

THE INTEGRATION OF ROMANIAN CULTURE IN EUROPE AND THE NATIONAL IDENTITY PROBLEM

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Abstract

Literary men, linguists, philosophers of the culture, historians have sought over time the core of Romanian culture originality, speaking of its 'personality' or 'national character' and finding the root of the 'Romanian stylistic matrix' in the soul of the Romanian people, in the beauty, originality and balance of the Romanian language. These coordinates have defined us and they are still defining us in the world. In the current context of globalization, where the computerization resulted in new approaches to the communicative act, the literary language, in general, and scientific language, in particular, suffer strong neological pressures, whose consequences we also find in the big picture of the Romanian culture. We are not denying that the advantages of neologisation, especially in the structure of the Romanian scientific language and neither the fact that the current policy of the translations in English of the Romanian writings represent a way to make ourselves known in the world. But the exaggerations in the current Romanian scientific journalism by giving up to the Romanian language threatens the cultural identity of the nation, identity that is firstly supported through language.

Keywords: identity, neologisms, journalism, scientific language

Literary men, linguists, philosophers of the culture and historians have sought over time the core of Romanian culture originality, speaking of its *personality* or *national character* and finding the root of the Romanian stylistic matrix in the soul of the Romanian people, in the beauty, originality and balance of the Romanian language. To understand the current trends in our culture, the role of the Romanian language in the general plan of the culture and in the assurance of national identity, it is required a diachronic analysis of the factors that contributed to the aggregation and enhancement of the defining structures of Romanian culture.

Foucault said that the existence of some 'fundamental codes of a culture, those that govern its language, the perceptual schemas, ... the values can be deciphered by digging deep the cultural layers, 'an archaeology' able to reveal

'the intrinsic relationship of rods with the spirit of the people'¹. Thus, we will partially use similar methods to reach to deciphering of the current trends in the Romanian culture. Regarding the *coordinates* that constantly marked the Romanian cultural life, it is stated that '*the Christian idea, the faith, the Orthodox religion* are among the fundamental features of the Romanian spirituality'². Another dominance of the national culture is the close relationship with the *Latinity*, whether we speak about the Latin origin of the language, of the Romanian people or we consider the *Latinity* argument to prove to the Occident, to the world, the origin of Romanian language, of the people and the belonging to the great family of Romanity. Another dominant feature in the national culture is the self-consciousness of the nation, the *Romanism*, a state of mind that has been preserved through the ages in the Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic space, regardless of the political, economic, social conditions or cultural influences from outside. The intersections of different cultures that have undergone amalgamation, filtration and synthesis processes on the Romanian territory, true 'cultural corridors', as the academician Razvan Teodorescu was saying, can be the foundation of 'some investigations with mandatory multidisciplinary profile that will also shed light on new facts of specific culture'³.

Thus, the fact that 'until 1690 we did not have [in the history of the national culture], a single Romanian row'⁴ was not a drawback in the evolution of the Romanian language which recovers rapidly in the XVIIth - XVIIIth centuries, when the Romanian religious writings, chronicles, codices appear. The Romanians have answered wisely to the foreign influences, whether from the luminous Helada or Eastern Gates and from

the court of Austro-Hungarian Empire, undertaking trades, habits and words, adapting, but keeping their being and, especially, the language. The theories and numerous comments regarding the role of foreign influences in the Romanian culture are found in many of the Romanian literary men, historians and philosophers. Without denying the beneficial role of these influences that can be 'fermented by the progress'⁵ for the national culture, there must be a critical attitude, a critical state to keep alive the national soul, the identity of the Romanian culture⁶.

Referring to the 'Romanian culture in the XVIIth - XVIIIth centuries', but we would add without fear of exaggeration from the following centuries, R. Teodorescu was highlighting the existence of '*an subjacent unity*' - evident in the language, nation consciousness, aesthetic criteria and common moral norms⁷, in this 'kaleidoscope' world of the cultural influences. The modern age means the opposite of Orientalism in the Romanian culture. Even if one cannot speak about a trenchant apostasy, there is a clear orientation towards other cultural spaces. All the subsequent cultural connections, Romanian-French, Romanian-Italian, Romanian-German had an important role in the spiritual life of the Romanians. In a first phase, French literary writings and others from different scientific fields: history, law, chemistry, medicine, etc. have entered the Romanian culture. Naturally, in the XIXth century there was an intense activity of translation of these writings to facilitate the access of Romanians to the French culture productions. C. Conachi, Al. Beldiman, Dinicu Golescu, I. H. Rădulescu, Gheorghe Asachi are translating from Voltaire, Montesquieu, J. J. Rousseau, La Fontaine, Moliere, Boileau. In translations, 'the foreign words [were] in Romanian clothes according to the genius and nature of language'⁸. In different scientific fields, for example in medicine, the translations of the French treaties from anatomy, dietetics, pharmacy fields, put into circulation new medical terms from the desire of achieving the same elegance in expressing the scientific ideas in the Romanian language as in the French language⁹.

We must emphasize that in this age where the French influence had, of course, moments of

exaggeration, the Romanian language was never replaces by French language in publications, press or scientific works. The literary men, historians and doctors were publishing their most important works in French language to make known the Romanian culture in Europe: M. Kogălniceanu, V. Alecsandri, N. Bălcescu, Alexandru Odobescu, Alexandru Xenopol, subsequently N. Iorga or the doctors Victor Babeș, C. Levaditi, Thoma Ionescu and later C. I. Parhon, Gh. Marinescu, C. Cantacuzino¹⁰, etc. Most times, the works published by the most prestigious Parisian publishing companies were reprinted in Romanian language to be also known in the country. We cannot omit from the list of scribes of that time, who wrote and published in French many of their fundamental works, the linguists I. A. Candrea, S. Pușcariu, Lazăr Șăineanu, N. Densușianu¹¹, thus contributing to the integration of the Romanian school of linguistics in the current of ideas of European linguistics based on 'some own and original theories and concepts'¹². The theories, the ideas of the Romanian researchers from different fields sparked interest¹³ in the Romanian culture, in general, in the Romanian language and they had the role to integrate us in the circuit of universal spiritual values. In this cultural context, the role of French language, of neologisms of French origin in the Romanian language stands with poignancy in XIXth, XXth centuries. In some scientific fields, for instance philosophy, it is noted the supereminence of German influence, but always a straight position made the Romanian text to have personality, the neological scientific terms to take forms that are more and more Romanian, thus achieving the modernization of literary Romanian language, of Romanian scientific language.

Since the VIIIth decade of XXth century and, in particular, at present, we are witnessing a strong influence of the English language, an Anglicization of the Romanian cultural space. The multiple transformations in economic, political, social plan, the profound changes in the structure of collective consciousness, in general, and in the literary Romanian language, in particular. The Romanians are migrating from their native space into other areas in search for work. The know other cultures, they speak other languages and

these realities have repercussions in the Romanian language, in general. An analysis, from the linguistic point of view, of the communities of Romanian immigrants working in Italy, Spain, Greece and other European countries, prove that their bilingualism or multilingualism are short-term situations. Structurally, Romanians from abroad are deeply attached to their mother language, especially in a total foreign 'linguistic scene'¹⁴.

The situation of the current Romanian scientific language requires another approach. The Romanian specialists in various scientific and art fields, like their predecessors who published their works in Latin or French to disseminate the Romanian cultural value in the world, today they write their books, articles in *English language*. The fact that the literary and scientific works are translated into English language is a good thing for a better image of Romanians abroad. If we interpret, according to the analysis of Andre Lefevere¹⁵ *the policy of translations*, we understand easily that the factors that underlie the policy of globalization, with clear trends of hierarchy, of domination of 'small worlds' by superstates, superpowers also act in the cultural plan. *The exaggerations* we are witnessing, both in terms of the use of English in plain language and especially in the field of scientific publications¹⁶, from several fields, seem risky phenomena which may affect the national identity.

There is a consensus in the world of thinkers anywhere, on the defining role of language in the spiritual world of a nation. Cioran was succinctly saying: 'We do not live in a country, but we live in a language. Homeland means this and nothing else'¹⁷. Or, what is happening in the current Romanian cultural scene makes you wonder – what is the language we are living in?

If we discuss the situation of the Romanian journalism from different scientific fields, medicine, arts, linguistics, physics, etc., the current image is clearly dominated by journals in English language¹⁸. The scientific publications which are historical landmarks in the Romanian culture and invaluable sources of researching the evolution of the Romanian scientific language, for a while, are examples of total obedience to the Anglicization trend. We are referring to the *Revista medico-chirurgicală a societății de medici și*

*naturaliști din Iași*¹⁹, now *The medical surgical journal for the physicians and naturalists society*.

Beyond the indisputable advantages of the information flow from different Romanian scientific fields in the outside, there are some issues that we need stressing them and that can be ideas for the Romanian scientific community. One of the issues of the translations in English from the scientific journals regards the *property* of the translated terms, their *accuracy*. For example, the literary texts of the old Romanian language texts in English translations will undoubtedly lose nuances and meanings that remain decipherable only in the original text, written in the Romanian language. Another issue that has to be considered is one of professional conduct. Does all Romanian researchers, literary men, physicists, doctors, etc. can draw up themselves the works in the English language or do they use the services of translations, more or less capable?

The translation of a scientific text requires the knowledge, not only of the specialized terminology in a particular field, but also the substantive issued to be able to express in a manner as close to the author's communicative intention, the idea of the text. Or, often, not knowing the underground leads to improper expressions that alter the overall picture of the scientific discourse.

Regarding the professional deontology, it should be noted that an *author*, in the general acceptance of the term, is the absolute creator of an artistic or scientific work. Any addition that occurs in the original text of the author, whether we consider the image of language, or we refer to the bibliographic sources, are data that must be provided by an author in order to weigh correctly its share, contribution to the cultural heritage of an era. If the bibliographic sources are often specified with honesty, the true creators rarely concealing its founts, about the effort of the translator to translate from Romanian into English the text of the paper does not mention a word. In case of literary writings, the translation work of lines, prose works is sometimes equally appreciated as actual the creation of the original text itself. Let us remember the translations from Horațiu of Olănescu Ascanio, translation of Coșbuc' Eneida, translations of Philippide from

Baudelaire or those of G. Lesnea from Essenin that are true works of art²⁰.

In the case of scientific articles, magazines, some treatises, the translator is not mentioned. If we look at the problem of translations of scientific works, from different field into the English language, from the point of view of the beneficiary, the Romanian reader, occurs naturally, the question: Do all Romanians know and understand the English language so that they can read English articles in the Romanian press, without the need of a dictionary or a translator? It certainly appears a justified sense of doubt. As in the ancient times, today we have to overcome prejudices, mentalities, and hostile attitudes of some tribes. Like a century or two ago, we are trying to answer, making known the cultural values, traditions, history.

A wise editorial policy would practice, in the case of scientific journals, runs or foreign countries, in English and the variants of the same journals, in Romanian, which would circulate within the Romanian territories. (Romania, Moldova, Banatul sârbesc, etc.). 'The language being the most direct expression of the national character, the first seal of the human spirit that the world surrounds it'²¹, the Romanian language must be kept, cultivated, cherished.

CONCLUSION

The integration of the national culture in Europe has been an ongoing concern of the Romanian spirituality. The integration should not be done at all costs. Otherwise, you could get, as Adrian Marino was pessimistically expected, to a 'cultural colonization [which] essentially annihilates any personality'²². And we think the Adrian Marino was right. Today, more and more 'European colonists' feel at home here. Therefore, the economic and political colonization can generate unfortunately, the cultural colonization.

References

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3. Ciopraga, Constantin (1973) *Personalitatea literaturii române*, Iași: Junimea Publishing.
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6. Foucault, Michel (1996) *Cuvintele și lucrurile*, Bucharest: Univers Publishing.
7. Frisch, Helmuth (1995) *Relațiile dintre lingvistica română și cea europeană*, Bucharest: Saeculum I.O. Publishing.
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12. de Madariaga, Salvador (1983) "Englez, francez, spaniel" in the volume *Itinerarii spirituale*, Bucharest: Meridiane Publishing.
13. Maiorescu, Titu (1967) *Critice*, vol. II Bucharest: Literature Publishing.
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Endnotes

1. Michel Foucault, *Cuvintele și lucrurile*, Univers Publishing, Bucharest, 1966, p. 38, 435.

2. Cf. N. Iorga, *Istoria românilor în chipuri și icoane*, Humanitas Publishing, Bucharest, 1992, p. 174.
3. Ac. Răzvan Teodorescu, *Drumuri către ieri*, Fundația Culturală Română Publishing, Bucharest, 1992, p. 104.
4. N. Iorga, op. cit., p. 206.
5. Al. Piru, G. Ibrăileanu, Minerva Publishing, 1971, p. 299.
6. We mention some of the views of G. M. Cantacuzino, C. Ciopraga who come to support the above statements. Thus, G. M. Cantacuzino, in *Introducere în opera lui Vitruviu (Introduction into the work of Vitruvius)*, Meridiane Publishing, Bucharest, 1993, p. 115 – 116 noted: ‘Each of these nations that come with its contributions, that today merged into what we call the Romanian spirit. *The influences are not important, what we do with them is important (s. n.)*’. The same idea also appears in the text of C. Ciopraga, from *Personalitatea literaturii române (The Personality of the Romanian Literature)*, Junimea Publishing, Iași, 1973, p. 8 – 9. ‘The personality involves assimilation and irradiation attitude. *The influences are processed, rarefied (s.n.)*... In other words, the national character in its fundamental aspect means differentiation, an openness to the existence that reflects a collective consciousness’.
7. R. Teodorescu, op. cit., p. 129.
8. According to *Istoria literaturii române (The history of the Romanian Literature)*, Academia Publishing, Bucharest, 1968, vol. II, p. 278.
9. In this respect, the doctor Severin wrote: ‘The medical language got some truly colossal proportions, any Romanian will be moved if he will listen teaching the medicine courses with the same elegance like in French language’ (According to N. A. Ursu, *Formarea terminologiei științifice românești*, Editura Științifică, Bucharest, 1962, p. 77).
10. We mention some of the most important works published in French language in which Europe could know the Romanian culture and Romanians: M. Kogălniceanu, *Histoire de la Valachie, de la Moldavie et des Valaques Transdanubiens*, N. Bălcescu, *Question économique des Principautés Danubiennes*, Al. Odobescu, *Le trésor de Petrossa*, A. D. Xenopol, *Les principes fondamentaux de l’histoire*, Paris, 1899 and *La Théorie de l’histoire*, Paris, 1908, V. Babeș collaboration with A. V. Cornil, *Les bactéries și monografia Traite de la Rage*, Paris, 1912, Gh. Marinescu, *La cellule nerveuse*, 1909, C. I. Parhon, *Les secretions internes (pathologie et physiologie)*, Paris, 1909, etc. cf. V. Bologa, *Istoria medicinei românești*, Editura Medicală, Bucharest, 1972, p. 243 – 257
11. Among the Romanian linguistic works published in the French language, we mention: I. A. Candrea, *Les elements latins de la langue roumaine, Le consonantism*, Paris, 1902, N. Deususianu, *L’element latin en Orients*, Paris, 1877 and *Histoire de la langue roumaine*, 1901, S. Pușcariu, *Studes des linguistique roumaine*, Cluj, Bucharest, 1937, Lazăr Șăineanu, *L’influence orientale sur la langue et culture roumaine*, Paris, 1902, etc.
12. See Helmuth Frisch, *Relațiile dintre lingvistica română și cea europeană*, I.O. Saeculum Publishing, București, 1995, p. 250.
13. We may suppose that, in addition to interests, the researches of Romanians have aroused admiration and respect. We mention an excerpt from an article by the French philosopher Emile Boutroux, where the Romanian historian A. D. Xenopol is appreciated as one of great thinkers and theorists of his time: ‘je ne crois pas exagérer en disant que les visites de M. Xenopol en France seront un jour de faits historiques. Les conférences laisseront des traces elle porteront des fruits, elles continueront à développer non seulement l’influence française en Roumanie et parmi les Roumains, mais j’en suis sur l’influence inverse qui doit, elle aussi, exister... Un de ces jours, j’en ai, l’assurance, vous entendrez ici non plus seulement un conférence sur l’influence des idées françaises en Roumanie, mais une conférence sur l’influence roumaine en France’. Al. Zub, which reproduces the above quote, adds: ‘The generous prophecy, which could perplex then, but that today, after so many Romanian energies have melted in the French culture, it would not surprise anyone. In fact, names like Anne de Noailles, B. Fondane, Tristan Tzara, Panait Istrati, Marthe Bibesco, Helene Văcărescu, E. Ionescu, E. M. Cioran have already entered in the cultural conscience of France’. Ac. to Al. Zub, *Istoriografia română la vremea sintezei A. D. Xenopol*, European Institute Publishing, 2004, p. 11 – 12
14. See article „Eu sunt român și limba mea n-o dau pe niciuna”, *Limbă și identitate la românii din Banatul sârbesc, stabiliți la Zurich*, author Meda Gabriela Gautschi, in the volume *Cultura și identitatea românească...*, ‘Al. I. Cuza’ University of Iasi Publishing, Iași, 2013, p. 131 – 135, Also see the article of Sandei Golopenția, *Relația emigranților cu limba lor maternă*, in the same volume, p. 137 – 152

15. Andre Lefevere 'introduces the concept of cultural authority, the historical and economic factors have contributed to the acquisition by some cultures of the status of major culture (s.n.) or hegemonic. Such cultures tend to publish fewer translations relying, primarily, on internal recourses. For example, the American publishers are publishing translations in a rate of 2 – 7%, while in the Romanian publishers, the translations may exceed 50% [of all publications]' ac.. Oana Surugiu, *Contacte literare româno-britanice, Politici de traducere în România interbelică*, în volumul *Metafore ale devenirii din perspectiva migrației contemporane... Național, internațional în limba și cultura română*, Alfa Publishing, Iași, 2013. Comments on the linguistic hegemonies we also meet at Ovidiu Pecican, in the article *Contra hegemoniilor lingvistice*, în *România liberă* of July 30th, 2013, p. 6.
16. Of an extraordinary actuality are M. Eminescu's notes on the scientific publications: 'If we open the newspapers of natural sciences, of medicine... the lake of responsibility for the language is the first thing we see, receiving foreign terms without need and only by the laziness to look for the Romanian equivalent. I have seen a book called *cosmeticurile nuisabile sănătății*. Anybody can imagine how the Romanian language is threatened to become through the precious language scientists'. Acc. to Mihai Eminescu despre cultură și artă, Junimea Publishing, 1970, p. 53
17. E. M. Cioran, *Eseuri*, Cartea românească Publishing Bucharest, 1988, p. 300; G. M. Cantacuzino writes in the same sense: 'What do we understand by the word nation? First of all, a nation is characterized by unity and solidarity in the most direct way to express, that is language... A nation is aware o its existence, first of all, by speech, by the language the members of a human group is practicing it, who confesses its consciousness and solidarity, which are so connected between them expressing ideas and principles which are common. Without this prior achievement and intellectual effort, a nation does not exists'. (Acc. to G. M. Cantacuzino, op. cit., p. 177).
18. Of all most popular Romanian magazine in English, indexed in numerous international databases, we remember of: *International Journal of Medical Dentistry*, *Romanian Journal of Oral Rehabilitation*, *The Scientific Journal of Humanistics Studies*, *Romanian Journal of Physics*, *Philologica Iassyensia*, etc.
19. 'The Medical-Naturalistic Society founded in 1833' about whose role in the Romanian culture speaks about Al. Șuțu at its 58th anniversary, highlighting the important role of Iași in 'the dissemination of science in the province, in the country, and even in some civilized countries ...the first and the oldest Romanian scientific society was to be before like a Romanian Academy (see *Buletinul Societății de Medici și Naturaliști din Iași*, vol. IV, nr. 4 Bis, p. 142), quoted from the article of Elena Iliescu, *Preocupări pentru chimie în Buletinul Societății de Medici și Naturaliști din Iași* in the volume *Tradiție și modernitate în Iașul literaturii și lingvisticii românești*, Demiurg Publishing House, Iași, 2008, p. 147 - 148
20. Titu Maiorescu appreciated the work of translation as much as the work of the translated writer. He noted in this regard: 'To ask the translator of Horațiu to produce all the poems of the Latin author in a such language and rhythm would mean to ask from a translator to conceive in its intimate nature all the various moods of other and to revive them, and then to create them again in another language.' (Acc. to Titu Maiorescu, *Critice*, Lietrature Publishing, Bucharest, 1967, vol. II, p. 441)
21. Salvador de Madariaga, *Englez, francez, spaniol*, in the volume *Itinerarii spirituale*, Meridiane Publishing, Bucharest, 1983, p. 327
22. Adrian Marino, *Viața unui om singur*, Polirom Publishing, Iași, 2010, p. 302. The author reminds to his contemporaries that Romania's cultural colonization attempts have also been in the past. 'In January 1919, the general Berthelot was the minister o war and he said: <<If we give Romanians the satisfactions that Romanians have right to and if we keep our commitments, we will have in Romania a real French colony, of more than 15 million inhabitants, where we will develop our trade and industry and where we will be like home>>'