

NEOLOGISMS IN ROMANIAN MASS MEDIA - ANALYSIS OF THE SYNTAGMS USED IN NEWS AND ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAMS

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Abstract

Breaking news, news alert, meeting, leadership or lobby are only a few of the numerous English syntagms taken over by journalists and imposed in the daily language of the Romanians by means of media. At first sight, within the context of globalization, such a phenomenon might appear as natural, on condition of the existence of some suitable factors for controlling and appreciating the real necessity of having some terms accepted in the Romanian language.

There exist domains of activity in which introduction of Anglo-Saxon terms is compulsory, once they do not have an equally corresponding word in Romanian, such as: broker, dealer, duty-free.

On the other side, however, there are a lot of - unacceptably numerous - Anglicism terms with no justification, as they do not bring additional information, comparatively with their equivalent Romanian word; these are the so-called luxury syntagms taken over and promoted by snobbery, which explains their extended utilization for the public, e.g.: advertising, training, performance, agreement, fashion, etc.

A poor command over the Romanian language and an incorrect translation of these abusively employed terms cause numerous pleonasm, which the journalists deliver us with superiority and enthusiasm. The greatest danger - in the absence of some decision factors capable of correcting and sanctioning such mistakes - is that such pleonastic or incorrectly used syntagms may be taken over as such by uneducated audience, especially teenagers and, by their extended utilization, mainly by means of socialization networks, imposed as apparently correct.

Keywords: *breaking news, mass media, Anglo-Saxon terms, pleonasm*

Breaking news, news alert, meeting, leadership or lobby are only a few of the numerous syntagms of the English language used by journalists and introduced in the daily language of the Romanians by means of press, and especially audiovisual media. At first sight, within the context of globalization, such a phenomenon might appear as natural, on condition of the existence of some suitable factors for the control and appreciation of the real necessity of having some of these terms accepted in the Romanian language.

Equally true is that there exist domains of activity in which introduction of Anglo-Saxon terms is compulsory, once they do not have an equally corresponding word in Romanian, such as: broker, dealer, duty-free. To the same category there also belong terms from the field of informational technology, computer utilization - involving almost wholly knowledge of the English language, nowadays considered as the language of globalization. Also, numerous terms from sporting domains are of English origin: out, corner, fault, offside, goal, etc.

On the other side, however, there are a lot of - unacceptably numerous - Anglicisms with no justification, as they bring no additional information, comparatively with their equivalent Romanian word; these are the so-called luxury syntagms taken over and promoted by snobbery, which explains their all-embracing presence in mass-media, e.g.: advertising, training, performance, agreement, fashion, etc.

A poor command over the Romanian language and an incorrect translation of these abusively employed terms cause numerous pleonasm, which the journalists deliver us with superiority and enthusiasm. The greatest danger - in the absence of some decision factors capable of correcting and sanctioning such mistakes - is that such pleonastic or incorrectly used syntagms may be taken over by uneducated audience, especially teenagers and, by their extended utilization, mainly by means of socialization networks, imposed as apparently correct.

Evolution brings about the occurrence of new lexical structures capable of expressing the modifications having intervened - at either material or spiritual level - in some society, while neologization of a language is characterized by two aspects, related to form and meaning. In the

opinion of the reputed linguist Iorgu Iordan, semantically, neologization assumes assigning of new meanings to words already existing in a language (the so-called internal way) - as, etimologically, a neologism is defined as any newly entered word in a language, regardless of its creation: composition, derivation, etc. - or its having been taken over from another language (the external way).

There also exists a third modality of enriching a language - known as loan translation, a linguistic term meaning, by extension of its semantic sphere, "copy" or "reproduction". Once assimilation is attained, it is nevertheless difficult to establish the manner through a word had entered the vocabulary of some language: loan translation, loan or translation.

Lexical loans from other languages are subjected to a natural proces of phonetic and morphological adaptation to the language having assimilated them. Syntagms may be loaned directly (orally) -on the basis of a permanent relation between the involved populations - or indirectly, by means of cultural exchanges.

The first loans having entered the Romanian lexic come from the Slavonic language, followed, beginning with the XVIth century, by Latin and Greek terms, present in chronicles¹. The contemporary Romanian vocabulary includes, apart from the neologisms of the classical languages, terms from the Romanic languages: French, Italian, from Turkish, Hungarian, from the Germanic languages: English and German and, last but not least, from Russian.

After the year 1989, the Romanian vocabulary has been simply invaded by English syntagms, mainly from technic and economic domains. As a matter of fact, the neologic character of the vocabulary represents one of the main features of the journalistic post-totalitary language.

The avalanche of neologisms in Romanian mass-media has been initially considered as a modality of concealing reality, indirectly contributing to baffling an already confuse population. However, linguists provided two types of explanations to such a phenomenon²:

- objective causes - the need to give a name to objects or notions not known or not defined since then,

- subjective causes - snobbery, the wish to astound, imitation of the Western life style.

In the 90'ies, the objectively taken over neologisms included numerous political terms: election campaign, political leader, minimal consensus, impeachment motion, uninominal poll, apoliticism, etc. Such syntagms were already included in Romanian, in the passive fund of its vocabulary, being nevertheless largely employed only after the year 1990, when their meaning was modified unde the influence of some foreign models.

Another category of post-revolutionary neologisms includes financial-banking terms: inflation, stock exchange, price liberalization, stand-by agreement, globalization, etc. The direct taking over of such terms from English, with only minor modifications, may be explained by the sudden and deep changes produced at economic level, as well as by the imperative need for explaining the evolution of such a phenomenon. The first consequence was manifested upon the audience which, frequently, misunderstood the message, a situation amplified, to a certain extent, by the ignorance of the journalists, who did not know exactly the meaning of words like: management, briefing, staff, trend, show, business, lobby, etc.

The mission of any journalist, the more so of the one involved in audiovisual activities, is that of providing relevant information by means of a "direct" contact with his audience. However, his function of communication should also have a practical component, for keeping alive the interest of his interlocutor. In this respect, the one who transmits information should master the correct meaning of each term he uses. As known, such appreciations are of rather theoretical nature as, actually, by its agenda-setting function, mass media build up a secondary reality, including information, reports and interpretations which they select, process and then distribute to the audience according to their own interests, and making use of certain syntagms.

In this way, any incorrect expression, any improperly used term come to be delivered - by means of TV transmissions - to a large audience, which take these formulas for granted, if

considering the immense credit of this mass communication structure. On the other side, even a correct utilization of a neologism by a journalist will not transmit the same message to all TV watchers, once known that the level of education or professional training may directly influence perception. Under such circumstances, on also considering the context, each person will interpret a neologism in his own way.

As to the neologisms derived from English, one should mention that they may be classified into several categories, as a function of their assimilation or "Romanization" degree³:

- integrally adapted (phonetically, graphically, morphologically) terms: leader, meeting, boss;
- terms in course of adaptation (Anglicisms and Americanisms): board, briefing, lobby, speaker, summit;
- "xenisms" or proper names, Big brother, leadership, road map.

The Romanian press of today is characterized by two types of loans: necessary and luxury⁴. The former ones refer to the terms and syntagms with no corresponding structure in Romanian, being motivated by the novelty of the referee. On the other side, luxury Anglicisms are useless and highly subjective; they only double words already existing in Romanian, bearing no new information.

The necessary loans are represented by terms belonging to the financial-banking field, sports and technology. There also exist syntagms from the education domain with no direct equivalent term in Romanian, and which are necessary due to their global character:

- Curriculum - school syllabus for some discipline;
- Master - elaborated studies;
- Grant - non-reimbursable sum of money offered to a research team for some scientific activity.

Another domain which requires the utilization of neologisms is that of press:

- Banner - long linen strip on which a message is written;
- Hot line - phone line at which the population may require some service;
- Clip - short advertizing TV film.

To the category of necessary loans there also belong the neologisms form the "fashionable world":

- Body - feminine piece of intimate underclothes
- Roll on - recipient of cosmetic or medical use equipped with a ball;
- Fan club - organized group admiring the same person.

In her volume, entitled "Influences of the English language in the Romanian audiovisual space", Nicoleta Ciacu makes mention of some luxury Anglicisms, whose loan is useless, as the Romanian language provides equivalent terms:

- Agreement - financial or economic convention;
- Advertising - publicity;
- Training - learning or instruction;
- Performance - show;
- Fashion - style;
- Make-up - paint for the face;
- Snacks - light meal.

In several situations, hurried, ignorant or snob journalists come to incorrectly use the neologisms, producing pleonastic formulations of which - in most cases - the audience is not aware of:

- Narrative of a story;
- Cash money;
- Mass-media means;
- The board of a management structure,
- Hentz by hand;
- Spectacular show.

Apart from such syntagms, the TV watcher is also bombed and baffled from the very beginning of certain transmissions, whose titles are hardly understood by large part of the audience, such as:

- Happy Hour - Pro TV
- Master Chef - Pro TV
- Wow Biz - Kanal D
- Paparazzi - Kanal D
- I like IT - Pro TV
- Replay - TVR 2
- Zona@IT - TVR 1
- Teleshopping - all TV canals
- Breaking News - all news or generalistic stations.

More numerous examples of this type may be collected from other TV, less visible canals, specialized on certain domains and addressing a

target audience. The problem is serious in the case of generalistic canals, which address a numerous and most varied audience, where the excessive utilization of neologisms modify essentially the message they transmit.

The graphs of Monday, February 24, (Fig. 1) evidence that the show recorded a rating (namely, the average number of TV watchers per minute of a TV show, comparatively with the total number of TV watchers) between 6 and 8. Rating may be expressed in absolute figures (thousands of TV watchers), or as a percent value of the target under analysis.

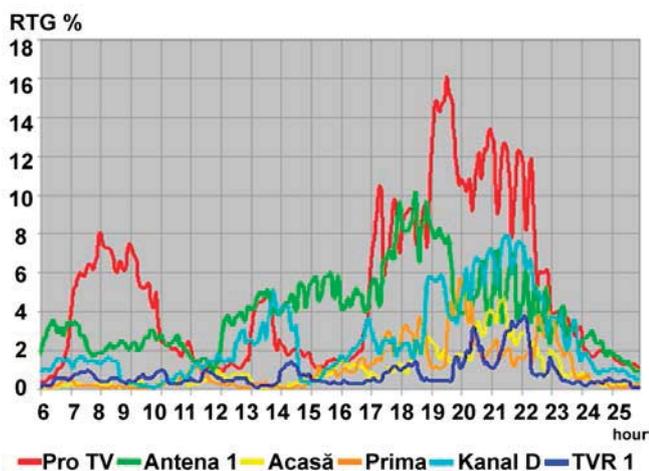


Fig. 1 - Graph of TV “large” audience - National target, hour

For example, analysis of the audience on genres (Fig. 2), groups of age (Fig. 3), education level (Fig. 4) watching Wow Biz, transmitted each evening by Kanal D, will demonstrate that many of its TV watchers not only do not have the minimum education for finding a bit correct translation, into Romanian, of the title of the show, but attribute to it a meaning of their own, which has no connection with its real significance.

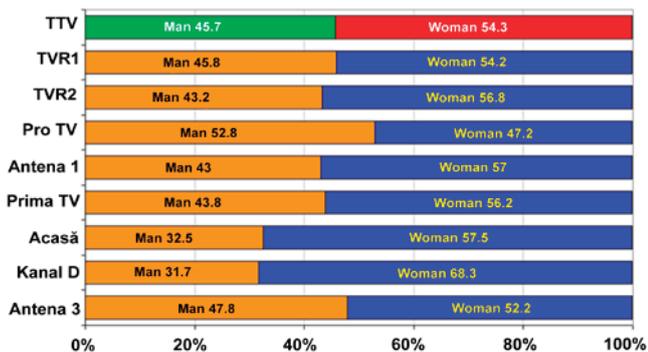


Fig. 2 - Structure of audience - prime time - on genres

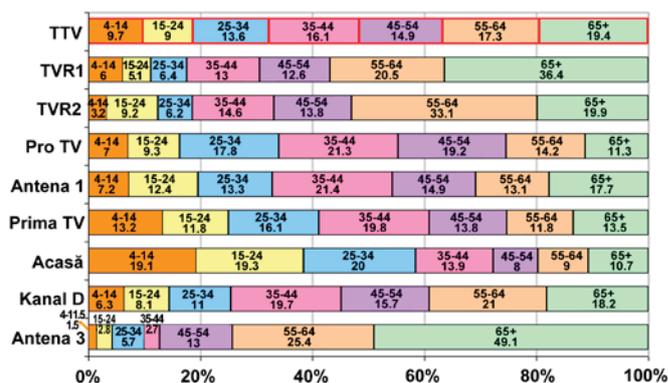


Fig. 3 - Structure of audience - prime time - on groups of age

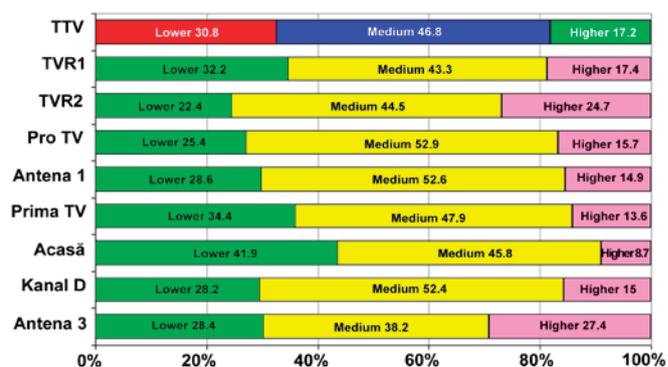


Fig 4 - Structure of audience - prime time - education level

The term *share* defines the number of people watching a certain transmission on some TV canal, comparatively with the total number of TV watchers registered in that moment.

The show is diffused from Monday until Friday, starting with 22.00, which means a prime time, the hour interval with the highest TV audience.

To conclude with, neologisms appear as equally necessary and dangerous - when incorrectly and excessively used. If the excess of Anglicisms in the beginning of the 90’ies was justified by the novelty of the situations people had to face and by their wish to escape from a totalitarian journalistic pattern, the time has now come for wisdom and measure.

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