate staff admits using it only in a very low percentage, namely 10% as opposed to the correct variant, which is preferred. It is important to say that the questionnaire asks the subjects to specify the percentage of use between the two variants. So, 50% of the interviewed corporate employees admitted using the wrong form in 10% of the cases, but they still preferred using the correct form. It is likely that when shown the two variants, people should recognize their own mistake and avoid mentioning the real percentage. As for the second group, the percentage raised to 20% preference for those who use both terms. Therefore, 70% of the interviewed students said they are actually using the wrong term, but only in 20% of the cases.

The results for the second phrase – “*a fi determinat*” instead of “*a fi hotărât*” – are higher. That is, for the group of employees aged between 25 and 35, 50% of the subjects admitted using the wrong form, but some of them gave an average of 20 %, while others (only a few) said they prefer the misuse in 70% of the cases. This use is correlated to the bilingual environments, where there are English speaking colleagues, or collaborators and the Romanian employees tend to translate from English into Romanian when speaking to other Romanian colleagues. The outcome for the segment of young people aged 18-25 was that 80% of the subjects use the Anglicism in almost 40% of the cases. However, there is no specification as to being determined by something, or someone. The meaning of the misused term comes out from the opposite-synonymic variant “*a fi hotărât*”.

The third example belonging to this category of word by word translations is the phrase “*a oferi suport*”, which was reported to be used by 60% of the corporate employees in almost 50% of the cases. This preference results from the same reasons as the previous one and is used even more frequently. The students, however, recorded using it in 40% of the cases, without any direct

influence of the university environment. Therefore, the reason for preferring the Anglicism is not clearly stated. Most of these misuses are borrowed from interlocutors during conversation, due to their influential power, to their being a role model, or to their level of adaptability to fashion (how cool they are).

The second category includes a verb which is almost naturalized (“a se focusa”) and another one, which is very seldom introduced in everyday speech, as it depends on the office activities in which the interviewed subjects are involved. Therefore, accountants and tourist agents are more likely to use “a bookui” instead of “a înregistra”/“a rezerva”. Nevertheless, one of the most popular Anglicisms seems to be the verb to focus, turned into “a se focusa”. Therefore, 50% of the corporate staff prefers this variant in more than 50% of the cases, which is mostly due to the same bilingual environment, but also to the media. Almost the same level of frequency is to be encountered with interviewed young people, who report using “a se focusa” in 40% of the cases, and again, only 50% of the interviewed students admit using both the Anglicism and the Romanian verb “a se concentra”. That is, even if it has not been included in the Romanian Explanatory Dictionary (DEX) yet as a verb (it is included as a noun – “focusare”), the Anglicism “a se focusa” is part of the xenisms that have been absorbed by colloquial spoken Romanian and will probably receive a dictionary rubric. The last analyzed term is a subtle grammatical mistake that almost passes unnoticed due to its non-possessive correct equivalent. Therefore, it has a rather high frequency of use, but the reasons why people prefer it are the pretended higher register and imitation (people often hear it). Thus, 90% of the interviewed corporate staff reported using it in 50% of the cases, and 95% of the interviewed students acknowledged employing “a se decide” in almost 60% of the cases.

The study acknowledges for 10% to 50% preference of Anglicisms, and surprisingly states that the first misused verbal phrase, which represented the trigger for this analysis, is the lowest. However, the author has already mentioned that the interviewed subjects belonging to the 25-35 years old group have been rather reluctant to fill in the questionnaire and others actually refused to. Thus, the research was mainly based on the oral testimony in the first place, and it resulted in this survey. But, to the author’s surprise, the declared truth in most of the cases does not exactly correspond to the real percentage of use. This happens because, as people see the misuse, as well as the correct variant they tend to be ashamed and refuse to admit their own mistakes. Sometimes, people even employ the incorrect term only to state the loyalty to the group they belong to.

5. Conclusions

The research proves that integration within the office environment forces the employees to imitate their superiors or their role models and thus, it makes them to speak incorrectly. This English-Romanian jargon is a statement of affiliation to the corporate group, and this sense of belonging gives people a feeling of social security and psychological fulfillment. It is, therefore, understandable why people hesitate to expose their language as being incorrect and admit that they, themselves adopt misused terms. On the other hand, they may start using this jargon unconsciously and spread the use in other environments, due to the frequency of the misuse at the office.

Nevertheless, even if the percentages should have been higher, the subjects have admitted employing the incorrect verbs, thus certifying the existence of a corporate language which is invaded by Anglicisms and which are sometimes outrageous, such as the case of “a bookui”. The similar percentages resulted with the youth group also proves the large coverage of the Anglicisms, as well as their fast dissemination.

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