A LINGUSTIC PERSPECTIVE ON THE PRESS IN OLTENIA

Ana-Maria DUDĂU
"Constantin Brâncuşi" University of Târgu-Jiu

Abstract

The language of the press recorded constantly a lot of innovations and deviations in relation to the landmarks at all levels of language: phonetic, in the ironic elaboration of certain archaic and regional forms, lexical, by the ingenuity of derivation, by composition using cropping, loans from British English or American English, grammatical and textual – the presence of hybrid structures in terms of text organization which do not observe its fundamental features: cohesion and coherence. The motivations of such forms and structures are multiple: lack of grammatical rules, parody speech of officials, creating a verbal interaction with the reader/listener or viewer, imposing a house style of the publication or broadcast.

Key words: *press, regional, archaic forms, borrowing, text management*

Résumé

Le langage de la presse a constamment enregistré bon nombre d'innovations et de déviations par rapport à la forme officiellement correcte, et cela à tous les niveaux de la langue: phonétique, de par l'emploi ironique de certaines formes archaiques et/ou régionales, adaptées au contexte; lexical, de par l'originalité dans la dérivation, dans la composition par troncations ou vu l'usage fait d'emprunts de l'anglais ou de l'anglais américain; grammatical et textuel, pour ce qui tient à la gestion du texte: nous sommes en présence de structures hybrides, qui ne respectent plus les traits fondamentaux d'un texte correct, à savoir la cohésion et la cohérence. Il y a de multiples motivations pour l'existence de telles formes et structures: méconnaissance de la grammaire; intention parodique à l'égard du discours de certains dignitaires; volonté de créer une interaction verbale d'avec le lecteur/auditeur/spectateur; désir d'imposer un style distinct à ladite publication ou émission.

Mots-clés: *presse, formes régionale, archaïques, emprunts, gestion du texte*

It is known that any living language is constantly reshaping itself, the direction of manifestation of this "transformation" being always the same: from society – the origin of the change – to vocabulary-the receiver of the change.

Slowly, over the centuries, people forget their earlier stages of life, resorting to other layers of culture that come with their novelty and cover the old ones.

Between them, however, there are no tarpaulins, to isolate them forever, but instead, all are subject to an osmosis which pushes part of what was up to something new, and vice versa.

The language of the press recorded constantly a lot of innovations and deviations in relation to the landmarks at all levels of language: phonetic, in the ironic elaboration of certain archaic and regional forms, lexical, by the ingenuity of derivation, by composition using cropping, loans from British English or American English,

BDD-A9558 © 2014 Editura Sitech
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.143 (2026-11-19 08:46:04 UTC)

grammatical and textual – the presence of hybrid structures in terms of text organization which do not observe its fundamental features: cohesion and coherence. The motivations of such forms and structures are multiple: lack of grammatical rules, parody speech of officials, creating a verbal interaction with the reader/listener or viewer, imposing a house style of the publication or broadcast.

The dynamic style of the language in all its functional aspects, journalistic language is a fertile field for linguistic research at all levels, showing an openness to functional variants of the language and tending to setup its own discursive grammar, subordinated to oral grammar.

There are more than 150 years which confirm that the press was a necessary and important tool of information and multilateral education of our nation.

Bookmen, people with various professions, with a reading taste and love for the written word, sought to bring in Gorj county publications coming out after 1820. About some of them, we have reliable information.

It is known, for instance, that *Magazin istoric pentru Dacia/ Historical magazine for Dacia*, edited by Nicolae Bălcescu and August Tr. Laurian and, *Curierul de ambe sexe*/*The courier of both sexes* made their way in Târgu-Jiu. The latter magazine mentioned, edited by Ion Eliade Radulescu, had from the first year of issues six subscribers from Gorj.

To prepare the conditions for editing certain local publications, in Târgu-Jiu, 60 years had to pass since the publication in the country, in 1820, of the first journals and newspapers. This event happened after 1880, when the first printing workshop appeared in the only town of Gorj. We are now on the verge of a century of Gorj press and we are counting 150 publications published in its localities.

Vulcanul (*The Volcano*) is the first weekly magazine of Târgu-Jiu, which came out in January 1882 at the National Typography Nicu D. Miloşescu. It seems that in the same year a political newspaper, *Vocea Gorjului* (*The Voice of Gorj*), was published, but there are no more copies stored.

Another newspaper, *Săteanul* (*The Villager*) with the editorial office in Târgu-Cărbuneşti would be published between February 24, 1883 and September 1884. In the spring of 1894, after a three year absence of any local newspaper, the city intellectuals clustered around Alexander Ştefulescu and Emanoil Pârăeanu, deciding to edit a magazine of science and literature, *Jiu* (April 15, 1894 – May 1, 1895).

From 1904 until after the First World War (1920) the following publications appeared: *Vocea Jiului* (1904-1905), *Alegătorul* (1905), *Bicicleta* (1906), *Respunsul Gorjului*(1906), *Gorjul Nou* (1908), *Zorile* (1909-1910), *Dreptatea* (1912), *Lupta* (1913), *Buletinul Gorjului* (1917), *Jiul Nou* (1919), etc.

In the research on the dialectal structure of Daco-Romanian it is considered that the speech from Oltenia does not represent a special subdialect, but a subordinate speech of the Wallachian subdialect. Indeed, phonetic, morphological or lexical peculiarities forming exclusive areas in Oltenia are insufficient and of minor importance (with some exceptions, for example, the use of the perfect simple for recent actions) so that the speech in this region can be characterized as the sixth Daco-Romanian subdialect. The dialects of the Romanian language are unifying and this is most visible in terms of vocabulary. The press of Gorj kept many ancient elements.

Out of nearly 90 words of certain origin, coming from the Geto-Dacian substratum or from the word stock shared with Albanian and 40 words of uncertain

BDD-A9558 © 2014 Editura Sitech
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.143 (2026-11-19 08:46:04 UTC)

native origin, most of them are spoken by the villagers from the upper course of the Jiu river .

Part of this native vocabulary of the Romanian language, mostly shared with Albanian and other Balkan languages, changed in time its phonetic body, but the meaning is the same today unless they somehow became polysemantic.

Some words of Latin origin have been preserved as regional archaic elements with the meaning or form close to the Latin etymon *căpeţăl* < Lat. *capitellum* ("prescure"), *cucui* < Lat. *cucullius* ("deal", "movilă"), *harotine*, *hoare* < cf. Lat. *ovaria* ("păsări de curte"), *scamn* < Lat. scamnum ("scaun")[1].

All the words above are old words, some of them found especially in, *Zorile* and, *Vocea Jiului*, which proves, moreover, that we are in front of a conservative area. Therefore we agree with Al. Niculescu, who reveals that "The Latinity of the Romanian language is an infinite and inexhaustible source of research and ideas in which every linguist who studies the history of our language must try his pen and resourcefulness to uncover the truth".

There are, in the press of Oltenia, quite a few words that send us to Serbian etymons: *chită* < Sb. *kyta* ("buchet"), *a chiti* < Sb. *kititi* ("a aranja"), *lubeniţă* < Sb. *lubenica*, *ljubenica*; Bg. *любениця* ("pepene verde"), *postavă* < Sb. *postava*, *mau* < Sb. *mah* ("avânt", "putere"): *i-a luat maul/piuitul* ("i-a luat puterea, forţa, n-a mai putut vorbi")[2]. Regarding the contact of the Romanians with the Serbs, it has its beginning not earlier than the 11th century and it is extremely valuable for the Romanian language, since an important category of such loans entered the Romanian representative vocabulary.

Some words have Bulgarian etymons and they entered the language particularly through direct contacts between populations at a later time and encountered on a territory immediately close to the Bulgarian language (Muntenia, Dobrogea, Oltenia) in more or less flat areas. *Dănac* ("flăcău") < Bg. *danaku*; *ulei* ("stup primitiv") *ulei* < Slv. *олей*, bg. *улей* (Munt., Olt.), but also *untdelemn*, cf. Slv. *др□в□но мас□о*, etc.

The Oltenian researched texts contain few regional terms of different origin: *cunie* < cf. Ukr. *кухня* ("bucătărie"), *sobă* < Turk. *soba*, Hung. *szoba* ("dormitory"), *târnaţ* < Hung. *tornác* ("prispă")[3].

These preserved items are probably due to the overflow of population from Ardeal to Oltenia, after the 15-16th centuries, words that are listed in the literary texts until the Reform. The Germanic influence on our language is reduced compared with other influences with which we had more contact. Some elements are still found in dialectal speech: *raină* < cf. Germ. *Reine* "cratiţă", *rapăn* "încărcat de fructe"; it is not about any skin disease on the animal, or on grape-vine, *tron* < Germ. Dialectal *Truhen* "sicriu".

The dialectal vocabulary in the locality or area, starting with the substratum elements, those of Latin origin and other origins, is rich enough also having its own characteristics.

Some words preserved some old shade of meaning, as *jidov*(*e*) "uriaş, om puternic" (huge, big man), *lesne* "ieftin, usor" (cheap, easy), *sobă* "cameră de dormit"

[1] *Rămurele*, 1931, p. 21, 24-27.
[2] *Mişcarea culturală*, 1926, p. 22-27.
[3] *Mişcarea culturală*, 1926, p. 25, 27.

BDD-A9558 © 2014 Editura Sitech
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.143 (2026-11-19 08:46:04 UTC)

(bedroom), *odaie* , "camera cea bună"(the good room)[4]. Connected with the words in the human vocabulary, we see a specific phonetic adaptation: *cumpanie* "companie, *decorațâie* "decorație", *gardilop* "garderob", *molоment* "monument", *țâment* "ciment", *prioteasa* "preoteasa".

As popular etymologies, we can observe: *albocalmin* "algocalmin", *tamburel* "taburet, scaun", *smaragduri* "smaralde", *pârte* "pârtie", *adăoga* "adăuga", *odina* "odihna", *fomeia* "femeia", *perceptori* "preceptori", *ălbie* "albie", *holboiați* "bolboiați", *cartaboşi* "caltaboşi", *palanța* "balanța"[5].

The large number of neologisms in dialects is an index of the degree of ingress of standard language in rural areas. There is a big competition between literary, popular and regional terms (dialectal terms). At the level of dialect, regional terms are more widely used.

New terms along with the dialectal ones form together synonymic areas. These double series formed of elements that belong to language and dialects, used by the old generation and the young one, give to dialectal vocabulary a touch of variety, wealth and also a specific linguistic colour.

In the process of modernization, internationalization and re-Latinization of the Romanian vocabulary, the French influence is the most important. The influence of French on Romanian was visible at the end of the 17th century, but in the 19th century it became even more powerful, continuing nowadays, and emanating terminologies in a variety of specialized fields. Feeling related through their historical origins, through the way of thinking and feeling, the Romanians saw in France the ideal landmark to return to Europe. An essential role in imposing the French influence, was played by two main factors: a) extralinguistic: disappearance of old institutions and life forms, of Slavic-Greek-Turkish origin in the context of the western civilisation, of an essentially French structure; b) linguistic: the syntactic-stylistic French words and structures replaced the Slavic, Greek, Turkish ones etc. because of the novelty, fashion, prestige, wealth, subtlety of the French language.

Even if the influence of French was overrated, it was exerted over the Romanian lexicon: "the most powerful influence of all modern ones which have been exerted over the Romanian language". Of the great number of neologism borrowed from French, most of them have been preserved in the language, which proves that they were, more or less, in harmony with the spirit of our language and thus were felt as necessary. Some of them were deprived of the prospect generalization, and somehow they did not meet some real requirements (either they had perfect equivalents from a semantic standpoint or they were felt as useless elements, etc). That is why these terms never got integrated, and they were removed to the peripheral area of the vocabulary where they completed the reserve of passive vocabulary.

Neologisms enter not just common language, but also dialectal units, regional speech, through the press and literary texts. Some of them enter the speech along with the literary utterance and are used in this way at least by some of the speakers, who, usually, have some prestige in the region.

Some of them are adapted to the phonetic system of the dialect, and others adapt, but partially. Finally a small part of them, that are not understood well or are associated

[4] Zorile, 1910, p. 22, 27.
[5] Gorjeanul, 1933, p. 21, 22, 27.

BDD-A9558 © 2014 Editura Sitech
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.143 (2026-11-19 08:46:04 UTC)

with another word, enter the dialect with a distorted form: *undulez*, *arănja*, *atăşa*, *carcelă*, *agrală*, *clanaret*, *lecramant*, *doftor*[6].

Over its evolution, a language borrows some terms from other languages. But learning concepts of modern culture raises a series of difficulties regarding its total integration in the register of another language: formal adaptation (phonetic and grammatical) and semantic. Phonetic adaptation represents the pressure of the language-receptor system – through the articulation base – on foreign sounds and contexts to make them get closer to the ones resulted from its historical evolution. That is why, some borrowings do not have a unique and stable form for a long time. The existence of these fluctuations, the alternative forms (phonetic variants), can have various causes: introduction of some different language variants; pressure of the Romanian language system which determines the adaptation of some forms through analogy with inherited Latin terms or with older borrowings; the adaptation of some variants which reflect the etymon better than others.

From what we have mentioned above, we can say that, as a result of language evolution and improvement of its morphematic structures, a part of the derived lexical units get out of use and become archaic (some of them there are not even known to current speakers of Romanian, and the other speakers avoid using them, because they see their colourful archaic structure).

As we can see, the semantic broadening and changes in the meaning of Romanian words is one of the greatest virtues of the language, which offers some new ways of expression: *Precum intr-un sanctuar* (M. Eminescu, *As a Sanctuary*), in language "we build up rock by rock everything we had before", the traditions of our ancestry. The research on the archaic meanings of some Romanian phraseological components from our current language, enables us to reveal one more time how our ancestors' life, faith, historic events left their mark on it.

The vocabulary of the analyzed texts has a popular characteristic, that is why it has also been used in the Academy Dictionary. Some words, also known in the dialects used in the neighbouring regions of Oltenia, are, still, more frequent in this area. Here are some of them: *a* – preposition: *soarele a chindie*; *an*: *anul trecut* (in Latin: *anno*), *bia* inter. which expresses affection: *Ce vă-i, bia, face, de plângeți*?, *a crici* ("a atrage atenția cu insistență"/'to draw attention'), *funcie* noun ("butoiaș"), *a (h)udi* ("a rămâne"), *a hurui* ("a dărâma"), *jeg* ("murdărie", "râp"), *maichea/machea* adv. which expresses surprise, perplexity; *muică* "mumă, bunică", *postavă/postăviță* ("albie"), *prânzu-ăl mare* ("amiază"), *stelniță* ("ploșniță"), *străfigat* ("strănut"), *pe tocmai* ("pe potrivă"), *tron* ("sicriu"), *o țâră/o țârâşică* ("puțin"), *vâi* ("vai"), *a zvidui* ("a lecui"), *dârjală* ("ciomag"), *gârligi* ("intrare în bordei"), *praftoriță* ("un fel de uşă"), *corlată* ("poliță îngustă"), *zălar* ("lemn gros"), *teiele* ("urzeala rogojinii"), *strelice* ("picătură"), *zgoandă* ("glumă"), *dănănaie* ("întâmplare"), *posod* ("pârghie de lemn"), *lăptoc* ("scoc")[7].

So, in an attempt to study language, we start to know our history better, but, just like The Grand Pyramid, and the symbols, and myths, the Romanian language tries to transmit some coded information. To decipher it, we often need deep diggings and in-depth studies.

[6] *Mişcarea culturală*, 1926, p. 24-26.
[7] *Gorjeanul*, 1933, p. 20, 23, 24, 26, 27.

BDD-A9558 © 2014 Editura Sitech
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.143 (2026-11-19 08:46:04 UTC)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brâncuş, Grigore, *Graiul din Oltenia*, in LR, no. 3/1962, p. 248-260.

Brâncuş, Grigore, *Vocabularul autohton al limbii române*, Bucureşti, Editura Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică, 1983.

Costinescu, M., Georgescu, *Dicţionarul limbii române vechi*, Bucureşti, Editura Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică, 1987.

Coteanu, I., *Elemente de dialectologie a limbii române*, Bucureşti, Editura Ştiinţifică, 1961,

Coteanu, I., Bidu-Vrănceanu, Angela, *Limba română contemporană*, *Vocabularul*, Bucureşti, Editura Didactică şi Pedagogică, 1975.

Coteanu, I. *Structura şi evoluţia limbii române* (*de la origini pînă la 1860*), Bucureşti, Editura Academiei Române, 1981.

Coteanu, I., Forăscu, Narcisa, Bidu-Vrănceanu, Angela, *Limba română contemporană*, *Vocabularul*, Bucureşti, Editura Didactică şi Pedagogică, 1985.

Coteanu, I., Sala, M. *Etimologia şi limba română*, Bucureşti, Editura Academiei Române, 1987.

Densusianu, O. *Istoria limbii române*, vol. I , *Originile*, Bucureşti, Editura Ştiinţifică, 1961.

Diaconescu, P. *Structură şi evoluţie în morfologia substantivului românesc*, Bucureşti, Editura Academiei Române, 1970.

Dimitrescu, Florica, *Contribuţii la istoria limbii române vechi*, Bucureşti, Editura Didactică şi Pedagogică, 1973.

Gâlcescu, Teodor, *Cercetări asupra graiului din Gorj*, in "Grai şi suflet", V/1931, p. 249-270.

Hristea, Theodor, *Probleme de etimologie*. *Studii*. *Articole*. *Note*, Bucureşti, Editura Ştiinţifică, 1968.

Pănoiu-Pancras, P., *Amintiri despre starea culturală din Gorjiu*, in "Revista Jiului", I, no. 11-12, 9 iunie 1921, p. 45.

Sala, M., *De la latină la română*, Bucureşti, Editura Univers Enciclopedic, 1998.

*** *Glosar dialectal Oltenia* (GDO), Bucureşti, Editura Academiei Române, 1967.

SOURCES

Gorjanul, no. 29/07.08.1933.

Zorile, no.7/02.1910.

Rămurele, no.7/10.1931.

Mişcarea culturală, no.24/12.1926.

Buciumul, no. 8, 9/12.1925.

Crinul satelor, no. 2/02.1924; no. 7/10.1923.

Credința, no.1/05.1931.

Îndrumarea nouă, no. 2/04.1937.

Foaie pentru suflet, no. 5, 8/1993.

Gazeta Gorjului, no. 23, 31/1968; no. 45/1969.

BDD-A9558 © 2014 Editura Sitech

Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.143 (2026-11-19 08:46:04 UTC)