

# LEXICAL BLENDING IN PRESENT-DAY ROMANIAN: A CORPUS-BASED STUDY\*

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**Abstract:** Lexical blending has been a puzzle for linguists, especially because word formation processes are somehow predictable, whereas lexical blending is not. Romanian lexical blending has been barely discussed in the literature, just a few articles citing a small number of ephemeral creations (see below) based on scarce data, and having little theoretical implications. Our study is the first to present a fully-fledged corpus-based analysis of nonce and wider-accepted Romanian lexical blends, exploring the etymological, structural, phonological, semantic and stylistic patterns of present-day Romanian lexical blends, thus offering some insights into how these unusual lexical items are formed and used by Romanian native speakers.

**Keywords:** lexical blending, nonce words, borrowing, language contact, word formation.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

New words are born every day in all languages, be it through internal or external processes. Lexical blending is somehow the *Cinderella* of the former, as it is pretty much unpredictable and, even if linguists have tried to define and theorise it, the outcome has not been one single-theoretical framework, but many; some share common aspects, while others are fundamentally divergent (see Section 2 below).

Lexical blending has been discussed mainly in connection with English, but other languages have also been considered (French, Italian, Polish etc.); little has been said about Romanian (see Section 2).

As empirical observations have shown us that lexical blending seems to be pretty productive in present-day Romanian, especially in journalese, we have decided to look at Romanian lexical blending synchronically, starting from a corpus of present-day Romanian. Section 3 discusses our corpus-based analysis, and in Section 4 we draw some conclusions.

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## 2. LEXICAL BLENDING

The definition of lexical blending is marked by widespread disagreement, and the process itself has fuzzy boundaries. Blends are commonly defined as new words coined out of parts of (at least) two words such as *brunch* < *breakfast* + *lunch* or *smog* < *smoke* + *fog* (Bauer 2003: 325, Kemmer 2003: 70, Mattiello 2013: 111). But the consensus among linguists stops here.

Some linguists have tried to narrow down the definition of blending only to those outputs that combine the first part of the first source-word with the last part of the second source-word, as in *Oxbridge* < *Oxford* + *Cambridge* (Bat-El 2006: 66, Hamans 2020: 31–32). Words such as *carjacking* < *car* + *hijacking*, where only one source word is clipped, or *slanguage* < *slang* + *language*, where both words with an overlapping segment may be observed intact, are thus left out. Nevertheless, most researchers do consider such examples blends (Kemmer 2003, Bauer, Lieber, Plag 2013, Mattiello 2013, Renner 2022).

The same narrow definition excludes combinations of two initial or two final word parts as in *agitprop* < *agitation* + *propaganda* and *frohawk* < *afro* + *mohawk* and calls them *stub compounds* (Hamans 2020: 32–33), *complex clippings* (Gries 2006) or *clipped compounds* (Bauer, Lieber, Plag 2013: 458). But Mattiello (2013), Renner (2019, 2022), among others, do consider these words blends.

Other attempts to define blending rely on phonological and semantic aspects. For Arcordia and Montermini (2012), source-word overlap is mandatory for blending, and Tomaszewicz (2012) accounts for this aspect postulating an Output-to-Output faithfulness constraint in the framework of Optimality Theory. But a more inclusive approach shows that segment overlap accounts only for 40% of blend formations in French and 50% in English (Renner 2019: 34).

Kubozono (1990: 1) and Dressler (2000: 5) consider blends only the outputs of two source-words in a paradigmatic, i.e., coordinate, relation, e.g., *lupper* < *lunch* + *supper*, and dismiss the ones in which there is a head-modifier relation between the two source-words, e.g., *breathalyzer* < *breath* + *analyzer*, whereas most researchers take into account both paradigmatic and syntagmatic blends (Bat-El 2006: 67, Mattiello 2013: 123–125, Renner 2019, 2022). These conflicting views reflect the polymorphous nature of blends.

López-Rúa (2004), Renner (2006, 2022), and Mattiello (2013) propose a more inclusive ‘prototypical approach’ that accounts for more diverse morphological patterns, a definition that we also embrace. In our opinion defining lexical blending as a “non-concatenative process of word combination that minimally involves some subtraction on one input word” (Renner 2022) allows a more fine-grained analysis. Other features, such as the number of clippings, clipping pattern, segment overlap, and source-word relation are secondary and subjected to cross-language variation.

The current interest towards lexical blending is most likely motivated by its increased productivity in many languages. For instance, in English, the number of blends recorded in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) seems to double every 50 years (Mattiello 2019: 2). English also seems to have been the driving force for the increased productivity of lexical blending in other languages such as Italian (Cacchiani 2016), Dutch (Hamans 2021), Polish (Konieczna 2012) and Bulgarian (Stamenov 2015).

Romanian still lacks a comprehensive study of lexical blends. Romanian linguists have discussed almost exclusively the so-called ‘contamination’ (Ro. *contaminație*,

*contaminare*), an unintentional process by means of which speakers merge two words that have some sort of semantic relation, usually two synonyms or near-synonyms, as in *ciureadă* ‘herd’ < *ciurdă* ‘herd’ + *cireadă* ‘herd’ (an overview in Moroianu, Vasileanu 2019). Little attention has been paid to voluntary blends: only a handful of articles analyse a few examples, usually taken from humor magazines (Răuțu 2010, Roibu 2020) or used in marketing (Popescu 2015), most being ephemeral formations (Roibu 2020: 323–324). There is a certain hesitation on how to call words such as *Șparlament* < *șparli* ‘(slang) to steal’ + *Parlament* ‘Parliament’, the most accepted term being *cuvânt-valiză* ‘portmanteau’ (Roibu 2020), but occasionally other terms such as *fuzionare* ‘fusion’ (Popescu 2015) and *telescopare* ‘telescoping’ (Răuțu 2010) are used. Since there has been little data and no information on how often certain blends are used, and on whether their use is only linked to the context in which they are recorded or is more wide-spread, no generalization regarding Romanian blends could be done until now.

### 3. A CORPUS-BASED STUDY OF PRESENT-DAY ROMANIAN LEXICAL BLENDS

#### 3.1. The corpus

To offer a comprehensive analysis of present-day Romanian lexical blending, we made appeal to a more than 60 000 000 words corpus comprising online texts, mainly journals, (humor) magazines, blogs, forums etc. The final corpus was processed with Wordsmith, resulting a 6.5-sheet 65 000-each word list that we manually checked in search for blends. During the process, we also monitored the online press. In the end, we came up with 324 items. Basic statistic tests were performed on our results using the online calculator Data Tab.

#### 3.2. The corpus analysis

Out of the 324 identified blends, 137 words seem to have been accepted by Romanian native speakers and are more widely used, i.e., outside the context in which we identified them, as shown by Google searches; we will further refer to them as accepted blends (hence ABs). On the contrary, 187 words are nonce words (hence NBs) or occasionalisms, i.e., words coined for a particular occasion, only by a specific writer or in one particular work, words that are unlikely to become part of the language (Bauer 2001: 38). Some nonce words may be more widely used during certain periods or in particular contexts, but they die out once the occasion they have been coined for falls into oblivion. However, the status of nonce word may sometimes be only temporary: every now and then, nonce words might be more widely accepted by speakers and thus become established words (Mattiello 2017: 25).

##### 3.2.1. Etymological aspects

Out of the 324 blends, 100 are international words and 224 genuine Romanian formations. Their origin closely correlates with their circulation, as can be observed from Table 1: most ABs are international words, and most international words are ABs, whereas

most NBs are Romanian formations, and most Romanian formations are NBs. The correlation is statistically significant:  $\chi^2(1) = 134.94$ ,  $p = <.001$ , Cramér's  $V = 0.65$ .

Table 1

Autochthonous vs. international blends.

	NBs		ABs		Total
	n	%	n	%	n
Autochthonous	177	94.65%	47	34.31%	224
International	10	5.35%	90	65.69%	100
Total	187	100%	137	100%	324

International blends are (i) borrowings still preserving their original form, e.g., *webinar* < *web* + *seminar*, *sexting* < *sex* + *texting*, (ii) adapted borrowings, e.g., Ro. *dramedie* < eng. *dramedy* < *drama* + *comedy*, which are usually perceived by Romanian native speakers as created from Romanian source-words (Vasileanu, Niculescu-Gorpin 2022), and (iii) calques, e.g., Ro. *furculingură* 'spork' < *furculiță* 'fork' + *lingură* 'spoon', where although the source-words are Romanian, their combination relies on Eng. *spork*. Out of the 100 international formations 76 are definitely English-based, 3 French (e.g., *alicament* 'highly nutritious food' < *aliment* 'food' + *médicament* 'medicine'), 1 Russian (*cominform* 'the communist information bureau') and 20 originate in multiple languages, with English usually among them (e.g., *yogilates* < *yoga* + *pilates*).

As two thirds of ABs are international formations, and only one third was formed in Romanian, it follows that mostly international blends are used more widely in present-day Romanian (see Table 1).

There are 10 borrowings that seem to remain nonce words, either because they are coined out of proper names (e.g., *Merkozy* < *Merkel* + *Sarkozy*) or because they have not gained popularity yet. But being a nonce word now may be just a temporary condition. 8 words are hapaxes in our corpus, e.g., the English borrowing *homecation* < *home* + *vacation*, or the Ro. loan translation *stacanță* < *sta* 'to stay' + *vacanță* 'vacation', after Eng. *staycation*. By the time this article will have been published, they may be more widely accepted and thus become part of the Romanian language.

The few autochthonous ABs are mostly ironic and jocular formations (30 out of 47 items), e.g., *tembelizor* < *tembel* 'idiot' + *televizor* 'TV'. Only a minority of words are stylistically unmarked, e.g., *furstafide* 'raisin cookies' < *fursecuri* 'cookies' + *stafide* 'raisins'.

Autochthonous blends seem to be less used and are more context-specific. 177 out of 224 items, i.e., 79.02% are NBs. 105 are ironic or jocular blends, some of them created from proper names, e.g., *Vanghelion* 'a New Year's Eve party organized by Vanghelie, a former mayor' < *Vanghelie* 'name of a former mayor' + *revelion* 'New Year's Eve'; others occur in humor magazines, alluding to specific events, e.g., *golfudulie* < *golf* 'golf' + *fudulie* 'arrogance', reference to a statement made by the current Romanian president, Klaus Iohannis, that golf is an accessible sport that can be played by anyone. Another 56 items are brand names, e.g., *Sănățele* 'a brand of crackers' < *sănătos* 'healthy' + *sărățele*

‘salty crackers’, or were created for specific marketing campaigns, e.g., *Ieftinuarie* ‘name of a sales campaign by a travel agency that took place in January’ < *ieftin* ‘cheap’ + *ianuarie* ‘January’.

Autochthonous blends are not always 100% autochthonous, i.e., Romanian words may combine with Anglicisms or English words, e.g., *smartphone* ‘cracked smartphone’ < *spart* ‘cracked’ + *smartphone*, *liteviezure* ‘alleged Dacian cryptocurrency’ < *Litecoin* + *viezure* ‘badger’.

### 3.2.2. Blending patterns

ABs and NBs seem to have different structural patterns, i.e. the number and type of clippings differ among the two groups, as it may be observed in Table 2, and the differences are statistically significant:  $\chi^2(7) = 19.91$ ,  $p = .006$ , Cramér’s  $V = 0.25$ .

Structural patterns may be described by labelling each part of the source-words (hence SW). If SW1 has two parts AB, and SW2 has another two parts CD, the resulting blend may take the different forms in Table 2 below, depending on the fragments it preserves. The deletion of grammatical endings should not be analysed as clipping, since these endings are usually omitted in Romanian derivation (e.g., *broască* ‘frog’ + *-uță* > *broscuță* ‘froggy’) and often in compounding.

An AD blend combines the first part of SW1 with the last part of SW2, e.g., *covridog* ‘a hotdog in a pretzel dough’ < *covrig* ‘pretzel’ + *hotdog* ‘hotdog’. An ABD blend combines a whole SW1 with the last part of SW2, as in *micig* ‘a public feast to which the public is attracted with some specific Romanian minced meat rolls’ < *mici* ‘specific Romanian minced meat rolls’ + *miting* ‘manifestation’. An ACD blend is formed by merging the first part of SW1 with an entire SW2, e.g., *patrihoț* ‘a Romanian (usually politician) who claims to be a patriot, but who is more interested in his own personal economic affairs and his own gain once in power’ < *patriot* ‘patriot’ + *hoț* ‘thief’. An ABCD blend displays an overlap between the end of SW1 and the beginning of SW2, so it is impossible to say which of the two words has been clipped, if any, e.g., *manechinuită* ‘ironical for supermodel’ < *manechină* ‘(super)model’ + *chinuită* ‘tortured’. The AC pattern preserves the first part of both SWs, e.g., *Harcov* ‘region comprising Harghita and Covasna’ < *Harghita* + *Covasna*, whereas the rarer BD preserves the last part of both SWs, e.g., *girocopter* ‘gyrocopter’ < *autogir* ‘autogyro’ + *elicopter* ‘helicopter’, a transparent borrowing. A couple of Romanian brand names display an ABC structure, e.g., *Certasig* ‘name of an insurance company’ < *cert* ‘sure’ + *asigura* ‘insurance’. Blends in which the two SWs have been intercalated appear only in the NBs group, e.g., *Băsexu* < *Bănescu* ‘Traian Bănescu, former president of Romania’ + *sex* ‘sex’.

As seen in Table 2 below, ABs are mainly AD, ABD and ACD, whereas NBs are mainly ABD and ACD. The increased frequency AD in ABs may be due to the fact that more ABs are foreign blends. Moreover, as seen in Table 3 below, ADs are twice as frequent in the total number of international Romanian blends than in the autochthonous ones. ABDs and ACDs are pretty similarly represented in both ABs and NBs, and the same pattern is also observed for the total number of Romanian blends as per etymology. A sharp difference is present in ABCD distribution, the most transparent pattern as both SWs remain intact: there are twice as many ABCDs in NBs than in ABs (Table 2). As the proportion is the same when comparing Romanian vs. international blends (see Table 3), this finding may be due to words’ etymology.

Overall, ABD and ACD patterns are the most frequently employed in Romanian lexical blending, followed by AD.

*Table 2*

Structural blending patterns: ABs vs. NBs.

	ABs		NBs		Total
	n	%	n	%	n
AD	38	27.74%	27	14.44%	65
ABD	38	27.74%	56	29.95%	94
ACD	36	26.28%	48	25.67%	84
ABCD	13	9.49%	35	18.72%	48
AC	11	8.03%	12	6.42%	23
BD	1	0.73%	0	0%	1
ABC	0	0%	2	1.07%	2
intercalated	0	0%	7	3.74%	7
Total	137	100%	187	100%	324

*Table 3*

Structural blending patterns for Romanian lexical blends as per etymology.

	International		Autochthonous		Total
	n	%	n	%	n
AD	28	28%	37	16.52%	65
ABD	29	29%	65	29.02%	94
ACD	24	24%	60	26.79%	84
ABCD	8	8%	40	17.86%	48
AC	10	10%	13	5.8%	23
BD	1	1%	0	0%	1
ABC	0	0%	2	0.89%	2
intercalat	0	0%	7	3.13%	7
Total	100	100%	224	100%	324

For some researchers, AD is the prototypical type of blending, and they even restrict blending to this morphological pattern (see above, Section 2). However, AD is mainly preferred in English, whereas ACD is more frequent in French, and ABD in Polish, where there is a balanced distribution of the other structural patterns (Renner 2019: 33, Koniczna 2012: 63). It follows that blending patterns differ due to etymology: most Romanian ABs are English-based words, so AD has double the frequency it has in NBs.

But psycholinguistic factors may also play an important part. Since blends are cognitively linked to their source-words “which are co-activated when the blend is used” (Kemmer 2003: 71), processing a blend depends, at least for the novel creations, on source-word recognizability. Clipping a word makes it less recognizable, so ABD, ACD, ABCD patterns should facilitate blend comprehension, since at least one SW is preserved intact. This is why the ABCD blends, the most transparent pattern, are present in a much higher proportion in the nonce-word group.

But recognizability may be achieved in more than one way, and competing strategies influence the form of the blending output (see below).

### 3.2.3. Metric structure and other phonologic characteristics

The literature on lexical blending states that phonologic characteristics are highly relevant for blends (Kemmer 2003: 75). One salient feature in blending is segment overlap that often makes it impossible to distinguish the exact contribution of each SW to the resulting blend and poses serious theoretic problems to morphologists since it contradicts the traditional view of morphemes as well-defined units. Though present only in a proportion of blends (e.g. 40% in French and 50% in English), segment overlap is considered mandatory for blending by some linguists (see Section 2 above), maybe because it is such a conspicuous feature.

Romanian spelling is mostly phonological (except for some borrowings and mainly present-day Anglicisms) so graphemic overlap mostly corresponds to the phonologic one. Since many Romanian blends are of English origin or contain some English material, there are cases of phonologic overlap only (e.g., *fraierfox* < *fraier* ‘loser’ + *Firefox*, as most Romanians have an American pronunciation of *Firefox*) or graphemic overlap only (e.g., *Energaz* ‘name of an energy and gas provider’ < *energie* ‘energy’ + *gaz* ‘gas’, where the *g* in *energie* is actually part of the graphic transcription of [dʒ]). This is why Tables 4 and 5 are slightly different.

NBs comprise a larger number of items with segment overlap than ABs. More specifically, 59.36% NBs display graphemic overlap and 60.96% phonologic overlap, whereas only 42.34% ABs exhibit graphemic overlap and 48.91% phonologic overlap. Comparing NBs and ABs, the difference is statistically significant ( $\chi^2(1) = 9.18$ ,  $p = .002$ , Cramér’s  $V = 0.17$  for graphemic overlap, and also for the phonological one  $\chi^2(1) = 4.66$ ,  $p = .031$ , Cramér’s  $V = 0.12$ ).

Tables 4 and 5 below show that Romanian NBs are more phonologically driven than ABs, i.e., segment overlap facilitates blending.

Table 4

Graphemic overlap in the ABs vs. the NBs.

	ABs		NBs		Total
	n	%	n	%	n
overlap	58	42.34%	111	59.36%	169
no overlap	79	57.66%	76	40.64%	155
Total	137	100%	187	100%	324

Table 5

Phonologic overlap in the ABs vs. the NBs.

	ABs		NBs		Total
	n	%	n	%	n
overlap	67	48.91%	114	60.96%	181
no overlap	70	51.09%	73	39.04%	143
Total	137	100%	187	100%	324

But other phonologic features may also increase SWs recognizability, for example, metrics.

Following Ronneberger-Sibold (2012), we will briefly discuss two types of lexical blends: contour vs. telescope blends.

In contour blends, the resulting word adopts the metric structure, i.e., number of syllables and stress pattern, of one of the SWs, as in *biniște* ‘a state of mind of feeling well and peaceful’ < *bine* ‘well’ + *liniște* ‘peacefulness’, where SW2 is the blend metric matrix. Contour blends are processed based on their phonologic properties: the hearer identifies the sound shape of the matrix SW, then recognizes the open slot and fills it in with material from the other word, which is then recovered.

For Ronneberger-Sibold (2012), telescope blends are only those that combine two whole SWs with a middle overlapping segment (the ABCD type, see 3.2). Other blend types are dismissed as fragment blends, and little is said about their processing. We believe that the definition of telescope blends is too restrictive; consequently we consider telescope blends all outputs longer than the longest of the SWs, even if not both SWs are preserved completely. In our opinion, words such as *buldoexcavator* ‘a vehicle that works as both a bulldozer and an excavator’ < *buldozer* ‘bulldozer’ + *excavator* ‘excavator’ are processed in the same way as, for example, *grotescomic* ‘grotesque and comic in the same time’ < *grotesc* ‘grotesque’ + *comic* ‘comic’, i.e., based on the preservation of more phonologic material from both SWs and not based on metric cues.



Overall, Table 6 shows that most ABs and NBs are contour blends (the difference is only marginally significant,  $\chi^2(2) = 5.37$ ,  $p = .068$ , Cramér's  $V = 0.13$ ). There are more telescope NBs because they need to be more transparent to be recognized, so they rely more on straightforward material preservation and less on abstract features such as contour.

Table 6

Telescope, contour and other blend shapes within the ABs vs the NBs.

	ABs		NBs		Total
	n	%	n	%	n
telescope	32	23.36%	66	35.29%	98
contour	86	62.77%	98	52.41%	184
other	19	13.87%	23	12.3%	42
Total	137	100%	187	100%	324

#### 3.2.4. Semantic features

Semantic headedness has been discussed in the literature mainly in regard to English and/or French. Renner (2019) suggests that tests previously applied for compounds, i.e., a test of hyponymy – trying to establish which of the two words in the compound is a hyponym to the other one – are not always feasible for lexical blends. Renner also considers that semantic headedness could also be assigned by looking at the transfer of conceptual features from the SWs to the resulting blend, i.e., the ‘conceptual feature or set of conceptual features which is dominant in the output’ (Renner 2019: 37).

We believe that analysing which SWs contributes more conceptual and semantic material to the final blend is the best way to decide headedness, at least for Romanian. Starting from this assumption, our corpus-analysis shows (Table 7) that right-headedness is the preferred pattern for Romanian blends, at least in our data. A correlation of the data here with those in Table 1 above suggests that not only international, English-based lexical blends, mostly found in the ABs, display this property, but also NBs. One possible explanation for this phenomenon could be the English influence, i.e., since lexical blending has increased its productivity under the present-day English influence, Romanian speakers feel that the right-headed pattern is more productive and maybe, more psychologically silent.

Table 7 below also shows that double-headed blends are present in both ABs and NBs, but significantly more in ABs; left-headedness, though also present in ABs, it is better represented in NBs.

Table 7

Semantic head distribution of ABs and NBs.

Semantic head	ABs		NBs		Total
	n	%	n	%	n
sw1	23	16.79%	50	26.74%	73
sw2	68	49.64%	108	57.75%	176
both	44	32.12%	20	10.7%	64
either	2	1.46%	0	0%	2
none	0	0%	9	4.81%	9
Total	137	100%	187	100%	324

When it comes to the meaning of the resulting lexical blends (see Table 8 below), there are 254 blends that display a hybrid meaning, i.e., the meaning of the resulting lexical blend preserves some meaning components from both SWs, irrespectively of the relationship existing between the SWs, or the semantic head of the blend. This finding suggests that structural and phonetic/graphic hybridity usually, but not always, corresponds to semantic hybridity.

Table 8

Semantic meaning of ABs and NBs.

	ABs		NBs		Total
	n	%	n	%	n
hybrid	114	83.21%	140	74.87%	254
sw1	9	6.57%	20	10.7%	29
sw2	9	6.57%	14	7.49%	23
sw1, sw2	4	2.92%	1	0.53%	5
sw1/sw2	1	0.73%	0	0%	1
name	0	0%	5	2.67%	5
extra hybrid	0	0%	7	3.74%	7
Total	137	100%	187	100%	324

There are fewer cases where the blend preserves the meaning of one of the SWs, and the other SW adds pragmatic or stylistic rather than semantic information, e.g., *Călăraşington* ‘ironical for Călăraşi’ < *Călăraşi* + *Washington*. There are even fewer cases where both SWs are in an (almost-synonymic) relationship, the resulting blend being a new synonym of the SWs, e.g., *ţopârlan* ‘rude man’ < *ţop* ‘rude man’ + *mârlan* ‘rude man’.

There are 7 NBs with ‘extra hybrid’ meaning, i.e., lexical blends whose meaning cannot be recovered from the combination of the SWs alone, but people need some extra contextual or background information to be able to access the full meaning of the resulting blend. Such an example is *litevievzure* ‘alleged Dacian cryptocurrency’ < *Litecoin* + *vievzure* ‘badger’ – to be able to recover the meaning component ‘Dacian’, people are required to know that *vievzure* is considered a substrate word; otherwise, people may think of a cryptocurrency that has a badger as symbol, for instance.

### 3.2.5. Stylistic features

A complete description of Romanian lexical blends also calls for an analysis of their stylistic features (see Table 9 below).

There is a striking difference between ABs and NBs ( $\chi^2(4) = 155.27$ ,  $p = <.001$ , Cramér’s  $V = 0.69$ ). More specifically, 62.77% ABs are standard words, and this may be due to the fact that most ABs are international words, whose meaning and context of use have been already established and accepted by a large part of Romanian native speakers. Being ABs, they serve to clear communicative purposes and bring important information to the context. On the contrary, NBs are mainly used either ironically and/or jokingly (57.75%) or in marketing (29.95%) because their main purpose in the communicative context is to attract readers’ attention. Moreover, 27.01% of ABs are also used ironically and/or jokingly, making this stylistic feature the most important characteristic of Romanian lexical blends.

Table 9

Stylistic features of ABs and NBs.

	ABs		NBs		Total
	n	%	n	%	n
standard	86	89.58%	10	10.42%	96
ironic/jokingly	37	25.52%	108	74.48%	145
marketing	4	6.67%	56	93.33%	60
literary-artistic	1	7.14%	13	92.86%	14
technical-scientific	9	100%	0	0%	9
Total	137		187		324

## CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of Romanian lexical blends proposed here represents the first comprehensive study of lexical blending on a corpus of present-day Romanian. Little, if anything, was said on the subject in relation to the Romanian language before.

Our study shows that lexical blending does exist in Romanian and is pretty productive: out of the 324 recorded blends, 224 are autochthonous, and only 100 borrowings.

It is fascinating how inventive people can be with language: most autochthonous blends are nonce words (177), words created for a specific occasion, usually either in journalese to ironically or jokingly describe something and thus to attract readers' attention or in marketing, again to attract readers' attention to a particular product. It seems that the main purpose of Romanian blends is to catch people's attention.

Since the analysis has also focused on the differences and similarities between Romanian ABs and NBs, some general conclusions regarding Romanian blends can be drawn.

From a structural point of view, Romanian blends fit the patterns described in the literature for other languages, with ABD and ACD being the most frequently used structures in Romanian blends (ABD – 94 items and ACD – 84 items). It seems that Romanians prefer more transparent, clearer blends that preserve more phonologic material from the SWs. AD is the third structural pattern and is present in 65 items that mostly correspond to English lexical blends.

The analysis of the phonological features suggests that Romanian lexical blending is favored by segment overlapping. More specifically, there are more lexical blends in the NB category, mostly autochthonous formation, marked by segment overlapping, than in the AB group. Moreover, a large proportion of Romanian blends adopt the metric structure of one of the SWs so that hearers may decode the blend based on metric cues. However, NBs tend to preserve more phonological material from the SWs resulting in longer blends as speakers try to create more transparent blends, with an increased SW recognizability.

Semantically, the Romanian lexical blends analysed are right-headed (a finding that points towards the English influence) and they usually have a hybrid meaning, i.e., both SWs contribute to the meaning of the resulting blend; this distinguishes them from Romanian traditional blends, where the output is usually a synonym or a near-synonym of one or both SWs (Moroianu, Vasileanu 2019: 159).

Overall, there were more NBs than ABs in our corpus. This has several implications. First of all, it shows that the word creation phenomenon is currently internally productive. Secondly, it suggests that Romanian native speakers consider blending a handy option in creating words that fit one particular occasion. Thirdly, blends do more than convey some lexical meaning; they also convey users' attitudes, i.e., by using an ironic or playful blend, writers are also expressing their attitudes towards the subject under discussion. Last, but not least lexical blending seems to gain more important status among other internal word formation processes in present-day Romanian.

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