

IMPACT OF TEACHING BUSINESS ENGLISH UPON ROMANIAN ONLINE ADVERTISING

Elena TĂLMĂCIAN¹

Abstract

This paper focuses on the importance of raising ESP students' awareness about the impact of business English terms and expressions upon Romanian online advertising language. This linguistic reality has been signalled during the business English seminars within the Bucharest University of Economic Studies (BUES) and the present research tries to capture the behaviour of economic Anglicisms in several advertisements in Romanian online business environments (e.g. sites belonging to banking institutions).

The applied part of our paper contains examples of Romanian advertisements containing at least one term in English, a set of questions addressed to our students as well as our findings.

Keywords: Anglicisation, business English, economic Anglicisms, banking language, online Romanian advertising language.

1. Introduction

The virtual environment is an extraordinary resource of teaching tools and it is up to teachers' abilities to guide their students on the learning path and select the best and effective teaching tools. By using valuable virtual resources, the focus of the present paper is on the Romanian online advertising language which is undergoing an intensive Anglicisation process².

In terms of the Anglicisation or Englishing degree we could speak about at least two different types of advertising messages in the Romanian online business environment: adverts that contain one or a few words in English and ads which are entirely in English although they target a foreign audience, Romanian respectively (see Adverts 1-10 in the Appendix). The basic historical meaning of the term *Anglicisation* is a little bit extended in order to refer to the linguistic reality we are facing nowadays: the Romanian advertising language undergoes a process of using more and more English terms, expressions and abbreviations. These messages

¹ Elena Tălmăcian, The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania,
elena.talmacian@yahoo.com

² The very high number of English words in advertising messages has also been signalled by Stoichițoiu-Ichim (2001:95).

appear in written form, most of the times on the background of an image related to the content of the message (see Adverts 1-10 in the Appendix).

The ads that tend to have the highest number of English terms per message or are entirely in English are job advertisements (see Advert 9 in the Appendix). Our first-year students³ within the Bucharest University of Economic Studies have proved to be very interested in these as they are very close to the moment of getting hired and most probably working in an economic environment or the moment of finding a job «in which case we think of highest importance is the *understanding* of the respective job ads». Actually, the starting point of our research is our business English seminar on the recruitment topic with a focus on IT job ads addressed to the Romanian public which are generally full of English (IT) terms/ phrases/ abbreviations.

On the other hand, the study of Romanian ads containing English terms has given us the opportunity of observing the behaviour of Anglicisms in Romanian linguistic environments and the changes/ impact some of them have upon the latter «the lack of case-marking, especially genitive; the lack of prepositions «e.g. “TotalSoft recrutează 40 poziții *internship*” (www.totalsoft.ro) instead of “*poziții de internship*”», the omission of the definite article «e.g. “Tranzacții sigure! La ING avem zero toleranță pentru fraudele pe internet, motiv pentru care toți cei care aleg *e-commerce* de la ING sunt înrolați automat în serviciul de autentificare 3DSecure” (www.ing.ro) instead of “*e-commerce-ul*”» which render the respective written messages a telegraphic appearance that makes one feel they “do not sound/ look like Romanian”».

It is these visible changes that encourage the perception of Anglicisms as a real threat for the receiving language and this is valid not only for Romanian. There are “purist”⁴ voices (Hohenhaus, 2002:175) that say German, for instance, is threatened by English, but the same author thinks German is safe, while other languages (90% according to “pessimists”) should take into consideration “some sort of resistance and language planning” as a solution for salvation. We are not that pessimistic as far as Romanian is concerned, but some linguistic measures «in the (online) media where there should be some clear rules regarding Anglicisms use as the rule of necessity, the rule of the Romanian term followed by the English term, etc.» are advisable.

³ This study refers to academic year 2017-2018 and the questionnaire respondents are 60 1st year students of the Faculty of Accounting and Management Information Systems.

⁴ See also Görlach (2003:117) who speaks about the purist approach to Anglicisms which would affect the DNA of the people excessively resorting to their use: “Speakers of individual languages have been aware of this impact and many have rigorously objected to the flood of newcomers, claiming that they endanger the linguistic ‘ecology’, that is, the morphological structure or the ‘purity’ of the affected languages and may even, at least implicitly, have some effect (claimed to be negative, of course) on national character, life-style and morals.”

2. Research methodology

As the presence of terms and expressions in English is a linguistic reality that can by no means be ignored, our challenge has been trying to find some answers to the questions regarding the Anglicisation process of the Romanian online advertising language.

The method of our research is asking first year BUES students to find twenty online Romanian ads, each containing at least one English term belonging to the business/ economic field. This has been an individual task for 60 first year students within the Faculty of Accounting and Management Information Systems. Together with our students we have analysed both the presence and the behaviour of English terms and expressions in the online ads they have selected. This is only a preparation/ research stage for the questionnaire stage.

3. Questionnaire and findings

The students had to answer four questions, as follows.

The first question we have addressed to the 60 BUES students is: “*What economic field(s) abound(s) in Romglish⁵ online advertising messages?*”. Their answers reveal the fact that Romanian online economic advertising abounds in English economic terms and phrases while the banking field is one of the economic terminologies that contain lots of such examples which can be easily found on bank websites. Here are only some of the examples BUES students have chosen:

- “Pe lângă serviciile de bază de creditare, gestiune, plăți și de trezorerie, vă oferim soluții bancare adaptate nevoilor specifice, precum *corporate finance, leasing, factoring*, sau piețe de capital.” (www.ing.ro);
- “Facilitatea de *overdraft* poate fi obținută dacă încasezi salariul sau alte venituri în Banca Comercial Carpatica.” (www.carpatica.ro);
- “Serviciul de *internet banking*, Click 24 Banking îți vine în ajutor” (www.bcr.ro);
- “Premiem *start-up-uri* curajoase cu premii totale de 100000 euro!” (www.finantare.ro);
- “Plătește cu cardul ING la *POS* și câștigi! Plătește cu cardul ING în magazine sau online și primești un bonus în cont” (www.ing.ro);
- “Trăiești viața fără *cash!*” (www.raiffeisen.ro);
- “ING personal – Credit pe loc, fiți gata *Black Friday!*” (www.ing.ro);

⁵ The term *Romglish* is the sinonime for English borrowings as Zafiu R. explains in a Gândul interview (<http://www.gandul.info/interviurile-gandul/noua-limba-a-romanilor-lingvistica-rodica-zafiu-explica-la-interviurile-gandul-cum-am-ajuns-sa-vorbim-si-sa-injuram-romglish-13874343>. Accessed July 21, 2017)

- “Raiffeisen Bank a lansat cardurile *contactless!*” (www.raifaissen.ro);
- “BRD oferă toate tipurile de soluții pentru nevoile de *cash management* ale companiilor: servicii de plată a salariilor, gestiune, încasare facturi, procesarea cardurilor, *e-banking* și colectare de numerar.” (www.brd.ro) and there are lots of other examples of the kind.

Regarding their frequency, our research reveals high frequency and low frequency⁶ English terms/ expressions and abbreviations. The first category can be exemplified by means of terms like: brand, broker, business, contactless, internet/mobile banking, cash, free-lancer, leasing, management, overdraft, part time, full time, voucher, ATM, Corporate & Investment Banking, networking, training, brand, e-commerce, teambuilding, prepay, job, summer job, internship, target, mentoring, start-up, marketing, deadline, dealer, shopping, leadership, front office, back office, HR, PR, Black Friday and others. We would like to mention here that these so-called high frequency English terms can be understood by our students quite easily.

On the other hand, there are also low frequency⁷ English terms/ expressions and abbreviations as they refer to economic realities that belong to a very specialized target audience such as: wealth management, escrow, POS, accounting and payroll specialist, retail/ wholesale banking, standing order (see Advert 2 in the Appendix) and many others. Unlike high frequency English terms, low frequency English terms/ expressions and abbreviations can hardly be understood by common Romanian speakers, a proof is the fact that they are not understood/ known by our students either. Therefore, our conclusion is that to a certain extent frequency goes hand in hand with the degree of understanding.

The second question is the following: “*To what extent can an English term affect the degree of understanding of an advertising message?*”. The people that need specific banking services are left with at least two possibilities:

1. they can find the meaning of the respective term or expression by looking it up in an (eventually and most probably online) dictionary or a site that clarifies the meaning of that term or expression⁸ which is used worldwide, but has not been included in a dictionary yet «like *ready business* whose meaning is explained in an online business publication as follows: “să ai un partener care te cunoaște și care îți

⁶ *High frequency* means English terms and expressions that are used in Romanian advertising contexts quite often and whose meanings can be (easily) understood by Romanians, while *low frequency* refers to a rare, specialised usage of certain English terms in Romanian advertising messages whose understanding is rather challenging or needs dictionary search.

⁷ The term “frequency” refers to the high possibility of finding a term/ expression/ abbreviation in English rather than in Romanian, even if we speak about a Romanian context.

⁸ The meaning(s) of business English expressions or job titles seem to be the most difficult to find (specialized) dictionaries (Tălmăcian, 2013: 201). The meaning of *PR manager* cannot be found in the online format of Cambridge Dictionary or the Business Dictionary that we have consulted (<http://dictionary.cambridge.org>; <http://www.businessdictionary.com>)

poate oferi soluția potrivit pentru a fi mereu conectat. Datele companiei sunt oricând accesate în siguranță de pe tabletă sau laptop, prin serviciile de date mobile oferite de Vodafone, iar agenții de vânzări, clienții și partenerii Ursus Breweries sunt conectați în orice moment la toate informațiile” (www.wall-street.ro)»;

2. they can ask bank officers for clarification.

The latter possibility may generate a feeling of irritation and sometimes even embarrassment. Such English specialized terms may come naturally when they are used by bank/ credit officers, but may become puzzling/ coded for the people that are not professionals in the field.

BUES students' have also answered third question of our research namely: “*Are you as Romanian (economic) readers comfortable when you have to decipher such messages?*”. The most frequent answer is that, generally, as long as there is knowledge, there is comfort. If the meaning of the respective English term or expression is unknown by the Romanian speaker, the reaction is very likely to take the shape of ignorance, rejection, irritation when coming across such terms. Our students' reaction has been clearly in favour of the presence of a Romanian synonym alongside the English term.

The fourth question that comes to complete our study is: “*In your opinion, what is the reason of the use of an English term in a Romanian ad?*”. There may be various reasons for the use of an English term or several terms in a Romanian advertisement. Most of the questioned BUES students agree that there is premise that (business) English terms and phrases are so widely and internationally spread that there is the expectation that actually anybody is able to understand them properly, which may be rather deceiving if we think of the whole Romanian audience in all social and professional environments.

As far as the 60 BUES students are concerned, unless we speak about the very high frequency English terms some of which we have exemplified above, they admit the fact that they have to appeal to dictionaries in order to understand such terms. But it is even more challenging to give an accurate translation «e.g. *cash flow* was translated “flux financiar” by a 1st year economic student instead of “flux de numerar”). We would also like to refer here to a very important aspect about translating an economic term/ expression/ acronym. This process is different from translating what is called general English. We agree with Ardelean (2016: 64) who very well says that “The translator has the liberty to choose from several different variants the one which best serves the original, while being, at the same time, closest to the understanding of the readers”, but in terms of economic English we should add the fact that for an accurate translation of business terms/ expressions/ acronyms it is crucial to take into account the very specific economic sub-domain that the English term we want to translate belongs to, otherwise what we get is an inaccurate or even totally different meaning from the original.

Among the reasons for the inclusion of such terms we should mention their ability to make the ad message more catchy, friendly, even funny «e.g., ING personal – Credit pe loc, fiți gata *Black Friday!*» (www.bcr.ro), Advert 1 in the Appendix» and their merit to express an economic reality by means of only one English term or expression which otherwise should be replaced by an elaborate explanation or phrase «e.g. *e-token*».

On the other hand, lots of Romanian adverts are full of English terms that could be very well replaced by their Romanian equivalents:

- “Serviciul *delivery* Cluj, vă onorează comenzile în timp rapid acasă sau la birou.” (www.anunturi.ro) (*delivery* = *livrare*);
- Promovăm un stil de lucru *learning by doing* unde setăm anumite *taskuri* împreună cu *team leaderii*, apoi ne asigurăm că juniorii noștri sunt pregătiți pentru standardele clienților noștri. (www.hipo.ro) (*learning by doing* = = *învățare prin practică*; *taskuri* = *sarcini*; *team leaderii* = *coordonatorii de echipă*);
- „*Internship* de la BRD îți propune să exersezi un domeniu specific bancar timp de două luni, alături de profesioniști care te vor ajuta să înțelegi cum se lucrează în domeniul financiar-bancar.” (www.brd.ro) (*internship* = = *practică, stagiu*).

Of course, in order to reach the real goal of their use, our recommendation is resorting to an English term *if* it is necessary and has no Romanian equivalent which most researchers in the field suggest: “The Anglo-Saxon terminology’s role in specialized languages is to facilitate communication, therefore it is not recommended to use so-called luxury Anglicisms – Anglo-Saxon terms that double Romanian words without bringing further information” (Condruz-Băcescu, 2016: 17), but it seems that the generalized use is the most powerful factor that filters such business English terms and expressions and decide over their preservation in Romanian business language. However, there are authorized voices that acknowledge the natural process of a language enrichment requires such “a growing number of borrowings and semi-adapted new terms which affect the linguistic “purity” often condemned by academia; nevertheless, they are a necessary phase in the process of language enrichment because they often cover new areas of knowledge” (Ardelean, 2016: 46)⁹.

⁹ See also Avram (1997: 5) who invites to accuracy and balance with reference to the usage of Anglicisms in Romanian contexts: „Influența engleză este un fenomen internațional care nu are nimic negativ în sine și nu e mai periculoasă pentru limba română decât alte influențe din trecut și de azi (se știe doar că marea ospitalitate a limbii noastre este dublată de o capacitate la fel mare, de asimilare, și de selecție în timp); în această privință se pune mai mult problema folosirii corecte și a echilibrului, care implică rezolvarea înțeleaptă a conflictului dintre generații în atitudinea față de anglicisme” *apud* Tălmăcian (2016: 78).

4. Final remarks

The most powerful proof of the importance of studying this phenomenon is our students' feedback. They unanimously admit the fact that advertising messages (which can be found in a variety of online media) contain more and more English terms and sometimes this linguistic reality may be aggressive or even embarrassing for the recipient of the advertising message. This fact may actually block communication instead of facilitating it if we should refer to the main purpose of their use. A very precise and safe way of facilitating the correct understanding of English terms/ expressions/ abbreviations suggested by most questioned BUES students is the presence of Romanian synonyms.

Of course, our present study has been a trial to raise awareness of this phenomenon and to find some answers to a few questions in relation to it. There is still lot of room for research in this area.

References and bibliography

Books and articles

- Ardelean, C.** 2016. *Translating for the future*, Bucharest: Tritonic.
- Avram, M.** 1997. *Anglicismele în limba română actuală*, Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române.
- Condruz-Băcescu, M.** 2016. *English Language in the Romanian Economic Field and Business Environment: a Necessity or a Fad?*, in *Journal of Languages for Specific Purposes*, Research Group for Communication in Business and Foreign Languages, no.3. Oradea.
- Görlach, M.** 2003. *English Words Abroad (Terminology and Lexicography Research and Practice 7)*, Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Hohenhaus, P.** 2002. *Standardization, change, resistance, linguistic threat. 18th century English and present day German* in *Current Issues in Linguistic Theory* 235. Standardization. *Studies from the Germanic Languages*, Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company (Andrew R. Linn, Nicola McLelland eds.)
- Stoichițoiu-Ichim, A.** 2001. *Vocabularul limbii române actuale. Dinamică, influențe, creativitate*, București: Editura All.
- Tălmăcian, E.** 2016. *Anglicismele în limba română actuală. Limbajul economic*, Bucharest: ASE Publishing House.
- Tălmăcian, E.** 2013. *Anglicismele în dicționare și mass-media*, Bucharest: ASE Publishing House.
- Zafiu, R.** 2017. *Noua limbă a românilor. Lingvista Rodica Zafiu explică, la Interviurile Gândul, cum am ajuns să vorbim și să înjurăm „ROMGLISH”*. Retrieved from <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-romglis-13874343>. Accessed July 21, 2017.

Online dictionaries

<http://dictionary.cambridge.org>

<http://www.businessdictionary.com>

Websites

www.altex.ro

www.anunturi.ro

www.bcr.ro

www.bestjobs.ro

www.brd.ro

www.carpatica.ro

www.cec.ro

www.finantare.ro

www.retail-fmcg.ro

www.ideideafaceri.manager.ro

www.ing.ro

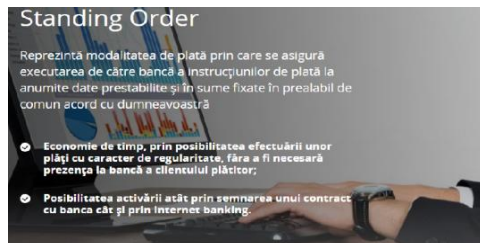
www.hipo.ro

www.jcicraiova.ro

www.raiffeisen.ro

www.totalsoft.ro

www.wall-street.ro

Appendix 1Advert 1 (www.bcr.ro)Advert 6 (www.cec.ro)Advert 2 (www.bcr.ro)Advert 7 (www.ing.ro)Advert 3 (www.altex.ro)Advert 8 (www.ideideafaceri.manager.ro)

Advert 4 (www.jcicraiova.ro)

Lucrezi în retailul alimentar sau în industria FMCG ?

E important să fii informat la zi !

Advert 5 (www.retail-fmcg.ro)

Advert 9 (www.bestjobs.ro)

Advert 10 (www.bcr.ro)

Appendix 2

Questionnaire

1. What economic field(s) abound(s) in Romglish online advertising messages?
2. To what extent can an English term affect the degree of understanding of an advertising message?
3. Are you as Romanian (economic) readers comfortable when you have to decipher such messages?
4. In your opinion, what is the reason of the use of an English term in a Romanian ad?

The author

Elena Tălmăcian is a university lecturer of Business English and Professional Communication with the University of Economic Studies, Bucharest. She holds a BA degree in English and Orthodox Theology (University of Bucharest), an MA degree in Applied Linguistics (University of Bucharest), an MA degree in Applied Language Education and Research Communication in Economics (Academy of Economic Studies, Bucharest) and a PhD degree in Philology (University of Bucharest). Her current research areas of interest are the influence of English upon contemporary Romanian (with focus on the Economic language), Business English teaching methodology and translation. She has published three books on anglicisms and several articles on e-learning, teaching business English collocations, the use of authentic audio and video materials during business English classes and she has also co-authored a study on students' perception of teachers' efficiency.