

False Friends in Tourism Vocabulary

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<https://doi.org/10.52744/AUCSFLSA.2025.01.16>

Abstract

Tourism terminology, the subject matter of this study, is not relatively uniform as far as the content is concerned, and represents a special strand of terminological research, due to the fact that tourism is a field which is in a continuous change, new words and expressions being adopted. False friends have received worldwide lexicographic consideration. The fact that similar words in different languages do not necessarily overlap semantically has inspired many linguists to identify false friends in different languages and provide a lexical description of them in dictionaries. This paper aims at raising awareness of the existence of Lexical FF-s in English and Romanian tourism context and the actual difference arise from the various cognitive patterns at work in the two languages, which sometimes do not allow for cultural patterns to be transmitted directly.

Keywords: analysis, cultural differences, source of confusion, etc.

Rezumat

Terminologia folosită în turism, tema prezentei lucrări, nu este uniformă din punct de vedere al conținutului și reprezintă un aspect aparte al terminologiei în general, grație faptului că, turismul este un domeniu aflat într-o continuă expansiune, în care noi cuvinte și expresii sunt adoptate. Prietenii falși au primit o mare atenție în studiile de specialitate, în întreaga lume. Faptul că unele cuvinte deși au forme similare în diferite limbi nu se suprapun la fel de bine din punct de vedere semantic a stârnit atenția și astfel, mulți lingviști au început să identifice aceste cuvinte și au oferit explicații lexicale cuprinzătoare despre ele în dicționare. Lucrarea de față are ca scop nu numai, aducerea în prim plan a acestor termeni care apar în terminologia folosită în turism, dar și evidențierea diferențelor care apar în traducerea lor pentru că atât româna cât și engleza nu permit transmiterea în mod direct a acestor aspecte de diferențiere culturală existente între cele două limbi.

Cuvinte cheie: analiză, diferențe culturale, sursă de confuzie etc.

1. Introduction

When considering false friends across languages it is necessary to point out that the amount of false friends differs from one language to

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another. The phenomenon of false friends has been a topic of hot discussion in the area of linguistic language acquisition, translation and contrastive studies. False friends (FF-s) are generally defined as pairs of words that look or sound phonologically and or orthographically similar in two languages but differ significantly in meaning ¹. FF -s are usually distinguished from each other in terms of their etymologies. According to Chamizo Dominguez and Nerlich ² FF-s in two or more languages come into existence either by coincidence or due to etymological relation. FF-s resulting from the first situation are called “*chance FF-s*” and those formed in the second situation are called “*semantic FF-s*”. Chance FF-s are those pairs which “share the same form but have different etymologies and different meanings in different languages” while semantic FF-s refer to pairs of words which have “the same etymological origin, their meanings differ in different languages, but one can still detect semantic relations between them”. FF-s have been investigated linguistically in many languages from different perspectives. The majority of these studies were devoted to the FF-s in English and Spanish (Beltran, 2006, Dominguez & Nerlich 2002, Roca-Varela, 2014) English and Russian (Yaylaci & Argynbayev, 2014), etc.

The aim of this study is twofold:

- i) To identify false friends through a large tourism corpus and to make a list to serve as a guide for further linguistic studies
- ii) To emphasize that studying false friends has important implications for translation cross-linguistic communication, also helps to avoid misunderstandings and mistranslations.

According to Cambridge Dictionary ³ a false friend is “a word that is often confused with a word in another language with a different meaning because the two words look or sound similar”.

2. Materials and Methods

The article introduces the pair of false friends in discussion. The English term from which the interference occurs comes first and then its seemingly Romanian term and at last its meaning in fact/ Romanian translation has been provided. The use of corpora is beneficial from a contrastive point of view allowing for both theoretical and more applied analysis of false friends in Tourism vocabulary. A large amount of

¹ Chamizo Dominguez & Nerlich 2002, Chamizo Dominguez 2008, Nido, 2000, Roca-Varela 2014

² Chamizo-Domínguez, P. & Nerlich, B. (2002). False friends: their origin and semantics in some selected languages. *Journal of Pragmatics* 34, 1833–1849. 1833, 2002

³ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/false-friend>



materials were consulted or collected from official tourism websites, travelling blogs and social media.

3. Sources of confusion

False friends represent one of the possible manifestations of interference⁴ between Romanian and English. The similarity between certain English and Romanian terms may lead to a tendency towards an extension of equivalences to the point of establishing an incorrect semantic correspondence between those items. Transfer of meaning between “false friends” word pairs from English and Romanian which in spite of similarities in form, have different and sometimes opposite meanings, is a negative one, a source of linguistic obscurity, contrary to semantic precision and notional clarity that tourism terminology aims at. There are some clear sources of confusion in what the use of “false friends” is regarded. We may distinguish a category of sources related to behaviour and another one concerning the linguistic approach. Thus, in what the human element is implied, it is first of all a question of wrong choice of words due to directness and spontaneity of conversations. It occurs because of the normal tendency to use the most familiar words that come to one’s mind when talking, as an unconscious and uncontrolled means of producing fluent communication. This comes really natural and unnoticed because of the similarity with the mother tongue of the speaker. It is doubtless that in such situations the fact that these words exist might be considered somewhat helpful. The use of some of these words presents the advantage of better fluency and higher speed. Of course, this holds true for the mistakes that are not very dangerous, neither creating too much confusion nor impeding the real comprehension of the general facts communicated. Of the same category, laziness is another cause for the production of false friends. Even aware that something may be inappropriate, too easy, or too much alike, the speaker indulges in using that the term anyhow as opposed to the more tiresome activity of checking it up, though time and situation (e.g.: not conversational but writing-less demanding) would allow. Regarding the linguistic issue, etymology is the first responsible. These words may have a common root, from an original language that both languages in question derive from or have borrowed and assimilated the particular word from. Some similar meanings can be still preserved, more or less, in both languages, as main senses or, on the contrary, as figurative or secondary. But new meanings can be still preserved, more or less, in

⁴ interference involves the avoidance of an individual’s speech in the other language as a result of the influence of the mother tongue on the language spoken at all levels.



both languages, as main senses or, on the contrary, as figurative or secondary. But new meanings can develop and there are restricted or enlarged meaning that influence the future development of the word in one language as distinct from the other. Distinct alterations of meanings the development of a polysemy, in certain circumstances or of a simply different particularization would bring about such confusions with these words. There might, unquestionably, appear situations of mere coincidence when there is no connection between the two words but a misunderstanding will still occur because of a chance similitude in form or pronunciation.

4. Exemplifications

English vocabulary and the Romanian one do not have too many words in common as they derive from different ancient languages; still the Roman influence has affected the Anglo-Saxon base of English. On the other hand, subsequent borrowings from other languages may have had the same effect of assimilating words much alike. Some words may have a very close meaning to the real one (see the list below), the wrong usage will have no major consequence in understanding the speaker.

English term	seemingly resembling the Romanian term	meaning in fact
cake	chec	prăjitură
assist	a asista	a ajuta
carpet	carpetă	covor
pork	porc	carne de porc

Differentiated evolution of the same word in linguistically isolated circumstances, as the situation of Romanian and English languages, will bring about different implications and meanings attributed to the words. They start from the same root but will come to mean something else in Romanian than in English, adopting various procedures of enlarging, restricting or focusing the notion embodied in the symbol represented by the certain word. A list of such false friends (as in the list below), may prove very useful when studying Tourism vocabulary English because these causing the most important and dangerous mistakes, especially when it comes to translate them in Romanian.

English term	seemingly resembling the Romanian term	meaning in fact
actual	actual	real, adevărat
advertisement	avertisment	publicitate



affluent	afluent	1.rich 2.tributary river
camera	cameră	aparat foto
casual	casual	obișnuit
caution	cauțiune	atenție, avertisment
chance	șansă	hazard
chef	șef	bucătar-șef
confectionary	confecționare	cofetărie
consequent	consecvent	ulterior, următor
crime	crimă	delict, infrațiune
deception	decepție	înșelăciune, iluzie
editor	editor	redactor
entitle	a intitula	a îndreptăți
extenuating	extenuant	atenuant, determinator
fabric	fabrică	stofă
far	far	departe, far
gracious	grațios	gentil, amabil
grave	grav	mormânt
gymnasium	gimnaziu	sală de sport
introduce	a introduce	a prezenta
invidious	invidios	discriminatoriu
jar	jar	borcan
petrol(Br.)	petrol	gas, petrol
prospect	prospect	outlook
island	Islanda	insulă
library	librărie	bibliotecă
magazine	magazin	revistă
novel	nuvelă	roman
petrol	petrol	benzină
pregnant	pregnant	gravidă
preservative	prezervativ	conservant
prevent	preveni	împiedica
prospect	prospect, broșură	potențial
rent	renta	chirie
rest	rest	a se odihni
resume	a rezuma	a relua
scholar	scolar	erudit
scope	scop	gamă, extindere
sensible	sensibil	rațional
supply	a suplini	a aproviziona
sympathetic	simpatic	înțelegător



topic

topică

subiect

We may encounter words having in Romanian a certain meaning as the basic one, while in English that particular meaning is not very commonly used and the terms have other more important senses. The danger with these is to mistakenly translate the word into Romanian, directly and keeping the suggested inferred meaning while the context would imply the other meanings. Much is the same way, a Romanian word may present by more English words, still having one common to the English correspondent:

English		Romanian
sense	He came to his <u>senses</u> and started to walk. The <u>sense</u> of this word is unknown.	simț sens
classify	FBI <u>classified</u> the document.	a clasifica
figure	I cannot <u>figure</u> the meaning of this word. 25 is a <u>figure</u> . The oval is a geometrical <u>figure</u> . He has a familiar <u>figure</u>	a-și da seama cifră figură figură, fizionomie
determine	I'm <u>determined</u> I won't change my mind We <u>determined</u> them to book the holiday.	hotărât, decis a determina
effective	To be <u>effective</u> , this medicine has to be taken with milk The <u>effective</u> work done is less than what was necessary.	eficient, ă efectivă, reală
eventual	They were preparing for an <u>eventual</u> presidential visit.	eventuală, potențială
expose	This secret was <u>exposed</u> .	a expune

Eventual is „ another „ false friend that is often confusing to Romanian learners (rom, eventual). It proves to be misleading because both the Romanian word and the English one are adjectives and they both refer to some point in English it means „ occurring or existing at the end of or as a result of a process or period of time” whereas in Romanian the meaning is „ something that might happen at some point in the future „ and its closest synonym would be ” *potențial*”. From the example provided in the list above it is understood that the visit will happen sooner or later . If we were to translate the sentence in Romanian while



keeping the word „eventual” as it is, it would be understood that the enemy might attack in the future or not. The more recent Romanian false friend „virtual” conveys a completely opposite sense from what the tourism texts in which it is used should convey. In English the adverb „virtually” means „in fact, practically to all intents as good as” In Romanian, however „virtual” means „something that does not exist” The discussion on false friends in tourism vocabulary can never be complete. According to Frînculescu⁵ false friends are extremely insidious semantic traps in translation, and when it comes to translation, the consequences of being caught in their net may be more serious”. The paper has tried to treat the subject more exhaustively by providing a representative selection of examples of such semantic traps.

Conclusions:

It is very important to identify and recognize the semantic differences between FF-s in both Romanian and English because such pairs stand on many occasions as barriers for a second language learner and translator, as well. The idea of the present paper has sprung from the lack of studies upon false friends within tourism and travelling context, especially a contrastive analysis. This analysis of the sample has shown that lexical FF-S do exist between Romanian and English. The purpose of the current study, as implied earlier, is primarily theoretical; it only attempts to shed more lights on the topic of FF-s identification and recognition in both languages within tourism and travelling contexts due to the scarcity of research in this aspect. Some of the given terms are very frequent while others are entering the Romanian tourism vocabulary. The pairs of false friends have been discussed with given examples and also the correct Romanian equivalents have been provided and by doing that this paper would prove useful to linguists and translators of tourism vocabulary and also for researchers and students.

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⁵ False Friends- The Traps of Medical Translation, P.225-235, 2014



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