
Lexical Anglicisms in the Era of Economic Globalization: A Sociolinguistic Analysis

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Abstract: The future of a language is characterized by the interaction of different subjects, which favour their expansion, preservation, limitation or even extinction. The number of speakers, communication context and large economic blocs of the superpowers and transnational enterprises, determine the main factors of language change. Despite the interest of the more developed nation states in protecting minority languages, the policies of the supranational self-government cause the evolution or cultural and linguistic loss of communities. Of course English is dominant, but few other languages are gaining a greater relevant role in the global communication. English was the international language of communication in last century, but globalization effects are opening new scenarios. The economic and financial relations among different states have facilitated the spread of the most productive countries. The languages of supranational states have assumed a more prominent value in the international relations. In this respect, the global market has developed an identity, a feeling and a consciousness sense, which have interrupted the absolutely cultural and linguistic hegemony of English. Nevertheless Italian and Spanish languages have been affected by an increase of anglicisms. The written interactions between the two Romance languages with English is often manifested with cases of lexical importation or substitutions. In any case, economic globalization and new technologies have intensified contacts. In one hand, they have spread the language and culture of a few populations. In other hand, they have significantly limited their use to the others. As mentioned above, we consider that the spread of a language mostly depends on three factors: 1) The quantitative sizes of human groups, 2) The economic power of the large states and 3) The area in which a language is stated, as a vehicle of communication. With regard to Romance languages, we understand the reasons because Spanish is growing exponentially. To the large number of Spanish speakers, the Hispanic bloc, in terms of human potential and natural resources, and the function of vehicular language in various communicative contexts.

Keywords: Dissertation, Language Change, Multilingualism, Economic Globalization, IC, Press, Community, Immigration

1. Introduction

It is well known that linguistic diversity is a cultural heritage for society. Each language is linked to the historical and cultural tradition of a people, for which its own language is a distinctive and identifying element. The concept of language preservation is linked to multilingualism, since the knowledge and use of languages other than one's own prevents its loss. This is what international and European institutions have been working for a long time, whose policies are aimed at linguistic preservation and the learning of all languages. In reality, immigration is the phenomenon that most determines linguistic diversity, for which intercultural confrontation involves the knowledge of more

than one language [36]. Nevertheless, the social dynamics of economic globalization produce new trends and values which favour the spread of a few languages compared to all the others. It is appropriate to analyze the processes linked to these phenomena, as they are reflected in the use of language within a community. Languages most exposed to change are those most implicated in social interaction at a global level, where communication (mostly written) differs according to linguistic and extra-linguistic factors. [31, 48-50]. In this respect, the observations that have been made over the years have accurately described the processes of social and linguistic change, by making a significant contribution to the study on the acquisition and preservation of a community or its cultural and linguistic loss. Studies on linguistic variation

have covered all social sectors [25, 29]. The economic and financial sector has for some time been the most analyzed, because of the delicate international situation characterized by the economic, political and social crisis.

Some personalities from the entrepreneurial and culture world believe that the real answer to the problems of 21st century communication is in considering an auxiliary international language (English). In the face of that opinion, we accept that languages meet the social and cultural needs of social groups, in respect and protect the linguistic and cultural diversity of people. However, economic globalization favours a supranational horizon conditioned by a limited number of languages but not exclusive to one. Based on current reports on the near future of languages, it is assumed that in the coming decades no language will occupy the absolute hegemonic position reached English at the end of the last century. Today the social situation is less regulated: other supranational languages such as Mandarin, Hindi-Urdu, Spanish, Arabic and Russian are going to curtail the monopoly of English [17].

To the extent that the globalized world poses a challenge to increasing interdependence between all languages, with the explicit and general benefit of some of them, globalization entails the danger of acculturation and linguistic substitution. The increase in capital, goods and natural persons triggers a worldwide cultural and linguistic process that transcends the communicative and popular nature of its native groups. The English language has long ceased to belong to a particular human group and it is open in the present and near future to the transfer of all those who decide to use it.

D. Crystal has reported that for “English global” the standard English variety is almost always understood, by the characteristics that identify its common traits [6]. However, increasing attention is being paid to the regional characteristics that differentiate the different areas of the English-speaking world. For example, today we normally talk about variants of British English (American, Australian, South African, Indian...) and accumulate studies on the distinctive way in which these varieties handle pronunciation, spelling, syntax, the vocabulary and structure of speech [20]. Much of the differences reside in the lexicological and lexicographic area, because it is the language section most closely linked to cultural identity¹.

2. The Societal Phenomenon of Multilingualism

The language challenges facing us in the near future are those linked to the consolidation of all languages. The Romance languages, in particular Italian and Spanish, are called to respond to the needs of global society, which promotes the use of anglicism [2, 11, 13, 15, 32-35, 41]. The phenomenon of bilingualism and social multilingualism has spread rapidly over the years. The media and human mobility

have been the main factors that have led to the spread of different cultures and languages. The ability to communicate with the help of Information and Communication Technologies, and the ease of movement within and outside national borders have multiplied contacts and fostered multilingualism.

The impact of one or more different languages and cultures on a society produces a change in the social function of the native language. A society acquires values that other languages embody and convey, as it grows and integrates other members. Romance languages are profoundly influenced by the Anglo-American language, circumstance that can be found in the printing press, such as the Italian and Spanish ones, where loans and lexical anglicisms abound. The availability of corpora of Italian and Spanish newspapers allows us to monitor the evolution in the printing of the different lexical varieties that we import from English, to better understand the quantitative dimension of that phenomenon. Sixty newspapers and economic inserts of the most popular newspapers and economic supplements in Italy and Spain were analyzed, between 2012 and 2014. It has been found that the influence of English in the printing press of the two social contexts is important, although the analysis data do not indicate a drastic change in the structures of these two Romance languages. The number of occurrences of lexical anglicisms in the Italian context exceeded the Spanish by approximately three times (2,987 IT vs 912 ES). This indicates Italian language (more than Spanish) is interested in the use of English, since it is a society open to Anglo-American culture [5].

The Italian and Spanish societies, two distinct communities, are made up of interdependent and interrelated social groups, and affected by a widespread phenomenon that varies within them. The readers of economic newspapers include medium-high social classes: they are the subjects involved in the process of assimilation and dissemination of the different lexical types coming from the English, within the economic sociolect.

2.1. Language Interference in the Economic and Financial Newspapers

World economic and commercial activities are undoubtedly reflected in communication, which has become increasingly enriched by the terms of the economic sociolect. That special variety differs from the common language by the use of terms, expressions and phrases that refer to concepts that are usually not used in the common language. Thus, we discover the presence of neologisms of the economic sociolect also in the common language, so that today the terms appearing in the economic-financial texts (quantitatively more numerous than the generals) are known by a wider audience than in the past [3, 44].

The analysis of the economic sociolect has marked some substantial differences in the distinction between economy and finance; commercial activity and financial trade; stock exchange and financial markets [21]. In any case, the economic sociolect (or better speaking “technolect”) is a

¹ The distinctive lexicons of regional dictionaries describe it very well.

complex social variety, difficult to define. The independent variables (geographical, social and situational) and the dependent variables (phonological, syntactic, lexical and pragmatic-textual) of the economic sociolect are discontinuous. The social and linguistic component alternates with the iconic and graphic component linked to it, as distinctive elements that orient the reader on a particular interest [12].

Within the economic sociolect there are varieties linked to the social situation, to the generational leap and to the social and cultural class of reference. In this way the language used depends on the reference, but the technical term maintains its meaning even in different economic and social situations [24, 26-28].

However, the terminology used to inform users of economic and financial issues is produced by industry specialists who regulate communication through the use of certain terms and phrases (most imported from the United States), according to the hearing to which the information is addressed. The communication of the economic and financial sector is differentiated between specialists, and between specialists and unskilled users [21]. On the one hand, the variety has a large number of anglicisms, as well as graphics and icons. The author has a considerable knowledge of the discipline. On the other hand, the frequent Anglo-American terms are included in discursive period too. The specialist informs the inexperienced recipient with forms and methods of dissemination, with reference to common experiences, in order to introduce technicalities as if they were of common use.

The lexicon of the journalistic text is a key factor in the variation of sociolect. The economic sociolect of the press is made up of specialized terms and common expressions, so that the first ones alternate or occasionally substitute the general terms of a specialized discourse. The economic sociolect, therefore, influences the common language, but differs from the common language and from any other sociolect, due to the specific terminology derived from a “global register” of imports and substitutions of English [1, 18, 19, 44, 45].

2.2. Multilingualism Effects on a Speech Community

As for speech community, the social stratification of the language involves different social groups. They share communication restrictions and norms of social behaviour [23, 30, 51]. A community follows the common linguistic norms, in a defined socio-geographical area [12]. Furthermore, it is characterized by a common feeling of belonging. Language, understood as a social link, becomes an instrument of aggregation, identification and belonging to the group. Speech community interprets social multilingualism when it integrates a variety of different languages (and cultures). Their coexistence is all the stronger, the greater the bond between the different social groups of the territory. Each host of society has a linguistic and cultural openness that differs from the other, depending on the interest and identification with the other group. Thus, we talk

about of “convergence”, “no convergence” or linguistic “divergence” when members of social groups share, do not share or share in part the norms of social behaviour [13]. On the one hand, converging action implies the choice of the interlocutors to speak one language in common or alternate more than one, in different phases of a discourse. On the other hand, actions of no convergence and divergence involves the use of two languages in the same proposition, for which some phonological, syntactic or lexical elements of one language transfer to the other, giving rise to a mixed grammatical structure [47]. Linguistic loans and anglicism are the new elements, which differ in terms of linguistic integration and social acceptance (loan), no integration (or linguistic substitution) and no social acceptance (anglicism) [9, 10, 14, 16].

2.3. The Impact of Lexical Anglicisms on the Italian and Spanish Economic Press

The development of the research, described in the past article, showed the lexical transfer process of anglicisms (code-switching and calque), through adaptation linguistic and adoption social cases [43]. From a sociolinguistic prospective, the lexical analysis on the samples indicated in detail the impact of the lexical anglicisms on the Italian and Spanish economic newspapers. The data also made it possible compare the two social contexts, from which were determined the situations of import and lexical substitution.

Table 1. Frequency of the different lexical types of code-switching and lexical calque, depending on the Italian and Spanish economic press.

Lexical Anglicisms	Total	%
Code-switching	3,810	97.72
Lexical calque	89	2.28
TOTAL	3,899	100

The results obtained indicated a clear supremacy of code-switching (97.72%) on lexical calque (2.28%). It demonstrates the vocation of Italian and Spanish journalism to the use of English voices with respect to their adaptation (or translation) [5].

Table 2. Total of occurrences and percentages of the lexical anglicisms in the Italian and Spanish economic press.

Working Sample	n. of anglicisms	% of anglicisms
Italian economic press	2,987	76.61
Spanish economic press	912	23.39
TOTAL	3,899	100

Furthermore, within the two social contexts it was noted that in the Italian economic periodicals the percentage of anglicisms (76.61%) was significantly greater than the number of Spanish counterparts (23.39%). It is a very wide margin that gives the measure of the attractive force of Anglo-American culture and civilization in Italy, more than in Spain. The differences in the percentages of lexical calque between the two social contexts were insignificant. Their values were very low, for which is noted the low propensity of Italian and Spanish societies to adapt, in favour of accepting of the American variety of economic English [5].

3. Economic Globalization and the Linguistic and Cultural Diversity of People

Economic globalization is not a new phenomenon in the history of humanity, as social relations have succeeded in the course of history with respect for other cultures, customs and religions, and economic and political interests [46]. However, the most recent globalization has different characteristics from previous ones. Communication is being profoundly affected by the digital revolution, which affects the economy and finance more than any other sector. Globalization consists of an economic component, a cultural component and a social component. Nevertheless, they do not have the same weight in real life, due to the importance given to the economy, which dominates and alters field relations [43]. Globalization is also marked a) by the absolute freedom of the movement of money across borders; b) by the relative freedom of the movements of goods and services between nations; c) by the freedom of persons. Although limited in many cases, migration has assumed enormous proportions, surpassing all forecasts². Immigration is therefore part of globalization.

Linguistic diversity represents the identity and cultural heritage of peoples who express and share their cultures as a common good. The protection of linguistic diversity is assigned to the "European Federation of National Institutions for Language" (ENFIL), which is within the EU. It coordinates the main national language institutions of the Member States of the European Union. A few more years before its establishment³, the EU had already decided on the development and protection of less widely used cultural and linguistic areas in Europe [8]. The growing preference for the use of the English language within the EU institutions has tended to be exclusive. In the following years, ENFIL has tried to put a stop to cultural globalization and anglicization. For this purpose, the actions of the UN and UNESCO⁴ have been incisive in preserving the linguistic and cultural diversity of all peoples of the world. "International Year of Languages" was celebrated in 2008 and since February 2000, "International Mother Language Day" is celebrated every year to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism. It is possible, therefore, that the policies of supranational states, of protection and cultural promotion, give balance to the continuous diffusion of English, for the preservation of the linguistic and cultural diversity of peoples [38-40, 42].

Globalization and diversity are terms which, as incredible as it may seem, can be practically reconciled based on the principle that linguistic and cultural diversity is a world heritage of humanity. A very reliable hypothesis is that

migration increases social contacts. They could give rise to new mixed forms of culture, language and social organization, at the expense of cultural uniformity.

D. Graddol carried out a considerable study, with excessively dramatic outlines on the future of world languages. The British linguist classified the most popular languages of the near future, while showing an excessively pessimistic forecast in the projection of the extinction of minority languages. From the economic and demographic evolution and the potential linguistic substitution, the following hierarchical stratification would occur in 2050;

- a) The big languages (Chinese, Hindi/Urdu, English, Spanish and Arabic);
- b) Regional languages. The languages of major trade blocs (Arabic, English, Chinese, Malay, Russian and Spanish);
- c) National languages. Around 90 languages serve over 220 nation states;
- d) The remainder of the world's 1000 or less languages with varying degrees of official recognition [17].

In a somewhat different way, it is assumed that in the 21st century these languages will occupy a primary but non-exclusive position, as was the case for the English language in the last century. Mandarin, Arabic, Hindi-Urdu, Russian and Spanish will be equivalent to English in certain areas of human life (Web, art, culture, sport, music, cooking, sport, religion) but secondary in other sectors of human activity (economy, finance, medicine, ICT...). That dynamism will produce greater pluralism in the upper layer and the significant loss of thousands of idioms in the lower layer. In terms of percentage, it is also assumed that 50% of minority languages will not survive the 21st century. In any case, the Spanish language will grow exponentially [4, 22, 32-34, 37, 41], while the fate of the Italian language will be different: although it is on the rise, its expansion will be contained [6, 7, 15, 51].

4. Conclusions

In a society dominated by the economy, global market strategies lead to unprecedented coexistence with other sectors, focusing on reconciling the needs of different stratified social groups. The digital revolution, which has facilitated global interconnections, has not deprived the press of the authoritative role of a means of social communication in the era of economic globalisation. Economics newspapers and magazines promote the dissemination of English culture and language. In a situation of social confrontation in the economic field between Italy and Spain, it is found that the Italian society is more influenced than the Spanish society, on the basis of a greater use of the different types of lexical anglicisms found in Italian economic newspapers than the Spanish equivalents.

From the point of view of variationist sociolinguistics, the variants of the linguistic variables in the selected samples indicate the real impact of lexical anglicisms on Italian and Spanish economic newspapers and inserts. The use of statistical calculation has also refuted the non-random and

2 From 1990 to 2017, the number of migrants in the world reached 258 million. Source: United Nations – Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International migration report 2017.

3 ENFIL was founded in Stockholm in 2003.

4 UNESCO General Conference - 33rd Session, Paris, 3 - 21 October 2005.

significant presence of the imported and non-integrated (or partially integrated) Anglo-American terms in the two social contexts. It must be said that the propensity to use large amounts of English is determined by the social factors of economic globalization and Anglo-American acculturation.

The phenomenon of economic globalization increases social contacts that produce convergence, non-convergence or cultural and linguistic divergence, in manifestations of social acceptance or rejection. Its evolution could give rise to new social and structural mixed forms that would stem the process of cultural homogenization and linguistic supremacy.

The most authoritative surveys outline for the near future a picture of a limited number of languages that will occupy prominent levels in mass communication. In this study it is assumed that English will remain the dominant language in the economic sciences, as well as in the natural, medical and computer sciences. It will be followed by Mandarin, Arabic, Hindi-Urdu, Russian and Spanish which will gain greater equivalence in social and human sciences. The transition from the absolute dominance of English to a few languages hegemony will produce greater pluralism in the upper layer. At the same time, it will result in the loss of thousands of idioms in the lower layer and in less linguistic and cultural diversity.

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