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FOREWORD

The second issue of *HEROS Journal* offers a rich and diverse collection of articles exploring Romanian language, society, and culture from multiple, often intersecting perspectives. The contributions span a comparative examination of the codification and standardization of Romanian and Finnish, analyses of urban multilingualism in Timișoara (Romania), and reflections on the challenges of teaching Romanian as a foreign language in Serbia, all anchored in discussions of language history and dynamism. Further articles engage with contemporary themes such as the language of LGBTQ communities on Romanian social media, discourse networks and the transformation of Romanian journalism from print to digital formats, as well as diary discourse that frames memory as individual heritage. The hereby issue is further enriched by two book reviews: one examining a volume focused on endangered languages in Italy and the Balkans, and the other exploring the Security (Sigourantza) files of the renowned Romanian novelist Panait Istrati. Together, these studies offer fresh and thought-provoking insights while fostering dialogue between Romanian and broader linguistic and cultural contexts.

A part of the contributions included in this issue were first presented at the International Conference *BORDERS – Romanian Across Borders: Identity, Migration, Culture, and Linguistic Change in the Romance Family*, held at the University of Helsinki, Finland, on 5th-6th May 2025. Organised in partnership with CoCoLaC (Comparing and Contrasting Languages and Cultures), the Romanian Language Institute (Bucharest, Romania), the Romanian Cultural Institute in Stockholm (Sweden), Tekstin Talo (Helsinki), and Sivuvalo Platform, the conference created a vibrant space for scholarly exchange across disciplines and borders, all featuring Romanian studies.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all the speakers and contributors who have honoured *HEROS Journal* with their invaluable work. We also extend our deepest appreciation to the peer reviewers for their thorough evaluations and insightful feedback, which have been essential in maintaining the academic rigor and integrity of this issue. Their dedication significantly contributes not only to the quality of the journal but also to the cultivation and strengthening of the *HEROS* community—a vibrant network of researchers committed to advancing Romanian Studies. It is our hope that this issue will provoke further reflection and foster meaningful dialogue amongst scholars, students, and readers engaged with the intricate relationships between language, identity, and culture.

The Editors

Codificarea și normarea limbilor română și finlandeză

The Codification and Standardisation of Romanian and Finnish

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Abstract

This article presents a comparative and contrastive analysis of the linguistic codification processes in Romania and Finland. These countries belong to quite different cultural spheres, without any direct cultural or political connection between them, but in them the history of language standardization and modernization reflects certain underlying cultural, religious, intellectual and social currents in European thought. Linguistic codification and standardization processes took place in several countries and regions in Europe (Albania, Slovenia, Norway, Catalonia, etc.), especially in the 19th century. All these developments share similar phenomena, which highlights the fundamental unity of culture and the evolution of ideas in Europe.

Keywords: language codification, language standardization, Romanian, Finnish, religious language, grammars

1. INTRODUCERE

Secolul al XIX-lea este o perioadă de mare emancipare culturală a multor popoare europene minoritare și/sau minorizate. Acest proces, care își atinge plenitudinea odată cu prăbușirea imperiilor multinaționale după Primul Război Mondial, este un fenomen care a modificat radical și realitatea lingvistică a continentului european, deoarece limba a început să fie considerată drept un element fundamental al identității naționale. Pe de altă parte, a existat și o tendință diferită în țări precum Franța, Spania și Marea Britanie, în care regimurile politice au luat măsuri pentru a înăbuși revendicările culturale și lingvistice ale comunităților minoritare sub pretextul păstrării unității naționale și a egalității cetățenilor. În aceste state, minoritățile lingvistice au fost adeseori ridiculizate și considerate ignorante și retrograde. Atitudinea aceasta pornește de lamarea Revoluție Franceză, după cum se poate vedea, de exemplu, în acest fragment dintr-un text revoluționar scris de Barère de Vieuzac (1961 [1794]: 713):

> Citoyens, les tyrans coalisés ont dit : l’ignorance fut toujours notre auxiliaire le plus puissant ; maintenons l’ignorance ; elle fait les fanatiques, elle multiplie les contre-révolutionnaires ; faisons rétrograder les Français vers la barbarie : servons-nous des peuples mal instruits ou de ceux qui parlent un idiome différent de celui de l’instruction publique. Le fédéralisme et la superstition parlent bas-breton ; l’émigration et la haine de la République parlent allemand ; la contre-révolution parle l’italien, et le fanatisme parle

> le basque. Cassons ces instruments de dommage et d'erreur.[1]

Un alt revoluționar important, Abbé Grégoire, a lansat o anchetă despre situația lingvistică din Franța și a publicat în 1794 un raport intitulat *Rapport sur la nécessité et les moyens d'anéantir les patois et d'universaliser l'usage de la langue française*. Rezultatele obținute au fost destul de dezamăgitoare:

> On peut assurer sans exagération qu'au moins six millions de Français, sur-tout dans les campagnes, ignorent la langue nationale ; qu'un nombre égal est à-peu-près incapable de soutenir une conversation suivie ; qu'en dernier résultat, le nombre de ceux qui la parlent purement n'excède pas trois millions ; & probablement le nombre de ceux qui l'écrivent correctement est encore moindre.[2] (Grégoire (Abbé), 1794: 5)

Această realitate era contrară ideologiei revoluționare care presupunea egalitatea cetățenilor în raportul lor cu Statul. Un cetățean care nu era în stare să folosească limba „oficială" (în general impusă de autoritățile statale) se afla într-o situație de dezavantaj în ceea ce privea posibilitățile de ascensiune socială.

Consecințele acestor programe de politică lingvistică se pot vedea pe harta Europei. În următoarele două paragrafe, vom încerca să oferim o prezentare simplificată a trăsăturilor care diferențiază Europa occidentală și septentrională de Europa centro-orientală:

(i) În Europa occidentală și septentrională există state dintre care cele mai multe au o întindere geografică considerabilă (cu excepția Belgiei, Țărilor de Jos, a Danemarcei sau a Irlandei) care au o singură limbă oficială și unde limbile minoritare aproape au dispărut sau se află într-o situație dificilă, chiar foarte precară. Sunt câteva excepții de la această tendință generală, de exemplu, Spania, Belgia și Finlanda. În Spania, limbile minoritare (catalana, basca, galiciana) sunt co-oficiale regional cu castiliana, limba oficială a statului, dar trăiesc sub presiunea reducerii demografice a minorităților istorice. Belgia este un stat trilingv, creat în 1831, limbile oficiale fiind neerlandeza, franceza și germana. Crearea statului belgian a fost făcută în parte din motive religioase (flamanzii, de limbă neerlandeză, erau catolici și au respins aderarea la Țările de Jos, stat majoritar protestant), în parte din motive de politică internațională (anumite state europene nu au permis ca regiunea valonilor să se plaseze sub administrația franceză). În Finlanda, bilingvismul oficial este rezultatul faptului că țara a fost o provincie suedeză timp de mai multe secole (aproximativ din sec. al XIII-lea până în 1809) și are o minoritate de limba suedeză (v. mai jos).

(ii) În Europa centro-orientală, pe de altă parte, sunt multe state cu o întindere geografică mai redusă (în afară de Polonia, Ucraina și România) care, în cele mai multe cazuri, și-au proclamat independența între 1908 și 1918. În ceea ce privește anumite regiuni ex-iugoslave și ex-sovietice, acestea au devenit independente în 1990, iar Slovacia, în 1993. În aproape toate aceste țări, independența politică a fost o consecință a unui proces de emancipare culturală care a început în secolul al XIX-lea și care, încetul cu încetul, a devenit o mișcare politică și socială și a pregătit terenul pentru dobândirea independenței și a libertății naționale. În acest proces de emancipare, limba și revendicările drepturilor lingvistice au jucat un rol primordial, limba fiind

[1] Cetățeni, tiranii din coaliție au spus: ignoranța a fost întotdeauna cel mai puternic aliat al nostru; să menținem ignoranța; ea face fanatici, multiplică contrarevoluționarii; să îi facem pe francezi să regreseze spre barbarie: să ne folosim de oameni slab educați sau de cei care vorbesc un idiom diferit de cel al educației publice. Federalismul și superstiția vorbesc bretona de jos; emigrația și ura față de Republică vorbesc germana; contrarevoluția vorbește italiana și fanatismul vorbește basca. Să rupem aceste instrumente ale răului și ale erorii. (trad. n.)

[2] Nu este exagerat să spunem că cel puțin șase milioane de francezi, în special în mediul rural, nu cunosc limba națională; că un număr egal sunt mai mult sau mai puțin incapabili să susțină o conversație cursivă; că, în final, numărul celor care o vorbesc pur nu depășește trei milioane; și probabil că numărul celor care o scriu corect este și mai mic. (trad. n.)

considerată ca expresie supremă a identității naționale. Foarte multe limbi vorbite în aceste țări au fost codificate și normate de-a lungul secolului al XIX-lea, iar numeroase opere literare publicate în timpul procesului de codificare au devenit puncte de referință culturală în țările respective. Cu toate acestea, criteriile folosite în elaborarea normelor lingvistice naționale în aceste țări nu sunt identice. Sunt mai mulți factori care intervin în procesul normativ, printre altele, istoria și ideologia politică și culturală a fiecărei țări, familia lingvistică de care aparține limba națională și caracteristicile fiecărei limbi.

Așadar, codificarea unei limbi este un proces extrem de complicat, care, de obicei, nu se desfășoară sub semnul unanimității celor care lucrează activ la elaborarea unei norme standardizate. Este vorba de:

> a crucial, yet often overlooked dimension of minority language standardisation, namely, how social actors engage with, support, alter, resist and even reject standardisation processes.[3] (Costa et al., 2018: 1)

E evident că în acest articol nu pretindem să oferim o prezentare exhaustivă a proceselor de codificare lingvistică în Europa, ci doar o analiză comparativă și contrastivă a două evoluții în două țări, România și Finlanda, care aparțin unor zone culturale destul de diferite, fără nicio legătură culturală sau politică directă între ele, dar în care istoria normării și a modernizării limbii reflectă anumite curente culturale, religioase, intelectuale și sociale subiacente în gândirea europeană.

2. INIȚIATIVE DE CODIFICARE A LIMBILOR ROMÂNĂ ȘI FINLANDEZĂ PÂNĂ LA SFÂRȘITUL SECOLULUI AL XVIII-LEA

În acest studiu de caz, ne concentrăm asupra istoriei codificării limbilor română și finlandeză, pentru că o astfel de comparație este interesantă din punctul de vedere al istoriei ideilor în context european, dat fiind faptul că evoluția ambelor limbi prezintă anumite similitudini destul de frapante, mai ales privind cronologia celor mai decisive evenimente, dar și niște diferențe considerabile. În orice caz, limba a fost, în ambele țări, un element fundamental în construcția identității naționale și în emanciparea culturală. Trebuie, totuși, să subliniem faptul că procesele de codificare și normare se desfășoară de-a lungul mai multor secole, sunt extrem de complexe și participă la ele un număr foarte mare de oameni: intelectuali, scriitori, istorici, preoți etc., și fiecare dintre ei a avut o viziune personală în ceea ce privește forma lingvistică preferată. În afară de eforturile individuale ale persoanelor care au avut un rol central în activitatea de normare lingvistică, sunt de asemenea multe instituții (precum și universități etc.) și numeroase mișcări asociative (societăți savante și literare, ziare, reviste etc.), care au îndeplinit un rol primordial în dezvoltarea normei lingvistice. Activitățile acestor actori individuali și colectivi au contribuit la fixarea structurilor gramaticale și lexicale ale limbilor română și finlandeză, după niște peripeții care deveneau uneori de-a dreptul agresive între cei care doreau să impună altora preferințele lor personale sau colective.

2.1. Codificarea limbajului religios în Țările Române și în Finlanda

Etapa inițială a proceselor de codificare a limbilor română și finlandeză a fost instrumentalizarea acestora ca mijloc de mântuire

[3] o dimensiune esențială, dar adesea neglijată, a standardizării limbilor minoritare, și anume modul în care actorii sociali se implică în procesele de standardizare, le sprijină, le modifică, li se opun și chiar le resping. (trad. n.)

religioasă. Primele texte tipărite în ambele limbi sunt traduceri biblice. În 1561, diaconul Coresi, „părintele literaturii române”, a tradus și a tipărit *Tetraevanghelul* (cele patru Evanghelii) în 1561 de. *Tetraevanghelul* a fost tradus din slavonă, limba oficială în Moldova și Țara Românească, dar în spirit protestant, cum se poate vedea în *Tâlcul Evangheliilor* (tipărit în 1564): „[...] toate limbile au cuvântul lu Dumnezeu în limba lor, numai noi, rumânii, n-avem [...]” (Coresi, 1998 [1564]: 186). Diaconul Coresi a publicat și multe alte texte bisericești, *Întrebare creştinească, Liturghierul românesc* etc., și opera lui este extrem de importantă pentru dezvoltarea limbii române scrise.

Cu câțiva ani înainte, în 1548, Mikael Agricola („părintele literaturii finlandeze”) tradusese Noul Testament, *Se Wsi Testamenti*. Sub inspirația Reformei protestante, Noul Testament a fost tradus din textul original grecesc în comparație cu versiunile latină, germană și suedeză. Într-o altă operă a lui Agricola, *Rucouskiria* (Cartea de rugăciuni), publicată în 1544, autorul scria în prolog: „Kyllä se kuulee suomen kielen, joka ymmärtää kaikkein mielen [...]”[4] (Cel care înțelege mințile tuturor va asculta cu siguranță și limba finlandeză) (trad.n.). Agricola a publicat mai multe texte religioase, dar și o carte pedagogică pentru un public mai larg (*ABCkiria*, primul abecedar finlandez, publicat în 1544). Munca lui Agricola a fost deosebit de exigentă, deoarece limba finlandeză era (și este) foarte diferită de limbile vecine și nu existau nici gramatici, nici dicționare. A trebuit ca Agricola să formeze cuvinte noi pentru concepte noi și, chiar dacă rezultatele nu întotdeauna erau satisfăcătoare, aproape 60% din cele vreo 8500 de cuvinte pe care le folosește în operele sale sunt folosite și în finlandeza modernă. Opera lui Mikael Agricola devine și mai importantă atunci când luăm în considerare faptul că în epoca sa nici nu se putea vorbi de „limba finlandeză”:

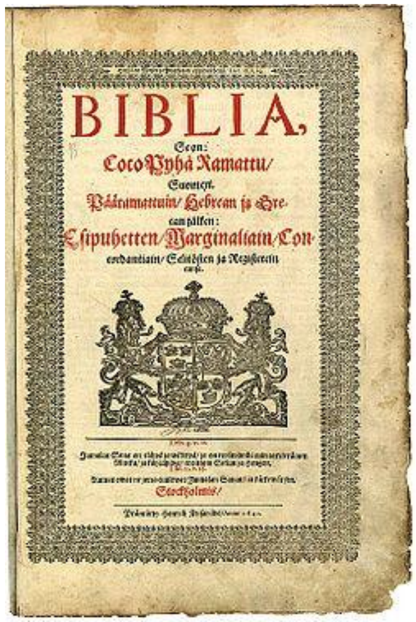
It is actually misleading to speak about Finnish in the Middle Ages because there still was no common and homogenous Finnish language in existence at that time. The language spoken by the indigenous habitants of the Finnish region existed in oral form only and it varied all throughout the country. The country was expansive and sparsely inhabited, and mutual communication was not close enough for any common language form to emerge.[5] (Häkkinen, 2016: 18)

Următoarea etapă importantă a standardizării limbilor română și finlandeză a fost traducerea întregii Biblii în limba vernaculară. Între primele texte tipărite și apariția întregii Biblii s-au publicat și alte texte religioase, documente administrative și juridice, cronici istorice etc., dar importanța traducerilor biblice este centrală pentru răspândirea unei versiuni prestigioase a limbii.

Frontispiciul Bibliei de la București,
(*Biblia, adecă Dumnezeiasca scriptură*),
publicată în 1688

[4] Textul se poate consulta aici: p20-06_rucouskiria.pdf.

[5] În realitate, este eronat să vorbim despre limba finlandeză în Evul Mediu, deoarece în acea perioadă nu exista încă o limbă finlandeză comună și omogenă. Limba vorbită de locuitorii indigeni ai regiunii finlandeze exista doar sub formă orală și varia pe tot cuprinsul țării. Țara era întinsă și puțin locuită, iar comunicarea reciprocă nu era suficient de strânsă pentru a permite apariția unei forme lingvistice comune. (trad. n.)



Frontispiciul primei Biblii întregi
în limba finlandeză, publicată în 1643

Biblia, adecă Dumnezeiasca scriptură a fost tipărită la București în 1688, folosindu-se alfabetul chirilic, ca în tipăriturile coresiene. Lucrarea de traducere a fost realizată de o echipă de cărturari din Țara Românească, Moldova și Transilvania, iar sursele *Bibliei de la București* au fost versiunile grecești ale Bibliei și textele religioase românești mai vechi. În ciuda faptului că traducerea conținea un număr considerabil de greșeli de traducere și de calcuri din limbile versiunilor originale, publicarea sa a fost de cea mai mare importanță pentru cultura și limba română, mai ales pentru că a constituit baza limbajului bisericesc și în acest fel a devenit un element lingvistic unificator pentru toți vorbitorii de română. E adevărat că opiniile asupra relevanței lingvistice și stilistice ale *Bibliei de la București* nu sunt unanime, cum putem observa în citatele următoare:

> Judecând lucrurile din această perspectivă, pe baza cantității de material analizate de-a lungul timpului, socotim că departe de a satisface multe dintre cerințele importante ale unei traduceri atât de pretențioase cum este cea a textului biblic, Biblia de la 1688 reprezintă o realizare importantă (ce-i drept, și un moment de detentă pierdut, apoi, de către urmași), rod al unei concepții corecte și capabile să dea roade, asupra felului în care trebuie construită o astfel de traducere. (Gafton, 2010: 70)

> Nu numai că Biblia de la 1688 nu a contribuit la modernizarea limbii literare, dar ea a repus în circulație o serie de cuvinte și de particularități lingvistice vechi, care nu se regăsesc în alte scrieri contemporane ei, cu excepția celor ale lui Dosoftei, un alt mare arhaizant. Nici din perspectivă diatopică, nici din perspectivă diacronică nu se poate spune că ea este „opera care marchează un remarcabil progres în dezvoltarea limbii române literare". (Moldovanu, 2003: 97)

De fapt, cum observă Gafton (2010: 52), „Biblia de la 1688 a avut o audiență aproape nulă" și nici în biserică nu s-a folosit. În orice caz, a constituit un punct de reper și un model pentru lucrări ulterioare și în sensul acesta a fost un element important din punct de vedere cultural și lingvistic.

În Finlanda, întreaga Biblie a fost tipărită în 1643. *Biblia: se on: coco pyhä Ramattu, suomexi pääramattuiden, hebrean ia grekan jälcken* (Toată Sfânta Biblie în finlandeză după principalele Biblii în ebraică și greacă). Membrii echipei de traducere erau toți clerici (unii dintre ei aparțineau și personalului academic al nou-înființatei Academii din Turku). Ca și *Noul Testament* al lui Agricola, limba Bibliei din 1642 se baza pe dialectele de sud-vest, deoarece centrele vieții religioase erau Arhiepiscopia și Academia din Turku. Biblia din 1642 a fost un *magnum opus,* folosit mai ales de parohii, preoți și învățători și având o difuzare practic inexistentă în rândul populației. Totuși, aceasta a pus bazele limbajului bisericesc pentru

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următoarele două secole până la sfârșitul secolului al XIX-lea. Datorită faptului că limbajul bisericesc se reînnoiește pe baza operelor anterioare, el este prin definiție conservator și arhaizant, dar avea un avantaj: era înțeles în aproape toate regiunile țării, deși se îndepărta din ce în ce mai mult de realitatea limbii vorbite.

2.2. Primele gramatici românești și finlandeze

Prima gramatică cu o abordare analitică a fost, în spațiul românesc, *Elementa linguæ daco-romanæ sive valachicæ*, publicată în 1780 și redactată de Samuil Micu-Klein (1745-1806) și Gheorghe Șincai (1754-1816), membri ai Școlii Ardelene, care au publicat multe texte despre subiecte variate, mai ales religioase și istoriografice. Școala Ardeleană a fost o mișcare intelectuală al cărei scop principal a fost promovarea limbii și culturii române prin publicarea de lucrări științifice și literare, precum și revendicarea drepturilor populației de limbă română din Transilvania care, în epoca respectivă, aparținea Imperiului Austro-Ungar. În această provincie, românii constituiau o „națiune tolerată”, marginalizată politic și economic. În 1791, membrii marcanți ai Școlii Ardelene au trimis un memoriu, *Supplex Libellus Valachorum Transsilvaniae*, împăratului Leopold al II-lea, în care se cereau drepturi politice egale tuturor națiunilor transilvănene. Elementul central al activității Școlii Ardelene a fost acela de a pune în valoare originile latine ale populației românești și ale limbii acesteia. Activitatea Școlii a fost primul pas către „relatinizarea” sau „reromanizarea” limbii române.

În Finlanda, în secolul al XVII-lea au apărut două gramatici, prima dintre ele fiind cea a lui Æschillus Petræus, *Lingvae Finnicae Brevis Institutio*, publicată în 1649. Gramatica lui Petræus, precum cea a lui Matthias Martinius, *Hodegus Finnicus*, încercau să explice structura limbii finlandeze folosind modelul latin, cu totul nepotrivit descrierii gramaticale a limbii finlandeze, din punct de vedere tipologic foarte diferită de limba latină. Prima descriere gramaticală competentă a fost *Grammatica Fennica* a lui Bartholdus Vhaël (1667-1723), preot și savant, care a adoptat o abordare științifică a sistemului gramatical finlandez. Gramatica sa, care a fost publicată în 1733, la 10 ani după moartea autorului, pornește de la structura internă a limbii, fără să recurgă la descrierea gramaticală greco-latină.


ELEMENTA
LINGUÆ
DACO-ROMANÆ,
SIVE
VALACHICÆ.
COMPOSITA
AB
SAMUELE KLEIN DE SZAD,
ORD. S. BASILII M. IN COLLEGIO GRÆCI
RITUS CATHOLICORUM VINDOBONENSI
AD S. BARBARAM EPHEMERIO;
LOCUPLETATA VERO, ET IN HUNC
ORDINEM REDACTA
A
GEORGIO GABRIELE SINKAI,
EJUSDEM ORDINIS, AA. LL. PHIL.
ET SS. TH. D.

VINDOBONÆ,
TYP. JOSEPHI NOB. DE KURZBÖCK.
M. DCC. LXXX.

Frontispiciul primei gramatici analitice a limbii române, *Elementa linguæ daco-romanæ sive valachicæ*, publicată în 1780 de Samuil Micu și Gheorghe Șincai

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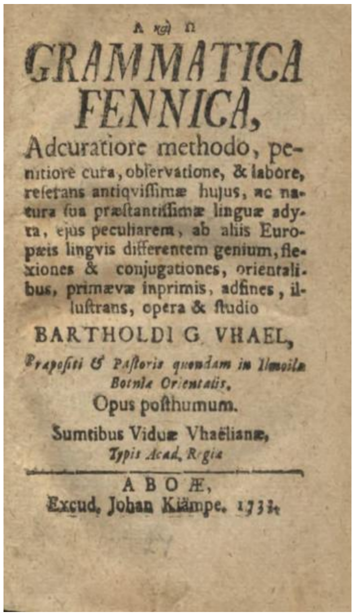
GRAMMATICA
FENNICA,
Adcuratiore methodo, penitiore cura, observatione, & labore, reserans antiqvissimæ hujus, ac natura sua præstantissimæ linguæ adyta, ejus peculiarem, ab aliis Europæis lingvis differentem genium, flexiones & conjugationes, orientalibus, primævæ inprimis, adfines, illustrans, opera & studio
BARTHOLDI G. VHAEL,
Præpositi & Pastoris quondam in Ilmoila Botniæ Orientalis,
Opus posthumum.
Sumtibus Viduæ Vhaëlianæ,
Typis Acad. Regiæ
ABOÆ,
Excud. Johan Kiämpe. 1733.

Frontispiciul primei gramatici importante
a limbii finlandeze,
scrise de Bartholdus Vhaël și publicate în 1733

2.3 Principiile ideologice ale proceselor de codificare în secolul al XIX-lea

În secolul al XIX-lea, revendicările lingvistice și culturale au început să se transforme în revendicări sociale și politice. Cum am văzut mai sus, Revoluția Franceză a folosit limba ca instrument pentru a întări unitatea națională și pentru a institui egalitatea cetățenilor (deși în cele mai multe cazuri, acest obiectiv, în principiu atât de lăudabil, traducea în realitate dorința de a promova centralizarea administrației și eradicarea diferențelor considerate periculoase pentru dezvoltarea națională). În ceea ce privește româna și finlandeza în secolul al XIX-lea, codificarea lingvistică este o activitate care însoțește și completează emanciparea politică în ambele spații. Cu toate acestea, pare foarte clar că principiile ideologice ale standardizării celor două limbi se bazează pe niște perspective diferite, deși scopul ultim este același – consolidarea independenței politice, culturale și sociale a națiunii. În cazul României, reromanizarea limbii a permis aderarea strânsă la lumea neolatină, cu toate consecințele ei, în domenii extrem de variate. În Finlanda, strategia standardizării limbii s-a concentrat pe consolidarea și apărarea specificității finlandeze față de țările vecine, considerate o amenințare pentru caracterul ancestral, străvechi al poporului de limbă finlandeză.

2.3.1. Limba română

Două opere relativ recente despre limba română veche (Frâncu, 2009 și Pană Dindelegan, 2016) ilustrează bine enorma variație dialectală a limbii de la primele documente scrise în secolul al XVI-lea până în anul 1780, când a fost publicată gramatica redactată de S. Micu și Gh. Șincai, *Elementa linguæ daco-romanæ sive valachicæ,* „când se consideră, în general, că se încheie epoca veche și începe perioada de tranziție către româna modernă” (Frâncu, 2009: 13).

Rucăreanu (2021) studiază gramaticile românești redactate între 1757 și 1914 și constată că aceste lucrări permit să se ajungă la o cunoaștere extrem de importantă pentru a înțelege evoluția normării limbii române: „socotim că legătura indisolubilă dintre primele gramatici și gramaticile actuale este relevantă” (Rucăreanu, 2021: 65). Codificarea limbii înseamnă, în același timp, și modernizarea ei. Secolul al XIX-lea a fost o perioadă de importante progrese științifice și tehnologice, iar în țările care se aflau la periferia marilor centre de inovații se simțea o nevoie imperioasă de a crea o terminologie care putea să se adapteze la exigențele unei societăți în plină transformare. Nicoleta Petuhov caracterizează începutul secolului al XIX-lea ca fiind

> un proces susținut și conștient de constituire de terminologii în cele mai variate domenii: agronomie, chimie, geografie, filosofie, fizică, matematică, medicină și, nu în ultimul rând, gramatică. (Petuhov, 2000: 555)

Acest fenomen se manifestă în universul mental al celor care se ocupau de *amenajarea lingvistică* și doreau să contribuie la crearea unui limbaj capabil să vehiculeze idei și concepte noi. Bogdan Țâra observă, în studiul lui despre Ion Budai-Deleanu, că, pentru acest cărturar,

> nu numai vorbirea populară, ci și vechea română literară nu mai corespundeau exigențelor de comunicare elevată de la începutul secolului al XIX-lea, când începe separarea culturii ecleziastice de cea laică și totodată procesul de modernizare și de occidentalizare a vieții socioculturale românești. (Țâra, 2014: 443)

Procesul codificării și modernizării limbii române, mai ales în domeniul lexicului, se întoarce într-un anumit sens spre uniunea latină, spre trecutul glorios al popoarelor latine, și, ca atare, foarte multe elemente lexicale și gramaticale de proveniență nelatină (slavă, maghiară, turcă etc.) au fost eliminate sau marginalizate și înlocuite cu împrumuturi latine și romanice. Introducerea neologismelor și crearea terminologiei tehnice se inspiră din mecanismele similare ale celorlalte limbi romanice. Codificarea și epurarea limbii nu pot fi separate de căutarea și recuperarea identității latine pierdute. Este evident că relatinizarea totală a limbii nu a fost posibilă, deoarece foarte multe elemente nelatine au devenit atât de centrale în limbă, încât a trebuit ca, astfel, codificatorii și instituțiile normative, create la sfârșitul secolului al XIX-lea, să facă anumite compromisuri.

2.3.2. Limba finlandeză

În imaginarul finlandezilor, Finlanda este o „țară fără istorie". Această expresie, imprecisă și obiectiv greșită, se referă la faptul că cele mai multe documente și descrieri referitoare la realitatea țării au fost scrise în alte limbi până în secolul al XIX-lea, nu în limba majoritară, limba finlandeză.

Situația aceasta se datorează trecutului politic și social al Finlandei, țară colonizată de alte puteri timp de șapte secole, până în anul 1917, când a fost proclamată independența țării. În secolul al XII-lea, suedezii au început cucerirea teritoriului corespunzător statului finlandez modern. Pretextul invaziei suedeze a fost evanghelizarea păgânilor finlandezi; totuși, studii mai recente au demonstrat că religia creștină pătrunsese și se înrădăcinase în țară înainte de invazia suedeză. Încetul cu încetul, mai ales după secolul al XVII-lea, limba suedeză a devenit limba claselor sociale privilegiate, iar limba finlandeză, deși avea un statut semi-oficial, a fost relegată într-o poziție minorizată cultural și social.

În a doua jumătate a secolului al XVIII-lea, decăderea Regatului Suediei a dat naștere unei activități naționaliste timide în Finlanda, chiar și unei mișcări separatiste numite *Liga Anjala*. Academia din Turku, singura universitate din țară, a fost centrul unui nou interes pentru istoria Finlandei și a populației sale autohtone. Figura centrală a acestei perioade prenaționaliste a fost H. G. Porthan (1739-1804), ale cărui studii de istorie, poezie populară și limbă au fost de o importanță extremă pentru recunoașterea specificului cultural și lingvistic al populației de limbă finlandeză. Porthan a respins teoriile mai vechi ale finlandezei ca limbă înrudită cu ebraica sau greaca clasică și a devenit un simpatizant fervent al cercetărilor relativ noi asupra familiei de limbi fino-ugrice.

În anul 1809, Finlanda, care fusese o provincie suedeză timp de șase secole, a fost anexată de Imperiul Rus. Suedia a ratificat tratatul de pace cu Rusia în temeiul căruia i-a cedat Rusiei partea de est a regatului. Țarul Alexandru I a conferit Finlandei statutul de Mare Ducat autonom. Poporul finlandez a jurat loialitate țarului prin reprezentanții săi, iar țarul a depus un jurământ de a menține drepturile de care finlandezii se bucurau sub Suedia, inclusiv Constituția din 1772, promulgată de Gustav III cu obiectivul restabilirii monarhiei absolute.

Schimbarea situației politice a însemnat și o schimbare majoră a situației lingvistice a țării (Klippi & Havu, 2006). Limba finlandeză, care fusese o limbă minoritară în regatul Suediei, a devenit, oarecum peste noapte, limba majoritară (vorbită de 85% din populație) a unei țări cu o amplă autonomie politică și administrativă. Limba oficială a continuat să fie suedeza, care era și singura limbă de învățământ și de prestigiu social. Procesul de codificare a început imediat după evenimentele anului 1809. Primii codificatori, care doreau ca limba finlandeză să devină limba oficială în țara lor, aveau la dispoziție diferite surse pentru a stabili norma limbii: (i) vechea limbă literară (folosită încă din secolul al XVI-lea, mai ales în textele religioase și administrative, care era arhaică, departe de realitatea lingvistică); (ii) diferitele dialecte regionale (v. paragraful următor; vechea limbă se baza pe dialectele occidentale, dar, publicarea în 1835 și 1849 a epopeii naționale, *Kalevala*, a dat un nou impuls dialectelor orientale); (iii) structura internă a limbii (care, datorită sistemului derivativ bogat, a făcut posibilă crearea de noi cuvinte din rădăcinile existente); (iv) limbi străine (împrumuturi, calcuri etc.). Vechea limbă literară avea avantajul de a fi înțeleasă de aproape toți vorbitorii diferitelor dialecte ale limbii, însă, pe de altă parte, era învechită iremediabil și, în consecință, incapabilă să fie utilizată ca bază pentru noua normă lingvistică fără importante modificări.

La începutul secolului al XIX-lea, în foarte multe țări europene, a apărut un nou interes pentru tradiții și obiceiuri populare. În Finlanda, poezia orală, lirică și epică s-a păstrat în regiunile estice mult mai bine decât în partea apuseană a țării, iar un medic, Elias Lönnrot (1802-1884), a început să culeagă vechi poezii și cântece populare, întocmind două opere: o grandioasă poezie epică, *Kalevala,* și o colecție de poezii lirice, *Kanteletar*. Publicarea în anul 1835 (prima versiune) și în 1849 (versiunea definitivă) a *Kalevalei,* devenită epopee națională, a fost un eveniment simbolic extrem de important pentru identitatea culturală a populației de limba finlandeză. Este o operă a lui Elias Lönnrot din punctul de vedere al structurii epice, dar textul în sine se bazează aproape în întregime pe poezii adunate din zonele rurale din estul Finlandei și din Carelia orientală. Descoperirea comorilor poetice ale populației rurale, considerate până atunci ignorantă și incultă, a suscitat un entuziasm general nu numai în Finlanda, ci și în multe țări europene (prima traducere suedeză apărând în 1841, cea franceză în 1845 și cea germană în 1852) și a contribuit în mod extraordinar la trezirea culturală a poporului finlandez, dar a și declanșat „lupta dialectelor”. Vechea limbă literară se baza pe dialectele vestice, dar poemele din *Kalevala* au fost culese în zona dialectelor estice, dându-le un prestigiu pe care nu îl avuseseră până atunci. Norma stabilită în anii 1880 a fost un compromis, care avea ca bază vechea limbă literară îmbogățită cu elemente provenite din dialectele orientale.[6]

Finlanda nu putea să se mândrească cu glorii trecute și nici cu apartenența la o zonă culturală prestigioasă. Codificarea limbii a fost de la bun început marcată de atitudini lingvistice puriste. Multe împrumuturi lexicale și anumite structuri gramaticale provenite din limbile vecine (mai ales din suedeză, rusă, germană) au fost eliminate și, în locul lor, s-au format neologisme bazate pe elemente autohtone. Mii de vocabule noi au intrat în limbă, în special în domeniul științific, cultural și artistic. În ceea ce privește dezvoltarea identității naționale, codificatorii limbii au încercat să reconstruiască un trecut mitic idealizat, anterior colonizării indo-europene.

3. CONCLUZII

Pentru a înțelege toată complexitatea procesului de codificare și normare, este necesar să se țină cont de un mare număr de factori. Câțiva dintre ei derivă din instrumentele și sursele

[6] O consecință a acestei evoluții și a caracterului hibrid al limbii normate este faptul că decalajul între limba normată și limba vorbită standard este considerabil (v. Havu, 2015).

lingvistice aflate la dispoziția codificatorilor (dialecte, tradiția scrisă, proprietățile diastratice ale limbii etc.). Aceste elemente au fost determinante în alegerea criteriilor aplicabile la stabilirea normei și au provocat adesea divergențe de opinii privind alegerea componentelor lingvistice. Alături de factori lingvistici (adeseori chiar foarte subiectivi) sunt și factori sociali: (i) cine sunt persoanele active în procesul de codificare și care este poziția lor socială și instituțională; (ii) cum se dezvoltă și se determină rolul și activitatea instituțiilor oficiale și a organizațiilor civice în procesul de codificare; (iii) când au fost create instituțiile normative și care a fost impactul lor în consolidarea normei; (iv) care au fost și cât de efective s-au dovedit mecanismele de răspândire a inovațiilor propuse.

În acest scurt studiu nu am putut să analizăm toate aceste elemente care sunt operative în procesul de codificare. Am vrut să descriem marile linii a două exemple de codificare lingvistică care ilustrează anumite dezvoltări în gândirea europeană care pot să se manifeste paralel fără să depindă de influențe reciproce directe. Unul dintre scopurile acestui articol ar fi și acela de a oferi posibilitatea de a deschide noi piste de cercetare mai ales în ceea ce privește motivele personale ale numeroșilor codificatori care, în spațiul românesc și finlandez, au participat la standardizarea și modernizarea limbii. Munca lor a fost de o importanță deosebit de prețioasă pentru emanciparea acestor două națiuni.

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Dynamics of Urban Multilingualism: The Case of Timişoara-Temesvár

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Abstract

This paper offers an empirical case study of the current sociolinguistic situation of ethnic minorities in and around Timișoara, the capital of the historical Banat region in modern Romania, located at the intersection of Hungary and Serbia. The study is based on data and material collected in March 2023 from representatives of the Hungarian, German, Serbian, and Slovak minorities in both Timișoara city and nearby rural areas, with a particular focus on young speakers. These communities have experienced significant demographic decline due to emigration and assimilation, leading to a decrease in both absolute numbers and relative proportions. However, despite these challenges, each minority group retains a resilient core, supported by cultural institutions such as schools, which facilitate the intergenerational transmission of ethnic heritage languages.

Exploring ongoing language shift processes within the local minority communities, the study reveals a transition from historically rich patterns of multilingualism to predominant bilingualism in Romanian. Additionally, a new dimension of trilingualism is emerging, as English increasingly serves as an intercultural and global language. This linguistic shift is analysed within the broader framework of urban multilingualism, in which linguistic diversity shapes social relations, cultural belonging, and identity in urban settings.

By focusing on language transmission and use across generations, this study provides insights into the future prospects of language vitality and maintenance within the ethnic and linguistic groups in Timișoara and the Banat region. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for assessing the sustainability of regional linguistic diversity and cultural heritage in a rapidly *changing sociocultural landscape. The findings contribute to broader discussions on language policies, identity, and minority rights in multilingual societies. Moreover, by focusing on young speakers, this study highlights linguistic trends that are increasingly characteristic of border regions across Europe, where multiple linguistic influences interact and evolve in response to both local and global pressures.*

Keywords: ethnography of language, linguistic identity, border regions, globalization, Romania

INTRODUCTION

The city of Timișoara is an illustrative example of the turbulent history of eastern Central Europe and the Balkans, as well as of the drastic political changes that have taken place following World War I (Kókai, 2020). Today Timișoara, the capital of Timiș County, western Romania, is also the centre of the historical Banat region (*Bánság*), located in the southeastern part of the Carpathian basin at the junction of Romania, Serbia, and Hungary (Neumann, 2019b). With c. 251,000 inhabitants (2021) and an additional 110,000 in the surrounding metropolitan region, Timișoara is the third largest city of Romania and the location of a large number of important historical sites, educational institutions, and industrial enterprises. In the late Middle Ages, the city was ruled as a part of the Kingdom of Hungary (1212–1526), also serving briefly as the Hungarian royal capital (1316–1323). After a period of Ottoman rule (1552–1716), it was acquired by the Habsburgs, under whom it belonged variously to Austria (1718–1779, 1849–1867), Hungary (1779–1849), and, finally, the Austro-Hungarian Empire (1867–1918). After an interlude under the independent Banat Republic (1918), followed by a brief episode of Serbian rule (1918–1919), Timișoara was incorporated into Romania in 1920 (Bjelica, 2019).

Complex historical developments have constantly shaped the ethnic and linguistic composition of the urban population of Timișoara. Conquests and migrations have repeatedly brought in new elements, increasing the role of some at the expense of others, and with social and linguistic changes as a result (Ilieșu, 2016; Balázs, 2021). The function of the dominant language in the region has been filled variously by Hungarian, German, Serbian, and Turkish, to be replaced by Romanian in the 20th century. While there remain few linguistic traces of the historical Ottoman presence in Timișoara today, Hungarian, German, and Serbian are still spoken in the city, though only by declining minorities. The city has also official names in these three languages: *Temesvár* in Hungarian, *Temeswar* or *Temeschwar* (earlier also *Temeschburg*) in German, and *Temišvar* (*Темишвар*) in Serbian. This name is of a Hungarian origin, with Hungarian *-vár* 'castle, city', combined with the name of the nearby river Timiș, Hungarian *Temes*, German *Temesch*, Serbian *Tamiš* (*Тамиш*), itself an ancient hydronym of prehistorical origin. Strictly speaking, the city lies on a different river, today named Bega, but earlier known in Hungarian as *Kistemes* 'Little Temes'.

Both the city of Timișoara and the immediately surrounding Banat region constitute the most multilingual part of Romania (Basarabă, 1999; Sorescu-Marinković & Salamurović, 2023). Apart from the historically dominant languages, there are also other languages that have been spoken here for centuries already, including, in particular, Slovak and Bulgarian, as well as Roma. As of today, Yiddish, once spoken by a substantial proportion of the urban population, has more or less disappeared. German is, however, present also in non-standard forms, notably dialects of the Swabian (*Schwäbisch*) type. More recently, the linguistic and ethnic diversity of the city has increased due to new migrant groups and individuals. Against this multiethnic and multilingual background, it was no accident that

Timișoara was selected to be one of the European Capitals of Culture in 2023. Its heritage of urban diversity was also the reason why Timișoara was chosen as the target of the present study, which aims to assess the current sociolinguistic situation of ethnic groups traditionally present in the city. This study is based on the analysis of the data gathered during a field trip in March 2023, which include interviews and recordings from representatives of the Hungarian, Serbian, German, and Slovak minorities. Outside of Timișoara city, the Slovak minority was studied also in the rural town of Nădlac (Slovak *Nadlak*) in Arad County on the border with Hungary.

The linguistic situation of Timișoara calls for an historical-ethnographic approach within the framework of urban multilingualism with a focus on how 'identity' is negotiated in an ethnically and linguistically diverse border region at the level of individuals, families, and communities (Watt & Llamas, 2014). Unfortunately, the general picture of Timișoara today is one of declining diversity. In the early 1990s, the city population reached the all-time high of 334,000 (1994), but in the following decades the population decreased by almost a quarter. Much of this decline is connected to emigration, which has particularly affected the minorities. However, for research on urban multilingualism, the phenomenon of declining diversity presents an opportunity for a rather understudied perspective on the issue of 'the city as a process and experience' (Smakman & Heinrich, 2017), which has more frequently been studied in view of recent immigration and increasing diversity. In the following sections, the present-day sociolinguistic status and multilingual patterns of the principal 'old' minority groups of Timișoara and surrounding areas are described in more detail. One potentially important minority that remains outside of this study is the Roma, who are possibly the single most multilingual ethnic group in Romania, but who are also inherently difficult to approach for short-term field work, and who, because of their high mobility, are less concentrated in the Banat region than the other groups.

Apart from the on-the-spot observations concerning the local linguistic environment and landscape, the bulk of the data for this study was collected using anonymous questionnaires distributed via available contact networks to speakers of the different minority languages. The questionnaires were provided, and the answers received in online format (*Google Forms*), and the information thus obtained was complemented by a number of in-depth personal interviews and recordings. The principal target groups were school children of various ages, as well as university students, but interviews were also received from teachers and other members of the adult society. The questionnaires were based on a model created for this particular purpose in English and then translated into Hungarian, Serbian, Slovak, and Romanian, which, as well as German, were also the languages used in the oral interviews. Due to the differences between the ethnic and linguistic groups, some variation was inevitable from language to language in the type and content of the questions, but typically each questionnaire contained c. 100 questions, most of which were of the multiple-choice type. The questions concerned the language attitudes and self-assessed language skills of the respondents in relation to their ethnic and linguistic background. The self-assessment of language skills was made according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), concerning which the respondents had received the necessary instructions in advance.[1]

HUNGARIAN

Hungarian has been present in Timișoara since the Middle Ages, and towards the end of the Austro-Hungarian period its status grew only

[1] For access to sample questionnaires, see the links at the end of this paper.

stronger, though, at the same time, there was widespread bilateral bilingualism in Hungarian and German. In 1920, there were c. 27,000 ethnic Hungarians in the city, and during the following decades the absolute number still continued to grow until it reached c. 37,000 in 1977. In the same period, however, due to intensive urbanization and immigration from elsewhere in Romania, the relative proportion of Hungarians in the city declined from 31% to 14%. Subsequently, the decline has continued both in absolute and relative terms, leaving today a residual population of only c. 8300 individuals (2021), or c. 3.3% of the total urban population.[2] Even so, Hungarian remains the most widely spoken minority language of Timișoara, and its presence in the city is supported by several institutions, including, perhaps most importantly, the externally funded 'Hungarian House' (*Magyar Ház*), recently under restoration and expansion, which functions as a cultural centre and houses also a Hungarian honorary consulate. Another centre of cultural activities is the state-funded 'Hungarian Theatre' (*Csiky Gergely Állami Magyar Színház*), which regularly presents plays and performances in Hungarian and has garnered attention also outside of the Banat region. There are also many locally produced publications in Hungarian, including a weekly newspaper (*Heti Új Szó*).

A key role for the continuity of the Hungarian language in Timișoara is played by two Hungarian schools, the Catholic Lyceum with a religious orientation (*Római Katolikus Teológiai Líceum*) and the secular Béla Bartók Lyceum (*Bartók Béla Elméleti Líceum*). The latter is the largest public school in the city with Hungarian as the primary language of instruction. The school has 53 teachers and c. 600 students, including 3 kindergarten classes, 10 primary classes, 8 junior classes, and 11 high school classes. While the school operates under a Romanian state-mandated curriculum, focus on Hungarian language and cultural preservation is highly valued and prioritized. As a part of the present study, sociolinguistic information was collected from the students of the Béla Bartók Lyceum with the help of an anonymous questionnaire as well as interviews. The aim was to get an understanding of how individual speakers see the connection between language and ethnic identity, what strategies they use when navigating their multilingual environments, and what the general social significance of language use and language attitudes is within the community.

The questionnaire was distributed to students in online form. A total of 114 respondents replied to the call, of whom 68 were males, 43 females, and 3 undisclosed. The average age of the respondents was 17 years. Virtually all of them had local roots, being born either in Timișoara (83%) or elsewhere in Romania (14%), and with parents and grandparents from Romania (99%). There were 119 questions in total, mainly focused on the use of the Hungarian language in different contexts and domains. Although the answers were self-reported, they provide insights into the perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs about language use. As could be expected, the answers concerning 'mother tongue' exhibited some dispersion, with 72 respondents reporting Hungarian, 4 Romanian, and 38 both Hungarian and Romanian as their 'mother tongues'. This correlates with the respondents' self-assessment of their language skills, in that almost 70% reported their CEFR level of Hungarian to be C2 ('mother tongue'), while about 11% reported level C1 ('near mother tongue' or 'fluent'). Proficiency levels in Romanian, by contrast, show much more variation, divided between C2 (28%), C1 (18%), B2 (12%), B1 (11%), A2 (21%), and A1 (10%).

It is obvious that the language skills of the students reflect the linguistic background of their parents, but also the impact of their social environment. Although mixed marriages between Hungarian and Romanian speakers are

[2] On the statistical sources used for the present study, see the note at the end of this paper.

increasingly common, 57% of the respondents reported Hungarian-only communication with parents, while 41% reported using both Hungarian and Romanian, and only 2% reported Romanian-only communication. In interaction with friends, Romanian has a stronger position, with 27% reporting Hungarian-only and 5% Romanian only communication against 68% who reported using both Hungarian and Romanian. As an apparent sign of increasing internationalization, the respondents also mentioned English and/or French as additional languages in 8% of parental and 16% of friendship relationships. A related question concerned the respondents' intention of passing on Hungarian to their own children in the future. As many as 94% answered positively, suggesting that Hungarian is strongly linked to their identity, and continued membership in the ethnic community via language use is highly valued.

While the answers received from the respondents show a firm commitment to the Hungarian language, there is no corresponding feeling of affinity with the Hungarian state. Although occasional visits to Hungary are easy because of the geographical closeness of the border, and many respondents have relatives in Hungary, the social and political interests of the respondents are connected with Romania or, more narrowly, with the Banat region. On a scale from 1 (strongest) to 5 (weakest), only 18% of the respondents reported a strong interest (1) in what happens in Hungary (events, news, etc.), while 50% reported no or almost no interest at all (4–5). At the same time, 65% of the respondents believed that the Hungarian language plays a very important part in their lives (1), with 42% also considering knowledge of Hungarian an important resource for the future (1). On the lower part of the scale (4–5), only 11–14% do not see much value in Hungarian and do not consider it as a significant resource for the future. Even so, the answers suggest that Hungarian is gradually being restricted to the personal sphere of family and friends, while the key to advancement in life is provided by Romanian and English.

It has to be noted that the Hungarians in the Banat region are historically separate from the much more substantial ethnic Hungarian populations elsewhere in Romania, especially in Transylvania (*Erdély*), where a similar bilingualism in Hungarian and Romanian is observed (Ganea, 2020). The Hungarian spoken in the Banat region belongs to the context of the south-lowland (*dél-alföldi*) regional dialect, and dialectal features (such as, for instance, the rounding of *ë* to *ö*) are still encountered in the speech of individuals with ties to the countryside. The language spoken in Timișoara and taught at schools is, however, essentially identical with standard Hungarian. The main concern of the respondents with regard to language was the frequent 'mixing' of 'proper Hungarian' with Romanian, which takes place both by lexical borrowing and code switching. Multilingual practices are common and acceptable in many domains, and Romanian is the language used most often by Hungarian speakers in the streets, in the library, with neighbours, and in stores. Apart from the schools and some churches, there are very few public places where a Hungarian speaker can use his/her mother tongue as the default language to address a stranger.

GERMAN, INCLUDING SWABIAN

The presence of the German language in Timișoara dates back to the defeat of the Ottomans in the Austro-Turkish war (1716–1718), after which German was introduced as the new administrative language. Its position was strengthened by a policy that actively encouraged colonization of the newly acquired territories with German-speaking settlers from all over the Holy Roman Empire, but mainly from the central and southwestern parts of Germany. The colonization took place in three waves (Carolinian, Theresian, and Josephine) in the course of the 18th century

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(Varga, 1999) and resulted in the formation of a new regional German-speaking population with an internally heterogeneous spoken language based on the Swabian, Bavarian, Franconian, and Hessian dialects. Since most of the first settlers came from Württemberg and Swabia, this population has become known as the 'Banat Swabians' (*Banater Schwaben*), although, strictly speaking, the initial settlers from Swabia, decimated by an outbreak of the plague in the 18th century, moved further towards the Crimea and Transcaucasia, after which they were replaced by new settlers from Bavaria and Franconia.

The varieties of 'Swabian' spoken in the Banat region appear to be largely derived from the Moselle-Franconian branch of the West Central German sub-branch of Western Germanic (Gehl, 1987). Incidentally, there is also another German-speaking population in Romania, the Transylvanian 'Saxons', whose ancestors came from approximately the same source region, though their migration started much earlier, in the 12th century. However, especially during the decades of the Austrian Empire (1804–1867), the German language also spread to Timișoara in more standard (Austrian) forms. As a result, German speakers were divided into those speaking Swabian dialects, especially in rural environments, and those speaking 'high' varieties close to Standard German, especially in the city itself. The position of Standard German as the dominant urban form of the language was further enhanced by the school system, and it was also the variety learnt as a second language by local Hungarian speakers. With increasing urbanization and the generally decreasing numbers of German speakers in the Banat region, the standard language has as of today largely replaced Swabian (cf. also Gehl, 1997).

In the last decades of the Austro-Hungarian empire, Germans were listed as by far the largest ethnic group in Timișoara, numbering c. 31,000 in 1900, as compared with c. 19,000 Hungarians, 6300 Romanians, and 2700 Serbs. By 1930, however, the balance between Germans and Hungarians had become statistically almost equalized, with c. 33,000 Germans and 32,000 Hungarians, one reason being that many bilingual German speakers preferred to report Hungarian as their ethnic identity in a semi-voluntary process also known as 'Magyarization' (Lupaș, 1992). However, the economic crisis of the 1930s drove many German-speaking inhabitants to the United States, whereas after World War II a large proportion of Germans in all parts of Romania were forcibly relocated to the Ukraine or other regions in the Soviet Union (Dărăban, 1999). A particularly sharp decline in the urban German-speaking population started in the 1990s, with their number dropping from 13,000 in 1992 to just 2200, or a mere 0,87% of the total urban population, in 2021. This decline was due to emigration *en masse* to Germany and other German-speaking countries. It may also be assumed that the former Jewish community in Timișoara, of whom many must have been speakers of Yiddish, were at least bilingual in German as well. In 1920 their number was 8300 and by 1956 it was still as high as 6700, but by the present day it has declined to just a few dozen individuals (Neumann 2019a, 380-383).

For the purposes of the present study, a survey was made of the sociolinguistic situation of both Swabian (*Schwowisch*) and Standard German (in Swabian *Däitsch*). Information on Swabian was gathered from six people, all of whom were also interviewed for the collection of grammatical data and recorded for language samples. The group consisted of one male and five female participants and represented three age groups with two participants in each group: 18–25, 50-65, and over 65. Only three of the older participants may be characterized as fully 'native' speakers of Swabian, while the others reported that they 'think' in Standard German and then 'translate' their thoughts into Swabian. However, even the younger participants indicated that they have a strong bond with their older relatives, suggesting a familial and cultural link in language use and preservation. Obviously, the Swabian speakers, all of whom are characterized by a more or less complete diglossia in Standard German and bilingualism in Romanian, strive to retain a Swabian identity within the more general German-speaking community. Although Swabian lacks a standardized script and the written forms vary, there are occasional publications in it. The local German weekly newspaper (*Banater Zeitung*) contains regularly a small literary section in Swabian.

The position of both German and Swabian in Timișoara is actively promoted by a number of cultural institutions, including the 'German Cultural Centre' (*Deutsches Kulturzentrum Temeswar*), founded and maintained with private support from Germany, and the state-funded 'German Theatre' (*Deutsches Staatstheater Temeswar*), both of which parallel the corresponding institutions of the Hungarian minority. The cultural centre also contains an externally funded unit of sheltered housing for German speakers (*Adam Müller-Guttenbrunn Haus*). In addition, local churches serve as important centres of Swabian culture and social interaction in the Banat Swabian community. Perhaps most importantly, however, the continuity of German, though not necessarily of Swabian, is guaranteed for the moment by the presence of other German-speaking urban minorities elsewhere in Romania, especially in Transylvania (*Siebenbürgen*), where the Transylvanian Saxons in cities like Cluj-Napoca (*Klausenburg*) and Sibiu (*Hermannstadt*) encounter challenges very similar to those of the Swabians of Timișoara. The demographic development in all these cities has been very similar, and for many purposes, including school textbooks (cf. e.g. Baier et al., 2017), German speakers in Romania can be considered as one population with only historically conditioned regional differences.

There is also a German high school (*Nikolaus Lenau-Lyzeum*) in Timișoara, which, in addition to Romanian, offers German as a language of instruction, though most of the c. 1300 students are not ethnic Germans or Swabians. An anonymous questionnaire distributed among high-school-age students at the school was returned by 37 respondents, born between 2004 and 2006, and comprising 20 females, 16 males, and one undisclosed. Of the respondents, 32 were born in Timișoara, three in Germany, and one in the United States. To the question concerning 'mother tongue', 18 respondents reported Romanian, 14 both Romanian and German, and three (born in Germany) German only, while two included also English as a 'mother tongue'. For a clear majority of the respondents, Romanian was the only language used in communication with parents (26), friends (27), and siblings (20). Even so, a similar majority reported that the German language plays an important or very important role (4–5 on a scale of 5) in their lives (26), and that they intend to pass on the language to their children (28). Although many of the respondents have partial Swabian roots, only two reported active knowledge and frequent use of Swabian. A follow-up interview of six students, three females and three males, confirmed that the school is the only environment where German is used more than other languages, while Romanian is the default language in all other contexts, including the home.

SERBIAN

The Serbian language and its Slavic ancestral forms have been present in the Banat region since early mediaeval times, though the modern Serbian population in the region is mainly the consequence of migrations following the Ottoman invasion of Serbia (1459) and the subsequent wars (Aleksov, 2010; Adam & Maran, 2019). In recent years, the number of ethnic Serbs in Romania, like that of other ethnic minorities, has been declining, being today c. 12,000 (2021), down from c. 18,000 a decade earlier (2011). In the city of Timișoara, the numbers show a similar decline from c. 4800 (2011) to the current 2800 (2021), which comprises c. 1.1% of the total urban population. However, from a broader perspective the absolute number of Serbs in Timișoara has been more stable, varying in the period 1880–1930 between c. 2200 and 2700 and reaching only a temporary maximum of c. 7700 in 1992. Although the relative proportion of Serbs has constantly declined, Serbs are still today a somewhat larger minority in the city than Germans and Swabians.

Like Hungarian and German, Serbian in Timișoara is supported by a local infrastructure which comprises a cultural centre under the name ‘Union of Serbs in Romania’ (*Савез Срба у Румунији*) and a bilingual Serbian secondary school named after Dositej Obradović (*Гимназија Доситеј Обрадовић*), as well as the Serbian Orthodox Christian community with an historical cathedral (*Српска православна саборна црква*) in the city centre. The cultural centre promotes also literary activities and publishes the weekly journal ‘Our language’ (*Наша реч*) with a diversified cultural, historical, and religious content. However, unlike Hungarian and German, which enjoy various kinds of institutional support from the Hungarian and German states, Serbian has no similar support from Serbia, a circumstance that poses a challenge to the preservation and promotion of the language in Romania. Interestingly, there is no official preference for the use of either the Cyrillic or Latin script for Serbian in Romania. However, in the publications and teaching materials used in the local educational and cultural institutions the consistent use of Cyrillic is observed.

To assess the current status of the Serbian language, a questionnaire was distributed in the form of an online survey to high-school-level students at the Serbian secondary school, as well as to a selection of students at the West University of Timișoara (*Universitatea de Vest din Timișoara*). A total of 45 respondents returned the questionnaire, of whom 36 were from the school and nine from the university, comprising 24 females, 16 males, as well as five undisclosed. A follow-up interview was conducted with 13 respondents, eight from the school and five from the university. The average respondent age was 16 years. The majority of the respondents were born in Romania (80%), but a rather substantial percentage was born in Serbia (20%). The findings reveal an exclusively positive attitude towards speaking and learning Serbian, as expressed by 87% of the participants, suggesting a strong cultural attachment and linguistic pride. Not surprisingly, however, high levels of bi- and multilingualism were evident, in that only 49% of the respondents reported only Serbian as their ‘mother tongue’, including some without native-like skills, while 30% reported both Serbian and Romanian. A somewhat paradoxical trend emerges, with 60% stating that their proficiency in Romanian surpasses that in Serbian.

Although it is obvious that Romanian inevitably dominates the daily life of all Serbian speakers in Timișoara, the Serbian secondary school, located in premises separate from the Romanian classes, provides an environment where Serbian can be used as the default language. A significant majority, comprising 71% of the respondents reported that they incorporate Serbian in their daily life, and 64% reported using it also beyond the school environment. As ‘only’ 87% reported using Romanian every day, there seems to exist a small minority of 13% who use Serbian more exclusively. A compelling 80% emphasized the importance of speaking Serbian as a vital component of their identity, highlighting the enduring significance of linguistic ties in shaping their sense of self, while 60% mentioned the ability to speak Serbian as the most important manifestation of their identity. 44% of the respondents mentioned that they are maintaining their knowledge of Serbian because of their wish to preserve the language for future generations and to emphasize their identity. 20% also expressed concerns regarding the potential loss of the language in the region if they do not use it in their daily lives.

Personal interviews with the representatives of the Union of Serbs in Romania revealed a number of more complex issues and ideas. It turns out that it is not only the lack of financial support from Serbia for enterprises like programs of student exchange and language immersion that makes the sustainability of the language an issue worth of special attention, but it is also the challenge of finding ways to meet the specific requirements of young people. Based on the answers to the questionnaires, only three students out of the 45 respondents see any potential economic benefits from knowing the Serbian language. This situation could change if the opportunities to study in Serbia were promoted accordingly. For the local continuity of Serbian it would be important to emphasize the relevance of the language in the context of Timișoara. A concerning trend emerges as 51% of the respondents expressed an intention to leave the country in the future, many to Serbia, but also elsewhere. Efforts to address these issues and to promote the local retention of the language would be crucial for the sustainability of Serbian ethnicity and culture in Timișoara.

SLOVAK

Slovaks in the Banat region differ from other minorities in that they have never constituted a substantial segment of the urban population of Timișoara. Although there are ethnic Slovak individuals in the city, their number has always been smaller than that of the other minorities, varying during the past century between 288 (1900) and 675 (1992), being more recently down to 385 (2011). There is, however, a more important Slovak community in Nădlac (from Hungarian *Nagylak*), a rural town located at the northern margin of the Banat region, some 60 km northwest of Timișoara and 44 km west of Arad. The Slovaks here number c. 2900 individuals (2021), forming c. 44% of the local population of c. 6700, which makes them the second-largest ethnic group in the town after Romanians. Other groups present in Nădlac include Roma (c. 5%) and Hungarians (c. 2%).

The Nădlac Slovaks descend from settlers who started arriving from the nearby Békéscsaba (Slovak *Békešská Čába*) county of Hungary in the early 19th century (Štefanko, 2006). The demographic transition in Nădlac underscores a complex interplay of historical circumstances. Prior to the arrival of Slovaks, Nădlac was inhabited by Romanians and, notably, Serbs, who historically guarded the Hungarian border. With the waning significance of their role following the end of Ottoman raids, coupled with increased state obligations, many Serbs opted to relocate, thereby creating a vacancy for new settlers. This demographic shift precipitated the influx of Slovak families, commencing with agricultural activities in the autumn of 1802 and culminating in the founding of a permanent settlement in the spring of 1803, an historical event commemorated in the Nădlac Evangelical Church through a pictorial rendition of the Slovak arrival. Another cluster of Slovak settlers had been formed a few decades earlier somewhat further to the north in the mountains of Munții Plopiș (*Rumunské Rudohorie*) in the region of Oradea (*Veľký Varadín*, Hungarian *Nagyvárad*), straddling the administrative boundaries of Bihor and Sălaj counties (Šusteková, 2007). The total population of Slovaks in Romania is today 10,232 individuals (2021).

The Slovak community in Nădlac has an educational and religious infrastructure, comprising both a Catholic and a Lutheran Evangelical church, a lyceum named after the writer Jozef Gregor Tajovský (*Teoretické Lýceum Jozefa Gregora Tajovského*), as well as several smaller primary educational institutions. Slovaks, despite ranking ninth in terms of population size among the ethnic minorities of Romania, have the third-largest representation of children in schools with minority language instruction (Daniel, 2009). For the purposes of the present study, an anonymous questionnaire was distributed to high-school-level students at the Jozef Gregor Tajovský Lyceum. Answers were received from 26 respondents, comprising 16 females and 10 males with an average age of 18 years. All respondents were born in either Nădlac or Arad, and all had at least one parent born in Nădlac. In a self-assessment of language skills, most respondents reported full fluency of Slovak at the CEFR levels C2 (10) or C1 (8), while the rest were divided between the levels B2 and B1. To the question concerning 'mother tongue', 10 respondents indicated Slovak, one Romanian, and the rest both Slovak and Romanian. In the last group 10 said that they 'liked' speaking Romanian more.

A gradual transition from Slovak to Slovak-Romanian bilingualism is observed in personal relationships. The language used with grandparents is in a majority of cases reported to be only Slovak (14 out of 26), while in communication with parents almost all (24) mentioned both Slovak and Romanian. With siblings and friends, also, most respondents reported speaking both languages, though a relatively large group (8) said that they speak only Slovak with their siblings against a smaller group (4) who speak only Romanian. Even so, most respondents viewed the Slovak language as an important part of their identity, although they also recognized the dominance of Romanian in the broader society. A large majority (18) of the respondents considered it important to pass on the Slovak language, culture, and identity to their children in the future, with only two respondents not planning to pass on the language. As methods of transmission, they mentioned systematic oral communication, books, games, and various community activities. By passing on the language they wish to make their children multilingual, so that they would be able to communicate also with the older generations in their family who speak only Slovak.

Overall, the findings of the survey suggest that the Slovak community in Nădlac is facing a complex linguistic and cultural landscape. While there is a strong sense of identity and a desire to maintain Slovak, the community's future will depend on its ability to adapt and thrive in a diverse and changing environment. The preservation of Slovak in Nădlac is dependent on the continued efforts of individuals, families, and community organizations in a situation where the language use and identity of the younger generation will likely be influenced by the increasing dominance of Romanian in the region. Support for language education programs, cultural events, and media initiatives could potentially foster a stronger sense of Slovak identity and language vitality among the younger generation. In this context, it is interesting to note that the engagement of the respondents with Slovakia and Slovak media turned out to be relatively limited. Only a small minority (3 out of 26) expressed any interest in what is happening in Slovak politics and society. This suggests that the cultural identity of the Nădlac Slovaks is primarily rooted in their local community and family traditions. At the same time, it is alarming that a majority of the respondents (15) would like to live in another country in the future.

COMPARATIVE OBSERVATIONS

The above summaries of the current state of the Hungarian, German, Serbian, and Slovak minorities of Timișoara and adjacent parts of the Banat region are largely based on the answers received to questions concerning the self-reported linguistic behaviour and identity of young individuals, typically of upper high-school-age. This is the age group that will be responsible for the transmission and survival of their respective languages in the region. The question concerning 'identity' in a context which includes both 'nationality' (often defined by citizenship) and 'ethnicity', as well as 'mother tongue' (often defined in terms of heritage language), is notoriously complex (Byrd, 2009). In spite of their historical and demographic differences, the four minorities examined here share similar challenges, many of which are connected with the fact that they today live in an environment heavily dominated by the Romanian state language (cf. e.g. Boia, 2016). This is evident in, for instance, the graphic and acoustic landscape of Timișoara, where the minority languages are seen and heard only within the restricted spaces reserved for them in schools, churches, and other cultural institutions. The situation is slightly different for Slovaks in the smaller urban environment of Nădlac, where the local minority is large enough to allow it to make a more noticeable contribution to the visual and auditory environment in public spaces.

All four minorities speak languages functioning as official state languages in nearby countries outside of Romania. For this reason, they can benefit from the linguistic infrastructure, including various kinds of educational and media output, produced in their linguistic 'homelands'. In general, apart from the occasional lexical and grammatical interference of Romanian, the varieties spoken in the Banat region differ little from the corresponding standard languages, meaning that the languages themselves are not 'endangered'. An exception is Swabian, which is idiosyncratic enough to form a separate entity that, as such, cannot be served by the German literary standard. The collecting of language samples and narratives from the last speakers of Banat Swabian has been an important task until recently (Lönnqvist, 2023), but today such work is no longer possible, because the remaining Swabian speakers have gone over to using the standard language, which is also the only variety taught at the German school in Timișoara. As far as the commitment of the linguistic 'homelands' to their crossborder minorities in Romania is concerned, it is clearly strongest in the cases of Hungary and Germany and weakest in the case of Serbia. Hungary and Germany are also the countries which since the 1990s have attracted and absorbed massive waves of 'repatriates', a development that has reduced these minorities in Romania to a tiny fraction of their former size.

The biggest changes that have taken place in the recent past concern the generational shift of patterns of individual bilingualism. The principal kind of urban bilingualism in the past used to be Hungarian and German, and this is still the case for many middle-aged minority representatives in Timișoara. However, with the exodus of the majority of ethnic Hungarians and Germans from the region, the remaining speakers of Hungarian and German are no longer interacting with each other on the community level, and only one case of Hungarian-German bilingualism was observed among the young individuals surveyed and interviewed for the present study. Although German still retains a certain prestige status as the most 'international' language of the region (cf. Laihonen, 2009), as is also suggested by the fact that many of the students enrolled in the German school are not ethnic Germans or Swabians, the local number of German speakers is too small to have an impact on the other minorities, all of which are more focused on the survival of their own ethnic languages. Also, as an apparent consequence of the increasing number of mixed marriages with Romanian speakers, 33% of young Hungarian speakers (38 of 114) and 38% of young German speakers (14 out of 37) in Timișoara reported having 'mother-tongue-level' bilingualism in Romanian. A similar picture is shown by the Serbian speakers, among whom 30% (14 out of 45) reported being fully bilingual in Romanian. It goes without saying that 'bilingualism' is always a relative concept, but it is obvious that what the respondents mean is a full functional competence in both the ethnic heritage minority language and the dominant state language.

What is also being lost is the old tradition of widespread urban multilingualism, in which the 'smaller' minorities of Timișoara, in particular, Jews, but also Serbs and Slovaks, as well as, earlier, even Romanians, used to be at least trilingual in both Hungarian and German, the two dominant languages that enjoyed the strongest presence in the traditional linguistic environment and graphic landscape. With the rising role of Romanian, the typical pattern for many middle-aged minority individuals is today a more or less full trilingualism in Hungarian, German, and Romanian, while ethnic Romanians are no longer fluent in any of the minority languages. Acquired multilingualism is, however, still supported by the Romanian school system, which allows several foreign languages, including Latin, French, and Spanish, but also German and English, to be studied in the context of the school programme. Although this does not necessarily guarantee full fluency, it is obvious that students graduating from the minority schools are better equipped for a multilingual adulthood than those graduating from monolingual Romanian majority schools.

All the four minorities examined here share a generally very positive attitude towards their ethnic and heritage languages. In spite of their almost full bilingualism in Romanian, a large majority of all minority individuals regard their specific minority language as their most important identity factor, which they also wish to pass on to the next generation. Most of them, with the exception of the Serbian speakers, also consider their language skills to be a potential source of economic benefits in the future. This does not necessarily imply that they would wish to emigrate to their linguistic 'homelands'. Although emigration plans are still common among the young Serbian and Slovak speakers, the remaining Hungarians, in particular, who are the largest extant minority group, see the Banat region as their true 'homeland', and even if they have connections with Hungary, most of them plan a future in Timișoara and Romania. From this point of view, it is not surprising that they express a widespread lack of interest in what happens in Hungary in the political and cultural spheres. This suggests that they regard their ethnic and linguistic identity as a regional feature, which they combine with a social and political identity as citizens of Romania.

DIVERSITY THEN AND NOW

Much of the research done on urban multilingualism, multiculturalism, and interculturalism has been focussed on very large urban complexes under keywords such as 'global city' (Sassen, 2005), 'superdiversity' (Duarte & Gogolin, 2013; Mar-Molinero, 2020), 'metroethnicity' (Maher, 2005), or 'metrolingualism' (Pennycook & Otsuji, 2015). In the European context the focus of research has also been on large cities, often national capitals, which typically contain a large number of recently introduced immigrant minorities (cf. e.g. Extra & Yağmur, 2011; King & Carson, 2016). In many such metropolitan hubs linguistic diversity is a relatively new phenomenon, or, at least, it has experienced a rapid expansion caused by recent transnational migration. Against this background, Timișoara offers a different picture: it is a medium-sized regional centre with only small or medium-sized minorities (cf. Boix-Fuster, 2015), and its original diversity has been undergoing a decline, rather than expansion. In a larger framework, the case of Timișoara is, of course, not unique, for a similar development of declining diversity can be observed in many other cities in various parts of eastern, southern, and northern Europe.

Historically, the urban multilingualism of Timișoara seems to have reached its 'golden age' in the decades immediately preceding World War I. Like other empires of the *Belle Époque*, Austria-Hungary was an internally highly diversified multiethnic and multilingual construction (Prokopovych, Bethke & Scheer, 2019). Timișoara, like other urban centres of the Hungarian part of the empire, was an inherently multilingual city (cf. Varga, 2014), though in terms of absolute size it was, of course, much smaller than today. The population was, however, rapidly growing, rising from 38,702 in 1880 to 86,850 in 1920, when it already comprised all the ethnic and linguistic groups, the remnants of which, at least, are still today present in the city: Germans, Hungarians, Romanians, Jews, Serbs, and Slovaks (here listed in order of descending population size as of 1920), as well as small communities of Bulgarians, Ukrainians, and Roma. It is not without cause that the Austro-Hungarian system of ethnic and linguistic administration, despite its ultimate failure in the Balkans, has been mentioned as a possible model for managing regional diversity in today's formally united Europe (Schjerve-Rindler & Vetter, 2007).

A serious challenge to the old imperial system of ethnic administration in Europe was posed by the new nation states that emerged from the former empires after World War I. The changes in many border regions were, however, slow. In the interwar years, when the Banat region was already divided by international borders, but with most of it belonging to the Kingdom of Romania, the multilingual tradition continued without substantial changes. In 1930, when the German and Hungarian communities in Timișoara were of an approximately equal size (32,000–33,000), ethnic Romanians were still in a minority in the city (c. 25,000). The nation-state ideology grew, however, stronger, continuing also after the Communist takeover (1947). To promote the position of ethnic Romanians in minority-dominated border regions, as well as to counteract the effects of 'Magyarization', the government applied an active assimilative policy known as 'Romanianization' (Burcea, 2009), which ultimately was one of the factors causing the mass emigration of minorities in the 1990s. Even so, the language policies of post-Communist Romania (Constantin, 2004; Dragoman, 2018) have been developing in a basically minority-friendly direction, as is also evident from the fact that schools are permitted to operate with Hungarian, German, Serbian, and Slovak as languages of instruction at all levels. All these languages, together with several others, are officially recognized as 'minority languages' in Romania.

The dominant position of Romanian in today's Timișoara means that the traditional type of multilingualism in public spaces has been lost. With the former minorities substantially reduced, the urban population is for both practical and economic reasons served by the dominant Romanian state language, which is the default language in all administrative, social, and commercial functions. As a result, the minorities have become compartmentalized in their own niches, which apart from the immediate family circle includes their ethnospecific schools, churches, theatres, and other institutions. Since the minorities are no longer fluent in each other's languages, Romanian has become their mutual *lingua franca.* Combined with the factor of mixed marriages of the parental generation, many young minority individuals consider Romanian as an additional 'mother tongue', although they typically declare that they still remain emotionally committed to their inherited ethnic language – even in cases when they know it less well than Romanian. Obviously, they identify themselves both with the minority and the majority depending on the social context. Such ambivalent identities could possibly be viewed as examples of 'ethnicity as fluid' (Howard, 2000: 375), but, at the same time, they suggest that ethnicity, at least in the European context, often has an emotional core that relates to the individual's heritage language.

It is, however, also possible to view the city as a whole as 'fluid' (Leadbetter, 2022), in which the present represents only an ephemeral moment in an endless chain of transformations. This is very much true of Timișoara, especially when we consider its origins and early history, but also its present-day profile. The latest stage in this process is the current trend of globalization, which is finally bringing an incipient 'superdiversity' also to Timișoara. The linguistic effects of globalization are well known from other parts of the world (cf. e.g. Mac Giolla Chríost, 2007), but Timișoara is still in the emerging periphery of this development. Even so, there is already a growing number of recent immigrants from countries such as Turkey, Nepal, Pakistan, and others, working in various fields in the city. However, unlike the old minorities, these groups are not yet fully integrated into their new environment, and they tend to lack an internal coherence, which is why they do not form clearcut ethnic or linguistic communities. The same is true of the international students who come to obtain an academic degree in Timișoara. The local medical university (*Universitatea de Medicină și Farmacie 'Victor Babeș' din Timișoara*) offers instruction in English and French. All of this has rapidly increased the role of, in particular, English as a language of intercultural communication in the city.

CONCLUSIONS

All circumstances considered, Timișoara is relatively well placed to maintain and develop further its multiethnic and multilingual heritage. Although the former diversity has been substantially reduced because of emigration and assimilation, qualitatively speaking all the former ethnic and linguistic groups are nevertheless still present, and each of them is supported by an ethnospecific infrastructure comprising schools, churches, cultural centres, theatres, and other institutions. It is true that the former everyday multilingualism on the street, including the multilingual graphic landscape, has been lost, and the minorities have become compartmentalized in separate niches. At the same time, the earlier patterns of bi- and multilingualism have been replaced by widespread bilingualism in Romanian. Even so, the minority languages survive at the community level in families and institutions, and even young representatives of the minorities are committed to retain their ethnic and linguistic identity and to pass on their languages to the next generation. At the emotional level the minority languages are more highly valued than the uniform state language.

Many of the activities promoting the survival of the minority languages are financed by the speaker communities themselves on a voluntary basis, sometimes with the help of crowd funding projects, but the municipal administration has also been keen to support the multilingual image of Timișoara, which it sees as a potential asset for marketing the city and attracting fresh external resources. Important contributions have been made by the Hungarian and German states in support of the continuity of Hungarian and German as living urban languages in Timișoara, while similar support for Serbian and Slovak is still to come. However, irrespective of the challenges, the information from self-reporting, as summarized in the present paper, suggests that the future of the minority languages in the city may be considered as secured for at least one generation to come.

It remains to be seen what the impact of the newest waves of transnational immigration, most of which come from outside of Europe, will be. There is a danger that this will result in an increased use of English as the default language of urban communication, a development that would mean an impoverishment, rather than an enrichment, of the linguistic environment. It is also possible that the new immigrants, because of their inherent heterogeneity, will quickly be assimilated to the local linguistic majority. Successfully coping with the task of handling both old and new linguistic diversity will certainly require creative solutions of the current and future decision makers in Timișoara.

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A NOTE ON THE STATISTICAL SOURCES

The historical population figures quoted in this paper are based, apart from the sources listed above, on the detailed summary in *Temes megye településeinek etnikai* (*anyanyelvi / nemzetiségi*) *adatai 1880–1992* [Ethnic data on the settlements of Temes County, 1880–1992] by E. Árpád Varga, available at: https://www.kia.hu/kiakonyvtar/konyvtar/erdely/erdstat/tmetn.pdf (Kulturális Innovációs Alapítvány Könyvtára). Recent census data are based on the publications of the Romanian National Institute of Statistics (*Institutul Național de Statistică*) in *Recensământul Populației și Locuințelor: Populația rezidentă după etnie* (2011: https://www.recensamantromania.ro/rpl-2011/rezultate-2011/ and 2021: https://www.recensamantromania.ro/). See also the Romanian, Hungarian, German, Serbian, and English versions of the Wikipedia entry on Timișoara.

ACCESS TO SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRES

The following links allow access to the questionnaires used for collecting data from the speakers of Hungarian, Serbian, Slovak, and German (in Romanian).

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfmDRHLABRz0HCSUqntJv-hxDPztguzBue5xINYqwwP0lBTMA/formResponse

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd0dI1vsbOduj-qq0BpVaD9DnF8lwi1ANLfS5A0j0LWFX9-bA/formResponse

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfmDwlkpTWwkAyf7QgUvR3Y8HVXpnEOPI3ktpdSNZgsRCphDQ/formResponse

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScFRa6o-WiNrev__9wznaCNv_0Xwsj-8TmoBnd5UKqKCrHhhQ/formResponse

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Queer Spaces, Global Faces: English as Style and Signal in Romanian LGBTQ+ Media

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Abstract

With the advent of digital media and communications, the circulation of cultural practices across borders and languages has increased significantly. This is particularly evident within LGBTQ+ communities, where online spaces often serve as crucial sites of identity expression, activism, and community-building. As queer individuals form connections that transcend national boundaries, questions arise about how this transnational and translingual nature is reflected linguistically, especially in non-English speaking contexts. This paper explores how multilingualism manifests in Romanian online spaces geared toward LGBTQ+ individuals, taking into special consideration the role and presence of English as a global lingua franca.

Through a mixed methods analysis of language use on public social media platforms Instagram and Facebook, this study investigates how English and Romanian (and potentially other languages) are used in posts, captions, hashtags, and comment threads. We examine not only the frequency of English usage but also its functions, whether it is used for signaling group belonging, conveying specific identities, or indexing particular forms of cultural capital within the community. The research also considers how this code-switching or language blending may contribute to the shaping of queer identities in a Romanian context.

By focusing on a relatively underexplored linguistic and cultural landscape, this study contributes to ongoing conversations in queer linguistics, sociolinguistics, and media studies. It aims to shed light on how global and local linguistic practices intersect in the digital performances of identity, particularly in marginalized communities navigating both national and global pressures.

Keywords: queer linguistics, social media, digital identity, Romanian LGBTQ+ community, multilingualism

INTRODUCTION

In our increasingly globalized and digitized world, social media has become a vital space where language, identity, community and belonging are performed and negotiated. For marginalized groups such as queer individuals whose voices are often excluded from mainstream discourse, social media offers a relatively accessible and dynamic space for self-expression, social interaction and identity construction. These online platforms allow users to utilize multiple semiotic and linguistic resources, ranging from images to text, to sound, to video, and beyond in their processes of building and displaying their identities in the online space. Among these, English plays a particularly prominent role. As a global language imbued with cultural capital, affective resonance and a prestige position in society, English often emerges as a central code in the self-representation of queer individuals worldwide, especially in contexts where the local language and culture are more conservative and lack ways of supporting queer identity expression.

Romania, a post-socialist Eastern European country, represents one such context. While significant legal changes, such as the decriminalization of homosexuality in 2001, have marked formal progress, LGBTQ+ individuals in Romania continue to face widespread societal stigma. According to the 2025 ILGA-Europe Rainbow Map[1] which tracks the situation of queer rights in Europe, Romania ranks the lowest for EU countries in terms of queer rights and protections, which shows that there are still persistent cultural and structural boundaries to queer visibility. As is the case in many other conservative countries, as a consequence of such sociopolitical environment, many queer Romanians turn to the digital realm as a site for navigating identity and building community. It is within this digital space that the use of English becomes particularly salient, not only as a lingua franca (as arguably there was less evidence of that in the data) but also as a means of accessing global (queer) youth vernaculars and creating a connection to 'Western' culture.

Despite the growing visibility of queer communities online and the increasing prevalence of English in these spaces, there is a notable lack of scholarship that examines how queer individuals in Romania use English as a part of their online identity practices. Existing studies in the fields of sociolinguistics and digital communication have explored topics ranging from translanguaging (Lee, 2017; Li, 2018), online youth discourse (Leppänen et al., 2009; Leppänen et al., 2015), foreign language influences as a cultural marker (Rampton, 1995) to queer digital cultures (Dovchin, 2020), but rarely have these frameworks been applied to queer language users in Eastern European contexts. Furthermore, while there has been important work on queer Englishes (Leap, 1996; Boellstorff, 2004; Jackson, 2004) and English as a lingua franca (Canagarajah, 2007; Canagarajah, 2018; Higgins, 2009), these studies do not cover the ways in which English operates as both a symbolic and functional resource in queer communities navigating post-socialist realities.

This paper seeks to address this gap by investigating the use of English by queer oriented social media profiles. It explores how English is utilized not only as a means of communication but also as a semiotic resource for affective belonging and cultural positioning. Drawing on the theoretical frameworks of translanguaging, queer linguistics, and world Englishes, the study positions the use of English within a broader context of sociolinguistic hybridity and post-socialist cultural flows. It considers how English, alongside Romanian, functions as a flexible medium through which queer users and pages navigate visibility, connection and comprehension. By focusing on queer Romanians, this study contributes to multiple intersecting conversations in sociolinguistics, digital media studies, and queer theory. It brings attention to a marginalized group in a region that is often underrepresented in global academic discourse while highlighting how language practices intersect with questions of power, identity and resistance.

This paper begins with a glance at the background of this topic, outlining key concepts in translanguaging, English as global and queer-coded language, the relation of this global English to the digital spaces and the sociolinguistic

[1] Accessible via https://rainbowmap.ilga-europe.org/.

dimensions and dynamics of queer life in Eastern Europe more broadly and Romania more specifically. This is then followed by an analysis of the English use within social media data collected from various queer oriented Romanian pages, illustrating the complex interplay between language, identity and digital performance.

SETTING THE SCENE

The ever-increasing mobility of people across borders and beyond their communities of origin, combined with the rise of digital communication, has led to the development of new perspectives for looking at the ways in which individuals communicate in no longer monolingual environments. In online environments especially, language use often transcends the separation between named languages, resulting in flexible, hybrid communicative practices. This new dynamic interaction has brought with it the concept of translanguaging – an approach to language where the focus is no longer on the difference between the languages/cultures involved in the interaction but rather on identifying the intersections and blended and blurred borders that shape the interaction (Dovchin, 2020). While there have been various different approaches to analyzing these multi- and translingual spaces and interactions, such as crossing (Rampton, 1995), intercultural communication (Bennett, 1993), and code-switching (Auer, 1999), translanguaging as a concept encompasses all of these and looks at language (and in the case of this paper, specifically English) as no longer purely a language that has a set definition but rather an ever shifting space of communication, that shapes itself and evolves purely based on the interlocutors present in the interaction (Li, 2018). The discussions in this field have ranged from focusing on hybrid linguistic practices of youths online (Leppänen et al., 2009; Dovchin et al., 2018), multiethnic youths (Rampton, 1995; Matras, 2020), hybridity of language in music (Dovchin et al., 2018) to linguistic identity in education (Tannenbaum & Tseng, 2015; Li, 2020).

Translanguaging is a part of the field of world Englishes, which is where this study also broadly situates itself. These broader frameworks such as World Englishes and English as a lingua franca offer critical perspectives on how English is used in global and non-native contexts (Blommaert, 2010), however they do not necessarily apply equally well to all contexts. English in Eastern Europe for example cannot be understood purely through English as a lingua franca or English as a Second Language frameworks, due to the circumstances in which English attained its current position in the region. As such, many different ways of thinking about the use of English in ‘foreign’ countries have become imminent. With the ongoing internationalization and globalization of the world, English has spread far beyond its original national reach and has become much more of a flexible base on top of which communication can be constructed (Blommaert, 2010; Li, 2018). Yet despite this spread and move towards a more relaxed approach to the language, it has also managed to retain its position as somewhat of a prestige language, especially in poorer regions (Dimova, 2007), where it is seen as a necessity for financial success, which has led to its prevalence among commercial entities (Hasanova, 2010).

As it has carved itself this type of niche, English has become what can be called a nativized foreign language (Prćić, 2014). As Prćić describes it, as a nativized foreign language, English has developed the ability to function supplementally to the native language, helping form a somewhat integrated communicative resource where the native language is enriched with elements from English (Prćić, 2014: 14), and as such has turned into an adaptive tool that individuals use flexibly, depending on social context, audience and purpose. This flexibility is especially evident online, where English often holds a dual status: it is both an accessible global resource and a prestige symbol tied to economic and cultural capital. In post-socialist countries like Romania, where Western alignment and upward mobility are often associated with English proficiency, the language can take on aspirational significance (Salakhyan, 2012). Yet for queer individuals, English can also offer discursive possibilities that may not be available in their native languages, such as identity labels that are non-pathologized or do not derive from hateful terms (Dovchin, 2020). This makes English not only a tool of social mobility but also of identity formation and affective expression, specifically within the queer community in more conservative corners of the world.

Building on the intersection of language and queer identity, queer linguistics as a field has examined how language both reflects and shapes non-normative sexual and gender identities, as queer individuals must bend language to support their identities that resist mainstream categorizations, with scholars such as Jones (2013) and Milani (2013, 2017) highlighting the diversity that exists within queer speech communities and emphasizing that the key there is linguistic flexibility rather than a specific speaking style. This connects to translanguaging and world Englishes, as in both cases the emphasis is on the fluid nature of language and its ties to identity. In recent years, the focus on queer/gay Englishes has been more and more prevalent in world Englishes scholarship (Milani, 2017; Dovchin, 2020; Epstein, 2023). However, the research has not been as prevalent in covering areas such as Eastern Europe, especially in the context of social media. While queer English already in and of itself builds its own sociolingual community (Leap, 1996; Jones, 2016) that interacts translingually with 'standard' English, the added dimension of English as a lingua franca in online contexts changes the ways in which these interactions are constructed. The concept of English as a lingua franca itself is one that is called into question in these interactions, as it presupposes a certain form of English has been exported to these non-English speaking spaces (Canagarajah, 2007), which is not quite the case for communities that use English as their primary language of identification.

The translingual nature of queer communities has been attested numerous times whether it be for safety or for an added sense of community (Boellstorff, 2004; Mourad, 2013). Language itself plays a large role in identity construction as the ways in which people choose to express themselves can carry a variety of meanings and connotations (Picq & Cottet, 2019) for any communities, but especially the queer communities globally. The use of language not only is constructive of identity, but also, as Picq & Cottet (2019) put it, 'on national and transnational levels, the language around sexuality has had legal, political and economic consequences' and as such is of paramount importance to properly study it, especially in regions where queer rights are still in the process of development. It is this process of rights being in development that influences the amount of English that appears within the queer communities in these regions, or arguably even in the overall population, as English enjoys a position as a prestige language within many countries (Dimova, 2007; Hasanova, 2010). This position of prestige, along with the taboo nature of queer lives in many countries, which leads to the lack of (non-derogatory) native vocabulary for queer terms (Mourad, 2013; Picq & Cottet, 2019), allows for English to take a place as the primary language of communication.

In Eastern Europe, queer communities navigate a complex landscape shaped by post-socialist transitions, nationalist discourses and varying degrees of institutionalized homophobia. The development of queer cultures in Eastern Europe has had a varied and tumultuous history, and currently queer individuals in many Eastern European countries are still experiencing troubles in authentically presenting themselves in everyday life, and Romania is no exception to this. As stated in the ILGA Rainbow Map from 2025, Romania ranks among the worst places in the EU for queer individuals. While being queer is decriminalized in Romania, the situation there is still rather difficult compared to most of the rest of the European countries. Despite this, there is a vibrant queer community that has been developing there, specifically a queer community that has developed in the context of the post-socialist status of Romania (Ugron, 2025). This is key to note, as the difference of background can be a significant influence on the way these communities use (foreign) language.

However, this difficult situation encourages the existence of vibrant queer communities online (Dovchin, 2020). The internet plays a crucial role in the everyday lives of queer people in conservative countries (Dovchin et al., 2018) and Romania is no exception to this. As physical spaces for queer expression and solidarity can be limited or put individuals at risk of harm,[2] social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram help provide both visibility and community in ways that are not readily available offline. These online spaces allow for interaction with and production of content on queer related topics, however this is typically within a transnational framework where English often dominates (Dovchin & Pennycook, 2017). English becomes especially salient in the construction of online queer personas, where users often tap into broader queer digital vernaculars in order to connect with a broader international community. These forms of expression are not simply imitative but rather they are interwoven with local slang, cultural references and various code-switching and mixing that reflect the user's specific sociolinguistic positioning. Moreover, the online environment facilitates a new form of identity creation, one that is flexible, visual and multimodal (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001). As social media posts can blend any number of elements, this adds another layer to the translanguaging that can occur as the users choose which elements to express in what language, adding an entirely new aspect to the study of queer linguistics, especially in Eastern Europe.

Considering all of these, there is a gap left when it comes to research of queer Englishes on social media specifically in Romania (and more broadly the Eastern European region as well). Leaning on the concept of the nativized foreign language (Prćić, 2014) and the framework of digital ethnography (Varis, 2015), this study looks at the current use of English in the queer Romanian social media landscape. The aim of this study is to see how and why English is used in queer aligned social media posts in Romania, whether any patterns can be seen, and if any conclusions can be drawn from those. The study also aims to compare the roles English and Romanian play in the queer Romanian social media landscape.

METHODOLOGY

The following section discusses the methodology of the study and presents how the data were collected and processed to address the research questions. The present study adopts a digital ethnographic approach to data by acknowledging the circumstances that are unique to online spaces. Digital ethnography is based on studying how culture and communities evolve within online spaces such as social media, forums, chats, etc. There are a variety of ways to approach those digital spaces. In general, the ethnographic approach consists of flexibility and reflectivity, and should not be seen as a limited traditionally utilized collection of techniques. Nevertheless, the aim of traditional, 'pre-digital' ethnography – capturing the situational changes or patterns within a certain spatial or temporal context – still stays relevant in the digital spaces, and,

[2] One of the posts included in the corpus referred to one of the locations that had had to deal with a violent hate crime at its premises, thus showing that physical spaces do have a much higher risk of harm for queer individuals.

consequently, is important for the current study too (Varis, 2015: 56). The present study takes a flexible approach by analyzing two social media platforms (Facebook and Instagram) and their comment sections within the context of English usage. The study aims to analyze the results from both linguistic and ethnographic point of view by connecting the quantitative results with larger trends that have been observed within the online spaces.

The data collection was significantly influenced by the study's focus on marginalized online communities. Thus, information published by non-commercial associations specializing in the Romanian queer community was crucial in finding the relevant online spaces. Particularly, *Campus Pride*, an online student-oriented project supervised by *MozaiQ LGBT Association,* provided both general information about the Romanian queer community, and social media pages of inclusive organizations and businesses. According to *MozaiQ LGBT Association's National Report*, *Campus Pride* is

> a project initiated with the aim of creating a welcoming and safe environment and a climate of acceptance for all students in the Romanian academic environment, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, as well as their ethnicity, gender, religion, (dis)ability, or any other identity elements that differentiate them and make them vulnerable. (MozaiQ Association, 2023: 3)

The locations and their social media pages are displayed in the *Campus Pride*'s interactive map that is accessible through the project's main website.[3] An alternative justification for collecting the data from the pages provided by *Campus Pride* is that both the project and *MozaiQ LGBT Association* are targeted towards the somewhat younger generation who have a tendency to be more international minded and more active at using social media. Such conditions create a favorable field for the present study that is interested in the usage of English within Romanian queer social media. *Campus Pride*'s interactive map categorizes its locations as 'association', 'pub' and 'testing center'. Out of those three categories, only the first two were taken into consideration due to them being able to reflect more diverse engagement, since 'testing center' locations tend to give solely medical information. Furthermore, the data collected from 'association' and 'pub' locations' social media pages is more appropriately aligned with the methodological orientation of digital ethnography, as the posts would presumably gather more interaction. It is worth mentioning that the present study analyzed exclusively the locations found in Bucharest, although the map has locations outside the capital city. It appears that currently the vast majority of these locations, however, are testing centers. Further research could potentially compare the posts from Bucharest locations with the posts from other cities' locations, if a similar resource listing the potential commercial and organizational locations is found.

The data were collected from Instagram and Facebook, as the locations listed in the *Campus Pride*'s interactive map had links to their accounts on these platforms. In total, 100 posts – and their comments – from 11 locations were collected and analyzed. The total number of locations on the map was 16. Out of those 11 locations analyzed, 9 were overlapping, meaning the same locations' social media pages both on Instagram and Facebook were analyzed. Due to significant variation in how frequently the social media pages were updated, the data collection was standardized by selecting the five latest posts from each location and the data collection was carried out in early spring of 2025. As Varis (2015: 63) notes, the digital data presents both opportunities and limitations. In this study, these limitations

[3] *Campus Pride*'s interactive map is available at: https://campus-pride.ro/harta-interactiva.

included broken links (three on Instagram, and two on Facebook) and outdated locations. These limitations were solved by removing them from the data pool, leading to the difference in locations analyzed for both social media platforms and to the total locations listed on the map.

As previously mentioned, the interactive map favors bilingual locations (due to the focus on a younger audience), which stresses the use of English within the Romanian queer online community even more. Also, some of the posts were excluded if they had absolutely no text in them (e.g., an image or a video with only visuals) or were re-posted more than once in a row, in which case only one of the copies was counted. Platform-specific features and differences were taken into account during the data collection. For example, on Instagram, posts shared via the 'shared posts' feature were excluded from the dataset unless they were created by the main account. On Facebook, the comments that were set to private were not included.

The data collection is also limited to categories that were made to meet the focus of the research. In line with digital ethnography's principle of methodological adaptability (Varis, 2015: 62), the categories were emergent and were created to reflect the patterns and overlapping that was encountered in the dataset. As such, during the process of collecting the data, it was subcategorized by language present (English, Romanian, or both), purpose of the post (event, informative, fundraising, celebratory, instructional and miscellaneous) and type of post (image post, text only, video, and various combinations of these). User engagement with the posts and potential English use in the comment section was also taken note of, and in some cases it influences some of the language categorization. The posts were classified by their types to note where English is most commonly used – in images or captions, for instance. Whether English appeared in the posts in a form of individual words or phrases versus as full meaningful sections (e.g., whole post being in English or the full Romanian text also being translated into English) was also observed.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

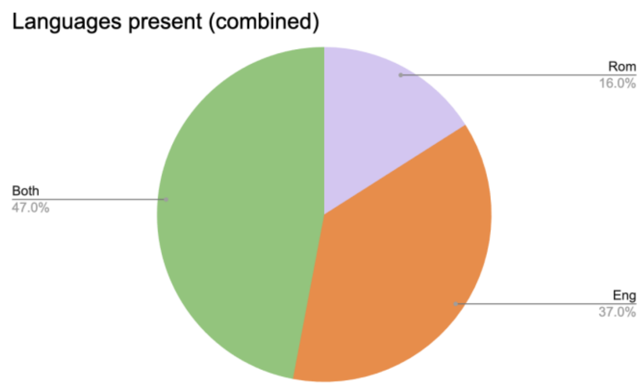
The following section will examine the data first from a quantitative and then a qualitative angle. We will start by looking at the amounts of English used in the posts that were collected and continue with a deeper look at examples of English that were found in the data, and we will finish with an analysis that synthesizes the findings from both of these approaches. The aim of this is to first understand why English is used in the posts (and compare it to Romanian) and then delve more deeply into examples that show how exactly English is used in the posts and what intricacies may be present.

Quantitative

The results of the conducted ethnographic analysis of 100 posts from 11 different locations across their Instagram and Facebook accounts showed remarkable variability in language use, depending on multiple variables. The origin of the dataset – Facebook or Instagram posts – is stated in the headings of the figures. If there are no significant differences between the datasets or their separate analysis is not relevant, the datasets are combined in the figures. Of the 11 locations analyzed, four are non-commercial (LGBTQ+ rights organizations), while the remaining seven are commercial ones, such as bars, restaurants, coffee shops or clubs. All of the four non-commercial locations were present in both the Instagram and Facebook datasets, leading to 20 posts of the set being from non-commercial locations. The posts were categorized by the language(s) used and the perceived purpose of the post, as the present study is not only interested in identifying English in the posts but also aims to contribute to the understanding of the context in which potential translanguaging occurs. To facilitate the comparison between the Instagram and Facebook datasets, the same amount of posts were analyzed – 50 from Instagram and 50 from Facebook. The results are presented in figures and standardized categories and subcategories. The number of posts is indicated in parentheses.

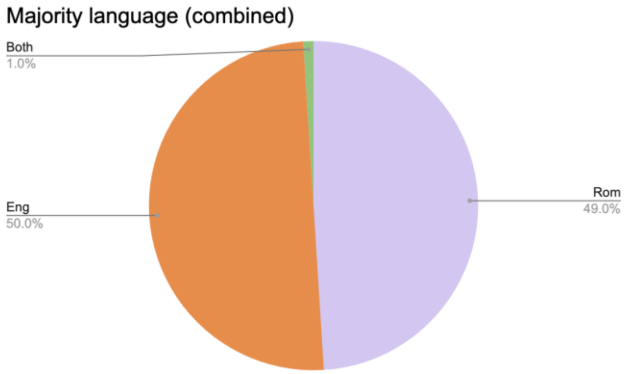
As can be seen in *Figure 1* below, the majority of posts on both platforms contained both English and Romanian. Still, the data suggests a strong presence of English, since 84% of all posts had English in them, compared to 73% of the posts having Romanian in them. In addition to this, a clear difference can be seen if we compare the percentages of purely Romanian posts (16%) to the purely English posts (37%), indicating that there is a considerable preference for making posts in English. This preference could be explained by the purpose of the majority of the posts. According to the data collected, the majority of the posts in both datasets are done by commercial locations and their posts are advertising events. These subcategories overlapping could explain the strong presence of English in general due to commercial locations wanting to reach a larger target audience. The data in the figure below shows the combined language tendencies of the posts from both platforms. When looking at the platforms individually, a small difference can be seen in the numbers, as the number of posts with both languages was lower on Facebook (n=20) than on Instagram (n=27). Interestingly, Instagram had lower amounts of both posts in English (n=17 compared to Facebook's n=20) and Romanian (n=6 compared to n=10), indicating the potential preference for using English mixed with Romanian for the accounts on Instagram.

Figure 1



In order to gain a more precise picture about the languages used in Romanian LGBTQ+ online spaces, the language use was categorized into two subsections – 'languages present' and 'majority language'. The key difference between these categories was the amount of language used, as for the 'languages present' category, even one word was enough, whereas for 'majority language' which language was more dominant in the post counted. Typically, it was easy to see which language was dominant in a post, however some edge cases occurred. Ultimately the dominant language was whichever transmitted more information. For example, an Instagram post with the description in both English and Romanian (the text being simply a direct translation from one language to the other) and an image stating in English the details of the event the post is about would be classified as having English as the dominant language. As illustrated in *Figure 2* below, while the 'languages present' category implies a strong preference for English, "the same pattern is not as clearly seen when looking at the majority languages.", as there the split is fairly even, with half of the posts in English (n=50) and almost half in Romanian (n=49) with only one outlier that had equal amounts of both languages.

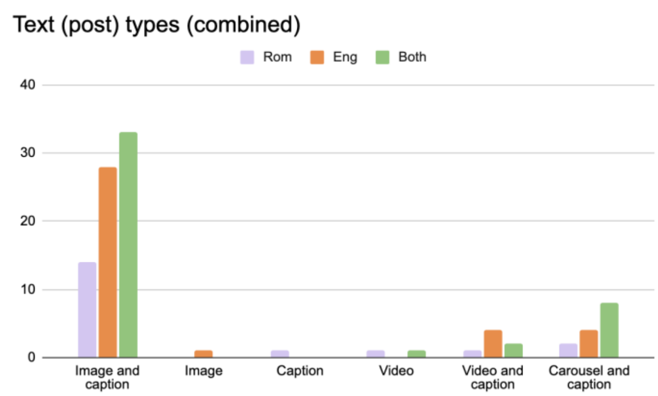
Figure 2



Both of the figures presented above depict the fact that English is indeed widely used in Romanian queer online spaces. Interestingly, there are relatively small differences between Instagram and Facebook when it comes to the prevalence of either English or Romanian as a majority language. Romanian is just slightly more frequently the majority language on Facebook (n=28) compared to Instagram (n=25), whilst English is a little bit more common on Instagram (n=25) than on Facebook (n=21). This serves as a contrast to the picture painted by just the 'languages present' category, which would show that Instagram has a preference for English (as only 6 posts were fully in Romanian). The data does however show that overall, there is a strong presence of English regardless of platform, which implies that English serves an important role for the Romanian queer online spaces.

As this study looked at language use, all the posts selected for the dataset included some form of text, however the posts tended to also include visual elements (photo or video) as is characteristic of social media platforms. The types of posts encountered and the distribution of multilingualism are presented below, in *Figure 3.* The two most used types ('image and caption' and 'carousel and caption') share similar distribution in languages, the mix of Romanian and English being the most popular one. With the post type 'video and caption' the distribution of languages present is a bit different – posts with both video and caption tend to be created mostly in English. It can be seen that visual posts were by far the most common feature in the dataset, echoing the statements made by Kress & Van Leeuwen (2001) about the multimodality of online text creation. In these posts as well, the visuals and textual elements were interwoven, in some cases leading to the texts in the post referencing the image (or the other way around). Alternatively, there were also some posts where the image was the text, which will be looked at further in the qualitative section.

Figure 3



The other big category, besides language and post type, was the purpose of the post, which had six subcategories: event, informative, fundraising, celebratory, instructional and miscellaneous. 'Event' posts were encouraging readers to participate in a certain activity such as musical performances, workshops, movie nights, etc. Majority of commercial posts fell under this category as they typically advertised events that they were holding. 'Informative' posts, as the name suggests, informed readers about certain changes in schedules, on-going situations, and elections, to name a few examples. 'Fundraising' posts, which were posts aiming to collect money for a cause not related to commercial interests, were present in both datasets, whilst 'celebratory' and 'miscellaneous' posts were identified only on

Instagram posts (see *Figure 4*). The one post categorized as 'miscellaneous' is a picture of a 'send nudes' neon sign posted by one of the commercial locations, a night club.

The figures below demonstrate what languages were present in each of those six subcategories. *Table 1* indicates that the most popular subcategory for the posts is 'event'. 'Event' is also the subcategory that best showcases the drastic difference between the datasets. Exclusively Romanian appears in a lesser number of 'event' posts, as noted in *Table 1*. However, a great disparity can be observed between the datasets. Facebook's 'event' posts are split between half (n=18) being only in English and the other half being either bilingual or monolingual Romanian. Meanwhile, monolingual Romanian is completely absent from Instagram's 'event' posts. On the other hand, the posts with both Romanian and English present occurred frequently both on Instagram and Facebook. The column that shows the number of posts with just individual English words/phrases, shows, however, that there was a stronger tendency to have posts with individual English sprinkled in among Romanian text in Instagram posts, aligning with Instagram having a larger amount of posts that were categorized as bilingual, as mentioned earlier.

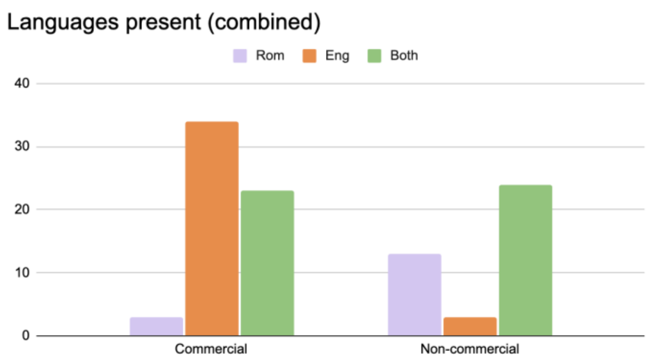
When it comes to categories beyond the 'event' category, the 'informative' posts with only English present are slightly more common on Facebook (n=5) than on Instagram (n=1). The 'informative' posts contained information related to the locations such as working hours (more typical for Facebook), or they informed of relevant political occurrences (more typical for Instagram). Fundraising posts also show a difference in language preferences as Instagram had no posts in this category that were fully in Romanian, while Facebook had two. The reason for this is unclear, however this could simply be a matter of when the data was collected and which campaigns were going on at the time. Interestingly, despite this lack of monolingual Romanian for Instagram, both social media platforms' posts in this category were mostly in Romanian, potentially showing that the language choice is influenced by the seriousness of the topic (this can also be seen in the 'instructional' category which is almost fully in Romanian, as it was mostly instructions on voting or medical matters).

Purpose of text	**Languages present (rom / eng / both)**	**Majority language**	**Number of posts with just individual English words**	**Total number of posts**
celebratory	IG: 0/0/1 | FB: 0/0/0	IG: English | FB: -	IG: 1 | FB: -	IG: 1 | FB: -
event	IG: 0/14/19 | FB: 3/18/15	IG: Romanian | FB: English	IG: 15 | FB: 14	IG: 33 | FB: 37
fundraising	IG: 0/1/3 | FB: 2/1/2	IG: Romanian | FB: Romanian	IG: 3 | FB: 2	IG: 4 | FB: 5
informative	IG: 3/1/3 | FB: 1/5/1	IG: English | FB: English	IG: 2 | FB: 1	IG: 7 | FB: 7
instructional	IG: 2/0/1 | FB: 2/0/0	IG: Romanian | FB: Romanian	IG: 1 | FB: -	IG: 3 | FB: 2
miscellaneous	IG: 1/0/1 | FB: 0/0/0	IG: English | FB: -	IG: 1 | FB: -	IG: 2 | FB: -

Table 1

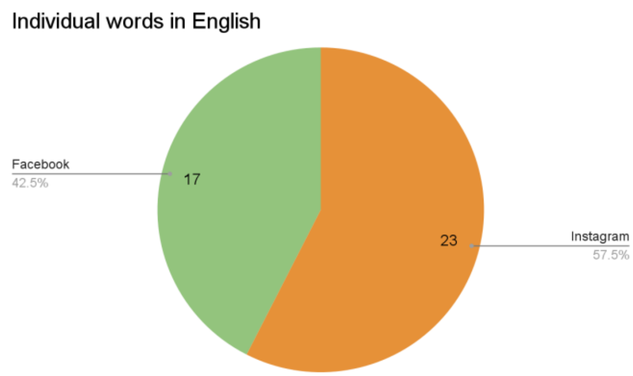
This effect of (assumed) purpose on the language choice can be looked at further when analyzing the types of locations and their language choices, outlined in *Figure 4*. As stated before, out of 11 locations only 4 can be classified as non-profit organizations, while the remaining 7 are LGBTQ+ inclusive businesses (this classification followed the one on the map used as the basis for finding the locations). One of the key findings of the present study is that the commercial locations tend to prefer English more than the non-commercial ones, as the *Figure 4* reveals. Still, both non-commercial and commercial locations are multilingual; both types include either individual English words or phrases into their posts. However, commercial locations are more prone to include solely English, with no Romanian in their posts. Such linguistic preferences could be explained by the international image of English. Namely, English is associated with prestige and elitism, especially in the post-Soviet space after the fall of the iron curtain (Hasanova, 2010: 3-4). Also, English, expectedly, attracts more clients and as a global lingua franca represents modernity and trends (Hasanova, 2010: 7).

Figure 4



This idea of trendiness is also one of the observations made in the present study, since the individual English words appearing in the posts written were also noted in both datasets. As can be seen in *Figure 5,* the majority of English individual words appear more frequently in the posts from Instagram (n=23), whilst Facebook had less English words (n=17). Still, a larger proportion of posts from the datasets were completely written in either Romanian or English and had no code-switching (see *Figure 1*). However, one example of English grammatically embedded into a Romanian sentence was identified from the Facebook dataset. This kind of code-switching is indeed rare and occurred only once in a 100-posts-large dataset. However, this kind of code-switching was identified in the comment section of both Instagram and Facebook posts. The comments were analyzed separately from the posts.

Figure 5



Besides the English present in the posts, this study looked into the English used in the comment section. The most notable disparities between the datasets can be observed in comment sections. First of all, the Facebook dataset contained fewer comments (n=25), whereas the Instagram dataset featured more than six times as many (n=166), though this accounts for only comments with text, as emoji-based comments would raise those numbers even higher for Instagram in particular. This shows a clear difference in the interaction patterns on the platforms. The languages present in Facebook and Instagram's comment sections are illustrated in the figures below (*Figure 6* and *7*).

Notably, the comments were disproportionately divided across the 100 posts analyzed. The average number of comments left under a Facebook post is as low as 0.5. Instagram's average is higher at 3.32. The most common value for both datasets, however, is 0. The visible difference in the number of comments could be explained by Facebook's feature of 'private comments' that are visible only to the chosen recipients. The Facebook dataset had 10 private comments that were excluded from the analysis. Those private comments were present in the posts that included English, the majority language in five posts being solely English. The majority of the private comments were left under the posts that were advertising events.

Figure 6

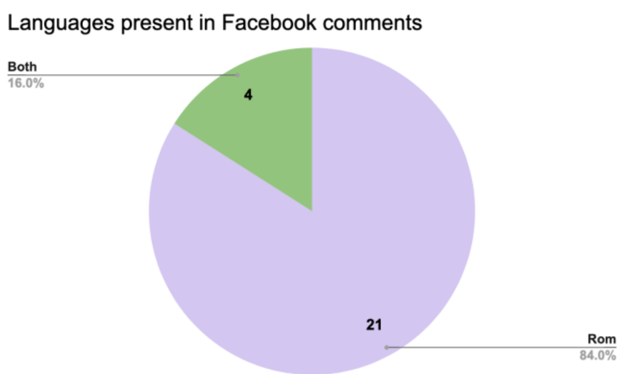
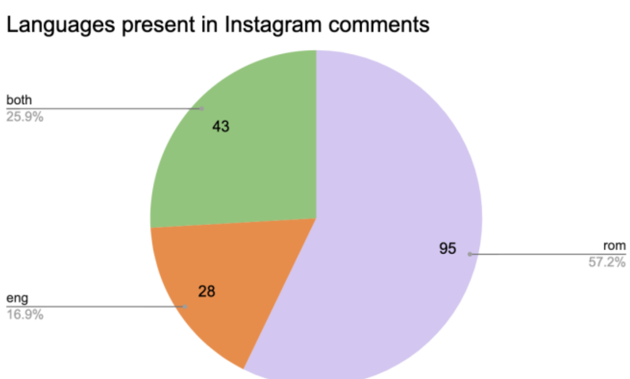


Figure 7



Comments on Facebook were comparatively less likely to feature English words or phrases than those on Instagram (see *Figure 6* and *7*). From the ethnographical standpoint, one of the factors explaining the disproportionality in the number of comments could be the concept of anonymity. According to Varis (2015: 64), Facebook is a challenging platform for research, since the platform encourages its users to avoid anonymity and to create accounts by using their real names. It has been studied that discouraging or prohibiting anonymity lowers the engagement with the online content. On the other hand, it has been noted that anonymity fosters negative behavior, such as swearing (Omernik & Sood, 2013: 4-5). However, in theory anonymity is still completely possible while engaging with the posts published on Facebook. For example, the user can 'privately' comment on the posts and Facebook does not require its users to create an account based on personal information, which, while uncommon, shows that anonymity is possible on Facebook as well. Additionally, Instagram is not much more anonymous compared to Facebook as most people tend to use their accounts in ways that do directly connect to their real life identity. Thus, anonymity provides only a partial explanation for the difference in interaction patterns. The lower engagement on Facebook could potentially be explained by the changing social media behaviors among the youth. The topic has been studied within the Romanian context, too. Particularly, a survey research focusing on the usage of social media among the Romanian youth conducted by Mocanu (2018) determined that the younger generation is experiencing 'migration' from Facebook to Instagram (Mocanu, 2018: 459, 462).

Qualitative

The data revealed two different uses of English in the posts. The first use case was English as a proper language, meaning that these posts were ones where English was either used for the entire post or used in the same capacity as Romanian (e.g. the Romanian text was translated to English). The second use case was the more interesting one, as it covered the cases where English was used as either single words or phrases. This could be further broken down to English used for service names (e.g. *Rainbow care*) and English used as a stylistic choice. The majority of individual words were somehow related to the LGBTQ+ community, namely such words as *rainbow*, *pride*, *slay* and *glam*. These words can be interpreted as social signifiers indexing identity and community belonging, in a way that resembles the semiotic signaling discussed by Rampton (1995) in the context of language crossing. The signaling is aligned with the public image of LGBTQ+ inclusivity that the locations have successfully maintained, particularly following their inclusion on the *Campus Pride*'s interactive map.

One such example is an Instagram post featuring the image text *rainbow eggs, serving legs*, with an image of legs and rainbow eggs as the background. As this is rather nonsensical, it shows that English is being used here more in the sense of a nativized foreign language for this small group (queer people) as the English serves a function of signaling alignment with queer identity rather than carrying meaning. This post was made by a queer rights organization, which aligns with this analysis of English here being used as a tool to signal alignment with the broader global queer culture. This same post (an image carousel with a caption on Instagram) also featured other terms such as *slay*, with the comments including terms such as *coming out* aligning further with this view.

Other identified cases of curious language use were for example *link in bio* which can be classified as either English or Romanian without diacritics. As most posts did use the diacritics, we opted to categorize posts with the words without the diacritics as English, however this could arguably be incorrect depending on the culture around proper writing in Romanian online communities, as many communities opt to simply use the standard English keyboard and thus forego the extra effort of diacritics. However, this ambiguity did not make a large difference in the language classifications of the posts, as the majority of the posts where this phrase was encountered were already bilingual. While this example is not significant for drawing any conclusions about English use, it was important to note as other such cases of ambiguity could also be present, though it was attempted to catch any of these and confirm using a dictionary (one such example would be the word *call center* which was eventually categorized as Romanian).

Cases where a sentence would use full English phrases in the middle of otherwise Romanian text were rare, with only one such example being identified. The sentence 'Bine, noi credem că al nostru *cast* este format din *your favorite performer's favorite performers*, pentru că *you are in for a treat*.' appeared on an 'event' post of a commercial location's page. In this example, the blending of the languages highlights what Prćić (2014) noted about the nativized foreign language, where English is used as an element that is both semantic but also in a sense decorative, adding more flair to the sentence. As this post was from a commercial entity, it also highlights that English is used by many commercial entities due to its trendy nature and connection to the global consumer.

Beyond the contents of the posts themselves, the hereby study also looked at the comments on the posts. As seen in the quantitative section, the English use in the comments was very different for Facebook and Instagram, with Instagram having visibly more English comments (though also just more comments overall). Interestingly, a pattern of negativity appeared more prominently in the exclusively Romanian comments compared to those that were multilingual or written in English. This could be indicative of the negative institutional attitudes towards queer communities in Romania, but further research is needed to confirm whether this constitutes a stable pattern within the LGBTQ+ online spaces. Beyond the opinions in the comments, there were also notable cases of code-mixing, as English words and phrases were used within otherwise Romanian comments. One such example would be '"sustin parteneriatul civil cu toata fiinta mea" right back at u' where one commenter replies to a previous comment (which was in English) with a quote from the politician the first comment was presumably defending. This is an example of English serving both a simple communicative role (as in showing that the text in Romanian is meant to combat the original commenter's statement) but also a more complex role as a trendier youth language, contrasting with the political statement being in Romanian.

These results from the posts show various language related trends among queer oriented Romanian social media accounts. As illustrated earlier, English was a very prominent language in the dataset, eclipsing the amount of purely Romanian content when looking at the overall totals. However, differences occurred between the two social media platforms, as English played a much more prevalent role in the Instagram dataset, both in the posts and in the comments section. It is unclear what exactly could have caused this discrepancy, but one could assume that the user demographics of Instagram skew a bit younger and thus a bit more English-oriented than those of Facebook. The use of English tended to be in line with commercial interest (as many commercial posts utilized English in some capacity) and with being an identity marker (as could be seen in individual English words being those that are associated with international queer English lexicon such as *slay* or *rainbow*), showing that English holds a dual role within the queer community in Romania. Further research is needed to see if these patterns also replicate themselves within active communication between queer individuals, as while the use of English in the comments suggests that that could be a possibility, it is in no way conclusive.

The roles of English displayed in this dataset align somewhat with the theoretical concept of English as a nativized foreign language (Prćić, 2014), as English is not necessarily used separately from the native language (Romanian) but rather as a sociocultural modifier, with the aim to take part in the global Anglophone culture. While mixing of full phrases was rare in the posts, with only one recorded example, language mixing in general (with individual words/short phrases) was not that rare, being present in nearly half of the posts, which shows that English tended to play more of a cultural signaling role than a communicative one when mixed in. When English was not mixed in however, and rather made up the full body of the post, it tended to be used with the intention of marketing events as internationally oriented, showing the prestige position of English.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the current study imply that the role of English in Romanian queer social media circles is multifaceted and very prominent. As on both Instagram and Facebook the majority of the posts contained English, the presence of the language is very visible; however, the data about the majority languages showed that Romanian is also still present (n=49). As such, it does not seem that English plays a role where it is used in place of Romanian, but rather it is used beside Romanian, which aligns with the theoretical concept of the nativized foreign language laid out by Prćić (2014), wherein English serves as a modifying element. This nature of English as a modifier is further seen in the individual posts used as examples, where English plays a role of connection to the global queer community, or as visual shorthand for more global (West-aligned) content. This connection to globalness is also evident from the fact that commercial locations tended to use significantly more English and also had more posts fully in English. This is presumably due to the prestige position that English holds as an international language and as a language of business (Hasanova, 2010). From this we can see that the how and why of English use in the context of Romanian queer social media are rather dependent on the purpose of the posts and the aim of the accounts.

Beyond just the accounts themselves, the comment sections also showed remarkable English use, especially in the case of Instagram, which adds plausibility to the idea that the trends seen in this analysis of posts from official pages (whether commercial or non-commercial) could also be reflective of communication between queer Romanians themselves on social media. The comments tended to also show more creative language mixing (using full phrases instead of single words or simply separating the Romanian and English altogether) compared to the actual posts, which again hints at English being used more casually by actual queer people than by official accounts. This, however, needs further study to be confirmed.

These findings raise important questions about how language can function not only as a communicative tool but also as a site of identity building/displaying for marginalized communities. The Romanian queer online spaces that were observed here are reflective of a broader global pattern of English use as both a symbolic and practical resource, one that gives the individual access to global queer identity and community, while simultaneously reinforcing existing linguistic hierarchies. The strategic use of English, whether for visibility, connection, or commercial engagement, illustrates how queer users and accounts actively curate their online presence in ways that navigate local stigma while participating in transnational queer culture. Future research could explore more direct perspectives of queer Romanians through more direct methods such as interviews or discourse analysis of conversational data, or if looking more into the institutional aspect, as this study did, have a longer-term overview of the languages used in posts. These further approaches could provide additional insight into what ideologies may underlie individuals' language practices. In particular, more work is needed to understand how queer Romanians and queer associated accounts/locations balance their language use and what kinds of thought processes guide it, especially in interactions beyond the public-facing digital stage.

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Câteva dificultăți de natură morfosintactică în învățarea limbii române ca limbă străină

Some Morphosyntactic Difficulties in Learning Romanian as a Foreign Language

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Magistro meo carissimo,
cui semper ero debitor,
Professori Constantin Frâncu

Abstract

The present study seeks to examine specific morphosyntactic challenges encountered in oral and written activities at the A1 and A2 proficiency levels by Serbian learners of Romanian as a foreign language at the University of Novi Sad. Drawing on morphosyntactic errors identified during linguistic interactions in seminar settings, the analysis adopts methodologies from contrastive linguistics, applied linguistics, and inter-linguistics.

The first analytical approach focuses on the identification of grammatical and semantic deviations, with the aim of extrapolating pedagogically relevant rules that facilitate a deeper comprehension of the target language. The second approach endeavours to contextualise the observed linguistic phenomena within a broader theoretical framework. At the introductory levels of language acquisition (A1 – A2), it is essential to provide learners with clearly defined patterns and morphosyntactic structures that can be readily understood and effectively applied across analogous linguistic contexts. At this stage, imitation emerges as a fundamental mechanism in the acquisition process.

With the advancement of research in applied linguistics, a more coherent understanding can be developed regarding the implementation of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). This includes clarifying which aspects of linguistic competence are being targeted, the methodologies through which they are operationalised, and the progression from basic to more complex linguistic structures. As learners advance through successive proficiency levels, morphosyntactic patterns tend to diversify and exhibit increased complexity and nuance.

The identification and systematic explanation of these patterns contribute to learners' engagement with the Sprachgeist *– the underlying linguistic worldview – through which language structures reality in a manner akin to reconstructing a complex, interlocking puzzle.*

Keywords: Romanian as a foreign language, applied linguistics, morphosyntactic difficulties, the spirit of language, language games

INTRODUCERE

Predarea limbii române ca limbă străină în cadrul lectoratelor românești din lume, coordonate de Institutul Limbii Române din București, presupune numeroase provocări, în special când limba țării face parte din altă ramură lingvistică. Analiza contrastivă și lingvistica aplicată aduc la lumină noi perspective în abordarea predării limbii române ca limbă străină, aspecte care ar putea fi utile și pentru redactarea unor viitoare manuale cu metode mai eficiente de predare și învățare. Faptele devin cu atât mai interesante cu cât limbile aparțin unor familii lingvistice total diferite.

Identificarea greșelilor de natură morfosintactică în cadrul seminarelor de studiere a limbii române ca limbă străină este importantă pentru găsirea unor strategii viitoare de abordare a aspectelor gramaticale, astfel încât cel care predă să poată descoperi metode pedagogice noi, să poată reflecta asupra dificultăților întâmpinate de către vorbitorul străin, facilitându-i drumul spre acel *Sprachgeist*, în care realitatea este organizată ca într-un puzzle lingvistic. Cu cât înțelegi mai bine mecanismul de construcție al unei limbi, cu atât învățarea limbii nu mai pare atât de dificilă, pentru că, cel puțin în cazul nivelurilor A1 și A2, aceasta se bazează pe tipare lingvistice.

METODA

Spre deosebire de secolul al XIX-lea, în care cercetătorii erau preocupați de limba în aspectul ei diacronic, lingvistica contemporană se axează, în primul rând, pe aspectul sincronic, predominând studiile în această direcție. Așa cum afirmă și Constantin Frâncu, „lingvistica contemporană [...] a progresat nu atât prin teorii, [...] cât prin metode, care într-adevăr reprezintă o noutate absolută în lingvistică” (Frâncu, 2016: 249). Metodele moderne din lingvistica actuală au dus la „rezultate surprinzătoare și în ceea ce privește deosebirea dintre particular și general, între elementele specifice unei limbi și elementele care țin de universaliile lingvistice” (Frâncu, 2016: 249). Nu putem face abstracție în studierea unei limbi de sistemul lingvistic pe care îl utilizează deja vorbitorul. Acesta este punctul de plecare ce apropie sau desparte cele două limbi. Căutarea unor căi de acces de la o limbă la alta este esențială pentru facilitarea învățării ei, pentru că, în procesul dobândirii competențelor lingvistice ale noii limbi, se pleacă de la limba cunoscută, așa cum precizează și Coșeriu:

> în realitate fiecare limbă este, într-adevăr, un sistem istoricește specific, dar specific în interiorul a ceea ce este universal în limbaj, așa încât fiecare limbă, după cum a văzut deja Humboldt, este o cheie pentru toate celelalte. (Coșeriu, 1997: 136)

Lucrarea nu se bazează pe o singură metodă, ci pe metode din diverse școli lingvistice europene și americane, îmbinate în funcție de scopul urmărit. Deoarece studiul pleacă de la erori morfosintactice colectate în urma interacțiunilor lingvistice avute cu studenții în cadrul seminarelor, am utilizat metode din lingvistica contrastivă, din lingvistica aplicată și interlingvistică. O primă abordare este una de natură pragmatică, presupunând identificarea erorilor gramaticale sau de natură semantică, astfel încât, pe baza lor, să se poată extrage anumite reguli pentru o înțelegere mai bună a limbii străine de către student. O a doua abordare apropie faptele lingvistice identificate de nivelul teoretic, de unde se pot identifica noi perspective pentru studiul limbii, facilitând procesul de predare. Identificarea erorilor gramaticale și formularea unor tipare lingvistice, cel puțin pentru primele 2 niveluri ale studiului unei limbi ca limbă străină, pot fi utile în stabilirea unor metode eficiente de abordare a acestor aspecte lingvistice și în crearea unor exerciții care să clarifice posibilele „neînțelegeri”. De asemenea, am folosit și elemente din gramatica generativ-transformațională a lui Noam Chomsky (Chomsky, 1965: 16), în special distincția pe care lingvistul o face între structura de adâncime (*deep structure*) și structura de suprafață (*surface structure*) și aspectul semantic pe care îl implică acestea. Corelarea celor două structuri ale limbii poate aduce o noutate și o coerență în introducerea graduală a elementelor de gramatică. Tot din lingvistica americană, am preluat cazurile de adâncime și de suprafață din teoria lingvistică a lui Fillmore, din așa-numita *gramatică a cazului* (Fillmore, 1968: 21).

Așa cum menționează Frâncu, lingvistica contrastivă „se înscrie în lunga tradiție comparativistă”, iar compararea a două limbi „scoate în evidență și asemănările și deosebirile dintre acestea, inclusiv pentru detectarea «universaliilor lingvistice»” (Frâncu, 2016: 207).

Deși multe fapte lingvistice sunt similare, conducând la acele universalii lingvistice și la ideea că suntem uniți mai mult decât credem prin limbaj, totuși cel care învață o limbă străină se confruntă și cu numeroase diferențe, uneori foarte provocatoare, mai ales când limba 1 și limba 2 aparțin și unor ramuri lingvistice îndepărtate.

ANALIZA ERORILOR MORFOSINTACTICE ȘI PROPUNEREA UNOR SOLUȚII DE REZOLVARE A ACESTORA

O primă abordare a dificultăților de natură morfosintactică este cea pragmatică, acestea fiind identificate în urma conversațiilor și a exercițiilor de la nivelurile A1 și A2 avute cu studenții din Serbia care învață limba română ca limbă străină la Universitatea din Novi Sad. Mai interesantă pentru lingvist este însă abordarea teoretică, pentru că aceasta ne ajută să anticipăm erorile pe care studentul le-ar putea face și să găsim modalități eficiente de a le rezolva atunci când apar. Bineînțeles că cele două metode conduc la soluții noi de abordare a limbii române ca limbă străină, cu atât mai eficiente cu cât sunt coroborate cu alte studii de același tip. Datele provenite din analiza erorilor morfosintactice sunt valoroase pentru cercetător, conducându-l la o perspectivă asupra limbii din afară. Scopul acestor studii este de a găsi cel mai bun mod de a preda o limbă străină. Adeseori, cercetătorul, în cazul nostru lectorul care predă limba sa maternă ca limbă străină, este pus în situația de a reflecta asupra limbajului, activând funcția metalingvistică a acestuia.

Observarea erorilor gramaticale descoperă, de multe ori, perspective inedite asupra abordării eficiente a limbii, iar cunoştințele dobândite anterior despre limbă și limbaj sunt acum dublate de modul în care este percepută limba de către cineva din afara sistemului lingvistic.

În urma studierii datelor lingvistice rezultate din conversațiile cu studenții sârbi care învață limba română ca limbă străină, am analizat în cele ce urmează 11 aspecte de natură morfosintactică, încercând, prin comparație cu limba sârbă sau nu, să identificăm structuri, tipare lingvistice ce ar putea conduce la noi posibile abordări ale unor aspecte gramaticale.

(a) *Formele de acuzativ cu prepoziție* creează dificultăți în ceea ce privește folosirea prepoziției.

1. Mă uit *la știri*.

1’. Gledam *vesti*.

De exemplu, sub influența limbii materne, propoziția formulată de studenți este:

1’’. ~~*Mă uit știri.*~~

Problema este generată de faptul că, în limba sârbă, verbul *gledati* este, în majoritatea cazurilor, nereflexiv, tranzitiv, cere acuzativ și obiect direct, în timp ce verbul *a se uita* are un clitic reflexiv obligatoriu, cerând un obiect prepozițional, component matricial al grupului verbal, impunând un regim prepozițional și atribuind grupului prepozițional, în care intră un grup nominal cu centru un substantiv, un rol tematic de *temă* (vezi Pană Dindelegan et al., 2010: 280). Semantic vorbind, *știrile* sunt obiectul percepției agentului, cu deosebirea că, în timp ce în limba română verbul *a se uita* cere obiect prepozițional, în limba sârbă cere obiect direct.

Considerăm că identificarea și explicarea tiparului sintactic asigură o mai bună înțelegere a acuzativului cu prepoziție în trecerea de la un nivel de studiu la altul.

De exemplu, la nivelul A1 putem începe cu tipare sintactice simple în care P (propoziția) este reprezentat de formula (S) + V + O, unde prin O înțelegem, așa cum precizează Fillmore, orice lucru care este afectat de acțiune sau starea identificată de verb: „the concept should be limited to things which are affected by the action or state identified by the verb” (Fillmore, 1968: 25). Nu trebuie să înțelegem aici prin O obiectul direct: „The term is not to be confused with the notion of direct object, nor with the name of the surface case synonymous with accusative” (Fillmore, 1968: 25).

1’’’. GV: Mă uit $[_{Gprep}$ *la* $[_{GN}$*știri*$]]_{Cprep}$

(S) + V + O (substantival)

În exemplul 1’’’, grupul prepozițional conține un grup nominal cu centru un substantiv (Pană Dindelegan et al., 2010: 467) și este cerut obligatoriu de către verbul reflexiv.

Spre sfârșitul nivelului A.1.1, se poate varia tiparul sintactic, pe măsură ce se studiază pronumele personal și determinanții.

2. GV: Mă uit $[_{Gprep}$ *la* $[_{GNpron}$*tine*$]]_{Cprep}$

(S) + V + O (pronominal)

Spre sfârșitul lui A2, când se studiază propoziția relativă și dublarea obiectului, tiparul sintactic devine mai complex:

3. GV: Mă uit $[_{Gprep}$ *la* $[_{PRel}[_{GNpron}$*cine*$]_{S}$ $[$*ne*$]_{CD}$-*a strigat*$]]_{Cprep}$.

[(S) + V + O [P relativă: S + O + V]]

Astfel, din exemplele 1, 2, 3, rezultă următoarele scheme sintactice:

- (S) + V + O (substantival)
- (S) + V + O (pronominal)
- [(S) + V + O [P relativă: S + O + V]]

etc.

Pornind de la aceste tipare sintactice, se pot dezvolta modele variate, utilizând și alte verbe din fiecare unitate de învățare studiată: *a se gândi*, *a se limita* etc. Ele vor sta la baza înțelegerii *jocurilor limbajului* (*die Sprachspiele*, vezi Wittgenstein, 1997) de către cel care vine dintr-un alt sistem lingvistic, dar vor putea constitui și puncte de plecare în elaborarea unor manuale eficiente în orice spațiu al lumii unde se predă româna ca limbă străină.

(b) O altă situație interesantă este cea a verbului de modalitate aletică *pot*, urmat de un verb. Așa cum preciza Frâncu, verbul *a putea* își menține „în proporție destul de mare capacitatea [...] de a construi cu infinitivul” (Frâncu, 2010: 139).

4. Doctorii *pot trata* pacienții la spital.

4’. Doktori/lekari *mogu da leče* pacijente u bolnici.

Propoziția 4 ridică dificultăți pentru studenții sârbi care învață limba română prin grupul verbal non-finit infinitival fără morfemul liber *a*: *pot trata* (Pană Dindelegan et al., 2010: 440). Aceștia au tendința de a insera între operatorul modal și forma infinitivală morfemul *a*, sub influența limbii sârbe în care se utilizează cele două verbe la prezent (*sadašnje vreme*) conectate prin conjuncția *da*: *mogu da leče*.

Discutarea unor tipare sintactice poate facilita învățarea acestor construcții sintactice.

Propoziția 4 poate fi rescrisă astfel:

4’’. Doctorii $[$*pot* $[_{GVinf}$*trata* pacienții...$]_{CD\ al\ operatorului\ modal}]_{Predicat\ complex\ cu\ operator\ modal}$.

Rezultă următoarea schemă sintactică:

- P → S + modalizarea aletică + O

sau una detaliată:

- P → S + V (modalul aletic) + O (vinf) + O (subst. + det.)

Exercițiile propuse în cadrul seminarelor pot fi atât cu operatorul modal urmat de infinitiv, cât și cu celelalte verbe care impun morfemul *a* (*prefer a spune*, *doresc a cânta*).

Considerăm că pot fi introduse construcții sintactice cu modalele *a putea* și *a trebui* urmate de un verb la modul conjunctiv (*eu pot să spun*; *tu trebuie să spui*) încă de la nivelul A.1.1. al studierii limbii române ca limbă străină, în special pentru persoanele I și II, singular și plural, unde forma de conjunctiv este omonimă cu cea de prezent: eu *spun*/eu *să spun*; tu *spui*/tu *să spui*; noi *spunem*/noi *să spunem*; voi *spuneți*/voi *să spuneți*.

(c) Erori gramaticale apar în cazul *verbelor de conjugarea I care la pers. I sg. au desinența* ***-u***. Majoritatea verbelor românești au desinența Ø la pers. I. sg, excepție făcând câteva verbe care au desinența *-u*: eu *intr**u***, *afl**u**, sta**u***, *da**u**, ia**u**, sufl**u**, url**u***. Fiind puține, considerăm că nu trebuie să lipsească din manuale, putând fi conjugate, deoarece verbele sunt și uzuale din punct de vedere conversațional, cel puțin pentru primele cinci exemple.

(d) Utilizarea adverbului *mai* creează anumite dificultăți în procesul învățării limbii române.

5. Eu *mai* scriu.

5'. Eu scriu *în continuare*/*și acum*/*și în prezent*.

6. *Mai* lucrez la proiect.

6'. *Încă* lucrez la proiect.

În exemplele 5 și 6, *mai* apare ca semiadverb, marcator aspectual și se referă la modul de desfășurare a unei acțiuni în timp, la o acțiune continuă, având sensul de *și acum*, *în continuare, și în prezent* (5') și cel de *încă* (6') (Pană Dindelegan et al., 2010: 244). Așadar, semiadverbul *mai* clarifică structura de adâncime a propoziției, indicând că nu este vorba despre faptul de a scrie acum ceva, ci despre o acțiune începută în trecut (*am scris*, *am lucrat la proiect*) care continuă în prezent (*mai*), devenind și o posibilă acțiune viitoare mai apropiată sau mai îndepărtată (e posibil să mai scriu până săptămâna viitoare, în cazul unui proiect, sau toată viața, în cazul în care sunt scriitor).

Dificultatea apare la studenții care învață româna ca limbă străină în utilizarea lui *mai* în structurile negative, când are valoare adversativă (în structura de adâncime), ține locul unui raport de coordonare adversativă și arată o acțiune încheiată:

Comparând exemplul 7 cu 7', rezultă fraza 7'' din structura de adâncime:

7. Eu nu *mai* dansez.

7'. Eu nu dansez.

7''. Eu nu *mai* dansez, *dar* am dansat cândva.

Din punct de vedere semantic, semiadverbul *mai* marchează o acțiune repetitivă care a avut loc în trecut, dar în prezent nu se mai întâmplă. Exemplul 7 îl presupune în structura de adâncime pe 7'': *Eu nu mai dansez acum, dar se presupune că am dansat cândva*. Dacă 7 nu este egal cu 7' și se opune lui 7', în schimb 7'' este o inferență deductivă a lui 7.

În limba sârbă sunt utilizate structuri diferite pentru cele două utilizări ale lui *mai*.

Pentru structura 7 cu negație se folosește:

7'''. Ne igram *više*./*Više* ne igram.

cu sensul *obișnuiam să dansez, dar nu o mai fac* și cu o topică liberă, spre deosebire de 7, unde se observă topica fixă, *mai* fiind poziționat întotdeauna între negație și verb: *nu mai dansez*.

(e) Studenții sârbi care învață limba română întâmpină dificultăți în exprimarea datei, folosind numeralele ordinale, ca în limba sârbă, pe când în română, pentru prima zi a lunii se utilizează numeralul ordinal, de ex. 1.08.2011 – *întâi a opta două mii unsprezece*, și pentru celelalte zile – numeralul cardinal, de ex. 03.02.2009 – *trei a doua două mii nouă*.

De asemenea, trebuie acordată atenție în cadrul seminarelor și numeralelor cardinale 11, 14 și 16, unde apar diferențe în construcția lor față de restul numeralelor: 11 – *unsprezece* și nu *~~unusprezece~~*, 14 – *paisprezece* și nu *~~patrusprezece~~*, 16 – *șaisprezece* și nu *~~șasesprezece~~*.

Studenții fac erori în citirea unor numerale, probabil sub influența limbii sârbe, așa cum vedem din exemplul 8:

8. Copacul acesta are peste 100 de ani.

8'. Ovo drvo ima preko sto godina.

Există tendința ca numeralul cardinal să se citească astfel în exemplul 8: *peste sută ani* și nu *peste o sută de ani*.

Fixarea formelor corecte se poate realiza prin exerciții de citire, scriere și, mai ales, prin exerciții audio.

(f) În ceea ce privește intrarea într-un spațiu și ieșirea din acesta, studenții întâmpină dificultăți în alegerea verbelor și a prepozițiilor. Considerăm că o clasificare mai bună a lor și niște scheme adecvate clarifică modul în care se pot utiliza, venind în sprijinul studenților, având în vedere că acest aspect al limbii este folosit frecvent în viața cotidiană.

Pentru a exprima intrarea și ieșirea sau deplasarea dintr-un punct A într-un punct B, româna are următoarele posibilități:

9. *a urca* (unde?) + *în* – *a coborî* + *din* (de unde?)

pentru mijloace de transport închise

Pentru intrarea și ieșirea din mijloace de transport închise se utilizează perechea de verbe *a urca – a coborî* și prepozițiile *în* și *din*, cu întrebările aferente (exemplul 9): (unde?) *a urca în taxi/în tren/în autobuz/în tramvai/în metrou* – (de unde?) *a coborî din taxi/din tren/din autobuz/din tramvai/din metrou*.

10. *a urca* (unde?) + *pe* – *a coborî* + *de pe* (de unde?)

pentru vehicule deschise

În situațiile în care mijlocul de deplasare este deschis (bicicletă, cal, motocicletă), utilizăm *a urca – a coborî* și prepozițiile *pe* și *de pe*, cu întrebările aferente (exemplul 10): (unde?) *a urca pe bicicletă/pe cal/pe motocicletă* – (de unde?) *a coborî de pe bicicletă/de pe cal/de pe motocicletă*.

11. *a intra* (unde?) + *în* – *a ieși* + *din* (de unde?)

pentru clădiri, spații închise

Pentru intrarea și ieșirea dintr-o clădire se utilizează perechea de verbe *a intra – a ieși*, cu prepozițiile *în* și *din* și cu întrebările aferente (exemplul 11): (unde?) *a intra în clădire/în școală/în universitate/în magazin* – (de unde?) *a ieși din clădire/din școală/din universitate/din magazin*.

12. *a intra* (unde?) + *la* – *a ieși* + *de la* (de unde?)

a merge (unde?) + *la* – *a pleca* + *de la* (de unde?)

pentru a merge la ceva/la cineva (în spații închise)

Pentru intrarea și ieșirea dintr-o clădire unde se merge la ceva sau la cineva se utilizează perechile de verbe *a intra – a ieși, a merge – a pleca* cu prepozițiile *la* și *de la* și cu întrebările aferente (exemplul 12): (unde?) *a intra/a merge la curs/la interviu/la film* (la ceva)/*la doctor/la profesor* (la cineva) – (de unde?) *a ieși/a pleca de la curs/de la interviu/de la film* (de la ceva)/*de la doctor/de la profesor* (de la cineva).

13. *a urca* (unde?) + *la* – *a coborî* + *de la* (de unde?)

deplasare în interiorul unei clădiri (etaj, cameră, apartament)

De asemenea, pentru deplasarea în interiorul unei clădiri utilizăm *a urca* și *a coborî* cu prepozițiile *la* și *de la* și cu întrebările aferente (exemplul 13): (unde?) *a urca la etajul al doilea/la camera a cincea/la apartamentul 9* – (de unde?) *a coborî de la etajul al doilea/de la camera a cincea/de la apartamentul 9*.

14. *a merge* (de unde? – unde?/până unde?) *de la – la/de la – până la*

deplasare de la un punct A → B și invers

Pentru deplasarea dintr-un punct A animat sau inanimat spre un punct B animat/inanimat utilizăm *a merge* cu prepozițiile *de la – la/de la – până la* și cu întrebările aferente (exemplul 14): *a merge* (de unde?) *de la bunica* (unde?) *la mama/a merge* (de unde?) *de la bunica* (până unde?) *până la mama*; *a merge* (de unde?) *de la piață* (unde?) *la bancomat/a merge* (de unde?) *de la piață* (până unde?) *până la bancomat*.

Identificarea fiecărei situații în parte și crearea unor exerciții pentru fiecare dintre acestea contribuie la înțelegerea rapidă și corectă a modului în care limba română exprimă această realitate a deplasării în spațiu în diferite forme.

(g) *Alternanța consonantică la adjectivele masculine* aduce probleme în declinarea acestora.

De exemplu, la adjective avem alternanțe consonantice la forma de plural masculin: *s* cu *ș*: *gras-grași*, *frumos-frumoși*; *t* cu *ț*: *elegant-eleganți*, *inteligent-inteligenți*; *d* cu *z*: *scund-scunzi*, *rotund-rotunzi*; *st* cu *șt*: *trist-triști*, *albastru-albaștri*.

Exercițiile gramaticale pot fi construite pornind de la forma de singular masculin la care se adaugă desinența de plural masculin *-i*, cu modificările consonantice necesare. Credem că învățarea devine mai accesibilă atunci când se studiază adjectivele nu numai după flexiunea lor, ci și după tipurile de alternanțe fonetice. De asemenea, în stabilirea diferențelor dintre forma de singular masculin și cea de plural masculin sunt foarte utile exercițiile de tipul completării unor spații goale. Acestea permit să se înțeleagă mai bine cum funcționează alternanțele fonetice: elegant - e l e g a n _ *i* (ț); scund - s c u n _ *i* (z); frumos - f r u m o _ *i* (ș).

(h) Unele structuri sintactice pot fi învățate respectând modelul sintactic pe care limba îl permite. Standardizarea unor modele sintactice și crearea unor exerciții pentru exersarea acestor structuri facilitează procesul de învățare.

15. *Îmi place* [$_{\text{GN}}$mâncarea$_{\text{Centru+Det.}}$]S.

Pe măsură ce se avansează în studiul limbii române, schema poate fi extinsă la o multitudine de alte situații de vorbire. De exemplu, în structurile cu verbul *a-i plăcea*, în timp ce se studiază demonstrativul sau alți determinanți, exercițiile pot varia, crescând gradul de dificultate.

15'. *Îmi place* [$_{\text{GN}}$mâncarea$_{\text{Centru+Det}}$aceasta$_{\text{Det. emfatic}}$]S.

Odată cu învățarea conjunctivului prezent, se poate diversifica exprimarea, prin înlocuirea subiectului cu o propoziție conjuncțională.

16. *Îmi place* [$_{\text{PConj}}$să mănânc]S.

(i) Pentru structurile cu adjectivul pronominal indefinit/nehotărât se pot genera modele standardizate ca punct de plecare pentru construcțiile complexe. Pornim în analiza noastră de la un exemplu anterior.

4''. Doctorii [pot [$_{\text{GVinf}}$trata pacienții...]$_{\text{CD al operatorului modal}}$]$_{\text{Predicat complex cu operator modal}}$.

Plecând de la un tipar sintactic în care avem un subiect simplu, putem construi enunțuri cu adjectivul pronominal indefinit/nehotărât. Unii cuantificatori (*tot*) dublează articolul hotărât/definit, având funcția de determinant emfatic, așa cum vedem în exemplul 18. Majoritatea cuantificatorilor se poziționează în fața substantivului pe care îl determină (17, 18).

17. [$_{\text{GN}}$[*Fiecare*]$_{\text{Det}}$ doctor$_{\text{Centru}}$]S [poate [$_{\text{GVinf}}$trata pacienții...]$_{\text{CD al operatorului modal}}$]$_{\text{Predicat complex cu operator modal}}$

18. [$_{\text{GN}}$[*Toți*]$_{\text{Det.emfatic}}$ doctori*i*$_{\text{Centru+Det}}$] [pot [$_{\text{GVinf}}$trata pacienții...]$_{\text{CD al operatorului modal}}$]$_{\text{Predicat complex cu operator modal}}$

(j) În construcțiile cu *dar*, identificarea tiparelor sintactice facilitează înțelegerea construcției frazelor. Pornind de la nivelul A1, unde studentul trebuie să construiască propoziții principale folosind coordonarea, se pot explica ulterior anumite propoziții secundare, care există în structura de adâncime a principalelor coordonate. Pornim în analiza noastră de la următoarele situații, semnul + referindu-se la verbul pozitiv, iar semnul – la negație:

19. Rochia e minunată, *dar* nu o cumpăr. [+, dar –] – contrazicere a așteptărilor

20. Rochia nu e urâtă, *dar* e scumpă. [–, dar +] – de corectare și substituire

21. Rochia e minunată, *dar* e (prea) lungă. [+, dar +] – contrast tematic

22. Rochia nu e urâtă, *dar* nu o cumpăr. [–, dar –] – contrazicere a așteptărilor

Exemplele 19 și 22 au în structura de adâncime o circumstanțială concesivă. Identificăm următoarele situații:

Exemplul 19:

Rochia e minunată, *dar* nu o cumpăr.

devine în structura de adâncime:

19'. [$_{\text{PConj}}$*Deși rochia e minunată*]$_{\text{CircConc}}$, nu o cumpăr.

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Exemplul 22:

Rochia nu e urâtă, *dar* nu o cumpăr.

devine în structura de adâncime:

[$_{\text{PConj}}$*Deși rochia nu e urâtă*]$_{\text{CircConc}}$, nu o cumpăr.

În cele două exemple (19 și 22), adversativele marchează contrazicerea unei așteptări, având în structura de adâncime un circumstanțial concesiv, exprimând o ipoteză care este anulată și un circumstanțial de cauză (de ce a fost anulată ipoteza?).

În exemplul 19 (*Rochia e minunată*) avem următoarea ipoteză: Dacă rochia e minunată, se presupune că îmi place atât de mult încât o voi cumpăra. Astfel, adjectivul *minunată* din structura anterioară antrenează o inferență de tipul: *Dacă ceva este atât de minunat, creează în mine dorința de a-l avea*. Partea a doua din 19 (*nu o cumpăr*) aduce anularea ipotezei, cu sau fără menționarea cauzei care duce la anulare (nu o cumpăr pentru că poate e prea scumpă, pentru că mai am rochii, pentru că nu mi-a plăcut comportamentul vânzătoarei etc.)

În exemplul 22 (*Rochia nu e urâtă*) avem următoarea ipoteză care antrenează o inferență de tipul: *Dacă rochia nu e urâtă, se presupune că e frumoasă sau cel puțin nu îmi displace atât de mult, încât e posibil să o cumpăr*. Partea a doua din 22 (*nu o cumpăr*) aduce anularea ipotezei, cu sau fără menționarea cauzei care duce la anulare (pentru că nu îmi place atât de mult, încât să mă determine să o cumpăr, nu o cumpăr pentru că poate e scumpă, pentru că mai am rochii etc.)

În cazul adversativelor care implică un contrast tematic (21), a doua propoziție poate fi eliptică de predicat:

21. [$_{\text{P}}$Rochia e minunată], *dar* [$_{\text{P}}$e (prea) lungă].

poate deveni:

21'. [$_{\text{P}}$Rochia e [$_{\text{Gadj}}$*minunată*]$_{\text{NP}}$, *dar* ~~e (prea)~~ [$_{\text{Gadj}}$*lungă*]$_{\text{NP}}$].

În exemplul 20 (Rochia nu e urâtă, *dar* e scumpă.), *dar* are funcția de corectare și substituire, exprimând o ipoteză (*e posibil să o cumpăr*) care este anulată direct în partea a doua a propoziției (*e scumpă*). Conjuncția *dar* scurtează inferența existentă în structura de adâncime care implică formularea cauzei care duce la anularea ipotezei:

20'. [$_{\text{P}}$Rochia nu e [$_{\text{Gadj}}$*urâtă*]$_{\text{NP}}$, [$_{\text{P}}$*dar* nu o cumpăr] [$_{\text{PConj}}$deoarece e [$_{\text{Gadj}}$*scumpă*]$_{\text{NP}}$]]$_{\text{CircCauză}}$.

Considerăm că se pot crea exerciții variate, plecând de la aceste tipare și de la ceea ce știe studentul de la nivelurile anterioare, pentru a face trecerea de la coordonare la subordonare. Explicarea unor subordonate începând cu nivelul A2 poate avea ca punct de plecare frazele coordonate studiate anterior la nivelul A1, deoarece structura de adâncime din frazele „aparent" simple este cheia pentru a înțelege desfășurarea analitică din subordonate.

(k) O dificultate pe care o întâmpină studenții este cea a perechii *a adormi – a dormi*.

Avem următoarele exemple:

23. *Am adormit* la 10. – a trece la starea de somn [= *aspect punctual*]

24. *L-am adormit* la 10. – a trece sau a aduce pe cineva la starea de somn [= *aspect punctual*]

Verbul *a adormi* are în sensul lui lexical mijloace de marcare a categoriei aspectului, arătând un eveniment unic (*aspect punctual*) și fiind un *verb perfectiv*, exprimând o acțiune încheiată. Verbul presupune trecerea de la starea A la starea B.

Verbul *a dormi* este *imperfectiv*, exprimă o acțiune în desfășurare, neîncheiată și aspectul lui este *continuativ* (*a dormi* – a se afla în stare de somn, a fi adormit).

25. *Dorm* de la ora 22 până la 6.

Pe axa temporală, verbul *a adormi* este anterior acțiunii exprimate de verbul *a dormi* și ambele se folosesc cu timpuri verbale diferite.

A → B
22.00

Eu (l-)am adormit.	*Eu dorm.*
perfect compus	prezent
perfectiv	imperfectiv
punctual	continuativ
tranzitiv/intranzitiv	intranzitiv

În enunțurile în care verbul *a adormi* este utilizat la conjunctiv (26), la prezent (27) sau la alte timpuri/moduri verbale, acesta își schimbă aspectul punctual și perfectiv, având un aspect prospectiv, de acțiune în pregătire. Asemenea nuanțe nu vor fi abordate decât la nivelurile avansate ale învățării limbii române, de la B2 spre nivelul C.

26. Urmează *să adorm*.

Exemplul 26 implică un aspect prospectiv și o acțiune aflată în proces de desfășurare, antrenând o inferență de tipul:

26’. Urmează să adorm, dar nu am adormit încă.

27. Mai am puțin și *adorm*.

Exemplul 27 antrenează aproximativ aceeași inferență ca 26, cu diferența că, spre deosebire de 26, sunt mai aproape pe axa temporală de verbul *a dormi*, iar posibilitatea de a intra în starea de somn este mult mai mare decât în cazul utilizării conjunctivului, unde acțiunea rămâne posibilă, nu neapărat și realizabilă.

26’’. Urmează să adorm (în scurt timp), dar nu am adormit încă.

Predarea gramaticii poate aduce un punctaj bun la teste, dar nu întotdeauna asigură utilizarea spontană a limbajului în conversații cotidiene. Renate A. Schulz arată importanța participării active a celui care învață la conversații și a completării lacunelor de informații prin discuții și negocieri ale sensului:

> Discourse theory posits that learners develop competence [...] not simply by absorbing input, but by actively participating in communicative interaction, *i.e.* by negotiating meaning and filling information gaps.[1] (Schulz, 1991: 20)

În același sens, cu mulți ani înainte, lingvistul Wittgenstein vorbea despre limbaj ca activitate: „Das Wort «Sprach*spiel*» soll hier hervorheben, daß das *Sprechen* der Sprache ein Teil ist einer Tätigkeit, oder einer Lebensform.”[2] (Wittgenstein, 1997: 11).

CONCLUZII

Domeniul lingvisticii aplicate este unul vast, oferind date asupra predării și învățării limbii române din zone cât mai variate și îndepărtate. Datorită exemplelor și soluțiilor pe care le propune, lucrarea de față poate constitui un punct de plecare pentru o analiză viitoare extinsă a greșelilor de natură morfosintactică, identificate în cadrul seminarelor cu studenții sârbi. Domeniul studierii limbii române ca limbă străină nu are o foarte lungă tradiție, de aceea trebuie căutate în continuare cele mai bune soluții de a preda ce este mai important din limbă, nu din punctul de vedere al cercetătorului, ci din punctul de vedere al celui care vrea să folosească limba la un nivel de bază sau, de ce nu, la unul ridicat. Considerăm că studiul de față oferă oricărui cercetător posibilitatea de a reflecta asupra propriului limbaj, de a reconsidera schemele și tiparele dobândite, de altfel, „problematica metalimbajului specific este una dintre cele mai importante în știința limbii” (Frâncu, 2016: 250).

În primul rând, studiul de față arată că, în vederea dobândirii cunoștințelor pentru nivelurile A1 și A2, este nevoie de tipare, de modele morfosintactice care să fie ușor înțelese și aplicate în contexte lingvistice asemănătoare. Scopul

[1] Teoria discursului afirmă că cei care învață își dezvoltă competențele [...] nu doar prin achiziția de informații, ci prin participarea activă la interacțiunea verbală, adică prin negocierea sensului și prin completarea lacunelor de informații. (trad. n.)

[2] Expresia „joc de limbă/limbaj” subliniază, în acest context, faptul că actul vorbirii face parte dintr-o activitate sau dintr-un mod de viață. (trad. n.)

primelor două niveluri este de a asigura o bază pentru înțelegerea și utilizarea limbii în situații curente de viață. Am putea spune că în primă fază a învățării unei limbi procesul de imitare este esențial. În al doilea rând, pe acest fundal stabilit, începând cu A2 și spre B1, situațiile lingvistice se complică și se diversifică. În această etapă, e foarte importantă problematica metalimbajului, deoarece îl ghidează pe cercetător în anticiparea drumului de parcurs de la „învățarea prin *mimesis*" la o „învățare conștientă", în care însuși cel care învață ajunge să problematizeze, să mediteze asupra funcționalității limbii, să realizeze el însuși elemente interlingvistice: „to know how to re-formulate and then re-use it in a variety of contexts"[3] (Lawes, 2012: 129). Într-un studiu al său, Roy C. O'Donnell subliniază importanța evitării erorilor de către profesor:

> The gap between research and educational practise is not easy to bridge, but the teacher who knows something about language development can avoid some mistakes and provide some opportunities for learning that might otherwise be overlooked.[4] (O'Donnell, 1974: 115)

Plecând de la ideea lui J. L. Austin și de la titlul cărții sale *How to Do Things With Words* (1962) și de la acele *Sprachspiele* wittgensteiniene, discuțiile generate de studiile de lingvistică aplicată și contrastivă ne învață *how to find better teaching methods with the help of language mistakes.*[5]

[3] să știe cum să reformuleze și să reutilizeze cunoștințele de limbă în contexte lingvistice variate. (trad. n.)

[4] Decalajul dintre teorie și practică nu este ușor de rezolvat, dar profesorul care cunoaște aspecte ale dezvoltării limbajului poate evita unele greșeli și poate oferi unele strategii de învățare, care altfel ar putea fi trecute cu vederea. (trad. n.)

[5] cum să găsim metode de predare mai eficiente cu ajutorul greșelilor de limbă. (trad. n.).

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A Socio-Cultural Analysis of Romanian News from the 18th Century to Digital Era

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Abstract

When Marshall McLuhan wrote in his 1964 book Understanding the Media: The Extensions of Man *that 'the medium is the message', the Canadian communication theorist described the role that the new technologies of the time – radio and television – played in shaping social interactions, communication, and the media itself. For decades, scholars have researched how radio and television have influenced news content. However, in the early 2000s their attention shifted towards another medium: the digital environment. From blogs to digital media outlets or social media platforms – and more recently, artificial intelligence – the role of the digital environment as 'the medium' that shapes information has become the focus of contemporary inquiry in both the social sciences and communication research. In this paper, we conduct a socio-cultural analysis of Romanian news coverage from a reader's perspective, investigating news discourse as the convergence of cultural trends, societal shifts, and economic and technological developments. This inquiry is grounded on the premise that a diachronic examination of news coverage can reveal how media discourse has evolved over years, reflecting underlying socio-cultural dynamics as well as economic and technological transformations. To explore this, the study analyses a corpus of news articles published in* Adevărul*, one of Romania's oldest newspapers.*

Keywords: news, media discourse, medium is the message, digital journalism, Romanian media, news value, news content.

INTRODUCTION

From the invention of the Gutenberg press to the advent of radio, television, and, most recently, the internet, each technological innovation has significantly influenced the format and content of news. The purpose of the hereby article is to examine the written news content of one of Romania's oldest newspapers, *Adevărul* [*The Truth*], focusing on the changes in content, language, and format that took place as it transitioned from print to digital.

Starting from the corpus assembled as part of our ongoing doctoral research—*The Rhetoric of Ambiguity in Romanian News: An Analysis from the Reader's Perspective*—at the Doctoral School of Linguistic and Literary Studies, Babeș-Bolyai University, which includes news articles published in January over a 20-year period (2000–2020) in both the print and digital editions of *Adevărul*, 50 news items were selected for qualitative analysis in relation to the theoretical concepts addressed in this paper.

Adevărul was identified as the target newspaper for the corpus, as it meets the following criteria relevant to our analysis: it has a historical presence on the Romanian media market; it is a mainstream media outlet with national coverage; it has been recognized as a quality newspaper throughout the post-Decembrist period; and it was available in both print and digital formats until 2020, the end of my research timeframe.

By *news*, we understand media discourse as defined by Van Dijk, specifically 'news articles in the narrow sense, that is, news discourse about past political, social, or cultural events' (Van Dijk, 1988: 5). Following the Dutch scholar's approach, news is understood as 'structures in relation to their context of production and understanding,' which function 'in the expression of underlying knowledge, beliefs, attitudes or ideologies, or as results of specific constraints of newsmaking' (Van Dijk, 1988: 5).

A HISTORICAL VIEW ON ROMANIAN NEWSPAPERS

The history of Romanian newspapers begins in the late 18^{th} century – specifically, in 1790 – with the printing of the first regular publication, a French-language newspaper produced in Iași, which ultimately published only seven editions in total (Petcu, 2012). A few decades later, the first newspapers in Romanian emerged. *Curierul Rumânesc* (launched in April 1829 in Bucharest), *Albina Românească* (first published in June 1829 in Iași), and *Gazeta de Transilvania* (March 1838 in Brașov) collectively marked 'the dawn of Romanian media' (Antip, 1964; Râpeanu, 2008). In the subsequent decades, although the number of publications increased, economic constraints prevented editors from maintaining a regular printing schedule. Consequently, most periodicals did not have fixed issue dates and were printed irregularly, varying from one to three times a week.

The early history of the newspaper *Adevărul* is closely linked to Alexandru Beldiman, who founded it in Iași in December 1871 (Râpeanu, 2008; Petcu, 2012). Because of its strongly anti-monarchist discourse, the paper was shut down after only a few issues, and Beldiman was sentenced to three months in prison for offenses against King Carol I (Petcu, 2012). In 1881, *Adevărul* resumed publication in Bucharest, maintaining its anti-monarchy stance as illustrated on its title page through a quote from Vasile Alecsandri – 'Beware, my Romanian brother, of foreign nails in your home' (Petcu, 2012: 17, my translation) – which alluded to the royal family that ruled Romania at the time, the Hohenzollerns.

In the first decade of the 20^{th} century, Romanian newspapers flourished, as evidenced by official records of the time: in 1912 *Adevărul* was printed in 30,000 copies and distributed alongside seven free magazines (Antip, 1964: 92), which helped make it one of the most widely read Romanian newspapers between the two world wars (Teodorașcu, 2020). Its success ended abruptly in 1937, when both *Adevărul* and *Dimineața*, another newspaper from the same publishing house, were banned by the Goga-Cuza government as media censorship intensified (Antip, 1964: 92). After the Second World War, *Adevărul* was printed again for a few years – 'competing for audience' (Gross, 2015: 34) with *Scânteia* [*The Spark*], the main newspaper supporting the Communist Party – only to be banned again in 1951, and revived only after the 1989 Romanian Revolution.

ROMANIAN NEWS DISCOURSE. VARIATIONS AND INFLUENCES

Discussing the early stages of the Romanian media discourse, Peter Gross wrote that 19^{th} century media reflected 'social-political turmoil and the nationalistic aspirations' (Gross, 1996: 3) and described it as 'highly subjective, polemical and partisan' towards political and economic interests (Gross, 1996: 6). On account of this participatory stance, Romanian newspapers were frequently threatened by the various political regimes they opposed. 'The reality of 1930s and 1940s, up to the end of World War II, was that the press became harried, timid, highly censored or muzzled altogether' (Gross, 1996: 7). Researchers have noted that Romanian journalists were not content merely to present the news but also expressed 'a clear attitude' (my translation) (Râpeanu, 2008: 37) towards current events, seeking to identify their causes 'in the social, economic and moral climate' (Râpeanu, 2008: 37) of the country. The end of World War II brought the Communist era in Romania, with all media becoming 'centralized under state-party control' (Gross, 1996: 10). The media discourse shifted from one of fierce polemic to one subordinate to the regime.

In an investigation of Romanian media before and during Communism, Victor Botez described the role of Communist-era media as being established by the Communist Party and aimed at 'pushing Romania ever closer to Communism' (Botez, 1987: 12, my translation).

The party tightly controlled both media output and the interactions between journalists and the country's leaders:

> At the rare press conference held by Romania's supreme leaders, the questions to be asked by the journalists selected to attend were provided to them by the Press Section of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. (Gross, 1996: 14)

By the end of the seventies, with the 11th Party Congress, official censorship was abolished. However, it was replaced with 'institutionalization of censorship at the micro level of the individual newspaper' (Gross, 1996: 17).

The multilayered censorship altered not only the language of the media, but also photos or documents in order 'to suit the images desired by the leadership' (Gross, 1996: 19), therefore 'truth was that which served Ceaușescu and his regime' (Gross, 1996: 19). Writing about his personal experience as a journalist under Ceaușescu's regime, Paul Schveiger mentioned that reading *Scânteia* and *Scânteia Tineretului* was mandatory in order to know the 'party's direction', emphasizing how people lived between two worlds – the real one and the one depicted by the media and official communications (Schveiger, 2010: 225). This practice heavily influenced Romanian public discourse, as 'it normalized and naturalized the double standards of discourse versus action' (Petre, 2012: 32).

The language used by the Romanian media of the time is known as 'wooden language' – a type of discourse 'often seen as lacking credibility, superficial or implying some intention of concealment' (Cătău-Vereș, 2023: 79). Primarily used by totalitarian regimes to reinforce power, 'wooden language refers to stereotypical expressions created on the spot' (Slama-Cazacu, 2010: 317) or clichés composed of real words with twisted meanings that are overused to signal support for the regime. In fact, 'numerous clichés were learned by heart, in order "not to make mistakes"' (Slama-Cazacu, 2010: 318, my translation). 'Romanian journalists could not and did not develop an approach and style separate from the one imposed upon them by the communist regime' (Gross: 1996, 27).

December 1989 marked the fall of Communism in Romania, an event that also significantly impacted media channels. The first thing most media outlets rushed to change was their name, whereas their format or editorial teams remained largely the same.

Scânteia, the official newspaper of the Romanian Communist Party, appeared on the morning of December 22nd in its regular format; however,

> by 6 pm, that day, only a few hours after the Ceausescus flew out of Bucharest, the new, one page newspaper, hit the streets. It was now called, *Scânteia Poporului* (*The People's Spark*). (Gross, 1996: 40)

This edition contained no news, but rather a selection of international reactions to Romania's events (Gross, 1996: 40). Several days later, the newspaper changed its name again to *Adevărul*.

ROMANIAN MEDIA IN THE NINETIES

Raluca Petre described the new titles of Romanian media from the beginning of the nineties as ‘shaped by the mindsets of actors who were driven by two sets of beliefs’ (Petre 2012: 107). One belief focused on a powerful type of mass communication, ‘derived from the domesticated Soviet model’ (Petre 2012: 107), while the other emphasized the media’s link with politics, manifesting ‘either as “organ of” or as totally against the one in power, the “anti” position’ (Petre 2012: 107). As pointed out by scholars, most Romanian journalists preferred the polemical approach (Coman, 2003: 73).

In terms of writing techniques, ‘the “wooden” quality nurtured by the Communist system’ (Gross, 1996: 40) remained a central feature of post-Communist media, which was intent on criticizing everyone, a

> philosophy which was to carry Romanian journalism away from reporting towards subjective, polemical, argumentative presentation of selected happenings, ideas, sources and their words. (Gross, 1996: 42)

At the beginning of 1996, Romania had approximately two to three times as many publications as in 1989 (Gross, 1999: 101). During these early post-Revolution years – often ‘regarded as “the romantic period” of the media’ (Petre, 2012: 117) – a significant number of journalists were hired by new media outlets despite having no journalistic training or education, and these newly-minted professionals ‘because of their lack of formal training, were quick to embrace the argument of their talent’ (Petre, 2012: 117). During the first two years of the decade, from 1990 to 1992, Romanian print media reached the height of its growth (in terms of number of publications and printing volumes); however, this peak was immediately followed by a sharp decline: ‘after 1992 some weekly publications disappeared altogether, and others turned into tabloids’ (Coman, 2003: 78, my translation).

In his analysis of Romanian post-Communist media, Mihai Coman identified several specific traits that defined the media during the early post-Revolution years: it served as proof of freedom of speech. It was popular and public-oriented, as well as heterogenic, mimetic in terms of identity, and open to employing a young workforce with limited experience. It tended to avoid public responsibilities; it struggled with a lack of credibility; and it embraced the tabloid approach (Coman, 2003: 69). Each of these traits has influenced Romanian media discourse. However, in terms of transition to digital journalism, the three core characteristics that had a significant impact were heterogeneity, the mimetic nature, and the tabloid tendencies.

> In print media, in the same publication, the vision and style of news media meets the vision and style of the tabloid, and elements of opinion journalism (even propaganda) are combined with features of unbiased news reporting. (Coman, 2003: 68, my translation)

The scholar emphasized that the tabloid approach infiltrating the media was not a ‘Romanian exception’, but a stage in a historical process observed in other countries as well (Coman, 2003: 68).

DIGITAL TRANSITION OF ROMANIAN MEDIA

The digital transition of Romanian media began in the nineties with *Evenimentul zilei*, the first Romanian tabloid and the first print newspaper to establish an online presence. This newspaper, which influenced Romanian media by

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promoting soft news (Coman, 2003), launched its website in 1996 (Ulmanu, 2011, in Sălcudean, 2015: 60). The migration to online formats unfolded in several stages, beginning in 2000 with the launch of revistapresei.ro – known today as Hotnews.ro – the first exclusively online newspaper (Bader & Sîrb, 2021: 22). In the initial stage, although most of the print media also maintained a website, the content was identical across both formats – 'the same titles, the same photos, endless chunks of text' (Sălcudean, 2015: 64, my translation). Another significant milestone in the digital migration of Romanian media occurred between 2008 and 2010. Simona Bader and Corina Sîrb have identified two main drivers for this transition: the economic crisis of 2008-2010 and shifts in media consumer behavior (Bader & Sîrb, 2021: 23). Between 2010 and 2011, several national print newspaper editions closed – *Gardianul* (6th of January 2010), *Ziua* (7th of January), *Gândul* (April 2011). Following a brief online presence, both *Ziua* and *Gardianul* eventually shut down their digital editions (Bader & Sîrb, 2021: 23).

The impact of economic crises on the Romanian media was also highlighted in the report *Mapping Digital Media: Romania*, published in 2010 by the Open Society Foundations:

> Romania was hit very hard by the economic crisis of 2008–2009, which slowed the remarkable growth of Romania's television, print and online sectors over the previous decade, especially in 2001–2004. (Open Society Foundations, 2010: 6)

METHODOLOGY

The present article aims to illustrate how socio-economic factors and the transition to digital platforms have impacted the Romanian news writing style. The analysis takes into consideration the following characteristics of the Romanian media, which we believe influence the framing of Romanian news writing style: the absence of a standardized stylebook at the national level or of individual stylebooks recognized by Romanian media outlets, and the evolving identification of publications as either quality or tabloid outlets over time.

Given that the existing literature primarily focuses on comparative approaches across different Romanian media outlets, I considered that maintaining a focus on a single newspaper would help avoid variations specific to differing writing styles among publications and offer a more focused perspective that complements existing comparative analyses. This study explores how writing styles in hard news articles change when moving from print to digital platforms.

We selected *Adevărul* as the target outlet for our qualitative analysis, as it has been consistently identified as a quality newspaper over the years. Therefore, any observations regarding variations in writing style are likely to be more representative. The corpus used in this article consists of 50 news articles published in *Adevărul*, available in both print and digital editions. The texts were first identified in the print editions, as part of my doctoral research, based on the following criteria: the article had to be of small dimensions (no more than 2,500 characters), address a topic specific to hard news (politics, economics, or current events), and be published in the January editions during the 2000–2020 timeframe. Out of the 200 news articles identified in print, I was able to locate 50 in the digital archive, having identified at least one item per year, with the earliest digital version published in 2002.

DIGITAL TRANSITION OF NEWS ARTICLES IN *ADEVĂRUL*

Using the corpus of media content compiled for this article, I have identified two key moments that illustrate the digital transition of news articles in *Adevărul*. Within the first decade of the study period – that is, 2000 to 2010 – news articles were initially published in the print edition and subsequently uploaded to the website later that same day, as evidenced by the publication dates included on the website. For example, the article *Trei hoți de benzină – găsiți morți într-un bazin, la Arpechim Pitești [Three gasoline thieves – found dead in a tank at Arpechim Pitești]*, was published in print on January 3rd, 2002, and then uploaded online that same day at 9 pm. A similar pattern occurs with another article, dated January 4th, 2006 – *H5N1 rezistă la tratament [H5N1 has developed treatment resistance]* – which appeared in print and online on the same day, with the online version published at 9 pm. This practice – publishing news first in print and then online by the end of the day – continued until 2010. As far as the format was concerned, the only notable difference between the two versions was that the online text duplicated its first two lines without using any distinctive marks or proper punctuation, while the remainder of the article was presented as a single paragraph. To illustrate, below are the contents of the piece dated January 4th, 2006. Both the print and digital versions of the text bear the same title.

The print version of the news article read as follows:

> *În Vietnam au apărut două cazuri fatale de infecție cu virusul H5N1, asociate cu rezistența virusului la Tamiflu. Aceste cazuri, chiar dacă nu reprezintă o surpriză pentru specialiști, au întărit ideea că virusul își poate dezvolta rezistența în timp, chiar și în fața dozelor crescute de medicamentație. Din fericire, pentru prima oară în ultimii 20 de ani, gripa umană a ocolit Europa în luna decembrie, neînregistrându-se nici un caz de gripă pe continent.*
> *[Vietnam has experienced two fatalities attributed to the H5N1 virus, which is believed to have developed resistance to Tamiflu. While these cases came as no surprise to experts, they did reinforce the notion that the virus could develop resistance over time – even when subjected to large doses of medication. Fortunately, for the first time in the past 20 years, human influenza did not reach Europe in December, as no cases were recorded on the continent.]* (my translation)

Unlike the print version, the online text also includes a leading paragraph – separated from the main text by a blank line – that merely replicates the first two lines, ending abruptly without attempting to convey any meaning or add value:

> *În Vietnam au apărut două cazuri fatale de infecție cu virusul H5N1, asociate cu rezistența virusului la Tamiflu. Aceste cazuri, chiar dacă nu reprezintă o surpriză pentru specialiști, au întărit*
> *[Vietnam has experienced two fatalities attributed to the H5N1 virus, which is believed to have developed resistance to Tamiflu. While these cases came as no surprise to experts, they did reinforce]*. (my translation)

This formatting pattern is consistent across all the texts from the 2000-2010 decade included in our analysis, which suggests that, at that time, publishing news online was merely an extension of the print edition, and that editors showed little interest in optimizing the digital display.

During the subsequent decade – from 2010 to 2020 – differences between the print and online versions became more pronounced. As publication priorities shifted towards the digital realm, news began being published online a day before appearing in print. In most of the cases examined in our analysis, the online versions were longer, richer in information, and formatted to break the text into shorter paragraphs – an approach well suited to the digital environment. The differences between the two versions became gradually more significant – what had started as slight formatting variations evolved into major differences in both titles and content by the end of that decade.

An example that clearly illustrates what news looked like during the first stage of the transition is the article titled,

> *Şefii companiilor de stat, din nou cu 'salarii nesimțite' [The heads of state-owned companies granted again 'scandalous pay checks']* (my translation),

which was published online on January 5th, 2011, at 10 pm, and appeared in the print edition dated January 6th, with the same title and word count. Compared to news from the previous period, the online version is divided into two paragraphs, and the duplication of the first two lines has been eliminated.

Three years later, a news article published online on January 7th, 2014, at 11 am, and in the print edition the following day, reveals significant differences between the digital and print versions. The digital version, titled

> *Erdogan decapitează poliţia turcă. 350 de poliţişti, concediaţi după scandalul de corupţie în care sunt implicaţi mai mulţi foşti miniştri [Erdogan slashes Turkish police. 350 policemen dismissed after corruption scandal involving several former ministers]* (my translation),

consists of 12 paragraphs and 418 words. In contrast, the print edition features the title *Erdogan decapitează poliția [Erdogan slashes police]* (my translation), accompanied by a text of 42 words. Along the same lines, a news article published online on the 20th of January 2015, titled

> *A promis Guvernul că nu va creşte nicio taxă în 2015? Experţii şi analiştii BCR cred altceva [Has the Government promised not to increase any taxes in 2015? BCR experts and analysts beg to differ]* (my translation)

contains 445 words. The print edition of *Adevărul*, dated January 21st, 2015, presents the same information under the title, *BCR: Unele impozite ar putea crește în 2015 [BCR: Some taxes might increase in 2015*] (my translation), with a significantly shorter text of 96 words.

The hereby analysis of the selected media content revealed that the increased focus on the digital environment that was central to the second decade led to a decline in the amount of news published in the print edition. By the end of that period, in 2020, print editions had come to include only a handful of news pieces, instead giving ample space to extensive articles featuring in-depth reporting and analyses. As print gradually gave way to digital, news articles as a journalistic genre followed suit, shifting from print to digital through a process of migration that was completed by 2020. This transition from print to digital not only marked the disappearance of news from print editions but also led to significant modifications in the content of journalistic texts. Although no major changes were observed in the topics covered by news items from *Adevărul* over the 20-year period analyzed, the digital environment introduced substantial transformations in writing style, which had a notable impact on the overall content.

CONTENT TRANSFORMATION. FROM TABLOID NEWS TO EMOTION-DRIVEN ENGAGEMENT

The process of tabloidization has been thoroughly documented as a feature of Romanian news, influenced by socio-cultural historical shifts. Another contributing factor, the report *Mapping Digital Media: Romania* notes, was the country's economic struggles, because of which 'investment in good-quality news and debate programs has fallen over the past five years'

(Open Society Foundations, 2010: 6). Furthermore, the shift towards tabloidization was not unique to Romania but reflected a broader international trend. Research in communication and media studies has shown that news outlets follow similar trends even in countries with stronger democratic media, a shift brought about by the transition to digital content. Although the increase in tabloidization is specific to Romanian media, including within the quality press, international comparative assessments suggest that tabloidization is a broader effect of the digital environment.

In an assessment of British media and the impact of the internet on journalism, James Curran and Jean Seaton showed that between 1970 and 1980 the competition between the publications generated ‘a number of well-publicised newspaper excesses’ (Curran & Seaton, 2010: 96) and that ‘the same competitive dynamic prevailed in the 2000s, and produced predictable results’ (Curran & Seaton, 2010: 96). They further identified that ‘the tabloid approach led to ever more inventive ways of arousing indignation’ (Curran & Seaton, 2010: 96), noting that fear and anger became primary means of engaging the British public. The same emotion-driven engagement was observed in Romanian digital news in an analysis of online news from 2018 and 2019 carried out by Simona Bader and Corina Sîrb. According to the conclusion of their research, ‘Romanian digital media relies more on a rhetoric of fear, conflict and panic’ (Bader & Sîrb, 2021: 72, my translation). The two scholars emphasized that the rhetoric of Romanian media was more conflict-oriented than ever before, regardless of the topic presented or the publication addressing it (Bader & Sîrb, 2021: 72). Along the same lines, Dolors Palau-Sampio offers an analysis of ‘press metamorphosis in the digital context’ centered on *El País* – a major Spanish newspaper – in which she argues that the transition to the online shows ‘commitment to tabloidization, with anecdotal, lifestyle or curiosity content, while so-called hard news is absent’ (Palau-Sampio, 2016: 63).

Consistent with this focus on eliciting the reader’s emotional engagement, the examples included in the research corpus show a tendency to emphasize negative information, often presented so as to produce a stronger impact, across a wide range of topics that include crime, institutional and governmental inefficiencies, and negative economic news.

To illustrate this point, two news items that were published both in print and online can be considered here. The first article – published January 8th, 2007 – appeared in print under the title *Primii infractori români, extrădaţi după integrare [First Romanian criminals expelled after EU accession*] (my translation), whereas the online headline read *Ordonanța ‘Mailat’ își dovedește ineficiența [‘Mailat’ Decree proves inefficient]* (my translation).[1] The second example – a social-news story exposing public-system deficiencies – ran online on January 23rd, 2018, as *O nouă ‘modă’: ferestrele de termopan în spatele cărora se află un zid [‘Trend alert’: double-pane windows installed in front of walls*] (my translation), and in print the following day (January 24th), under the more sedate title, *O nouă metodă: termopan în fața ferestrelor zidite [New method emerges: double-pane glass for windows with a wall behind]* (my translation). These examples chart the progression of tabloidization: the online version’s use of ‘trend’ instead of the print version’s ‘method’ leverages emotional engagement, underscoring the increasingly heavy-handed reliance on sensational rhetoric over time.

[1] *Mailat* refers to Romulus Mailat, a Romanian citizen who was sentenced to life imprisonment in Italy in 2009 for the rape and murder of an Italian citizen. The case received widespread media coverage in both Italy and Romania, prompting public debate on issues related to immigration and the media’s influence on public perception.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

As demonstrated by the qualitative analysis of the content in our selected news corpus, the findings support existing theoretical propositions, illustrating how the shift toward digital media has contributed to the increasing tabloidization of Romanian journalism – a genre that has historically not been strictly factual. This trend aligns with broader international developments in online journalism. The study indicates a noticeable departure from fact-based reporting, with a growing emphasis on eliciting emotional engagement from readers. Consequently, traditional news and informative journalism, as defined in scholarly literature, appear to be losing ground, while the media environment is becoming increasingly social and less focused on delivering factual information. Given the current challenges faced by the media in maintaining public attention, future research would benefit from a broader diachronic analysis of journalistic texts. Such an investigation could help determine whether—and in what ways—writing techniques influence the evolving relationship between the media and its audience.

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Discourse Networks Through the Lens of Paul Zarifopol and Friedrich Kittler. Romanian and German Perspectives

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Abstract

The discourse networks of the 1800s and 1900s were an important starting point in the writings of Paul Zarifopol and Friedrich Kittler. Closely following the development of discourse networks, they explored how these evolved over time and the impact they had on society. The present paper focuses on the two intertwined perspectives of the two writers, in an attempt to find common ground. In this context, the paper aims at an interdisciplinary approach, drawing a parallel between Kittler's media theories and Zarifopol's literary theories, reflected in discourse networks.

Keywords: discourse network, Paul Zarifopol, Friedrich Kittler, literary theories, interdisciplinarity

INTRODUCTION

Discourse networks, such as the gramophone, the typewriter, radio, film, music, etc., were an important topic of discussion in 1900s. They first appeared in the initial forms in the 1800s and steadily developed with the advent of technology. The term was coined by Friedrich Kittler and was first used in his benchmark book, *Discourse Networks* (1990). Discourse networks were defined as a series of tools that facilitate communication, while also contributing to its propagation and dissemination. In the 1800s, the main discourse networks were represented by the classic form of communication, namely writing and reading (Kittler, 1990: 108). The development of early technologies led to the simultaneous development of discourse networks, as writing and reading could be transcribed onto technological devices, so that they could be stored and accessed by anyone. The discourse networks of the 1900s took the forms of the gramophone, the typewriter, radio, film, etc., marking an important evolution in both discourse and media technologies (Kittler, 1990).

Paul Zarifopol and Friedrich Kittler were two thinkers concerned with how discourse networks developed over time. The two scholars closely followed their evolution, highlighting the advantages they brought to the era. Kitler was one of the most representative figures in media theory, dedicating an entire volume to discourse networks and the relationships between/among them. On the other hand, Zarifopol was not only one of the most talented essayists in Romanian literature, but he was also one of the most attentive observers of the society in which he lived, proving his expertise through the complex analyses he made. Therefore, the two writers could not have been a more suitable choice for the present topic, as they were two representative figures in discussing how discourse networks functioned throughout time. Moreover, the two writers were chosen because of the similar perspectives they shared, even though they were separated by a time gap. However, it was not only time that separated the two, but also the different mentalities of the nations to which they belonged, as well as their different ways of thinking. Despite these aspects, similar topics and ideas are to be found in common in the works of the two scholars, both of them offering authentic analyses of discourse networks. In some cases, there may also be some different approaches, mainly caused by the time gap between the two, but this only makes the perspectives even more appealing.

Although the two thinkers were separated by a temporal distance, their perspectives shared many connections, as they view in a similar way the beneficial effects that the development of discourse networks had brought. Inevitably, there were also some divergent points, especially regarding the future implications that discourse networks would have. While Kittler optimistically envisioned the beginning of a new era, in which technology would increasingly occupy the spheres of existence, Zarifopol was more sceptical about the implications that discourse networks could have if not used wisely. Finally, the perspectives of the two writers were distinguished by their novelty and profound intellectuality, completing the critical portrait of the era.

The research methods used in writing the present paper were literature review and discourse analysis. The use of these two methods led to a deeper understanding of the theories of the two thinkers and to relevant conclusions. The literature review was necessary in order to familiarize the reader with the context in which discourse networks emerged and spread, while discourse analysis was an essential step in shaping the hypotheses and providing relevant arguments. The present paper aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the discourse networks of 1800s and 1900s, based on the theories of the two thinkers, who closely observed their development and evolution.

GENERAL REMARKS

Paul Zarifopol's essays dealt with a variety of topics, approaching ideas from multiple fields of study and activity. He was not only concerned with Romanian and foreign writers, but also with the communication field, as he was interested in media studies, especially in all the technologies that emerged after the First World War. Therefore, he dealt with topics like the gramophone, the typewriter, film (Kittler, 1999), radio, music (Kittler, 1990), etc., drawing multiple connections between them and the literary field. He analysed, at the same time, the impact that all the new technologies had on the era (Kittler, 1990). A closer reading of his books, for example of *Discourse networks* or *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, reveals that many of his ideas are still reflected today, so that the lifespan of his texts extends even to our times, as he dealt with ideas that are still relevant. On the other hand, Kittler was one of the most prominent figures in media studies. Trained as a literary scholar, like Zarifopol, he first brought into discussion the language channels, highlighting how writing and reading evolved within the era, as well as how the transition from the author to the reader and vice versa was realised. Starting from this point of view, Kittler identified in the 1800s two different cultures: a culture of the scribe and a culture of the learned (Kittler, 1990: 108). The culture of the scribe embodied the ability to write, while the culture of the learned embodied both writing and reading:

> Historians differentiate between two types of culture with regard to writing: a culture of the scribe, in which the ability to write is a privilege and thus a function of the ruling class; and a culture of the learned, in which reading and writing are coupled together and thus can be universalized. (Furet & Ozouf, 1977: 90, my translation)

In the European Middle Ages, on the other hand, the scribe was simply a copyist or a calligrapher, who did not understand the content of the material he was transcribing. As a rule, the texts the scribes transcribed were the biblical texts, their role being to spread the word of God. Moreover, they were also required to write personal commentaries or continuations of texts that medieval readers proposed and dictated. Starting from 1800s, the discourse network brought a major shift, fostering a culture that promoted reading and writing as interdependent concepts, automatically linked to each other. In this way, reading and writing became an automatism, playing a crucial role in shaping universal education and making people literate. Thus, in 1800, writing and reading became common property, under the condition of cultivating the pure listening:

> The discourse network of 1800 was the opposite: a culture in which reading and writing were coupled and automatized. The purpose of this coupling was a universal education, and its prerequisite was an alphabetization that connected reading and writing by linking both back to a singular kind of listening. (Kittler, 1990: 108)

At the same time, Anselmus[1] contributed to the universality of writing and reading. He was the first to attribute the quality of poet to the reader. Faced with the difficult task of copying illegible characters that completely excluded both listening and comprehension, he realised that the role of the reader was not only to read the content of a text mechanically, but also to give it meaning. Thus, the image of the reader could be equated with that of a poet. From that moment, the era began to generate and to promote more and more reader-poets:

> And because Poetry, unlike wisdom or insight, regulations or the teachings of the gods, cannot exist without readers, the reader-poet Anselmus generates more and more reader-poets, beginning with his writer Hoffmann and moving on through him as relay station to many other poetic youths. In this way reading and writing became universal. (Kittler, 1990: 108-109)

From this moment forward, the book industry started becoming more and more widespread, as the era witnessed both a mobilization of the continuous transition between author and reader, and a series of technological or social innovations that led to progress. Thus, the changes that occurred in the practice of discourse led to the development of the book industry.

The three key concepts in discourse practice were poetry, author and work. Kittler explained that there was no need to look for their meaning within aesthetic systems, because it was made available to the reader in Hoffmann's fairy tale, *The Golden Pot*. According to Hoffmann, poetry emerged with the manifestation of the erotic, authors with the writings that were already written in their subconscious, and works of art with the strong feelings they experience, materializing in the form of hallucinations:

> The end of the fairy tale *The Golden Pot* says it clearly. Poetry as a possession of the inner mind arises in erotic and alcoholic intoxication; authorship arises in rereading what had been unconsciously written in the delirium; poetic works, finally, are media for the hallucinatory substitution of realms of the senses. These three key concepts in the discourse network of 1800 are as many promises of happiness. (Kittler, 1990: 109)

Therefore, poetry at that time was associated with visions, hallucinations, illusions, dreams, magical powers, being a result of the supernatural:

[1] A symbolic character in the fairy tale *Golden Pot* (1814), written by E.T.A. Hoffmann, Anselmus was considered to be the first creator of poetry.

‘Since it is the nature of madness to fasten onto any given idea or concept, often to the exclusion of almost all others’ (Arnold, 1782: 210).

Some authors of the 1800s even associated poetry with madness, believing that the visions people had of the deceased loved ones could stir our imagination, thereby drawing images of past and present into people’s souls, which could be transformed into artistic material: ‘the ever-turning wheel of the imagination, which like a magic lantern throws out images of the past and future across the soul’ (Spiess, 1966: 56, my translation). Another example could be Tiedemann’s *Investigations into Man* that reported the case of a

> young man who had dedicated himself to poetry and could spend a whole day without writing one line, until somnambulism came to his aid. He got up in the middle of the night, wrote, then read over what he had written and applauded himself by laughing loudly. (Tiedemann, 1778: 267, my translation)

In such cases, poetry stood at the forefront of its time. Around 1800, the emerging human sciences, particularly through their medico-psychological explorations of insanity, identified within the multiple expressions of unreason a singular form that stated the true essence of irrationality.

However, poetry meant much more than that. The discursive practice of the 1800s brought not only new perspectives on poetry, as we have seen above (psychological, supernatural, occultist, etc.), but also a new way of understanding it through the aesthetic system it embodied. Poetry thus began to develop its own technical standards and its own aesthetics. A number of theorists and philosophers of the era attempted to define poetry and the creative process on the basis of a set of complementary elements. A. Wilhelm Schlegel defined poetry as one of the most comprehensive arts and considered language to be an essential element in the poetic art, the poet making his own world through it, which led to the transformation of the real world into an imaginary world in which all poetic elements met:

> The other arts possess, according to their limited modes or means of representation, a definite domain that is more or less susceptible to delimitation. The medium of poetry, however, happens to be identical with that through which the human spirit first attains consciousness, and through which its ideas obtain the power of voluntary connection and expression: language. Therefore, poetry is not bound to any objects but rather creates its own; it is the most comprehensive of all arts and at the same time the universal spirit present in them all. That which in the portrayal of other arts lifts us above commonplace reality into an imaginary world, is what we call the poetic element in them. (Schlegel, 1962: 225, my translation)

Unlike Schlegel, Hegel defined poetry from a spiritual perspective. According to him, poetry was based not so much on the senses and feelings as on the spiritual senses that inhabited the poet’s soul, spiritual contemplation and imagination being the essential elements in the creative process. The poetic material would not render the meaning, but the expression of an individual spirit to another individual spirit:

> That is to say, it works neither for contemplation by the senses, as the visual arts do, nor for purely ideal feeling, as music does, but on the contrary tries to present to spiritual imagination and contemplation the spiritual meanings which it has shaped within its own soul. For this reason, the material through which it manifests itself retains for it only the value of a means (even if an artistically treated means) for the expression of spirit to spirit, and it has not the value of being a sensuous

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> existent in which the spiritual content can find a corresponding reality. Amongst the means hitherto considered, the means here can only be sound as the sensuous material still relatively the most adequate to spirit. (Hegel, 1975: 626).

Poetry, seen as a direct connection between the world and the spirit, also quickly gained its place among aesthetic systems. Thanks to the increasingly widespread use of discourse networks, language could be translated from one to another, becoming a real channel of communication. In terms of the way in which poetry was configured, it emerged as the embodiment of the complete art, as it incorporated the modes of representation of other arts, as Hegel stated:

> As for poetry's mode of configuration, poetry in this matter appears as the total art because, what is only relatively the case in painting and music, it repeats in its own field the modes of presentation characteristic of the other arts'. (Hegel, 1975: 627)

This does not mean, however, that poetry could replace the other arts in its own right, but that it can translate them into artistic material for poetry. Translation is achieved through fantasy and imagination, which has the power to define all the arts. Poetry is imagination itself, the fundamental foundation for all the individual art forms that can be found within it: 'Only poetry can claim the imagination itself, that universal foundation of all the particular art-forms and the individual arts as its proper material' (Hegel, 1975: 967).

As the discourse networks of the 1800 brought new perspectives on poetry, enriching the literary field of German culture, similar developments occurred within Romanian literature too, with poetry and art itself representing a field that was increasingly being explored. One of the most prominent voices in this regard was Paul Zarifopol, who aligned with Hegel's critical system. Like Hegel, Paul Zarifopol was also an important voice on aestheticism in art and poetry. In Romanian literature, he was considered one of the most important defenders of aesthetics, promoting continuously the idea of the specificity of art and the cult of authentic art as a singular, individual domain. The aesthetic system that he brought into discussion was intensely debated because of the controversies that he raised, as he placed himself on the side of absolute aesthetics, outside of any psychological, philosophical, social or political sphere. He was not only a commentator of both Romanian and foreign writers, but also a literary theorist, with his own critical system. Paul Zarifopol remained in the history of Romanian criticism as one of the most consistent supporters of the autonomy of aesthetics, of the specificity and independence of art, as C. Trandafir stated: 'The guiding thread is the idea of the specificity of art, the support of the legitimacy of aesthetics and its protection from the interference of alien elements' (Trandafir, 1981: 81, my translation). He supported the aesthetic point of view and, at the same time, he based his conceptions on rational judgments and values, bringing art back to its true purity. He realised that art had its own singular field, differentiated from other related fields such as history, philosophy, politics, morality, etc., and he rejected inauthenticity and imposture.

Paul Zarifopol started from the idea that art belonged to its own domain, with its own particular laws and differentiated language, being the result of a historical process:

> Pledges for literary art or attempts at literary precision are made with iridium quill. Corrosive, tightly argued appreciations give the impression of the definitive in spite of the discontinuity imposed by the essay's formula. (Muthu, 1979: 19, my translation)

Zarifopol constantly emphasised the importance of aesthetic judgment, first of all, as a primordial act, which could not carry its existence without special preparation, embodied by artistic technique. He urged critics and writers to strive for precision, to maintain the clean sketch of the art's content and regardless of its connections with other fields, to keep it solely in mind:

> The literary criticism practiced, however incidentally, by Zarifopol, is drawn from these rationalist premises and it aspires to explain the work to the limit – always pushed further – of the impenetrable mystery. (Cistelecan, 2018: 502, my translation)

Unlike Kittler, Zarifopol rejected biographic, romantic, scientific, psychological, sociological, etc. criticism, and had the cult of art, seen as the result of a labour process, of a craft. He pleaded for a rigorous attention to the object, for the appreciation of art on the basis of its own laws and criteria, calling for the delimitation of literary art from mere literature, and for the delimitation of the artistic commentator, which distinguished himself from the historical, sociological or psychological one. In a constant search for the image of authentic art as self-sufficient, detached from the contingencies of utility, the critic rejected poetry of a philosophical, sentimental-pedagogical nature, prophetic and political, disapproving the involvement of philosophers in the field of aesthetics.

A polemical and dissociative spirit *par excellence*, Paul Zarifopol's mission was to detect the problematic points and to accurately diagnose certain phenomena, advocating the distinction between literary art and literature, the need for technical criticism practiced by specialists in the field, the removal of extra-aesthetic criteria and inaccuracies determined by sociological and psychological methods, the exclusion of sentimentalism, as well as the promotion of lucid criticism as a differentiated act of culture:

> Paul Zarifopol's fears of scientific criticism, whether psychological or sociological, stem from the risks of any partial reading, which risks degenerating into a rigid system. He advocates an individual criticism, as differentiated as possible, free from prejudice, elastic, adaptable from one text to another. (Munteanu, 1993: 236, my translation)

He denounced the inconsistency of the idea of perfect style, of style as ornament, of classical composition, of grammatical correctness and elegance, fighting the rigid norms of classicism from a modern perspective, bringing into the picture the idea of the perishability of art and the evolution of aesthetic taste. As he showed a clear antipathy for the artificial style that was imposed by the rigid rules of literary education, Zarifopol started to seek the unchallenged art, the one that was released from any classical patterns:

> Paul Zarifopol was the most outstanding representative of our interwar criticism, elevated to the purest expression of intelligence and the most severe intransigence. His judgment, often unjust, offers us an incomparable spiritual feast. (Cioculescu, 1976: 300, my translation)

Thus, Zarifopol placed himself in opposition to German authors like Hoffmann, Schlegel or Spiess, rejecting the idea that the source of inspiration in the creation of artistic material could be other than aesthetic. However, Zarifopol adopted their perspective regarding the way in which poetry was formed and developed. Similar to the German philosophers, he began his analyses by highlighting the evolution that the discourse network had in the 1800s, which was the period when major changes took place not only in the social, but also in the literary field. With the spread of writing and reading, more and more writers emerged, and the creations began to become more various, precisely because of the diversity of the authors' voices, as Schlegel also stated: 'There are so many writers because these days reading and writing differ only by degrees' (Schlegel, 1890: 399, my translation). At that time, one of the most widespread art forms was poetry, in its early stages, free from rules, and then increasingly cultivated, developing its own aesthetic system. Poetry is just as widespread today, with many people defining themselves as poets. Zarifopol noticed that several philosophers have argued over the years that being a poet is something that can be done by anyone and does not require an innate vocation. Therefore, he noticed that Renan, for example, believed that anything we said about ourselves could be poetic material (Zarifopol, 1971: 463). At the same time, he looked at Taine, who also said that our life experiences put together could make the subject of a good novel (Zarifopol, 1971: 463). He noticed that even certain Romanian writers agreed, Heliade Rădulescu urging people to write (Zarifopol, 1971: 463), while Alecsandri, according to him, brought the idea that some people were simply born poets (Zarifopol, 1971: 463). Zarifopol, however, added a very important point, namely that not everyone could become a poet, but only a clever and cultivated person: 'The quality of any activity is the product of natural endowment and appropriate culture' (Zarifopol, 1971: 464, my translation). Even though the romantics enthusiastically affirmed that the ability to be poet was innate, Zarifopol emphasised the need for a person to learn and cultivate himself or herself in order to prove that he or she was indeed born to be a poet.

Another issue that was raised in the discourse network of the 1800s was the translation and translatability of literary works, which began to become a growing necessity. This subject concerned both Zarifopol and Kittler. As Pestalozzi noticed, knowledge was exchanged by means of concepts, just as goods were exchanged by means of money (Pestalozzi, 1927: 306). In this sense, translation also became a discursive practice where each seller came with his or her own merchandise to sell or exchange, as Hoffmann said: 'Translations are the discursive market, to which the most distant merchants come with their wares' (Hoffmann, 1963: 65, my translation). The best portrayal, however, was made by Goethe, who first brought to attention the translatability of all discourses. He emphasised not the translation itself, but what remained after the translation, the essence of the meaning that the poet translated into the language of the people. This is why he rejected imitative translations, word by word translations, and emphasised the importance of original translations, those that preserved the authentic elements of the creation, transposed in the same light:

> I value both rhythm and rhyme, whereby poetry first becomes poetry; but what is really, deeply, and fundamentally effective, what is really permanent, is what remains of the poet when he is translated into prose. Then the pure, perfect substance remains... I will only, in support of my position, mention Luther's translation of the Bible, for the fact that this excellent man handed down a work composed in the most different styles and gave us its poetical, historical, commanding didactic tone in our mother tongue, as if all were cast in one mould, has done more to advance religion than if he had attempted to imitate, in detail, the peculiarities of the original. (Spiess, 1966: 56, my translation)

While the presence of untranslatable elements within any language was acknowledged, it was ultimately minimized. The general equivalent emerged as the residue of what was left behind, a remainder representing the pure, the perfect substance or the signified. Kittler noticed that the process had a flattening effect, that could be best visible in the translation of Mignon in Wilhelm Meister. Here, the fragmented material was unified in an artificial way. In the discourse

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network of 1800s, the general equivalent fulfilled the role of a foundational structure that was opened to changes. The problem regarding the untranslatability of discourse networks could be addressed only within the framework of linguistics. Moreover, the meaning could often be transferred from one language to another with minimal loss involved, therefore, the consistencies helped to define the distinctiveness of a given language, as Kittler stated (Kittler, 1990: 71). Linguistics in 1800s occupied one pole of a central spectrum on the logic of the signified; poetry occupied the other. In its pursuit of moral and intellectual elevation, poetry embraced the general equivalent, and with it, the idea of inherent meaning, which remained deeply religious in nature, whether in the works of Luther or *Faust*. As the saying goes, 'All Poetry is, in the end, translation' (Tiedemann, 1778: 267, my translation).

Kittler stated that the discourse network of 1800s was strongly defined by love, nature and women. The three elements intertwined and formed the creative substance for poets. This would then be transferred to the level of discourse through language. In that context, language functioned purely under the form of a channel (Kittler, 1990: 73). The same aspect was noticed by Schlegel too:

> Nature, the whole world of passion and action that lay within the poet, and which he attempts to externalize through language – this nature is expressive. Language is only a channel, the true poet only a translator, or, more specifically, he is the one who brings Nature into the heart and soul of his brothers'. (Schlegel, 1962: 225, my translation)

Zarifopol's perspective on translations is similar. Translating a text is not just a matter of reconstructing the terms used in that particular text, but of finding symbolic language meanings that give meaning to the original discourse. The text could be reconstructed again under the condition of giving the appropriate words, as well as the original meaning that the poet wanted to convey:

> Translation is the written proof of understanding a text. To understand a text is to reconstruct parts of the life of a world, of a time, of a man. To translate means to find in symbolic elements a language which correspond so closely to the original discourse that they give the appropriate material to the new reconstruction. The possibility of translation depends on the similarities in the historical life of the nations between whom this literary exchange is made. The translator who fails to realize the obligations and challenges of which we are speaking, will only make systematic distortions. (Zarifopol, 1971: 502, my translation)

All in all, translation into the mother tongue was considered a teachable skill, something that could be systematically conveyed in the newly established humanistic preparatory schools to every aspiring civil servant. In contrast, translation from the mother tongue represented a persistent paradox. The ability to transcend this paradox marked the true poets, setting them apart from others. Discourse networks helped them to perceive poetry as a singular, initiatory experience, an exceptional rite for the emerging generation of poets.

The discourse network of the 1900s mainly focused on media technologies and the impact they had on society, bringing important changes. Kittler began his discourse by highlighting the psychophysical experiments that were carried out in the 1900s, particularly those that were related to the automation of writing and reading (Kittler, 1990: 206). However, the most important achievements were made in the fields of optics and acoustics, Thomas Edison being the one who brought two important innovations: film and the gramophone. Once the gramophone started to become more popular, people wanted to use it for other various purposes. From a religious perspective, people sought to be able to reproduce as many biblical texts as possible, while poets, for example, desired to be able to hear the great writers who inspired them in their works, as one of them confessed:

> I would so much like to have heard Goethe's voice! He was said to have such a beautiful vocal organ, and everything he said was so meaningful. Oh, if only he had been able to speak into the gramophone! Oh! Oh!'. (Friedlaender, 1980: 159, my translation)

From Kittler's perspective, vibration occupied a very important place in acoustic technologies. (Kittler, 1990: 230) The gramophone was not just a simple reproduction of a person's voice, but went beyond that, drawing its essence from the vibrations that the voice creates, bringing it closer to the listener. In this way, a more lasting connection could be established between the speaker and the listener, creating reverberations that would withstand the passage of time. The ideal that people wanted to achieve through the gramophone was formulated by Charles Cros, who, in his poem *Inscription*, incorporated its principles:

> Like the faces in cameos,/I wanted beloved voices/To be a fortune which one keeps forever,/And which can repeat the musical/Dream of the too short hour;/Time would flee, I subdue it'. (Cros, 1964: 136, my translation)

Before the phonograph reproduced religious texts or voices of writers, its history began by reproducing children's texts. That was the moment when talking dolls appeared. Initially, they caused a wave of discontent, because they were considered threatening for pedagogical norms, as pupils did not learn useful aspects they could see in everyday speech. Moreover, it was thought that multiple linguistic games led to addiction. Nevertheless, the idea was overcome, because the technology improved its performance, so the phonograph came to be more useful in schools, and thus the phonograph was introduced in the school system, as Kittler stated (Kittler 1990: 232).

Thanks to its linguistic performance, the phonograph was useful in schools precisely because of the phonetic accuracy it could reproduce, helping pupils to improve their skills through the precise pronunciation it offered, as well as through its pure rhythmic and melodic line:

> it is essential for achieving an accurate impression of the most fleeting, unrepresentative, and yet so important, characteristic aspects of language, of phonetics (speech melody) and of rhythm. (Surkamp, 1913: 13, my translation)

Ernst Surkamp is also the one who associated the phonograph with the idea of accent or dialect. In his opinion, the phonograph incorporated multiple languages, whose pronunciation and accent were specific: 'a store of readily accessible language sounds in exemplary, faultless accent' (Surkamp 1913: 30, my translation). Yet, Kittler believed that the phonograph's potential could extend further and in unpredictable directions. Therefore, he brought into attention Rilke's case (Kittler, 1990: 233). His physics teacher gave the students the task to rebuild and experiment with a phonograph as soon as the device became commercially available, and the recorded sounds unveiled what he described 'a new and infinitely delicate point in the texture of reality' (Rilke, 1960: 52). The advent of a purely empirical phonetics, clearly distinct from phonology, made it suddenly possible to capture real phenomena, rather than force them to fit educational conventions.

While Kittler focused on the concept of the phonograph, Zarifopol was not so much concerned with the phonograph as he was with the radio. Kittler elaborated on the discussion of radio too, but he highlighted the military role it played. In the analysis he undertook, he found that technologies, as well as the radio itself, were used in wars to increase efficiency and speed of reaction: 'the entertainment industry is, in any conceivable sense of the word, nothing but an abuse of army equipment' (Kittler 1999: 96). On the other hand, Kittler also stated the positive role that wars fulfilled regarding the development of technology. War represented an additional reason for people to create more advanced technologies and to test new ways through which they could make more lasting and efficient devices. In contrast to Kittler, Zarifopol actually lived through the two wars and had the chance to observe their real consequences. Therefore, he wrote multiple essays dealing with this issue. Nevertheless, regarding the radio, he chose to focus on the literary point of view, rather than the military one, talking about the way the radio interacted with literature, as well as the impact it had on society. He determined the main purpose of the radio, which was to connect people from an acoustic point of view, offering the possibility of hearing a person without seeing him or her:

> The essence of radio culture is to connect people exclusively acoustically. Radio offers us, to an amplified degree, the original possibility of hearing ourselves without seeing ourselves. (Zarifopol, 1988: 47, my translation)

According to him, the main responsibility of radio communication was to ensure the realization of pure hearing (Zarifopol, 1988: 47). Furthermore, the radio focused on the individuality of the uttering voice which became unique and unrepeatable, taking the form of an isolated expressive manifestation that monopolizes all attention: 'A voice rises somewhere, from all over the world. A single expressive manifestation is isolated from a human being' (Zarifopol, 1988: 47, my translation).

Nevertheless, radio communication was not just a one-way communication, but it was also conditioned by the existence of a listener. A relationship of interdependence was established between the speaker and the listener, each carrying his or her own mystery: the speaker the mystery of the spoken word and the listener the mystery of the listened word. The listener had to focus his or her full attention on the voice, as it was the only sensibility that can penetrate his soul:

> A voice that speaks and a pair of ears that listen. Thus: the attention is concentrated in one branch of sensibility – the listener is the listener and nothing else, – he lives only with the ear. (Zarifopol, 1988: 47, my translation)

It was not only the image that was suppressed in radio communication, but also gestures and mimicry, the only human reality that remained being the voice, which took the form of the absolute: 'It is absolute speech or absolute singing, the effects of mimicry and gesture are completely eliminated' (Zarifopol, 1988: 47, my translation). Therefore, radio became the place where the two human sensibilities met: the speaker, through the mystery of speech, and the listener, through the mystery of listening. He introduced the idea that written communication would gradually be replaced by the oral communication, as it was a faster and more efficient way of communication. Another idea he stated was that 'the radio rules recommend us: don't declaim, just tell stories' (Zarifopol, 1988: 48, my translation). He considered that essence and brevity are the two fundamental characteristics of radio communication. According to him, to tell a story and not to declaim required the existence of three necessities: 'the necessity to keep our judgment cold, the necessity to know the facts, the necessity to not waste time' (Zarifopol, 1988: 48, my translation).

In his examples, Zarifopol started from the distinction he had made between the radio and the cinema. In cinematography, words are reduced to a minimum, whereas the facts are the ones that gave it its essence. The explanations of the events in the movie are concentrated in a few words, the emphasis falling on the unfolding of the action, which was why, from his perspective, weak movies were those that needed long explanations. Just as the cinema cultivated the taste for facts, the radio communication should do the same, cultivate short but meaningful facts:

> The popularity of the cinema shows us how strong the taste for facts of today's man is. And just as the cinema, for its part, puts a stop to talk, concentrating everything in action, so radio communication is necessary in the same sense, in that it captures mimicry, gesture, and eliminates declamation and swollen speech. (Zarifopol, 1988: 48, my translation)

Zarifopol was an honest essayist not just with himself, but also with the audience he addressed. Therefore, he established the idea that communication through media technologies brought a considerable advantage as a form of smooth communication, that had the possibility to cross distances, but, at the same time, it also brought a disadvantage because it could encounter some limits at the level of knowing who the listening audience was. According to him, in the absence of a contact with the listener, radio communication could have a ghostly character, incorporating stories that were told by an unknown voice that could speak from thousand kilometres away. Zarifopol asserted that 'the radio is a new power of literary preface in general, and that this power comes, along with others, to contribute to the suppression of the long sentence' (Zarifopol, 1988: 47, my translation).

Discourse networks of 1900s also had a great contribution to the development of dialects, as Kittler noticed (Kittler, 1990: 234). The greatest impact was felt again in schools. Until then, students learned through the book language (Kittler, 1990: 234). Even though each had their own individuality and particular language, they had to conform to school policy, namely to learn their language, more precisely, the language of their poets and thinkers. Learning was done exclusively through the book language, meaning the formal learning just from books, without offering the possibility of opening up to other spheres of learning or knowledge. In Hackenberg's view, this way of learning stifled students and did not educate them properly. The book language had increasingly begun to control the language of schools, and the result was the formation of students who were progressively becoming shy and monosyllabic in their speech:

> The school-age child brings his own language to school, his native language, his family language, the language of his playmates, his own naive, intuitive language: our task and our desire is to teach him our language, the language of our poets and thinkers… But is it not asking a great deal when we demand that children, from the very first day of school, speak nothing but the school language... It is not long before the children will be overtaken by books and book language: a child learns to read. Reading, however, weakens and cuts across – it cannot be otherwise – the child's coherent, fluent speech, and book language begins more and more to influence and control school language; finally, in its often foreign and refined way, it creates a child who is now shy and monosyllabic. (Hackenberg, 1904: 70, my translation)

In this case, the development of discourse networks brought about a major change. As soon as the gramophone was introduced into schools, a greater improvement regarding student performance was noticed. Hall was the one who studied this subject more closely and noticed that acoustics significantly helped in the learning process. In his analysis, he started from the connections that were created between rhyme, rhythm, sound and words, capturing the pupils' attention. Any form of acoustics or visual absorbed their attention and helped create new forms of learning. This was based on the natural sounds that children heard every day, such as the sounds of nature or animals (Hall, 1893: 348). Perception was activated to the fullest and the information accumulated, though perception would be stored at the cognitive level as information. Thus, psychological processes were also involved in the learning process, a process that was activated through sounds, as Hall stated:

> Words, in connection with rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, cadence, etc., or even without these, simply as sound-pictures, often absorb the attention of children, and yield them as a really aesthetic pleasure either quite independently of their meaning or to the utter bewilderment of it. They hear fancied words in noises and the sounds of nature and animals, and are persistent punners. As butterflies make butter or eat it or give it by squeezing, so grasshoppers give grass, bees give beads and beans, kittens grow on pussy-willow, and all honey comes from honeysuckles, and even a poplin dress is made of poplar-trees. (Hall, 1893: 348)

Surkamp also concluded that dialects should be encouraged in schools, especially since all the technologies brought about by discursive networks could contribute to more effective learning, but also to the pleasure of listening to fragments in one's native language:

> Dialects in schools deserve every possible encouragement, and the talking machine can be effective in that its undistorted oral presentations nourish one's delight in a native language. (Surkamp, 1913: 14, my translation)

Discourse networks spread not only in schools, but also in the literature field. Poets also gave the talking machine a try. Kittler stated that the first German writer to record his voice was Ernst von Wildenbruch, in 1897, who wrote a poem specifically for the purpose of recording it (Kittler, 1990: 235). The poem is entitled *For the Phonographic Recording of His Voice* and is entirely dedicated to testing the new technology. Walter Bruch, who was the inventor of PAL television, was able to access the recording from an archive that kept historical recordings, and transcribed Wildenbruch's poem, reproducing it later:

> Shapes can constrain the human visage, the eye can be held fast in an image, only the voice, born in breath, bodiless, dies and flies off. The docile face can deceive the eye, but the sound of the voice can never lie, thus to me the phonograph is the soul's own true photograph, which brings what is hidden to light and forces the past to speak. Hear then, for in this sound you will look into the soul of Ernst von Wildenbruch. (Bruch, 1979: 20, my translation)

The lyrics were not only profound, but also brought an innovative vision to the phonograph. Kittler analysed them and he noticed that Wildenbruch started from the idea that the only reality and the only form of truth was the voice. If the face and eyes could deceive, the voice was the only vulnerable element of the human being. The voice spoke the truth and revealed hidden things (Kittler, 1990: 236). From his perspective, the voice was a reflection of the human soul, a faithful photograph of it. Discourse networks led not only to the development of auditory technologies, but also to the development of visual technologies. Thus, in addition to the phonograph, movies also underwent development. It was the first time that movement could be recorded, and not just imagined by the public: 'Movement can now be recorded in the technological real, no longer only in the imaginary' (Sellmann, 1912: 54, my translation). If the purpose of the phonograph was to record the voice, the sole purpose of movies was to record movement: 'The cinematograph can only do one thing, as its name implies, and that is to record movement' (Sellmann, 1912: 54, my translation).

With the advent of movie, rapid connections began to be established between the body and technology, between stimuli and response, and it was no longer necessary for all these connections to be made at the imaginary level. Kittler conveyed the impact that film had had on society, highlighting the promise that was made by poets in the age of literacy: 'Film transposed into the technological field what Poetry had promised in the age of alphabetization and granted through the fantasy of the library' (Kittler, 1990: 245). All aspects of real life could be transposed onto screens, which led to the rapid popularity of movies, which became a pure joy for the general public. As technologies that appeared simultaneously, film and the gramophone did what human power could not: they transposed visual and auditory data with extraordinary precision. However, their greatest impact was on data storage. The method of storing data in books was surpassed by the possibility of storing it on technological devices, reducing its degradation and contributing significantly to the increase in production quality, as Kittler also observes:

> As technological media, the gramophone and film store acoustical and optical data serially with superhuman precision. Invented at the same time by the same engineers, they launched a two-pronged attack on a monopoly that had not been granted to the book until the time of universal alphabetization: a monopoly on the storage of serial data'. (Kittler, 1990: 245)

Film not only offered people the opportunity to escape from books, but also gave them the chance to live in a better fictional world. In movies, the ordinary could become miraculous, and the ugly could become beautiful. Movies often presented ideal pictures in which anyone could exceed their limits and become whatever they wanted to be. Movies portrayed both the intellectual and working classes, but the distinctions between them were diminished, so as everyone would have the opportunity to live their own dream:

> The schoolboy wants to see the prairies of his Westerns; he wants to see strange people in strange circumstances; he wants to see the lush, primitive banks of Asian rivers. The modest bureaucrat and the housewife locked into her household long for the shimmering celebrations of elegant society, for the far coasts and mountains to which they will never travel... The working man, in his everyday routine, becomes a romantic as soon as he has some free time. He does not want to see anything realistic; rather, the realistic should be raised into an imaginary, fantastic realm... One finds all this in the movies. (Pinthus, 1963: 21, my translation)

The emergence of these technologies prompted writers of the time to shift from classical methods of art creation to the modern ones, integrating technology into their methods. Moreover, some of them began to produce texts that were intended exclusively for technological production.

Paul Zarifopol was also interested in how the film spread. His approach was similar to that of Pinthus, considering film as an opportunity to access a new world. The idea he pointed out in his analysis was related to how audience preferences had changed over time. People began to feel a strong need for novelty and adventure, as well as for escaping the routine of everyday life. Film could offer them the little pleasures they needed and could stimulate their attention by means of dynamic action and surprising events. Therefore, a new era began in the 1900s, an era in which not only technology developed, but also people's way of thinking:

> People do not want complicated thinking; they are already overwhelmed with psychological problems, with profound inner tragedies, with mouths tight and twisted into a bitter smile; and they have lost the patience to hide their boredom. They long for spectacle, movement, adventure. The literary father, who fell into the temptation of the bandit novel, gave in to a basic need: he gave in to the pleasure of stimulating his attention through a rush of varied, violent, unforeseen events. And precisely: cinema has unleashed the courage of this pleasure throughout the world. (Zarifopol, 1971: 327, my translation)

He continued his argument by comparing the written text with the video animation offered by the film, in an attempt to explain why people felt more attracted to visuals than to reading. According to him, the difference between the two could be seen in the impact they had on the audience. While reading could be boring and sometimes difficult or tiring, watching a film not only facilitated the transmission of information in a more animated way, but also touched the reader's soul:

> The text, always too literary, of theatrical dialogue, makes him [the reader] impatient: the brief explanation projected on the illuminated screen, in letters half a metre high, fills his soul and spirit just right, no matter how plebeian it may be in literary terms. (Zarifopol, 1971: 327, my translation)

Zarifopol compared film to theatre, considering that film was the pure realization of theatre, both through the intelligence with which it was conceived and the ingenious way in which it was staged: 'It is pure theatre. A maximum of intelligence and imagination, in the service of stage representation' (Zarifopol, 1988: 102, my translation). Films not only contributed to mark an important step in the technology of the era, but also restored social harmony within it, providing balance: 'It is obvious that the purest and most solid social and international harmony was achieved by cinema' (Zarifopol, 1971: 325, my translation).

CONCLUSIONS

If the discourse networks of the 1800s represented a first step in the development of language and technology, the discourse networks of the 1900s brought about a new paradigm. Media technologies began to be increasingly integrated into everyday life, leading to the emergence of a new stage in the development of the era: 'The paradigms of media used in positivistic literary history were widened to include film, radio, and record' (Schanze, 1977: 133, my translation). All this would lead to the emergence of a new art form, in which writers would have complete freedom. Apollinaire discussed this aspect, raising the possibility that, in the future, the only forms of publication would be those based on technology, portraying the image of a new art form that would spread:

> It would have been strange if in an epoch when the popular art par excellence, the cinema, is a book of pictures, poets had not tried to compose pictures for meditative and refined minds that are not content with the crude imaginings of the makers of films.

> These last will become more perceptive, and one can predict the day when, the photograph and the cinema having become the only form of publication in use, the poet will have a freedom heretofore unknown. One should not be astonished if, with the means they now have at their disposal, poets set themselves to preparing this new art. (Apollinaire 1972: 228).

Kittler supports Apollinaire's point of view. In addition to phonograph and film technology, there would also be the typewriter, which, according to McLuhan, brought about 'an entirely new attitude to the written and printed word' (McLuhan, 1964: 260).

Kittler and Zarifopol also supported this idea, identifying a major change in society with the development of discourse network technologies. The change took place not only at the social level, but also at the level of people's mentality. Even if the new discourse networks were perceived with caution by people at first, they became, over time, fundamental means of communication. Classic discourse networks were gradually replaced by the new ones, which proved to be more efficient in terms of use. They were later introduced in schools, leading to greater achievements in what concerns the learning process of students. The development of discourse networks marked the beginning of a new era, where information became more accessible. The attribute of accessibility was later complemented by that of rapidity, contributing significantly to the propagation and dissemination of information. Even though it was not a widely discussed topic of that time, discourse networks marked the beginning of a new technological era, in which people had their first interactions with intelligent machines.

In their writings, Kittler and Zarifopol analysed thoroughly the discourse networks. The close attention they paid to discourse networks became more apparent with a deep dive into their literary works. Moreover, through a retrospective lens, one can become aware of the common ground their works share. It is not a mere interest in discourse networks that brings Kittler and Zarifopol together, but also an almost mirrored view of their perspectives. Kittler and Zarifopol provided valid arguments, which in turn had only made their emphasis on the impact of discourse networks all the more reasonable. For example, both Kittler and Zarifopol perceived discourse networks as a fundamental component in the evolution of society and even provided a blueprint in understanding discourse networks and the way the development of their era was impacted by them. Even though both provided these highlights by giving examples from the media literature, their writings do have their own particularities. The temporal distance is apparent, even if the outlines of the understanding of discourse networks were more or less the same. Still, the distinctions are not intended to put Kittler and Zarifopol in antinomy, but rather to highlight a complementary understanding. Kittler emphasised how the discourse networks were influenced by the ever-growing development of media technologies, while Zarifopol was more interested in a humanistic understanding that sought to grasp how exactly the discourse networks were impacting people of his time. To this humanistic approach, Zarifopol added a hint of scepticism, for he commented on the potential threat these new technologies provided, should they be used in less than wise ways.

Overall, their interest in the discourse networks sets Kittler and Zarifopol in the position of leading figures on the matter. The two thinkers shared many intertwining ideas, even if their foundations were different. In this case, culture represented a decisive factor in the way they distinguished from one another. Their studies aim to explain discourse networks and how they had spread upon their nations, which already implies a difference in perceiving. Despite these shifts, they both sought out to give a clear understanding of discourse networks. It is in this understanding that they provided the outline for how one could rebuild the path of media technologies that interfered with discourse practices. Kittler and Zarifopol observed how discourse networks had been shaped from their classical form, namely writing and reading, to a modern form, one which emphasised the transition within media technologies that rethought the way we communicate. Thus, discourse networks have become an integral part of everyday life.

The echoes of the two thinkers still resonate nowadays, reflecting their relevance in the present too, especially since both anticipated the complex development of discourse networks. Over time, these have become increasingly advanced technologies, changing the way we perceive the world. Discourse networks are now at their peak in the era of technology, spreading with an astonishing speed and, at the same time, discovering newer and newer forms.

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Nina Cassian, *Memoria ca zestre* – memoriile limitelor, limitele memoriei. Jurnalul ca formă de libertate interioară și spațiu de reflecție asupra exilului intern și extern

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Nina Cassian, Memory as Legacy – The Memory of Limits, the Limits of Memory. The Diary as a Form of Inner Freedom and a Space for Reflection on Inner and Outer Exile

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Abstract

Published between 2003 and 2005, Nina Cassian's diary is an important historical document, as it reflects the living and working conditions of writers during the communist period. Equally significant is the writer's disillusionment, her youth having been marked by sincere adherence to the communist revolution. Despite this, even after the publication of her debut volume, Nina Cassian became a victim of ideological persecution and tried to conform to the requirements of socialist realism, albeit unsuccessfully. The inability to adapt, the incomprehension of the criticism she received, and her sharp gaze upon the world characterize the three volumes and shape a path of disillusionment. The first volume of memoirs has a unique structure, as it contains three layers of writing: the immediate recording of events, typical of a diary, followed by observations added during a first rereading in the 1970s, and a third layer, that of the final rereading and the authorial discourse freed from the self-censorship inherent in life under a totalitarian system, after 1985. That year, the author was in the United States on a Soros scholarship when she learned of the death of her friend Gheorghe Ursu. Frightened, she chose the path of exile, so the notes and additions made on American soil reflect the breaking of self-limitations caused by the preventive fear of possible searches – a fear with which all writers in totalitarian regimes lived and continue to live. Thus, the diary is both a valuable document of its time and an intricate, multifaceted textual mechanism. The two subsequent rereadings become journeys through time, while the act of remembering and completing the text constitutes a transgression of the limits imposed by self-censorship. The present moment, immediately recorded in the diary, intertwines with the present of rereading, from which the writer brings additions, clarifications, and later revelations prompted by other experiences. Finally, exile also implies the passage from one language to another, *and Nina Cassian takes this step as well, choosing to write in the language of her adopted country, even though, in interviews, she consistently stated that her true homeland was and remains the Romanian language.*

Keywords: Nina Cassian, diary, memory, Communism, exile, frontier

CONTEXT ISTORIC

Nina Cassian, pe numele său real Renée Annie Cassian (1924-2014), a fost o scriitoare, eseistă, traducătoare și compozitoare română, de origine evreiască. La vârsta de 16 ani, a intrat în organizația tineretului comunist, ideologia comunistă reprezentând, în contextul respectiv, o alegere existențială și o modalitate de a se opune amenințării fasciste:

> La 16 ani m-am încadrat în organizația ilegală a Tineretului Comunist, visând să mântui lumea de toate antagonismele fundamentale dintre sexe, rase, popoare, clase etc. Zânele se topiseră în legendă, balaurii deveniseră reali. Cât despre armonia pe care o visam și ce s-a ales din ea... (Rad, 2020: 125).

După instalarea regimului comunist în România, Nina Cassian își păstrează încrederea în doctrina comunistă, însă ideologii realismului socialist nu o cruță: volumul său de debut, *La scara 1/1* este aspru criticat (Interviu cu Nina Cassian, 2008). La începutul lunii februarie 1948, la doar o lună după publicarea articolului lui Sorin Toma, *Poezia putrefacției sau putrefacția poeziei*, o execuție simbolică a poetului Tudor Arghezi, Traian Șelmaru scrie un articol în trei părți, de data aceasta victimele fiind Nina Cassian și criticul literar Ovid. S. Crohmălniceanu, care scrisese o cronică de întâmpinare favorabilă acestui volum al scriitoarei. Prima parte a articolului reia bazele teoretice ale unei critici „sănătoase", care să respecte principiile marxism-leninismului (Șelmaru, 1948 (I): 3-4), iar celelalte două se concentrează pe atacul asupra celor doi. Ovid S. Crohmălniceanu este învinovățit pentru limbajul pretențios, pe care ideologul de serviciu îl catalogheazǎ drept „o păsărească" din care oamenii muncii nu pot înțelege nimic, și pentru graba de a fi lăudat volumul de debut al Ninei Cassian chiar înainte ca acesta să fi ajuns în librării (Șelmaru, 1948 (II): 2). Poeta este acuzată de „decadentism burghez" și de neputința de a se rupe de „dușmanul" din interior (Șelmaru, 1948 (III): 2). În stilul specific vremii, criticul face referire la personaje care puteau fi și inventate, precum presupusa dactilografă care se miră de un pleonasm din cronica lui Ovid S. Crohmălniceanu sau la ascultători care se declară neliniștiți după audiția unor poezii ale Ninei Cassian la radio. Aceste mecanisme aveau rolul de a întări judecata de valoare a criticului prin exemple de cititori proveniți din rândurile proletarilor, care confirmă lipsa de valoare și de adecvare a textelor literare incriminate.

Fenomenul cenzurii în perioada comunistă a fost subiectul a numeroase cercetări în domeniu. Liliana Corobca analizează istoria cenzurii în România, cercetătoarea concluzionând că cenzura a avut trei funcții principale: re-scrierea trecutului cultural, scrierea prezentului auctorial și pre-scrierea viitorului identitar (Corobca, 2014: 323). În perioada 1944-1948, are loc prima etapă a cenzurii, când moștenirea clasică este confiscată și epurată fizic (Corobca, 2014: 187). Debutul instituțional al cenzurii comuniste îl reprezintă anul 1949, când ia ființă Direcția Generală a Presei și Tipăriturilor (Ficeac, 1999: 39). Începând cu 1948, numărul de titluri interzise crește exponențial, cenzura începând să opereze cu criterii mult mai precise: cel al *selecției* (numai edițiile menționate în broșură trebuie retrase din circulație), cel al *abordării globale* (manualele școlare tipărite înainte de 1947), cel *apodictic* (interzicerea tuturor cărților scrise de anumiți autori) (Costea & al., 1995: 77-78).

În perioada 1948-1957, există un mecanism dublu de cenzură: o cenzură pe departamente, în cadrul căreia textul este verificat de către un cenzor, iar cenzorul este, la rândul lui, verificat de către un alt cenzor, și o cenzură tematică. Controlul între diversele departamente este dublat și de un supracontrol sau un postcontrol, în această perioadă coagulându-se o hiper-conştiință a cenzorului care își exprimă frustrarea că interdicțiile impuse de el nu sunt respectate, așa cum constată Liliana Corobca, pe baza analizei și a coroborării documentelor din perioada respectivă (Corobca, 2013: 149-152).

Cenzura în România își atinge maturitatea în anul 1954, când DGPT este o instituție bine organizată, puternică, vascularizată de un colectiv de specialiști în diverse domenii și cu atribuții extinse (Ficeac, 1999: 53). A treia etapă în evoluția cenzurii se înregistrează în intervalul 1958-1968, când trecutul antecomunist este reintegrat în circuitul cultural, însă într-o manieră subversivă: operele scriitorilor clasici sunt tipărite în ediții aproape necenzurate, dar în tiraje infime, în vreme ce tirajelor de masă le sunt destinate aceleași opere, însă cernute prin ciurul ideologiei comuniste (Corobca, 2013: 188).

Odată cu venirea la conducerea CC al PCR a lui Nicolae Ceaușescu, în 1965, se poate observa un relativ dezgheț ideologic, al cărui moment de vârf îl va reprezenta perioada 22-24 august 1968, când, vreme de trei zile, cenzura practic nu a existat în România, în relatările despre invazia Cehoslovaciei (Ficeac, 1999: 120). Dezghețul este însă relativ, deoarece chiar din 1966 putem vorbi despre o cenzurare a corpului feminin și a instituției familiei, prin promulgarea bine-cunoscutului decret 770/1966, care făcea aproape imposibil avortul, pe fondul unei acute (și voite) lipse a mijloacelor de contracepție. Relativul dezgheț se transformă într-un alt îngheț care va urma doar o pantă ascendentă, după 1971. Faimoasele Teze din iulie, care marchează începutul noii revoluții culturale, reprezintă punctul inițial al unui proces tot mai agresiv de cenzură care, în ultimele două decenii ale comunismului românesc, va fi dublat de o luptă pentru resurse materiale și instituționale, așa cum remarcă Ioana Macrea-Toma:

> Eu văd spațiul politicii culturale în socialism ca încadrat de cele două coordonate ale statusului politic și autorității culturale. [...] Adică, organizarea societății presează producătorii culturali să convertească o parte din autoritatea lor culturală în status politic, care poate fi apoi folosit la amplificarea *standingului* cultural prin accesul crescut la resurse. [...] Unii producători de cultură sunt într-adevăr oportuniști căutând o cale spre putere, dar cei mai mulți dintre ei sunt adânc atașați noțiunii de adevăr sau valoare pe care o servesc și pentru care ei luptă cu pasiune. A prefera o valoare alteia, un adevăr altui adevăr, *este politic* în aceste sisteme, deoarece aceste valori și adevăruri sunt reproduse numai prin pretenții emise în numele lor și alocații făcute în contul lor. Asemenea preferințe și lupte au și consecințe politice, fiindcă în lupta dintre grupuri acelea care câștigă pot să o facă prin privarea adversarilor lor de ceea ce este necesar pentru producția culturală. Ele pot astfel desăvârși și munca centrului de distrugere a focarelor alternative de activitate culturală. (Macrea-Toma, 2009: 70-72)

Desființarea formală a cenzurii, în 1977, pentru ca astfel Ceaușescu să obțină clauza națiunii celei mai favorizate, după criza economică ce a urmat cutremurului din luna martie, nu a implicat însă o slăbire a cenzurii (Corobca, 2014: 258-263), ci, dimpotrivă, o multiplicare a formelor acestui mecanism de control, așa cum arată Liliana Corobca în încercarea de definire a fenomenului de New Censorship:

> În locul cenzurii (Direcția Presei și a Tipăriturilor) a funcționat un sistem mult mai elaborat de control efectuat la mai multe niveluri: al editurii – prin redactorul de carte și referenți (ca și până atunci); la Consiliul Culturii și Educației Socialiste, inclusiv în alcătuirea planurilor editoriale (o lucrare privită negativ de oficialități nu era trecută în Planul editorial sau era amânată de la un an la altul); la Comitetul Central, unde funcționa o comisie specială, îndeosebi pentru lucrările de istorie, sociologie etc. În plus, tipografiile aveau ordin să nu culeagă niciun text dacă nu avea o ștampilă specială și semnătură din partea editurii (instituției) care trimitea lucrarea. Cenzura – dominată de interesele politice – devenise, după 1975, și îndeosebi în anii ’80, mult mai restrictivă. (Corobca, 2014: 263)

În ceea ce privește mecanismele intratextuale ale cenzurii, și aici se remarcă mai multe tipuri de deformare a intențiilor auctoriale: *cenzura* prin suprimare, cea prin deformare, cea prin adăugare, căreia i se adaugă și *autocenzura* prin adăugare – modalitate prin care scriitorul însuși adaugă balast textual, în speranța că cenzorul va fi cel care va anula respectivul excedent (Corobca, 2014: 176, 279).

Acționând de la început și până la final ca un mecanism opresiv, de re-scriere a trecutului și a prezentului și de pre-scriere a viitorului, cenzura a irigat nu doar spațiul cultural, ci întreaga realitate a lumii comuniste: corpul femeii, calitatea și cantitatea de hrană, resursele materiale și imateriale, capitalul cultural și social al fiecărui individ. De la tentative de-a dreptul ridicole de alterare a adevărului[1] și până la mecanisme perfide și rafinate de manipulare a intelectualilor, cenzura a reglat spațiul cultural românesc și a filtrat în permanență orice formă de discurs public.

Fidelă ideologiei oficiale, în primii opt ani de la instaurarea dictaturii comuniste în România, Nina Cassian încearcă să se supună noii dogme, simplificându-și limbajul și supunându-se rețetarului mutilant al realismului socialist, făcându-și chiar și autocritica, însă fără succes. La această perioadă scriitoarea se va referi ca la o „hemoragie estetică”, în numeroase interviuri, dar și în paginile jurnalului: „Adică, n-am pierdut sânge etic, pentru că scriam de bună credință prostiile. Am pierdut sânge estetic” (Nicoară & Bunescu, 2018), mărturisește, mult mai târziu, deziluzionata poetă.

Pe lângă activitatea literară, Nina Cassian a fost și o traducătoare de excepție și compozitoare, iar cărțile sale pentru copii au fost foarte populare și apreciate. Retragerea în spațiul literaturii pentru copii a fost, ca în cazul multor scriitori, o evadare din corsetul ideologiei realist-socialiste, iar textele au o evidentă funcție parabolică (100 de ani cu Nina Cassian, 2024). Scriitoarea însăși mărturisește că literatura pentru copii permitea o desfășurare mai amplă a talentului și veleităților literare, pentru că acolo încă mai erau permise figurile de stil (Nicoară & Bunescu, 2018).

În 1985, Nina Cassian se afla la New York, cu o bursă Soros, când află de moartea prietenului său, Gheorghe Ursu, victimă a fostei Securități. Dezorientată și speriată de eventualele repercusiuni (în jurnalul lui Gheorghe Ursu se aflau și poezii de-ale Ninei Cassian în care scriitoarea ironiza comunismul și pe Nicolae

[1] Liliana Corobca oferă astfel de exemple de ridicol al cenzurii, precum o succesiune de titluri considerată de către „lector” drept „dușmănoasă”, într-un indice alfabetic al anuarului cărții 1955-1957: „[...] Martor mincinos (Harvey Matusov); Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin; [...] Pârjolul (Cezar Petrescu și Dinu Bondi); Plan de măsuri al C.C. al P.M.R. și al Consiliului de Miniștri din R.P.R. cu privire la recoltare, dezmiriștire, treeriș și colectări pe anul 1955; [...] Planul tehnic, industrial și financiar al întreprinderilor socialiste; Planuri sortite eșecului (M. Lascu)” (Corobca, 2013: 178-179). De asemenea, Sanda Cordoș oferă liste de cuvinte interzise în anii ’80, pe baza mărturiilor a diverși scriitori care s-au confruntat cu absurdul cenzurii: *„cozi, viol, denunțător, carne, frig, tiranie, cafea, sinucidere, sâni, Dumnezeu, antisemitism, curvă, întuneric, homosexual”* (Norman Manea); *„cartof, pâine, laborator, bunăstare*” (Ion D. Sîrbu); *„țepe, clown, pitic, foame, frig, moarte*” (Florența Albu); *„informatică, robotică, neatârnare, îngrășăminte chimice*” (Tia Șerbănescu) (Cordoș, 2003: 19). Un alt exemplu faimos este un vers al Martei Petreu, *„carne, cutremur al memoriei*”, interzis de cenzură pentru că ar fi făcut trimitere la problemele de aprovizionare cu alimente a populației (Rad, 2012: 42).

Ceaușescu), dar și alienată după moartea soțului, ea decide să rămână în SUA, inițial prin încercări de a-și prelungi bursa sau de a găsi alte burse de creație și, abia după un an și jumătate, prin inițierea procedurilor instituționale pentru cererea de azi politic.

Între 2003 și 2005, la Editura Institutului Cultural Român este publicat jurnalul din perioada 1948-2005 al scriitoarei. Cele trei volume, cu titlul simbolic *Memoria ca zestre*, restituie o imagine panoramică a perioadei comuniste, din perspectiva unui intelectual care a aderat la ideologia comunistă pentru a se salva, dar care, în timp, a suferit un proces de dezvrăjire.

MEMORIA ȘI LIMITELE SALE

Cele trei volume constituie un document hibrid, pentru că documentul originar îl reprezintă jurnalul, însă acesta e completat de alte două niveluri, ale unor relecturi ulterioare, în care se aduc completări și clarificări. Astfel, imediatețea și autenticitatea jurnalului sunt „contaminate" de latura autobiografică a celorlalte două niveluri temporale. Philippe Lejeune consideră că, de obicei, jurnalele sunt începute în adolescență, iar autorul revine la acest tip de document în momente de criză (Lejeune, 2009: 34). Jurnalul în cauză se înscrie pe coordonatele stipulate de Lejeune: început „la o filă neagră" – deci într-un moment de criză – în 1948, așadar, când autoarea avea 24 de ani, documentul reprezintă a doua tentativă diaristică a Ninei Cassian, după cum se observă chiar în prima însemnare:

> Acum doisprezece ani, deci la începutul adolescenței mele, lipsa de evenimente era atât de copleșitoare încât începusem un fel de jurnal în care mai degrabă îmi „făceam mâna", descriind anotimpuri, exagerându-mi tristețile și singurătatea, scriind câte o poezie întunecată și misterioasă, în umbra lui Eminescu.... (Cassian, 2003: 46)

De asemenea, un jurnal „onest", în accepțiunea cercetătorului francez, trebuie să fie discontinuu, cu goluri, aluziv, redundant, și repetitiv și non-narativ, în sensul în care secvențele individuale nu creează iluzia unei narațiuni și nu se știe finalul poveștii (Lejeune, 2009: 170). Așa cum reiese din lectura celor trei volume ale Ninei Cassian, etapele de criză, de tensiune sunt marcate de mai multe intrări diaristice, în vreme ce perioadele de acalmie sau de fericire sunt rezumate dramatic. Caracterul aluziv e un efect al autocenzurii, fie pentru că diarista se teme de posibilitatea ca altcineva să îi citească jurnalul (Securitatea – un posibil lector intruziv, abuziv și punitiv sau soțul – lector implicit și acceptat, dar care trebuie protejat), fie pentru că persoanele la care se face referire sunt încă în viață, iar imaginea lor ar fi afectată de evenimentele relatate.

Mai mult, jurnalul e deosebit de autobiografie, susține Philippe Lejeune, întrucât restituie o imagine parțială și deformată a scriitorului, în vreme ce autobiografia are un caracter finalizat și restituie o imagine coerentă (și, deci, parțial falsificată) a celui care reflectă pe marginea propriei vieți (Lejeune, 2009: 153, 191). De altfel, diferența dintre jurnal și autobiografie este susținută și de către Paul de Man, care vede în autobiografie o desfigurare a ceea ce încearcă să restituie (De Man, 1984: 81).

Memoriile Ninei Cassian fac în permanență acest joc dublu între cvasi-simultaneitatea jurnalului și filtrul autobiografic. Primul volum este format din trei straturi: cel dintâi e reprezentat de notațiile din perioada 1948-1953. Vorbim despre intrări de jurnal care surprind impresiile imediate cu privire la diferite evenimente: relațiile cu prietenii, cu colegii și cu familia, problemele de la locul de muncă, mici secvențe introspective, scene domestice etc. Al doilea strat cuprinde completări ulterioare, începute în 1975, în România comunistă, când scriitoarea își recitește jurnalul în timpul unei vacanțe, în satul 2 Mai. Distanța „dintre mine și mine" deja se insinuează, iar Nina cea matură și dezamăgită de la jumătatea anilor ’70 începe să dialogheze cu alter egoul său mai tânăr și mai naiv. Ultimul nivel îl constituie completările începând cu 1985, când scriitoarea decide să rămână în SUA. De altfel, la acest nivel se întrevede o libertate mult mai mare în judecățile de valoare și în completările exprimate, deoarece alegerea exilului duce la dizolvarea autocenzurii preventive care încă exista în 1975, pentru că primejdia unei percheziții și, implicit, căderea jurnalului în mâini străine era cât se poate de reală.

Cartea a II-a cuprinde perioada 1954-1985, păstrându-se structura tripartită, cu intervenții sporadice din perioada exilului, în Cartea a III-a rămânând doar două niveluri ale scriiturii, în perioada 1985-2005, până când cele două voci se suprapun, la final.

Al doilea strat, al notațiilor începute în 1975, aduce în centru conștientizarea minciunii și o depășire a limitelor impuse de regim, în urma procesului de maturizare. Prima notație făcută la relectura jurnalului început în 1948 aruncă lumină asupra intențiilor auctoriale de a „corecta” naivitatea diaristei și de a conflua cele două voci:

> Caietul început „la o filă neagră” acum douăzeci și șapte de ani a continuat cu un șir de caiete al căror destin va curge înainte, paralel cu și dincolo de comentariile astea, până când distanța dintre mine și mine se va micșora într-atât încât să facă inutilă existența unui „jurnal dublu”. Mi s-a părut necesară compunerea unui „jurnal al jurnalului” pentru că sutele de pagini care însoțesc mai mult de jumătate din viața mea se dovedesc la recitire revelatorii (cel puțin pentru mine) prin reflectarea, naivă până la caricatură, a evenimentelor de ordin ideologic și etic petrecute în agitata istorie a României după cel de-Al Doilea Război Mondial, istorie cu care mă identific și de care mă delimitez periodic, precum și prin dezvăluirea, aș zice exhibiționistă, a ființei mele „supradotate” și „subdezvoltate” (adică incapabilă de maturizare) în același timp. (Cassian, 2003: 47)

Acest tip de scriitură densă reflectă procesul de maturizare, de dez-iluzionare, iar apoi de alienare de sine prin trauma exilului și a îmbătrânirii. Pe de o parte, experiența exilului aduce în prim-plan probleme precum pierderea patriei, a casei, a limbii, a continuității psiho-geografice cu sine. Pe de altă parte, îmbătrânirea, în special în ultimul volum, e percepută tot ca o formă de exil, din corpul care își trădează subiectul. Ambele se instalează în conștiința scriitoarei odată cu moartea lui Ali, în 1984, când dispariția „marii iubiri” e resimțită drept o formă de mutilare.

Nici vocea diaristei nu e pe deplin autentică, aceasta fiind conștientă că jurnalul său are un cititor constant, în ipostaza lui Ali. Fiecare dintre cei doi ține jurnal și soții își citesc reciproc însemnările, astfel că jurnalul devine o formă de intimitate în cuplu, iar însemnările sunt nu de puține ori autocenzurate sau animate de impulsuri manipulatoare ori domestic vindicative, în cazul Ninei Cassian. De exemplu, într-o notă din 1975, memorialista explică acest mecanism:

> Doamne, ce mincinoasă puteam fi! Trec peste procentul de sfidare (știam că Ali îmi va citi jurnalul și că, dacă n-o va face din proprie inițiativă, îl voi sili eu), dar constat că, într-adevăr, mă credeam „foarte tare”, voiam într-adevăr „verificări”, eram convinsă că rezist. Cu timpul, păstrându-mi trăsăturile „necurate”, având în continuare „sadismul adevărului” și asumându-mi deseori „structura Lilith”, a trebuit să mă recunosc nu o dată învinsă [...] Ceea ce nu înseamnă că, pe vremea tinereții mele lipsite de înțelepciune, măsură, experiență, toleranță, nu am realizat totuși o seamă de succese [...]. (Cassian, 2003: 57-58)

În privința notațiilor din exil, am semnalat deja că se remarcă printr-o mai mare libertate și o mai mică autocenzură, deoarece dispare spaima că jurnalul ar putea ajunge pe mâinile Securității, însă autocenzura nu dispare complet, căci, în paginile alese spre publicare, sunt menționate persoane încă în viață la momentul respectiv. Într-o notă din 6 martie 1986, scriitoarea menționează această autocenzură profilactică atunci când face referire la procesul rescrierii jurnalului:

> Am făcut toate formalitățile şi probabil pe 31 martie plec la Londra, apoi mă întorc aici şi pe 3 mai plec la Yaddo unde voi lucra, în special, la *Jurnalul unui jurnal* început la 17 iulie 1975, din care am bătute la mașină circa 500 de pagini, comentariile suferind încă de pe urma faptului că, fiind în România, oricând putea cineva să-mi facă percheziție. Deci, paginile, sincere totuși precaute, vor trebui rescrise – iar volumul va avea următoarea dedicație: *To Gheorghe (Babu) Ursu who died for his diary.*[2] (Cassian, 2005: 13-14)

DE LA COMUNISM LA ANTICOMUNISM – TRANSGRESAREA IDEOLOGIEI

Problema de fond, în cazul acestui document, rămâne, pentru spațiul cultural românesc, faptul că Nina Cassian a fost comunistă. Critica de întâmpinare și istoriile literare sancționează acest aspect și îi reproșează scriitoarei ignorarea măcelului cultural din anii '40-'50. Iată, spre exemplu, suspiciunea de neseriozitate și de comportament duplicitar în paginile pe care Nicolae Manolescu i le acordă scriitoarei în *Istoria critică a literaturii române*:

> Dacă îi citim şi paginile de jurnal din aceiaşi ani '40, nu se poate să nu observăm că atitudinea Ninei Cassian față de comunism, ca şi a altora din generația ei, a stat pe un echivoc: aderarea la o ideologie menită să revoluționeze lumea a mers mână în mână cu o poezie despre care se poate spune orice în afară că ar fi revoluționară. Geo Dumitrescu a recomandat-o, fără a o scrie el însuși decât mai târziu, Nina Cassian a şi scris-o, plângându-se apoi că a fost o probă de schimonoseală. Să fi fost poeta atât de naivă, încât să-şi fi închipuit că se putea deplasa nepedepsită la fața locului fără a vedea acolo ceea ce îi cerea ideologia comunistă? Cu siguranță, nu era. [...] *Memoria ca zestre*, jurnalul publicat tardiv, este nesincer şi neinteresant. (Manolescu, 2008: 940-942)

O asemenea afirmație, nesusținută de argumente pertinente, nu face altceva decât să trădeze *parti-pris*-ul criticului șaizecist față de generația anterioară, care a trăit într-un climat de teroare: regimul legionar, cel de-Al Doilea Război Mondial, instalarea regimului comunist. Distanța condescendentă se vede în limbajul critic, Nina Cassian fiind descrisă drept „hetair[ă] din templul realismului-socialist" (Manolescu, 2008: 941), iar apetitul ei pentru formule literare diferite e catalogat drept „nimfomanie poetică" (Manolescu, 2008: 942).

Laura Pavel, la rândul ei, o acuză pe Nina Cassian de a fi pactizat cu regimul, iar volumele autobiografice sunt interpretate ca „autobiografie ficționalizată", „confesiuni fictive" care creează „o ficțiune convenabilă despre sine" (Pavel, 2015).

Emanuela Ilie vede în memoriile Ninei Cassian o istorie neverosimilă a dezvrăjirii de utopia socialistă (Ilie, 2021: 361). Cercetătoarea chestionează adevărul și o suspectează pe Nina Cassian că și-a contrafăcut portretul. Tocmai tripla stratificare temporală ar reprezenta „un indice al pervertirii sau al (auto)mistificării" (Ilie, 2021: 361). Faptul că memorialista nu o sancționează pe diaristă constituie o formă de iresponsabilitate și de ignoranță, consideră Emanuela Ilie (2021: 361), deși Nina Cassian mărturisește în prefață că

[2] Lui Gheorghe (Babu) Ursu, care a murit pentru jurnalul lui (trad. n.).

intenția ei e să ofere un document de epocă, nu o *mea culpa*:

> De asemeni, știu că se așteaptă de la „depoziția" unui martor și a unui supraviețuitor fie o patetică turnare de cenușă în cap, fie evocarea unei mai mult sau mai puțin subtile disidențe. Cartea mea nu e nici una, nici alta. Speranța mea e ca acest „document" să fie relevator (în special pentru anii „obsedantului deceniu", dar și pentru cei dinainte și de după) –, iar dacă (dincolo de cancan) detaliile biografice îmi pot însoți bibliografia, dacă ele pot fi numite un „simptom contemporan" – înseamnă că-mi îndeplinesc o datorie de conștiință în a le expune. (Cassian, 2003: 6)

O percepție relativ obiectivă se remarcă în cronica de întâmpinare a lui Tudorel Urian la primul volum de memorii al Ninei Cassian. În ciuda tonului tendențios,[3] Urian admiră onestitatea Ninei Cassian în reevaluarea adeziunii sale iraționale la estetica realismului socialist și în ignorarea climatului de opresiune și de teroare din primul deceniu comunist, considerând volumul de memorii un document important pentru înțelegerea acelei perioade:

> *Memoria ca zestre* este una dintre cele mai interesante mărturii privind începuturile perioadei staliniste în România. Cartea unei tinere de 24 de ani, debordând de vitalitate, adaptabilă la orice situație, vag iresponsabilă, care trăiește din plin boema proletcultistă. O carte pe alocuri scandaloasă, dar obligatorie pentru toți cei care se mai întreabă cum a fost posibil ca scriitorii importanți ai epocii să se pună, adesea cu masochistă voluptate, în slujba prostului gust și a imbecilizării programate. (Urian, 2003: 6)

Nina Cassian precizează că, pentru ea, comunismul a însemnat o salvare din fața nazismului, o mântuire a lumii de toate relele. Dez-vrăjirea e vizibilă începând cu anii '70, când are loc prima relectură a jurnalului și când sunt aduse primele completări:

> Între 1944 și 1948 – anul când Cortina de fier a căzut cu un uruit sinistru și în cultură – au avut loc o mulțime de evenimente. În special, în primii doi-trei ani (războiul continua în Vest, mai era un an până la Ziua Victoriei), trăiam o adevărată euforie postbelică. […] Dar ce nu se petrecea în acei ani de început de „eră"? Mergeam în fabrici și în cartiere, înjghebând spectacole compozite, coruri, recitări, scenete cu „forțe locale", Aduceam textele („Pentru tine, o, democrație" de Walt Whitman, dar și „Cruce fascistă cu gheare" de Dumitru Corbea […]), dirijam, regizam – până când, chemată la „Sector", mi s-a înmânat un program-tip pentru viitoarele manifestări care trebuia executat la literă. Și, Doamne, ce convenționale și rigide erau acele texte care, evident, m-au indispus din punct de vedere estetic fără a-mi revela însă prognozele amenințătoare a ceea ce avea să se întâmple nu peste mult timp… […] Eram – sau mă simțeam – liberă, în aspirația mea de a fi „revoluționară în viață și în artă", aparținând stângii avangardiste, alături de atâția mari poeți, pictori, dramaturgi etc. din toate țările lumii – uniți-vă! (Cassian, 2003: 37-38)

Fenomenul dez-vrăjirii de iluzia comunistă în rândul intelectualilor, precum și mecanismele prin care Puterea comunistă a reușit să atragă, să convingă, să manipuleze și să forțeze o parte dintre elite au fost amplu analizate, iar Nina Cassian nu este o figură singulară din acest punct de vedere (v. Macrea-Toma, 2009; Mitchievici,

[3] A se vedea remarci precum „tânăra poetesă este în permanență ambetată de amor" sau „nimic nu confirmă existența celor aproximativ 1000 de bărbați despre care [...] Marian Popa spune că i-ar fi marcat viața erotică" ori „[j]urnalul Ninei Cassian [...] s-ar putea numi *Realism și proletcultism*", din care reiese atitudinea superioară și minimalizatoare a criticului literar atât față de scriitoarea, cât și față de (mai ales) femeia Nina Cassian.

2011). Amenințarea ideologiei fasciste pentru o persoană de origine evreiască, dublată de popularitatea ideilor de stânga în mediul avangardelor interbelice explică priza pe care o ideologie a egalității și a revoluției capitalului a avut-o în rândul intelectualilor, în perioada inter- și imediat postbelică. Iar acapararea figurilor proeminente și imbricarea activității lor intelectuale într-un mecanism dedicat revoluției continue și preocupat, în aparență, de educarea maselor și de permanenta critică și autocritică explică, la rândul său, confiscarea timpului și diminuarea spiritului critic față de ideologie în sine – fie de teama eliminării din spațiul cultural central, fie de nevoia de a se adapta la cerințele Partidului.

Scriitoarea însăși constată, la relectura jurnalului, schimbarea de limbaj și o explică într-o manieră cât se poate de obiectivă:

> Se observă ușor pătrunderea unui vocabular semijurnalistic, cu formulele stereotipe ale momentului, vocabular care, timp de aproximativ zece ani, urma să se instaleze, înlocuind gândirea vie. Și iată-mă adoptând acest vocabular, cu credință și aproape cu tandrețe, în însemnările mele intime, neobligată de nimeni, dar, în fond, devenind inconștient executantul docil al unei partituri date. (Cassian, 2003: 51)

Opțiunea de a tăcea, care, în condiții de libertate, pare alegerea onorantă și onorabilă, era însă imposibilă în perioada respectivă. Tăcerea era suspectă în ochii Partidului, pentru că era percepută drept lene, refuz – așadar, avataruri ale burgheziei:

> Volumele de poezie pe care le plănuiam și le promiteam la „Îndrumare” reprezentau un alt sindrom al epocii: scrisul nu mai era o activitate spontană, aleatorie, ci o obligație. Dacă, pentru o vreme, nu ofereai nimic pentru publicație, deveneai suspect. Dacă, cine știe cum, treceai printr-o criză de creație, te făceai vinovat de lene, de evazionism, de lipsă de adeziune la regim etc. Firește, nu puteai pretinde că lucrezi la un… *Hamlet*, de exemplu, sau la un studiu filosofic sau la o operă comică – planul editorial fiind dedicat exclusiv temelor epocii, ale anului, ale zilei: construirea socialismului, omul nou, lauda Partidului și a conducătorilor lui în frunte cu Stalin etc. Toate aceste teme aveau în comun tratarea convențională, stilul rudimentar, vocabularul restrâns. Dispăruse total dreptul de a alege. Câți ani aveau să mai treacă? Vreo opt, până în 1956, când, ca urmare a unui (relativ) dezgheț, s-au produs schimbări, „s-a dat drumul la dragoste” (ce formulă aberantă!), am putut scrie „pasteluri”, ne-am recâștigat vocabularul… Dar, până la acea dată – când eu însămi, poate chiar înaintea altora, am revenit la poezie, publicând *Vârstele anului*, în 1957, – s-au succedat anomaliile impuse de Partid, torturile, demascările, sancțiunile, perversele materiale „îndrumătoare” etc. (Cassian, 2003: 69-70)

Partidul controla nu doar limbajul, ideile, subiectele, ci și timpul scriitorilor. Timpul petrecut în casele de creație trebuia justificat cu texte care să reflecte fidel principiile realismului-socialist. Va fi nevoie de opt ani de la articolul lui Traian Șelmaru pentru ca Nina Cassian să se reîntoarcă la adevăratul său sânge estetic.

IUBIREA – UN RÂU CU AFLUENȚI. SFIDAREA TABUURILOR

Tema creației la Nina Cassian, cu toate dramele cauzate fie de blocaje auctoriale, fie de neputința adecvării la canoanele absurde ale realismului-socialist, este dublată de omniprezenta temă a iubirii. Dragostea e înțeleasă ca o formă de dez-limitare, de depășire a traumelor adolescenței. Din acest punct de vedere, tripticul Ninei Cassian stă sub semnul iubirii: adolescenta frustrată de defectul fizic tot mai vizibil odată cu părăsirea vârstei copilăriei și molestată de un unchi caută să fie iubită. Iubirea nu e însă monogamă, ci, așa cum o descrie autoarea, un râu în care se varsă afluenți. De la flirturi pasagere la relații de zeci de ani, jurnalul Ninei Cassian restituie imaginea unei ființe care are nevoie să fie iubită și să iubească pentru a exista.

Aventurile extraconjugale sunt taxate de către critica literară, care o acuză de amoralitate, lipsă de pudoare, promiscuitate sau caută explicații psihanalitice pentru aparentele derapaje de la normele conservatoare de reprezentare a unei relații sănătoase. Busola morală a criticii noastre literare și-a manifestat reactivitatea față de comportamentul sexual atipic al Ninei Cassian și s-a concentrat disproporționat de mult pe acest filon al jurnalului. Atitudinea scandalizată a criticilor literari se vede în formulările ludic-tendențioase: am menționat deja observația lui Traian Urian despre cum jurnalul ar trebui să se numească „Erotism și proletcultism”, Tania Radu vorbește despre „stahanovismul erotic” al scriitoarei (Radu, 2014: 133-134, *apud* Ilie, 2021: 367), Emanuela Ilie își păstrează atitudinea distantă și moralizatoare față de obiectul cercetării, prezentând-o pe Nina Cassian drept „[o] revoluționară (înflăcărată) în viață și în artă” (Ilie, 2021: 368). Liana Cozea crede că autoarea „îşi recunoaşte păcatele ca într-un soi de absolvire, nu foarte convinsă însă de gravitatea lor, iscând, pe alocuri, nedumeriri şi stupefacţii” (Cozea, 2013: 95, *apud* Ilie, 2021: 366); Emanuela Ilie judecă notațiile „seci, de aceea încă şi mai şocante, [care] consemnează cu o calmă satisfacţie numărul cuceririlor menite a-i asigura echilibrul fiziologic” (Ilie, 2021: 366), grilele de lectură fiind mai degrabă creştinocentrice. Ceea ce astăzi s-ar numi o „relație deschisă” este încă de neconceput pentru un public critic care se plasează pe poziții conservatoare, astfel că un asemenea oprobriu nu surprinde.

În ceea ce ne privește, nu relația deschisă a scriitoarei interesează, ci importanța iubirii în construirea geografiei interioare. Așa cum singură recunoaşte, în nenumărate ocazii, cea mai mare iubire din viața Ninei Cassian a fost Ali (Al. I. Ştefănescu), al doilea soț al său:

> L-am cunoscut pe Al. I. Ștefănescu la sfârșitul anului 1947. [...] Ali, spre deosebire de Colin, nu era nici înalt, nici frumos, nu fusese ilegalist, nu-i plăcea poezia modernă, dar m-am îndrăgostit de el până peste cap și fără argumente. [...] Întrucât această cu adevărat mare iubire din viața mea a durat treizeci și șase de ani, până la moartea lui Ali, ea va ocupa masive porțiuni din memorii, relația noastră, cu toate conflictele ei, dar, mai ales, cu extazul pe care mi l-a oferit nu o dată, înlocuind apetitul meu pentru feerie și vrajă cu beția (licoarea magică) a Iubirii... (Cassian, 2001: 43-44)

Nevoia existențială de a iubi și, implicit, de a-și confirma existența știindu-se iubită se vede în special în Cartea a treia (1985-2005), unde se înregistrează 17 notații despre ideea sinuciderii, după moartea lui Ali, în 1984. Acestea se opresc odată cu începutul relației cu Maurice Edwards. Nevoia de iubire nu e reductibilă la hipererotism, ci e o parte organică din ființa scriitoarei. Criza maritală din 1964, după ce autoarea află că soțul său a participat la o orgie, întărește viziunea amorală, asexuală și non-monogamă asupra relațiilor și oferă un prilej de introspecție mai degrabă naivă cu privire la reprezentările de gen ale Ninei Cassian, care își consideră aventurile inocente, spre deosebire de infidelitatea soțului (Cassian, 2004: 116).

Scriitoarea reprezintă cât se poate de plastic nevoia de iubire prin metafora râului care primește afluenți. Într-o notă din 10 mai 1966, pe fondul crizei în relația cu Ali, criză agravată și de debutul alcoolismului acestuia, Nina Cassian își face procese de conștiință și caută soluții (Cassian, 2004: 147). Evident, amestecul de narcisism și infantilism trădează fragilitatea diaristei, însă aceasta își menține consecvența în a sa *recherche de l'amour*. Chiar în ultimele pagini din cartea a treia, memorialista confruntă propria percepție cu privire la acest subiect cu modul în care alteritatea a ales să-l interpreteze:

> Da, am iubit şi am fost iubită, fără umbră de impudoare sau obscenitate. Indecente sunt doar articolele incriminatorii care mi s-au adresat pe această temă. Am visat şi am vizat întotdeauna profunzimea comunicării umane şi o aură de puritate pe care am şi obținut-o adeseori – în acestea au constat aspirațiile mele spre iubire. Şi spre fericire. Şi spre libertate. Libertatea mea. Aceea de a mă îndrăgosti, de a face nudism la 2 Mai, nu de „a trage cu puşca", dar de a dărui în dreapta şi-n stânga sentimente, idei, uneori opinii incendiare, netemându-mă, dintr-un soi de iresponsabilitate, de consecințe. (Cassian, 2005: 208)

Memorialista își asumă alegerile făcute de-a lungul timpului, respingând, în același timp, judecățile pudibonde ale contemporanilor. Exilul forțat al scriitoarei și moartea lui Ali ne oferă imaginea unei Nina Cassian mutilate atât de dispariția marii iubiri, cât și de aparenta imposibilitate a unei noi iubiri:

> Cât mai am de trăit? Iubirea probabil îmi va rămâne interzisă până la moarte. Tot ce urmează e doar o zbatere – cu momente de repaos dacă nu de mulțumire – eu fiind mereu ruinată, istovită, frecventată de deprimare, asaltată de amintiri cu Trunti şi Ali, atât de dureroase. La Bucureşti, ele ar fi la fel, doar agravate de context. Acasă sau aici, aceeaşi ceaţă opacă. (Cassian, 2005: 25),

constată cu amărăciune autoarea, într-o notă din 10 august 1986. Un an și jumătate mai târziu, se întreabă „Ce-mi lipseşte esenţial? Ali. Iubire. Un partener" (Cassian, 2005: 62), într-o notă din 21 ianuarie 1988, iar două luni mai târziu revine asupra aceleiași nevoi de afecțiune:

> Era cât pe ce să încep din nou aceste însemnări cu „nu mi-e bine" – dar ăsta e adevărul. Dorul de iubire mă bântuie. Şi cortina, chiar dacă nu de fier, care a căzut pe viaţa mea. (Cassian, 2005: 67, 12 martie 1988)

O ultimă iubire apare în viața Ninei Cassian în 1995, la 70 de ani. Acest mic miracol, suplinirea absenței lui Ali, e dublat și de o notă de cinism, căci, așa cum spune partenerul ei, Maurice, „veșnicia" celor doi e una foarte aproape (Cassian, 2005: 152). Noul iubit se instalează în viața Ninei Cassian, iar în acest proces se observă și o discretă reconfigurare a limitelor memoriei. Viața de cuplu și fericirea domestică șterg temporar amintiri precum ziua de naștere a lui Ali sau aniversarea căsătoriei:

> De atâtea întâmplări, am uitat că la 21 iunie a fost ziua lui Ali şi la 26 iunie, aniversarea căsătoriei noastre. Cum de am putut trăi fără iubire timp de unsprezece ani??!! (Cassian, 2005: 154)

Iubirea devine astfel un pansament pentru eul fracturat, iar uitarea un simptom al relativei însănătoșiri. De altfel, memorialista însăși constată, într-o completare din 2004, faptul că întâlnirea cu Maurice a înlăturat perspectiva sinuciderii, care a acompaniat-o după moartea lui Ali și după hotărârea de a rămâne în Statele Unite:

> Lapidaritatea notelor mele mă obligă la acestea. Întâlnindu-l şi cuplându-mă cu extraordinarul Maurice, ideea sinuciderii s-a îndepărtat – şi doar ea mi-a fost o atât de solidă pavăză! O purtam cu mine – de fapt, înlăuntrul meu – şi oricâte obstacole îmi punea destinul, oricâte accidente mi se întâmplau, ea, ideea sinuciderii, îmi era mereu

> la îndemână. Acum deveneam din nou vulnerabilă. (Cassian, 2005)[4]

Iubirea este o soluție ontologică, de împărtășire a singurătății. „Luxul vulnerabilității" despre care vorbește Nina Cassian este la fel de important, pentru că manifestarea vulnerabilității în fața unui „celălalt apropiat" înseamnă a fi autentic, a renunța la mască, a fi sincer. Relația cu Maurice – *her American Ali*, cum se autodescrie partenerul Ninei Cassian – este o împlinire existențială similară cu ceea ce Ana Blandiana numește „singurătate în doi", descriindu-și relația cu Romulus Rusan (v. Blandiana, 2023). „Singurătatea în doi" și „luxul vulnerabilității" sunt moduri autentice de a fi împreună cu „celălalt apropiat" și la adăpost de „celălalt îndepărtat".

EXILUL – LIMITE GEOGRAFICE ȘI LINGVISTICE

Pentru Nina Cassian, exilul nu este o alegere, ci mai degrabă un instinct de autoconservare. Hotărârea de a rămâne în SUA face imposibilă întoarcerea în România. Alegerea e însă permanent chestionată, dubiile au în centru obsesia că, alături de Ali, scriitoarea ar fi putut suporta teroarea din România: „Ce caut eu în America?", se întreabă ea într-o notă din 23 noiembrie 1989 (Cassian, 2005: 91).

Un an mai devreme, e bântuită de ideea că, alături de Ali, ar fi avut curaj să se întoarcă în România și să îndure persecuțiile:

> Ah, dacă Ali trăia (sănătos), cred că am fi rămas împreună la București, [...] cu toate mizeriile, indignările, cu toate persecuțiile – eu cred că m-aș fi întors acasă de la New York și am fi înfruntat împreună ceaușismul, bătrânețea, creația, moartea, iar dacă în exilul meu ar exista vreun câștig, mă voi bucura de el post mortem. (Cassian, 2005: 81)

Exilul e resimțit, la rândul lui, ca o formă de mutilare, alături de bătrânețe și dispariția celui iubit. Vinovăția, neputința, frustrarea, precaritatea materială, nesiguranța zilei de mâine sunt stări comune în paginile „americane" ale jurnalului. Imposibila întoarcere în România, în ultimii cinci ani de dictatură, această graniță fizică de netrecut, configurează un exil geografic dureros, dublat de unul lingvistic. Inițial, se observă în notații termeni pentru care nu exista corespondent în limba română: *liposuction, food processor, microwave-ul, spălător de vase*. Apoi, Nina Cassian menționează că își traduce singură poeziile (Cassian, 2005: 7, 72), în final scriind direct în limba engleză (Cassian, 2005: 143, 202, 209). Cu toate acestea, limba română rămâne centrală în identitatea scriitoarei:

> Lucrez la volumul *Take My Word for It* (*Credeți-mă pe cuvânt*), o carte de poeme scrise direct în englezește (câteva traduse de mine din românește). E o aventură în care m-am lansat în mod spontan, fără ambiția de a mă integra într-o nouă cultură ci din necesitate interioară. A cotrobăi în adâncurile unei limbi e fără îndoială o călătorie fascinantă (pe care cu strălucire a efectuat-o Noica). A pipăi rădăcinile cuvintelor, a le constata evoluția, schimbările de sens și de nuanțe, a ți le integra cu idiomuri cu tot până la a le profera cu naturalețe – e un drum anevoios și răsplătilor. Ce o să iasă din strădania mea – o să vedem. Oricum a trebuit din nou să admir bogăția și expresivitatea limbii române. Dau doar două exemple: pentru un singur cuvânt – „snow", noi aveam trei: „zăpadă", „nea", „omăt". Pentru singurul „love", în românește există trei: „dragoste", „iubire", „amor". (Cassian, 2005: 160)

[4] Din cartea în format fizic pe care am consultat-o lipsesc paginile 177-192 (eroare de tipografie). Aceste pagini le-am regăsit într-o versiune scanată (dar plină de erori de recunoaștere a textului) a volumului al III-lea, la pagina 99 din 116.

Atunci când dezrădăcinarea se resimte, e percepută ca o criză (Cassian, 2005: 45). Exilul geografic și cel lingvistic sunt însoțite de un permanent sentiment de alienare. Frecvent, scriitoarea face inventare sub forma „ce am – ce-mi lipsește", în tentativa de a-și justifica alegerea de a rămâne în SUA, de a se convinge că a făcut alegerea corectă:

> Desigur, nu pot nega că mă bucur de un anumit confort: când e frig, dau drumul la căldură, mănânc struguri, pepeni în tot timpul anului, de asemeni, legumele mult râvnite, varză de Bruxelles, mazăre nouă, sparanghel; carne de porc, de curcan, ficăţei, „fructe de mare" în conserve (midii, stridii), tarte gata făcute: gospodăria e uşoară, cu unelte şi detergenţi – deci. Ce să mai adaug? Cârligele de lipit pe pereţi, spălatul şi uscatul automat al rufelor, orarele magazinelor (non stop) newyorkeze – splendid! Dar, de fapt, „confortul" de acasă consta în pianul Beckstein (nu pianina destul de nenorocită dăruită de Liviu), tablourile, biblioteca, femeia de serviciu care-mi făcea curat şi-mi gătea, o anumită siguranţă a zilei de mâine (pensie, drepturi de autor, chiar aşa prăpădite cum erau în ultimul timp) şi, mai ales, limba în care mă exprimam! (Şi, am uitat să spun că minunatele alimente pomenite mai sus n-au nici un gust.) (Cassian, 2005: 39-40)

Străinătatea, cu tot confortul material, rămâne alienantă și artificială. Un punct nevralgic și una dintre obsesiile volumului al III-lea îl constituie și pierderea casei din București, un factor decisiv în cumpănirea posibilității de a se reîntoarce în România, după 1989. Casa din București e un veritabil *lieu de memoire*, care cuprinde atât tezaurul imaterial de amintiri, cât și tezaurul material-cultural (cărți, ediții rare, partituri, tablouri, pianul, manuscrise, haine).

În anul 1992, scriitoarea pierde procesul cu Florentin Țugui, viceprimar al Sectorului 4, care îi preia abuziv locuința, acest reper central în existența Ninei Cassian, iar dispariția casei implică imposibilitatea întoarcerii permanente în țară, mai ales după 1989, în condiții de libertate, când Nina Cassian s-ar fi putut întoarce în România (Cassian, 2005: 133). Astfel, frontierele geografice pot fi transgresate, însă nu și cele materiale. În ciuda succesului avut în SUA, scriitoarea nu își permite achiziționarea unei locuințe la București și preferă să rămână în țara de adopție, România devenind un spațiu interior recuperat doar temporar și intermitent, cu prilejul vacanțelor sau al evenimentelor culturale la care aceasta participă.

Pe alocuri, ultimul volum capătă aspectul unui necrolog. Conştiinţa morţii iminente şi teama faţă de propriul corp care o trădează sunt dominante. Finalul se înscrie în zodia pierderii:

> Oare toţi prietenii mei au uitat că aparţin cumva Istoriei Literaturii Române şi că mă îngrijoram de documente? Îmi dau lacrimile când îmi rememorez unele din „obiectele" care aparţin vieţii mele unice şi care sunt de neînlocuit. (Cassian, 2005: 65-66),

se plânge scriitoarea într-o notă din 7 februarie 1988.

Paginile de la sfârșit conțin o suită de amintiri disparate, într-un flux al memoriei care încearcă să recupereze ultimele rămășițe vii dintr-o existență care se apropie de final: imposibila reîntoarcere, defectele fizice, traducerea, prietenii, viața literară, muzica, citate. Finalul pare un *tour de force* al unei memorii avide să recupereze cât mai mult, să transfere cât mai mult din amintire pe pagină. Ultimele rânduri pun semnul egal între viață și moarte, între bătrânețe și uitare:

> Şi, deci, azi, la optzeci de ani împliniţi, cu biologia deteriorată şi dincolo de vindecare, (poate doar cu una improbabilă) închei cu următoarele: „Dar nu mă vindec de rana de secol, de rana de lume de-aceste fragile

distihuri ANTUME? POSTUME? New York, 2005”. (Cassian, 2005: 211)

CONCLUZII

Cum se poate citi un asemenea document memorialistic-diaristic? Cât de importantă și de credibilă este mărturia unei persoane care s-a dezis de comunism, după ce l-a îmbrățișat, într-un spațiu cultural în care comunismul a făcut atâta rău? Ce valoare are o astfel de mărturie ca document de epocă, așa cum intenționează autoarea? De ce critica literară și publicațiile *mainstream* au reacționat atât de puternic la tema sexualității/senzualității? Cât de pudibond și de anticomunist trebuie/poate să fie un critic literar? Și ce loc are Nina Cassian în Istoria Literaturii Române?

Pornim de la premisa că restituirea unui adevăr absolut prin intermediul autobiografiei este imposibilă. Jurnalul este mai autentic decât memoriile, pentru că este spontan, în vreme ce memoriile, prin distanța temporală între eveniment și transcriere, evident că oferă o percepție alterată, filtrată. În cazul jurnalului Ninei Cassian, această desfigurare este dublată și de actul selecției paginilor de jurnal care au fost publicate. Spontaneitatea notațiilor diaristice este limitată de efortul de construcție a unui personaj și de dorința de a păstra anonimatul anumitor persoane, din diverse motive. Pe lângă aceste alterări *a posteriori*, așa cum am observat, scrierea unui jurnal în perioade de totalitarism implică filtrul autocenzurii preventive.

Nina Cassian este un martor particular și pentru aderența inițială necondiționată la ideologia comunistă. Tocmai de aceea, credem că mărturia unei persoane care s-a „vindecat” de comunism este importantă și nu ar trebui ca receptarea volumului să se facă pornind de la prezumția de vinovăție. Paginile de jurnal care fac referire la încercarea de a se adapta la realismul-socialist sunt cât se poate de autentice, la fel și dez-vrăjirea de ideologia comunistă. Este firesc ca o tânără evreică să își caute salvarea într-o ideologie egalitaristă, în fața amenințării fasciste. Reproșurile că Nina Cassian a închis ochii la crimele îngrozitoare care se petreceau în jurul ei, la epurările culturale, la instalarea terorii, în vreme ce ea se bucura de toate privilegiile își găsesc explicațiile în paginile de memorii: euforia lumii noi, confiscarea timpului, încercarea de adaptare la cerințele sistemului, teama deja instalată prin mecanismele de represiune și de control ale Puterii asupra propriilor oameni.

În ceea ce privește obsesia criticii literare pentru viața intimă a scriitoarei, considerăm că este efectul unor grile de lectură pudibonde, monogame și creștinocentrice, care însă nu ar trebui să producă judecăți de valoare bigote. Este foarte straniu că, la o simplă căutare a numelui pe un motor de căutare, prima pagină de rezultate afișate pentru intrarea „Nina Cassian” generează trei articole despre „marea seducătoare a literaturii române”, „cea mai atrăgătoare femeie urâtă din literatura română” sau „fabuloasele aventuri ale poetei”, în vreme ce căutări cu nume precum „Nichita Stănescu”, „Marin Preda”, „Gabriela Melinescu”, „Ana Blandiana”, „Cella Serghi”, „Maria Banuș”, „Constanța Buzea” ori „Sofia Nădejde” generează maximum un rezultat despre viața sentimentală a respectivilor scriitori (unul pentru slăbiciunea Elenei Ceaușescu față de poetul Nichita Stănescu și două referiri la calitatea de „soție” a Constanței Buzea). Obsesia pentru viața privată a scriitorilor, pentru eventualele derapaje morale care pot fi speculate și amplificate denaturează lentila prin care analizăm textul literar.

Nu în ultimul rând, care este locul Ninei Cassian în literatura română? Ar trebui să fie unul important, o dovedesc volumele publicate, talentul, originalitatea și succesul avut atât în țară, cât și în străinătate. Pe lângă activitatea literară, Nina Cassian rămâne și o traducătoare de excepție, dar și o compozitoare. A tradus poezii de Iannis Ritsos, de Bertold Brecht sau de Hans Peter Türk, piese de teatru de W. Shakespeare și chiar texte ale lui Paul Celan în limba engleză. În ceea ce privește activitatea de compozitoare a Ninei Cassian, amintim doar *Lieduri pentru voce și pian*, de Paul Richter (1977) sau muzica pentru o piesă originală de teatru pentru copii: *Nică fără frică* (Orchestra de cameră), 1979. Mărturia ei despre România comunistă, despre exil și tranziția anilor ’90 sunt documente prețioase despre o lume și o istorie trăite și trecute prin toată gama de sentimente, de la bucurie la disperare și de la plenitudine la alienare.

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Monica Genesin, Karl Gerhard Hempel, Thede Kahl (eds.), *Endangered Language Varieties in Italy and the Balkans*, Vienna, Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, 2024, 379 p.

Book Review

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The topic of endangered languages has been drawing increasingly more attention over the recent years. Many a conference has been conducted, and many a book on the issue has been and will be written. Both general issues (Nau et al., 2014; Olko & Sallabank, 2021) and particular cases have been covered (Aminian Jazi & Kahl, 2024; Grond & Akin, 2024; Sorescu-Marinković et al., 2025). Maybe it is because most researchers live and work in Europe that the Old Continent has become the center of their attention.

Endangered Language Varieties in Italy and the Balkans is a collection of articles on endangered linguistic varieties in the two regions. The book gives an outlook on selected minority languages and dialects used in Italy and South-East Europe. It also includes articles on language policy legislation in different countries and on terminology in sociolinguistics.

The book was published as proceedings from the conference 'Preserving European linguistic diversity. Endangered varieties and minority languages in Italy and the Balkans. Sustainability and language policy' held on March 8, 2018, in Villa Vigoni, the German-Italian Center for European Dialogue. Unlike many other collections of articles, this book considers two European regions rather than one and provides an invaluable contribution to research on their relations.

The introductory article is followed by the Consensus on the Protection and Preservation of Minority and Regional Languages, which the editors wrote. This document underlines the importance of multilingual communities and their advantages and lists some concrete key measures of language policy that contribute to the protection of endangered languages. The latter highlights the book among similar article collections.

The main part starts with a chapter on minority language policy. The first article by Dejan Matić addresses the theoretical issue of defining language death. It tries to and succeeds in disambiguating the terminology confusion for three closely related terms: *language death*, *language shift*, and *language attrition*. The following two articles, written by Lucija Šimičić and the late Fiorenzo Toso, discuss language policies of Croatia and Italy, respectively. Both indicate similar flaws in the bureaucratic systems of the two countries, such as a lack of attention to smaller linguistic varieties and the frequent non-differentiation between the concepts of linguistic minority and national minority. For instance, Šimičić brings up the case of the Arbanasi community in Zadar. Its members do not consider themselves Albanians, even though the variety they speak is based on the Gheg dialect of the Albanian language. For his part, Toso points out that the confusion between the terms *linguistic minority* and *national minority* leads to certain problems, such as a closed number of recognized minorities.

The following chapter contains three articles on linguistic landscapes. Both Karl Gerhard Hempel and Aleksandra Salamurović highlight the issue of the visibility of languages in multilingual (rather than bilingual) areas. Hempel discusses the use of Italian, German, and Ladino in South Tyrol, presenting interesting examples of a creative approach to language use on bilingual street signs (both top-down and bottom-up). This approach takes into account different syntactic features of Italian and German. Salamurović explores the use of Serbian, Hungarian, and German in the marketplaces of Novi Sad from 1748 to 1945, comparing the situation to the present day. Additionally, she examines the use of Cyrillic and Latin script for Serbian during these periods. The article is a rare (and valuable) example of writing about linguistic landscapes from a diachronic perspective. Monica Genesin and Joachim Matzinger discuss the use of Italian and Arbresh (an Albanian-based variety) in San Marzano di Giuseppe, a village in Apulia (Southern Italy). The authors provide examples of the use of standard Albanian in linguistic landscapes and compile the first list of toponyms and related terminology in Arbresh, a variety lacking a written tradition.

The book's third chapter is dedicated to the vitality of minority languages in Italy. Maria Luisa Pignoli and Emilia Conforti address the case of Arbëresh. Conforti is moderately optimistic about teaching minority languages in primary schools, particularly in Calabria and Sicily. Conversely, Pignoli holds a pessimistic view regarding the vitality of the varieties spoken in Northern Arbëria (the regions of Abruzzo, Apulia, Campania, and Molise), pointing out deficiencies in the implementation of Italian Law 482/1999 on the Protection of Endangered Languages. These deficiencies include a lack of coordination among the governments of the four regions where the varieties are spoken, and issues with the so-called Language Desks. Franco Finco offers a positive example of the law's implementation. His overview of the legislative protection measures for Friulian, a Romance language spoken in North-Eastern Italy, is followed by a look at the media, music, and literature in that language, including literary works by the film director Pier Paolo Pasolini.

The book's last chapter opens with two articles that answer a sophisticated question: What can linguists do if a variety faces extinction or is already extinct? Francesco G. Giannachi provides his collected material on toponymy in the municipality of Soleto in Apulia. The list of toponyms includes place names of both Greek and Italian origin, some of which are no longer used. Luana Rizzo investigates the use of Greek in Salento (Apulia) from the 11th to the 16th century. Additionally, she highlights several projects aimed at recovering the region's linguistic and cultural heritage, including digitizing old manuscripts and publishing previously unpublished codes. The next articles discuss innovations in minority languages induced by total language contact. Among other phenomena, Malinka Pila examines the imperfect tense use in counterfactual conditionals in Resian, a Slavic variety spoken in North-Eastern Italy. The variety's historic isolation from other Slavic languages has contributed to the development of the verbal system according to the Romance model, where the aorist disappears before the imperfect. Walter Breu addresses a similar yet distinct phenomenon in Molise Slavic. Furthermore, he discusses various periphrastic verbal constructions in both Molise Slavic and Molise Albanian that have developed as calques from Italian. Christoph Giesel provides an overview of innovations in the language of Sandžak-Bosniaks in Istanbul. These innovations arise from contact with Turkish and can be found at all levels, including phonetic, morphological, syntactical, and lexical. The final article, written by Livio Gaeta, introduces the ArchiWals Archive. This unique project includes a lexicon and a corpus of five varieties of the Walser (German-based) linguistic islands in North-Western Italy. The sources for the corpus comprise data from the first half of the 19th century to the present. Gaeta argues that the archive can help diminish the effect of the observer's paradox. Unfortunately, the archive's website seems to be currently unavailable.

It is hard not to appreciate the editors' attitude toward their work. To be sure, there are some minor weaknesses in the book. For instance, the editors provide information about its structure in the introductory article. However, this information cannot be seen in the table of contents. From my point of view, it would be logical to switch the second and third chapters so that Toso's article about the Italian law on the protection of endangered languages is followed by articles by Pignoli, Conforti, and Finco regarding the law's implementation. Additionally, it is frustrating that it took six years to publish the conference proceedings. Still, the book decently contributes to the research on endangered languages in Italy and the Balkans. It provides a valuable and absorbing window into the study of the often-neglected minority languages.

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Book Review

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Le volume que proposent Dana Radler et Cristina-Alice Toma, nouvellement paru à la Maison d'Edition *Presse Universitaire de Cluj (Presa Universitară Clujeană),* en version bilingue, offre un important aperçu documentaire concernant la vie de Panaït Istrati à travers la lecture d'une collection de textes à valeur historique, provenant de plusieurs archives : les rapports, les lettres et les télégrammes contenus dans le fonds de l'archive Sigourantza (1922-1942), auxquels s'ajoutent des articles tirés de la presse roumaine des années '20 et '30 du 20e siècle, collectés dans différentes archives, des fragments de textes littéraires, des photographies. La lecture du volume favorise la reconstitution du tableau de la société roumaine et internationale de l'entre-deux-guerres, un

> voyage […] suivant les traces de la grande personnalité de Panaït Istrati, mais aussi des personnalités moins connues de l'entre-deux-guerres et de plus tard. (p. 263)

La partie d'ouverture du volume, intitulée *Remerciements,* offre un aperçu de grande relevance concernant le paysage actuel des recherches et des échanges scientifiques concernant l'œuvre littéraire et la biographie de l'écrivain interculturel Panaït Istrati, tout en encadrant le projet de volume dans un riche ensemble de manifestations culturelles qui lui sont consacrées (des tables rondes organisées à Bucarest et à Braila, des événements abrités par la Librairie Kyralina de Bucarest, par l'Institut des Hautes Etudes Avancées pour la Culture et la Civilisation du Levant et par le Musée national de Littérature, des études et articles rédigés par les chercheurs grecs – Panayota Mini et Mihalis Patsis –, des colloques organisés à l'Université libre de Bruxelles en Belgique à l'aide de spécialistes de l'œuvre de Panaït Istrati, tels que Denis Taurel et Christian Delrue, des ressources de grande valeur existantes dans la Bibliothèque nationale de France et dans la Bibliothèque Diderot de Lyon). Les principales personnalités qui ont rendu Panaït Istrati connu ont été le grand ami de l'écrivain, Alexandru Talex, auteur d'importantes traductions et d'exégèses, Margareta Istrati, la dernière épouse de l'écrivain, qui a facilité à tous les intéressés l'accès aux informations concernant sa vie, et les membres de l'Association *Les amis de Panaït Istrati* de France. Pour ce qui en est des ressources critiques, les éditrices mentionnent qu'elles sont

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> si nombreuses qu'il est impossible d'épuiser la liste de tous ceux qui ont porté leur attention sur l'œuvre d'Istrati, en France, Grèce, Roumanie, aux Pays-Bas et dans d'autres pays. (p. 264)

Elles adressent des remerciements pour les informations très utiles offertes par des intellectuels reconnus et des institutions d'Antonio Sofianopulo de la Comunità Greco-Orientale de Trieste, des Archives de l'Etat du Valais, Suisse, Manos Avgeridis, Archives contemporaines d'Histoire sociale (ASKI) de Grèce, soulignant l'intérêt récent à la réception de l'œuvre de Panaït Istrati en Espagne, en Tunisie et en Russie.

Le discours de la préface, signée par Sorin Aparaschivei, s'articule autour de la question à partir de laquelle se définit le projet du volume : « Pourquoi Panaït Istrati a-t-il été suivi par la Sûreté? » (p. 267). La réponse à cette question accentue le conflit politique donné par l'adhésion de l'écrivain à l'idéologie communiste dès 1904 et amène un contour encore plus précis du contexte socio-culturel et politique qui a déterminé son évolution. Le fait qu'il

> présentait un potentiel danger pour la Sûreté de l'Etat, parce qu'il faisait partie de la catégorie des *communistes propagandistes*, sous l'influence ou le contrôle d'un pouvoir étranger, en l'occurrence l'Union Soviétique (p. 267),

constitue le noyau d'une argumentation élaborée et unitaire, à même de reconstituer le tableau politique de la Roumanie et de la ville de Braila dans la période d'entre les deux grandes guerres: « Le Parti Communiste avait été mis hors la loi en 1924, après la rébellion de Tatar-Bunar (Bessarabie) » (p. 267). La ville natale de Panaït Istrati, Braila, était

> parmi les premières villes roumaines à être contaminées par *l'Internationale socialiste.* C'est ici qu'ont trouvé refuge des anarchistes célèbres comme Errico Malatesta et Napoléon Papini, adeptes de Giuseppe Mazzini. Il est connu que Malatesta a été l'un des idéologues qui ont inspiré Benito Mussolini. (p. 268)

Le chapitre introductif (*Sur les traces de Panaït Istrati,* 20 pages) est structuré en trois parties principales, divisées en sous chapitres : *1. Considérations préliminaires ; 2. Taxonomie, langage et contexte ; 3. Défis actuel – pour une nouvelle approche*. Il présente le fonds documentaire de l'archive *Sigourantza* concernant Panaït Istrati et l'histoire de sa réception. Le premier travail sur les documents de l'archive a été entrepris par Alexandru Oprea, l'auteur d'une sélection de 22 documents, publiés dans le numéro 16 de 1974 de *Manuscriptum* (p. 86-110), traduit en français dans les *Cahiers des Amis de Panaït Istrati*, en mars 1980 (p. 19-22). Le nouveau travail sur les documents de l'archive a le statut d'une « récupération biobibliographique » (p. 272) à valeur symbolique, à l'anniversaire de 140 ans depuis la naissance de l'écrivain.

Les *Considérations préliminaires* fixent les coordonnées de l'espace-temps de la collection (années de rédaction, localisation). Les éditrices mentionnent la répartition des documents en quatre volumes :

> Le premier tome comprend des documents gardés au niveau central, le deuxième contient des articles de presse, le troisième inclut des articles et des informations archivées à Braila et le volume III/1316 comprend seulement deux pages provenant de Ploiesti […] Les quatre tomes ont été constitués selon une distribution institutionnelle à ramifications territoriales, mais la nature des documents n'est pas uniforme du point de vue chronologique et thématique. (p. 247)

Les points de référence des textes de la collection concernent les écrits d'Istrati, son adhésion à une nouvelle formation politique de gauche, les réunions publiques, les relations avec les intellectuels roumains et étrangers, le contrôle des biens personnels et l'adaptation de *Kyra Kyralina*. Du point de vue formel, les documents sont caractérisés par une grande variété typologique. Les auteurs ont un profil hétérogène : des détectifs, des chefs de poste de gendarmerie, des inspecteurs, des directeurs des services de la sûreté de Braila ou des autorités centrales, comme la Présidence du Conseil des Ministres. Les considérations sur la langue et le style permettent la constatation de la même hétérogénéité.

Dans le chapitre *Cartographie et complémentarité* les éditrices soulignent l'unicité de la présente édition, la reproduction de l'archive n'étant pas « une stricte reprise des documents qui la constituent » (p. 288), mais le résultat de « l'effort de documentation contextuelle supplémentaire, du type cartographique et pas seulement » (p. 288). Les œuvres de Panaït Istrati s'articulent entre la vision pragmatique des rapporteurs et l' évaluation esthétique des critiques littéraires qui estiment des limites du jugement politique. Le volume *Confession pour vaincus* est, par exemple, interprété par le rapporteur comme l'œuvre d'un bolcheviste, tandis que les autrices du volume mettent en lumière le contraire : Il

> n'était pas un bolchévique et n'était pas le partisan d'une idéologie, même s'il n'avait pas renoncé à la conception générale de gauche proposée généreusement par le bolchévisme, tel qu'il l'entendait avant de voyager en USRR. (p. 290)

Sa prise de distance graduelle mais définitive par rapport au monde soviétique au fur et à mesure qu'il constatait comment l'élite politique et l'administration du système « prétendaient soutenir les idéaux populaires » (p. 290), son parti pris de l'humanité, sa croyance à l'art comme moyen d'améliorer l'existence de tous, son scepticisme à l'égard de la technologie, son orientation non conventionnelle le recommandent plutôt comme un esprit antimoderne, s'inscrivant dans la lignée des grands créateurs littéraires et artistiques de tous les temps (voir Antoine Compagnon, *Les antimodernes. De Joseph de Maistre à Rolland Barthes*, Paris, Gallimard, 2005).

La section consacrée aux documents de la collection est ample, les documents se succèdent de manière chronologique. La lecture laisse entrevoir le parcours biographique de Panaït Istrati dans la période la plus fleurissante de sa carrière, entre 1922 et 1935, et continuent cinq ans après sa mort, jusqu'en 1942. On regarde ses visites à Braila, Galati et Bucarest, la formation du cercle culturel *Panaït Istrati* à Galati (1925), sa participation au *Comité de la défense des victimes de la terreur blanche en Bulgarie et dans les Balkans,* sa visite à Moscou (1927), sa participation aux événements de gauche, sa prise en évidence par la Sûreté roumaine à cause de la parution de son livre d'orientation anticapitaliste, *Mihail,* en français (1928), sa conférence sur la *Russie soviétique* (1928), son article sur les théories sociales, publié dans le journal grec *Eleftero-Vima* (1928), son discours devant les prisonniers communistes de Singro, son article dédié à ses frères de Thessalonique, publié dans le journal *Avanti* du 24 janvier 1928, son rejet de la Grèce et l'embarquement pour Odessa et Moscou (1928), son retour à Braila en compagnie de sa femme (1929), ses visites à Bucarest, Timisoara et Iasi (1929), ses discours devant les prisonniers politiques et les femmes des victimes communistes (1929), son entretien avec le ministre de l'intérieur concernant les relations avec la Russie soviétique (1929), ses conférences de 1929, la parution du volume *La Russie soviétique* et le contrôle de sa diffusion (1930), ses persécutions par la police et l'administration roumaine (1930), sa maladie, son refuge, son isolement (1930), ses visites à Iasi et l'amitié avec l'écrivain roumain Mihail Sadoveanu (1930-1931), son deuxième échec amoureux, l'abandon graduel de son idéal soviétique, son troisième mariage, sa mort (1932-1935).

Les remerciements, la préface, le chapitre introductif contenant la présentation du projet et le contenu de la collection sont suivis de six annexes contenant la lettre adressée à Gabriel Reuillard, l'article concernant l'ordre de Victor Basch d'assommer les étudiants roumains patriotes de 1926, l'article concernant le statut de la justice roumaine, publié dans les *Cahiers des droits de l'homme* le 15 mai 1926, l'article sur la préface du volume *Domnitza de Snagov* (1926), l'article sur *« la vulgarité balkanique de M. Panaït Istrati »* publié dans la revue *Universul* le 4 septembre 1926, des *Remarques sur la manière dont on pratique et dont on doit pratiquer la surveillance* (Revue *Siguranta Statului*, 1925) et une partie contenant des illustrations.

Le volume a une forte valeur documentaire concernant la biographie de Panaït Istrati et le paysage culturel de la Roumanie d'entre les deux guerres. Il sera valorisé dans les recherches littéraires et historiques.

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