

ATTITUDES TOWARDS ROMGLISH IN ONLINE DISCOURSE

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Article history: Received 21 August 2022; Revised 23 October 2022; Accepted 31 October 2022; Available online 20 December 2022; Available print 30 December 2022.

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ABSTRACT. *Attitudes towards Romglish in Online Discourse.* As English has become a global language, it has also become the language of computer-mediated communication. The online medium has offered the ideal space for English to enter in contact with multiple other languages and, as a result, to contribute to the formation of new varieties. In Romania, this new variety is Romgleză or Romglish, a combination of Romanian and English that is used especially by, but not limited to the younger generations. However, language change does not come easy and, although it has been around for quite a while, Romglish is still considered as improper by some. The present paper analyses two sets of online comments in order to identify attitudes towards Romglish and the language ideologies behind them. To this end, monoglossic ideologies, such as the standard language ideology (Milroy 2001) and the purist ideology (Langer & Davies 2005) will be taken as references when analysing the online comments. The data focuses mainly on two online sources: the Ştirile Kanal D Facebook page and an Elforum thread, and it shows that rather than singular and static, language ideologies are multiple and rather fluid, with many online users displaying both monoglossic and heteroglossic ideologies.

Keywords: *language ideologies, heteroglossic ideologies, monoglossic ideologies, attitudes, Romglish, online discourse*

REZUMAT. *Atitudini relativ la romgleza din discursul online.* Engleza este atât o limbă globală cât și limba comunicării mediate de calculator. Mediul online a oferit un spațiu ideal pentru ca engleza să intre în contact cu numeroase alte limbi și, astfel, să contribuie la formarea unor noi varietăți. În România, această nouă varietate este romgleza sau Romglish, o combinație între română și engleză care este folosită mai ales de către tânăra generație, dar nu numai. Schimbarea

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Însă nu este ușoară și, deși există de ceva vreme, romgleza este considerată încă nepotrivită de către unele persoane. Prezenta lucrare analizează două seturi de comentarii online pentru a identifica atitudini față de romgleză și ideologiile lingvistice care le influențează. În acest scop, ideologii monoglose, precum ideologia limbii standard (Milroy 2001) și ideologia puristă (Langer & Davies 2005) vor fi luate în considerare. Datele culese sunt din două surse online: pagina de Facebook pentru Știrile Kanal D și discuția de la o postare de pe Elforum. Acestea arată că ideologiile lingvistice nu sunt singulare și statice, ci multiple și mai degrabă fluide, utilizatorii online prezentând atât ideologii monoglose cât și heteroglose.

***Cuvinte-cheie:** ideologii lingvistice, ideologii heteroglose, ideologii monoglose, atitudini, romgleză, discurs online*

Introduction

Language ideologies are representative of speakers' beliefs and attitudes towards languages and they can shape and/or influence language use. However, language ideologies go beyond this since "they include the values, practices and beliefs associated with language use by speakers, and the discourse which constructs values and beliefs at state, institutional, national and global levels" (Blackledge 2005, 32). As a result, language ideologies are not just about languages and have influences both at the individual and the societal levels. Furthermore, "language ideologies contribute to the production and reproduction of social difference, constructing some languages and varieties as of greater worth than other languages and varieties" (Blackledge 2005, 33). This comes as a result of giving more prestige to certain languages and/or language varieties to the detriment of others (e.g. considering the official language or the standard variety as better than other existing languages or varieties).

Language ideologies can be generally divided into monoglossic and heteroglossic ideologies. The former consider that monolingualism should be the norm since linguistic homogeneity is regarded as necessary for national unity and identity, which are generally seen as threatened by multilingualism. The latter on the other hand generally consider multilingualism as something positive, viewing differences as assets, thus promoting inclusion rather than assimilation. However,

[v]ery often, multilingual societies which apparently tolerate or promote heterogeneity in fact undervalue or appear to ignore the linguistic diversity of their populace. A liberal orientation to equality of opportunity for all

may mask an ideological drive towards homogeneity, a drive which potentially marginalises or excludes those who either refuse, or are unwilling, to conform. (Blackledge 2005, 34-35)

Thus, both types of ideologies can ignore the linguistic variety and the actual linguistic practices of its speakers since both can promote one or some languages over another. For instance, in order to promote and even protect diversity the EU has created the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCPNM) and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML). However, as even the names of these documents show, they do not cover new minorities and their languages. Moreover, even countries that do not have an official language still promote one national language over others. This is the case of Australia where, according to their Home Affairs website, English “connects us together and is an important unifying element of Australian society. English language proficiency is a key contributor to better educational and employment outcomes and social participation levels”. Thus, English as their national language creates unity, which shows that at least a certain level of homogeneity is the desirable state. Furthermore, while promoting equality in terms of opportunity, there is also a covert promotion of homogeneity.

In terms of monoglossic ideologies, there are four prevalent ones that are generally encountered among individuals: the one nation – one language ideology, the standard language ideology, the mother tongue ideology, and the purist ideology. The one nation – one language ideology connects language to state-formation since, for the latter to succeed, people need to be united under one homogeneous language. This can be done by choosing one language and/or language variety that is considered more prestigious than others. Thus, “by promoting invariance and uniformity in language structure [...] [standardization] consists of the imposition of [this] uniformity upon a class of objects” (Milroy 2001, 530) without taking into account the existing linguistic diversity. Similarly, the mother-tongue ideology is based on the idea that each individual has one mother tongue (MT) (Weber & Horner 2012). However, there is no clear definition and, according to Skutnabb-Kangas (1988) MTs can be defined based on various criteria. As a result, promoting language singularity is ignoring the actual linguistic realities of speakers.

Lastly, similar to all the previous ideologies, the purist ideology promotes one language variety over others. However, purism seems to draw the interest of both linguists and laypersons since

ordinary speakers with many different mother tongues and with no formal training in linguistics [...] share certain belief about what language is, how it develops or should develop, whether it has good or bad qualities,

etc. [...] [and additionally] there is the recurrent phenomenon that speakers of a language agree that the state of their language is in decline, that it contains too many words from informal varieties, that it is threatened by modernising and foreign influences: in short, that it was better in the olden days and that nowadays something needs to be done to restore it to its former glory. (Langer & Davies 2005, 1)

Since people generally feel a strong connection to language, there is a significant interest in it, which can also lead to strong viewpoints on the matter, especially when changes start occurring, in what would be called “folk linguistics” (Langer & Davies 2005, 1). It should be mentioned that the so-called decline of the language could be caused by both internal (e.g. elements from informal varieties) or external (e.g. foreign elements) (Langer & Davies 2005, 3) depending on whether a more restrictive or permissive definition of purism is given. Furthermore, according to Langer and Davies (2005), purism is not interested only in removing undesirable elements but also in maintaining desirable ones, although subjectivity is generally at the basis of this differentiation. This also directly connects this ideology to the standard language one since “before one can remove elements from a linguistic norm, one has to have a linguistic norm” (Langer & Davies 2005, 4). This would mean that individuals would turn to dictionaries, for instance, in search of the desirable forms. However, this leads to a contradiction according to Langer and Davies (2005) since “linguistic folk turn to a standard dictionary to find out what standard is, but when they find things that they do not consider to be standard they reject the dictionary – hence the question is, why do they *ever* turn to the dictionary rather than trust their own judgement in the first place!” (9). This was encountered in one of the comments analysed for the present paper as well. In it, a Facebook user criticises the coordinator of the new Romanian dictionary, who is a researcher at the Iorgu Iordan – Al. Rosetti Institute of Linguistics, for deciding to introduce over 3.500 words from other languages

I saw and heard the Romanian professor from the Institute of Linguistics speak (on the news), the one who “coordinated and decided” the introduction of over 3.500 words from other languages in DEX! She was stuttering and speaking like a primary school pupil!!!! With hackneyed phrases, typical for communism, this person has titles like [Elena] Ceaușescu, for show!!!! (my translation)²

² Am vazut-o si auzit-o vorbind pe profesoara de limba romana de la institutul lingvistic (la stiri). Cea care a “coordonat si decis” introducerea in dex a peste 3.500 de cuvinte din alte limbi! Se balbaia si se explima ca un elev de clase primare!!!! Limba de lemn, tipic comunismului, individa are titluri ca ceauseasca, de sanchi !!!!!

Thus, because this user did not agree with the introduction of the new words, they turn against the linguist seen as responsible for this. Interestingly, they do not seem to turn against the dictionary itself. It should be mentioned that folk linguistics also involves a lack of knowledge about how language and/or dictionaries work. For instance, critics such as the one mentioned, do not seem familiar with the fact that the introduction of new words in a dictionary does not mean that they become the norm but rather that these words are encountered often enough in general speech that they need to be acknowledged. Furthermore, words introduced in the dictionary in one edition can just as well be removed from future editions.

The four mentioned ideologies, although discussed separately, are interconnected since they all promote the same idea of homogeneity and singularity. Furthermore, as previously mentioned, heteroglossic ideologies can lead to ideals similar to monoglossic ones. This makes the discussion about ideologies more complex since “on a societal and an individual level one will not be able to identify only one single ideology rather everyone is influenced by multiple discourses and will display different language ideologies depending on time and place” (Iversen & Mkandawire 2020, 37). Thus, like languages, ideologies are not fixed entities but rather fluid and can change over time and according to context (Blackledge, 2005). For example, previous research conducted by this author (Oltean-Cîmpean 2019, 2021) has shown that young adults who are multilingual can have multiple ideologies, both monoglossic and heteroglossic, depending on the context and the subject of discussion. The present paper is interested in analysing comments from two comment threads in order to identify attitudes towards Romglish and if and what language ideologies influence them.

Online Discourses and Attitudes towards Romglish

Although language ideologies have always been encountered in the public discourse, the development and spread of the Internet has allowed ever more individuals to express their views and attitudes towards languages. For instance, since the 2010s there have been multiple news pieces or blog entries that discuss and, mainly criticise, the changes in language use encountered among Romanian expats.³ The included comment sections criticised in part the expats for forgetting Romanian and using words from a different language as

³ See <https://www.gabrielursan.ro/dragi-romani-din-strainatate-care-ati-venit-in-vizita/> and <https://www.nasul.tv/romanii-intorsi-in-tara-in-vacanta-de-vara-au-primut-o-lectie-de-la-vanzatorii-buticurilor-se-fac-ca-au-uitat-limba-romana-si-pocesc-cuvintele-asa-ca-au-fost-intampinati-cu-un-anunt-fabulos-va-r/comment-page-1/>

well. Initially the discussions were mainly about expats from Italy who were criticised for forgetting (or “pretending to forget”) their MT. However, the focus of the discussion switched once English started to increasingly influence language change among people living in Romania.

Over the years English has reached the level of global language mediated by various reasons ranging from economic, mass media and international communication to education and technology (Crystal 1997, 2008). This influence has become noticeable in Romania as well, especially starting with the 90s and, in the 21st century, the interest shown towards English has only increased. On the one hand, English has gained ground in the educational system (now the language can be studied starting with kindergarten). On the other hand, a growth in access to mass media has increased Romanian speakers’ contact with English. As in the case of other language, this constant contact between English and Romanian has given rise to a new language variety, namely Romglish (Romgleză).

The label Romglish has been used, in the public discourse, by both non-linguists and linguists alike and, according to Vişan (2016) it was “coined in the 90s by Eugen Simion [...], to refer to what he perceived as the increasing hybridisation in the post-communist discourse of the Romanian media” (138). Furthermore, Simion, when speaking about Romglish in a newspaper article, stated that it was an “intolerable jargon which tends to spread like scabies and to slutify language, to uglify it” (Vişan 2016, 138 – her translation). Therefore, the term Romglish has a pejorative connotation attached to it and it is used to describe what is perceived as the decline of the language. Furthermore, this has been noticed in other public discourses in the media as well. For instance, in 2018, in his show, “Pastila de limbă” (The Language Pill – my translation), author Radu Paraschivescu discusses “Ridiculous forms of expression in ‘Romglish’” (my translation)⁴ and begins his segment by defining Romglish as “the hotchpotch of Romanian and English that Romanians sometimes use as a form of expression” (my translation)⁵ and by stating that it is a “risk that we do not diminish by declaring ourselves scandalised, but by trying to explain why some hybrid constructions are ridiculous and why it would be preferable to give them up” (my translation)⁶. The words used when describing Romglish (“hotchpotch”, “ridiculous”, “risk”) show that it is seen as an improper use of the language but also as a threat to the integrity of Romanian. Furthermore, as a conclusion to the segment, Paraschivescu states that “It is all about borrowing in moderation, with discernment and to not transform necessity into

⁴ Explimări ridicole în „romgleză”

⁵ ghiveciul de română și engleză în care se exprimă uneori românii

⁶ Romgleza este un risc pe care nu-l micșorăm declarându-ne scandalizați, ci încercând să explicăm de ce anumite exprimări hibride sunt ridicole și de ce e preferabil să renunțăm la ele

haughtiness” (my translation)⁷. These statements reveal a desire for Romanian homogeneity and that there is one correct version of the language and way in which language change should take place. This view does not take into consideration that languages are not fixed but fluid entities and that speakers influence language change. These views also shape the general understanding of what Romglish means, namely “to loosely designate those cases which are perceived as “excessive borrowings” (especially for those lexical borrowings from English that do not undergo morphophonological adaptation) or for the adaptation of lexical elements or phrasal constituents from English into Romanian, such as calques, and sometimes for the cases of code-mixing [and code-switching] [...]” (Vişan 2016, 138). This understanding can be noticed in some of the reactions found in public discourses, with many of them related to what is called “corporate jargon”⁸, which generally involves various degrees of code-switching and is considered as improper language.

This interpretation of Romglish is reminiscent of the position George Pruteanu had in the early to mid-2000s. In his view, new words were welcome into the language as long as they were necessary and they were “integrated in the system, assimilated [...] according to Romanian rules of writing and pronunciation” (Pruteanu 2007). As a result, Pruteanu supported words such as *chic*, *mouse*, *click*, *look*, *hacker*, *airbag* as long as they underwent an adaptation to the Romanian system in the form of *şic*, *maus*, *clic*, *luc*, *hekăr*, *erbeg* (Pruteanu 2007). Although Pruteanu considered that Romanian needed to be protected and separated new words into good and bad borrowings, his more nuanced perspective is more in line with that of some linguists.

In her 2016 article, Vişan analyses two interviews on the topic with two well-known and appreciated linguists, namely Rodica Zafiu and Marius Sala. As shown by the analyses, both linguists show purist overtones in their answer to various degrees. For instance, Zafiu takes a more moderate position stating that what she does not agree with are linguistic calques rather than borrowing itself since they “interfere *there where they aren’t needed and modify the existing structures of that language*” (Vişan 2016, 140 – her translation and emphasis). Sala, on the other hand, shows more purist overtones in his answers, referring to borrowings (especially those from American-English) as a “*passing fashion (practised especially by snobbish semiliterate people)*” (Vişan 2016, 141 – her translation and emphasis). While neither of the linguists adopts a strong purist

⁷ Totul e să importi cu măsură, cu discernământ, și să nu transformi necesitatea în fardoseală

⁸ See <https://cluju.ro/romgleza-cuvinte-ridicole-folosite-in-multinationale-si-nu-numai/>, <https://razvanpascu.ro/2011/05/27/gandim-si-vorbim-romgleza-am-decat-o-ideea-about-that/>, https://adevarul.ro/educatie/scoala/conversatii-romgleza-vorbeste-multinationale-afecteaza-limba-romana-1_54d22472448e03c0fd45e794/index.html.

ideology, they both promote the notion of a “proper Romanian” (Vișan 2016) that is homogeneous. Thus, they seem to adhere to more monoglossic ideologies while also mentioning the benefit of some borrowings. Moreover, if we consider Sala’s perspective, there is quite the negative view of people who use these words borrowed from English, making most likely a covert reference to the use of code-switching more than anything else. This might also be reminiscent of a more traditional view of multilinguals, namely that they are two or more monolinguals in one body and, as a result, they should use each of the known languages independently.

A similar perspective can be noticed in Dragomirescu and Nicolae’s 2011 book on language mistakes (book that is a part of the “Viața cuvintelor” / The Life of Words Series (my translation) and coordinated by Marius Sala). In it, they have a chapter dedicated to Romglish, namely “Romgleza noastră cea de toate zilele” (Our Daily Romglish – my translation) where they start the section on borrowings stating that instead of adopting a purist view, they decided “to let the language decide what it will keep or not from this wave of Anglicisms” (my translation)⁹ (Dragomirescu&Nicolae 2011, 31-32). However, they conclude the section by stating that “some recent English borrowings [...], which, although, at times, welcome in the technical fields in which they were borrowed, extended their meaning and replace, without justification, already existing words” (my translation)¹⁰ (Dragomirescu&Nicolae 2011, 32). Moreover, in a previous section, Dragomirescu and Nicolae (2011) mention that the English influence is not negative but that such language changes “can easily become language mistakes, if they do not respect rules, if they are rather individual than systematic, if they do not fit in the stylistic register in which they appear” (my translation)¹¹ (31). Even though the two linguists do not adhere to a purist perspective, there are still monoglossic ideologies that seem to guide their position. For instance, there is a separation between proper and improper borrowings – this in fact reminds of the purist ideology, borrowings need to respect a certain register and pattern – this reminds of the standard ideology, and, finally, the statements seem to ignore the actual linguistic (multilingual) practices of Romanian speakers.

The importance of the positions presented by linguists in the public discourse stem from the fact that non-linguists look at these positions as

⁹ să lăsăm limba să decidă ce va păstra și ce nu din valul acesta de anglicisme

¹⁰ unele împrumuturi recente din engleză [...], care, deși sunt, uneori, bine-venite în domeniile tehnice în care au fost împrumutate, s-au extins în afara acestor domenii, și-au lărgit sensul și înlocuiesc, fără justificare, cuvinte deja existente

¹¹ pot trece cu ușurință în domeniul greșelilor de limbă, dacă nu respect regulile, dacă nu sunt sistematice, ci individuale, dacă nu se potrivesc registrului stilistic în care apar

guidelines, even when they disagree with them. Furthermore, politicians and policy-makers might ask for these experts' opinions on the current state of the language. This was noticeable in the 2000s when the so-called Pruteanu Law, which stipulated in part that correct Romanian should be used everywhere in the country, came into effect. Thus, these public positions can influence both individual and social perspectives and even policies.

Analysis and Discussion

For the analysis of attitudes towards Romglish in online discourse, two main platforms were selected, namely Facebook and Elforum. The comments chosen for analysis are from a KanalD news piece on Romglish (Facebook) and those from a thread on Romglish (Elforum). Both sources are fairly recent, with the KanalD video being posted in January 2022, while the thread on Elforum is from August 2021. Additionally, at the moment of selection, the Facebook post had 193 comments from 149 users, while the Elforum thread had 83 messages from 23 users.

Romglish: An English invasion or the new 'golden' Romanian

The news piece has as a topic Romglish and, under the title "Limba română, asaltată de engleză" (Romanian Invaded by English – my translation), it presents how the younger generation increasingly uses English words while also showing interviews with young people stating, in short, that they feel comfortable enough with English to use it very often (they give some examples as well) and that they sometimes think in English rather than Romanian. The piece also includes a short interview with a linguist who mentions code-switching as used especially by young people "either because the words are specialised in a field or because we seem cooler" (my translation)¹². The news piece ends by stating that over 3000 English words were introduced in the latest version of the dictionary and by mentioning that "linguists say that the purpose is to establish the manner in which [these words] are written correctly [and] not to replace Romanian words" (my translation)¹³. Although the news piece in itself is not the focus of the present paper, it should be mentioned that it is representative of a media discourse that is critical towards Romglish and one that covertly promotes monoglossic ideologies, mainly purist and standard language ideologies. This can be noticed in the use of the word "invaded" in the title which implies that English is attacking the integrity of Romanian. Moreover, it

¹² fie pentru că termenii sunt specializați unui domeniu, fie pentru că părem mai cool

¹³ lingviștii spun că scopul este stabilirea modului în care [cuvintele] se scriu corect [și] nu înlocuirea cuvintelor românești

is stated that the combinations between Romanian and English are made “by ear”, with the rest of the piece reminding viewers how young people choose English even though there are Romanian equivalents. Furthermore, the news piece separates English users between proper and improper ones by mentioning that linguists use English terms as well but “knowingly” (“în cunoștință de cauză” – my translation). Certainly, what this news piece fails to do is consider the actual linguistic practices of speakers by implying that there is only one proper way of using language in Romania and even the interviewed linguist seems to contribute to this idea.

This news piece has elicited quite a few responses, both in terms of reactions (through the 7 Facebook emojis) and comments. Thus, there were 674 reactions (316 like emojis, 255 laugh emojis, 71 angry emojis, 14 sad emojis, 7 wow emojis, 6 love emojis, and 5 care emojis) and 193 comments from 149 individuals, with only 17 people writing multiple comments (one person wrote 20 messages of which 18 were the same comment posted multiple times). As it can be noticed from the numbers given for reactions, only 85 individuals had negative reactions to the news piece. This is different from the comments since out of the 193 comments only about 14 individual comments could be considered positive or somewhat positive, with the majority being quite negative (a few even including insults towards young people in general and the ones in the video in particular).

Unlike the Facebook comment thread, the Elforum thread has the format of a conversation with most users actually discussing the topic rather than simply reacting to it. The original poster (OP) created the post because they disliked Romglish, which they defined as “that strange neo-Romanian language” (“Acea struțocămilă de neo limbă românească” – my translation), and there are too few people “preoccupied by the mutilation of Romanian” (“preocupați de pocirea limbii române” – my translation). Moreover, Pascu’s blog entry on the topic of Romglish is used as a conversation starter. While, similar to the Facebook comment thread, most users show a degree of dislike towards Romglish, one of the main differences is that some users brought sources and examples for their positions. For instance, one user posted a short article by linguist Rodica Zafiu, another posted an article from a translator, while others gave examples of words of foreign origin.

In terms of positive reactions, most of the 14 Facebook comments make an attempt at explaining why people use Romglish or why people dislike the use of Romglish as shown in the following examples:

“It’s not about forgetting Romanian. It’s just that some words sound better in English” (my translation)¹⁴

¹⁴ Nu e vorba de uitarea limbii române. Doar că unele cuvinte suna mai bine în engleză.

“C’mon stop criticising so much ‘cause the Chinese and Indians and others around that area + many African nations use English, so we are talking about aprox $\frac{3}{4}$ of the global population...” (my translation)¹⁵

“Oh, c’mon what’s the problem ‘cause I don’t get it... I think it would be best for all of us to switch to English and be done with it... that’s the problem, that we speak in English also, it is worse when you don’t know it and you need it... as if your pension would increase if they would only speak in Romanian.” (my translation)¹⁶

“I think that you are offended that you don’t know English my favourite patriots, I kiss you” (my translation)¹⁷

These comments, at first sight, show that these individuals have no issues with the use of Romglish. In fact, the last comment includes the use of Romglish (“va kiss”). However, language ideologies can be noticed in their positions as well. For instance, in all four examples there is more prestige given to English to the detriment of Romanian prompted by statements such as “some words sound better in English” and “approx. $\frac{3}{4}$ of the global population” speak it, “it would be best for all of us to switch to English and be done with it”.

There were also three individuals on Facebook who tried to give more comprehensive explanations, with one repeating the same message 18 times in the comment thread stating that “movies are in English, documentaries (history, geography, chemistry biology ones etc) are in English as well, other explanations [are] in English, jokes [are] in English and so on. After all of these English will certainly come to mind first” (my translation)¹⁸. The other two comments come as a response to someone who called the use of Romglish “a disgrace” and “snobbery”:

“it’s not snobbery ma’am, they are exposed to too much English content and the Romanian content on TV is most often of poor quality, so they don’t accumulate a rich enough vocabulary in their mother tongue” (my translation)¹⁹

¹⁵ Hai nu mai criticați atâta că și chinezii și indienii și ălalți de pe acolo + multe nații africane folosesc engleza, deci vorbim de aprox $\frac{3}{4}$ din populația globului...

¹⁶ Ete fleoșc si care e problema ca nu inteleg... cred ca mai bine trecem toti pe engleza si gata... aia e problema ca vorbim si in engleza, e mai prost atunci cand nu o stii si ai nevoie de ea... de parca daca o sa vorbeasca astia doar romana va creste voua pensia.

¹⁷ cred ca sunteti ofensati ca nu stiti engleza patriotii mei preferati, va kiss

¹⁸ filmele sunt in limba engleza, documentarele (de istorie, geografie, chimie biologie etc) sunt si ele in engleza si tot asa. Dupa toate astea sigur ca iti vine in minte intai engleza

¹⁹ nu este snobism doamna, sunt expuși la prea mult conținut în engleză iar conținutul românesc este de cele mai multe ori de proasta calitate, așa că nu acumulează un vocabular destul de extins în limba materna

“Ma’am, you have no idea what you are talking about. Language change is the norm, it is not a shameful situation. The Internet helps with a faster spread but this was happening for thousands of years before it was invented. In the 19th century Romanian was terraformed by the then academy through French, we have expressions from them, cultural customs, jokes, +50% of the Romanian modern vocabulary is borrowed from French. What you are saying about how kids speak today the peasants from the 19th century were saying about your present language. The ‘vulgarisation’ of a language is a natural life process. Why do you speak Romanian instead of Latin? It’s actually in reverse, the ‘literary and unaltered form’ of a language is a 20th-century Balkan concept and you are snobbish through the lack of understanding of the subject’s realities” (my translation)²⁰

As it can be noticed, two of these comments use too much access to English content as a cause for Romglish. In both cases it seems to be a matter of prestige since there is a preference for English. In the second comment this is made clearer by mentioning the “poor quality” of “the Romanian content on TV”. Furthermore, in this comment there is the implication that this makes one deficient in Romanian, i.e. their MT. Therefore, here as well, language ideologies seem to guide their interpretation of language use. Moreover, the complexity of language ideologies can be identified here since contact with English is not necessarily considered negative, and while more prestige is given to English the MT (which is singularly in the form of Romanian) is seen as suffering from this contact.

There were users who tried to explain why Romglish is used on the Elforum thread as well. For instance, one user mentioned how Romanian language use can be influenced when the language is only used at home and for a small number of hours a day, while also stating that they “avoid as much as possible mixing words from different languages – some uses seem forced and strange. However, sometimes, a foreign word can be more relevant in a discussion than the Romanian equivalent” (my translation)²¹. Others stated that

²⁰ Doamnă, nu aveți habar ce vorbiți. Schimbarea unei limbi este norma, nu este vreo situație rușinoasă. Internetul ajută la răspândirea mai rapidă dar asta se întâmplă de mii de ani înainte ca el să fie inventat. În secolul 19 limba română a fost teraformată de academia de atunci prin limba franceză, avem expresii de la ei, obiceiuri culturale, glume, +50% din vocabularul român modern este împrumutat din franceză. Ce spuneți dumneavoastră de ce vorbesc copii (sic) azi au spus tărâni secolului 19 despre limba dumneavoastră de azi. „Vulgarizarea” unei limbi este un proces natural al vieții. Dumneavoastră de ce vorbiți română ci nu latină? Tocmai ca eare (sic) invers, „forma literară” și nealterată a unei limbi este un concept al secolului 20 în balcani iar snobismul îl prezentați dumneavoastră prin lipsa înțelegerii realității subiectului

²¹ Evit cât pot amestecul de cuvinte din limbi diferite – unele exprimări par fortate și ciudate. Dar, uneori, un cuvânt străin poate fi mai relevant într-o discuție decât echivalentul românesc, chiar de pare bizar sau o zic așa.

“Romanian is alive and over generations it has borrowed words from all cultures with a great influence [...]. Generally, the persons who use borrowings from other languages do it because it is fashionable or because that’s the manner of speaking in their social circles. There are also those bilingual persons who, when having a language lapse make use of the known foreign language instead of stuttering or having a blockage (mainly consisting in emigrants). Another category that is less understood and known is that of persons who have studied and are practicing a profession [...] in a foreign language” (my translation)²²

“Romanian is not a dead language [...] not limited to what to [...] what the Academy has approved, but a live one [...] that is changing daily - becoming enriched- according to communicational necessities,[...] [and these changes] need to be made quickly and thus they are often made through “shortcuts”, a shortcut being represented even by quickly borrowing -directly!- from English [...] some words, expressions or shortenings, without trying or waiting for the adaptation, translation or introduction of some equivalent Romanian expressions” (my translation)²³

In these comments both monoglossic and heteroglossic ideologies can be identified. For instance, while they view borrowings as normal, these users also consider that there is a norm and that Romglish is a departure from said norm. This is shown through the use of words such as “fashionable”, “strange”, “shortcuts”. Furthermore, their views do not include all speakers and all linguistic practices since they are limited to certain categories of people (e.g. emigrants). Thus, Romglish is seen more as an exception rather than something that happens regularly. Additionally, there is a clear reference to standard language both on Facebook and Elforum through the mentioning of the Academy, which shows a more prescriptive view on language.

This more prescriptive view is noticeable in other Elforum comments as well. Although none of the users here seemed to be against borrowing words

²² limba romana este o limba vie care de-a lungul generatiilor (sic) a imprumutat cuvinte din toate culturile cu influenta mare [...]. In general persoanele (sic) care folosesc cuvinte imprumutate din ale (sic) limbi o fac pentru ca e la moda sau din cauza ca in cercurile sociale in care se regasesc acela e modul usual de vorbire. Mai sunt si acele persoanele (sic) bilingve care in momentele de lapsus in loc sa se balbaie sau blocheze se ajuta de limba straina cunoscuta (majoritar compusa din emigranti). O alta categorie mai putin inteleasa sau cunoscuta e aceea (sic) a persoanelor care au invatat si practica o meserie [...] intr-o limba straina.

²³ Limba romana nu este o limba moarta [...] nu este limitata [...] la ceea ce a aprobat Academia, ci este o limba vie [...] care se schimba -se imbogateste- in fiecare zi pe masura necesitatilor de comunicare, [...] [si aceste schimbari] trebuiesc facute rapid si de aceea adesea se fac prin multe “scurtaturi”, o scurtatura constituind-o inclusiv preluarea rapida - si de aceea direct!- din engleza [...] a unor cuvinte, expresii sau prescurtari, fara a mai incerca sau astepta adaptarea, traducerea ori introducerea unor expresii romanesti echivalente.

from English, or another language, or using other languages beside Romanian, they did consider that there is a right way to do this, namely when needed – “when the translation changes the meaning” (“când traducerea schimbă sensul” – my translation) –, and under “clear rules” (“reguli clare” – my translation) or at least some “common sense rules” (“reguli de bun simț” - my translation). Moreover, one of the users supports the introduction of neologisms but it should be limited to them since “when speaking of shining, job, implementation, banner, advertiser, slim, moisture, hair stylist, strike and many others etc. we’re talking about barbarisms. This doesn’t fall under language enrichment! And neither does it lead to its improvement” (my translation)²⁴. Thus, while showing heteroglossic ideologies as well, there is a tendency towards more monoglossic ones. One language is considered as more prestigious, namely Romanian, and in need of protection – this is implied through the mentioning of rules. Furthermore, borrowings are divided into proper (neologisms or words from specific fields or related to specific development) and improper ones. Thus, there is a purist ideology here, as well as a standard language ideology since there needs to exist an official body to decide on the appropriateness of words and a variant of the language that would be considered the norm. This is quite similar to Pruteanu’s position as well, especially when considering that the last user adapted the English words to Romanian spelling.

As previously mentioned, the vast majority of comments show negative views about young people and their use of Romglish. Similar to the positive messages, language ideologies are shaping these attitudes as well. For instance, a strong connection between language and identity could be noticed in Facebook messages such as:

“we need to keep out identity our values” (my translation)²⁵

“I’m not saying it is bad to study in other languages as well, on the contrary, but to avoid yours, or to mix it with other foreign words, seems like you don’t love your people and their tongue. If they would be educated in school and told that the Dacians were the first speakers of Latin, from which all the other languages derive, maybe they would understand and be proud of their own origin” (my translation)²⁶

²⁴ Dar, cand vorbim de şaining, job, implementare, benăr, advertiser, slim, moisture, heăr stilist, straic si multe etc. vorbim de barbarisme. Asta nu intra la categoria imbogatirii limbii! Si nici nu duce la imbunatatirea ei.

²⁵ trebuie să ne păstrăm identitatea noastră valorile noastre

²⁶ Nu spun că e rău să mai studiezi și alte limbi străine, dimpotrivă, dar ca să o eviți pe a ta, sau să o amesteci cu alte cuvinte străine, mi se pare că nu-ți iubești neamul cu graiul lui. Dacă li s-ar face educație în școală și s-ar povesti că Dacii au fost primii vorbitori de latină, din care derivă toate celelalte limbi, poate ar înțelege și ar fi mândri de propria lor origine.

“I believe that this is a consequence of globalisation, of the present increased spread of anti-Romanianism. The young should be reminded of the many Romanian heroes who have fallen defending Romanian” (my translation)²⁷

From these messages, the connection that exists between language and identity, in the case of some speakers, is quite clear, especially in the first comment. These responses are also based on the presumption that there is one single, homogeneous language that unites the speakers of the country – this is similar to the one nation – one language ideology. Furthermore, in the third message multilingualism (represented by globalisation) is seen as a threat to the Romanian spirit, language, and even unity. There is also more prestige given to Romanian than any other language through the mentioning of Dacians and the national “heroes fallen while defending Romanian”. However, while promoting monoglossic ideologies, these users ignore linguistic diversity both within the country’s territory and within Romanian itself.

Monoglossic ideologies can be encountered in other Facebook comments as well, as shown in the following examples:

“Such disgrace! Well-trained people who live abroad for tens of years have not forgotten Romanian and some brats who live here don’t know how to speak it anymore! This is snobbery, to not call it something else! They are ashamed of their mother tongue! Bravo, Romania’s youth!” (my translation)²⁸
 “...you think in English but you don’t know how to write grammatically correct in the language of the country you were born in...” (my translation)²⁹
 ““Breaking news, dance on ice, week end, Survivor, Extra night”! Crikey, don’t we like Romanian anymore?” (my translation)³⁰
 “Dudes, speak in Romanian, aren’t you ashamed of yourselves? This is your mother tongue, you were born with it, you live in Romania not America” (my translation)³¹
 “The new type of illiteracy: to try and speak a foreign language when you can’t even correctly speak your mother tongue” (my translation)³²

²⁷ Eu cred că acest fapt este o consecință a globalizării, a antiromânismului tot mai răspândite astăzi. Ar trebui să li se amintească tinerilor câți eroi ai neamului românesc au murit de-a lungul timpului pentru apărarea limbii române.

²⁸ Mai mare rusinea! Oameni bine pregătiti care locuiesc de zeci de ani în strainatate nu au uitat limba română și niste plozi care stau aici și nu mai știu să o vorbească! Asta e snobism, ca să nu zic altfel! Le (sic) se rusine cu limba maternă! Bravo, tineretul României!

²⁹ ...gândiți în engleză dar nu știți să scrieți corect gramatical limba țării în care v-ați născut...

³⁰ „Breaking news, dance on ice, week end, Survivor, Extra night”! Aoleu, lb. română nu ne mai place?

³¹ Vorbiți fraților în limba română, nu va este rusine? Asta e limba voastră maternă, cu ea v-ați născut, traieți în România nu în America (sic)

³² Noul gen de analfabetism: să încerci să vorbești o limbă străină când nici măcar pe limba maternă nu o poți vorbi (sic) corect.

“I ask you, do you know how to speak Romanian correctly, or are you ashamed of your own mother tongue ???” (my translation)³³

“Romanian is beautiful, one of the most beautiful languages. I don’t understand why they dirty it with other Anglicisms ?!” (my translation)³⁴

The language ideologies guiding these attitudes are mainly the standard language, mother tongue and purist ideologies. The MT of the speakers in the news piece is mentioned several times, showing that those commenting consider that, on the one hand, speakers have only one MT and, on the other, that all Romanians have the same MT. This was observed on Elforum as well when the OP stated that “I’ve said it before, we either speak Romanian or we switch to English as a mother tongue” (my translation)³⁵. Furthermore, the MT is considered as more prestigious and, also, as important for identity. Thus, using English is considered “snobbery” and something that should make one feel ashamed. This is pointed out in one of the comments where examples of English titles used on Romanian television (e.g. *Breaking News*, *Survivor*) are given as criticism for not choosing Romanian versions. Additionally, Romglish users are perceived as lacking education and MT knowledge, as pointed out by an Elforum user: “To know and use a foreign language regularly, has nothing to do with the mutilation of Romanian! Snobs, the uneducated, the half-witted, use Romglish thinking that they are showing us fools that they know English. No, they are in fact showing us they have no clue about their mother tongue” (my translation)³⁶.

Moreover, there is one variety of Romanian, namely the standard one, which is considered as correct and, thus more prestigious. This can be noticeable in the comments about the correctness of the Romanian used by young people. In terms of purism, part of the criticism is related to using English words, mixing the two languages, with examples of individuals who have been living outside Romania for several years and still know and use the language without code-switching. In fact, this is presented like a badge of honour since it makes them good Romanian users by comparison to the “brats”, “illiterate” Romglish users. Furthermore, there were quite a few comments that, similar to one of the comments above, used “dirty” when referring to the use of English words.

³³ Eu vă întreb știți să vb română corect , sau vă este rușine să vb propria limbă maternă ???

³⁴ limba romana este frumoasa, una din cele mai frumoase limbi. Nu înțeleg de ce o murdărește cu alte englezisme ?!

³⁵ Am mai zis și altă dată, ori vorbim limba română ori trecem la limba engleză, ca limbă maternă!...

³⁶ A sti si folosi curent o limba straina, nu are nimic de-a face cu pocirea limbii române! Snobii, incultii, sferdoctii, folosesc romgleza crezind ca ne arata, noua, fraierilor, ca stiu limba engleza. Nu, ei ne arata, defapt (sic), ca habar nu au de limba materna.

Final Remarks

The analysis of the comments chosen for the present paper has shown that people's attitudes towards Romglish are influenced by language ideologies. Furthermore, both monoglossic and heteroglossic ideologies were identified among both the Facebook and Elforum users. While most users from the two sources held an overall negative attitude towards Romglish, there were some positive comments as well. And yet, even comments that showed support for Romglish had some underlying monoglossic views as well. Among the monoglossic ideologies, the most common ones were the standard language, mother tongue and purist ones. At the same time, most users exhibited multiple ideologies rather than just one. This comes to show the complexity of language ideologies.

While the two sources had different formats with the Elforum thread representing a conversation rather than simple reactions, similar attitudes were encountered in both. Although the views and comments analysed do not necessarily express the general views of Romanians, they could be seen as representative for categories of individual who use and comment on the two platforms. Furthermore, since the chosen sources offered comments from almost 200 individual users, the findings can be considered relevant in terms of language ideologies, especially when taken together with previous research done by this author.

What the present article can conclude is that language ideologies guide and shape people's attitudes towards and about language(s). Furthermore, ideologies are not simple and fixed but rather complex and fluid, as there have been multiple ideologies identified with single individuals. In addition, the views that linguists have could be noticed among non-linguists as well. For instance, the separation between good and bad borrowings, the adaptation of the spelling of English words, the view that Romanian needs to be protected and that there is a proper form of the language were all encountered both among the linguists mentioned and among many of the users. Thus, this shows that public positions on language(s) can influence the views and attitudes of non-linguists. However, more extensive research is recommended, research that could take into account various variables (e.g. age, sex, education) so that to attain a more comprehensive understanding of language ideologies both among linguists and non-linguists.

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