

## The Morphological Adaptation of English-origin Neologisms (Letter E) to the Romanian Language

### L'adaptation morphologique des néologismes d'origine anglaise (lettre E) à la langue roumaine

### Adaptarea morfologică a neologismelor de origine engleză (litera E) în limba română

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#### **Abstract**

*The article presents a descriptive study upon the morphological adaptation of English-origin neologisms, selected from MDN (2008) – The Great Dictionary of Neologisms and DEX (2012) – The Explicative Dictionary of the Romanian Language, Letter E. The results of the study revealed the tendency to almost completely adapt English-origin words to the Romanian morphological and syntactical system, showing once more the fact that the Romanian language is capable of enriching itself without altering its inner structure, despite the so-called “threat” that English language seems to pose to the linguistic integrity of the Romanian language and its speakers, as well.*

#### **Résumé**

*Le article présente une étude descriptive sur l'adaptation morphologique d'origine anglaise neologisms, choisis de MDN (2008) – le Grand Dictionnaire de Neologisms et de DEX (2012) – le Dictionnaire Explicatif de la Langue Roumaine, la Lettre E. Les résultats de l'étude ont révélé que la tendance à adapter presque complètement des mots d'origine anglaise au système morphologique et syntaxique roumain, en montrant encore une fois le fait que la langue roumaine est capable du fait d'enrichir lui-même sans changer sa structure intérieure, malgré la soi-disant "menace" que la langue anglaise semble poser à l'intégrité linguistique de la langue roumaine et de ses haut-parleurs, aussi.*

#### **Rezumat**

*Articolul prezintă un studiu descriptiv efectuat asupra adaptării morfologice a neologismelor de origine engleză, selectate din MDN (2008) – Marele Dicționar de Neologisme, și DEX (2012) – Dicționarul Explicativ al Limbii Române, Litera E. Rezultatele studiului au relevat tendința unei adaptări aproape complete a cuvintelor de origine engleză la sistemul morfosintactic al limbii române, încă o dată demonstrând faptul că limba română este capabilă să se îmbogățească fără a-și altera structura internă, în ciuda unei așa-numite “amenințări” pe care limba engleză ar putea să o aibă asupra integrității lingvistice atât a limbii române cât și a vorbitorilor săi.*

**Key-words:** *neologism, English, Romanian, morphological adaptation*

**Mots clé:** *néologisme, anglaise, roumaine, adaptation morphologique*

**Cuvinte cheie:** *neologism, engleză, română, adaptare morfologică*

## 1. Introduction

Language, as a means of communication, evolves at the same time as society does, this process accelerating within the context of expanding the relationship between different nations and idea stirring. During the historical evolution of a language, due to the complex relations between language and society, a great deal of words have acquired new meanings and connotations, in accordance with the reality of that period, or they may just simply disappeared from use, being replaced, step by step, by other new forms that better denoted the new concepts.

Regarding the influence of English upon the Romanian language, it is worthy to mention the fact that we speak about an international phenomenon (worldwidely, not only at European level). The massive borrowing of English and America-origin words started to manifest after World War II in most of the European languages, and not only. This phenomenon may be explained especially within the context of progress in various technical, economical, medical areas, and so on. We should mention that these borrowings and influences are necessary, even positive ones, as long as they do not become exaggerate. In the last decades, the English and American-origin neologisms have entered Romanian with an utmost rapidity. It is a massive grasp that continues to grow in an accelerated rhythm, but which finds its motivation in extra-linguistic realities.

The process of enriching the vocabulary of a language is both essential and inevitable within the context of a worldwide progress. As a consequence, the number of English-origin neologisms in the Romanian language is ever growing. And, just like lifestyles change, language changes as well: "There can never be a moment of true standstill in language. Like everything else, it gradually transforms itself over centuries" [1]. Although we cannot clearly determine the causes of linguistic changes, there could be stated that we can actually observe the consequences of these changes.

If the new word, in its either morphological, graphical or phonological form is spread enough, then the change is in progress, while if it replaces the old word already existing in the language, then the adaptation process is complete. However, despite the universality of the phenomena of changing in language, the methods and ways of absorbing new words differ from one language to another. Any language reflects the lifestyle of its speakers: social organisation, political system, economy, philosophy, art, customs, etc, which, taken all together, form the culture of a particular community [2].

A **neologism** comes from the Greek *néo-* (meaning "new", and *lógos*, meaning "speech, utterance") and it represents a newly coined term, word, or phrase, that may be in the process of entering common use, but has not yet been accepted into mainstream language [3]. Neologisms are often directly attributable to a specific person, publication, period, or event.

Neologisms may enter Romanian either orally or through the written language, having as main purpose the enrichment of an already existing vocabulary. Sometimes, a new word is introduced in the language to denote a new concept or object that has not existed until then. Other times, the newly introduced neologism may already have a synonym in the target language (the Romanian language). In this case, its function is to "colour" the language. Usually, the best way to choose the right use of a neologism is in accordance with the functional style of the text or the theme under discussion, both in oral and written communication.

As Sapir himself stated: "nothing is perfectly static, every word, every grammar element, every phrase, every sound and accent is slowly changing, through an invisible and impersonal change in the life of a language" [4]. Thus, the language changing process is seen as a permanent fluctuation between the old and the new, with an ending of this process through the replacement of old structures with the new ones.

## 2. Material and Method

The present article comprises a thorough analysis upon the morphological adaptation of the English-origin neologisms (letter E) to the Romanian language system. The words were selected from the Great Dictionary of Neologisms (MDN, 2008) and from the Explicative Dictionary of the Romanian Language (DEX, 2012). Thus, there were selected a total number of 98 English-origin neologisms -- letter E.

The method used was a descriptive one, through a content analysis upon the morphological adaptation of the selected words. The purpose of such a study was to reach a better understanding and explanation of such a broad phenomena as the linguistic evolution of nowadays English-origin neologisms.

## 3. Morphological Adaptation

Regarding the morphological adaptation of English-origin neologisms under discussion (Letter E), they were classified into three major categories: nouns, adjectives and verbs. These, however, were also divided into subcategories, such as: feminine nouns, masculine nouns or neuter nouns, variable or invariable adjectives. The verb category was poorly represented, comprising only one verb. The categories of adverb and interjection were absent within the present analysis. Furthermore, we will present the distribution of English-origin neologisms (Letter E) selected from MDN (2008) and DEX (2012), ordered in the table below:

**Table 1**  
**Total of English-origin Neologisms -- MDN (2008) and DEX (2012), Letter E—98**

Neuter Nouns	Feminine Nouns	Masculine Nouns	Variable Adjectives	Invariable Adjectives	Verbs	Multiple Morphology
30	29	3	30	1	1	5

In the last decades, the process of morphological adaptation to the Romanian language system was quite a smooth one, due to the fact that both the Romanian language and its speakers have an extraordinary receptivity to foreign borrowings, especially English-origin ones. As a consequence, the English-origin neologisms under study have been quite rapidly distributed within the above grammar categories, using various lexical means, such as conversion or suffixation.

### 3.1. Morphological Adaptation of English-origin Nouns

In the present study, the best represented category of English-origin neologisms was the **noun** category, followed by the categories of **adjective** and **verb**. The easiness with which nouns may be borrowed from the English language may explain this current phenomenon.

As far as the gender of nouns, linguists have usually distinguished three criteria, namely: the etymological criterium, the semantic criterium and the form criterium. Despite the fact that in English there exists a correspondence between the grammatical gender and the natural one, English-origin nouns have not generally preserved their English gender (masculine or feminine). Thus, most of the analyzed nouns belong to the **neuter gender**, according to the studied dictionaries, as it may be observed from the table previously presented. Among the English-origin neuter nouns studied, we enumerate:

*eastmancolor* < engl. *eastmancolor*/ *ecocardiograf* < engl. *echocardiograph*/ *ecofeedback* < engl. *ecofeedback*/ *ectomer* < engl. *ectomere*/ *ectomezoderm* < engl. *ectomesoderm*/ *eidofor* < engl. *eidophore*/ *electrocar* < engl. *electrocar*/ *electrochimograf* < engl. *electrokymograph*/ *elitism* < engl. *elitism*/ *emitor* < engl. *emitter*/ *endemism* < engl. *endemism*/ *endometru* < engl. *endometrium*/ *endonucleolus* < engl. *endonucleolus*/ *engler* < engl. *engler*/ *esclator* < engl. *esclator*/ *escapism* < engl. *escapisme*/ *esker* < engl. *esker*/ *establishment* < engl. *establishment*/ *ethno-rock* < engl. *ethno-rock*/ *eufuism* < engl. *euphuism*/ *eugenism* < engl. *eugenism*/ *Eurocity* < engl. *Eurocity*/ *event* <

engl. *event/ everdur* < engl. *everdur/ exit-poll* < engl. *exit-poll/ exoschelet* < engl. *exoskeleton/ experimentalism* < engl. *experimentalism/ explodor* < engl. *exploder/ extender* < engl. *extender/ eye-liner* < engl. *eye-liner*

The **feminine nouns** under study were represented by 29 English-origin neologisms, mostly similar in number with the neuter ones. These are referred to as [-animated], although in English the feminine is usually associated with [+animated]. Among the feminine English-origin nouns studied, we have:

*echistică* < engl. *ekistics/ ecofiziologie* < engl. *ecophysiology/ ecogramă* < engl. *echogram/ ecopatie* < engl. *echopathy/ ecospecie* < engl. *ecospecies/ ectocornee* < engl. *ectocornea/ ectoretină* < engl. *ectoretina/ electroacupunctură* < engl. *electroacupuncture/ electrochimografie* < engl. *electrokynography/ electrografie* < engl. *electrography/ electronografie* < engl. *electronography/ empatie* < engl. *empathy/ enantiotropie* < engl. *enantiotropy/ endemicitate* < engl. *endemicity/ endocinematografie* < engl. *endocinematography/ endomitoză* < engl. *endomitosi/ ergotamină* < engl. *ergotamine, erozivitate* < engl. *erosivity/ esotropie* < engl. *esotropia/ etnicitate* < engl. *ethnicity/ etnoistorie* < engl. *ethnohistory/ eumicete* < engl. *eumycetes/ evolută* < engl. *evolute/ evorsiune* < engl. *evorsion/ exciză* < engl. *excise/ exotropie* < engl. *exotropia/ expectanță* < engl. *expectancy/ externalizare* < engl. *externalization/ extrospecție* < engl. *extrospection*

**Masculine nouns** represent the third category of English-origin nouns studied, very poorly represented (only 3 items) as far as gender rendering is concerned. In Romanian, the masculine gender is generally associated with the [- animated] feature from English. Next, we will enumerate the masculine English-origin nouns starting with letter E selected from the studied dictionaries:

*echinostomi* < engl. *echinostoma/ egări* < engl. *jaegger/ eurodolar* < engl. *eurodollar*

An interesting observation may be made in that two of the masculine English-origin neologisms mentioned above, namely *echinostomi* and *egări* have been adapted to the Romanian language in the plural form.

As there may be seen from our analysis, the categories of neuter and feminine English-origin nouns starting with letter E are by far the most numerous ones (30 and 29, respectively), followed by the masculine nouns category, quite poorly represented (only 3). We may observe that both the feminine and the masculine nouns were integrated into the

[- animated] category, thus not preserving the characteristic feature of the English language of masculine and feminine nouns referred to as [+ animate]. We should also mention the fact that English does not operate with the neuter gender, and, still, the greatest number of English-origin nouns was referred to as neuter ones in Romanian.

### 3.2. Morphological Adaptation of English-origin Adjectives

In our study, we also found quite an important number of English-origin adjectives, even though in a lower number than the number of English-origin nouns. Out of the total number of 31 adjectives studied, 30 are variable adjectives and only 1 is an invariable adjective; due to the fact that English does not operate with invariable adjectives, the fact that the majority of English-origin adjectives adapted as variable ones in Romanian is a sign that the process of morphological adaptation of these adjectives is in a continuous progress.

Thus, the **variable adjectives** have been integrated quite rapidly as far as their ending is concerned. They add the endings "-ă" or "-e" in order to form the feminine, which is not the case of the source adjective in English that remains unchanged in the feminine, a fact that proves us that these terms have been completely adapted to the Romanian morphological system. For example:

*echinoctial*, -ă < engl. *equinoctial*/ *echiunghiular*, -ă < engl. *equiangular*/ *ecofiziologic*, -ă < engl. *ecophysiological*/ *educațional*, -ă < engl. *educational*/ *efectual*, -ă < engl. *effectual*/ *egalizator*, -toare < engl. *equalizing*/ *eladic*, -ă < engl. *helladic*/ *electrohidraulic*, -ă < engl. *electrohydraulic*/ *electronografic*, -ă < engl. *electronographic*/ *elitist*, -ă < engl. *elitist*/ *emancipativ*, -ă < engl. *emancipative*/ *enantioblast*, -ă < engl. *enantioblast*/ *enzimatic*, -ă < engl. *enzymatic*/ *enzootic*, -ă < engl. *enzootic*/ *epidimar*, -ă < engl. *epidymal*/ *ergonomist*, -ă < engl. *ergonomiste*/ *escapist*, -ă < engl. *escapiste*/ *eufuistic*, -ă < engl. *euphuistic*/ *expandat*, -ă < engl. *expanded*/ *experimentalist*, -ă < engl. *experimentalist*/ *expozitiv*, -ă < engl. *expositive*/ *expozițional*, -ă < engl. *expositional*/ *expres*, -ă < engl. *express*/ *extracultural*, ă < engl. *extracultural*/ *extradural*, -ă < engl. *extradural*/ *extragalactic*, -ă < engl. *extragalactic*/ *extramarital*, -ă < engl. *extramarital*/ *extraprofesional*, -ă < engl. *extraprofessional*/ *extrospectiv*, -ă < engl. *extrospective*

As far as the category of **invariable adjectives** is concerned, the English-origin neologisms starting with letter E provided us with only **one** adapted invariable adjective, which preserved its original English form, concerning both the spelling and the pronunciation. Thus, the invariable adjective is *extra-dry* < engl. *extra-dry*.

The present study upon the morphosyntactic integration of the English-origin adjectives revealed that the majority of the English-origin adjectives were adapted to the Romanian morphological and syntactical system, both by the use of feminine and masculine endings and by the after-noun position (a rule that does not apply to English, a language where the determinant adjective is always placed before the noun it determines).

### 3.3. Morphological Adaptation of English-origin Verbs

The present study established the presence of a single **English-origin verb**, namely *expanda* < engl. *expand*. This verb is a transitive one and there may be noticed a tendency to be integrated into the Romanian morphological system by adding the ending „-a” to the infinitive. In spite of the scarce presence of English-origin neological verbs with letter E, we support the belief that, in use, there are a lot more such verbs of English origin that have not been registered yet in the general dictionaries under study.

#### 3.4.1. English-origin Neologisms with Multiple Morphology

Although *conversion* is a process of morphological class alternation specific to the English language system, it has become ever productive in Romanian as well. When performing the present study, we also observed English-origin words that may function both as adjectives and nouns, or as feminine and masculine nouns, according to the information given in the studied dictionaries. Their number is 5, having a double morphological status. Therefore, our study determined the following morphological “pairs”:

##### feminine noun or masculine noun

*ergonomist*, -ă < engl. *ergonomist*, fem./masc. noun, ”specialist, specialistă în ergonomie” (MDN, 2008)

*ex-campion*, -oană < engl. *ex-champion*, fem./masc. noun, ”fost campion, fostă campioană” (MDN, 2008)

*exponent*, -ă < engl. *exponent*, fem./masc. noun, ”I. reprezentant, -ă al/ a unei idei, idei, stat, etc.” (MDN, 2008)

##### adjective or masculine noun

*eucariot*, -ă < engl. *eucaryote*, adj./ masc. noun, ”(celulă, organism) cu un nucleu bine diferențiat” (MDN, 2008)

### **adjective or feminine noun**

*exponențial*, -ă < engl. *exponential*, adj./ fem. noun, ”2.reprezentativ pentru o categorie de elemente de același fel” (MDN, 2008)

## **4. Conclusions**

The influence of the English language upon the Romanian language is no longer a novelty for linguists, and especially for the Romanian speakers. As far as the morphological adaptation of English-origin borrowings is concerned, the present article presents an analysis performed upon the English-origin neologisms starting with letter E, selected from MDN (2008) and DEX (2012). As such, out of a total number of 98 English-origin neologisms, 30 were neuter nouns, 29 were feminine nouns and only 3 were masculine nouns. The fact that most of the nouns were attributed the neuter gender in Romanian indicates a complete adaptation of these words to the Romanian language system, morphologically speaking, taking into consideration the fact that in English there is no neuter gender, only feminine and masculine. Regarding the English-origin adjectives studied, we distributed 30 within the class of variable adjectives, while only 1 adjective preserved its original invariable feature, specific to the English morphosyntactical system. The English-origin verbs under analysis were observed in a very small number, namely only 1, its adaptation being performed by adding the ending „-a” to the infinitive.

In conclusion, English-origin neologisms are part of our linguistic reality and our attitude, both as specialists and speakers, should be a rational one, should take into considerations both its advantages and disadvantages. The English influence, though, should not be seen as a means of “destroying” the Romanian language, on the contrary, it should be considered as a modality of lexis modernization. Therefore, at least from this perspective, we do not consider the phenomenon of English borrowings to be a negative one, due to the fact that the new words were rapidly adapted to the Romanian morphological system and did not alter the main structure of the Romanian morphosyntactical system.

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