

ABSTRACT

In my habilitation thesis, titled *CONTRIBUTIONS TO ANGLO-ROMANIAN LEXICOLOGY, LEXICOGRAPHY, CONTRASTIVITY AND TRANSLATION STUDIES – RESULTING FROM REFLECTIVE AND APPLICATIVE WRITING*, I made a review of the professional achievement, both in the field of language teaching and in the field of academic research. The thesis, made up of three main chapters, begins by succinctly presenting those scientific contributions that I consider to be more relevant, which were published after I defended my PhD thesis. Taking as a starting point, in the main, the results and directions of study sketchily outlined and materialized in my doctoral thesis (published as *Structura etimologică a vocabularului neologic – cu specială referire la anglicisme din limba română / The Etymological Structure of Neologic Vocabulary – with special reference to the Anglicisms in Romanian – Publishing House of Pitesti University, 2004*), I endeavoured to complete, confirm and correct (when needed) or to further refine the database of Anglicisms available in this country. Hence, I made a modest contribution to completing and improving this database (or, rather, these databases), the sheer amount of which has increased in time (and in the meantime), which is only natural: first of all, I confirmed or further nuanced various observations on language trends or processes that are manifest in this lexical subfield.

Through the examples and cases analyzed, I also managed to confirm older phenomena and tendencies, which continue to be obvious in contemporary Romanian – especially in as far as the form of the quite recent Anglicisms is concerned, e.g. reordering, restructuring, reformulation, etc. Likewise, by adopting a theoretical and practical frame of reference, I identified and tried to analyze some more recent (or relatively more recent) manifestations, tendencies and types of processes (in Chapter 1).

By capitalizing on the analytical remarks I made in several published papers, I tried to define the possibility for the researcher to make predictions in the linguistic domain (more specifically, in the field of vocabulary), in other words the probability that certain phenomena or linguistic processes that occur currently will, in an analogous and continuous manner, be recorded in the future, too – with a higher or lower intensity.

Therefore, I reiterated and nuanced a set of remarks concerning the penetration of English loanwords in current Romanian (especially – but not only – lexical loans proper), which are increasingly being circulated through the type of expression used by the mass media in this country, and, moreover, by current speech itself. The brief analysis of the state of the Romanian language, which is being affected by this real Anglo-American neologous invasion, is illustrated quite substantially in this thesis, setting out from a sketch of the relevant typologies.

The general observation that I was able to make on many of the texts I used as the main source of my considerations, which were fragments excerpted from various Romanian publications, was that they actually represented, to a large extent, translations from English (in an overt or covert manner). This phenomenon (which is by no means new within the context of the Romanian language) is essentially and substantially expressed in the lexical mechanism of loan translation (also called *calque*), which carries a maximum degree of linguistic interest – and, of course, a broader type of interest: cultural interest, nay ideological interest. Many of the *barbarisms* that may be spotted in the way most (younger) Romanians speak – i.e. the sort of expression that clearly deviates from the current norms – are about to enter the Romanian vocabulary because of the kind of careless, crude, ill-informed and/or simplistic translation that can be noticed in Romanian mass media, just as in what is called the *public space*. I endeavoured to provide quantitatively and typologically appropriate illustrations of the *calquing* procedures that (often, and significantly) affect the idiom usually used by the Romanian press, whether written or audio-visual, but also the speech widely used by large categories of the Romanian youth; in their speech, the influence is felt of more or less recent Anglo-American models, patterns and structures (be they lexical-semantic, or idiomatic and conversational). In addition to the semantic implications of loan-translation, I tried to underline its grammatical and stylistic implications, concluding that it is virtually a type of inter-lingual and intercultural mimetism. I could therefore notice that the linguistic influences of borrowing from English can extend, in an abundant as well as insidious manner, well beyond the confines of vocabulary

itself, also affecting other compartments of the language system, i.e. syntax, morphology, register and style.

So, working for the present – while trying to surmise what the future has in store – I followed the technique (or the strategy) of the *palimpsest*, and also the model of the *hourglass* (when one starts from collecting information, then goes on through accumulation and sheer quantity, and then by filtering and nuancing, as well as by concentrating information, and ends by analysis and synthesis, i.e. using the results of the analysis undertaken, on an expanded and superior level). More specifically, the linguist (not only the person who has a particular leaning towards, or a special interest in the field of applicative studies) is under a professional obligation to set out from databases, to achieve syntheses materialized in guides, glossaries, thematic and contrastive dictionaries (e.g. dictionaries of collocation, dictionaries of language difficulties – not only in English, i.e. those intended for Romanian pupils and university students learning English –, but also in the field of vocabulary, grammar and use of Romanian), as well as textbooks based on a mainly didactic and contrastive approach. As far as I am concerned, the result of such theoretical and practical concerns was mainly (i.e. in addition to my published papers), the making up of a number of corpora of terms, occurrences and citations (most of which are sentences) that are representative of the neologistic renewal of current Romanian, mainly under the influence of the Anglo-American lexical inflow. They were made in electronic form (*Word*), and recorded on CDs. We have already begun building an extended lexicon corpus, through the lexical corpus including the latest notes on the press lingo in Romania.

Another aspect that I addressed in the present thesis is to what extent the speakers of Romanian are aware of the semantics of the Anglo-American loans – or their lexical structure/composition; for example, how many speakers of the Romanian language who heard about the *offshore law* can figure out what that law refers to, based on the form of the English phrase? Of course, there are some very interesting cases of *false awareness*, too, viz. cases of hyper-Englishing (e.g. the older acronym BIG, misunderstood as having to do with Eng. *big*); or (in terms of phonetics) the title of I. Popescu-Băjenaru's novel, *Cișmigiu & Comp.*, which is now pronounced "...and Company".

A case study coming under the umbrella of linguistic standardization, which I considered in several papers, is largely related to the ideological dimension of language use: I approached what French linguists call *féminisation* – as a prevalent (national) strategy/policy, adopted in France (more than in Belgium, Switzerland and Québec). Its direction is, in France, directly contrary to that of its counterpart in the United Kingdom and the United States, where the excess of feminine noun forms is considered offensive, or at least slightly objectionable. What echoes we can see (and record) in this country are typical of the latter paradigm rather than the former.

I have also (rather cursorily) approached the broad issue of contrastivity in some of my papers. I have been particularly interested in the issue of the comparative expressivity of the two languages in contact, as well as *Gender* in Romanian and English. It was from the same comparative angle that I tried to study some translation-related issues, considered as *sui generis* manifestations of contrastivity.

As far as the phenomenon of euphemism is concerned, I have studied it, both illustratively and analytically, as a type of disguising strategy used by neology – at a social level – in order to qualify, mask, or sugarcoat reality, etc.

The conclusions I reached as a result of my studies can by no means be definitive: the more recent terms borrowed from English can continue in the Romanian language (as they should, logically and licitly), especially in so far as they represent the benefit of such qualities as genuine informative input, breviloquence and usefulness (essentially in terms of displaying specialization in use), but also if they are placed at a certain level of (perceived) prestige, and have relatively high frequency of use, in other words, if they have prestige, topicality and "fashionableness" (or "vogue", "trendiness"). However, I could notice a host of Anglo-American neologisms that can be perceived as a possible basis for the creation of a new local "langue de bois". It can be concluded, be it schematically, that the acceptance of recent Anglicisms, their chances of enjoying definitive-residence status in Romanian, are fundamentally related to: (1) their usefulness, which, in many cases, results from the very specialized character of the terms; (2) the

“cultural” prestige of the terms in question; (3) their frequency in actual language use; (4) the “general convenience” criterion (or usability);

As linguists, as well as users of Romanian as our native language, we must also be aware of what the future holds in store for us, trying to maintain an appropriate attitude of balance: in other words, one should not have excessively high, radical or exalted expectations, or, as the English say, to indulge in *wishful thinking*; and yet, one should neither be submerged by fatalism or pessimism, ending up agreeing, for example, with the declarative – and often demagogical – hypocrisy of *laxity* (viz. the attitude of one who says, “Well, after all, it little matters, this variant is as good as the other one! All that counts is understand what the speaker meant to say!”).

We believe such an attitude may lead, if the worst comes to the worst, to major shortcomings, even to (relative) catastrophes, not only in the field of language (use), but also in terms of the cultural milieu and the human environment proper. On the other hand, it is very true that humanistic sciences have as a specific type of indeterminism, which, when we deal with prognosis-related matters, statistics can only mitigate rather than truly solve or overcome (which is also true of the area of societal phenomena – for instance, who could predict, exactly and numerically, what the demographic increase, the illiteracy percentage, or the numbers of detainees, criminals, etc. will be in a nation?).

We also believe that, even if sometimes ironically considered mere “collections of butterflies”, lexical corpora and inventories, especially when made scientifically, can only be constructed and then explored efficiently by methods such as data mining, corpus analysis, etc. Concrete realities ought to be of assistance for scientific abstraction; likewise, there is no possibility for the latter to find its true and primordial purpose, manifested by generating knowledge and human action, unless one uses the concrete data provided by reality.

I have also written and published a series of contributions, which are equally based on concrete data and analyses, in the following philological sub-domains (see Chapter 2): ● lexical statistics; ● lexicology and etymology (with special reference to the dictionaries that were published in Romania); ● lexicography – by compiling bilingual dictionaries (an English-Romanian one, and a Romanian-English one) and complex/grammatical dictionaries; ● applied linguistics (in the subfield of ELT: I completed the first volume in a planned/future bilingual, didactic and complex Shakespeare series); ● addressing multi-, inter-, and multidisciplinary themes. I constantly tried to apply the statistical method, as well as the historical-chronological perspective.

I think I managed to make a modest contribution to (Romanian and English) lexicography, as well as the study of etymology, by the observations, clarifications, additions and corrections that I published. The fact is quite obvious that in lexicography there is a prevalent – and sometimes remarkable – diversity of opinions and solutions, as well as a relatively high degree of discordance in terms of both the semantics of the terms glossed and/or analyzed, and their description (regarding the characterization of a language in terms of register, style, or social strata). On the other hand, the best monolingual dictionaries compiled in the English-speaking world provide us with excellent examples in the field of lexicography. Based on examples excerpted from some of very good English dictionaries, I found that we can benefit much more from the model they offer.

Considered from the point of view of its practical utility, but also in terms of scientific and methodological relevance, lexicography has been the field of predilection of my efforts for over thirty years. Personal reflection, the importance of which is undeniable, has proven to be particularly beneficial in compiling my bilingual dictionaries. Intending – as I have always admitted – to contribute to improving and updating the books published in this field, I have taken special interest in applied linguistics, especially by developing a set of lexicographic instruments (mostly bilingual dictionaries), while also working along the lines of improving and refining the (rather more creative and novel) manner in which they can fulfill their task to both inform and train the users. Such novel methods and ways were suggested to me, and also made possible, by a number of (relatively) new concepts, researches and information, related to both the sphere of communication and that of didactic activity proper.

I was inspired by the conviction arising from the idea that a complex contrastive/comparative approach to the lexicon of English is likely to make a valuable contribution to the specific product generated by the efforts undertaken by lexicographers, especially in didactic terms. I am equally convinced that a good specialist in lexicography would be able to benefit from all the models that the traditional dictionaries and glossaries have lately brought to the fore, in Romania as well as abroad. Therefore, I considered it not only extremely useful, but also absolutely necessary for our lexicographers to put to best use some of the novel concepts and suggestions present in the works of eminent authors of dictionaries (whether bilingual or monolingual) such as A. Bantaş, L. Leviţchi or A.S. Hornby, while, at the same time, trying to make innovative contributions to the quality of such valuable teaching guides, and thus enhancing their efficiency through novel conceptual ways. Therefore, I was particularly attracted by, partial to, and intent on, the need for greater explanatory complexity, which could add, as a specific feature of lexicographical works, to their other inherent qualities: flexibility, clarity, lack of ambiguity and congruence.

As a result of my several years' work, selecting, analyzing, comparing, classifying and glossing the English and Romanian vocabulary, I managed to bring to completion three dictionaries, which are now ready for print: one is a Romanian-English didactic and complex dictionary – a “medium-to-large” one, and the other two make up a twin set (a medium-size English-Romanian dictionary, and a Romanian-English dictionary). I meant the complex and grammatical Romanian-English dictionary as the first part of a larger series, which ought to include a complex, grammaticized English-Romanian dictionary, complemented by a glossary explaining the use of the English words, and a general dictionary of the overall difficulties of the English language. To a considerable large extent, these dictionaries are also the result of several reflective and contrastive papers that I published, which were devoted to the English lexicon – that enormous inventory of terms, divergent meanings, variants, idioms and phrases, notoriously riddled with various difficulties and structural “pitfalls” or “traps”.

The above-mentioned grammatical dictionary will surely be a reliable guide for pupils and students, but also for teachers, essentially representing a hybrid (integrated and, hopefully, functional) glossary and an explanatory, essentially grammaticized mini-manual). As far as the bilingual dictionaries are concerned, they represent the result of a combination of theoretical knowledge and personal experience in the field of lexicography; I was happy to note that, more often than not, I was able to practically benefit, sometimes unexpectedly, from its feedback.

In the long run, I intend to continue my preoccupations and efforts in order to contribute papers, studies and more extensive books, but also new reference materials (e.g. glossaries and dictionaries), furthering the progress of linguistic knowledge in the fields of: ● lexicology and etymology especially in the field of Anglicisms (I want to add to the glossary of Anglicisms in Romanian, and contribute to enriching the national Anglican corpus, including data mining; ● lexicography (by completing, enriching and updating the Great English-Romanian Dictionary, 1979 edition); ● the practice and the theory of translation (I intend to develop a corpus of didactic type of, presenting the achievements in the field of translation – from, and into in Romanian – of several literary works written in English); ● applied linguistics (relating to the field of English didactics: I want to continue the bilingual complex and didactic series of Shakespeare's plays, which was started with *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*); ● multi-, inter- and multidisciplinary – through collaborations with colleagues from other departments, viz. historical-humanistic, economic, psycho-social and nature disciplines, and also technical disciplines – (see Chapter 3).

I think it of prime importance to harmonize the glossing of the English loans in Romanian (by listing, defining and describing them in as nuanced and appropriate a manner as possible), in those cases where they do not agree between the different books and other sources available, be they published in Romanian or in Europe (e.g. G. Ciobanu, DCR3, M. Görlach, etc.). Similarly, it is necessary to undertake new syntheses in this field, usable as sources for other glossaries or dictionaries of Anglicisms (or neologisms). In this practical and applicative subfield of research, I intend to continue constructing the corpus of terms and citations that I have started (in which some of the words and occurrences analyzed

are also commented; wherever possible, the analysis ought to be conducted from the angle of semantics, etymology, morpho-phonematics and style and register).

The relevance – and, consequently, the structure – of the databases and the planned corpora will be in line with the fundamental parameters of: semantic and formal change, collocation, etymology, synchrony, style and register, expressivity, domain, cultural relevancy. We will therefore envisage a comprehensive glossary (or dictionary) designed to illustrate, in minute and faithful detail, the influence of English on modern Romanian. The prospective database (or dictionary) should be titled “Influences of English on the Romanian Language” – rather than “A Dictionary of Anglicisms in Romanian”, because one can come across rather numerous types of influences that are different from the lexical, semantic, etymological, morpho-grammatical and stylistic ones, such as the phonetic (e.g. *Richard?*), typographicTM), or cultural influences.

I intend to apply the statistical method more consistently and substantially, wherever possible in my lexicology and lexicography activity, while striving to avoid generating excessive or hasty conclusions. At the same time, we will try to make public my own “small discoveries” in the field of glossing and analyzing the lexicon, hopefully to the benefit of Romanian lexicography and etymological research – mainly in point of minor errors and inaccuracies.

We also propose the creation of a large contrastive-applicative database containing commented and corrected fragments excerpted from versions of literary translations published in this country. It will undoubtedly be useful to both certified translators and students or pupils, as well as those who study the techniques and practice of translating. So far we have selected samples and occurrences from over thirty volumes of Anglo-American literature translated and published in Romanian publishing houses.

We also intend to continue the bilingual complex Shakespeare edition including another four plays (viz. *Romeo and Juliet*, *King Lear*, *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*).

I would very much like to see the relevance of these activities and initiatives to be recognized (and, hopefully, appreciated) not only by my fellow linguists, but also by our much younger collaborators, who should „take the relay” in this field of scientific and applicative work, which is so necessary today, in the context of the *knowledge-based society* that is currently being built.