



Research Article

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Bulgarian-English Code-switching in Internet Forum Communication: The BG-mamma Case

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Abstract: The aim of the paper is to introduce the author's observations on the influence that English has on the Bulgarian forum "Netspeak" for women living in the USA. The collected data for the investigation are excerpted from a Bulgarian forum platform. The emphasis is on code-switching, one of the main topics in sociolinguistics; as well as on the interlanguage, which is a result of the penetration of some elements from English into the first language of communicators. The orthography may also be influenced as in Bulgaria the Cyrillic alphabet is used.

The informal situation is a prerequisite for the mixed style use, especially in vocabulary. Different topics have been observed and discussed by users in the forum: the choice of baby accessories; baggage loss in airports; child diseases, child physical and mental development, etc.

The investigated forum discussion includes 52,020 lexical items. Excerpted English words are few - only 1.5%. Most of them are nouns because of their easy grammatical adaptation. The verb group is not affected so noticeably. The Bulgarian verbal system is very complicated and English verbs used in Bulgarian context are grammatically adapted. There are some exceptions when people use ready-made constructions like idioms and phrasal verbs.

Keywords: code-mixing; digraphia; bilingualism

1 Introduction

1.1 General remarks

The aim of the paper is to examine the influence of English on Bulgarian speech of Bulgarian women who live in the USA. They are 1st generation immigrants, and they have lived in Bulgaria for a long time. Most of them have written their personal immigrant stories elsewhere in the forum platform. As these narratives are not part of the threads I have observed, they are not included here. Generally, these women come to the USA after finishing school, sometimes after university, i.e., their Bulgarian is excellent. Their English level varies but it is usually good enough to live in the USA without communication problems. Thus, I put the emphasis on code-switching, one of the main topics in sociolinguistics, as well as on the interlanguage, which in the case of Bulgarians results from the penetration of some elements from English, the more influential

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language (in fact the most influential language in the world), into the first language, the mother tongue of the communicators.

Such observations concerning Bulgarian speech of people living abroad are relatively few. Sotirov (2000) investigates the Bulgarian speech of Bulgarians, living in Hungary; Sivova-Tsankova (2006) is interested in the speech of Bulgarian students in Germany, Pachev (2005) conducts research into the speech of Bulgarian people in Slovakia, Krejcova (2015) – into the speech of Bulgarian expatriates in the Czech Republic, and Kocheva (2017) – into the speech of Bulgarians in Vienna, Austria.

The influence of English onto Bulgarian speech of people living in the USA is partly investigated by Mitsova (2013) who observes the oral speech of 5 Bulgarians – two women and three men. According to her, there are not many examples of code-switching between English and Bulgarian, most of which results from the process of accommodation in the life of the host country and its culture (Mitsova 2013:151). She gives some examples of such mixed uses. However, the elaborate investigation of the English forms and words in her corpus is not available.

1.2 Code-switching and interference – some terminological notes

According to Crystal (1987), code-switching, or language switching, occurs when an individual who is bilingual alternates between two languages during his/her speech with another bilingual person. From another perspective it is described as “the use of elements from more than one language within a conversation” (Deumert 2011: 268). However, a lot of languages adopt into their vocabularies a large number of foreign words and some monolinguals also use these borrowed words in specific situations without any intention of mixing codes, so Deumert’s definition is partial. In Haugen’s view, code-switching “occurs when a bilingual introduces a completely unassimilated word from another language into his speech” (Haugen 1956: 40). In fact, code-switching is a result of bilingualism or multilingualism. A lot of researchers argue that monolinguals are a minority around the world (Macha 1991, Franceschini 1998: 62, etc.). For this reason, Deumert says that the phenomenon is ubiquitous among multilinguals (Deumert 2011: 268). The same is claimed by Eastman “[w]here people use a mixed language regularly, codeswitching [i.e. variety-alternation] represents the norm” (Eastman 1992: 1; see also Alvarez-Caccamo 1998: 42). Rüdiger recalls the Poplack and Sankoff’s (1984) view that it can be problematic to distinguish between the use of loanwords, code-switching, and interference (Rüdiger 2018: 185). The authors (Poplack & Sankoff 1984: 103-104) present some criteria for the loanwords characterization, i.e. frequency of use, native-language synonym replacement, morphophonemic and/or syntactic integration, and acceptability. As the investigated bg-mamma forum users live in the USA and their language is not representative of the English influence onto Bulgarian, the English uses in their texts could not be treated as loanwords.

Because of its mixed character and its pragmatic origin code-switching (CS) is close to pidginisation. However, their linguistic characteristics are different. According to Franceschini:

Common features of CS and pidgin languages are restricted to external, social factors; the internal systems of CS and pidgins are completely different. For instance, CS does not have a reduced number of vowels, restricted vocabulary and/or a smaller set of morphological possibilities as it is attributed to pidgin languages (cf. Mühlhäusler 1986; Arends, Muysken & Smith 1995) – quite the contrary: CS enormously multiplies the possibilities of expression. (Franceschini 1998: 67).

Some researchers claim that code-switching requires strong proficiency in all languages being utilized and serves complex social functions (Flores and Lewis 2016: 100). At the same time, bilinguals are not always excellent speakers of both languages. The same is said by Meeuwis and Blommaert: “code-switching speakers are not necessarily speakers who would be capable of producing monolingual speech in the languages used in code-switching. From an empirical point of view, a simple connection between code-switching and bilingualism rests on shaky grounds.” (Meeuwis & Blommaert 1998: 77).

The terminological observations vary and different researchers present their specific viewpoints. Sometimes the discussed terms may be very close in their meaning. For example, interference may be

viewed as the transference of elements of one language to another at various levels including phonological, grammatical, lexical and orthographical (Berthold et al. 1997). According to Poplack and Sankoff (1984: 102) “[c]ode-switching is simply the alternate use of the two languages in discourse, and even in the sentence without any necessary influence of one language on those stretches of discourse realized in the other.”

Haugen includes ‘code-switching’, ‘interference’ and ‘integration’ in his ‘three stages in diffusion’ (Haugen 1956: 40). The perspective accepted here is Deumert’s (2011: 268) mentioned above: “the use of elements from more than one language within a conversation”. However, as English is the source of new-coming loanwords in Bulgarian (Blagoeva 2006, Popova 2013, Yordanova 2013, Grozdanova 2017, etc.), the investigated English uses are treated as elements of code-switching process if they are not included in Bulgarian dictionaries.

1.3 Object of investigation

The object of the research is informal written communication in the largest Bulgarian maternity discussion forum – bg-mamma. As the interference may be seen in different levels and to different degrees, it is important to see the extent to which English, the official language of the country where users live, influences their first language, Bulgarian. Some investigations show that Spanish-English bilinguals “report more linguistic interference (code-switching) when they communicate in Spanish, their first-language, and little or no code-switching when they communicate in English, their second-language.” (Heredia & Brown 2005: 215). Deumert imposes several facts for code-switching – it is typical of multilingual persons; it occurs within sentences, and at syntactic boundaries, it happens in spoken language, and *in informal written language (italic is mine, B.T.)*, as well as in stylized linguistic performances (Deumert 2011: 269). As it could be seen, there are some possible reasons for the switching from one language to another – different levels of language proficiency, to express solidarity, to show attitude, language play, a topic of conversation. (Crystal 1987).

Therefore, the maternity discussion forum communication of users who live in the USA and who write in Bulgarian is the place where code-switching is expected to be found. The hypothesis is that the influence of English on Bulgarian speech of users might be viewed at the orthographical, grammatical and more noticeably – at the lexical level. It is expected that the orthographical level may be influenced by the use of the Latin alphabet or by preferring the written form of an English word which is different from the officially accepted in Bulgarian.

The grammatical level is more conservative and the changes there are slightly visible. However, it will be investigated how different parts of speech are morphologically adapted to Bulgarian.

2 Corpus and methods

2.1 Corpus

As mentioned, the collected data for the investigation are from the biggest Bulgarian forum platform – bg-mamma. In this platform, there are a couple of forums and sub-forums focused on different topics and problems. I have chosen to make the observation of a virtual place, called ‘тема’ (*topic*) that unifies women living in different parts of the USA. Every *topic* is, in fact, a thread of a limited number of posts. The whole *topic* consists of 50 pages. Every page contains 15 posts.

When the required pages are reached a user may start a new one. The excerpted words and expressions are collected by the *topic* № 150, named ‘150 Джетлагнати американски летни ваканции!’ [‘150 jet-lagged American summer holidays’]. It was active between August 7th and September 21st 2013, i.e., for a month and a half. The authors are 45 users living in different parts of the USA.

The *topic* of mothers living in the USA is a part of the forum ‘Дом и семейство’ [‘Home and family’], sub-forum ‘Родители в чужбина’ [‘Parents abroad’].

The following discussion topics may be identified in the corpus:

- Physical and Mental Development of Baby;
- Travel problems – jet-lag; luggage loss, etc.;
- Where to live in the USA;
- Baby accessories – bassinets, prams, cribs, etc.;
- Help from parents when the baby was born;
- Kindergartens and primary schools in the USA;
- Ethnic diversity in American schools;
- Documentations – insurances, visas, etc.;
- Nutrition;
- Public breastfeeding.

As one may see, topics are various and linked to everyday situations. Some of them include motherhood problems (nutrition, accessories, school problems, etc.), immigrant problems (visas, insurances, etc.), others are more general (travelling, lodging, etc.).

2.2 Methods

The analysis combines a quantitative approach with a qualitative and analytical one (see Rossman and Wilson 1985). The data include the frequency of the use of English words in Bulgarian informal written discussions as well as the parts of speech which are influenced by code-switching.

At the same time, the so-called discourse-functional approaches are used – they investigate why some linguistic choices are made; what are the functions of the grammatical and lexical alternations of a language (Cumming & Ono 1997: 114).

In the contribution it is accepted the view of discourse as a set of interrelated elements¹ – topics discussed, participants in communication and the language used (Halliday and Hasan 1990: 24; Todorova 2010, etc.). In this view, the linguistic data are not independent of the ‘context of situation’ (the term of Malinowski, used from Halliday & Hasan 1985) – from the profile of users, as well as of their interests and topics of discussion.

The possible ways of investigating the language change and the influence of English according to Teubert and Čermakova (2004: 22) are:

- “the change of frequency of words or other units of meaning (compounds, multi-word units, collocations, set phrases), which is often indicative of a change in meaning or a change in the domains in which words are used;
- the occurrence of new words;
- the occurrence of new larger units of meaning;
- changing context profiles, i.e. changes in the frequencies of words occurring in the contexts of words or other units of meaning.”

The immediate qualitative analysis consists of the identification and description of the English words. When they are identified, they are classified according to the part of speech they belong to. The definition of the English word will be the following: the word which comes in Bulgarian speech from English and which is not a part of active vocabulary of Bulgarian people, so it is not found in the Dictionary of Bulgarian language (RBE 2001-2015), or which is used in Bulgarian with other meanings, different from the use in the investigated discussion.

Therefore, the use of the new words as well as the extending of the meaning of some words because of the influence of English is the aim of this paper. The change of typical collocations will also be investigated.

The English words and phrases in the topic are excerpted manually and double-checked as there is no available software which may recognize the forms. The investigated discussion is copied in the MS Word file and the calculation of the word number in the investigated corpus is made by the help of MS Word tools. The

¹ Halliday and Hasan (1985) called them field, tenor, and mode.

percentage of English nouns, adjectives and other parts of speech as well as the proportion of Cyrillic and Latin forms is made by the help of Excel.

3 Code-switching in the bg-mamma “American” topic – scope and characteristics

The influence of one language on another is a result of a large number of reasons – behavioural, social, cultural, etc. The analysis of the reasons for the language transfer also includes the similarities and differences between the compared languages as well as the specifics of the code-switching and the interference.

Despite the expectations, the excerpted English items in the investigated *topic* are few – only 769 out of 52020 lexical items, or $\approx 1,5\%$ (1,478)². However, there are some explanations for this fact – the topic is written by people, whose first language is Bulgarian and this is their ‘Bulgarian place’. The rules of the forum require they write in Cyrillic. Thus the English orthography use is hindered.

A lot of researchers argue that nowadays the English language influences Bulgarian. However, the observations show that in the majority of the *bg-mamma* topics only 3-4 English words in all 50 threads could be seen. In the investigated topic they are more frequent, but their number is not significant – 1,5 %. Unfortunately, there is not a reference corpus in Bulgarian, where the typical number of English words may be seen. Therefore, the scope of the influence and the reasons for it will be more important in the research.

As previously emphasized, the extracted items are divided into parts of speech (see Table 1.), and I observe the specific use of every part. It is also important whether they are morphologically adapted to Bulgarian or are used without change.

Table 1.

	Nouns	Adjectives	Verbs	Adverbs	Others
Number	364	75	33	5	15
Percentage	74%	15 %	7%	1%	3%

Thus the characteristics of English words and phrases used in the investigated part of the forum are presented successively. I have divided the words into word classes according to their grammatical characteristics.

3.1 Nouns

Nouns come first because their number in the corpus is the greatest. The excerpted nouns are 364 ($\approx 74\%$ of the excerpted lexemes). Therefore, nominatives are very important parts of the texts as they mark objects and ideas and they form the thematic structure of the texts. In fact, in all languages, the lexical borrowings are usually nouns. Most of them are used in their original form, others are written in Cyrillic (Table 2.)

² There are 765 excerpted items which form 492 lexemes including compound and phrasal words. I assume that the difference between compound words and collocations is a difference in degree. Compounds are linked together – they usually have their own meaning, different from the meaning of their components. They cannot be divided into morphological and syntactic elements. Collocations are phrases of words that usually go together. One of them is a modifier. ”There is no formal means in distinguishing between compounds and collocation except that compounds are syntactically inseparable, whereas the items in a syntactic collocation are more loosely associated” (Macdonald & Darjowidjojo 1967: 61). So the challenge for the researcher is how to organize the investigated material; whether to list every word that can be found or the whole expression presents the unit. As it is known, sometimes the word combination represents the concept, or serves as a catchword, has a phatic or emotive function. The appropriate approach has to be mixed.

Table 2. Use of English nouns in Cyrillic or Latin

Alphabet	Number	Percentage
Cyrillic	284	78%
Latin	80	22%

When people live in a certain country, they usually ‘catch’ the vocabulary of the environment. I assume that they will use more English nominatives than verbs because they read or listen to and use these words all the time. If someone is expecting a baby in the USA, they will know that ‘*the bassinet*’ is ‘*the bassinet*’, and will use this word instead of its Bulgarian correspondence (‘бебешка люлка’). In addition, objects are the first words we learn in our language learning process. It does not matter if we learn our mother tongue or second, third, etc. language.

There is another important reason for the noun borrowing. When talking about the transfer from English to Bulgarian, the easiest words to be borrowed from a grammatical point of view are nouns. They do not need a grammatical transformation in many cases. They receive their gender according to the Bulgarian grammatical rules.

When Bulgarian people use English nouns in a native milieu, they form plural and definite forms using active language models. Most of the expressions in the corpus are likewise grammatically adapted to Bulgarian. In the investigated corpus all uses of noun definite forms (54 examples) are formed with the help of a Bulgarian definite article. In Bulgarian this article is a morpheme at the end of the word – ‘баунсър-а’ (DEF), ‘евалюейшпън-а’ (DEF), etc. When the plural forms are used, they are more often with English inflections – ‘*carbs*’, ‘*colard greens*’, ‘карс’[*cars*], etc. (37 times). Bulgarian plural noun forms are used 20 times (see Table 3.). All uses of Bulgarian definite or plural forms are written in Cyrillic. English endings for plural are used both in Cyrillic and Latin examples.

Table 3. Plural inflections of English nouns – number and percentage

Bulgarian Plural Inflections	20	35%
English Plural Inflections	37	65 %

A. Proper nouns

The code-switching process in the corpus includes the use of English proper nouns as well as common nouns. 70 of them are proper nouns; others are common nouns. Proper nouns are more frequently trade names or names of cities and states – *нетфликс* [Netflix], *Хоум Дипо* [Home Depot], *OfficeMax*, *Celebration*, *FL*, *Tums*, *робийз* (Robeez), *NY*, *Kali* [Cali], *Бритакса* [Britax], *CPS*, *Хутърс* [Hooters], *Блакбъри* [Blackberry], *Нейчърпедик* [Naturepedic], *National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES)*, *РВра*, etc. Some of the proper nouns used are in their original orthography (36 items), others are used in Cyrillic (34), i.e., in the second group, the process of adaptation is advanced.

It is unnatural that the name of companies or shops is written in Cyrillic. However, because the forum recommends Cyrillic use and the change of the alphabet is inconvenient, one may see such examples.

Some of these names are written with small letters – ‘нетфликс’[Netflix], ‘стар уорс’[Star Wars], ‘тмобиле’ [TMobile], etc. – which is incorrect both in English and Bulgarian. Some of them are unconventionally transliterated into Bulgarian – ‘Блакбери’ (instead of ‘Блекбъри’ [Blackberry]); ‘Кико’ (instead of ‘Чико’ [Chicco]), etc.

(1)

a) *Сега видях, че си писала за Нейчърпедик.³*
 Now saw.1SG that have.written.2SG.F about Naturepedic.
 ‘I saw now that you have written about **Naturepedic.**’

b) *като дойде в USA на 5 год го водех редовно в Хутърс ...*
 when came.3 SG in USA at 5 years him was.conducting.1SG regularly in Hooters...
 ‘when he came to the **USA** when he was 5 I regularly took him to **Hooters...**’

B. Common nouns

It is interesting that almost 14 percent or 41 common nouns are written with the help of the Latin alphabet (i.e. in English). These are cases of digraphia – in the first example *brahok chegn chram* is in the Latin alphabet, the other words are in Cyrillic.

Although borrowings are not very frequent and digraphia is not preferred in the posts above, one could see some examples of bilingualism – the same author uses Bulgarian and English words in their post: ‘инсект върджинс’ [*insect virgins*], ‘галона камбуча’ [*gallons kombucha*], ‘билиона петс’ [*billion pets*], ‘скуоби култури’ [*scoby cultures*] are noun phrases taken from English. Almost every post contains ‘mixed’ sentences. In some cases, there is only one noun that comes from English:

(2)

a) *Дълго време спеше в баунсѐра.*
 Long time was.sleeping.3SG in bouncer.DEF.
 ‘He has slept in **the bouncer** for a long time.’

b) *сега 1 бедрум под 1000\$ не се намира въобще*
 now 1 bedroom under 1000\$ not.find.3SG.REFL.PASS
 at all
 ‘now there is not one **bedroom** out there for less than \$1,000’

c) *За доктори и иниурънси става въпрос.*
 For doctors and insurance.PL become.3SG question
 ‘I mean doctors and **insurances.**’

An interesting phenomenon is the fact that some of the excerpted nouns are used in Bulgarian but with a different meaning. The “extending” of lexical meaning is not something unexpected, and the process depends on its relevance (Diez-Arroyo 2016: 616). In the following example, the word ‘основа’ instead of ‘база’ will be used by Bulgarians who are not influenced by English.

(3) *Столче за кола + база*
 seat for car + base.F.SING
 ‘car seat+**base**’

³ The examples are used in their original spelling.

Sometimes the use is figurative or an idiomatic one:

(4)

a) *Ставаме пасивни рецептори на грижи,*
спасяване, съвети...
 Become.1PL passive receptor. M.PL of care,
 saving, advices...
 ‘We become passive **receptors** of care, saving, advice.’

b) *има други авенюта за изява според мен*
 there.are others avenue.N.PL of expression according to me.
 ‘I think there are other **avenues** of expression.’

Some of the excerpted nouns are loanwords in English as well – i.e. English is a mediator between the language of origin and Bulgarian. English is a language that borrows foreign words without oppression. For example, ‘камбуча’ (*kombucha*), ‘алфредо сос’ (*alfredo sauce*), ‘*brahok chegn chram*’ clearly are not originally “English” words. Because they come in the corpus from English, I have included them in my investigation (see López-Morales 1987: 303; Balteiro 2011: 27).

(5) *За обяд ни гостиха с ястие, носещо звучното*
название – брахок чегн чрам.
 For lunch us feasted.3PL with dish bearing.N the pompous
 name – brahok chegn chram.
 ‘For lunch, they gave us a dish with the pompous name **brahok chegn chram**.’

As already mentioned, nouns are not very often used alone. For as much as they tend to describe concepts, they are often described by word combinations. In some cases, the result is a compound noun, in others – a collocation, noun phrase (NP). The boundary between them is not clear enough – it is claimed to be a semantic one – if the word combination has its own meaning and represents a new concept, it is a compound. Nouns are usually extended by another noun (as above), or an adjective. Sometimes the whole noun phrase is used – Noun + Noun (6 a., b., c., d.) or Adj.+ Noun (7):

(6)

a) *Киндергартен четат чатър букс в нашият дистрикт.*
 Kindergarten read.3PL chapter books in our.DEF district.
 ‘Kindergarten read **chapter books** in our district.’

b) *Днес най после ни пристигна бус паса*
 Today at.last us arrive.3SG bus pass.DEF
 ‘At last today **the bus pass** has arrived.’

c) *В тъпканица като НЙ ми се живее, ако ще и*
с койл стов и попкорн таван
 In jam like NY me live.3SG.REFL.PASS even
 with coil stove and popcorn ceiling
 ‘I want to live in a jam like NY even with a **coil stove** and a **popcorn** ceiling’.

d) *Имаше и кемп ерия.*
 There.was and camp area.
 ‘There was a **camp area** as well.’

(7)

- a) Или като **the heart-healthy cereal** – рекламен трик.
 ‘Or as **the heart-healthy cereal** – publicity trick.’
- b) **мидъл скул** един ден няма да толкова стресиращ.
 middle school one day won’t to so stressful.
 ‘the **middle school** won’t be so stressful one day’
- c) **всичките ми деца са се радвали и предпочитали**
 учители мъже в **елементарни** **скула**.
 All my children have enjoyed and preferred
 teacher.PL male.PL in elementary school.Def.
 ‘All of my children have enjoyed and preferred having male teachers in the **elementary school**.’

The examples above (7 a., b., c.) show the tendency of noun phrases with attributes without suffixes to be used. As it is known, nouns are often modified by other nouns or adjectives. A noun in the position of a modifier in postposition is an active model in Bulgarian. However, it has not been very popular until recently. These days, because of English, one can see a great number of new combinations, though the modifier appears in the pre-position. Sometimes the whole phrase is from English, in others – only the modifier (‘Макларън количката’ [*Maclaren stroller*], ‘неорганик матрачетата’ [*non-organic mattresses*]). It is problematic when they are made of more than one word, or they are compound words or nominative phrases as it is also not clear where the boundary between lexicology and grammar stands. The language system is interconnected, and the change in vocabulary may affect the grammar as well.

(8)

- A) **Макларън количката** ползвах
 Maclaren stroller.DEF used.1SG
 ‘I used a **Maclaren stroller**’
- b) За обяд пращаме ориз/ориз + киноа/грах/кус-кус +
 кисело мляко + плод + зеленчук + **стринг**
чийз.
 For lunch send.1PL rice/rice + quinoa/peas/couscous +
 yougurt + fruit + vegetable + string
 cheese.
 ‘For lunch we send rice/rice+quinoa/ peas/couscous+ yougurt+fruit+vegetable+**string cheese**.’
- c) **процентно продажбите на неорганик матрачетата са**
 повече
 percentaged.ADV sale.PL.DEF of non-organic mattress.PL are
 more
 ‘the percentage of **non-organic mattress** sales is higher’

As it is known, the close relationship between nouns and adjectives was noticed a long time ago. Alfieri (2015) states that in the Greek-Latin parts of speech theory the difference between adjectives and nouns is not significant. According to Dionysius Thrax’s Τέχνη γραμματική

“[t]he noun is divided into three types: 1) ὄνομα κύριον ‘proper noun’, which refers to the individual substance (τὸ τὴν ἰδίαν οὐσίαν σημαῖνον); 2) ὄνομα κοινόν or προσηγορικόν ‘common noun’, which refers to the common substance (τὸ τὴν κοινήν οὐσίαν σημαῖνον); and 3) the epithet as the third εἶδος ‘type’ (Tekh. 12)” (Alfieri 2015: 363).

To sum up, the partial substitution of the adjectives with the nouns in Bulgarian is an important but not unpredictable phenomenon having in mind the closeness between nouns and adjectives, the existence of such a construction in Bulgarian, as well as the worldwide spread of English.

3.2 Adjectives

75 adjectives are excerpted from the corpora. More of them are modifiers of nouns, and some of them are a part of compounds. Some of them are a part of NP (10 a, b, c), others are a part of the predicate or VP (10 d, e). Some of them are grammatically adapted to Bulgarian; others are used in their original form.

(9)

- a) *дали* *не* *е* *някаква* *форма* *на* ***sensory*** *issue.*
 whether not is some.F form of sensory issue.
 ‘If it is a form of a **sensory** issue’
- b) *която* *днес* *видях* *на* **“*уелкъм* *дей*”**
 who today saw.1 SG in “welcome day”
 ‘whom I saw today during the “**welcome** day”
- c) *някои* *от* *вас* *се* *бяха* *оплаквали* *неотдавна* *от* *неядящи/много*
пикви *деца*
 some of you had.complained recently from non-eating/very
 picky children
 ‘some of you have complained about non-eating/ too **picky** children recently’
- d) *Не* *знам,* *аз* *съм* *обявена,* *че* *съм* *много*
selfish
 Not know.1SG I am declared.1SG.F that am.1SG very
 selfish
 ‘I don’t know; it is said that I’m too **selfish**’
- e) *цяла* *цица* *на* *показ* *за* *мен* *е* ***tacky.***
 whole teat on display for me is tacky.
 ‘the whole breast to be visible is **tacky** for me.’

Gender and number are inflectional features of Bulgarian adjectives that mark agreement with nouns. Therefore, English and Bulgarian adjectives are grammatically different. It is demonstrated in example d. – the participle ‘обявена’ is in its feminine form. However, the English word ‘selfish’ is gender-neutral. When English adjectives appear in Bulgarian texts morphologically adapted they sound natural. However, only 14 adjectives in the corpus (19%) have Bulgarian suffixes and inflexions at the end of the word (евалю-иран-а F ‘evaluated’; джетлаг-нат-и PL ‘jet-lagged’, сензитив-ен ‘sensitive’, etc.). Others appear unchanged and in Bulgarian texts, they become grammatically close to adverbs or nouns.

62 out of 75 adjectives, or 83% are written in Cyrillic, and 13 out of 75 or 17% are in Latin (Table 4.). All Cyrillic forms are transcribed, which prove their persistence in the users’ speech. None of the forms are transliterated.

Table 4. Use of English Adjectives in Cyrillic or Latin

Alphabet	Number	Percentage
Cyrillic	62	83%
Latin	13	17%

3.3 Verbs

The verb in Bulgarian includes the full paradigm of person and number (in some cases – when participles are used in the verb forms, the category of gender is activated as well). The other verb categories expressed morphologically are aspect, tense, voice, and mood. There are also a great number of perfect-like forms expressing evidentiality, mirativity, etc.

In English, one and the same word may function as a noun or as a verb, and the context is determinative for proper reception. In Bulgarian, the forms of verbs and nouns are completely different because of dissimilar inflexions. This is why it is difficult to use English verbs in Bulgarian speech without adaptation.

This might be the reason why there are few English verbs in the corpora. The extracted forms are 33. 27 of them (or 82%) are morphologically adapted to Bulgarian. As one may suppose, most of them are in their most neutral form – Imperfective aspect, 3rd conjugation (10 a., c.), Indicative, Present tense.

(10)

a) *за да не ги хъртва*
to not them **hurt**.3SG.IPFV.PRS
'in order not to **hurt** them'

b) *да не спамим тук*
to not spam.1PL.IPFV.PRS there
'let's not **spam** here'

c) *Пействам оригиналната рецепта на Фeya*
Paste.1SG.IPFV.PRS original.DEF recipe of Feya
'I **paste** the Feya's original recipe'

Some verbs are used grammatically unchanged. In all these cases the whole phrase is English (only one of them is in the Latin alphabet):

(11)

a) *Защото Wonder Pets винаги celebrate with some celery.*
'Because Wonder Pets always **celebrate** with some celery'

b) *хормони ай гесс 🤔*
'Hormones, I **guess**'

c) *Маймун, персистънс нейс офф 😊 евентюали*
'Maimun, persistence **pays off** 😊 eventually'

d) *Ю ноу дъ дрил.*
'You **know** the drill.'

е) <i>Ма</i>	<i>честно</i>	<i>в</i>	<i>повече</i>	<i>ми</i>	<i>идва</i>			
<i>масовото</i>	<i>възмущение,</i>	<i>особено</i>	<i>от</i>	<i>други</i>	<i>майки</i>	–	<i>зет</i>	
<i>овър</i>	<i>ит!</i>							
But	frankly	in	much	to.me	come.3SG.IPFV.PRS			
mass.DEF	indignation,	especially	from	other.PL	mothers	–	get	
over	it!							

‘Frankly, this mass indignation is too much for me, especially from other mothers – **get over** it!’

To conclude, the English verbs in the investigated corpus are not numerous. In most cases, they are inflected like Bulgarian verbs. The used suffixes and inflexions are in concordance with the tendency of the newly-formed verbs in Bulgarian to be of 3rd Conjugation, Imperfective aspect. These verbs sometimes build a Perfective form of 1st Conjugation.

Some verbs present actions connected to the computer communication and they are widely used by Bulgarians in their native milieu as well (especially younger generations), i.e. “пействам”, “спамя”, “хъртвам”. Others are used accidentally for various reasons – because the verb is a part of a longer expression, because the combination sounds better to the user or because this is the word that comes to their mind first.

3.4 Other parts of speech

The adverbs in the corpus are very few – only five: *авъридж* (*average*), *precisely*, *ълонг* (*along*), *евър* (*ever*), *евентюали* (*eventually*). All of them except for ‘*precisely*’ are in Cyrillic and transcribed.

At the end, I would like to mention that there are some other expressions from English. They are formed as inseparable phrases or sentences, and they express emotions or attitude. They are borrowed as ready-made clichés. Some of these phrases and abbreviations are very popular in all types of informal Internet communication: ‘WTF!?!?’; ‘Not!’, ‘тнкс’ (*thanks*), *WOW* (*of all nights!*); ‘*Co yom!*’ (*So what!*); ‘*xenu фрайдей, лейдис!*’ (*Happy Friday, ladies*).

To sum up, the excerpted language uses represent the process of the interrelation between Bulgarian and English in Bulgarian speech of people who live in the USA. While several words and expressions could not be found in the speech of Bulgarian people living in Bulgaria, the investigated examples conform to the general process of active adoption of English words in the contemporary Bulgarian language, especially in the fields of computer communication, finance, jurisprudence, etc. Most of the borrowed words are nouns or noun phrases as they are easily adapted to other languages. Moreover, nouns designate things, and in everyday life, they could quickly become a part of some people’s vocabulary. At the same time, sometimes English words are used to make the message more interesting and impressive.

4 Conclusion

The contact between languages is one of the reasons for language change. Some phenomena like emigration/immigration, world globalization, Internet access, etc. ‘catalyze’ the language interaction and determine the expansion of English all over the world.

Millions of Bulgarians have emigrated since 1990. Some of them have been abroad for a short time. Others stay longer, and they see their future outside Bulgaria. Nevertheless, almost all of them need to communicate in Bulgarian from time to time. It is not surprising that some of the most active blog commentators as well as many forum members live abroad, but they prefer to use their native language on the Internet. However, they use more loanwords because of their everyday contact with other languages. As English words become popular in every language in the world, they enter the vocabulary of more and more people. Therefore, the English language influences other languages because it changes the individual language use of people who are in touch with it.

All these points could be found in the corpus. There are some examples of orthographical interference as digraphia is observed in several cases. However, since the forum rules require the use of the Cyrillic alphabet, the use of transcribed words from English is more frequent. Some words are used in Bulgarian context for the first time; other excerpted words have already been used in Bulgarian with fractions of their meaning and as a part of a limited number of collocations. Because of the influence of English, other meanings of these words are activated, and one may see different collocations as well as new word combinations.

Since the 1990s a large number of new words in Bulgarian have come from English. The loanwords are usually nouns because of their simple grammatical adaptation. The Bulgarian-English interaction process, however, leads to changes in the noun phrase. Nouns are usually used as modifiers in place of adjectives. This is a significant change – the grammatical system is conservative and difficult to change.

The verbal group is not so noticeably affected. The Bulgarian verbal system is very complicated and English verbs used in Bulgarian context are grammatically adapted. There are some exceptions when people use ready-made constructions such as idioms and phrasal verbs.

In the investigated corpora there are some adverbs, as well as some inseparable expressions such as abbreviations, phatic functioning phrases, etc.

In conclusion, as one might expect, the Bulgarian speech of people who live in the USA is more influenced by English than the speech of Bulgarians in their native milieu. Nevertheless, some of the characteristics mentioned above could be seen in the speech of Bulgarians in Bulgaria too. The interaction between English and Bulgarian changes the vocabulary of Bulgarian, but this is a global phenomenon. The continuing influence of English on Bulgarian is expected to keep the tendency of loaning new words and models from English active for a long time. Therefore, it will be very fruitful to observe the comparison between these results and those from some future investigations.

Abbreviations:

ADJ	adjective
ADV	adverb
DEF	definite
F	feminine
IPFV	imperfective
M	masculine
N	neuter
PASS	passive
PFV	perfective
PL	plural
PRS	present
PST	past
REFL	reflexive
SG	singular

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