The Cocktail of "Integrated" Menus. Ethnic Identity and Alterity in the Discourse of Menus

Luminița DRUGĂ, Petronela SAVIN

Key-words: *menus, identity and alterity ethnique, phatique*

The first thing that comes to one's mind when thinking about globalization is that of economic globalization. The idea is perfectly rendered by the migration of the international capitals, goods and people. Moreover, besides this particular type of globalization, there comes the cultural globalization, as a result of communicational revolution. The economy's objectives are the production and distribution of goods and services, minimizing the real characteristics of its effects. Nevertheless, the properties of both the goods and cultural services contribute to the expanding of cultural globalization as a simple concept of economic globalization.

Another important value which appears is-the symbolic value-a solid value impossible to be affected by the market price. It is this the starting point which should be taken into consideration by the one who studies the discourse of food, a discourse that encapsulates both the economic and the symbolic layer tracing the cultural identity of a nation.

There is an opposition known worldwide, between two types of cultural goods totally opposed: the genuine symbols and traditions, a label of local identity and the modern cultural occidental goods, which are created and promoted by mass media.

One of the most commented topics of nowadays mentality is that of the relation between the national and cultural identities and the economic processes of globalization. This topic has profound implications for the understanding of the European integration within the Romanian cultural identity. This reality can be beautifully studied by means of commercial discourse on food.

People from all over the world drink Heineken beer, eat a croissant or a pizza, go to McDonald's. All these are proves of accepting some "cultural values" beyond the country's borders. Still, we tend to believe that only Romanians drink *palinca,* eat forcemeat roll of cabbage or wine leaves –*sărmaluțe,* sausages made in Pleşcoi.

The only problem which exists in the Romanian modern culture encapsulates the tension between the national identity and the European integration. This is the "nucleus" of the life we live. The society we live in has to face two complementary phenomena, which manifest simultaneously within the Romanian space: the integration process and the rebirth of traditional and national ideologies.

The problem of European integration coincides with that of globalization. The integration in the European space is a stage which has to be completed in the process

„Philologica Jassyensia", An V, Nr. 2 (10), 2009, p. 111–117

BDD-A915 © 2009 Institutul de Filologie Română „A. Philippide"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:53:55 UTC)

of globalization. One of the modern paradoxes is that profound and ideological tendencies manifested as an effect of the world's globalization in the non occidental spaces.

By building up an unique market of goods and information, the modern globalization has surprisingly revitalised the apparently dormant forces of identity. Therefore, the rejected thesis, according to which the crisis of identities is a globalization product, is nowadays accepted in the occidental spaces as an ordinary statement.

As for what the food cultural space is concerned, it seems that, in the context of the existing globalization, europenization, some of the member states became aware of the importance of national symbols belonging to the food paradigm, the moment when they became part of the European Union. Analyzing the case of Romania, we can say that only after the aderation in 2007 did the romanians realized that they can lose the right to produce some brands, brands which brought recognition to the the country among the european peoples (*Sibiu salami, Pleşcoi sausages, Buzău cracknels, palinca, horinca* etc).

For decades, all the states were recognised both within their borders and abroad thanks to some political symbols as the flag, the coat of arms, the emblem, the coins and nowadays the passport, some cultural signs in the context of globalization, whereas the food symbols play an important role.

From now on, we chose to analyze these cultural signs of the food, by studying the ways of expressing globalization, placing them in the national context, at the level of discourse of two menus, one of them belonging to a cosmopolite restaurant *Llyod Restaurant*, in Timisoara, and the other one belonging to a traditional restaurant, *Casa Bolta Rece Restauran,* in Iasi.

The discourse of the menus is part of advertising language, a distinct language which Stelian Dumistrăcel distinguishes from the newspaper style, as it stands for a sinfasique unit well defined by its specific elements. The advertising language refers to the message transmitted (impossed) to the audience by means of persuasive strategies, which is sometimes paid by the one who waits for the benefits. If the purpose of the message is the selling of a particular product, as the above mentioned author says, the functions of the language are relevant, the conotative and the phatic function (manipulating phatic prevailling) in particular (Dumistrăcel 2006: 64).

All the functions of the advertising language can be discovered in the menus discourse, with the distinction that the role of the phatic function is much more important than the informing function, also because of the specific communicational context in which this discourse is used (the waiter is a mediator in the relation with the client).

As for the discourse of the menus, this phatic component is more than obvious in the strategies of constructing a psychological connexion between the sender and the receiver, meant to start and to mentain the communication with the purpose of persuading the potential client.

The menu of a restaurant is created in relation to the client, to the atmosphere which stays for the context of the offer, and for this particular reason we want to present some of the elements defining the restaurants chosen to be analyzed. All the information about these two spaces is taken from their presentation site, and

BDD-A915 © 2009 Institutul de Filologie Română „A. Philippide"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:53:55 UTC)

throughout this we are given the chance to analyze the strategy used to attract the clients by means of popular communication channel, the internet[1].

Both the *Llyod Restaurant* and the *Casa Bolta Rece Restaurant* built their presentation strategy on the paradigm of *tradition*. The major historical characteristics, are present on the site, emphasizing upon the specificity of each space.

The *Lyod Restaurant* was opened in autumn, 1912, as a part of the Lyod Palace, the headquarters of the Goods Exchange, the Llyod Society and many other financial societies, well known in that respective period. Designed by the desinging engineer Leopold Baumhorn and the bulding architect Arnold Merbl, the indoor design is the product of *art nouveau.* The clients had their own tables, chosen according to the profession of each of them. Among the regular clients of the place, at the begining of the century, we can mention the reporter and writer Egon Erwin Kisch, and the famous field marshal August von Mackensen, the major captain of the German army in the east.

As we can see, the information presented on the site, about the history of *Llyod Restaurant* portray Timisoara's image before the two world wars, a flourishing, cosmopolite bourg, the result of a capitalist economic development, strongly influenced by the Austrian-Hungarian occupation. These trades can be discovered in the *Llyod's Restaurant* specificity as an emblem for Timisoara city, always oriented towards the occidental culture and civilization.

The *Casa Bolta Rece Restaurant* in Iasi is differently described on the presentation site, both regarding its specificity and history. The name of this place, *Bolta Rece*, comes from the name of the street Rece, where it is situated, as all the undergrounds were occupied by basements. The first documentation of the building which was to become the famous *Boltă Rece*, dates from the 17th January 1786.

It was built in the Moldavian spirit, as an old peasant house, with a porch. Above the soil, enclosing a large kitchen and an oven, there was a saloon where a great number of people were served; in the basement a cubicle cave was built. Ever since 1864, Avram Amira, an authentic merchant, together with his nephews, Panciu and Simon, transformed *Bolta Rece* into a famous a place mentioned in the literary writings of "Junimea" society members, who ended here some of the feasts they started in pompous restaurants.

Furthermore, the presentation site of *Casa Bolta Rece Restaurant,* insists upon the historic element and emphasizes upon the specific authentic, regional and traditional space[2].

All these efforts of using an image having a labeling value for the presentation of the two restaurants is meant to attract the client. We speak here about reflexes of the phatic function of communication.

From now on, we will analyze the menus of the two restaurants, taking into consideration this phatic function of the food terminology.

The major elements around which the phatic function of the two restaurants is woven, is directly connected to the whole strategy of presentation of the two restaurants.

[1] See http://www.restaurantlloyd.ro and http://www.casaboltarece.ro.

[2] The lack of diacritic sig which characterizes the whole text of this site diminishes sometimes the authenticity of the text.

BDD-A915 © 2009 Institutul de Filologie Română „A. Philippide"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:53:55 UTC)

The menus are a combination of foreign dishes and the flavor of traditional dishes. Complex marketing strategies were used for the two regions, on which the attention is focused, strategies that find their roots on the power of suggestion of the terms naming the different dishes prepared there.

The way the site is built up, perfectly sustains this idea. With the *Casa Bolta Rece Restaurant* one can easily observe the traditional component. Among the sections of the site there is a rubric called "traditions", where the gastronomic recommendation are presented, the *Bolta Rece* recipes, the *Bolta Rece* wine cellar. The organization of the menu, which contains two subsections, the traditional menu and the *Bolta Rece* menu is created on this idea. All these elements can not be found in *Lloyd Restaurant.*

One of the elements which helps one to weight as far as the promoting area is concerned and the specificity of each of the restaurants is the chef's specialization, which, is *zama de găină cu tăieței de casă* ("en soup with home made noodles") in the case of *Casa Bolta Rece Restaurant,* and *tournedo Rossinis and file mignon à la chef* in the case of *Lloyd Restaurant.*

The *Lloyd Restaurant* promotes itself by means of some dishes named after the name of the place: *gustare rece Lloyd* ("cold Llyod entrée"), *gustare caldă Lloyd* ("hot Lloyd entrée"), *cartofi Lloyd* ("Lloyd potatoes"), *salată Lloyd* ("*Lloyd salad*"), whereas the restaurant in Iasi has recipes and menu with the name *Bolta Rece*.

The orientation towards an authentic offer of the *Casa Bolta Rece Restaurant* is obvious by means of the elements which build up the traditional menu. The house's speciality is *tochitura Bolta Rece* ("Romanian dish") and *chişca moldovenească* ("moldovian sausage with rice and liver"). One can observe the dialectical palatalized form *tochitură*, which appeared as such in the menus of the restaurants, *chişcă moldovenească*, where the first term is of Ucrainian origin (ucr. *kişka*), indicating the regional specificity of the dish. An interesting fact is that the dishes which are part of the restaurant's tradition, have inherited or Romanian compound names and names of Turkish origin.

The inherited, derived or compound terms such as *tochitură, perişoare cu smântână* ("meat balls with cream"), *pârjoale moldoveneşti* ("moldavian big cake of ground meat"), *pui la ceaun cu mujdei şi mămăliguță* ("fried chicken with garlic sauce and polenta"), *colțunaşi* ("fruit dumplings"), *clătite cu brânză la cuptor* ("cheese pancakes") exist together with Turkish terms in the same context *ciulama de pui* ("chicken blanquette"; *ciulama*< turc. *çulama*), *iahnie de fasole cu ciolan* ("white beans stew with bones"; *iahnie <turc. yahni*), *sărmăluțe în foi de viță* ("forcemeat roll of cabbage"; *sarma* cf. *turc., sb. sarma*), *musaca* ("minced meat fried with pupates slices"; *turc. musakka*). Therefore, the dishes with Turkish names are seen are authentic ones.

In the menu of *Casa Bolta Rece Restaurant*, the traditional dishes are presented among the dishes of different origin. The specific ways of forming the names present the situation of the traditional register of some of the elements of the menu: *ficăței de pui la grătar* ("*fried chicken liver*"), *sărmăluțe în foi de varză* ("*forcemeat rolls of cabbage*"), *pastramă cu mămăliguță şi brânză* ("*smoke dried salt meat with cheese and polenta*"), *coltunaşi cu brânză* ("cheese dumplings"). One

BDD-A915 © 2009 Institutul de Filologie Română „A. Philippide"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:53:55 UTC)

of the dishes which defines the regional character of the menu in the restaurant in Iasi, is specific to the east Romania, *borşul* ("borsch"; rus. *boršč*).

The name of some drinks stand for the traditional component of the menu, being them of unknown etymology, as *ţuică*, or of Turkish origin, *rachiu* (<turc. *rakı*), or formed within the romanian space, *afinată* ("huckleberry brandy"), *vişinată* ("wild cherries brandy"), *caisată* ("peach brandy"), *secărică* ("rye brandy").

In the case of *Lloyd Restaurant,* there is no special section in the traditional menu, but the dishes are present in the general menu under the name of "traditional dish": *gustare ţărănească* ("peasant entrée"), *ciorbă ţărănească de văcuţă* ("beef soup"), *sărmăluţe în foi de varză, cu costiţă şi smântână* ("forcemeat rolls with cabbage and cream"), *ciolan afumat cu fasole albă* ("smoked bone and white beans"), *mămăliguţă cu brânză şi smântână* ("cheese and cream with polenta"), *sărmăluţe în foi de varză, cu costiţă şi smântână* ("forcemeat rolls with cabbage"). Some of the dishes do not exist under the name of "traditional dish" but the specificity of the terms illustrates the roots they have in the traditional space: *ficăţei de pui cu costiţă* ("chicken liver with chop"), *tocăniţă piperată de văcuţă* ("spicy beef stew"), *friptură de porc la tavă* ("fried pork"), *muşchiuleţ împănat de porc* ("larded pork fillet"), *tăiţei cu nuci* ("nut noddles"), *ciorbă ardelenească de porc* ("Transilvanian pork soup"), *ciulama de pui cu mămăliguţă* ("chicken blanquette and polenta") etc. The palatalized term *tochitură* appears in the menu of the restaurant in Timisoara, as a proof that the Moldavian model of this assortment made itself respect in other culinary areas.

The emphasis upon the "traditional" brand, is obviously part of the phatic strategy of attracting the client, of maintaining a permanent psychological relation with the possible client which appreciates the traditional values.

The same brand value, this time a bit different, belonging to another area, has the cosmopolite component of the menu, in which the foreign origin of some dishes attracts the client, ready to try something new, fashionable, innovative.

This aspect of the menus, marked by the influence of other gastronomic cultures is present both within the offer of *Lloyd Restaurant*, a space characterized as receptive to new, and the of the *Casa Bolta Rece Restaurant*, a place of traditional feast, but it is much more present in the first case.

With the *Lloyd Restaurant*, the foreign dishes, which are the product of the new inedible gastronomic experience, belong to occidental origin. Some of the terms were adapted in Romanian language, being less transparent concerning the origin of the dish. This is the case of some French names of dishes: *rulou de şuncă cu hrean* ("ham roll with horse radish"; *rulou* < fr. *rouleau*), *crochete de caşcaval* ("cheese croquettes"; *crochete* < fr. *croquettes*), *bulete de caşcaval* ("chesse balls"; *bulet* < fr. *boulette*), *omletă simplă* ("omlette"; *omletă*, fr. *omelette*), *sos de maioneză* ("mayonnaise"; *sos*, fr. *sauce*, *maioneză*, fr. *mayonnaise*), *supă de fasole albă cu costiţă* ("white beans soup with bones"; *supă*, fr. *supe*). Thanks to the way in which they are named, by enumerating the ingredients (often diminutives) are presented as authentic dishes.

The category of dishes' names which contain unadapted foreign terms is the main source for constructing a promoting strategy of the gastronomic offer with a cosmopolite specificity.the unadapted french terms insert the idea of sophistication:

BDD-A915 © 2009 Institutul de Filologie Română „A. Philippide"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:53:55 UTC)

clătite Creppe-Suzette (“Creppe-Suzette pancakes”), *consommé cu ou* (“consommé with eggs”), *coupe-jacques* (“coupe-jacques”), *filé de şalău à la bonne femme* (“pike perch fillet à la bonne femme”), *fileuri de anchoise* (“anchoise fillets”), *meloné glacé* (“meloné glacé”), *sos de unt maître d'hotel* (“butter sauce maître d'hotel”), *sos à la grec* (“sauce à la grec”), *sos vinaigrette* (“vinaigrette sauce”), *sos meunière* (“meunière sauce”), *sufleu surprise* (“*suffle surprise*”). As for the preparation mode, the French names are also present: *cartofi gratinați* (“breadcrumb potatoes”; ([a] *gratina*, fr. *gratiner*), *cartofi pireu* (“mashed potatoes”; *pireu*, fr. *purée*), *mazăre verde sote* (“green peas sote”; *sote*, fr. *sauté*). The only exception is the term *natur* which is of german origin. *Natur* is often used for *cartofi natur* (“natur potatoes”).The italian cuisine is present by means of unadapted termes: *carbonara spaghetti*, *ciociara spahetti*, *pene arabiata*, *tagliatelle toscana*. The English unadapted terms for dishes are less numerous: s*os Ketchup* (“Ketchup sauce”), *sos Worchester* (“Worchester sauce”), *cocktail cu cozi de raci* (“crowfish tails cocktail”), *steak Hawaii* (“Hawai steaki”), *pfeffersteak*, *mixed grilles*.

The relation between the foreign terms is an interesting aspect to be analyzed, in the case of dishes of the same type. For example, the dishes containing meat, in the section entitled “dishes à la carte” from the *Lloyd Restaurant* menu, has both French dishes, adapted or unadapted: *cotlet gratinat cu creier* (“brain dish cooked with breadcrumbs”; *cotlet*, fr. *côtelette*), *rulou de vițel cu ciuperci* (“beef roll with mushrooms”; *rulou*, fr. *rouleau*), *boeuf à la Stroganoff*, *Chateaubriand*, *Gordon bleu*, English name, *Hawaii steak, pfeffersteak*, *mixed grilles*, German name, *şnițel vienez* (“Vienna snitzel”; *şnițel*, germ. *Schnitzel*) or of Italian origin, *tournedo Rossini*, *saltimbocca*.

Another way to mark the belonging of different dishes to the gastronomic tradition of other countries is the presence of the peoples’ name or the area name of that particular dish: *cartofi şvăbeşti* (“Swabish potatoes”), s*alată şvăbească* (“Swabish salad”), *gulaş unguresc* (“gulash”), *salată germană cu cârnați* (“German salad with saussages”), *cotlet parizian* (“French chop”), *spaghete milaneze* (“Milan spaghetti”), *spaghete bologneze* (“Bologna spaghetti”), *spaghete napolitane* (“Napoli spaghetti”).

Among the dishes which betray the influence of the occidental cuisine, the menu of *Casa Bolta Rece Restaurant* presents some specialities which exist in the restaurant in Timisoara also, the difference is done by the diversity of offer in the case of the later.

Specific dishes having French names are present in the menu of the traditional restaurant, *gordon bleu*, *cotlet de porc pané* (“pané pork chop”), *filé de şalău pané* (“pané pike perch fillet”), *filé de şalău meunière* (“meunière pike perch fillet”), *rulou din cotlet cu ciuperci* (“chop roll with mushrooms”), German origin, *şnitel din muşchi de vită* (“beef tenderloin snitzel”), Italian origin, *spaghete cu sos, şuncă şi caşcaval* (“spaghete with sauce, chesse and ham”). The fact that the *Casa Bolta Rece Restaurant*, is not a cosmopolite space is proved by the presence of various types of *sandwich*, a fast-food dish, of an English origin. Hence, the ways of attracting the clients searching for the new are present in the offer of a traditional restaurant too.

Both the traditional and the cosmopolite component of the menus presented stand for the promoting strategy used by the restaurants, which are but phatic manifestations of the advertising communication, and elements that indicate the manifestation of the national consciousness in the context of globalization.

BDD-A915 © 2009 Institutul de Filologie Română „A. Philippide”
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:53:55 UTC)

Bibliography

Albrow 1990: M. Albrow, *Globalisation, Knowledge and Society. Reading from International Sociology*, London, Sage.

Cuisinier, Jean, (1999), *The European Etnology*, Iaşi, The European Institute Publishing House.

Coşeriu 1994: Eugen Coşeriu, *The Antropological Linguistics in time and space* Chişinău, Ştiinţa Publishing House.

Coşeriu 2000: Eugen Coşeriu, *General Linguistics Courses*, Eugenia Bojoga (trad.), Chişinău, Arc Publishing House.

Dumistrăcel 2006: Stelian Dumistrăcel, *The mass media language winthin the Romania space - a perspective on functional styles*, Iaşi, The European Institute Publishing House.

Gafton 2001: Alexandru Gafton, *Romanian Language, historical elements,* Iaşi, "Restitutio" Publishing House.

Giddens 1990: A. Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, Cambridge, Polity.

Mazilu 1999: Dan-Horia Mazilu, *We about the others. A false treaty on imagology*, Iasi, Polirom Publishing House.

Robertson 1992: R. Robertson, *Globalisation: Social Theory and Global Culture*, London, Sage.

Thompson 1995: J. B. Thompson, *The Media and Modernity*, Cambridge, Polity.

Zafiu 2001: Rodica Zafiu, *Stylistic diversity in nowadays Romanian*, Bucureşti, Bucharest University Publishing House.

Dictionaries

DA = [Academia Română] *Dicţionarul limbii române*; I/I, literele A-B, Bucureşti, 1913; I/II, litera C, Bucureşti, 1940; I/III, fascicula I, D - *de*, Bucureşti, 1949; II/I, literele F-I, Bucureşti, 1934; II/II, fasc. I, J - *lacustru*, Bucureşti, 1937; II/III, *ladă - lojniţă* [s.a].

DLR = [Academia Română], *Dicţionarul limbii române* (serie nouă), Editura Academiei, t. VI, litera M (1965-1968); VII/1, litera N (1971); VII/2, litera O (1969); VIII/1-5, litera P (1972-1984); IX, litera R (1975); X/l-5, litera S (1986-1994); XI/1, litera Ş (1978); XI/2-3, litera T (1982-1983); XII/1, litera Ţ (1994); XIII/1, litera V (V - *veni*; 1997).

MDA = [Academia Română, Institutul de lingvistică „Iorgu Iordan"], *Micul dicţionar academic*, vol. I-IV, Bucureşti, Editura Univers Enciclopedic, 2001-2003.

Abstract

In the Romanian language the discourse of *food* offers one an overview of the national identity of the place in the context of globalization. Within the discourse of food (recipes, gastronomic jokes), the discourse of the menus plays an important role. The name of the dishes, their description in the menu show the national trace, or that of other nationalities which is but a strategy to attract the decoder, to raise his interest and gastronomic curiosity. By analyzing the discourse of the menus of two different restaurants, one will reach the conclusion that by using the name of the dishes and their image in the menu to mark the national identity is just a way to create a phatic communion between the interlocutors.

"Vasile Alecsandri" University, Bacău
Romania

BDD-A915 © 2009 Institutul de Filologie Română „A. Philippide"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:53:55 UTC)