

CORPORATE COMMUNICATION BIASES IN THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT UNDER GLOBALIZATION TRENDS

Ramona-Elena, Chițu¹

Abstract: *The development of the private sector, employers' requirements of specific communication skills, the economic field division into numberless branches of activity – finance and banks, management, human resources, accounting, international relations, tourism – the presence of a certain literature in the field by means of translations, all such aspects represent grounded reasons for the existence of a global economic vocabulary in the Romanian language. Finding its origins in the structuralism philosophic principles and associated with the structuralism linguistic trends, economic language's globalisation becomes obvious nowadays through the occurrence of a large number of linguistic borrowings. Classified into either needless or necessary borrowed lexical units, lexical units borrowed and completely or at all assimilated in the target language, such borrowings lay the foundation of what specialists in the field call corporate language. Considering that the total or partial lack of knowledge on such language can become a real barrier in achieving communication, this study aims at analysing the level to which such words are known by the employees in the business environments involved in economic international partnerships and in multinational organisations.*

Key words: *globalisation, corporate language, business environment, competence, communication*

Code JEL: D83

1. Introduction

One of the premises determining the need to approach communication in a multilingual context, within the business environments in Romania, is the casual relationship underlying economic development and the implicit governing language. Besides the development of economic activities, economic progress equally involves the necessity to specialise in the field. Naturally, individuals looking either for performance, or even for just getting hired in the economic field, should get acquainted with, learn and use adequately the specific terminology. Just like other specific languages, the economic language makes use of a speciality vocabulary, used predominantly in translations, treaties, textbooks, scientific papers as well as in practical activities.

The economic side of globalisation, likely to operate by opening new economic markets in search of new work points and by extending commercial networks, has equally entailed a cultural side of this phenomenon, namely, the enforcement of a common economic language. Thus, we can claim that economic development can become one of the main causes determining the occurrence of lexical diversity in a language, a reason why economics can be regarded as a topic of interest closely related to the linguistic ones. The cause relationship we can mention at such level relies on the fact that the language is seen as a certain good, one necessary for national and international development, as well as for communication achievement (Kaplan and Baldauf, 1997, p. 154),.

Thus, the economic side of globalisation includes a transformation process of the specialised vocabulary. Terminological diversity – defined by an increase of neologisms, a quick assimilation of borrowings and linguistic calculi from other languages, seen as sources of linguistic influence – and stylistic diversity – the occurrence in writing of the oral colloquial language or argotic lexical items become, under such context, barriers in achieving communication efficiently. This article aims at analysing the level at which linguistic borrowings from other languages are adequately known and used by the employees of multinational companies, in whose field of activity communication defines

¹ Ph D Lecturer Ramona Elena Chițu – Constantin Brâncoveanu University, Faculty of Management, Marketing in Economic Affairs, Rm Vâcea, E-mail: ramona_chitu_79@yahoo.com.

certain linguistic particularities determined by their belonging to a certain country and by the world planning strategy, as well as in companies performing import-export activities or business relations with legal entities abroad.

The method of research, considered to be a quantitative one, is based on survey by means of questionnaires, applied to a sample of 20 employees, whose professional competence includes English communication skills. Questionnaires interpretation, for collecting the data needed for reaching our purpose, relies on three main directions: a correct understanding of the words used, compliance with the original phonetic form (in case no other form is noted in the Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language) and the suitable use of such words in the context.

2. Multilingual terminology and the corporate language

The trend to become international witnessed by specialised languages, mainly by the economic and technical one, finds its origin in a first attempt to achieve language uniformity. The reasons motivating such uniformity can be identified in the principles of positivist philosophy of the 50s and 60s “according to which, by means of a national planning, often based on economic planning and using the terminology in economic field, governments were able to overcome many of the problems (the great economic crisis, the second world war) which had overwhelmed them during the previous decades” (Kaplan and Baldauf, 1997, p.153).

As a consequence of such a trend, language globalisation by means of multilingual terminology is associated by the above-mentioned authors (Kaplan and Baldauf, 1997, p.153) with the structuralism trend, where “the audio-lingual method, based on teaching own linguistic structures, was considered a progress in the process of linguistic learning”. The characteristics underlying the development of society can be thus identified both in macro, by especially in micro structures, through this concern for learning foreign languages.

Besides the language of informatics, the economic language represents today the version of the Romanian language with a visible ascension towards internationalisation. An important role at such level of analysis belongs to the occurrence of linguistic borrowings in the business environments. A word borrowed from another language can be fully incorporated in the target language, taking over the phonology and spelling from this language, so that this word can be interpreted by most speakers as a native item. In economic language, we can identify such borrowings from French and English:

- *to implement (En) – a implementa*
- *to apply for (En)– a aplica*
- *to list (En)– a lista*
- *contrefaire (Fr)– a contraface*
- *influencer (Fr) – a influența*
- *solutioner (Fr) – soluționa*
- *leader (En) - lider*
- *to access (En) – a accesa*
- *to sponsor (En) – a sponsoriza*
- *convoquer (Fr)– a convoca*
- *proposer (Fr) – a propune*
- *inventaire (Fr) – inventar*
- *recensement (Fr) – recensământ*
- *interview (En) - interviu*

Latin origin terms are equally prominent in the language designating economic activities and they belong to all morphological categories, such as:

- *negocio – negotiation –negociere*
- *director – director – director*
- *administracion - administratin – administratie*
- *exportar – export – a exporta*

Encouraged, after 1989, by the more frequent, even obsessive use of the computer and the Internet, as far the technical language is concerned and, respectively, by the extension of economic networks, as far as the economic language is concerned, the

terminological import from other languages has been facing some difficulties in integrating and phonologically adjusting. According to the level of use, linguistic borrowings fall into the following classification (Platt et. al, 1984, pp. 88-89):

- ☑ occasional, but used at random;
- ☑ more frequently used by a number of speakers (stabilization of linguistic borrowings);
- ☑ used or recognised by most speakers (stabilized linguistic borrowings).

There are many other adjustments, besides pronunciation changes, which are likely to accompany the borrowed word. By their occurrence in the linguistic structure of the target language, in our case Romanian, borrowed words become native gradually. The most important processes of becoming native clearly involve phonology. When we encounter a foreign sound which does not exist in our language, we are likely to think the most natural thing is to replace that sound by the most similar native one. Nevertheless, it is difficult to determine the perfectly similar sound.

According to the author Pavol Kvetko, foreign words can become fully assimilated, considering their spelling, phonetics and morphology, according to the following linguistic standards (Kvetko, 2005, p. 97):

- The words fully assimilated are those which have occurred in the vocabulary of a language for a long time, so that their foreign origin cannot be even noticed, as they lose their foreign characteristics and spelling.
- The words partially assimilated are the words which are not completely integrated from semantic, grammatical, phonetic or orthographical point of view. The pronunciation and spelling of such partially assimilated words is largely different.
- The words which have not been assimilated are words unlikely to be adopted and they are used as such, for example, the word “*mouse*”.

Once they enter the Romanian language, economic terms are subject to vocabulary dynamics and implicitly to adjustments affecting their semantic content. The most frequent changes likely to occur are the following:

1. Widening of meaning - *leader* is used nowadays in the Romanian language under the general meaning of “chief, head, leading commander”, by means of its semantic evolution from the original meaning of “the leader of a party or labour organisation”;
2. Reduction of meaning - *know-how* initially used to designating “any information related to an industrial, commercial or scientific experience, necessary for manufacturing a product” is nowadays used as “technology transfer”.

3. Types of lexical borrowings

Words can be borrowed from one language into another by a wide range of means. In order to acquire the statute of a borrowed word, a lexical item shall be taken over without translation and made to comply with the borrowing linguistic conventions, considering its spelling and pronunciation. Another type of borrowing, known as a linguistic calculus, is in fact a translation of the lexical unit taken from another language. A lexical item used in another language with no kind of adjustment in terms of spelling or orthography is simply a foreign word.

Linguistic borrowings from English (British and American version) used in Romanian language, in a version partially or at all adjusted to Romanian rules, are known as Anglicism words. Enough spread in linguistics, the term Anglicism has been defined, interpreted and classified in different outstanding papers by authors well-known in the field, such as M. Grevisse, A. Martinet, S. Pușcariu, M. Avram etc. In the volume *Anglicism in the present Romanian language*, the term Anglicism is defined as “a type of foreign word which is not confined to unadjusted or useless borrowings and is defined as: a linguistic unit (not only a word, but also a formant, idiom, meaning or grammar construction) and even a type of English pronunciation or writing (including spelling),

whatever the regional variety of English language, so including American English, not only the British one” (Avram, 1997, p. 11).

According to the classification submitted by the author Sextil Pușcariu (Pușcariu, 1976, p. 11), Anglicism units are divided into two categories:

1. Necessary borrowings
2. Needless borrowings

Necessary borrowings are those words, collocations or idioms which do not have a correspondent in the Romanian language or which, although detaining such a lexical equivalent, present some advantages in comparison with the term in the autochthonous language. Such advantages include precision, accuracy and international use, denotative and connotative motivation (Stoichițoiu-Ichim, 2001, p. 85).

- *briefing*
- *cash and carry*
 - *marketing*
 - *management*
 - *factoring*
 - *voucher*
 - *cash-flow*
- *discount*
- *dumping*
- *broker*
- *consulting*
- *supermarket*
- *leasing*
- *merchandising*
- *brainstorming*
- *overdraft*
- *target*
- *tramping*

Needless borrowings are those foreign words likely to occur in one language due to the subjective trend of a certain social category of speakers to distinguish themselves linguistically. Such lexical items only double the Romanian words, without providing any further information, so the use of such words is not strictly necessary but it occurs from stylistic reasons:

- *job – slujbă*
- *talk-show – masă rotundă*
- *advertising – publicitate*
- *boss – șef, superior*
- *brand – marcă, firmă*
- *dealer – distribuitor*
- *trend – tendință*

This classification adjusted to Romanian language is in compliance with the law promulgated by the linguist George Pruteanu (Donici, 2010, p. 8), who suggests the translation of all foreign terms likely to appear in public places, wishing to avoid the confusion likely to be produced by those who do not speak foreign languages and the degradation of Romanian language. There are still certain words that even the regretted linguist George Pruteanu suggested to be used in their original version, such as „*brainstorming*” whose translation „*the storming of brains*” becomes inappropriate.

4. The need to know lexical borrowings in international business environments

In business environments involved in international economic partnerships as well as in multinational organisations, the economic culture, symbols and reference systems in the country of origin are basic coordinates governing communication. The presence of certain individuals from different cultures, the organisational framework well-defined in the economic culture of the country of origin, the need to match reality with language, to make the communication process easier and to assure a correct communication, all these aspects determine the occurrence and implementation of a certain lexical content, specific to the type of activity performed: industrial, commercial, banking, financial etc. Formed as such, the corporate language is generally considered a language of clichés which does not provide choices.

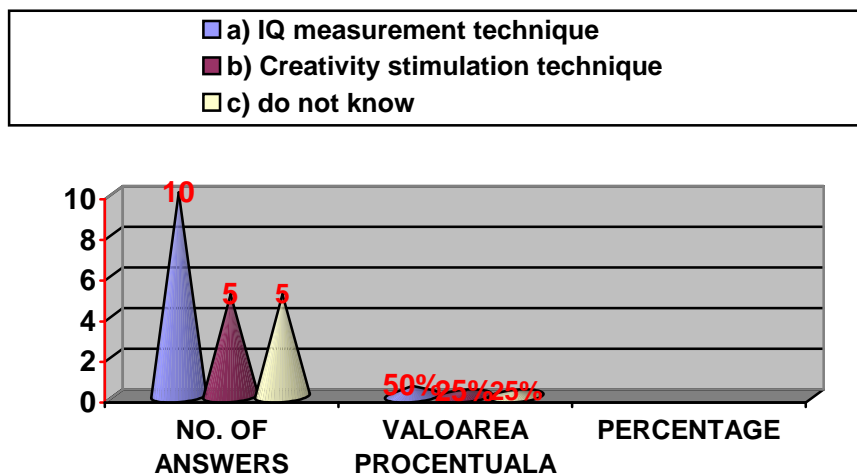
According to the requirements of the working environment, the employees must be able to use adequately the language namely built and to understand the social and cultural reality thus signified. Considering the division of corporate communication into two versions (S. Şerb, 2001, p. 39) – oral, which on its turn includes the formal and informal versions, as well as the written version subordinated to the administrative style – by the questionnaire applied we hereby aim at analysing the level to which linguistic borrowings are known in terms of oral communication. We motivate our preference for oral communication by stating that oral communication better supports the transfer between languages and helps us identify the personal style of the speaker, his/her expression particularities.

On the basis on the theoretical data previously provided, the results likely to be obtained follow three main directions:

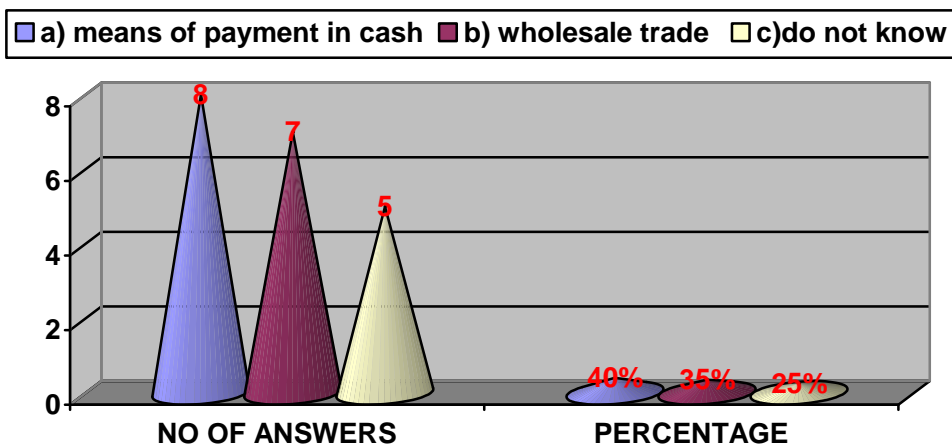
A. Proper understanding of the word used

Wishing to meet the requirements set in the professional environment, employees in international business environments get used to uttering lexical units borrowed from foreign languages and imposed by corporate communication, although the meaning of such words is sometimes completely unknown. Belonging to the category of needless Anglicism units, the word **brainstorming** seems to be correctly used only by 25% of the interviewed employees.

Question 1: What is the meaning of the word **brainstorming**, a word frequently used in phrases like *brainstorming meeting/session/technique*?

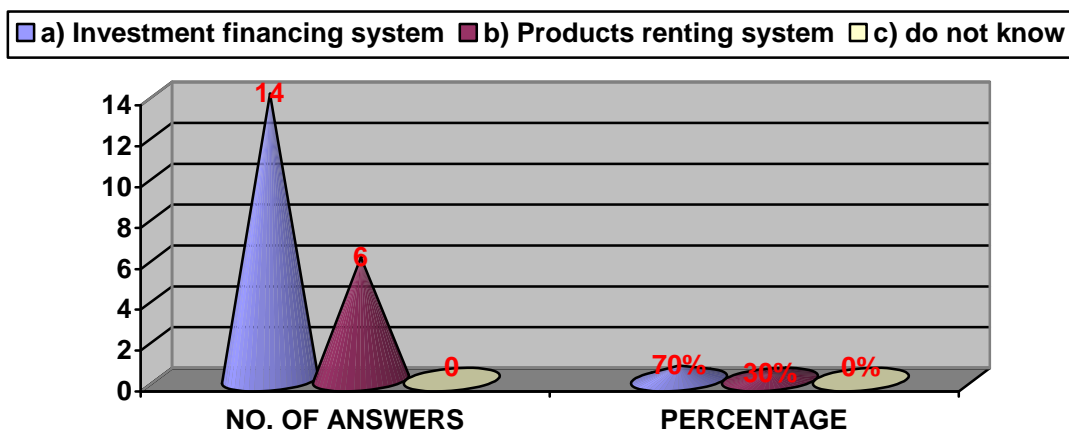


Question 2: The term **cash and carry** refers to the nature of a commercial activity or to a means of payment?



After interpreting the questionnaires applied, we can see that 65% of the people working in the economic business field do not know the borrowed terms used for referring to sales commercial techniques, otherwise useful on cash registers.

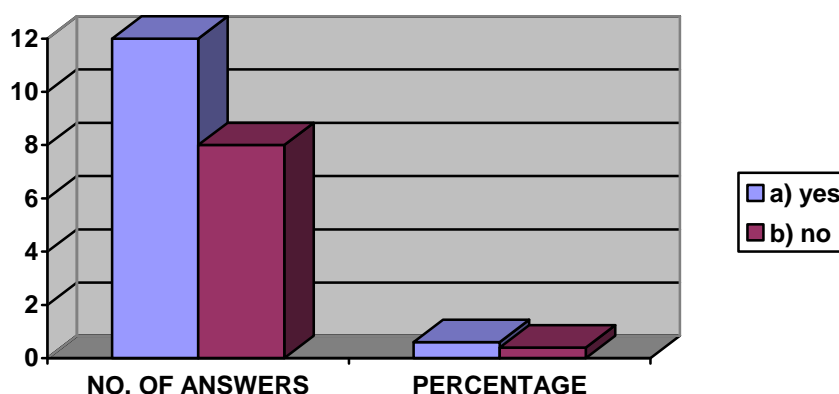
Question 3: Leasing is known as another form of common bank loans. What exactly does this term refer to?



B. Using borrowed lexical units in context

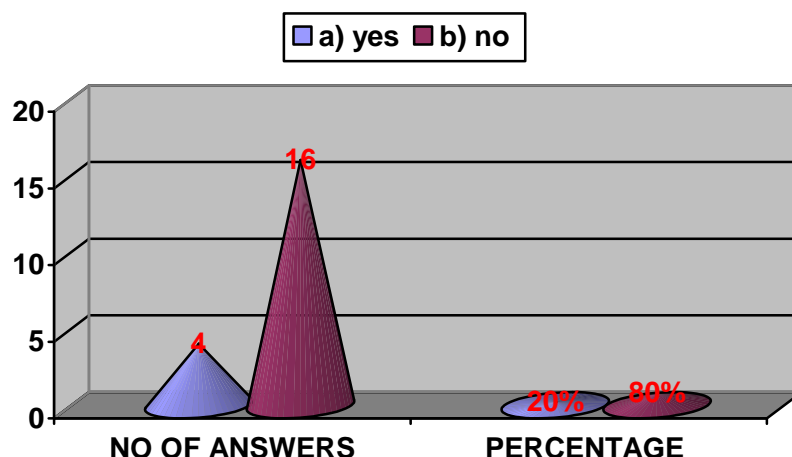
The ignorance of the borrowed terminology's meaning determines, on its turn, an unsuitable use of this category of words in the context. Pleonastic expressions become a common example of faulty communication achievement as far as the content is concerned. Making an average of the results obtained, 48.3% of the interviewed people consider appropriate such uses as: *cash money*, *board of management*, *overdraft withdrawal* (Ro. *bani cash*, *board de conducere*, *descoperire overdraft*).

Question 4: Do you consider appropriate the phrase **cash money** (Ro: **bani cash**)?

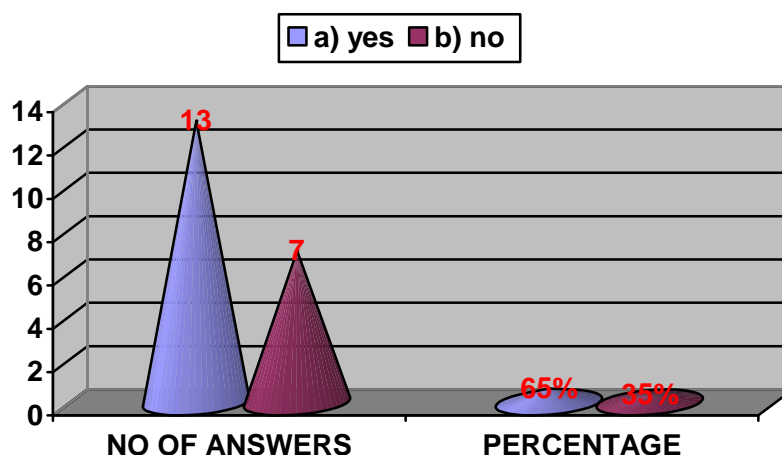


Question 5: Can you identify any mistake in the following text extracted from the Financial Newspaper?

The Germans from the Penny Market, the store network relying on discount policies, changed a few months ago 2 executives from the Management Board of the local subsidiary (Ro: board de conducere).



Question 6: As a result of their intention to meet the needs of withdrawing large amounts of money from accounts, banks have come up with a new withdrawal option, commonly defined as overdraft. In such a context, do we make any mistake saying: *I required the overdraft withdrawal from my current account?*



C. Pronunciation and spelling of the words borrowed

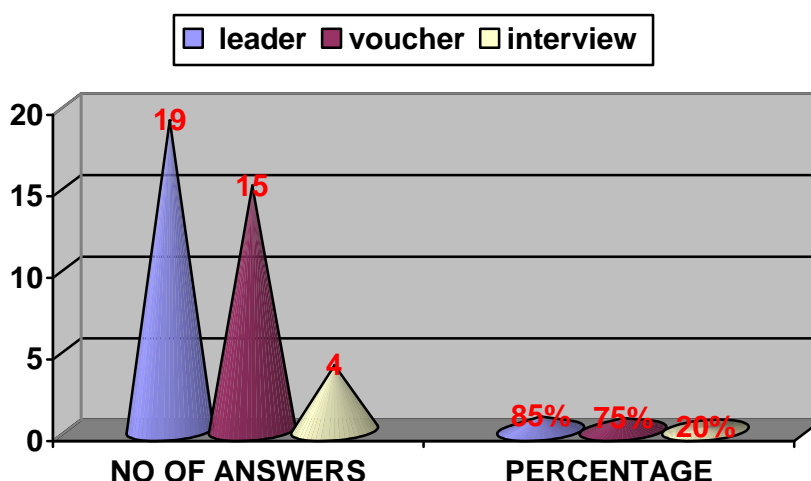
The non-observance of the original phonetic form and the permanent attempt to adjust the borrowed words both phonetically and graphically, by means of unjustified and unrecorded modifications in Romanian language, represents another trend reflecting the speakers' desire to cope with the new challenges. Frequently used in companies involved in distribution activities, words such as: **out-of-stock** (a term referring to the lack of a product in stock), **key-account** (a wholesaler or a leading manufacturer's customer assuring a large volume of sales) have already acquired a Romanian pronunciation - *auto stoc*, respectively *cheia caunt* – for an average of 49% of the interviewed people. (Questions 7, 8).

On the other hand, we have to underlie the trend of preserving the spelling of the original language even in the case of words already adjusted phonetically and graphically to the Romanian writing system. Thus, **interview**, **leader** and **voucher** are still an option for writing in Romanian for 60% of the interviewed ones.

Question 9: Circle the correct version in Romanian of the following words:

1. a) leader
b) lider
2. a) voucher
b) vaucer

3. a) interviu
- b) interview



False friends represent another cause for the confusion of mistakes made when considering the meaning of borrowed words. Because of this linguistic interference, the borrowed words are likely to be associated with the meaning of the words existing in the target language. Such a type of wrong association begins even with several Romanian neologisms, such as *lucrative* or *fortuitous*. Considering borrowings used in corporate communication and unadjusted to the Romanian language, interpretation errors occur with such words as: **agreement**, **collection**, **advertisement**. For 30% of the interviewed people, the word **agreement** (Ro – contract, understanding) is the corresponding word for the Romanian word entertainment (Ro: agreement).

Corporate communication has become a reality nowadays concerning the economic context and the social one where the organisation develops as well as a distinct field of activity of the organisation. In order to meet the requirements entailed by the internationalisation of economic affairs, a thorough professional training and as well as a deep acquisition of knowledge in the field are as important as communication skills in foreign languages, cultural adjustment being a natural consequence. Considered as a natural consequence of the need to render theoretical concept by using specific terminology, corporate communication is present at all levels of economic activity: management, labour planning, projects management, staff recruitment, building teamwork etc. Having in view the scientific rigor of the field and the role this type of language has, the abilities to understand and use words borrowed from other languages, especially from English, should be given a first place importance within the professional competence of employees from international companies, whatever the position they held in such legal entities.

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Annex 1

QUESTIONNAIRE

Respondent's personal data:

Name:

E-mail:

Phone number:

Questions:

1. What is the meaning of the word **brainstorming**, a word frequently used in phrases like *brainstorming meeting/session/technique*?
 - a) IQ measurement technique;
 - b) Creativity stimulation technique.
2. The term **cash and carry** refers to the nature of a commercial activity or to a means of payment?
 - a) Means of payment in cash;
 - b) Wholesale trade.
3. **Leasing** is known as another form of common bank loans. What exactly does this term refer to?
 - a) Investment financing system;
 - b) Products renting system.
4. Do you consider appropriate the phrase **cash money** (Ro: **bani cash**)?
 - a) yes;
 - b) no.
5. Can you identify any mistake in the following text extracted from the Financial Newspaper?
The Germans from the Penny Market, the store network relying on discount policies, changed a few months ago 2 executives from the Management Board of the local subsidiary (Ro: board de conducere).
 - a) yes;
 - b) no.
6. As a result of their intention to meet the needs of withdrawing large amounts of money from accounts, banks have come up with a new withdrawal option, commonly defined as overdraft. In such a context, do we make any mistake saying: *I required the overdraft withdrawal from my current account*?
 - a) yes;
 - b) No.
7. Besides the management of goods inventory, avoiding **out-of-stock** situations is an important responsibility of the employees in the Sales Department. Write down the correct pronunciation of the phrase **out-of-stock**.
8. Write down the correct pronunciation of the word **Key Account** (Manager), referring to a position where the employee deal with the most important customers of a company.
9. Circle the correct version of the following words:
 1. a) leader
b) lider
 2. a) voucher
b) vaucer
 3. a) interviu
b) interview
10. Render the Romanian correspondent for the English word **agreement**.