

## ENGLISH AND THE GLOSSY MAGAZINES. PROFITABLE OR NOT...

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*General language features of the written press. The study emphasizes the main features of the language used in the contemporary written press, regarding also the evolution of the journalistic language. The study case is based on the way that the language used in some newspapers/magazines has some concrete tendencies, such as: the use of many English words, the use of some incorrect words, the use of a specific language (viewed as a fashion of words). These are the features of the language used by common people, but also by the written press.*

*Key words/concepts: media, English words, linguistic fashion*

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**General background.** It is well-known that the process of loaning from a foreign language is more or less characteristic of any period in the history of a language. In the same line, the vocabulary, as the sum of the words belonging to a language, mirrors the reality, being a good indicator of any social, political or cultural changes of its users. Thus, the lexical luggage is constantly expanding, acquiring new words which refer to new objects, phenomena, processes and concepts. The last decades of the 20th century witnessed the influence of English on Romanian as being proportionally higher than the influence of other languages. Consequently, the English loanwords have become an outstanding characteristic of contemporary Romanian language. The present paper intends to present the impact of this process of loaning English words upon written media, especially upon magazines for women.

The Romanian glossy magazine market is expanding, in terms of both reading rate and revenues from advertising. In 2008, Romanian press groups launched in this niche more glossy titles on the market: Marie Claire, InStyle, GQ, Esquire, Harper's Bazaar etc. that were added to the already existing women glossies: Bolero, Cosmopolitan, Glamour, Joy, Unica, Avantaje, Look!, Elle, Tabu, The One, Tango, Ce se întâmplă doctore? The press trusts in Romania estimate that women's magazines dominate the Romanian glossy magazine market. Some 310,000 copies of glossy magazines for women are sold each month, yielding some €5 million in revenues from advertising in the first quarter of 2007, according to the Deputy General Manager of Ringier Romania. Managers of glossy magazines indicate that the increase in the women's magazine segment is due to changing consumer and lifestyle habits, and an increase in personal expenses.

In terms of economic figures this means progress. But, let us have a look at the cultural, linguistic gain of this headway. Most of the features of the magazine and newspaper style are determined by the fundamental need of publishers to come up with new elements, to be sensational, to offer surprises so as to arise the audience's interest and to continue to communicate pieces of information always threatened by rush, boredom. As the novelty does not always rely on ideas or information, it is the language that bears the innovation. The journalistic passion for the shocking, sick neologism is already well-known, and it has easily been noticeable in the Romanian press after 1989. A steady source for the linguistic picturesque seems to be the countryside, familiar, argotic and, of course, the borrowed items, all of them trying to refresh and permanently innovate the routine daily language. Anyway, the fashion of journalistic creativity

has gone. The most striking phenomenon is the influence of English. As Rodica Zafiu<sup>456</sup> rightly points out, it is a complex phenomenon as it implies a prestige factor: because English is an international language, and knowing it appears as compulsory, there is a snobbish side of the story; in fact as the linguist appreciates, necessity and snobbery are linked to one another. The great number of English borrowed words in the written media suggests the openly expressed wish of the journalist to be perceived as an accessible, entertaining, up-to-date writer but, sometimes the result turns to be the opposite and the public discourse easily slips towards a familiarity that crosses the animated, vivid language, becoming impolite and invective as Rodica Zafiu rightly mentions.

Beside the natural need to use some terms coming from English (the influence of English being an international phenomenon. due to the progress of some domains) the invasion of English-borrowed words there becomes a sort of trend among some social categories that frequently and deliberately employ English words, even if Romanian language has words to denote this fact, that is they have Romanian equivalents: *job, party, look, hair-stylist, popcorn, hit, fast-food, voucher* announcing a sort of linguistic “fashion” in the nowadays written media.

This trend of using, sometimes useless and abusively, English words could be explained up to a point as we actually live in a world of “fakes”. Almost everything is being forged and copied: paintings, clothes, bags, music, sites, books, images, characters, even words and expressions. There are originals and copies as well. We have whiskers not lashes, false nails, reshaped bodies. But it is even easier to fake and copy options, expectations, words, behaviour, to let yourself taken away by imitation, fake and not knowledge. It is handy, easy and trendy.

Regardless the aim, be it necessity or trend, these borrowings show the way our vocabulary changes, as media represents the most eloquent and true reality.

Mihaela Muresan<sup>457</sup> offers a classification of English borrowed words or *anglicisms*<sup>458</sup> according to some criteria:

- **aim or necessity:** *denotative or necessary* (they do not have a Romanian equivalent): *tenis, nailon, sendvici* and *conotative or luxury* (words that have Romanian equivalents, their use is not necessary unless for stylistic reasons: *living-room (cameră de zi), talk-show (masă rotundă), week-end (sfârșit de săptămână)*);

- **informational quantity** it brings, meaning that the English words add one or several supplementary meanings to the existent Romanian words: *audiență* (<engl. *audience*) bears the meaning of a meeting granted to a certain applicant, (DEX, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Editura Univers Enciclopedic, București, 1998), and is at present enriched with the English meaning of *public*; *locație*(<engl. *location*), originally meaning *renting*, at present is used to denote any *placement, settlement, even place, spot, site*; *a aplica* (< engl. *to apply*) means to put into practice, but is nowadays frequently used instead of *to make a request, to candidate*;

- **form:** *raw, unchanged:* *sexy, cool, trendy, bye-bye, beep, fifty-fifty* and *adapted words:* *tenis, servicii, nailon*; *simple:* *marketing, business, impact, bancnotă, leasing* etc and *compound:* or *phrases/expressions:* *all right, the show must go on, ok, best seller, glamour girl* etc.);

- **structure:** *composed* according to the English word order: *CV, Napoca Hotel, Diesel Club* and *derivatives* (suffixes/prefixes): *superstar, megastar, FNI-gate*).

The high frequency of the English borrowed words in today written media gives a special characteristic to the newspaper language. Thus, this language is impregnated with a great number of English words, correctly or incorrectly used.

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456 Rodica Zafiu, Jurnalul national, 4 aprilie 2006, [www.jurnalulnational.ro](http://www.jurnalulnational.ro).

457 Mihaela Muresan, Tendințe lingvistice în presa scrisă contemporană, în Jurnalism și comunicare, Anul III, nr. 4, 2008, p. 24.

458 words or expressions borrowed from English language, without being necessary, sometimes not being integrated in the language – according to “Dicționarul explicativ al limbii române”.

Further on, we shall analyze the above mentioned linguistic tendencies in the light of this important yet, controversial player of our nowadays society: mass-media. The first fact that is worth mentioning is that we deal with an international tendency “the massive borrowing of Anglo-American terms manifested after the Second World War in most European languages and not only, a phenomenon explicable especially through the progress of some technical domains” (Rus Maria Laura apud Mureșan Mihaela).

In the written media, anglicisms are very often used, especially in magazines dedicated to the feminine audience. There are extremely numerous examples of the use of English borrowings in different areas and we shall present some of them found in glossy magazines and analyse their unnecessary or luxury usage mainly in women magazines (it is obvious that the target audience and the topic approached greatly influence the number and quality of anglicisms); their employment is motivated by the tendency of certain social categories to be different, unique, special at least in point of language. In order to exemplify all these we analysed articles from *Tango* and *Cosmopolitan*, issues published over the last year. The two are monthly magazines with a circulation of 25000 issues the former and 45000 issues the latter, having as target women over 18 years old.

**Magazine study** The presentation underlines the preference to use anglicisms to the detriment of their Romanian equivalents, phenomenon analysed in this study in the two publications pointed previously. From the researched material we gathered that most of the terms are not assimilated either phonetically or morphologically by the structure of Romanian language; there are terms that are not even registered in the Romanian specialized works: *cover*, *fresh*, *modeling*, *outfit*, *target*, *look*, *nickname*, *target*, *up-grade*.

The domains where anglicisms are more present are: the musical domain, the everyday life, fashion, sports, economy. and here are some colourful examples to sustain our statements.

**-The musical domain:** 65% of the selected terms are not included in the recently published lexicographic works:

**beat:** “noul single cu beat de house cucerește...”<sup>459</sup>

**live:** “albumul a fost înregistrat live.”<sup>460</sup>

**cover:** „Artistul a lansat deja într-o nouă versiune *cover-ul* celor de la Soft Cell.”<sup>461</sup>

**view:** “...a înregistrat câteva mii de view-uri.”<sup>462</sup>

**upgrade:** “...de ce nu am vrea să facem un “upgrade” al relației amoroase.”<sup>463</sup>

**-The everyday life** registers new items not attested in DCR<sup>464</sup>: *cool*, *fresh*, *hair-styling*, *outfit*, *t-shirt*, besides the inveterate *cover-girl*, *casting*, *make-up*, *look*, *trendy*. Most of them are “luxury anglicisms”, as there are Romanian equivalents for them.

**cool** “... cele mai *cool* trend-uri în hair-styling.”<sup>465</sup> It appears in combination with other words, or, sometimes just alone like an interjection. It is a word with a high frequency in the analyzed articles, being in close competition with *look* - term registered in DCR<sub>2</sub>:

**look:** “*look* similar accesibil.”<sup>466</sup>

**outfit:** “*outfit-ul* de club era horror, ce să mai!”<sup>467</sup>; “outfit” proves to be a useless, luxury anglicism that could easily be replaced with its Romanian equivalent; still, it is a rather used word in the articles on fashion.

459 *Cosmopolitan*, aprilie, 2009, p.32.

460 Idem, p.30.

461 Idem, noiembrie, 2008, p. 2.

462 Idem, aprilie, 2009, p. 32.

463 Idem, p. 21.

464 DCR- Dictionar de cuvinte recente.

465 *Cosmopolitan*, martie, 2008, p. 39.

466 Idem, aprilie, 2009, p.34.

467 *Cosmopolitan*, aprilie, 2009, p. 64.

**casting** : "...când m-am dus la *casting* în Paris, nici nu au vrut să audă..."<sup>468</sup>  
**nickname**: "doar aici îndrăznește să-și deschidă inima, sub un *nickname* cu conotații dureroase..."<sup>469</sup>  
**trendy**: "...elementele unui interior, să-i spunem, *trendy*..."<sup>470</sup>  
**sexy** is probably one of the best known adjectives of English origin in Romanian language; it is a "raw" adjective used not only in the written media, but also in the everyday speech, on television etc.; it appears spelt either like in English or like a Romanian word: "sexi: "trup sexy".<sup>471</sup>  
**trend**: "...și nu doar pentru că asta e "*trendul*", explică ei..."<sup>472</sup>  
**OK**: "arată-i că nu este *OK* ceea ce face..."<sup>473</sup>  
**full**: "...nu te fac să te simți "*full*" și nici nu-ți deschid apetitul..."<sup>474</sup>  
**fresh** : "Un parfum fresh, de primăvară..."<sup>475</sup>  
**weekend**: "nici nu mai știu unde să ies și eu în *weekend*..."<sup>476</sup>  
**background**: "...născut în cu totul alte condiții, cu totul alt *background*, cu totul altă evoluție decât a mea..."<sup>477</sup>  
**brunch**: "*Brunch* de Paste pe boulevard...irezistibil..."<sup>478</sup>  
**junk**: "dacă nu mănânci *junk*, evident..."<sup>479</sup>  
**topping**: "Ca desert, topesc ciocolata drept *topping* peste banană..."<sup>480</sup>  
**buzz**: "...deplasează-te atunci când ai ceva de spus în loc să dai "*buzz*" pe Mess..."<sup>481</sup>  
**- Beauty&fashion** is another area where there are plenty of luxury English borrowed words, actually, reading articles on these topics is like reading in a totally unknown language, a combination of Romenglish.  
**make-over**: "e un *make-over* rapid și eficient, ticluit de specialiști cu fler salutar..."<sup>482</sup>  
**make-up artist**: "odata, un *make-up artist* m-a altoit cu o nuanță deschisă de ruj..."<sup>483</sup>  
**anti-age**: "...folosește crema *anti-age* cu unt de Shea și vitamine..."<sup>484</sup>  
**gloss**: "strălucirea *glossului* acționează ca o lupă..."<sup>485</sup>  
**shooting**: "Anul trecut am avut *shooting* în Turks..."<sup>486</sup>  
**show**: "implicarea în cele mai spectaculoase *show-uri* de beauty&fashion..."<sup>487</sup>  
**showbiz**: "Este printre puținii romantici rebeli din acest *showbiz* plin de scilipici..."<sup>488</sup>  
**lifting**: "*liftingul* facial efectuat cu bisturiul..."<sup>489</sup>

468 Idem, martie, 2009, p. 125.

469 Tango, 43/2009, p. 114.

470 Cosmopolitan, aprilie, 2009, p.147.

471 Idem, martie, p.1.

472 Cosmopolitan, aprilie, 2009, p.18.

473 Idem, p. 71.

474 Idem, p. 123.

475 Idem, martie, 2009, p. 94.

476 Idem, p.82.

477Tango, nr. 45, 2009, p. 68.

478Idem, p. 68.

479Cosmopolitan, aprilie, 2009, p.89.

480 Idem, p. 126.

481 Idem, p. 131.

482 Tango nr. 43, 2009, p. 118.

483 Cosmopolitan, februarie, 2009, p 129.

484 Idem, aprilie, 2009, p. 138.

485 Idem, p. 85.

486 Idem, februarie, 2009, p.125.

487 Cosmopolitan, ianuarie, 2009, p. 151.

488 Tango, 43/2009, p. 158.

489 Idem, ibidem.

**hair-style:** “toată echipa de *hair-style* și-a etalat cele mai spectaculoase și splendide creații.”<sup>490</sup>  
- *Bussines-man, dealer, job, marketing, shopping*, are the most used anglicisms met in the “**economic**” articles in the glossy magazines. They are already included in DCR and DN<sup>491</sup>:  
**job:** “...să renunțe la un *job* care nu-l satisface.”<sup>492</sup>; “...fiecare vietate pe care *jobul* o ține departe de reședința personală...”<sup>493</sup>  
**shopping :** “mergi la *shopping* virtual pe [www.cosmopolitan.ro](http://www.cosmopolitan.ro).”<sup>494</sup> It is an item that has a Romanian equivalent, still, it is extremely frequently used, bearing a stylistic, connotative role; it also belongs to the category of phrasal anglicisms, being made up by adding the suffix “ing.”  
**brand:** “Faimosul *brand* orologer elvețian”<sup>495</sup>  
**PR:** “...se face *PR* și *anti- PR*, se scrie o adevărată condică de reclamații...”<sup>496</sup>  
-**The technical domain** gains new lexical meanings:  
**webcam:** “deschid calculatorul, dau drumul la *webcam* și vorbesc cu oameni...”<sup>497</sup>,  
**scana** “*am scanat*-o din priviri, am zâmbit...”<sup>498</sup>  
**scroll:** “...un mouse wireless cu *scroll* în opt direcții...”<sup>499</sup>  
**stick:** “Ia-ți un *stick* de la Kingston...”<sup>500</sup>  
**blackberry:** “...înfoliată în sârme, căști, *blackberries* și tastaturi...”<sup>501</sup>  
**display:** “...noutățile pe *display-ul* telefonului, downloadate direct în măruntaiele celularului.”<sup>502</sup>  
**pacemaker:** “El să aibă *pacemaker* și să moară cât mai repede.”<sup>503</sup>  
**gadget:** “...ne plac *gadgeturile* care sunt mici...”<sup>504</sup>

### Conclusions

1. We can notice that the use of anglicisms varies a lot according to circumstances. Some terms are employed to ease the communication as there are words with no Romanian equivalents and they should have been rendered through a whole long phrase (*single* „disc ce conține câte o singură piesă pe fiecare față”). Other times they are used just to change the “old” language and to keep pace with the international trends.
2. Most borrowed items are nouns denoting abstract notions and invariable adjectives: “sexy/sexi”, “live”. Nouns got the Romanian plural ending: *hobby-uri, party-uri, trend-uri*.
3. As far as grammar is concerned, the grammatical structure is the most stable, thus the novelties penetrate the vocabulary, the fixed expressions meant to signal, to build up the contact especially among young people. From a morphological point of view we have to admit that anglicisms rapidly adapt themselves to the Romanian morphology; in order to be able to communicate people have to model them: to form plural, to articulate the nouns, to use verbs conjugated according to number and person, for example, “bodyguarzi” and “a downloada” (at present “downloadez”).

490 Cosmopolitan, martie, 2009, p132.

491 DN- Dictionar de neologisme.

492 Cosmopolitan, aprilie, 2009, p. 68.

493 Tango, nr. 45, 2009, p. 390.

494 Cosmopolitan, aprilie, 2009, p. 380

495 Idem, februarie, 2009, p.8.

496 Tango, nr. 43, 2009, p. 152.

497 Cosmopolitan, aprilie, 2009, p.115.

498Idem, p.136.

499 Idem, p.141.

500 Idem, p. 137.

501 Tango, nr. 43, 2009, p. 39.

502 Idem, ibidem.

503 Idem, p. 158.

504 Cosmopolitan, aprilie, 2009, p. 136.



4. On the other hand, the orthographic and phonetic adaptation is rather slow; a possible explanation could be that a lot of people know and learn English and consequently it is a matter of social prestige to use the words sounding and behaving very close to the original. .

5. The studied magazines abound in titles in English or a combination of English and Romanian: *Cosmo book club*, *Cosmo informer*, *Cosmo style insider*, *Metale in trend*, *Cosmon'n Vogue*, *Beauty stil de vedeta*, *Masti home-made*, *Job & bani*, *Quiz culinar*, *Real life* etc.<sup>505</sup>; most of these are already phrases often used in everyday speech, still they are luxury borrowings as we could easily find Romanian equivalents.

6. Even if they are rather peculiar as compared with Romanian words, English borrowed items tend to "behave" like "one of them" and thus speakers employ them pretty often. Moreover, the media fully makes use of them, regardless the domain. Some anglicisms do not change when "entering" Romanian language, they only add a dash: *dressing-ul*, *shopping-ul*, *outfit-ul* etc.

7. We consider that any reader of a fashion, sport or IT article will get the essential, even if s/he does not speak the language. There are terms that cannot be actually translated into Romanian with one word only; we need an explanation which is time, space and energy-consuming: *marketing*, *training*, *leadership*, *trust*, *broker*, *rating*, *management* etc. but this is not always the case of the glossy magazines; here the writers use borrowed terms so as to spice their communication.

8. Compared with other glossy magazines where there is an excessive use of anglicisms, *Cosmopolitan* and *Tango* magazines use anglicisms less frequently. A comparison between the two of them places *Cosmopolitan* in the first position with more English borrowings than *Tango*; consequently, it is obvious that the audience influences a lot the quality of the transmitted message, not many anglicisms could be found in *Tango* which proved more creativity and spontaneity.

To end up, the essence of a language is to get richer every day. Borrowings from other languages correctly used are all that matters. Media is the one that promotes language at most as it knows its tendencies best influencing both the language and its speakers. Anglicisms stand for a living proof that the language evolves. Yet, we mention that we considered only those terms very frequently used in women glossy magazines.

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505 *Cosmopolitan*, aprilie, 2009, p. 9-10.

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