

FORMATION OF INTERNATIONAL VOCABULARY AND "FALSE FRIENDS"

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Articolul tratează problema formării vocabularului internațional și a "prietenilor perfizi" ai traducătorului. Cuvintele internaționale sunt cuvinte de aceeași origine, care sunt întâlnite în mai multe limbi. Ele pot apărea ca rezultat al înrudirii cuvintelor sau datorită împrumuturilor de cuvinte dintr-o limbă în alta. Internaționalismele pot fi grupate în funcție de limbile lor de origine, acestea, de cele mai multe ori, fiind limbile romanice. Însă, cuvintele care sunt întâlnite în mai multe limbi, și au forme identice, dar sensuri diferite nu pot fi incluse în vocabularul internațional. Ele sunt de obicei numite "prieteni perfizi" sau "capcane", pentru că ele ne întind o cursă prin înfățișarea lor familiară, făcându-ne să credem că le cunoaștem sensul. "Capcanele" rezultate din diferențele semantice dintre cuvinte cu sens aparent cunoscut constituie surse de greșeli, mai mult sau mai puțin grave, când vocabularul limbii engleze nu e stăpânit într-o măsură suficientă și când nu se recurge destul de des la dicționare bune.

The world of 21st century is a global community of nations. Expanding global contacts result in the considerable growth of international vocabulary. All languages depend for their changes upon the cultural and social matrix in which they operate and various contacts between nations are part of this matrix reflected in vocabulary. As the process of borrowing is mostly connected with the appearance of new notions, which the loan words serve to express, it is natural that the borrowing is seldom limited to one language. Words of identical origin that occur in several languages as a result of simultaneous or successive borrowings from one ultimate source are called **international words**. International words play a prominent part in various terminological systems including the vocabulary of science, industry and art.

In the widest sense, an **international word** is a word which occurs in more than one national language. The German words *Haus* and *Automobil*, for example, are identical with the English words *house* and *automobile* despite slight differences in spelling and pronunciation. Their meanings are of course essential parts of them. If they were semantically distinct, as are English *also* and German *also* for example, they could not be viewed as identical words.

There are two types of international words. German and English *Haus* and *house* represent a type, which owes its international range to the common descent of two or more languages; words of this type are international by cognateship in the restricted sense of the term. On the other hand, the internationalism of German and English *Automobil* and *automobile* is due to the transition of words from one language to another; words of this type, though sometimes loosely called **cognates**, should be distinguished as international by loan and diffusion.

International words differ strikingly in their range. From a practical point of view, only those international words need be considered which have a wide range of occurrence throughout the regions of the world inhabited by peoples who participate in international intercourse and are consequently apt to take an interest in its simplification.

If international words differ as to their range, they may likewise be grouped as to their language of origin or "**center of radiation**" [1, p.9]. There are important and unimportant centers of radiation, and words of wide international range spring from either. The word *igloo* for instance has a very respectable range. It occurs in Eskimo, English, French, Russian, and in many other languages. But Eskimo, from which the word stems, is not therefore a significant center of radiation. Such minor "centers of radiation" can be disregarded without a resulting loss of important items in the international vocabulary provided it be ascertained that the possible contributions of every disregarded center come into consideration elsewhere.

For practical reasons the sphere in which "international words" are to be collected must be restricted, but the purpose of getting together the most generally international vocabulary possible can best be served if the restricted sphere fulfills two requirements: first, it must be a powerful center of radiation of international words, one that has contributed largely to the stock of international words throughout the rest of the world; secondly, it must have a high degree of receptivity with regard to the material radiating from other languages.

English answers most fully the requirement of receptive power in regard to international words of foreign origin. The Romance languages comply best with the requirement of productive radiation of international

words. The best restricted sphere of languages in which to carry out a systematic collection of international words is consequently a combination of English and the Romance languages. These languages are called **source or control languages** [2, p.11].

A few examples may serve to show that the Anglo-Romance group of languages does constitute a sphere of source languages in which international words of the most varied origins can be gathered. The Hebrew word for "hell," *Ghinnm*, is widely international, but to get it into the international vocabulary, Hebrew need not be investigated for the word appears in English as *Gehenna*, in Spanish as *gehena*, in Italian as *geenna*. The Arabic word which appears in English as *alcove* can likewise be gathered in the restricted sphere, for it appears in Italian and Portuguese as *alcova*, in Spanish as *alcoba*, and in French as *alcove*. An example of an international word of Russian origin is that appearing in English as *mammoth*, in French as *mammouth*, in Spanish as *mamat*, and in Italian as *mammut*. A German example is English *feldspar*, French *feldspath*, Italian *feldspato*, Spanish *feldespato*.

The rate of change in technology, political, social and artistic life has been greatly accelerated in the 20th century and so has the rate of growth of international word stock. Nowadays, at the beginning of the 21st century, international words penetrate in our everyday life, and become fundamental, indispensable, and essential for all kinds of activity. At the same time, they continue to play an especially prominent part in various terminological systems including the vocabulary of science, industry and art.

The international vocabulary has absorbed materials of the most varied origins and languages. But one of the most important languages of the first kind is **Latin**, which has prolonged its natural span of life for over a thousand years by serving as a universal language to the world of learning throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance and, till this day, to the Roman Catholic Church.

Latin phrases and words are used nowadays by intelligent people in literature and literary speech. The following Latin words and expressions, which still circulate today, are considered international: *a posteriori* – inductive; *a priori* – deductive; *de facto* – in reality, actually; *et alii* – and others; *et cetera* – and so forth; *in camera* – in private, secretly; *ipso facto* – as an inevitable result; *magna cum laude* – with great distinction; *nota bene* – used to call attention to something important; *per capita* – per unit of population; *per diem* – by the day, daily; *sui generis* – unique, peculiar.

Latin words are also used nowadays in science and medicine by biologists, physicians, doctors and pharmacists. Latin medicinal terms continue to play the central function in the development of world medicine. New cures appear and besides the name given by their creators, they receive an international Latin name. The same happens with other discoveries and inventions in the field of Biology, Zoology, Psychology, etc.

In the domain of chemistry, international terms occupy a rather important place. The words that denote chemical elements are international: *aluminum*, *bismuth*, *gallium*, *germanium*, *lithium*, *magnesium*, *selenium*, *tellurium*, *titanium*, etc.

Greek is also a very important source for international vocabulary. Words of this origin are special terms: *philanthropy*, *cosmography*, *agronomy*, *oligarchy*, etc.

A distinct semantic group of Greek international words pertains to theatre, literature and rhetoric: *anapest*, *comedy*, *climax*, *critic*, *dialogue*, *drama*, *elegy*, *epilogue*, *episode*, *prologue*, *rhythm*, *scene*, *theatre*, etc.

A new impulsion for the creation of international words was given by the great technical progress of the 20th c., which is reflected in hundreds of newly coined terms or Latin and Greek words applied in new meanings, eg.: *allergy*, *antibiotic*, *hormones*, *protein*, *stratosphere*, etc. – all based on Greek roots. Examples of new application of Latin terms are: *introvert radioactive*, *relativity*, etc.

Some terms are Greco-Latin hybrids, as they combine Latin and Greek roots: *sociology*, *television*, *telegraph*, *telepathy*, etc.

The mankind's cultural debt to **Italy** is reflected in great number of Italian words connected with architecture, painting and especially music that were borrowed into most European languages. Italian musical terms are accepted and used in the whole world. They are: *accent*, *accompaniment*, *allegretto*, *allegro*, *cadence*, *chord*, *crescendo*, *forte*, *fortissimo*, *interval*, *lento*, *melody*, *piano*, *pianissimo*, *scale*, *tempo*, *tone*, etc.

French influence of the later periods mainly pertains to diplomatic relations, social life, art and fashions. French remained the international language of diplomacy for several hundred years. Examples of diplomatic terms are: *attaché*, *communiqué*, *dossier*, etc. The words: *ball*, *cortège*, *café*, *coquette*, *hotel*, *picnic*, *restaurant* refer to social life. *Ballet*, *ensemble*, *essay*, *genre* relate to art. Military terms are: *brigade*, *marine*, *police*. Fashions in dress and food are illustrated by words like: *blouse*, *corsage*, *champagne*, *menu*, *soup*.

The importance of French expressions is indisputable and undeniable. Some of them become international due to their role and function in literature and history. The following examples show us the value and significance of the French expressions in the world culture: *a propos, beau monde, carte blanche, comme il faut, en face, tête-à-têtes*, etc.

The tempo of change in technology in the 20th and 21st century accelerated the growth of international word stock. The following examples of comparatively new words due to the progress of science illustrate the development and the spread of international vocabulary in all directions: *algorithm, antenna, antibiotic, accumulator, acoustics, battery, cybernetics, detector, diagram, gene, genetic code, gravitation, microelectronics*, and many more.

Due to the revolution in science, technology and social life, many new professions appears in the world. Some of them became international: *president (in a firm), programmer, image-maker, manager, stylist, security, barman*, etc.

The invention of computer causes the appearance of new international words. These words penetrate in our everyday live and are used by the greater part of the population, because the computers are nowadays indispensable in our society. The most popular words are: *internet, CD-ROM, monitor, display, file, printer, disk, scanner, mouse, cursor, click*, etc.

Nowadays, the electronic media that bind the world together are the essential carriers of language. To work efficiently, they need a common standard. The **English** language is now the operating standard for global communication. Electronic communications have created a need for a global language – and English will fill that slot.

A large number of English words are to be found in the vocabulary pertaining to clothes: *jersey, pullover, sweater, nylon, tweed* etc. Cinema and different forms of entertainment are also a source of many international words of English origin: *film, club, cocktail, jazz*. We find numerous English words in the field of sport: *football, out, match, tennis, time*.

In the previous century English has become the international language of trade. The following terms are very important in the sphere of economy. The economists and businessmen use them in the foreign commerce, foreign market and external relations. Some of them are: *bonus, cash, credit, dividend, exchange, exporting, importing, interview, leasing, management, market, marketing, overdraft, quotas, trademark*, etc.

In the course of the last fifty years a great number of international words in different languages have been under a process of constant change of their meanings in dependence and rhythm of development of the given society, economic, political, scientific and technological development. New meanings appeared, while others were entirely dropped in other languages. This process is going on and will go on. In some cases we can observe generalization of meaning, in others – specialization of meaning. Sometimes borrowings acquire new meanings, which were uncharacteristic for its former semantic structure [3, p.13].

In the translation process the translator should avoid misleading international counterparts. For instance, the Russian *аккуратный* should not be translated into Romanian or English by ‘*acurat*’ or ‘*accurate*’ correspondingly, but by ‘*punctual*’, ‘*neat*’, etc. The English word *artist* is not translated into Romanian and Russian by ‘*artist*’/ ‘*артист*’, but by the lexemes ‘*pictor, om de artă*’ and ‘*художник*’ [4, p.64].

This category of words is termed “*deceptive cognates*”, “*false cognates*” or “*false friends*” [5, p.12]. “**False friends**” are pairs of words in two languages that look or sound similar but differ in meaning. Such words can cause difficulty for students learning a foreign language, particularly one that is related to their native language, because the students are likely to misidentify the words due to language interference.

From the etymological point of view, “false friends” can be created in several ways [6]:

– **Cognates**: If Language A borrowed a word from Language B, then in Language B the word shifted in meaning, a native speaker of language A will face a “false friend” when learning language B.

– **False cognates**: In certain cases, “false friends” were created separately in the two languages or they are simply homonyms with no relation between them whatsoever. They happened due to pure coincidence, e.g., the Latin *is*, the Chinese *you*, and the German *Rat* when compared to the respective English words.

– **Pseudo-anglicisms**: Pseudo-anglicisms are artificially-created constructions of words with elements borrowed from English but the morphemes of which do not actually exist in English. For example, the German word *twen* for ‘anyone in their twenties’ or the age itself, or *fesch* for ‘smart, natty, chic, attractive’, which originated in the English “fashionable”.

Let us compare, for example, the following words in English and French: *Attend* in French does not mean 'to be present' but 'to wait'. *Assist* in French means 'to attend'. *Raisin* means 'dried grape' in English but it means 'the fresh grape' in French. *Demand* in English is 'to require', *demandeur* in French is 'request'. *Appointment* is not *appointement* – that means 'money' in French - but *rendez-vous*. *Agenda* in English means 'things to be done at a meeting', whereas in French it means 'a diary'. *Deception* means 'lies' but *déception* means 'disappointment'. *Actually* means 'really' but *actuellement* means 'presently'. *Ignore* means in French 'to not know'.

Pseudo-international words are such words, which are similar in form but different in meaning. Here the risk of making a mistake is very great whenever the translator fails to consult his dictionary. The formal similarity of pseudo-international words suggests that they are interchangeable, but this is deceptive and may lead to translation errors [7, p.57].

Such words are often a problem for inexperienced translators. Not without reason they are called "false friends" of translator, as the mistakes are numerous. They may become the "false friends" if the translator substitutes one of them for the other without due regard to the difference in their meaning or to the way the English word is used in the particular context. The translator should bear in mind that a number of factors can prevent the possibility of using the formally similar word as an equivalent. Among these factors, the following are most important [8, p.85-87]:

– **The semantic factor** resulting from the different subsequent development of the words borrowed by the two languages from the same source.

– **The stylistic factor** resulting from the difference in the emotive or stylistic connotation of the correlated words.

– **The co-occurrence factor**, reflecting the difference in the lexical combinability rules in the two languages. The choice of an equivalent is often influenced by the usage preferring a standard combination of words to the formally similar substitute.

– **The pragmatic factor** reflecting the difference in the background knowledge of the members of the two language communities that makes the translator reject the formal equivalent in favor of the more explicit or familiar variant.

The international word stock should carefully be studied in order to avoid frequent mistakes committed by students and translators. But, despite the cases of "false friends", the formation of the international vocabulary is a positive process, which makes easier to communicate or translate from one language into another due to the existing common international word stock.

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