ROMANIAN LINGUISTIC HERITAGE IN THE CONTEXT OF EUROPEAN MULTILINGUALISM

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Abstract: *The European Union gathers more than 500 million people, from 27 member states, with 23 official languages and 3 types of alphabets. In addition, 60 other languages are part of the EU heritage and are spoken in different regions or by certain groups. The Romanian language, the continuance of the Latin language spoken in the eastern parts of the former Roman Empire, comes with its four dialects: Daco-Romanian, Aromanian, Megleno-Romanian and Istro-Romanian to complete the European linguistic palette. The Romanian linguists have always shown a permanent concern for both the identity and the status of the Romanian language and its dialects, thus supporting the existence of the ethnic, linguistic and cultural particularities of the minorities and rejecting, firmly, any attempt to assimilate them by force.*

Keywords: *multilingualism, dialect, assimilation, official language, spoken language.*

The great European family boasts a great linguistic diversity: the official languages of the member states, co-official languages used in different areas, plus a great variety of regional and minority languages as well as the languages spoken by the immigrant communities.

Thus, in the 27 EU Member States there are over 60 indigenous communities speaking regional or minority languages: from the ancient Celtic languages of the Western Europe to the Eastern European minority languages. In terms of kinship, most European languages come from the same linguistic family: the Indo-European language that lays at the base of the dialects of more than 95% of people in the geographical Europe.

The Romanian language - the only Romance language in Eastern Europe - is an "island" of Latinity in a mainly "Slavic sea" - including its dialects from the south of the Danube – Aromanian, Megleno-Romanian and Istro-Romanian.

Multilingualism is defined narrowly as the alternative use of several languages; widely, it is use of several alternative language systems, regardless of their status: different languages, dialects of the same language or even varieties of the same idiom, being a natural consequence of linguistic contact.

According to certain parameters such as the sociological, the psychological and the linguistic character, several typologies of multilingualism can be distinguished:

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• Social (collective) multilingualism - of an entire community, group multilingualism, individual multilingualism, depending on the degree of social inclusion of the phenomenon

• Successive (sequential) multilingualism - the second language is learned after the acquisition of the first language (3-4 years later) or late multilingualism - distinction similar to the previous one, but that allows the identification of subtypes depending on the age at which the second, the third language is learned, etc. The multilingual speaker has acquired at least one language during his / her childhood, the so-called first language, acquired without formal education.

• Compound multilingualism - similar languages are regarded as similar, from a functional point of view, their units having a relationship of correspondence (languages learned / taught at school). The speakers are usually fluent in two or three linguistic systems, coordinated multilingualism - the languages are separated, from a functional point of view, arguing that their units express partially or totally distinct meanings (a language is used in official situations: administration, school, etc., the other one – within the family, among friends, etc., e.g., Aromanians in Greece). For each language, the speakers use a different intonation and pronunciation associated with a different social behaviour;

• Symmetrical multilingualism - all languages are equally known (rare case); asymmetric multilingualism - there are differences in knowledge; Receptive (passive) multilingualism- one of the languages is understood but not spoken; written multilingualism - one of the languages is understood in reading, but not in listening; technical multilingualism - one of the languages is known only to the extent strictly required by the professional needs;

• According to the political situation from a state or a supranational community: impersonal multilingualism - characteristic system of government in a state whose citizens are monolingual (Belgium); personal multilingualism - characteristic of a state whose system of government is monolingual, but whose citizens are multilingual; in this case, multilingualism can be: natural - a result of mixed marriages, of living in a border area or in an aloglot environment; voluntary (promotion) - led by the individual desire to promote in a multilingual multinational corporation (European Union); decreed (by concession) - based on state authority, but contrary to the desire of citizens (non-Hungarian minorities in Hungary before World War I).

Because mandatory multilingualism involves the contact of two or more languages and cultures, it causes interference phenomena at all contact structure idioms' levels, triggering reorganization processes of the structural patterns.

Interferences usually occur in both cases, contributing significantly to the formation of idioms. European Union gathers under its umbrella over 500 million people in 27 countries with 23 official languages and three types of alphabets. In addition, 60 other languages are part of EU heritage and are spoken in certain regions or by certain groups.

The European Union recognizes the close link between language and identity, as well as the fact that language is the most direct expression of culture. Therefore, language policies have been developed to meet the linguistic diversity, to promote

multilingualism and, when necessary, to protect the endangered languages.

Multilingualism is an Europe value and a shared commitment, with particular importance for initial education, lifelong learning, employment, justice, freedom and security.

Romanian language and its dialects

Romanian language, with its four dialects - Daco-Romanian, Aromanian, Megleno-Romanian and Istro-Romanian – is the continuance of the Latin language spoken in the eastern parts of the former Roman Empire. Together with the Dalmatian language (now extinct) and central and southern Italian dialects, is part of the Apenino-Balkan group of Romance languages, different from theAlpine–Pyrenean group[1].

The fact that Latin was spoken in the Eastern Roman Empire, widely in the Balkan Peninsulaexplains the current geographical distribution of the Romanian dialects in territories both north and south of the Danube.

Romanian language unity does not contradict this vastly Romanized space. It is due both to the Latin unity and the unitary character of the substrate language[2], being supported, for centuries, by the constant contacts between the Romanized population in the north of the Danube and the one in the Balkan Peninsula, contacts attested by historical sources: "*It is totally inaccurate to suppose that the territory currently occupied by Romanian has been entirely abandoned by their ancestors and that there has been no contact between the areas invaded by the barbarians and those protected by the Roman Empire. Historically, it has been undeniably proven that, in the forth, the fifth, the sixth, the seventh and the ninth centuries entire populations have crossed the Danube from south to north and from north to south. From this constant contact and continuous exchange – of which the evacuation of Dacia by Aurelian is only a small part – came the unity of the Romanian people and of its language.[3]* "GI Bratianu underlines the importance of these contacts: "*The only conclusion that can be drawn with certainty [from the historical facts study] is the continuous crossing, from one shore to another of the Danube, of some convoys of captives or immigrants at the end of the third century and the beginning of the ninth century; these are frequent exchanges, maybe without major political consequences, but whose linguistic influence is more than obvious.*[4]"

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[1] Cf. M. G. Bartoli (1806: 297 ș. u.); cf. and G. Ivănescu (1980: 96). For delineation, in Italy, of the two groups through a "line" linking Spezia, at the Tyrrhenian Sea (the West), to Rimini (according to others, Pesaro), to the Adriatic Sea (the East), according to Wartburg (1950, map 10), Lausberg (1969: 39-40, 69-70).

[2] The Vulgar Latin unity that lays at the bases of the Romance languages is widely recognized. Al. Philippide also postulates an original ethnic unity, based on the preponderance of Thracians: "The uniform feature that this conglomerate acquired, in order to give rise to one people, the Romanian one, and to one language, the Romanian one, is due both to the mixture of elements privileged by the same social and political circumstances and to the prevalence of one of the nations, the Thracian one"(Philippide 1925: 856).

[3] Brătianu 1937: 60; "Dacia leaving must not be considered under a single text, but under all the facts and the historical realities; thus it appears then as an episode in a series of similar events and not as a "Final caesura" in the history of Roman rule in Eastern Europe "(Brătianu 1937: 123).

[4] Brătianu 1937: 63. Th. Capidanextended contacts in Europe until the arrival of the Turks: "Taking into account both the language unity and the order of the historical statements by Byzantine

The Daco-Romanian language (the north dialect) is mainly spoken in the north of the Danube, namely in Romania and Moldova as the mother tongue of the majority, but in the immediate vicinity of these two countries, in Ukraine, Hungary, Serbia and Bulgaria; it is also spoken in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, but only in isolated communities. It is the only dialect that has created a standard – the literary Romanian language - used as official language in Romania and Moldova, with currently about 27 million speakers.

The southern dialects, namely Romanian, Megleno – Romanian and Istro-Romanian are spoken in the Balkan states (in the south of the Danube), the ex-Yugoslav republics: Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia as well as in Bulgaria, Greece and Albania.

The first certifications on dialectal differences occur in 1648, in the preface to the ***Noul Testament de la Bălgrad*** (New Testament from Bălgrad) (Transylvania), written by the Bishop Simeon Ştefan. With an obvious concern about the formation of unique literary language for all Romanians, the erudite scholar pointed out that "*rumânii nu grăiescîntoateţărâleîntr-un chip, încăniciîntr-o ţarătoţiîntr-un chip* (aproximate translation in current Romanian: Romanian people do not speak the same in all countries, but they do not speak the same even in one country)." The explanation of this situation would be that, being spread in several "countries" Romanians "have mingled their words with other languages".[5]

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the scholar scientist DimitrieCantemir (1673-1723), Prince of Moldavia, analyzes, in detail, the issue of the Romanian language and its dialects.

D. Cantemir emphasizes the common origin of the Romanians from the north and south of the Danube: "*toateacestenăroade* (aproximate translation in current Romanian: all these nations" - namely people from the regions called Moldova, Muntenia, Maramures, Romanians over the Danube and Koutsovlach from Greece – coming from the same Trajan's Romanian .

According to some linguists [6], Istro-Romanian (in older sources *Istriano-Romanian*) is a distinct language belonging to the Eastern subgroup of the Romance languages, like Romanian, Aromanian and Megleno-Romanian. Other linguists[7] consider that Istro-Romanian is a dialect of the Romanian language, together with the dialects Daco-Romanian, Aromanian and Megleno-Romanian. It is assumed that Istro-Romanians settled in Istria in the twelfth century, since an Istria ruler, called Radu (probably a Romanian name), is

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chroniclers [...]chroniclers that all tell us of the existence of the Romanian population in Haemus, Thracian, Rhodope, Macedonia, Epirus, Thessaly, Acarnania and Aetolia, in other words, since the land closest to the banks of the Danube to the heart of Greece, it is natural to assume that, just before the assrival of Turks in Europe, there has been a continuity between elements of the north, on both banks of the Danube, and between those in the South: Epirus, Thessaly, Acarnania and Aetolia. After the Turkish invasion that continuity has been lost" (Capidan 1932: 24).

[5] Ioan Bianu, Nerva Hodoş, Bibliografia românească veche, I (1508-1716), Bucureşti, 1903, p. 170; cf. Dial. rom. (1977: 39), Tratat dial. (1984: 110).

[6] P. Skok, Alexandru Graur, Ion Coteanu.

[7] Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu, Sextil Puşcariu, Emil Petrovici, Ovid Densuşianu, Iosif Popovici, Alexandru Rosetti.

mentioned. However, the first serious documentary attestations of the Istro-Romanian are dated in 1329, when the Serbian chronicles speak about the Vlach population in the region. This suggests that Istro-Romanians arrived in Istria in the forteenth century or even earlier. The place of origin is suspected to be the basin of the Carpathian Mountains. Some linguists (including Ovid Densusianu) believe that Istro-Romanians have come to this region either from Transylvania or from Serbia, almost 1000 years ago.

The historical sources reveal that the Istro-Romanians are descendants of the Romanized population in North-Western of the Balkan Peninsula, which were in territorial contact both with the Romanized population from the north of the Danube (western provinces) and the Romanized population from the south of the Danube (ancestors of Aromanians and of Megleno-Romanians). This explains Istro-Romanian asymmetries on one hand, with the Daco-Romanian Western dialects and, on the other hand, with the Romanian dialects in the south of the Danube (Megleno-Romanian and Aromanian). As it is obvious, from the historical documents from the twelfth - fifteenth centuries, that the Istro-Romanian ancestors moved gradually to the Dalmatian coast, reaching Istria.

The Megleno-Romanian language is the Eastern Romance language whose history is less known, because it does not have old documentary attestation. While the Aromanian language separated from the other Eastern Romance languages in the ninth century, the Megleno-Romanian language is supposed to have separated from Romanian in a more recent period. One of the hypotheses is that it happened in the eleventh or twelfth centuries. Another theory states that the Megleno-Romanians[8] were settled in Macedonia by the Byzantines only in the fourteenth century.

There are few texts written in Megleno-Romanian. The first were recorded by linguists[9]. There are also several collections of folk literature[10], and one cultivated work, a brochure on silkworm growth, the script adapted from the Romanian one and terms borrowed from it.

Megleno-Romanians are descendants of the Romanized population from the land situated between the Danube and the Haemus, which is in territorial contact both with the Romanized population in the north of the Danube, and the Romanized population in the south of the Danube (Istro-Romanian and Aromanian ancestors). This explains the similarities of the Megleno-Romanian language, on one hand, with the Daco-Romanian (Southern dialects) and, on the other hand, with the Istro-Romanian and Aromanian. After the battle of Lebunion (Thrace) in 1091, the Byzantine emperor Alexius I Comnenus colonized, in the territory of *Meglena* (Macedonia), a part of the Pechenegs taken prisoners together with their families. Soon after, in 1094, in a decree of the same emperor,

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[8] Denomination used not by that people, but by linguists, in the view of dialect status of the Romanian language that is traditionally assigned to the idiom spoken by this population.

[9] The first one was Weigand, Gustav, cu *Vlacho-Meglen, eine ethnographisch-philologische Untersuchung*, Leipzig, 1892.

[10] Candrea, I.-Aurel, *Texte meglenite. Grai și suflet*, fasc. I-II, 1923, 1924; Papahagi, Pericle, *Românii din Meglenia. Texte și glosar*, București, 1900; Papahagi, Pericle, *Meglenoromânii. Studiu etnografico-filologic*, vol. I-II, București, 1902 between 1900 and 1930.

Vlachs from Meglena are mentioned, thus understanding that the colonized Pechenegs were either mixed with the Romanians from the Danube lands or met Vlachs that have been living there before. The Megleno-Romanian shows greater similarities with some dialects of the Aromanian language (eg, *Moloviște* and *Gopeş* patois), hence some Megleno-Romanian ancestors moved south with some of the Aromanians.

Thesis on the Aromanian language as an independent language and not as a Romanian dialect is recent and began to be known only after 1990, in a political context of regional ethnic revival in the Balkans, which traditionally sought to discourage Aromanians and their language identification with Romania and with the Romanian language.

The Aromanian language name is not uniform in all its speakers. According to the regional patois, Aromanians speak *armânească, armâneşce, armâneaşti, rămăneşte* (fărşeroţii) sau *vlăheaşte..* The total number of speakers of Aromanian is estimated at about 300,000, but the number of Aromanians ethnic, including those who do not speak the language, is estimated at over one million.

DimitrieCantemir in DescriptioMoldaviae (written between 1714 and 1716), writes the following about the Aromanian language: "*The Koutsovlach have a more modified dialect [than that of the inhabitants of Muntenia, compared with the patois of the inhibitants of Moldova, nn], the Koutsovlach living in Rumelia, at the border of Macedonia. They mixharmoniously their country's language with both the Greek and the Albanian ones; so that they mix in their Wallachian language sometimes cracks from the Greek language, other times cracks from the Albanian language. But, anywhere and anytime, they keep the moldavian ending for nouns and for verbs. It is true that, if they use this modified dialect, they can communicate only between themselves, because neither a Greek, an Albanian nor a Moldavian is able to understand what they say or mean.If the three of them were together in the same place and if they heard Koutsovlachs speaking, they would be certainly albe to understand what they mean if each of them would translate to the others cracks of his language".[11]*

Aromanians are successors of the Romanized population in the south of the Balkan Peninsula, in lands where today we find the largest and the most compact group: the Pindos mountain range. There are dialect differences in Aromanian, some patois - eg, the Farsherot - showing greater similarities with the other dialects in the south of the Danube (vocalic system of 6 phonemes, no opposition ă ~ î). This leads us to believe that some of the Aromanians ancestors settled in the existing settlements (where they met a Romanized population hat has been living there for a while) coming from the north.

The Romanian Academy has always regarded the Aromanians as part of this people, irrespective of the place of origin. Since the set up of the Romanian Literary Society (1866), that became the Romanian Academic Society (1867), each Romanian subsidiary had - according to the number of inhabitants - 4, 3 or 2 founding members, among which two Aromanians: Ioan D. Caragiani and DimitrieCozacovici (Cosacovici). Over the years, other great representatives of

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[11] Dimitrie Cantemir, *Descrierea Moldovei*, Ed. Litera, Chişinău, 1998, p. 228.

public life, letters, sciences and arts from among Aromanians were received in the Romanian Academy: the Metropolitan Andrei Saguna, the writer and philologist George Murnu, the brilliant translator of the "Iliad" and "Odyssey" the linguist PericlePapahagi, the writer and diplomat MarcuBeza, the linguist Theodor Capidan, author of monographs on Megleno-Romanian and Aromanian dialects, one of the main editors of the Dictionary of Romanian language, the writer and philologist CezarPapacostea, the literary critic DumitruCaracostea, the engineer, Astronautics Specialist ElieCarafoli, the painter Ion Paceaetc[12].

The **Daco-Romanian language** is the language spoken in the north of the southern Slavic linguistic area (represented by the Serbs, Bulgarians and Macedonian Slavs), especially in the north of the Danube (Romania, Moldova, Ukraine, Hungary), but also at its south: in Dobrogea and in Timoc.

The term was introduced to distinguish the Romanian language from its 4 dialectal variants: the Daco-Romanian, the Aromanian (macedoromâna) and the Megleno-Romanian, spoken in the territories of southern Balkan peninsula, as well as the Istro-Romanian spoken in the Istria peninsula. The term "Daco-Romanian" contains a reference to the Dacians, because, in Antiquity, the Dacians lived in the Daco-Romanian linguistic area that is currently inhabited by the Romanian speakers (the provinces of Dacia and Moesia, later Dacia Ripensis).

Not all linguists recognize these idioms as dialects of the same Romanian, some considering them four independent languages.

Romania has always shown great generosity, constantly supporting the existence of the ethnic, linguistic and cultural particularities of the minorities and rejecting, firmly, any attempt to assimilate them by force.

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[12] According to the Romanian Academy Note / 2005.