

**ON ENGLISH LOANWORDS  
IN THE ROMANIAN OF LAND IMPROVEMENT**

**ÎMPRUMUTURILE DIN LIMBA ENGLEZĂ  
ÎN VOCABULARUL ROMÂNESC AL ÎMBUNĂȚĂȚIRILOR FUNCiare**

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**Abstract.** *The purpose of this study is to help Romanian students studying English as future specialists in "Cadastru" identify and, thus, easier understand and learn specialised land improvement Romanian words of English origin. The study of these terms is part of a wider study focused on loanwords in specialised languages. The type of approach is etymological. The limits of research are caused by the corpus of words on which the present study was carried out. The practical implications of the study derive from the purpose of the study. This paper is original due to the fact that it is for the first time that such a specialised vocabulary is analysed from an etymological point of view.*

**Rezumat.** *Scopul acestui studiu este să îi ajute pe studenții români care studiază limba engleză în cadrul specializării „Cadastru” să identifice și, astfel, să înțeleagă și să învețe mai ușor, termenii de origine engleză din vocabularul românesc al îmbunătățirilor funciare. Studiul acestor termeni face parte dintr-un studiu mai amplu dedicat împrumuturilor din limbile străine prezente în limbajele de specialitate. Abordarea termenilor este etimologică. Limitele cercetării sunt cele impuse de corpusul pe care s-a făcut studiul. Implicațiile practice ale cercetării derivă din scopul studiului. Lucrarea este originală datorită faptului că este pentru prima oară când se abordează un asemenea lexic specializat din perspectivă etimologică.*

**Key words:** *English, Romanian, loanword, and land improvement.*

**Cuvinte-cheie:** *limba engleză, limba română, împrumut lexical, și îmbunătățiri funciare.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

One of the most outstanding features of Modern Romanian is its large and varied vocabulary. Romanian has borrowed many words from so many other languages and made them its own. In the modern period a large number of new affixes have been taken from French, Latin, Greek, and a few others. Beginning with the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and still going on apace is the fertile coinage of scientific, technical, scholarly, commercial, and political terms that have swelled the Romanian vocabulary to such proportions that even the largest unabridged dictionaries can select and define only a small portion of the total number of words that actually exist.

Romanian language has taken over a great number of words from English. These “borrowed words” or “loanwords” have nevertheless become a permanent part of Romanian. Most of them have been modified to bring them into line with the phonological rules of Romanian, and as such they can help a non-native English speaking Romanian or they can, on the contrary, confuse him. This is also the case of *land improvement vocabulary* (LIV).

### **MATERIAL AND METHOD**

Our corpus of words was selected from PRICOP & MARCU (eds.) (1987-1989). Of the 4801 of the entries in the dictionary, only 31 are loanwords of English origin – *aerlift, badland,*

*bermă, bulldozer, bullgrader, bushel, caterpillar, chișai, conveier, Darcy, dash-pot, data processing, dispecer, display, dry farming, hardpan, jet, know-how, macroelement, marketing, mulci, mull, plotter, prefiltrare, reset, screper, software, stoc, stress, termogramă, and vortex* – compared to the 378 French loanwords and to the 80 German loanwords!

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Loanwords can attain different degrees of assimilation into the language. Linguists (CHALKER & WEINER, 1994: 50) have identified four types of assimilation and, consequently, four groups of loanwords: *totally assimilated words*, *words retaining traces of their origin*, *words assimilated in their form but semantically tied to a foreign context*, and *words which have not yet achieved general currency*.

All LIV loanwords above must have fallen initially into the last category: *words having not yet achieved general currency but occurring in very limited contexts*. They now belong to the following groups:

1. *Totally assimilated words*, i.e. *words assimilated to the native word-stock and that are phonetically and orthographically integrated*: R *badland* < E *badlands* “A barren area characterised by numerous ridges, peaks, and mesas cut by erosion” (W); R *bulldozer* < E *bulldozer* “1. A powerful, tractor-driven machine equipped with a heavy steel blade: used for clearing wooded areas and moving soil in road construction” (W); R *caterpillar* < E *Caterpillar* “A tractor whose driving wheels gear with self-laid, wide metal belts whereby its weight is distributed over a large area, permitting the tractor to move over soft or rough terrain; a trade name” (W); R *chișai* < E *quick sand* “A bed of sand so water-soaked as readily to engulf any person or animal that attempts to move or rest upon it” (W); R *dispecer* < E *dispatcher* “2. One who directs the movements of trains, trucks, etc., and maintains records of such movement” (W); R *macroelement* < no mention in any English language dictionary; R *mulci* < E *mulch* “Any loose material, as straw, placed about the stalks of plants to protect their roots” (W); R *prefiltrare* < E *pre-filtering* “water filtering through a large granulation filter” (DÎF), for which the DEX mentions “after English”; R *screper* < E *scraper* “2. A horse-drawn or motor-driven apparatus having a large metal scoop or scoops, for scraping up, transporting, and dumping dirt: a road *scraper*, a road leveller” (W); R *stoc* < E *stock* “2. a quantity of something accumulated, as for future use” (RHD); “10. a quantity of something acquired or kept for future use: to lay in a *stock* of provisions; 14. raw material: paper *stock*” (W) vs “1. water supply. 2. materials stored” (DÎF); R *stres* < E *stress* “3. *Mech.* A force or system of forces which tends to produce deformation in a body on which it acts” (W); R *termogramă* < *French, English, German* – no mention in any English language dictionary.

To note that the trade name *Caterpillar* has become in Romanian a common noun.

Other loanwords do not appear in the Romanian explanatory dictionary (DEX), which makes it impossible for us to trace their origins. Thus, R *bermă* might come either from the E *berm(e)* “1. The bank of a canal opposite the towpath. 2. A horizontal ledge part way up a slope; bench. 3. A ledge dug near the top of a trench to support beams and prevent caving in of the sides. 4. A narrow, level ledge at the outside foot of a parapet, to retain material which might otherwise fall from the slope into the moat. 5. The outside or downhill side of a ditch or trench.” (W), or from the F *berme*.

As for R *conveier* (as in R *conveier verde*) “A combination of field crop and forage crop rotation allowing the feeding of animals with green pasturage from spring till late fall, or with succulent forage till fall” (DÎF), it presumably comes from the E *conveyer*, but the latter does not appear as such in Romanian language dictionaries (DEX) or in English language dictionaries (W, RHD) where only *conveyor* “1. a person or thing that conveys. 2. *Mach.* an endless chain or belt, set of rollers, etc., for carrying materials” (RHD) appears.

Some of these loanwords have been so well assimilated that they have given derivative words in Romanian. Though not mentioned by the Romanian language dictionary (DEX), they do exist and are used in land improvement: R *dispecerizare* (DÎF) < R *dispecer* (DÎF, DEX) and R *dispecerat* (DEX) < R *dispecer* (DÎF, DEX), and R *mulcire* (DÎF) < R *mulci* (DÎF).

2. *Words retaining traces of their origin, i.e. words fully part of the Romanian vocabulary, but that retain traces of their foreign origin in their pronunciation, spelling, or inflection:* R *bullgrader* < E *Bullgrader* “The trade name of a soil-moving bulldozer” (DÎF) does not appear in English (W, RHD) or Romanian (DEX) language dictionaries; R *bushel* < E *bushel* “1. A measure of capacity; four pecks, 35.238 l or 2150.42 cubic inches” (W); R *Darcy* < E *Darcy* “A rock permeability measure unit equal to 0.987  $\mu\text{m}^2$ ” (DÎF, L) does not appear in English (W, RHD) or Romanian (DEX) language dictionaries; R *dash-pot* < E *dash-pot* “A hydraulic damper used to soften a mechanism movements” (DÎF) does not appear in English (W, RHD) or Romanian (DEX) language dictionaries; R *data processing* < E *data processing* “processing of information, esp. the handling of information by electronic machines in accordance with strictly defined systems if procedure” (RHD), “the operation of digital or analogue computers” (W); R *dry farming* < E *dry farming* “In an arid or dry country, the raising of crops without irrigation, mainly by saving the moisture of the soil and by raising drought-resisting crops” (W); R *hardpan* < E *hardpan* “1. a layer of firm detritus under soft soil” (W); R *jet* < E *jet* “1. That which spurts out from a narrow orifice; a gushing flow” (W); R *know-how* < E *know-how* “*Colloq.* Knowledge of how to perform a complicated operation or procedure; technical skill” (W); R *marketing* < E *marketing* “The total of activities by which transfer of title or possession of goods from seller to buyer is effected, including advertising, shipping, storing, and selling” (RHD); R *plotter* < E *plotter* “3. A contrivance, as for plotting coordinates” (W); R *reset* < E *reset* “The act of resetting, or that which is reset; specifically, a resetting of type” (W); R *software* < E *software* “In a digital computer, any of the programmes designated to control various aspects of the operation of the machine, such as input and output operations” (W); R *vortex* < E *vortex* “1. A mass of rotating or whirling fluid, especially when sucked spirally toward the centre; a whirlpool; an eddy” (W).

To note that the trade name *Bullgrader* has become in Romanian a common noun.

3. *Words assimilated in their form but semantically tied to a foreign context:* R *aerlift* < E *airlift* “1. The operation of transporting foodstuffs and other commodities into Berlin by airplane during the land blockade imposed by the U.S.S.R. in 1948. 2. Any similar operation for any purpose. 3. The load carried by such a transport method” (W) vs. “A device for raising water, the functioning of which is based on specific weight difference between water and air-water emulsion” (DÎF); R *display* < E *display* “1. The act of spreading out, unfolding, exhibiting, or bringing to the view or to the mind. 2. Ostentatious show. 3. Printing. A style of type calculated to attract attention. 4. The matter so displayed.” (W) vs. “A device (screen) for displaying alphanumerical and graphical information” (DÎF); R *mull* < E *mull*<sup>3</sup> “1. A thin, soft, cotton, rayon, or silk dress goods. 2. A variety of soft, thin muslin used as a base for medicated ointments, as mulla” (W) vs. “Intermediary humus; in most cases, a humus characterised by an intimate mixture between organic matter and mineral soil, and having a slightly acid or neutral reaction” (DÎF).

## CONCLUSIONS

As has often been noticed, the richness of the Romanian vocabulary is in large part due to borrowing from many other languages of the world, sometimes in such a way as to allow fine denotative, connotative, or stylistic distinctions between semantically related or nearly synonymous words to grow up.

We have seen that 12 LIV loanwords (39%) are *words totally assimilated to the native word-stock* (they are phonetically and orthographically integrated), while other 14 LIV loanwords (45%) are *words fully part of the Romanian vocabulary* (they retain traces of their foreign origin in their pronunciation, spelling, or inflection), and other 3 LIV loanwords (10%) are *words assimilated in their form but semantically tied to a foreign context*. Finally, 2 LIV loanwords (6%) are untraceable and, therefore, impossible to range within one of the three categories above.

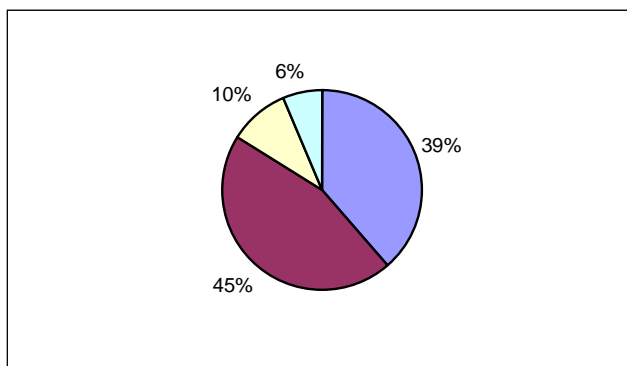


Figure 1 – Romanian land improvement vocabulary - English Loanwords:  
 39% - words totally assimilated; 45% - words fully part of the Romanian vocabulary;  
 10% - words assimilated in their form but semantically tied to a foreign context; 6% - untraceable words.

Despite the small number of LIV loanwords from English and their rather restricted use, the great percentage of words totally assimilated (39%), and the even greater percentage of words fully part of the Romanian vocabulary (45%) show the extraordinary ability of Romanian to turn “borrowings” into permanent words (Figure 1).

### LITERATURE

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