

ANGLICISMS IN ADOLESCENT LANGUAGE USE: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF LEXICAL CHOICE IN ROMANIAN

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Abstract

This paper presents a small-scale exploratory sociolinguistic study of the use of English-derived lexical items (Anglicisms) among Romanian adolescents aged 10–14. Drawing on self-reported questionnaire data collected from 43 students in a single educational context, the study examines adolescents' lexical preferences in relation to Romanian equivalents across different communicative settings, including informal interaction, formal contexts, and digital environments. The analysis focuses on adolescents' perceptions of appropriateness, motivation, and contextual variation in their use of Anglicisms, rather than on frequency of use or language change at a systemic level. The findings suggest that Anglicisms function primarily as stylistic and pragmatic resources associated with informality, peer-group interaction, and online communication, while Romanian lexical items are more strongly associated with formal and institutional contexts. The study does not aim at generalisation, but contributes to ongoing discussions on youth language practices, lexical borrowing, and register awareness in contemporary multilingual societies.

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Keywords: Anglicisms; Adolescent language; Lexical borrowing; Language attitudes; Sociolinguistic variation.

1 Introduction

The presence of English-derived lexical items in everyday communication has become a salient feature of many contemporary languages, particularly in contexts shaped by global media, digital communication, and early foreign language education. In European societies, English functions not only as a foreign language, but also as a pervasive linguistic resource that increasingly permeates informal interaction, youth culture, and online discourse. As a result, Anglicisms have attracted sustained attention in sociolinguistic research, especially in relation to questions of language contact, borrowing, and stylistic variation.

Adolescence represents a particularly productive site for investigating such phenomena. Previous research has shown that young speakers often engage in heightened linguistic experimentation, drawing on diverse linguistic resources to negotiate identity, group membership, and social positioning. Lexical choices made

by adolescents are therefore rarely neutral: they frequently carry pragmatic, affective, and symbolic meanings that extend beyond their referential content. Within this perspective, the use of Anglicisms may be understood not simply as a consequence of lexical need or linguistic deficiency, but as part of broader sociolinguistic processes involving style, stance, and register differentiation.

In the Romanian context, the visibility of Anglicisms has increased markedly since the late twentieth century, following political, economic, and cultural realignments that intensified contact with the English-speaking world. English is now introduced at an early stage in formal education and is omnipresent in digital media, entertainment, advertising, and social networking platforms. While previous studies have documented the presence of English borrowings in Romanian and described their structural integration, less attention has been paid to how adolescent speakers themselves perceive and evaluate these lexical items in relation to Romanian equivalents, particularly across different communicative contexts.

The present study addresses this gap by exploring how a group of Romanian adolescents report using and evaluating Anglicisms in comparison with Romanian lexical forms. Rather than treating borrowing as an indicator of language change or language loss, the study adopts a sociolinguistic perspective that foregrounds speakers' attitudes, contextual sensitivity, and perceived appropriateness of lexical choices. The focus is on how adolescents differentiate between informal, formal, and digital settings, and on the motivations they associate with their lexical preferences.

Specifically, the study is guided by the following research questions:

1. In which communicative contexts do Romanian adolescents report preferring Anglicisms over Romanian lexical equivalents?
2. What motivations do adolescents associate with their use of Anglicisms (e.g. sound, familiarity, trendiness, digital exposure)?
3. To what extent do adolescents demonstrate awareness of register differentiation in their lexical choices?

Based on a questionnaire administered to a limited and non-random sample, the study is explicitly exploratory in nature and does not aim at statistical generalisation. Its contribution lies in providing qualitative and quantitative insights into adolescents' perceptions of lexical borrowing and in highlighting the role of Anglicisms as stylistic resources within youth language practices. By situating these findings within broader discussions of sociolinguistic variation and language attitudes, the paper aims to contribute modestly to ongoing research on language contact and adolescent speech in contemporary multilingual settings.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Lexical borrowing and language contact

Lexical borrowing is a central phenomenon in language contact and has been extensively documented in sociolinguistics and historical linguistics. Early

foundational work defines borrowing as the transfer of linguistic material from one language to another under conditions of sustained contact, shaped by both linguistic and social factors (Weinreich, 1953). Later developments in contact linguistics emphasise that borrowing is not driven solely by lexical necessity, but also by prestige relations, speaker attitudes, and socio-cultural evaluation (Thomason & Kaufman, 1988; Thomason, 2001).

Within this perspective, borrowed lexical items are not passive imports but socially meaningful resources whose distribution reflects patterns of usage, register, and speaker agency. This approach is particularly relevant in contexts involving English, whose global status facilitates borrowing beyond specialised domains and into everyday interaction. As Crystal (2003) observes, English increasingly functions as a linguistic resource embedded in global communication practices rather than as a foreign language confined to formal learning contexts.

2.2 Anglicisms in European and Romanian contexts

The spread of Anglicisms across European languages has been well documented, with research consistently identifying media, advertising, technology, and youth culture as primary domains of influence (Görlach, 2001). Importantly, studies emphasise that the presence of English-derived lexical items does not necessarily indicate language shift or loss, but rather reflects selective borrowing shaped by contextual and stylistic constraints.

In Romanian linguistics, Anglicisms have been examined primarily from a structural and lexicographic perspective. Research has documented their historical development, morphological adaptation, and increasing frequency, particularly after the political changes of 1989 (Avram, 1997; Stoichițoiu Ichim, 2006). More recent work has drawn attention to the pragmatic functions of Anglicisms, showing that some English-derived items operate as discourse markers and stance markers in spoken Romanian (Niculescu-Gorpin & Vasileanu, 2020).

While these studies provide valuable insights into the integration of Anglicisms into Romanian, they largely focus on written corpora, media discourse, or adult language use. Comparatively little attention has been paid to adolescent speakers and to their own evaluations of Anglicisms in relation to Romanian equivalents, particularly across different communicative contexts.

2.3 Adolescents, stylistic practice, and sociolinguistic variation

Adolescence has long been recognised as a key stage in sociolinguistic variation, characterised by heightened sensitivity to peer norms and increased stylistic flexibility. Variationist research demonstrates that adolescents often exhibit high levels of linguistic variability, not because of incomplete acquisition of the standard language, but because they actively deploy linguistic resources to construct social identities (Eckert, 2000).

Lexical choice plays a crucial role in this process. Studies of youth language show that adolescents frequently use non-standard forms, slang, and borrowings to index informality, group affiliation, and stance (Tagliamonte, 2016). These choices are not random: adolescents demonstrate considerable pragmatic competence and an emerging awareness of register differentiation, adapting their linguistic behaviour according to audience and context.

From this perspective, the use of Anglicisms by adolescents can be interpreted as a stylistic strategy rather than as evidence of linguistic deficiency. Borrowed lexical items may function as markers of informality or modernity, particularly in peer-group interaction and digitally mediated communication.

2.4 Language attitudes and perceived appropriateness

Language attitudes play a central role in shaping linguistic behaviour. Speakers' beliefs about particular linguistic forms influence not only how they evaluate others, but also how they regulate their own language use (Garrett, 2010). In the case of lexical borrowing, attitudes towards the donor language and its symbolic associations are particularly influential.

Research on attitudes towards English borrowings suggests that speakers often associate Anglicisms with innovation, globalisation, and contemporary culture, while simultaneously recognising their limited appropriateness in formal or institutional contexts (Onysko, 2007). Such ambivalent evaluations are especially pronounced among younger speakers, who are more exposed to English through education, media, and digital platforms.

An attitudinal perspective allows researchers to move beyond prescriptive debates and instead examine how speakers negotiate competing linguistic norms in practice. This approach is particularly suitable for exploratory studies of adolescent language use, where self-reported data can provide insight into perceived appropriateness and register awareness.

2.5 Positioning the present study

Drawing on research in language contact, youth sociolinguistics, and language attitudes, the present study approaches Anglicisms as socially meaningful lexical resources whose use is shaped by context and speaker evaluation. Rather than focusing on long-term language change or structural integration, the study adopts an exploratory perspective that foregrounds adolescents' self-reported preferences across informal, formal, and digital settings.

By situating adolescent lexical choice within broader sociolinguistic frameworks, the study complements existing Romanian research on Anglicisms and contributes speaker-oriented evidence to discussions of borrowing and stylistic variation.

2.6 Borrowing, register, and normative awareness

Research on lexical borrowing increasingly emphasises the role of register differentiation and normative awareness in shaping speakers' linguistic choices. Rather than viewing borrowing as a uniform process affecting all domains of language use, sociolinguistic research shows that borrowed items are unevenly distributed across registers, genres, and interactional settings (Eckert, 2000; Coupland, 2007). This perspective challenges earlier assumptions that borrowing necessarily leads to erosion of the recipient language, instead foregrounding speakers' ability to regulate and compartmentalise linguistic resources (Thomason, 2001).

From a sociolinguistic standpoint, register awareness refers to speakers' sensitivity to contextual expectations regarding language use, including formality, audience, and institutional norms. Empirical studies of adolescent speech demonstrate that even young speakers are capable of adjusting their linguistic behaviour in patterned and context-sensitive ways, distinguishing between peer-group interaction and institutional settings (Eckert, 2000; Tagliamonte, 2016).

Within this framework, linguistic innovation and experimentation do not signal a lack of competence, but rather an advanced ability to manipulate linguistic resources for social meaning. Borrowings from English may therefore function as stylistic markers associated with informality or peer interaction, without challenging the legitimacy or functional stability of the standard language in formal contexts.

This framework is particularly relevant for the present study, which examines adolescents' self-reported evaluations of Anglicisms across different settings. By focusing on perceived appropriateness rather than frequency alone, the study aligns with approaches that conceptualise borrowing as a contextually regulated practice shaped by social norms and speaker awareness.

3 Methodology

3.1 Research design

The present study adopts a small-scale exploratory sociolinguistic design, combining quantitative and qualitative elements. The primary aim is not statistical generalisation, but the identification of patterns in adolescents' self-reported lexical preferences and attitudes towards Anglicisms in comparison with Romanian equivalents. Such an approach is consistent with speaker-centred research traditions in sociolinguistics, particularly in studies of language attitudes and stylistic variation.

The exploratory design and use of a questionnaire-based instrument were informed by established principles of research design in applied linguistics and language education, particularly with regard to aligning research questions, instruments, and analytical scope (Popescu, 2025).

Given the study's focus on perceived appropriateness and contextual sensitivity, self-report data were considered appropriate. Questionnaires have been widely used in sociolinguistic research to investigate speakers' evaluations, beliefs, and metalinguistic awareness, especially when the research interest lies in attitudes rather than in naturally occurring frequency of use.

3.2 Participants

The participants were 43 adolescents aged between 10 and 14, enrolled in a single Romanian lower-secondary educational institution. The sample constituted a convenience sample, as participants were drawn from classes taught by the researcher. While this sampling method limits the generalisability of the findings, it is acceptable for exploratory research aimed at generating preliminary insights rather than population-wide claims.

All participants were native speakers of Romanian and had received formal instruction in English as a foreign language as part of the national curriculum. At the time of data collection, English had been studied for several years by all participants, ensuring a shared baseline of exposure to the language.

3.3 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations were taken into account throughout the research process. Participation in the study was voluntary, and students were informed that their responses would be used solely for research purposes. Anonymity was ensured by the absence of identifying information on the questionnaires, and responses were analysed in aggregate form only.

The dual role of the researcher as both teacher and investigator represents a potential source of bias. To minimise this risk, students were explicitly informed that participation or specific responses would have no impact on academic assessment. The questionnaire was administered in a neutral classroom setting, and no feedback was provided on individual answers.

3.4 Research instrument

Data were collected by means of a written questionnaire consisting of six items, combining multiple-choice questions and short fill-in-the-blank tasks. The instrument was designed to elicit participants' lexical preferences and attitudes rather than to test linguistic competence.

The questionnaire included:

- items requiring participants to choose between Romanian lexical items and English-derived alternatives in specific contexts;
- items addressing perceived motivations for using Anglicisms (e.g. sound, familiarity, trendiness, digital exposure);

- items probing participants' views on the appropriateness and perceived impact of Anglicisms.

Several items were contextualised (e.g. informal conversation, school setting, online interaction) in order to examine register sensitivity and contextual variation in lexical choice.

3.5 Data collection procedure

The questionnaire was administered during regular class time and completed individually by the participants. No time limit was imposed, and clarification was provided only with regard to task instructions, not content. The researcher refrained from commenting on language choices during the data collection phase in order to avoid influencing responses.

Completed questionnaires were collected immediately after completion and subsequently coded for analysis.

3.6 Data analysis

The data were analysed using a mixed-methods approach. Quantitative analysis involved calculating frequencies and percentages for multiple-choice responses in order to identify general patterns of preference across contexts. Given the exploratory nature of the study and the limited sample size, no inferential statistical tests were applied.

Qualitative analysis focused on participants' written explanations and comments, which were examined thematically to identify recurring motivations and attitudes towards the use of Anglicisms. These qualitative observations were used to contextualise and interpret the quantitative findings, rather than to make independent claims.

3.7 Limitations

Several limitations of the study must be acknowledged. The small, non-random sample restricts the generalisability of the findings beyond the specific educational context examined. The reliance on self-reported data means that reported preferences may not fully correspond to actual language use in spontaneous interaction. Additionally, the teacher–student relationship may have influenced participants' responses despite efforts to minimise this effect.

Nevertheless, these limitations are consistent with the exploratory nature of the study. The findings should therefore be interpreted as indicative rather than conclusive, and as a basis for future research involving larger samples, longitudinal designs, and naturalistic data.

3.8 Methodological reflexivity

In addition to the limitations outlined above, it is important to reflect on the epistemological position underlying the research design. As a classroom-based exploratory study, the research prioritises speakers' self-reported evaluations over direct observation of linguistic behaviour. This choice reflects the study's focus on attitudes, perceived appropriateness, and metalinguistic awareness rather than on production frequency.

Self-reported data inevitably involve a degree of subjectivity; however, in sociolinguistic research on language attitudes, such subjectivity constitutes a valuable source of insight into speakers' normative orientations. Adolescents' responses provide access to how they conceptualise their own language use and how they evaluate competing linguistic forms within their social environment.

The researcher's dual role as teacher and investigator also necessitates reflexive awareness. While this position may introduce constraints, it simultaneously offers privileged access to a stable educational context and to participants who share comparable linguistic and curricular experiences. Acknowledging this positionality allows the study to be interpreted within its appropriate scope and supports transparency in methodological reporting.

4 Results

This section presents the results of the questionnaire administered to 43 adolescents aged between 10 and 14. The findings are organised according to the main areas addressed by the research questions: lexical preferences across contexts, reported contexts of Anglicism use, and motivations associated with the use of English-derived lexical items. As the study is exploratory in nature, results are reported descriptively using frequencies and percentages.

4.1 Lexical preferences across communicative contexts

Several questionnaire items required participants to choose between Romanian lexical items and English-derived alternatives in specific communicative situations.

When asked to select the form they would most likely use when referring to taking a photograph for friends, 58.5% of respondents chose the Romanian expression *Fac o poză pentru prieteni*, while 41.5% selected the English-derived form *a face un selfie*.

Alegeți, dintre opțiunile de mai jos, varianta preferată: Vom face:
41 de răspunsuri

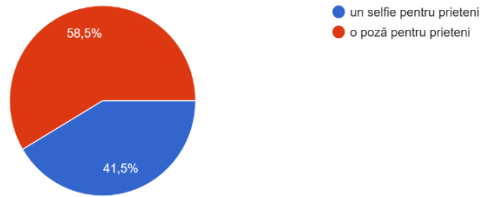


Figure 1. Lexical preference for Romanian vs English-derived forms in a photography-related context

In contrast, a stronger preference for Anglicisms was observed in items referring to leisure-related activities. When asked to choose between Romanian equivalents for expressing enthusiasm about a party and the English-derived term *vibe*, the majority of participants selected the Anglicism.

Ne-a încântat:
41 de răspunsuri

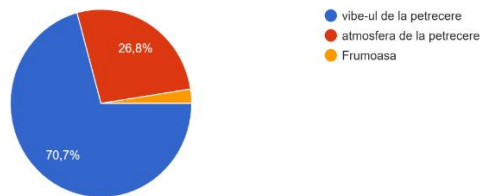


Figure 2. Preference for English-derived vs Romanian expressions in a leisure-related context.

However, this preference did not extend uniformly across all contexts. In a school-related scenario involving public speaking, **75.6%** of respondents reported preferring the Romanian expression *un discurs frumos* rather than the English-derived *cool speech*.

La festivitate, directorul a avut
41 de răspunsuri

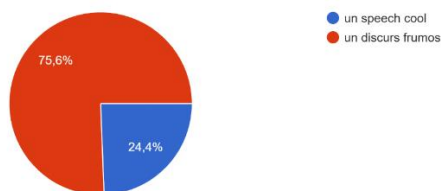


Figure 3. Lexical preference in a formal school-related context.

Similarly, when choosing between *cei mai buni prieteni* and *besties*, a higher proportion of respondents selected the Romanian expression, despite the informal nature of the context.

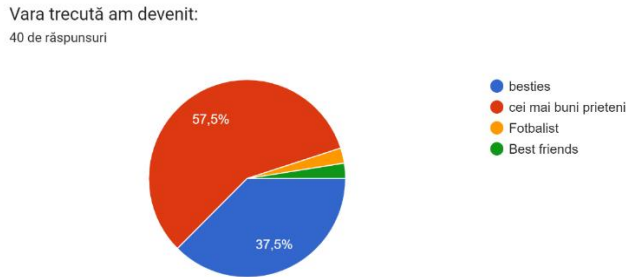


Figure 4. Lexical preference for Romanian vs English-derived terms in peer-group reference.

By contrast, expressions referring to emotional states showed a stronger preference for English-derived forms. A majority of participants reported using *Sunt happy!* rather than *Sunt fericit!*, regardless of context.

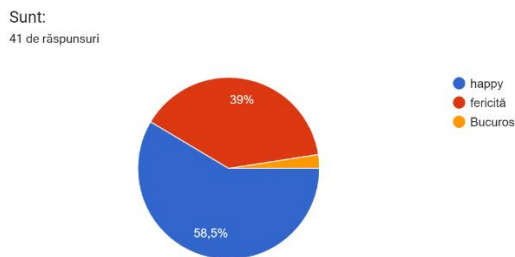


Figure 5. Preference for English-derived vs Romanian expressions of emotional state.

In digitally mediated contexts, Anglicisms were especially prominent. When referring to social media activity, most respondents selected the English-derived verb *follow* rather than the Romanian equivalent.

Când sunt pe Instagram dau:
41 de răspunsuri

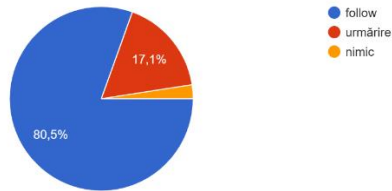


Figure 6. Lexical preference in digitally mediated contexts.

4.2 Contexts of Anglicism use

Participants were asked to indicate the situations in which they most frequently used Anglicisms. Anglicisms were most commonly associated with free time activities (36.6%), followed by situations in which respondents reported not recalling the Romanian equivalent (31.7%). School-related contexts were selected by 17.1% of participants, while 9.8% indicated other situations such as gaming or peer interaction.

În ce situații aveți tendința să folosiți cel mai des anglicisme?
41 de răspunsuri

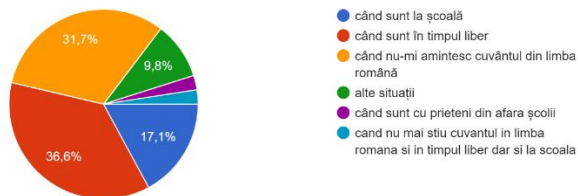


Figure 7. Reported contexts of Anglicism use

4.3 Reported motivations for using Anglicisms

When asked about the purpose of using Anglicisms, relatively few participants indicated motivations related to impressing others or demonstrating knowledge of English. The most frequently selected responses referred to habitual use, sounding trendier, or having no specific communicative intention.

Atunci când le folosiți, care este scopul?
41 de răspunsuri

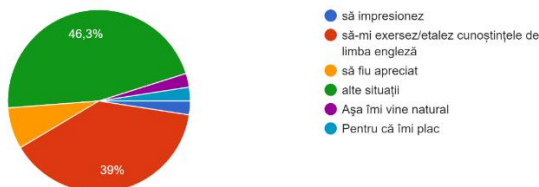


Figure 8. Reported motivations for the use of Anglicisms

When asked why English-derived words were sometimes perceived as easier to use than Romanian equivalents, the most frequently selected response was that Anglicisms “sound better”. Other responses referred to familiarity through exposure in media, games, music, and online communication.

De ce vă este mai ușor să folosiți echivalentul cuvântului românesc din limba engleză?
41 de răspunsuri

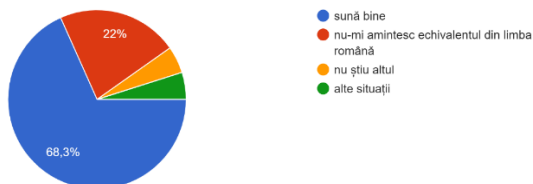


Figure 9. Reported reasons for perceived ease of Anglicism use

4.4 Attitudes towards the impact of Anglicisms

Participants were asked to evaluate the perceived impact of Anglicisms on the Romanian language. Most respondents selected options indicating a positive or neutral evaluation, while fewer participants expressed concerns about negative effects.

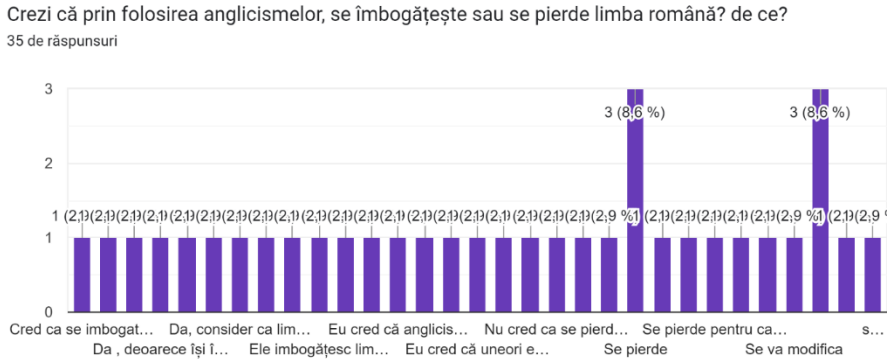


Figure 10. Adolescents' evaluations of the impact of Anglicisms on Romanian

When asked about the potential influence of borrowings on the language of future generations, 46.3% of participants indicated that Anglicisms would enrich vocabulary, whereas 29.3% believed that the language would be negatively affected.

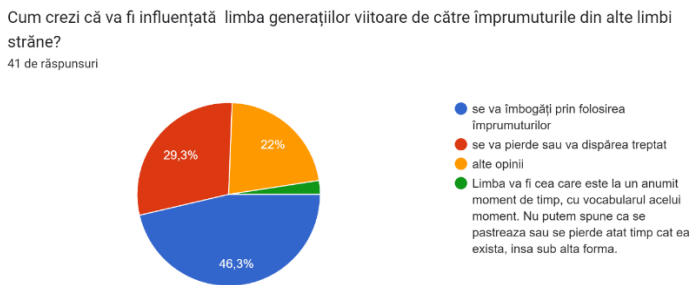


Figure 11. Perceived influence of Anglicisms on the language of future generations

4.5 Summary of results

Overall, the results indicate that adolescents' reported use of Anglicisms is context-sensitive rather than uniform. English-derived lexical items are more frequently associated with informal, emotional, and digitally mediated contexts, whereas Romanian equivalents are more commonly preferred in formal or institutional settings. Participants' reported motivations suggest that Anglicism use is linked primarily to familiarity, perceived sound, and habitual exposure.

5 Discussion

The present study set out to explore Romanian adolescents' self-reported use and evaluation of Anglicisms across different communicative contexts. Rather than

treating borrowing as evidence of language change at a systemic level, the analysis focused on contextual variation, perceived appropriateness, and speaker attitudes. The findings provide several insights into how English-derived lexical items function within adolescent linguistic repertoires.

5.1 Context sensitivity and register awareness

One of the most consistent patterns emerging from the data is the context-sensitive distribution of Anglicisms. Participants reported a greater preference for English-derived lexical items in informal, leisure-related, emotional, and digitally mediated contexts, while Romanian equivalents were more frequently preferred in formal or institutional settings, such as school-related communication.

This pattern aligns with previous sociolinguistic research showing that adolescents demonstrate considerable register awareness, adjusting their linguistic choices according to audience and setting (Eckert, 2000; Tagliamonte, 2016). The preference for Romanian expressions in formal contexts, such as public speaking tasks, suggests that Anglicism use is not indiscriminate, but constrained by normative expectations associated with institutional discourse. These findings support the view that adolescents' use of borrowed lexical items reflects stylistic choice rather than linguistic deficiency.

5.2 Anglicisms as stylistic and pragmatic resources

The strong preference for certain Anglicisms, particularly in expressions of emotion (*Sunt happy!*) and leisure-related evaluations (*vibe*), suggests that some English-derived items have acquired pragmatic and affective salience in adolescent language use. Such items appear to function as stylistic resources that allow speakers to index informality, expressivity, and peer-group alignment.

This observation resonates with research on youth language practices, which emphasises the symbolic and expressive functions of lexical choice (Androutsopoulos, 2014; Eckert, 2000). Rather than filling lexical gaps, Anglicisms in these contexts seem to offer alternative means of expressing stance and affect, often perceived by speakers as more immediate or expressive than their Romanian counterparts.

At the same time, the selective rejection of certain Anglicisms (e.g. *cool speech*, *besties*) indicates that not all English-derived forms are equally integrated or acceptable. This uneven distribution supports findings from Romanian linguistics that Anglicisms vary in their degree of integration and pragmatic function (Niculescu-Gorpin & Vasileanu, 2020).

5.3 Digital mediation and lexical borrowing

The prominence of Anglicisms in digitally mediated contexts, particularly social media use, reflects the central role of English in online communication. Participants'

preference for English-derived verbs and expressions in this domain is consistent with previous research highlighting the influence of digital environments on lexical borrowing (Crystal, 2003).

Digital platforms often expose users to English-dominant interfaces, terminology, and peer practices, which may contribute to the routinisation of Anglicisms in online discourse. The findings suggest that adolescents' linguistic repertoires are shaped not only by formal language education, but also by everyday interaction in digitally mediated spaces, where English functions as a default linguistic resource.

5.4 Language attitudes and evaluations of borrowing

Participants' responses concerning the perceived impact of Anglicisms on Romanian reveal generally positive or ambivalent attitudes towards lexical borrowing. Most respondents viewed Anglicisms as enriching or modernising the language, while fewer expressed concerns about negative consequences.

These findings are consistent with studies of language attitudes which show that English borrowings are often associated with modernity, globalisation, and innovation, particularly among younger speakers (Garrett, 2010; Onysko, 2007). Importantly, the coexistence of positive evaluations with context-sensitive restrictions on use suggests that favourable attitudes towards Anglicisms do not entail their unregulated adoption across all registers.

From an attitudinal perspective, adolescents appear to negotiate competing norms: valuing Anglicisms as expressive resources in informal settings, while recognising the appropriateness of Romanian lexical items in formal contexts. This supports the view that borrowing practices are shaped by social evaluation rather than by lack of competence in the mother tongue.

5.5 Implications for sociolinguistic research

Although limited in scale, the study contributes to sociolinguistic research on lexical borrowing by foregrounding speaker perspectives and perceived appropriateness. The findings complement structural and corpus-based studies of Anglicisms in Romanian by highlighting how adolescents themselves evaluate and deploy English-derived items in everyday communication.

The results also underscore the importance of examining borrowing practices within specific age groups and communicative contexts. Adolescents' linguistic behaviour provides insight into emerging norms and stylistic patterns, particularly in societies characterised by intense exposure to global English.

5.6 Educational and sociolinguistic implications

Beyond its contribution to sociolinguistic research, the study also carries implications for language education and language awareness in school contexts. The

findings suggest that adolescents' use of Anglicisms is not random or uncontrolled, but shaped by context-sensitive evaluations and an emerging awareness of normative expectations. This observation challenges deficit-oriented views that interpret the presence of English-derived lexical items as evidence of declining competence in the mother tongue.

From an educational perspective, recognising adolescents' register awareness can inform pedagogical approaches that emphasise language choice rather than language prohibition. Instead of discouraging the use of Anglicisms categorically, educators may benefit from fostering metalinguistic reflection on when and why certain lexical items are appropriate. Such an approach aligns with broader goals of language education that aim to develop communicative competence across diverse contexts.

At the sociolinguistic level, the findings support models of language contact that foreground speaker agency and normative regulation. Adolescents appear to negotiate multiple linguistic resources without collapsing register distinctions, suggesting that borrowing from English does not necessarily undermine the functional integrity of Romanian. Rather, English-derived items may coexist with Romanian equivalents within differentiated domains of use.

These implications reinforce the value of speaker-centred, context-sensitive research in understanding contemporary language contact phenomena. By examining how young speakers themselves evaluate and deploy borrowed forms, sociolinguistic research can move beyond abstract debates about language change and focus on the lived realities of multilingual communication.

5.7 Limitations revisited

The interpretation of these findings must be tempered by the limitations of the study. The reliance on a small, non-random sample and on self-reported data restricts the generalisability of the results. Moreover, reported preferences may not fully correspond to actual language use in spontaneous interaction.

Nevertheless, the consistency of the patterns observed across multiple items suggests that the findings capture meaningful tendencies in adolescent lexical evaluation. Future research could build on this exploratory study by incorporating larger samples, longitudinal designs, and naturalistic data from spoken or digital corpora.

6 Conclusion

This study set out to explore Romanian adolescents' self-reported use and evaluation of Anglicisms in comparison with Romanian lexical equivalents, with particular attention to contextual variation and perceived appropriateness. Adopting an exploratory sociolinguistic approach, the research focused on adolescents' lexical

preferences across informal, formal, and digitally mediated communicative settings, rather than on structural change or long-term language evolution.

The results indicate that adolescents' use of Anglicisms is context-sensitive rather than uniform. English-derived lexical items were reported more frequently in informal interaction, expressions of emotion, leisure-related activities, and online communication, while Romanian equivalents were preferred in formal or institutional contexts, such as school-related discourse. These patterns suggest that adolescents demonstrate a developing awareness of register differentiation and adjust their lexical choices accordingly.

The findings further show that Anglicisms function primarily as stylistic and pragmatic resources within adolescent language use. Participants associated English-derived items with familiarity, expressiveness, and habitual exposure through media and digital platforms, rather than with deliberate attempts to display linguistic competence. At the same time, not all Anglicisms were equally accepted, indicating selective and evaluative adoption rather than indiscriminate borrowing.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, the study contributes speaker-oriented evidence to research on lexical borrowing in Romanian by foregrounding adolescents' attitudes and evaluations. By focusing on perceived appropriateness and contextual variation, the study complements existing structural and lexicographic analyses of Anglicisms and highlights the importance of examining borrowing practices within specific age groups and communicative domains.

The study is subject to several limitations. The small, non-random sample and the reliance on self-reported data limit the generalisability of the findings, and reported preferences may not fully correspond to actual language use in spontaneous interaction. These constraints are consistent with the exploratory nature of the research, and the results should therefore be interpreted as indicative rather than conclusive.

Future research could build on this study by incorporating larger and more diverse samples, longitudinal designs, and naturalistic data from spoken or digital corpora. Comparative studies involving different age groups or educational contexts would further enhance understanding of how Anglicisms are evaluated and deployed across the Romanian speech community.

In conclusion, the findings suggest that Anglicisms form part of Romanian adolescents' linguistic repertoires as contextually regulated resources, reflecting broader sociolinguistic processes of stylistic variation and language contact rather than unstructured or uncontrolled change.

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