

CLASSIFICATION OF ENGLISH-ORIGIN WORDS (H LETTER) ACCORDING TO THEIR DEGREE OF ASSIMILATION IN ROMANIAN

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Abstract: English has been the language of international communication for over three decades now. In all areas of activity one is faced with the extreme influence of this “international language”, namely the English language. The present article represents a study on the degree of assimilation of English-origin words beginning with letter H, selected from two of the most important dictionaries of the Romanian language, namely MDN (2008) – The Great Dictionary of Neologisms and DEX (2016) – The Explicative Dictionary of the Romanian Language. Thus, the study showed that the majority of the selected items were completely assimilated to the Romanian system of spelling and pronunciation, unlike the partially assimilated words that preserved their spelling form from their original language, English.

Keywords: English, Romanian, words, assimilation, influence

Introduction

There is no surprise anymore that languages, including the Romanian language as well, go through a continuous process of enriching the vocabulary through borrowing foreign words, in our case, English-origin words. These borrowings undergo a process of assimilation by the Romanian language, some of them being completely assimilated over time, while others remaining only partially assimilated. If we refer to the referential-denominational and communicative function of the words borrowed from English, we can paint a larger picture of this process in the form and context of globalization. As we all know, the English language has been the language of international communication for over three decades now. In all areas of activity one is faced with the extreme influence of this “international language”, namely the English language. As such, this process has had a great impact on all the languages all over the world, including the Romanian language. There have been borrowed thousands of new words from the English language, some of them necessary, some of them unnecessary.

If you look upon the causes that may lead to difficulties and, also, deflections during the process of assimilation of English-origin words, we will focus our attention to the objective reasons, namely:

- a relatively recent aspect;
- differences between the two languages (Romanian and English);
- the phenomenon of analogy -- the pressure of the receptor language (in this case Romanian);
- a relatively limited circulation in some registers of the language -- formal, colloquial, slang.

Regarding the subjective causes that exert an influence upon the process of assimilation of English-origin words, the most important ones are the following:

- convenience or the “minimum effort” law (Stoichitoiu-Ichim, 2006:35), which mostly explains the use of many English-origin words that already have a correspondent in the Romanian language.

- an insufficient knowledge of the English language (or even of the Romanian language, sometimes), which may lead to spelling and pronunciation errors or to wrong translations of the “false friends” type.

The assimilation of English-origin words represents an ever growing process in Romania, especially after 1990, as the number of English language speakers has increased and the communication means, written and audio-visual, prefer words identical or similar to English ones, mainly regarding spelling and pronunciation. Unlike the English-origin words borrowed before 1990, more and more words entering from English to Romanian tend to preserve their original spelling, only the pronunciation being mostly adapted to the Romanian language phonetic system.

Material and method

The present article represents a study on the degree of assimilation of English-origin words beginning with letter H, selected from two of the most important dictionaries of the Romanian language, namely MDN (2008) – *The Great Dictionary of Neologisms* and DEX (2016) – *The Explicative Dictionary of the Romanian Language*. The method used was a descriptive one, revealing interesting facts about the stage and degree of assimilation of English-origin words, letter H.

Results on the assimilation of English-origin words (letter H)

In the present study, we identified a total number of 152 English-origin words beginning with letter H, selected from two of the most important dictionaries of the Romanian language, namely MDN (2008) – *The Great Dictionary of Neologisms* and DEX (2016) – *The Explicative Dictionary of the Romanian Language*. There were established two main categories, according to the degree of assimilation of these new words, borrowed from the English language in the past decades. Thus, we can speak of partially assimilated borrowings and completely assimilated ones. The process of assimilation was complete when both the spelling and pronunciation of the English-origin word were adapted to a full extent to the Romanian language system. On the other hand, the partially assimilated words underwent an interesting adaptation process, as most of them preserved their spelling from English, adapting only their pronunciation to the Romanian language system. Also, some of them were assimilated with both the spelling and pronunciation specific to the English language.

In terms of spelling and pronunciation, the two languages under discussion here, namely Romanian and English, have great differences, due to the distinct language families they belong to. As such, Romanian belongs to the Romance languages group, while English belongs to the Germanic languages group. Needless to say that the rules of spelling and pronunciation are quite different, to a large extent, between these two languages.

In our study, we identified a number of 94 **completely assimilated** English-origin words beginning with letter H. These words are no longer perceived by the speakers as foreign elements. This is due the fact that these English-origin words have been adapted so well to the Romanian spelling, pronunciation, grammar and syntactic rules that they could indeed be considered as having the status of Romanian words. The following words have been

selected from the two dictionaries used in this study and identified as completely assimilated borrowings from the English language:

hadrozaur < engl. *hadrosaur*/ *hagiolatrie* < engl. *hagiolatriy*/ *halniu* < engl. *halnium*/
halitoza < engl. *halitosis*/ *hamartofobie* < engl. *hamartophobia*/ *handbal* < engl. *handball*/
haptofobie < engl. *haptophobia*/ *hedonofobie* < engl. *hedonophobia*/ *helmintofobie* < engl.
helminthophobia/ *helotomie* < engl. *helotomy*/ *hemianalgezie* < engl. *hemianalgesia*/ *hemicefal*
< engl. *hemicephalus*/ *hemicefalie* < engl. *hemicephalia*/ *hemimorfism* < engl. *hemimorphism*/
hemocrioscopie < engl. *hemocryoscopy*/ *hemocromometru* < engl. *hemochromometer*/
hemofobie < engl. *hemophobia*/ *hemomanometru* < engl. *hemomanometer*/ *hemotahometru* <
engl. *hemotachometer*/ *hent* < engl. *hands*/ *hepaticolitiaza* < engl. *hepaticolithiasis*/ *heptada* <
engl. *heptad*/ *heptastih*, -a < engl. *heptastich*/ *herbartian*, -a < engl. *herbartian*/ *herbartianism*
< engl. *Herbartian* + -ism/ *hermafroditism* < engl. *hermafroditism*/ *hernioplastie* < engl.
hernioplastia/ *heterocefal* < engl. *heterocephalus*/ *heterodinare* < engl. *heterodyne*/ *hialofobie*
< engl. *hyalophobia*/ *hidrodipsomanie* < engl. *hydrodipsomania*/ *hidrofinare* < engl.
hidrofininy/ *hidrogenaza* < engl. *hydrogenase*/ *hidrolocator* < engl. *hydrolocator*/ *hidronaut*
< engl. *hydronaut*/ *hidroplasma* < engl. *hydroplasm*/ *hidroscop* < engl. *hydroscope*/ *hierofobie*
< engl. *hierophobia*/ *hilofobie* < engl. *hylophobia*/ *himenologie* < engl. *hymenology*/
himenorafie < engl. *hymenorrhaphy*/ *himenotom* < engl. *hymenotome*/ *himenotomie* < engl.
hymenotomia/ *hiperacid*, -a < engl. *hyperacid*/ *hiperactiv*, -a < engl. *hyperactive*/
hiperactivitate < engl. *hyperactivity*/ *hiperadrenalism* < engl. *hyperadrenalism*/ *hiperbarism* <
engl. *hyperbarism*/ *hiperbolism* < engl. *hyperbolism*/ *hiperboliza* < engl. *hyperbolize*/
hiperbrahicefalie < engl. *hyperbrachicephalia*/ *hiperentectic* < engl. *hyperentectic*/
hiperentuziasm < engl. *hyperenthusiasm*/ *hipertensiune* < engl. *hypertension*/ *hipergonadism*
< engl. *hypergonadism*/ *hiperinflatie* < engl. *hyperinflation*/ *hiperinvolutie* < engl.
hiperinvoluție/ *hipermotilitate* < engl. *hypermotility*/ *hipernutritie* < engl. *hypernutrition*/
hiperparazitism < engl. *hyperparasitism*/ *hiperpigmentatie* < engl. *hyperpigmentation*/
hiperploid, -a < engl. *hyperploid*/ *hipersunet* < engl. *hypersound*/ *hiperventilatie* < engl.
hiperventilation/ *hipnagog* < engl. *hypnagogue*/ *hipnofobic* < engl. *hypnophobic*/ *hipnofobie*
< engl. *hypnophobia*/ *hipnogeneza* < engl. *hypnogenesis*/ *hipnolepsie* < engl. *hypnolepsia*/
hipnologie < engl. *hypnology*/ *hipnomanie* < engl. *hypnomania*/ *hipnoterapie* < engl.
hipnoterapie/ *hipobaric* < engl. *hypobaric*/ *hipobarism* < engl. *hypobarism*/ *hipobaropatie* <
engl. *hypobaropathy*/ *hipobrahial* < engl. *hipobrachial*/ *hipocromazie* < engl. *hypochromasia*/
hipodontie < engl. *hypodontia*/ *hipofaringe* < engl. *hypopharynx*/ *hipomicron* < engl.
hypomicron/ *hipomotilitate* < engl. *hypomotility*/ *hipoonichie* < engl. *hypoonychium*/
hipoventilatie < engl. *hypoventilation*/ *hipoxantina* < engl. *hypoxanthine*/ *hipoxidoza* < engl.
hypoxidosis/ *histerodinie* < engl. *hysterodynia*/ *histerolit* < engl. *hysterolith*/ *histerolitiaza* <
engl. *hysterolithiasis*/ *hochei* < engl. *hockey*/ *hocheist* < engl. *hockey-ist*/ *hon* < engl. *honn*/
hormefobie < engl. *hornophobia*/ *hormism* < engl. *hormisme*/ *hurican* < engl. *hurricane*

These words have been assimilated so well by the Romanian speakers that they are not perceived as foreign words anymore. The degree of assimilation of an English-origin word is influenced, most of the time, by the period of time this word has been in use in the Romanian language, and also by the availability of Romanian to assimilate the new English-origin words.

Besides the category of completely assimilated English-origin words, the Romanian lexicon is also filled with **partially assimilated** English-origin words. These are still

perceived as foreign words, due to the fact that they have preserved their English form, especially as far as their spelling is concerned. Thus, these words have been adapted to the Romanian pronunciation system, which is completely different from the English pronunciation one. Next, we will enumerate the English-origin words selected from the studied dictionaries, namely MDN and DEX, which have been only partially assimilated by the Romanian language:

hacker < engl. *hacker*/ *hacking* < engl. *hacking*/ *half* < engl. *half*/ *half-time* < engl. *half-time*/ *haloplancton* < engl. *haloplancton*/ *hammerless* < engl. *hammerless*/ *handicap* < engl. *handicap*/ *handling* < engl. *handling*/ *happening* < engl. *happening*/ *happy-end* < engl. *happy-end*/ *hardback* < engl. *hardback*/ *hard disk* < engl. *hard disk*/ *hardpan* < engl. *hardpan*/ *hard rock* < engl. *hard rock*/ *hardware* < engl. *hardware*/ *hard-top* < engl. *hard-top*/ *hat-trick* < engl. *hat-trick*/ *header* < engl. *header*/ *heading* < engl. *heading*/ *heavy metal* < engl. *heavy metal*/ *hedging* < engl. *hedging*/ *hello* < engl. *hello*/ *hereford* < engl. *hereford*/ *hibakusha* < engl. *hibakusha*/ *high fidelity* < engl. *high fidelity*/ *high-life* < engl. *high-life*/ *hijacking* < engl. *hijacking*/ *hippy* < engl. *hippy*/ *hippyism* < engl. *hippyism*/ *hit* < engl. *hit*/ *HIV* < engl. *HIV*/ *hobbesian* < engl. *hobbesian*/ *hobbit* < engl. *hobbit*/ *hobby* < engl. *hobby*/ *hogback* < engl. *hogback*/ *holding* < engl. *holding*/ *holdup* < engl. *holdup*/ *home-computer* < engl. *home-computer*/ *homeless* < engl. *homeless*/ *home-rule* < engl. *home-rule*/ *homespun* < engl. *homespun*/ *horror* < engl. *horror*/ *hostess* < engl. *hostess*/ *hot* < engl. *hot*/ *hotdog* < engl. *hotdog*/ *hot-jazz* < engl. *hot-jazz*/ *hotline* < engl. *hotline*/ *hot money* < engl. *hot money*/ *house* < engl. *house*/ *hovercraft* < engl. *hovercraft*/ *howdah* < engl. *howdah*/ *hula-hoop* < engl. *hula-hoop*/ *hully-gully* < engl. *hully-gully*/ *hummock* < engl. *hummock*/ *hunter* < engl. *hunter*/ *hunting* < engl. *hunting*/ *hurdler* < engl. *hurdler*/ *hurling* < engl. *hurling*

In the present study, we identified a number of 58 partially assimilated English-origin words, beginning with letter H. As stated before, we can observe that these words have preserved their spelling from the English language, but most of them have been adapted to the Romanian pronunciation rules. Still, Romanian speakers consider these words as foreign ones, despite their large use, especially in specialized languages, like IT, medicine or technology.

Discussion

The study on English-origin borrowings assimilated by the Romanian language has been going on for a long time, with an outburst within the last two decades. The explanation for this phenomenon could be that the English language has become more and more used in all fields of activity, from leisure time related ones to professional activities. Especially very young people, in their adolescence and in their 20s, are quite often confronted with an excessive use of new words originating from the English language. Some of these words, a considerable but not a majority number, have been integrated in the Romanian language by preserving their original form from the English language, especially regarding their spelling, and, sometimes, even their original pronunciation. Still, most of these borrowings have been completely assimilated by the Romanian speakers, namely they have been adapted to the Romanian system of pronunciation and spelling.

In previous studies, we analyzed English-origin words beginning with letters D, E, F and G, regarding their adaptation to the grammatical, spelling and pronunciation systems of the Romanian language (Badea O., 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016). This is the first study performed by us in terms of the degree of assimilation of English-origin words, in terms of completely or partially assimilated to the Romanian language system of spelling and pronunciation.

Emanuela Dima supported the idea that English-origin neologisms are the result of a strong influence of the English spiritual, cultural, material and technological upon the Romanian society. In this paper, we can also see the reference to the differences between the synthetic/ analytic characteristic of the two languages: Romanian and English (Dima, 2005: 92).

Vlad Topala stated that some words borrowed from the English language underwent a process of adaptation and assimilation, while others suffered no changes at all (Topala, 2006: 428).

Ioana Vintila-Radulescu made a clear distinction between neologisms and foreign words, being mainly concerned if and by what means these words preserved their foreign aspect or they could be considered as belonging to the present Romanian vocabulary (Vintila-Radulescu, 2006: 445).

In the present study, we analyzed from a descriptive perspective the extent of the assimilation of English-origin words with letter H, selected from two of the most important dictionaries of the Romanian language, namely MDN (2008) – *The Great Dictionary of Neologisms* and DEX (2016) – *The Explicative Dictionary of the Romanian Language*. Thus, out of a total number of 152 items beginning with letter H, 94 were completely assimilated by the Romanian language in terms of their pronunciation and spelling, while the other 58 were only partially assimilated, as they preserved their original spelling English form, adapting only the pronunciation to the Romanian phonetic system.

Conclusion

The present article revealed an interesting and ever going phenomenon all over the last three decades. Thus, the study performed on English-origin words beginning with letter H, selected from MDN (2008) and DEX (2016), showed that the majority of the selected items were completely assimilated to the Romanian system of spelling and pronunciation, which we know that it is quite different from the one of the English language. The partially assimilated words preserved their spelling form from their original language, English, maybe due to a tendency of internationalizing some words in some professional areas of interest, like the IT, business or medical fields.

In conclusion, the Romanian language still continues to be a fertile ground for the assimilation of new English words, by means of an adaptation process of these new words, not raising any problems as far as their spelling and pronunciation is concerned. Even though, most of the English-origin words studied in this paper were assimilated completely by the Romanian language speakers, the English influence should not be seen as “harming” the Romanian language; on the contrary, it should be viewed as a way of enriching the speakers vocabulary, as far as the use of borrowed words does not exceed a linguistic common sense that any Romanian speaker should hold.

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