

THE CATCHINESS OF CODE-SWITCHING: PLURILINGUALISM IN *CATCHY* (A ROMANIAN WOMEN'S E-ZINE)

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ABSTRACT. *The Catchiness of Code-Switching: Plurilingualism in Catchy (A Romanian Women's E-Zine).* This case study investigates code-switching as a salient feature of women's online magazines. The corpus is made up of textual material posted on *catchy.ro*, self-proclaimed "the only premium-luxury-e-zine in Romania which privileges editorial content". In the first instance, Daniela Hăisan will look into the plurilingualism which characterises the structure and site map of the online magazine, and then into the plurilingualism which singularises the (feature) articles as narratives about identity, filtered through subjective experiences of everyday life. Four major criteria are taken into account when analysing the corpus: visual embeddedness, preferred embedded language(s), types of code-switching (tag-switching, inter-sentential switching, and intra-sentential switching), and morphology of the embedded language. The main conclusions are that code-switching is used in order to make a statement about the writer's identity while fostering a rapport with the target group of readers, and that it is less a sign of language decline as it is of a gradual movement towards informality.

Keywords: *code-switching, (women's) e-zine, discourse analysis*

REZUMAT. *Caracterul proliferant al schimbării de cod: Plurilingvismul din Catchy (o revistă românească online pentru femei).* Prezentul studiu de caz investighează schimbarea de cod ca trăsătură distinctivă a revistelor online pentru

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femei. Corpusul este alcătuit din texte postate pe *catchy.ro*, autoproclamată “singura revistă online românească premium-luxury în care conținutul editorial este primul cel prețuit”. Într-o primă instanță, vom analiza plurilingvismul care caracterizează structura și harta site-ului revistei, apoi plurilingvismul care particularizează articolele și editorialele ca narațiuni despre identitate, filtrate prin experiențele subiective ale vieții de zi cu zi. Patru criterii majore sunt luate în considerare în analiza corpusului: integrarea grafică a elementelor din limba engleză, limba/limbile secundare preferate, tipuri de schimbare de cod (tipul *tag*, intra- și inter-propoziționale) și aspecte morfologice ale limbii secundare. Principalele concluzii privesc folosirea schimbării de cod ca declarație și afirmare a identității scriitorului online dar și ca modalitate de a stabili o relație de afinitate cu grupul-țintă de cititori; schimbarea de cod este interpretată nu atât ca simptom al deteriorării limbii, cât mai ales al unei deplasări treptate către registrul informal.

Cuvinte-cheie: schimbare de cod, revistă online (pentru femei), analiza discursului

Introduction

The object of the present paper is, broadly speaking, code-switching within the (computer-mediated) discourse of popular culture. While a vast amount of research has been done on spoken code-switching, this case study investigates the proliferation of anglicisms in women’s e-writing based on a corpus of a few hundred feature articles in a Romanian online magazine, *Catchy*. The more and more common Romanian/English code-switching is seen as a (perfectly explicable) trend in online communication rather than a threat to the Romanian language, and as a way for writers to shape self-identity while also strengthening group identity.

The choice of a topic which lies at the confluence of discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, and psycholinguistics naturally entails a discussion of a variety of issues such as plurilingualism, code-mixing (here, used interchangeably with *code-switching*), e-writing, (women’s) language, etc., which will be succinctly addressed in what follows. This, however, being a case study rather than a fully-fledged research scheme, it will refer to the corpus at hand as illustrative of a more general linguistic phenomenon, thus aiming to provide a complement to previous research on Romanian/English code-switching, which focused mainly on the impact of English on Romanian (Zafiu 2001; Cocu 2016), on the speech of Romanian immigrants in English-speaking countries (Ene 2001; Bancu 2013, 2014), or on the code-switching patterns of Romanian/English bilinguals born and living in Romania (Greavu 2022).

The study relies on a recent (2015–2021) sample of posts (selected on account of pertinence and representativity of women's language and code-switching at the same) retrievable from <https://www.catchy.ro/>, which are subject to qualitative and (occasionally) quantitative examination. The main research questions have to do with the form and function of Romanian/English code-switching in women's magazines. How visible are linguistic varieties in the over-all text? What types of code-switching are used? What types of words are being code-switched? To what extent are practices like these born of a real need due to a gap in the Romanian lexicon? How do the *Catchy* writers'/editors' linguistic practices reflect and impact issues like language and social change?

1. Code-Switching as Part and Parcel of Online Plurilingualism

Plurilingual is generally employed to describe someone who speaks several languages (more than three, advisably, otherwise the right term is *bilingual* or *trilingual*), while *multilingual* can refer to territories, social groups or types of media in which several languages coexist – this assumption, however, does not change the fact that they may at times be used interchangeably. For Rainier Grutman, for instance, *multilingualism* “evokes the co-presence of two or more languages (in a given society, text or individual)” (Grutman 2001, 157). What is more, “the presence of a single loanword can theoretically be considered a minimal requirement for a text to be identified as multilingual” (158). The co-presence of languages may, if used consistently, lead to lexical interference in the form of borrowings, calques, semantic extensions, or may simply occur as code-switching.

In linguistics, *code-switching*, *style-shifting*, or *language alternation* is the practice of moving back and forth between two different languages, or between two different dialects or registers of one and the same language. Known to occur far more often in conversation than in writing, code-switching has, in time, turned into one of the most significant markers of online writing. Online multilingualism/plurilingualism is not only about websites translated into several languages; it is increasingly about individuals indulging in code-mixing when they text, write emails, or submit a blog post.

The general premise of code-switching is that there is always one dominant, preferred language—which Carol Myers-Scotton (2006, 244) likes to call *matrix language*—which sets the morphosyntactic frame of the bilingual clause and consequently dictates word-order and influences the choice of inflections. The other language—the *embedded language*, in Myers-Scotton's terms—simply supplies some content words (nouns, adjectives, verbs) or tag phrases; it is, therefore, ‘tolerated’ by the matrix language: sometimes functional,

and sometimes purely ornamental. In our case study, the matrix language is Romanian, while English fulfils the role of a secondary, embedded language (occasionally contrasted with French).

Current research normally takes into account three types of code-switching (see Poplack 1980; Romaine 1995):

- 1) tag switching (the insertion of an embedded language tag in an utterance which is entirely phrased in the matrix language, without syntactic rule violation)
- 2) inter-sentential switching (the alternation between two languages, which occurs at sentence boundaries, with one sentence in the matrix language and then the next in the embedded language)
- 3) intra-sentential switching (the switching that occurs inside the same clause or sentence).

There are several functions code-switching performs. As inventoried by William B. Gudykunst (2004), they range from hiding fluency or memory problems in the second(ary) language to exerting control, marking the passage from informal/casual situations to a more formal/professional context, announcing specific identities, aligning speakers with others in specific situations, and facilitating interpersonal relationships. As for the reasons to switch codes, they are even more numerous and diverse (e.g. they are useful when one is trying to change the topic, quote somebody, express solidarity or gratitude, clarify specific concepts, express group identity or fit in, etc.). As far as our corpus is concerned, intra-sentential switching appears to be the most common, and one of the main functions it fulfils is that of constructing a specific identity of/for the Romanian consumer of women's genres such as online magazines.

2. Women's Language

The subtle, peripheral, yet steady process of identity construction in an ever-shifting digital culture has already been scrutinised by many researchers. Sherry Turkle, among others, relies on metaphor to sum up the stupendous reverberations the Internet has had around the world and on our sense of self:

At one level, the computer is a tool. It helps us write, keep track of our accounts, and communicate with others. Beyond this, the computer offers us both new models of mind and a new medium on which to project our ideas and fantasies. Most recently, the computer has become even more than tool and mirror: we are able to step through the looking glass. We are learning to live in virtual worlds (Turkle 1997, 9).

For Turkle, these new models of mind have led to a flexible, fragmentary self, lacking stability and changing constantly due to a different kind of communication between its parts.

Gender, although socially and discursively constructed rather than genetically inherited, is usually a dependable parameter when it comes to group identity delimitation and delineation. The strict polarity of masculine vs. feminine might have long fallen out of fashion but the issue of gender will probably never become obsolete. Judith Butler, who writes that “gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time – an identity instituted through a *stylized repetition of acts*” (Butler 1988, 519), provides a useful insight into identity construction, which needs to be constantly negotiated (with oneself as well as among one’s fellows).

Defined in the specialised literature as both “language restricted in use to women and language descriptive of women alone” (Lakoff 1973, 48), women’s language has long been seen as working against women’s identity. The (in)famous differences pointed out by Lakoff (1973) in the choice and frequency of lexical items (e.g. women’s use of precise colour terms and of evaluative adjectives; the reluctance to use swear words) and pragma-discursive features (e.g. tags, indirectness, lack of assertiveness) are still (partially) valid today. Mulac and Lundell (1995) analysed descriptive essays written by college students in terms of “male language variables” (such as judgmental adjectives and elliptical sentences) and “female language variables” (for example, references to emotion and hedge words), with a 75% rate of inferring the identity of the writer. Baron (2008) conducted a similar experiment and found out that “[i]f males were more likely to use contractions, females were the prime users of emoticons” (65).

Women’s language is often described as a language of intimacy. Bullock and Toribio (2009, 104), while evoking John J. Gumperz’ (1976) semantic approach to code-switching, speak about a *we-code* (minority language, commonly associated with in-group activities, and informality) versus a *they-code* (majority language, associated with formal speech).

Women’s writing still relies a lot on the subjective experiences of ordinary life; it is there that the narrative of the self is most vividly formulated; it is there that the reflexive positioning of the self is most transparent – which is why (online) women’s magazines make up a highly convenient corpus for analysing code-switching as a means of self-assertiveness but also of group assertiveness.

3. The Corpus

Catchy.ro, which provides the primary source data we will be relying upon in what follows, recommends itself as “the only Romanian premium-luxury magazine online in which editorial content comes first, out of respect for

you, our readers”². It also claims to focus on essential topics³ and to invite both sexes to pitch in, in a provocative yet stridency-free manner⁴.

The e-zine (started in 2010) has a variety of ‘columns’ which range from politics to charity and from movie recommendations to fashion. It also contains numerous personal and lifestyle entries, which usually blend in the commercial content.

While all column titles (and sometimes article titles, too) are in English, this is not a bilingual site properly speaking, as it does not provide articles in both languages: Romanian and English. The online publication is thus introduced as a “Romanian” magazine (as far as the blurb says), it displays English titles throughout the website, and the editorial content allows English words and phrases on an *ad libitum* basis to be grafted on a basically Romanian blueprint. Here and there, all sorts of messages flash on the screen, with an obvious conative function (e.g. “Hi, it is July 31st 2022. Have a nice evening!” or “Subscribe to our newsletter!”), meant to create a friendly, familiar environment computer literate readers can enjoy. The website not only practises code-switching, it practically flaunts it.

The ‘checkered’ quality of the interface is as refreshing as it is puzzling. The readers’ expectations of finding a well-written English text behind the English title that caught their eye are accordingly baffled by the discovery of a piece of writing barely tinged with Englishness. On the other hand, readers with only an approximate knowledge of English might be dissuaded from reading further.

The title of the e-zine (*Catchy*), together with its subtitle (*like a woman*) points explicitly to women as target readers. The features of the ideal target reader can be inferred from a special section of the website which advertises jobs and which lists the qualities of the project manager the *Catchy.ro* team (made up exclusively of women) are seeking: “studii superioare” [higher education], “experiență, preferabil online” [work experience, preferably online], English proficiency, and familiarity with the idiosyncrasies of the contemporary 30+ woman as well as with luxury brands on the Romanian market. The profile of the *Catchy* reader is thus a knowledgeable, computer-literate, anglophone woman, a young yet mature professional. The very polysemy of *catchy* is reflected in both the interface and the editorial content: appealing and easily remembered pictures and topics, on the one hand, but also potentially deceptive headlines and occasionally spasmodic texts (given the linguistic indeterminacy and intermittence).

There are seven different thematic sections (aesthetics, culture, social life, domestic life), with a variable number of sub-sections, some of which with mantra-like English titles:

² “Singura revistă online românească premium-luxury în care conținutul editorial este primul cel prețuit, din respect pentru voi, cititorii noștri.”

³ “Noi povestim doar despre lucrurile care contează.”

⁴ “Provocator, dar fără stridențe.”

- 1) *Look at me* (sub-sections: *Beauty, Fashion, Shopping Spree*)
- 2) *Live with me* (sub-sections: *Deco, Dine & Wine, Go Green, Healthy You, Naturally Savvy*)
- 3) *Love me* (sub-sections: *Help me!, Men Talk, Talk Tabu, Yes or No*)
- 4) *Catchy Zone* (sub-sections: *Arts & Entertainment, Astro, Cars & Gadgets, Handpicked News, Read me, Start up, Travel*)
- 5) *Catchy W* (sub-sections: *Editor's Picks, Nitty-Gritty, The Happiness Project, Women R Us*)
- 6) *Catchy Events*
- 7) *World*.

Quantitatively, the e-zine offers compelling data: over 20,000 articles posted since 2010; 36 guest writers (personalities like journalist Rodica Culcer, feminist philosopher Mihaela Miroiu, editorialist Lelia Munteanu, translator and film critic Irina Nistor, poet Florin Iaru, translator and prose writer Radu Paraschivescu, theatre and film director Alexandru Tocilescu, etc.); 222 senior contributors; 298 junior contributors.

As expected, digital advertising (pop-up ads and native ads included) is profuse; luxury items are crucial in delineating the model of femininity the magazine proposes, as they promote consumerism under the guise of self-improvement. The fact that *Look at me* is placed first is definitely not at random, but in keeping with the 'makeover' feature, the infallible gimmick in every women's magazine. It is, again, a matter of strengthening group identity:

The seductiveness of this formula, in which an ordinary reader is transformed by professional attention to her clothes, hair and make-up, lies in its ability to play both on our desire ('I could look that good') and our guilt ('why don't I look that good?'). It goes to the heart of a powerful fantasy for women in consumerist cultures, namely that such surface alterations as losing weight or cutting your hair will somehow transform your whole life and personality.

This fantasy—perfectly encapsulated in the women's magazine cliché of the 'new you'—is one most men do not seem to share (Cameron 1995, 173).

Other common themes, like relationships, travel, abuse, health, sexuality, motherhood, or movies, also deal with issues the target readers can become interested in and identify themselves with, but they get significantly less editorial and ad space.

Nevertheless, the 'personal' texts are the ones forming the bedrock of the magazine, turning into an arena for self-expression. Readers are invited to contribute to the e-zine and personal experience is relied upon in order to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant topics. As noted by Ballaster et al.

(1991, 87–88), a crucial feature of women’s magazines is the reader’s contributions in the form of letters and true-life stories, because women’s magazines assume a shared experience, a commonality between women. Personalised, relatable language, and the focus on the self is what characterizes these stories which often take the form of some sort of group therapy.

4. Corpus Analysis

Our corpus was both ‘manually’ and ‘automatically’ handled, the feature articles between 2015 and 2021 being scrutinised and selected (17 out of 14,000) in accordance with a significant occurrence of code-switching. In analysing the proposed selection, we resorted to four main criteria, namely:

- 1) visual embeddedness
- 2) preferred embedded language(s)
- 3) types of code-switching
- 4) morphology of the embedded language.

4.1. Visual Embeddedness

We already highlighted the fact that code-switching is so ostentatious on *Catchy.ro* that readers cannot but be struck by it as soon they reach the magazine’s main page, and this is due to the fact that the main titles are in English, not in Romanian. This does not mean, however, that the words or phrases from a language other than Romanian (usually, English) are always graphically marked (by italics, for instance). In fact, in about 45% of the cases, they are unmarked. Or, as Rainier Grutman rightly observed, “[t]he impact (rhetorical, stylistic, etc.) of linguistic varieties depends as much on the ways in which they are visually embedded in the over-all text as on the values attached to them in extra-textual (i.e. real) society” (Grutman 2001, 158). The 45% of the English elements which are not italicised are highly significant, as they put code-mixing forward as a perfectly acceptable phenomenon, with English terms used not as coherence-disrupting exoticisms, but rather as natural interferences in the Romanian text, as if they had already been adopted as such by the matrix language. Here are two such examples⁵ (*penny universities* and *skin care*) in their respective contexts. As neither *penny universities* nor *skin care* is italicised in the ‘original’ text, we reproduce them as such:

⁵ All the examples (E1–E17) are included in the Appendix, at the end of the paper, together with the exact title of the articles they were extracted from, the title of the sub-section they were published in, the author of the article and the date.

E1: ...unele locuri percepeau o taxă de un penny la intrare, ceea ce a dus și la o poreclă pentru ele – penny universities, recunoscându-li-se funcția educativă. [...some of those coffee shops used to charge an entrance fee, which earned them a nickname – *penny universities*, thus acknowledging their educational function.]⁶

E2: ...am stat ore în șir la soare uitând de SPF doar pentru că momentul mi se părea mult mai important decât acel aspect de skin care. [I stayed in the sun for hours on end, forgetting about SPF just because that particular moment seemed to me much more important than the *skin care* aspect.]

Other recurring words which are never italicised are *trend* and *trendy*. *Trend*, for example, which occurs in 385 texts, is never in italics.

Once quotations were left out, we were still able to find some anglicisms written between inverted commas, too few to count, statistically (e.g. *mindfulness*, *update*, *for fun*), all the more so as some of them were used ironically.

Paradoxically, even if English words are almost never explained (an explanation, definition or paraphrase would make them stand out graphically, by means of parentheses, dashes or footnotes), they are sometimes used to explain terms in other languages, like Turkish (v. *imaret*⁷) or even a Romanian term which is meant as a mocking calque of an English one (*bulion*⁸ for *bullying*), on account of phonetic similarity.

E3: Există și varianta *imaret*-urilor, un fel de *soup kitchens*, multe făcând parte din așezăminte religioase. [You could also consider the *imarets* as an alternative, a kind of *soup kitchens*, many of which belonging to religious settlements.]

E4: ...o colegă, hater-iță de-a mea, a făcut bulion cu mine (adică bullying) cum că am ochii grași. [...a colleague, hater of mine, *bulion*-ed me (meaning she bullied me) on account of having fat eyes.]

Only exceptionally are linguistic interferences translated, and then, it is the editor, not the author, who clarifies the meaning, as in the following example:

E5: ...se știe că un anume Boulanger a deschis un stabiliment în 1765 unde vindea supe (*stock/bouillon*) considerate *restorative* – hence the name of the restaurant. (n. red: vindecătoare – iată deci de unde vine

⁶ Literal back-translation between brackets is always mine.

⁷ *Imaret* refers to a public soup kitchen built throughout the Ottoman Empire from the 14th to the 19th centuries, which could be part of a larger complex serving as hospice for pilgrims or travellers (see Singer 2004).

⁸ Literally, *bulion* (from French *bouillon*) is either broth or tomato sauce.

numele restaurant). [...it is well-known that one Boulanger opened an establishment in 1765 where he sold soups (*stock/bouillon*) considered *restorative* – hence the name of the restaurant. (editor’s note: healing – hence the name of the restaurant).]

4.2. Preferred Embedded Language(s)

Even if Romanian/English code-switching is the primary concern of the present paper, we cannot overlook the fact that English is not the only embedded language present in the corpus. French, Spanish, and Latin are also used, if sparingly. Given that the influence of French on Romanian has had centuries to decant and stabilise, interspersing texts (whether oral or written) with French is felt as natural, scholarly, classy, whereas English elements are still perceived as somehow forced, and often informal. *Je ne sais quoi* appears quite a few times in the corpus without italics, just like the recurring *haute-couturier* and *bouclé*. As expected, most French words are found in articles about cuisine, fashion, decoration, and furniture, and are not really necessary; they are used either for local colour or in order to flabbergast readers with a superior kind of knowledge or professionalism. Making a slalom between English and French is also common.

E6: Câteva lămpi sunt *blue toile*⁹ (le ador, *à propos*). [...] E o babilonie această încăpere [...], un *bric-à-brac* cu oarece sens și stil. [A few of the lamps are blue canvas (I adore them, by the way). [...] This room is the ultimate chaos [...], a jumble of things with barely a drop of meaning and style.]

Mention must be made of the fact that even though some of the French words have long been assimilated into the Romanian language and acquired a Romanian spelling (e.g. *apropo* for *à propos*; *boucle* for *bouclé*), the authors quoted above seem to favour the French orthography. This is obviously a matter of deliberate choice, intended to make a statement about the power of multilingualism as a prerogative of modern-day professionals.

4.3. Types of Code-Switching

Of the three known types of code-mixing, intersentential switching is the least common. The example below is one of the very few we could find in

⁹ *Toile* is the French word for fabric, linen cloth, or canvas. The term entered the English language in the 12th century but many modern-day dictionaries do not mention it anymore. Nowadays, it is commonly used to refer to the original design aesthetic of the fabric manufactured in the town of Jouy-en-Josas (*toile de Jouy* – linen printed with romantic, pastoral patterns in a single colour – usually blue, black, or red), in the suburbs of Paris, from 1760 until 1821 (see also Gril-Mariotte 2015).

hundreds of posts on *catchy.ro*. The switch to English makes sense in the context, as it is meant to draw attention to an interesting fact: the text speaks about eating out in Pompeii, the city destroyed in the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in AD 79, but the way they used to bake bread back then clearly indicates a pizza ancestor:

E7: ...pâinea se cocea cu rozmarin, usuturoi, ulei de măslina, brânză și anchois, în cuptor cu lemne; (*wait a minute, did somebody say pizza?*)
 [...bread used to be baked with rosemary, garlic, olive oil, cheese and anchovy, in a wood-fire oven; (*wait a minute, did somebody say pizza?*)]

Tag-switching is much better represented than intersentential switching in the given corpus (one instance occurring as a sequel to one of the examples already mentioned above):

E4: ...o colegă, hater-iță de-a mea, a făcut bulion cu mine (adică bullying) cum că am ochii grași. I mean, Ochii grași?! Ochii???? [...a colleague of mine, who hated me, *bulion*-ed me (meaning she bullied me) on account of having fat eyes. I mean, fat eyes?! Eyes????]

The main functions tag-switching fulfills in our corpus actually have to do with the introduction of supplemental information, which is usually an expression of a particular emotional reaction.

I mean, in the example above, which insinuates itself into the text (given its regular font), is paradoxically more striking than any other type of typographical emphasis. It is used not so much for clarification as to express outrage at the very act of bullying as well as at the absurd reason which triggered it.

Speaking of which, in the next example, has the purpose of introducing parenthetical information, whereas *clotted cream* is probably used for lack of an exact equivalent in Romanian (or is it because the text addresses women, who are supposed to be food aficionados?):

E8: ...se spune că sultanul Ahmed al III-lea [...] își trimitea vizirul [...] pe străzi, să îi aducă zilnic dulciurile preferate. *Speaking of which*, trebuie să spun că existau magazine ce vindeau cofeturi cu *clotted cream*. [...they say sultan Ahmed III used to send his vizier to go out and bring him his favourite sweets on a daily basis. *Speaking of which*, I have to say they had shops which sold *clotted cream* confectionery.]

Wrong, on the other hand, delivers a verdict at the end of a long paragraph bantering poor writers.

E9: Tu nu ai nevoie să citești, pentru că tu știi. Wrong!!! [You don't need to read anything because you already know everything. Wrong!!!]

Intrasentential switching is by far the most common type of switching in general, a fact supported by our findings, too. We can see in the examples below that resorting to English was not really called for. Using *parenting* when you have “educație parentală” [parental education] or “creșterea copiilor” [children's upbringing] at your disposal and using *gender* when you have got “gen” or “sex” are deliberate choices of words, due not to necessity but to the fact that bilinguals are sometimes so used to these words (both parenting and gender being widely debated topics) that they may seem more meaningful, more evocative in English than in their native tongue. The Internet facilitates access to knowledge but as this knowledge is often phrased in English, it is the English terms that stick to memory. English terms such as *parenting* and *gender* encapsulate the years people spent reading about the respective topics, and this makes the two words more appealing, more flavourful, and more relevant conceptually.

E10: *Parenting* și *gender* în zilele noastre... [Parenting and gender nowadays...]

Cook shops, eating houses, fine dining, take-out, and street food are all examples of specialised terms from the gastronomic field; their choice instead of the Romanian counterparts is also the consequence of their weight as concepts. They also manage to express a well-established reality in a more synthetical (thus economical) way.

E11: Dacă voiai să mănânci în oraș, în Imperiul Otoman, aveai varianta unor *cook shops* și *eating houses*, ambele cu abordări variate ale mâncării. [If you wanted to eat out, in the Ottoman Empire, you could always go to a sort of cook shops and eating houses – both of which offering a variety of approaches to food.]

E12: Restaurantele de *fine dining* făceau așadar *take-out* încă de la apariție, ce spuneți de asta? [Fine dining restaurants have practised take-out ever since they appeared for the first time, how about that?]

E13: Și tot ca atunci, *street food* nu era o mâncare a săracilor, ci a pofticioșilor de orice rang; ... [And, just like back then, street food was not the food of the poor, but rather of all sorts of foodies.]

Using terms from the contemporary American culture to describe the oriental cuisine of a time long gone (e.g. the Antiquity, the Middle Ages) in a Romanian text may be unusual, but this polyphony seems to be motivated by a desire to

'domesticate' the exotic culture by allowing readers to relate to concepts they might be more familiar with.

Other terms, like *open-minded* and *the place to be*, are probably among the most relevant examples of Romanian/English code-switching: they are definitely not necessary in the context, they certainly do not replace Romanian phrases which are difficult to retrieve from memory, they simply exist to emphasise the writer's desire to casually but proudly display her English competence, of imprinting the text with something which the group she is supposed to represent will instantly recognize and accept.

E14: ...în România, oamenii îmi par mai conservatori, însă eu sunt cât se poate de *open-minded*. [In Romania, people seem to be resistant to change, but I am as open-minded as can be.]

E15: În vara lui 79 AD, ultima din viață urbei, hanul lui Primus era *the place to be* în Pompei. [In the summer of AD 79, the last the city got to witness, Primus' inn was the place to be in Pompeii.]

4.4. Morphology of the Embedded Language

There are two morphological issues of interest here: one regards the different word classes found within the English switches in our data, and the other regards their degree of morphological integration in the matrix language (i.e. Romanian).

Nouns and noun phrases clearly dominate the classes of switched elements (more than half of the elements being bare nouns), followed by modifiers (mostly adjectives, among which *trendy*, with a total of 162 occurrences).

Some of the elements retain their source-language morphemes (e.g. the plural or participle morpheme: e.g. *bullies, bullying, bullied*), while uninflected forms are also present (see *street food* above), but most of them are morphologically integrated into Romanian. For example:

- the Romanian plural morpheme *-uri* is commonly attached to an English stem (as in *look-uri*)
- a feminine suffix like *-iță* is attached to an English stem (as in *hater-iță*)

Sometimes, a masculine indefinite article introduces an English noun the counterpart of which is, in Romanian, a feminine noun (e.g. *un [a] full body reconstruction* [approx. o remodelare corporală completă – with the feminine noun *remodelare* as head of the noun phrase]).

E16: Unul dintre cele mai bune look-uri a fost o rochie mini... [One of the best outfits – literally, looks – was a mini-skirt...]

E17: În același timp, mi-ar plăcea să am casa [...] caldă și șarmantă ca un *cottage* în Dorset... [At the same time, I would like my house to be warm and charming like a cottage in Dorset...]

The fact the inflectional morphology comes more often than not from the matrix language (i.e. Romanian) actually validates the so-called “principle of the matrix language frame” proposed by Meyers-Scotton (2002, 92), which postulates the grammatical supremacy of the preferred language over the embedded one, and also Sridhar and Sridhar’s (1980) hypothesis that the guest language adjusts to the syntax and semantics of the host language.

Conclusions

Relatively few of the English elements in our corpus designate cutting-edge or exotic concepts for which Romanian lacks an accepted equivalent. Most of them are high-frequency terms with easily retrievable counterparts in Romanian (see, for instance, the preference for the French orthography of *à propos*). Code-switching is thus used in order to make a statement about the writer’s identity (i.e. a well informed, computer-literate, anglophone professional, creative enough to enjoy code-switching) while fostering a rapport with the target group of readers which is thought to welcome code-mixing, although, as pointed out by Rainier Grutman, “writing that makes use of more than one language does not necessarily presuppose a polyglot public, though its deciphering more often than not requires some imagination” (Grutman 2001, 158).

The presence of English words and phrases in these texts has to do with two things: the target readers (which are assumed to be young and avid technology users) and the movement towards informality in writing¹⁰. It is part of a language of intimacy, of bonding, of inclusiveness. The embedded language (namely English, in this particular context) functions like the minority language of the *we-code* delineated by Bullock and Toribio (2009, 104): the more informal the language, the more persuasive.

Romanian/English code-switching is thus more of a fad than a need (as far as our corpus is concerned), and the often superfluous use of English terms may well fuel the purists’ anxiety about anglicisms spoiling the Romanian

¹⁰ Cf. “The most obvious influence of Internet language on traditional writing is to reinforce two ongoing tendencies we have already described. One of these is strengthening the role of writing as a representation of informal spoken language. [...] A less obvious effect of the Internet on writing is the increasing uncertainty that many of us feel about whether a clump of language should be one word, a hyphenated word, or two words.” (Baron 2008, 177)

language. "Will the English-dominated Internet spell the end of other tongues?", David Crystal asks in the preamble of one of his books (Crystal 2006, 1), and his answer comes promptly: "I do not see the Internet being the death of languages, but the reverse" (275). What we need to do is distinguish between language change and language decline: "Since yesterday's change is often today's norm, we may simply need to wait long enough before an innovation stops being treated with opprobrium by language elites." (Baron 2008, 161–162). Words like *(fast-)food*, *bullying*, *take-away*, or *take-out* are taken into account and listed as borrowings in *DOOM 3* (2022), but they were not at the time these feature articles were written.

What *Catchy.ro* attempts in its persistent, sometimes non-judicious code-switching, is to offer a snapshot: not of the current stage of the Romanian language but of a stage in women's emancipation in an otherwise conservative society. It strives to construct empowering fictions, it encourages self-reflection and self-assertiveness, it ultimately capitalises on the catchiness of (Internet) English in order to draw the potential readers in.

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APPENDIX

No.	Example	Article/Sub-Section	Author	Date
E1	...unele locuri percepeau o taxă de un penny la intrare, ceea ce a dus și la o poreclă pentru ele – penny universities, recunoscându-li-se funcția educativă.	<i>Istorii pe pâine. Eating out 4. Cafenele revoluționare/ Dine & Wine</i> https://www.catchy.ro/istorii-pe-paine-eating-out-4-cafenele-revolutionare/165182	Adriana Sohodoleanu	March 13 2021
E2	...am stat ore în șir la soare uitând de SPF doar pentru că momentul mi se părea mult mai important decât acel aspect de skin care.	<i>Nu sunt o femeie frumoasă/Talk Tabu</i> https://www.catchy.ro/nu-sunt-o-femeie-frumoasa/173320	Corina Bezdîga	April 4 2022
E3	Există și varianta <i>imaret</i> -urilor, un fel de <i>soup kitchens</i> , multe făcând parte din așezăminte religioase.	<i>Istorii pe pâine. Eating out 2. Imperiul Otoman/ Dine & Wine</i> https://www.catchy.ro/istorii-pe-paine-eating-out-2-imperiul-otoman/165178	Adriana Sohodoleanu	March 13 2021
E4	...o colegă, hater-iță de-a mea, a făcut bulion cu mine (adică bullying) cum că am ochii grași. I mean, Ochii grași?! Ochii????	<i>Dacă o cunoașteți cumva pe D-na Premenopauză, spuneți-i că e de porc/Talk Tabu</i> https://www.catchy.ro/daca-o-cunoasteti-cumva-pe-d-na-premenopauza-sa-i-spuneti-va-rog-ca-e-de-porc/171154	Erika Bloj	December 10 2021
E5	...se știe că un anume Boulanger a deschis un stabiliment în 1765 unde vindea supe (<i>stock/bouillion</i>) considerate <i>restorative</i> – hence the name of the restaurant. (n. red: vindecătoare – iată deci de unde vine numele restaurant).	<i>Istorii pe pâine. Eating out 5. Let Them eat Cake, she said/Dine & Wine</i> https://www.catchy.ro/istorii-pe-paine-eating-out-5-let-them-eat-cake-she-said/166251	Adriana Sohodoleanu	March 15 2021

No.	Example	Article/Sub-Section	Author	Date
E6	Câteva lămpi sunt <i>blue toile</i> (le ador, <i>à propos</i>). [...] E o babilonie această încăpere [...], un <i>bric-à-brac</i> cu oarece sens și stil.	<i>Paisley/Deco</i> https://www.catchy.ro/paisley/101065	Marius Constantinescu	September 27 2016
E7	...pâinea se cocea cu rozmarin, usuturoi, ulei de măsline, brânză și anchois; în cuptor cu lemne; (<i>wait a minute, did somebody say pizza?</i>)	<i>Istории pe paine. Eating out 1. Pompei/Dine & Wine</i> https://www.catchy.ro/istorii-pe-paine-eating-out-1-pompei/165032	Adriana Sohodoleanu	January 15 2021
E8	...se spune că sultanul Ahmed al III-lea [...] își trimitea vizirul [...] pe străzi, să îi aducă zilnic dulciurile preferate. <i>Speaking of which</i> , trebuie să spun că existau magazine ce vindeau cofeturi cu <i>clotted cream</i> .	<i>Istории pe paine. Eating out 2. Imperiul Otoman/Dine & Wine</i> https://www.catchy.ro/istorii-pe-paine-eating-out-2-imperiul-otoman/165178	Adriana Sohodoleanu	March 13 2021
E9	Tu nu ai nevoie să citești, pentru că tu știi. Wrong!!!	<i>Nu te-a înțeles nimeni? Ai scris prost!/Life Bites</i> https://www.catchy.ro/nu-te-a-inteles-nimeni-ai-scris-prost/66567	Ioana Duda	January 12 2015
E10	<i>Parenting și gender</i> în zilele noastre...	<i>Și acum, eu ce să-i răspund?!/Talk Tabu</i> https://www.catchy.ro/si-acum-eu-ce-i-raspund/174546	Ramona Dogaru	July 22 2022
E11	Dacă voiai să mănânci în oraș, în Imperiul Otoman, aveai varianta unor <i>cook shops</i> și <i>eating houses</i> , ambele cu abordări variate ale mâncării.	<i>Istории pe paine. Eating out 2. Imperiul Otoman/Dine & Wine</i> https://www.catchy.ro/istorii-pe-paine-eating-out-2-imperiul-otoman/165178	Adriana Sohodoleanu	March 13 2021
E12	Restaurantele de <i>fine dining</i> făceau așadar <i>take-out</i> încă de la apariție, ce spuneți de asta?	<i>Istории pe paine. Eating out 5. Let Them eat Cake, she said/Dine & Wine</i> https://www.catchy.ro/istorii-pe-paine-eating-out-5-let-them-eat-cake-she-said/166251	Adriana Sohodoleanu	March 15 2021

No.	Example	Article/Sub-Section	Author	Date
E13	Și tot ca atunci, <i>street food</i> nu era o mâncare a săracilor, ci a pofticioșilor de orice rang; ...	<i>Istории pe paine. Eating out 2. Imperiul Otoman/Dine & Wine</i> https://www.catchy.ro/istorii-pe-paine-eating-out-2-imperiul-otoman/165178	Adriana Sohodoleanu	March 13 2021
E14	...în România, oamenii îmi par mai conservatori, însă eu sunt cât se poate de <i>open-minded</i> .	<i>Și acum, eu ce să-i răspund?!/Talk Tabu</i> https://www.catchy.ro/si-acum-eu-ce-i-raspund/174546	Ramona Dogaru	July 22 2022
E15	În vara lui 79 AD, ultima din viață urbei, hanul lui Primus era <i>the place to be</i> în Pompei.	<i>Istории pe paine. Eating out 1. Pompei/Dine & Wine</i> https://www.catchy.ro/istorii-pe-paine-eating-out-1-pompei/165032	Adriana Sohodoleanu	January 15 2021
E16	Unul dintre cele mai bune look-uri a fost o rochie mini...	<i>Elie Saab la Paris Fashion Week după doi ani – o explozie de culoare/Fashion</i> https://www.catchy.ro/elie-saab-la-paris-fashion-week-dupa-doi-ani-o-explozie-de-culoare/171923	Catchy	January 27 2022
E17	În același timp, mi-ar plăcea să am casa [...] caldă și șarmantă ca un <i>cottage</i> în Dorset...	<i>Paisley/Deco</i> https://www.catchy.ro/paisley/101065	Marius Constantinescu	September 27 2016

