

**THE INFLUENCE OF ENGLISH ON MORPHOLOGICAL COMPOUNDING IN
ROMANIAN AND PORTUGUESE****Roxana CIOLĂNEANU¹
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Abstract

The present paper looks at instances of possible incipient morphological borrowing in Romanian and Portuguese from English within the context of “societal multilingualism” (Romaine 2006). We suspect that the ever-increasing number of right-headed compounds in Romanian and Portuguese might be a consequence of the English influence; consequently, we will bring linguistic and extra-linguistic factors to support the hypothesis that right-headed compounding in Romanian and Portuguese places itself at the crossroads of language internal evolution and external influence. Some of these compounds are already registered in dictionaries, some others are not, but they are frequently met in specialised texts and newspaper articles.

Keywords: morphological borrowing, neoclassical compounds, societal multilingualism, right-headedness, creative neologisms, language contact.

1. Preliminary remarks

Generally speaking, the discussion on the influence of English over other languages focuses mainly on lexical borrowings. It is common knowledge that English has been exerting an ever-increasing influence on the lexis of various European and non-European languages over the last decades, being the preferred language of communication in various professional and specialised fields and the predominant language of publication. There are two main factors that have led to the current status of English: on the one hand, the expansion of the British colonial power, which reached its peak towards the end of the 19th century and, on the other hand, the status of the United States as the leading economic power in the 20th century (Crystal, 2011: 106).

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The factors above clearly show us that it is not the language itself and its structure that trigger changes when it comes in contact with another language, but it is the sociolinguistic history of the speakers that is the “primary determinant of the linguistic outcome of language contact” (Thomason & Kaufman, 1988: 35).

Previous researchers on contact-induced change, i.e. “transfer of linguistic material from one language to another” show that it is fairly easy to be established when it comes to lexical borrowing, but more difficult to be understood and described when it refers to grammatical meaning and structures. Contact-induced grammaticalisation is a gradual process that takes centuries to happen and involves several generations of speakers (Heine and Kuteva, 2003: 533). The contact between English and other European and non-European languages is still young. On the other hand, changes nowadays happen at such high speed that maybe linguistic change takes place more rapidly than expected.

In his 1966 study, *The English element in the main European languages*, Filipović states that the real invasion of the English words started in the eighteenth century and concludes that English has not considerably influenced other languages in the area of morphology since: (i) it hasn't triggered any kind of morphological remoulding; (ii) there are rare cases of English morpheme transfer into European languages; (iii) English loan-words have been adapted to the morphological system of the borrowing language (Filipović, 1970: 109).

2. Language contact and linguistic outcomes

Thomason and Kaufman (1988: 37) showed that the linguistic outcomes of language contact situations are mainly two: *borrowing* and *interference through shift*. The authors place the two concepts in the context of bilingualism (in various degrees, from less widespread to extensive bilingualism) and define *borrowing* as “the incorporation of foreign features into a group's native language by speakers of that language: the native language is maintained but is changed by the addition of the incorporated features” (Thomason & Kaufman, 1988: 37), whereas *interference* results from “imperfect group learning during a process of language shift”, i.e. “a group of speakers shifting to a target language fails to learn the target language perfectly” (Thomason & Kaufman, 1988: 38).

We could roughly associate these two concepts with Kachru's model of the three concentric circles of world Englishes (taking into account the way English was acquired). Consequently, we may say that in the countries that belong to the *outer circle* (i.e. countries in which English was or is still used in the administrative system and has been learned as a second language) the linguistic contact has resulted in *interference through shift*, whereas in the languages that are part of the *expanding circle* (spoken by people who recognize the importance of English as an

international language and learn it as a foreign language), the linguistic contact had as its main consequence a great deal of *borrowing*, mainly at the lexical level.

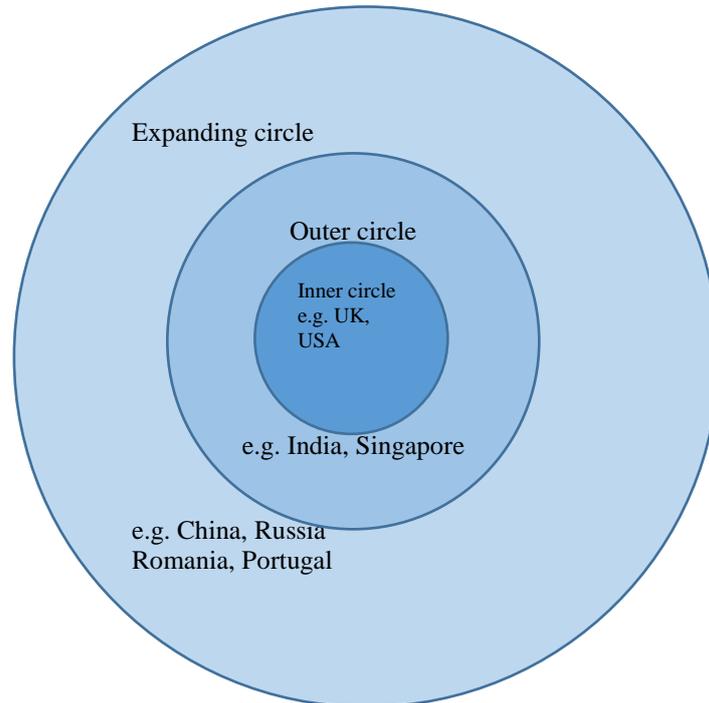


Figure 1: The three circles (Source: Crystal, 2011: 107)

The influence of English over Romanian and Portuguese must be considered within the context of the so-called “societal multilingualism” rather than “individual multilingualism” (Romaine 2006) since we are looking for structural changes that affect the L1 languages of the multilingual speakers as a community and not for linguistic accidents that might appear in one bilingual/multilingual speaker’s discourse. We are interested in some incipient structural borrowing that might be already present in Romanian and Portuguese as a consequence of *local bilingualism*, i.e. people use their mother tongue as the predominant language of communication, but they use English in professional/academic settings as a way to facilitate communication with their foreign partners/peers, plus their continuous exposure to English through publications, films, TV shows etc. in English.

Once we have placed the concept of *borrowing* in the context of language contact, we have to check whether there is a way of measuring the intensity of the phenomenon because we assume that the stronger the language contact, the more diverse the language borrowing (ranging from lexical borrowing to structural borrowing). We have used, in this sense, *The Borrowing Scale* put together by Thomason & Kaufman (1988: 74-75) in which the authors try to distinguish between various degrees of *borrowing*, however mentioning that the boundaries

between the established categories are rather fuzzy (Thomason & Kaufman, 1988: 77).

(1) Casual contact: Lexical borrowing only	Lexicon: content words (non-basic vocabulary borrowed for cultural and functional reasons)
	Structure: -
(2) Slightly more intense contact: slight structural borrowing	Lexicon: function words (conjunctions and adverbial particles)
	Structure: minor phonological, syntactic and lexical semantic features (that cause little or no typological disruption)
(3) More intense contact: slightly more structural borrowing	Lexicon: function words (prepositions and adpositions; derivational affixes added to native vocabulary; personal and demonstrative numerals, etc.)
	Structure: phonemicization of previously allophonic alternations; aspects of moving from SOV to SVO, e.g. borrowed postpositions in a prepositional language (or vice versa).
(4) Strong cultural pressure: moderate structural borrowing	Lexicon:
	Structure: major structural features that cause relatively little typological change (e.g. extensive word order changes, borrowed inflectional affixes and categories, etc.)
(5) Very strong cultural pressure: heavy structural borrowing	Lexicon:
	Structure: major structural features that cause significant typological disruption (e.g. changes in word structure rules etc.)

In Romanian and Portuguese, the massive borrowing from English is a socio-cultural phenomenon that appears mainly at the lexical level. We could characterize the linguistic contact between English and the two languages under scrutiny as being casual, however on an increasing trend. Consequently, slight changes under the influence of English have been noticed at various levels of the linguistic system.

In Romanian, a wide range of structural borrowings have been spotted, from word formation innovation (for instance new derivation patterns, e.g. *punker*, *biker*) to unusual word order (*determiner* + *determined* order, e.g. *Sport Magazin*, *Național Arena* etc.) lexico-syntactic loans (for instance, intransitive verbs in Romanian that have acquired a new meaning under the influence of English and a transitive

reading when used with the borrowed meaning (Stoichițoiu-Ichim, 2005: 102 - 103). For instance, the verb “a abuza” in Romanian has two meanings according to *The Explicative Dictionary of Romanian* (2009): “1. to use something in an exaggerated manner; misuse; 2. to commit illegal or unjust deeds, taking advantage of a situation, position or title”. The same meanings are reinforced by various other contemporary dictionaries. The usage of the verb, however, exhibits a fairly frequently-met third meaning, yet not recorded by dictionaries: “to treat someone in a cruel and violent way, often sexually”. This third meaning corresponds to the most common sense that “to abuse” has in English (cf. *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*). Apart from the evident semantic loan, which is indicative of some incipient forms of contact-induced grammatical changes under the influence of English, what is interesting is a change that has been noticed in the verbal regime: “a abuza” in its first two meanings recorded by dictionaries is intransitive (always accompanied by the preposition “de”), whereas “a abuza” in the third sense is transitive (“a abuza pe cineva” = “to abuse someone”), which also allows for a participle-derived adjective (e.g. “o femeie abuzată” = “an abused woman”).

In Portuguese, the same kind of instances can be found: *líder* (< *leader*) or *spoiler*, which document an increasing borrowing of agentive words (though the agentive suffix has not gained autonomy yet). Head final phrases, such as *e-fatura* (literally ‘e-receipt’) or *Loures Shopping*, that contrast with the vernacular word order (*e-fatura* is an equivalent of *fatura eletrónica*, likewise *Loures Shopping* coexists with *Shopping Aranguês*, though the canonical word order usually triggers the translation of *shopping center* into *centro comercial*). Finally, an English feature such as the possibility to use the indirect object as the subject of a passive verb is borrowed in some specific cases. For instance, verbs such as *dar* ‘to give’, *dizer* ‘to tell’, *mandar* ‘to send’, which require an indirect object, may be marginally used in passive sentences as a direct translation of the equivalent English verbs (e.g. *I was given ...* > **eu fui dado/a ...*; *I was told ...* > **eu fui dito/a ...*; *I was sent ...* > **eu fui mandado/a ...*).

All these examples show without any doubt that, even in casual contact situations, “change can occur at any and all levels of the linguistic system” (Thomason & Kaufman, 1988: 9). Structural borrowing is, however, more difficult to prove because it takes more time to be acquired and it implies not only “the transfer of fully-formed lexical units, but also the transfer of ‘productive’ constructs” (Musacchio, 2005: 71).

3. Premises for the English influence over word-formation patterns in Romanian and Portuguese

The main factors that make us suspect an English influence over morphological compounding (also named neoclassical compounding) in Romanian and Portuguese are basically two: the now well acknowledged role of English as the global language and the productivity of this word formation resource in current English.

One of the motives why people borrow words or patterns from other languages is the prestige of the source languages. Nowadays, it goes without saying that English has acquired a well-established international status given by: (i) economic reasons: e.g. the USA's dominant economic position, tourist and advertising industries, etc.; (ii) practical reasons: English is the main language used in tourism, international business and academic conferences; (iii) intellectual reasons: most of the scientific, technical and academic work is written in English; (iv) entertainment reasons: English is the main language of popular music, films, computers, video games, etc. (Crystal, 2011: 106).

The reasons mentioned above show a large exposure to English of the people who learn English as a foreign language. In what concerns our paper, we believe that a huge role in facilitating not only the borrowing of lexicalized compounds, but also the structural borrowing, is played by **heavy language contact through translation**, mainly in specialised fields where these types of neoclassical compounding is used to denominate various specialised concepts/realities. As it happens with any speciality, at a certain point, some technical terms start to be used in common, everyday language, and, in the case of the morphological compounds which the present paper focuses on, the way they are structured, i.e. the rules they are governed by, becomes part of the implicit language knowledge of the speakers and it becomes productive. In other words, we are claiming that starting from a limited set of lexicalised morphological compounds (most of them part of specialised vocabularies, i.e. not very accessible to common speakers) that existed in Romanian and Portuguese, to which there have been added more such compounds under the lexical influence of English, speakers of Romanian and Portuguese have started to produce genuine compounds of this type, sometimes using vernacular words, or a mixture of neoclassical roots and vernacular words. Thus, people manifest a great deal of *linguistic creativity*, which is actually based on the above-mentioned implicit linguistic knowledge (a similar idea can be found in Veloso & Martins, 2011: 559). Consequently, we are not dealing here only with lexical borrowings, but also with the transfer of a “productive construct” (Musacchio, 2005: 71).

A second reason for suspecting an English influence on the morphological compounding in Romanian and Portuguese is its current productivity in English, not only in the domains of science, but also in everyday contexts, especially in advertising and commerce (Crystal, 2011: 129). In line with Haspelmath and Sims (2010: 116), we hold that a rule is *productive* when “the neologisms formed by that rule are hardly noticed”, i.e. speakers “form new words unconsciously and unintentionally”, whereas *creative* neologisms are “coined intentionally, and they immediately strike hearers and readers as new and unusual”. Consequently, we may state that a productive rule in English has been borrowed in Romanian and Portuguese by means of creative neologisms coined by fluent speakers of English.

4. Data and analysis

4.1. The objective and the scope of our analysis

As we are dealing here with incipient forms of structural borrowing from English into Romanian and Portuguese, it is very risky to make some strong assumption at this stage about the role of English in moulding structural patterns in the above-mentioned languages. However, we position our analysis at the interface between external influence and internal language tendencies. This is why we have chosen to analyse a series of morphological compounds in Romanian and Portuguese and show that the compounding model, already existing in the target languages, has become much more frequently used under the influence of English, following the principle according to which

“in order to develop a structure that is equivalent to the one in the model language, speakers choose among the use patterns that are available in the replica language the one that corresponds most closely to the model, frequently one that until then was more peripheral and of low frequency of use, and they activate it – with the effect that a peripheral pattern gradually turns into the regular equivalent of the model, acquires high frequency of use, and eventually it may emerge as a full-fledged grammatical category” (Heine and Kuteva, 2003: 562).

The key concept that legitimises such an approach is *communication*. People, nowadays, communicate at high speed and, consequently, they make use of structures that are transparent and mutually compatible in the languages that are in contact and more readily inter-translatable (Heine and Kuteva, 2003: 561). The neoclassical compounds offer the advantage of being transparent and readily understandable in the languages that are in contact.

A special type of communication is translation, and, as Romanian and Portuguese terminologies are, in general, *translated* versions of the English model, it is only

natural that, by borrowing compound words from English, the way they are composed is also borrowed and stored in the speakers' mental lexicon. The role of translation in facilitating linguistic borrowing has been lately emphasised and there are authors who state that translation actually creates a 'third code' (Frawley, 1984: 169, Musacchio, 2005: 71).

4.2. A few theoretical remarks on morphological compounding

Compounding, as a word-formation strategy, is widely spread in various languages of the world. It is a well-known fact that Germanic languages (English included) prefer compounding, but its existence in the Romance languages is not surprising. Romanian and Portuguese are languages that favour derivation; nonetheless, an increase in the use of compounding in word-formation has recently been noticed. In Romanian, the tendency to move from a structurally derivative type of language to a composition-based system, under the influence of foreign linguistic models (mainly French and English) was noticed back in the 60s (Dimitrescu, 1962: 397).

Neoclassical/morphological compounds are defined as being made of "formatives of potentially nuclear status as base or affix (...) generally characterized as forms in which lexemes of Latin or Greek origin are combined to form new combinations that may or may not be attested in the original languages" (Bauer, Lieber & Plag, 2013: 441). In other words, morphological compounding is defined as the concatenation of two (or more) roots, generally mediated by a linking vowel (Villalva, 1994: 299). These roots are generally bound forms that do not occur in simple words. For instance, a morphological compound such as *haemogram* (ro. *hemogramă*, pt. *hemograma*) is formed by joining two roots of Greek origin, *hem* 'blood' and *gram* 'register' linked by the vowel *-o-*. This linking element (also called interfix or intermorph) is "a meaningless extension that occurs between the first and the second elements of compounding", "a historical remnant of a no-longer-existent theme vowel" (Lieber & Stekauer, 2009: 13).

Morphological compounding is somehow a 'newcomer' to Romance word formation morphology. The pattern is inherited from:

Ancient Greek: root – *o* – root cf. *insect* (Lat.) – *o* – *fago* (Gr.) >
> Gr. *phágein* 'comer'

Latin: root – *i* – root cf. *insect* (Lat.) – *i* – *voro* (Lat.) >
> Lat. *vorāce* 'which devours'

In Romanian and Portuguese, morphological compounds are often loan words and not the vernacular product of a compounding word formation rules, precisely because they come from scientific and technical fields (Villalva, 1995: 299-300). In fact, the roots that most frequently participate in morphological compounds are

modern adaptations of ancient Greek and Latin roots that became quite popular from the 18th century onwards in producing specialised terminologies (e.g. medicine, computer science, sports etc.). As historical data show, most Romanian and Portuguese morphological compounds were borrowed from French rather than from English:

fr.	<i>gastronomie</i> (1800)	fr.	<i>diachronie</i> (1916)
en.	<i>gastronomy</i> (1814)	en.	<i>diachronic</i> (1927)
pt.	<i>gastronomia</i> (1884)	pt.	<i>diacronia</i> (2 nd half of the 20 th century)
ro.	<i>gastronomie</i> ³	ro.	<i>diacronie</i>

There are also cases in which French probably served as a vehicular language for compounds of English origin, as the following example shows:

en.	<i>neurasthenia</i> (1869)
fr.	<i>neurasthénie</i> (1880)
pt.	<i>neurastenia</i> (1910)
ro.	<i>neuroastenie</i>

Our study is not concerned with the already established neoclassical compounds that are used mainly in specialized languages and that are interpreted as lexical borrowings, but with those compounds in which vernacular roots are used, following one of the two models mentioned above. For instance, in Portuguese, the compound *raticida* “rat killer” has the structure [[rat]_{NR}[i]_{LV}[cid]_{NR}]a, which comprises the root *rat*, coming from the common word *rato* (en. rat), and a neoclassical root *cid* (“to kill”).

Similar models exist in both analysed languages through neoclassical compounding. The difference between the already established and lexicalised (i.e. they are registered by dictionaries) morphological compounds and the recent ones (most of them not yet lexicalised) is the freedom of compounding using not only neoclassical roots, but also vernacular roots. In other words, English does not bring a new compounding pattern into Romanian or Portuguese; however, it boosts the use of a neoclassical pattern that goes beyond the specialised use and it is ever more used in common, every-day language. The Principle of Compositionality, which this type of morphological compounds is based on, allows the speakers of a certain language to infer the meaning of a compound word starting from the

³ In Romanian, it is difficult to establish the date when a word appeared in the language due to the lack of dating information in the Romanian etymological dictionaries. However, we suspect that this kind of neoclassical compounds entered the Romanian lexicon in the late 19th century and the 20th century under the influence of French and English.

meaning of the compounding elements (Villalva, 2008: 29, Veloso & Martins, 2011: 560).

All the theoretical and empirical assumptions mentioned up to this point allow us to formulate the following hypothesis that our study is based on:

In the context of the ever-increasing influence of English in Europe and beyond, the principle of compositionality started to be more productive in the area of morphological compounding. Common language users, with no or little etymological knowledge, are not able to analyse and infer the meaning of well-established morphological compounds such as *hydrocephaly* (ro. *hidrocefalie*, pt. *hidrocefalia*); however, they are able to understand and even create new compounds following similar patterns and using common, everyday language words, such as: ro. *tehno-dependență* or pt. *toxico-dependência*. These compounds are fully analysable and understandable by most Romanian and Portuguese speakers.

4.3. Case study: X-dependence morphological compounds in Romanian and Portuguese

There are various categories of morphological compounds, but in this paper we will focus only on compounds of the type *X-dependence* because they seem to be on an increasing trend in use and frequency both in Romanian and Portuguese.

4.3.1. Why are they morphological compounds?

The *X-dependence* structure is not a natural and predictable construction, neither in Romanian nor in Portuguese. It is a well-known fact that languages belonging to various families exhibit different structural properties as far as compounding is concerned: English, a Germanic language, has right-headed compounds, irrespective of the status of their constituents (roots, such as *breadstick*, or words, such as *roller skater*), whereas Romanian and Portuguese, Romance languages, have right-headed root compounds (e.g. pt. *hidrossolúvel* 'hydrosoluble') and left-headed word compounds (e.g. pt. *bomba-relógio* 'time bomb'). So, in English, forming new right-headed compounds based on a neoclassical, head-final pattern is not surprising since this is the general compounding model that is favoured in the Germanic languages. In Romanian and Portuguese, however, this kind of compounding is both recent and new, since right-headed compounding is not a vernacular word-formation pattern. Quite surprisingly, though, it seems to be providing a structuring model as well.

We should eliminate from the very beginning the idea that compounds such as ro. *toxico-dependență* or pt. *toxicodependência* might be lexical borrowings from

English since English does not use the *dependence* compounding element to express the intended meaning; it uses *addiction* instead. However, the structure that an analysis of *X-addiction* type of compounds provides seems to offer a “productive model” for the target-languages. In English, there is a wide range of the so-called *synthetic compounds*, i.e. compounds whose “head is a deverbal noun and whose dependent member fills an argument position in the head’s valence”: *truck driver, air-cleaner, whale hunting, duck-shooting*, etc. (Haspelmath & Sims, 2010: 249-250). These morphological/synthetic compounds challenge the relationship between composition and derivation because in the claimed source-language, English, as well as in the target languages, Romanian and Portuguese, there is no verbal compound that subsequently allows derivations:

en. <i>drug-addicted</i>	ro. <i>toxico-dependent</i>	pt. <i>tóxico-</i>
<i>dependente</i>		
<i>drug-addiction</i>	<i>toxico-dependență</i>	<i>tóxico-</i>
<i>dependência</i>		
<i>*to drug-addict</i>	<i>*a toxico-depinde</i>	<i>*tóxico-</i>
<i>depender</i>		

4.3.2. Synthetic compounds in Romanian and Portuguese

In Romanian, we have identified a group of such synthetic compounds, some of them already registered by dictionaries (e.g. *farmaco-dependență; drogodependență*); some others are frequently met in specialised texts and newspaper articles, but they do not appear in dictionaries yet (e.g. *toxico-dependent*).

A quick search on the Internet resulted in a bigger amount of such compound forms (www.google.ro, 12.08.2016), as the table below shows:

Compound Adjective	Occurrences	Compound Noun	Occurrences
<i>etanolo-dependent</i>	0	<i>etanolo-dependență</i>	5
<i>fotodependent</i>	1820	<i>foto-dependență</i>	773
<i>heroino-dependent</i>	1	<i>heroino-dependență</i>	0
<i>insulino-dependent</i>	30 700	<i>insulino-dependență</i>	2
<i>medico-dependent</i>	1	<i>medico-dependență</i>	2
<i>psiho-dependent</i>	2	<i>psihodependență</i>	107
<i>socio-dependent</i>	2	<i>socio-dependență</i>	6
<i>tehno-dependent</i>	2	<i>tehno-dependență</i>	7
<i>toxico-dependent</i>	255	<i>toxico-dependență</i>	201

The data from Portuguese are quite similar: very few of these compounds are registered by dictionaries (e.g. *toxicodependente, toxicodependência*), but a lot

more can be spotted in texts and articles on the Internet (www.google.pt, 12.08.2016), as the table below shows:

Compound Adjective	Occurrences	Compound Noun	Occurrences
<i>fotodependente</i>	2430	<i>fotodependência</i>	43
<i>heroinodependente</i>		<i>heroinodependência</i>	
<i>insulinodependente</i>	51 000	<i>insulinodependência</i>	1560
<i>psicodependente</i>	49	<i>psicodependência</i>	461
<i>sociodependente</i>	3 080	<i>sociodependência</i>	346
<i>tecnodependente</i>	1530	<i>tecnodependência</i>	7
<i>toxicodependente</i>	57 400	<i>toxicodependência</i>	608 000

Looking at the results in the tables above, we notice that this type of compounds are created in Romanian and Portuguese mainly to denominate concepts belonging to specialized and semi-specialized domains that are frequently used in everyday languages as well because people come across this type of situations (e.g. ro. *insulino-dependență*, pt. *toxicodependente*) and they have to denominate it. This seems to replicate a strategy that is commonly used in English in order to synthesise prepositional structures:

e.g. *a meaning dependent on context* → *a context-dependent meaning*
business dependent on weather → *weather-dependent business*
plants dependent on sun → *sun-dependent plants*

In English, this is a generalized strategy of creating *X-dependent* or *X-dependence* synthetic compounds, both in specialized and general language. From the data found for Romanian and Portuguese, there seems to be some restrictions on the formation of this type of compounding structures:

- i. the synthetic structures of the *X-dependent* or *X-dependence* type seem to be used in denominating concepts belonging to scientific domains that are also used by laypeople, not only by specialists in the respective fields;
- ii. the first element of the newly-formed compound structures in Romanian and Portuguese has to be a (neoclassical) root used in some other compounds as well that allows the addition of the linking vowel –o– in order to ameliorate the phonotactics (Bauer, Lieber & PLAG, 2013: 456), i.e. the sound sequence in compounds;
- iii. the linking vowel in English synthetic compounding is optional, whereas in Romanian and Portuguese it is compulsory.

This is why, Romanian and Portuguese cannot replicate a synthetic compound such as the one below:

e.g.	en. <i>a meaning dependent on context</i>	<i>a context-dependent meaning</i>
	ro. <i>un sens dependent de context</i>	<i>*un sens contexto-dependent</i>
	pt. <i>um sentido dependente do contexto</i>	<i>*um sentido contexto-dependente</i>

However, the following compounds, which were identified in Romanian, as the table above shows, are possible and acceptable, because the first element of each of them is of Latin or Greek origin, and also appears in other compounds: *medico-dependent*, *insulino-dependent*, *tehno-dependent* etc. And the same is true for Portuguese: the formation of these compounds requires the availability of a neoclassical root (cf. *toxicodependente* vs. **contextodependente*).

Notice, finally, that the compound *foto-dependent* in Romanian has been found to have two meanings depending on the way it was formed: *foto-dependent*₁ has in its composition the Greek root *photos*, ‘light’ and it means “dependent on light”; *foto-dependent*₂ means “addicted to photography”, and it is a clipping compound, with the first element being the shortened version of *fotografie* (en. *photography*). The ambiguity of the Romanian form is not to be found in Portuguese, since the first meaning makes use of the word *sensível* ‘sensitive’ (cf. *fotosensível* ‘photosensitive’ vs. *foto-dependente* ‘photodependent’). This is an interesting example, since it documents the transition from the word borrowing strategy, in Portuguese, to the structure borrowing strategy, in Romanian.

5. Conclusions

In this paper, we have tried to explain the rise in use of a head final type of compounding in Romanian and Portuguese due to the influence of external factors (i.e. the influence of English) over pre-existent, hardly productive, internal language patterns (i.e. word formation rules in neoclassical head-final compounds).

The influence of English has been interpreted as a socio-cultural phenomenon that is justified through key-terms such as: *extensive bilingualism*, *societal multilingualism* and *communication through translation*. The current status of English as the *global language* makes of it the main “exporter” of scientific and technical terms, which also opens up the way to export not only terms, but also structures.

The expansion of the above-mentioned pattern to the common usage of the language in Romanian and Portuguese, thus leading to the creation of new compound words using not only neoclassical roots, but also vernacular words is, in our opinion, the result of two tendencies: the “democratization” of terminologies, in the sense of making them accessible to laypeople, thus transferring specialized

terms and structures to general language; the activation of a “dormant” pattern of the native speakers as a consequence of the lexical borrowings with identical structure from English.

On a more general note, this new, synthetic, compounding pattern contributes to intensifying the tendency of Romanian and Portuguese to move from a structurally-derivative type of language to a compounding-based system. The *X-dependent/dependente* pattern is a model that has been extending over constructions that are normally prepositional, and its main advantages are *linguistic economy* and *semantic transparency*, thus contributing to developing a more international vocabulary. Nevertheless, some of the new compounds are still perceived as striking, which proves that what we are dealing with here are structures that, at the current stage, are more *creative* and less *productive* in Romanian and Portuguese.

In this study, we have proven that there is, indeed, some incipient structural borrowing from English into Romanian and Portuguese that functions in the two target languages under some special restrictions. It is not a genuine, complete structural transfer that might cause typological disruptions in the future since the contact between the languages is casual and mainly resulting in lexical borrowings. In the case of *X-dependence* compounds, English seems to have played the role of “awakening” some already existing compounding patterns in Romanian and Portuguese and increased their frequency in the language.

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