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ADDRESSING TERMS USED IN THE FAMILY. CULTURAL DIMENSIONS AND CONTEXTUAL CONNOTATIONS.

Our analysis comprises comments of Romanian and English addressing terms chosen according to the nature of interpersonal relations and the position of the interlocutors within those relations. There may be personal relations (within the family or of intimate nature) or professional relations. Each type of relationship implies either the equal status of the interlocutors or the presence of a person with authority to whom the others are subordinate. There are also situations when we observe false relations of equality or subordination, their apparent nature becoming obvious by using various linguistic means which emphasize the position of the interlocutors.

Addressing terms are combined with other means of expressing the attitude towards the interlocutor or towards a referent absent from the situation of communication; thus, the elements from the former category cannot be analysed without considering the latter. Together with the constraints imposed by the situation of communication and by the intentions of the author, we must also consider the linguistic potential of Romanian and of English, since they reflect a cultural dimension. Whenever cultural specificity was reflected in the usage of Romanian linguistic structures which don't have a correspondent in English, we chose English variants able to preserve the stylistic register characteristics of the original text. When more than one variant could be used, we pointed out the semantic uniqueness of each choice.

The excerpts we selected for translation from the novel „Arta conversației" by Ileana Vulpescu offer representative examples to illustrate the Romanian cultural and linguistic specificity, manifested in the variety of human relationships presented and in the abundant samples of spoken language. Translating such a text is a challenge from the perspective of finding appropriate English structures to express Romanian realities in point of politeness strategies.

This paper aims at describing the lexicalization of a typical subordination family relationship, that between parents and children. A main criterion taken into consideration within this type of relationship is age, automatically associated with moral authority. When that authority is not acknowledged, we encounter situations of false politeness, direct and indirect referring terms having ironical connotations.

Stai că-ți deschid eu, se-auzi dinuntru glasul Măriei. Şi uşa se dădu la perete. Sînziana stătea nehotărîtă-n cadrul ei. — Pup, pup ! zise Măria, şi-şi sărută mama pe frunte, obicei de cînd era mică, şi maica-sa trebuia să se-aplece pentru acest ceremonial tandru. Acum, fata-şi întinse doar nițel capul, o sărută, apoi, cu o privire complice către flori, îi şopti: — Ei, îm ? — Vreun fost pacient... Fata închise un ochi. — Şi de unde ştii că nu sînt pentru tine? o-ntrebă maică-sa. — Faci mişto de mine ? !	„Wait, I'll get the door for you", she heard Maria's voice from inside the flat. And when the girl left the door wide open, Sînziana remained undecided in the doorway. „Kiss, kiss", said Maria, and kissed her mother on the forehead; that had been her habit ever since she was just a little girl and her mother had to bend for this tender ceremonial. Now, the girl barely raised her head, kissed her mother, and then, with a collaborative/sly look in her eyes, cast a glance towards the flowers and whispered: „Well, huh?" „It must have been a former patient who brought them..." The girl closed an eye. „And how do you know

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— Iar vorbeşti ca pe maidan ? — **Stimată doamnă**, folosesc un limbaj argotic, atîta tot, adăugă fata cu o dicţie pedantă, şuşotind apoi la urechea maică-sii: — Avem oaspeţi... **pe «dumnealui», de! pe tata**. — A ! — Cînd am venit acasă, la 12, c-a lipsit **diva de fizică**, le-am găsit «ca pe-o scrisoare la cutie»; şi-i arătă din ochi florile. Nu le-am luat, ca să le vadă mahalaua, şi Măria făcu un gest larg către uşile de pe palier. (cap. 1, pp.10- 11)	they are not for you?" asked her mother. „You're kidding me, right?" „Have you started to talk like a gang girl again?" „**Esteemed mother dear/ Mother dearest/ Mommy dearest**, I just use slang terms, that's all", the girl added with an emphatic intonation, and then whispered in her mother's ear: „We have guests... who do you think it is, **His Highness, my father/ the big shot, father**!" „Oh!" „When I came home at noon, 'cause **the Physics ‚diva'** didn't show up, I found the flowers like ‚a letter in a mailbox'," the girl continued while looking at them. „I didn't take them from outside the door, so that every neighbour would see them", Maria went on, gesturing towards all the doors on the floor.

The fragment is representative for parent-child relationship in contemporary society. The perspective adopted is that of Maria, Sînziana's daughter, now a young lady. To Maria the whole scene means playing a game which implies alternating the roles. In the beginning, at least apparently, Maria accepts the role of the obedient child, submissive to the authority of the parent. She offers to open the door and is willing to prolong a childhood ritual, that of forehead kissing. But everything is just an appearance: even the gesture perpetuated ever since she was a child has a reverse meaning. The child assumes the role of the parent who kisses protectively on the forehead, without any excessive sentimentalism. In this case, Maria's gesture is just a pretext of announcing her mother about the latest events and of inquiring about her personal life. The reply **« Pup, pup »/ « Kiss, kiss »** is in evident contrast with her sly look and with her ironical, slang remarks which follow. Maria's style is direct but it hides her affection and compassion, her wish of seeing her mother happy. The parent role assumed by Maria is actually the result of contributing to her mother's happy personal life. Being divorced, Sînziana is not living an easy life and Maria does not want her mother to appear as a victim in the eyes of the neighbors. Linguistically, Maria's strategy of politeness assigns an equal status to the mother and to the daughter. This is reflected in the reply

« Faci mişto de mine?!"„You're kidding me, right?"

As we have already mentioned, sometimes Maria uses an authoritative tone and attitude, denoting a total lack of consideration expressed in the usage of two successive interjections

„Acum, fata-şi întinse doar niţel capul, o sărută, apoi, cu o privire complice către flori, îi şopti: — **Ei, îm**?" ‚Now, the girl barely raised her head, kissed her mother, and then, with a collaborative/sly look in her eyes, cast a glance towards the flowers and whispered: „**Well, huh**?"

Her mother scolds Maria and compares her to **„a gang girl"** and that determines the latter to adopt a formal and ironical stylistic register. The original term of addressing **„stimată doamnă"** combines the formality in expression with the irony of the situation. It is not a formula to use in the parent-child relationship. The stress is on the strong ironical connotation. The literal translation of the Romanian term **„stimată doamnă"** by the English **dear lady** does not seem appropriate to us since it would imply the semantic features [+distance], [+reserve] and even [+depreciatory attitude], [+ rejection], and that is not the intention. To preserve the speaker's intention we can consider structures such as **esteemed mother dear, mother dearest or mommy dearest.** The choice of one of them depends on the

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dominant semantic feature which would govern the whole dialogue. Formal, polite style is not a purpose in itself; Maria implicitly rebels against it and in the original text she uses elements belonging to the level of marked politeness. In fact, their presence means quite the opposite of what one might expect: Maria does not approve of them, she expresses her vexation regarding their excessive usage and against the lack of sincerity hidden behind them. That is the game practised by Maria with a lot of talent, the game about which we discussed at the beginning of this article. It is not a simple play on words, she does more than making strange, even paradoxical associations of words. She apparently adopts a certain type of behaviour, considered as appropriate, only to mock at it and its falsity. If we maintain ourselves in the domain of irony, the addresssing term **Esteemed mother dear** does not attempt to cancel the relationship mother-daughter, as it is the case with the Romanian term **Stimată doamnă**; it is from the perspective of this relationship that Maria makes an implicit criticism of the prejudices associated to it. The expression **esteemed mother dear** is characterised by the semes [+formal], [+ironical]. We notice the apparently inadequate collocation between the adjective **esteemed** and the syntagm **mother dear**. The adjective **esteemed** has a formal character, being used before a common noun as a term of addressing between people who are involved in a professional relationship; its meaning corresponds to that of the Romanian adjective **stimat**. The denotative meaning of the adjective under discussion contains the seme [+respect], both in Romanian and in English, the feature [+affection] being irrelevant for the type of relations involved. The adjective **dear,** especially when followed by the appellative-noun **mother**, stresses the component of affectivity, respect being implicit in this type of relation. The completely different perspective expressed by the two adjectives, **esteemed** and **dear,** does not lead to a paradox, to an illogical syntagm; on the contrary, it creates an unusual, but extremely suggestive combination, with a strong ironical mark in both languages.

On the other hand, if we make the translation starting from the premise that both the tone and the register used are just a mask in a game, then we can select informal, jesting collocations to render the speaker's intention. **Mommy dearest** is such a structure; the term of endearment **mommy „mămicuță, mami"** is associated with the superlative of the adjective **dear** "drag", the latter losing its basic meaning in this case. The result (whose literal translation into Romanian is **„mami scumpă")** is obviously marked for irony. The addressing formula **mother dearest** is more neutral, the diminutival form does not appear any more and, consequently, the joking tone is more reduced. If such a variant is preferred in translation, we must keep in mind that the register used remains informal.

We must point out again that Maria's ironical and joking tone has no depreciative connotation, it does not express any lack of respect in relation to her mother. The intention is to rebel against appearances and against prejudices, even at the level of their linguistic manifestation. In relation to her mother, Maria adopts a position of equality, which presupposes the liberty of dealing with her mother's personal life and happiness. In relation to her father, who left them for another woman, Maria has a different attitude. The linguistic structures meant to express politeness are connoted for [+distance] and [+disconsideration]. In Romanian, the lexicalization of these semantic values is rendered by the pronoun **dumnealui**, marking neutral politeness, followed by the noun **tata.** The ironical nuance is clearly marked by the usage of the pronoun of politeness between inverted commas and by its separation from the noun *tată* using the interjection **de.** Inverted commas are compulsory to obtain the ironical connotation; otherwise, the term would be interpreted literally and in its denotative meaning. In the Romanian cultural space, children had to address their parents or refer to them by using the pronouns of politeness **dumneata/ dumnealui/ dumneaei.** Some children are taught to do so even nowadays but the tendency towards informality prevails. In English such a distant attitude is rendered by children's usage of the addressing term *sir* in relation to their father or **madam** in relation to their mother. These English terms express a higher degree of politeness than their Romanian counterparts and

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their usage implies some sort of conflict between the parent and the child. Authority acknowledgement may be genuine or just an appearance.

The fact that English does not have pronouns of politeness made us choose linguistic structures which should correlate with the previous ones, used in addressing Mother. The expression **Esteemed mother dear** perfectly matches the syntagm **His Highness, my father,** (literally translated into Romanian by **„Măria-sa tata"**), both having in common the semes [+formal], [+ironical]. We previously discussed the process of meaning change in case of **dear,** extremely used as a general term of addressing. The same process is true for the syntagm *His* **Highness, my father** where the basic meaning of *His Highness* disappears. Implying the feature [+ceremonial] by definition, the structure *possessive adjective* + *Highness* (both elements being written in capital letters) with its denotative meaning is exclusively used in addressing referents who are royalty. In the text we notice the broadening of this expression in point of meaning; it comes to be associated to any type of referent as long as irony , even sarcasm and depreciative value are implied.

If one prefers translating to emphasize informality and a joking tone, the expression **the big shot, father** (literally translated into Romanian by "grozavu' de tata") fully corresponds to the intended illocutionary value and stylistically accords with the structure **Mommy dearest.** The expression *big shot* is a slang term, therefore placed at the extreme pole of the colloquial style. It pressuposes authority and influence, but in a negative way, and also a large degree of self-importance determined by the social position.

We underlined the syntagm **diva de fizică, the Physics ‚diva',** though it is not linked to the relationship parent-child, because its usage implicitly creates an analogy between the feminine typology represented by Sînziana, Maria's mother, and the Physics teacher. Both in Romanian and in English, the word *divă,* borrowed from Italian, is taken from the entertainment world. It refers to a star (initially an opera singer), a well-known and glamorous artist. In time, the word has undergone changes in both languages, acquiring a pejorative connotation when it refers to an ordinary person, full of self-importance and putting on airs. The features [+showing off], [+self-important] are exactly what Maria does not appreciate, and she is happy that her mother appears as an example of a woman with real qualities. In the original text the term *diva* is used without inverted commas, the figurative meaning being obvious from the context. In English we considered the use of inverted commas as obligatory to express the required meaning. The English syntagm **His Highness, my father,** like the term *divă/diva* and the structure **Esteemed mother dear/ Stimată doamnă,** represent examples of broadening the referential field generally associated to the English addressing terms which contain the element **Highness,** respectively to the Romanian ones containing the term **stimată.** At the same time, we notice a specialization, a narrowing of the connotative domain: **esteemed** may presuppose the seme [+referent intimate to the speaker], **highness** does not necessarily imply the feature [+royalty] and **diva** does not imply the feature [+famous opera singer], but they all have in common the ironical connotation. Maria's attitude, discussed above, is 'borrowed' by the author-narrator and implicitly contrasts the image of her mother, Sînziana, and that of her father and his current wife:

Aproape după fiecare vizită paternă, Măria răbufnea, blagoslovind-o ca la uşa cortului pe actuala **nevastă** a lui **taică-său** şi netrecîndu-l cu vederea, nici pe acesta, cu toate-ncercările Sînzienei de-a o domoli.	After nearly every visit of her father, Maria would burst out against his current **wife**, calling her names and not forgetting him either in her imprecations, in spite of her mother's attempts to calm her down

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— Ce, vine-aici să-şi verse nervii pe care şi-i face cu **«marea vedetă»** ? Vine să ne şicaneze pe noi că **aia a dumnealui** se culcă cu altul ? (cap. 1, p. 11)	. „Why, he dares to come here and take it out on us, because his **‚big celebrity' of a wife** has annoyed him? He comes here to pick on us because that ‚**piece**' of his is sleeping with somebody else?

The highly frequent syntagm **taică-său** is the result of shortening the collocation between the noun *tată*, with the spoken archaic variant *taică*, and the possessive adjective *său*. In this context the collocation has both a colloquial and a depreciative value; this interpretation is triggered by its association with a series of words and expressions which denote the referents as being Maria's father and his wife. These words make up a lexical-semantic field and share the seme [+pejorative]:

blagoslovind-o ca la uşa cortului/ calling her names, netrecîndu-l cu vederea/ and not forgetting him either in her imprecations, vine-aici să-şi verse nervii/he dares to come here and take it out on us, vine să ne şicaneze pe noi/ He comes here to pick on us.

The syntagm **taică-său** cannot be exactly rendered in English neither in point of its colloquial tinge, nor in its pejorative one. The form **her father** is connotatively neutral, any possible connotation being inferred from the context. The variant **her old man**, (literally translated into Romanian by **„bătrânul ei"),** though denotatively appropriate, does not seem adequate to us because it implies a colloquial-friendly shade of meaning.

References to the wife of Maria's father include depreciative terms, too. The meaning of ‚false celebrity' previously encountered when referring to the Physics teacher is now resumed by means of a collocation used between inverted commas to mark the seme [+irony]: **«marea vedetă»/ ‚big celebrity' of a wife.** The Romanian syntagm *aia a dumnealui* is impossible to be translated into English by using a correspondent pronoun. The feminine distal demonstrative pronoun always expresses a strong pejorative tinge, implying the seme [+immorality], when referring to a human referent. In English we selected a noun which, metaphorically used, has the same connotation: **that ‚piece' of his.** If the translator insists on expressing the above-mentioned connotations by means of an English pronoun, he/she could use the emphasized pronoun **it. It** is a third person singular personal pronoun, typically used for inanimate referents. It can also be used when the speaker actually denies the [+human] feature associated with the referent; the process is opposed to that of personification. The translation would be .

*„Why, he dares to come here and take it out on us, because his **‚big celebrity' of a wife** has annoyed him? He comes here to pick on us because **it** is sleeping with somebody else?"*

The pejorative tinge associated to the referent had been ‚announced' in the text by the intervention of the author-narrator who uses the referential term *nevastă*. Used exclusively in the colloquial register, **nevastă** can express a depreciative value, unlike its synonym **soție,** [+formal] and [+neutral]. At first sight, a correspondent of the Romanian **soție** would be the English **spouse**, a noun of common gender, i.e. it can refer to persons of both sexes. Nevertheless, **spouse** is much more formal than **soție**. It connotes affectedness when used in everyday language, being the generally-used term in legal documents. In the linguistic and situational context under analysis we chose the neutral term **wife** in translation; it can express nuances of meaning ranging from excessive familiarity to irony, and it has a high usage frequency.

The next fragment is illustrative in expressing the relationship parent-child in a colloquial-joking style, especially since both interlocutors are adults. The son, himself a doctor, addresses his father by means of a marked politeness formula, **domnul profesor Şerban,** placing himself in the position of a subordinate, professionally speaking;

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nevertheless, distance and the comical tone are evident in associating the previous form with the appellative **tată.** To preserve the tone of the speaker we chose the term *Dad* in translation, it being the appropriate correspondent of the appellative *tată.* The English **father** would have sounded too distant and the whole utterance would have acquired an illocutionary value of reproach which does not correspond to the original text. The appellative **Dad** is written in capital as it does not have a generic value, it refers to the speaker's father.

The jesting usage of marked politeness terms to render the relationship parent-child can cover a variety of illocutionary values: a mixture of respect and reproach for the excessive concern about the job, the ironization of pride and of the servile attitude of those who use politeness just to maintain a façade, etc. In this case the connotation is under no circumstances a pejorative one; it expresses sincere respect and sympathy, but also a joking tone.

— A, **domnul profesor Şerban**, zise Tudor care apărea din culoar cu Ana şi cu Şerban de mînă. Ai fost azi la Clinică, **tată** ? continuă Tudor. Nu ? Atunci nu ştii c-a murit Voicu Marin. (cap. 1, p. 48)	„Oh, **professor Şerban**", exclaimed Tudor appearing from the hall holding Ana and Şerban by the hand. „Have you been at the Clinic today, **Dad**?" continued Tudor. „No? Then you don't know that Voicu Marin is dead."

We can conclude that addressing terms are formally influenced by the potential of the language they belong to, and semantically by the perspective adopted on various types of human relationships, frequently marked by a profound traditionalism. In some cases, both in Romanian and in English, we notice a broadening of the meaning specific to terms of addressing which initially had a restrictive and specialised usage (**stimată/esteemed, Înălțimea voastră/Your Highness, divă/diva**). The process of referential domain broadening is doubled by a specialisation of the denotative field, strongly marked for irony. Politeness strategies specific to Romanian include the usage of pronouns of politeness, addressing terms which mark intermediate politeness combining respect and affection and means of addressing with double reference: to a person's gender and title/profession. These specific Romanian formulas of addressing can be translated into English only by choosing syntagms able to render the relevant connotation in the context. Collocations which seem apparently paradoxical, incompatible prove to be extremely rich semantically.

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ABSTRACT

When discussing the lexical meaning of a word or structure, pragmatic factors involved cannot be overlooked. Defined by their semantic features, more or less transparent for the native speakers of any language if we consider the etymological perspective, words acquire new semantic connotations in a certain linguistic and/or situational context. Those connotations, part of the affective and social meaning, can be adequately identified and interpreted only as a result of combining etymological and semantic-pragmatic perspectives. In discussing the chosen fragments of literary texts, we applied the method of componential analysis, since relevant semantic features are the necessary point of reference in observing the linguistic creativity of the writer, creativity manifested in the form of atypical collocations, paradoxes and semantic ambiguities. Even everyday terms can imply multiple valences which are identifiable only in the pragmatic context of the fictional text world, this process being dependent on readers' various degrees of competence.

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