



"HENRI COANDA"  
AIR FORCE ACADEMY  
ROMANIA



"GENERAL M.R. STEFANIK"  
ARMED FORCES ACADEMY  
SLOVAK REPUBLIC

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE of SCIENTIFIC PAPER  
AFASES 2012  
Brasov, 24-26 May 2012

## **ROMGLEZA – IN THE NAME OF GLOBALIZATION**

**Ana MUNTEANU\*, Dorina LUPAN\*\***

\*Faculty of Legal and Administrative Sciences, Brasov, 'Spiru Haret' University, Romania

**Abstract:** *Our paper looks at how far the Romanian language has changed under the influence of English, one of the most spoken international languages. We totally agree with the statement that a language is a living organism, the lexicon of a language being the most mobile part. Nowadays we think that all languages are particularly altered by English borrowings, showing that, with and especially without people's conscious will and awareness, globalization really touches one of the most durable symbols of a nation: their language. No matter how bad it seems, we think that the positives far outweigh the negatives. Not to mention the fact that, from time to time, a 'global' language influences the other languages. It is not without problems, but on the whole we think that it is better not to greatly exaggerate the whole process.*

**Keywords:** *romgleza, globalization, lexical innovation, linguistic evolution*

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The European motto 'unity in diversity' seems to have altered its content. Globalization, with good and bad things, touches, slowly but surely, one of the most durable symbols of a nation: language. Obviously we are not close to the 1948's, when the lexical borrowings, especially those from French, were endless subjects and maybe the most interesting topics of wide debates. Everybody remembers that some of the professionals' concerns knew apocalyptic dimensions, some being really hilarious. However, some contemporary linguistic 'metamorphosis' remind us that history repeats itself, including the history of language.

The fact that a nation's language is a living organism has become a common place. And it would be a pity not to be so. If we do not accept this reality, we admit that a language does not evolve; still neologisms are irrefutable evidence that any language is alive. How far can this trend be accepted? It is a good subject for reflection for everybody, not only for specialists. The pessimists would say,

'Up to torturing the language! In the name of globalization!'

We propose, in the lines below, a reflection on this development, with or without quotes.

### **2. ROMGLEZA**

**2.1 A new language?** *Romgleza* was 'born' from the union of two languages: Romanian and English, following the great mixture of more and more English words and Romanian words.

The truth is that English has spread across the world relatively fast due to the British and especially American economy and the fast-growing developments in technology, to mention just two of the most important causes. Today about eighty percent of the data stored in the world's computers is in English. The entertainment industry has a say in this, too. Many people are familiar with English because of Hollywood and pop music. At least five out of ten songs in the pop charts in most countries at any given time are sung in English.

Coming back to Romania and the language spoken on this land, we would like to imagine

an ordinary day in an average Romanian person's life. Please, note that the underlined words are English.

The Romanian manager, a top corporate executive, the CEO type, welcomes everybody with a shiny 'hello!' while opening the door with a 'Push' sign on it, and wishes a good day (i.e. a kind of "Buna ziua" (good afternoon) translated into a transatlantic language), when there is a sign saying 'Closed'. The job itself is not very complicated: s/he has a computer, a usual browser, so s/he logs in, chooses a user name from a big folder where s/he stored her/his passwords. Then s/he clicks enter, then OK; if the case, s/he scans; if s/he happens to make a mistake, s/he presses on the delete button or cancels the activity.

For team building it is a bit different. All information should be updated and one should download everything they think is relevant, hot, the main topics being trend, dumping and the necessary inputs. Outdoor it's ... cool; one can see or have tuned cars, the latest gadgets, tablets, of course, the 'must have' type, or 'must see'; the latest hits, the news in prime time, the latest CDs, VIP's life, shopping at mall or at the nearest supermarket.

In this continuous stress, one can survive eating a hot dog in the morning, at a fast food at lunch, perhaps a pizza; at dinner one can choose something special, a full menu from a catering company, leader on the market.

And this imaginary day could go on, fueled by the language that bombards us daily, especially from mass-media. This perception is, of course, at the common user's level. The specialists, those who would handle such a profound phenomenon thoroughly, will find reasons, explanations, being able to classify the new words into different groups, belonging to various areas (art, cinema, techniques, information technology, etc.).

**2.2 Looking backwards.** If we confine ourselves to just a quick ascertaining observation, we will note that the phenomenon is not new, just that the pace of innovations in a language got amazing speeds. A quick review of the development of vocabulary in other languages such as Greek, English or French is meant to eliminate any concern.

While conquering the world, Alexander the Great carried the kind of Greek spoken then into the Near East where it became the standard language of commerce and government, existing along side many local languages. Greek was adopted as a second language by the native people of these regions and was ultimately transformed into what has come to be called the common Greek [2]. It brought significant changes in vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar and some of these changes have persisted into Modern Greek. The time of rapid change initiated by Alexander, though, lasted around 600 years.

In his research, Palmer found out an 'amazing' thing: during the Hellenistic period some purists reacted strongly against common Greek. They developed a movement called Atticism, which treated classical Attic as the only acceptable standard for prose writing. This movement would continue to influence Greek writing well into the modern era by constraining the production of literature in the normal idiom of actual daily speech [2].

Ancient Greek had an amazingly rich vocabulary and had a heavy influence on the English speaking civilization. Its vocabulary influenced and contributed to modern English; more than twenty percent of English vocabulary is derived from the vocabulary of ancient Greece. According to the *Webster International Dictionary* the total of the word stock of the English language is 166,724 words, out of which 41,214 are Greek [5].

Some of the most known English words of Greek origin are: analysis, antithesis, criterion, diagnosis, dogma, method, phenomenon, synthesis, therapy.

During the last century Italian and then French influenced other languages, according to the period when they were 'global'. In the same period, in Romanian many words were introduced from the neo-Latin languages, especially Italian and French. Much of the Italian words from the Romanian language belong to music and banking terminology. But the strongest influence of the last century until the late 1980s was, of course, the French influence. French was taught and known by many Romanians.



“HENRI COANDA”  
AIR FORCE ACADEMY  
ROMANIA



“GENERAL M.R. STEFANIK”  
ARMED FORCES ACADEMY  
SLOVAK REPUBLIC

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE of SCIENTIFIC PAPER  
AFASES 2012  
Brasov, 24-26 May 2012

The French language influenced Romanian throughout the eighteenth century. At first, the Phanariote principles brought French culture in the Romanian countries.

The Greeks from Constantinople were officials of the Ottoman Empire due to their higher level of education (compared to the average Ottoman population). Many members of the Phanariote families occupied high political and administrative posts for the Sublime Porte for relations with Western Europe because they were multilingual. The spread of the French culture in the Middle East led to the adoption of French as the language of diplomacy and shortly it became the language of the cultivated, well-mannered class of society. And if they did not know French, the Phanariote Principles came in Romania accompanied by their secretaries who spoke French, those times' international language. As a result, landowners and people from the 'aristocracy' brought French people to Romania, people who taught French to their Romanian children and to the court [3].

As opposed to the above mentioned influences that happened because of the countries' educated elites, the recent English influence has happened due to ordinary people. At the end of the last century and the beginning of this century, the majority of loans are from English. They have appeared and still appear in different fields: sports, business, economy, banking, finance, IT, fashion, music, transportation, psychology, art, construction, film, medicine (and we are aware that our list did not include all areas). For example, a person who has an average level of knowledge of English and works in the economic field uses 'willy-nilly' specific terms in English, because, internationally, English is now recognized as the global language of business (there is a specialized language: English for business).

### 2.3 Looking at our Latin relatives.

European clichés consider French to be proud of their traditions, cuisine and fashion, monuments, literature and art, culture and civilization in general, but also arrogant, conservative, and reluctant to multiculturalism.

Beyond clichés, however, the French are bizarre and spontaneous, charming and unpredictable, ironic and well-mannered, knowing how to behave and what to speak.

Like any other language, French has known and still knows internal and external influences which, due to their strength can not be ignored, regardless of the causes which concur in this process.

The French Academy – conservative forum par excellence – in many occasions rejected any attempt to authorize any innovation in language, such as lifting or reducing the accents or accepting neologisms, mainly Anglicisms (English words).

More tolerant, in fact more flexible and realistic proved to be the French lexicologists who update with commendable consistency and monthly frequency each edition of Larousse and Robert dictionaries.

Innovations in current French deserve to be treated under different chapters, depending on their nature and in the context of external pressures at an ortho-phonetic and orthographic level, as well as a social level. For example, the pronunciation of foreign proper names, in accordance with the French norms, is the foreigners' delight and even the Francophones': Mozart [Moza], Michael Jackson [mi]el Jaksõ], Venice, Milan, Florence; sandwich, weekend, tramway and other old Anglicisms have 'suffered' a more phonetic treatment than an orthographic one. In French recent neologisms have experienced different treatments, strange, or maybe normal if judged according to the 'purist' Frenchmen

and / or the import of technology together with the word that it defines.

The Ministerial decision from January 1973, for example, requires or recommends the use of French terms for realities borrowed from English: 'cadreur' instead of cameraman, 'retour en arriere' instead of flash back, 'classe' for standing, 'salle de sejour' for living room, 'savoir faire' for know-how, 'banque de données' instead of data bank, [4].

Toubon's famous law of 1994 (dubbed, by the way, Monsieur Allgood) also attacks the 'cut' words, the abbreviations, in this case, which can give rise to confusion and would rather approach slang; but abbreviations are common in spoken French and tend to generalize influencing slowly, selectively, even the neat French: ado(lescent), aglo(mération), bio(logie), compta(ble), déca(feiné), démo(nstration), écolo(giste), impro(visation), instit(uteur), labo(ratoire), météo(rologie), prépa(ratoire).

**2.4 Other aspects.** The language of a people is an element of stability in its life, but, considered in terms of its functionality, it appears to be a dynamic phenomenon, capable of evolving and changing. Language is a very complex phenomenon that involves an extremely rich system of morphological, syntactic, orthographic or orthoepic rules and regulations. Once these rules are set they must be complied with by all the speakers or writers to keep the unity and stability of the language. These rules are contained in treaties, handbooks, textbooks, dictionaries, of which we understand what it is allowed or not in a language. But, due to the evolution of the language, now and then such rules become uncomfortable because they change the relationship between what is right or wrong. E. Coșeriu states that 'change in a language, linguistic change, means the dissemination or generalization of an innovation, involving some necessary and subsequent adoptions' [1]. That is why we think we should accept linguistic changes, adopting necessary things

up to altering the existing language as known by our grandparents. We believe that Romanian would not become *Romgleza*, but a more developed language, capable of helping people communicate better.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

For a long time, people have felt the need for a global language in order to communicate faster and better. Esperanto, the most successful artificial language, was thought to become the global language. It did not succeed. Instead, English has spread across the world.

While more and more people learn English and speak it for different reasons, one could notice the effect it has on the other languages: a great variety of words and expressions are used in English while speaking their native language. We think it is 'OK' :) in principle, and, without being a huge fan of the new language some people speak (*Romgleza*), we are optimist. This living creature called language will grow nicely, changing just as much as needed, if we do not exaggerate while bringing it up. In fact, it happened before, as we have mentioned above: Greek, Latin, Italian, French influences, to mention just some of the most powerful – and Romanian is still unique, special and different from all other languages.

### REFERENCES

1. Coșeriu, E. *Diacronie, sincronie și istorie*. București: Encyclopedic Publishing House, (1997), p. 70.
2. Palmer L., R., *The Greek Language*. Duckworth Publishing House (1996).
3. Rosetti, Al., *Schiță de istorie a limbii române de la origini până în zilele noastre*, București: Albatros Publishing House (1976), p. 81.
4. \*\*\* *Dictionnaire des néologismes*, 5-e édition, Paris : PUF (1988).
5. \*\*\* *Webster International Dictionary* Available: <http://unabridged.merriam-webster.com> (April, 2012)