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PHRASEOLOGY AS AN AUTONOMOUS LINGUISTIC DISCIPLINE

Current state of the topic in Romanian linguistics

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Abstract
The objective of this study is to review the main contributions of Romanian linguistics to the definition of phraseology as an autonomous linguistic discipline, with the aim of specifying its object of investigation and studying the linguistic phenomena characteristic of this discipline.

Key words: phraseology, linguistic discipline, Romanian linguistics

1. The status of phraseology and its object of investigation

Phraseology is an intermediary field, being close, in the reference literature, both to vocabulary studies, since it studies fixed word combinations, characterized by a unitary meaning, as well as to syntax, since phraseologic phenomena are defined by syntactic relations of various kinds, which are realized on a syntagmatic axis (Boroianu, 1974, I: 24). Given the expressive nature of phraseologic phenomena, these have also been associated to stylistics (Bally, 1951: 66-87; Iordan, 1975: 265-304). Taking into consideration the possibility of differentiating styles and functional variants of a language by analysing phraseologic units, it has been particularly drawn closer to functional stylistics (Coteanu, 1973: 99).

But beyond the closeness to different linguistic disciplines, phraseology tends to be regarded as an autonomous discipline, with its own object and methods of investigation (Hristea, 1984: 134).

The term *phraseology* designates the discipline as well as its object, the set or totality of phraseologic units in a given language. According to the origin of phraseologisms, a line has been drawn between two areas of investigation, namely, *linguistic phraseology* understood as "a community's means of expression" and *literary phraseology* including "aphorisms, witticism, word combinations with an accidental character, belonging to certain writers, outstanding people" (Boroianu, 1974, I: 27).

As an autonomous discipline, the object of research of phraseology consists in *phraseologic units* from a given language (or a group of languages).

The concept of *phraseologic unit* (*unité phraséologique*) has been first used by Charles Bally, in *Précis de stylistique*, wherefrom it was taken by V. V. Vinogradov and other Soviet linguists, who translated it by

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frazeologhiceskaia edinitsa, which led to the term *frazeologhizm*, with the same meaning, and then subsequently borrowed by different languages belonging to the European culture (Hristea, 1984: 138). In present-day Romanian linguistics, the concepts of *phraseologic unit* and *phraseologism* are seriously challenged, on different levels, by the structures *stable syntactic groups*, *phraseologic groups*, *constant word combinations*, *fixed word combinations*, *fixed syntagms*, *syntagmatic units*. For that matter, Casia Zaharia has drawn out an extensive list of phraseologic terms used in Romanian and German linguistics and also wrote, at the same time and in a paper on comparative phraseology with a significant theoretical foundation, a biography of the most important ones (Zaharia, 2004: 97-107).

To clearly delineate the area of phraseology as a linguistic discipline, we may regard it as starting where vocabulary meets syntax, once the boundaries of the word - conceived as a semantic and functional unit contained in-between spaces (Boroianu, 1974, I: 27) - have been crossed. Therefore, the delineation of the field of phraseology requires, on the one hand, the separation of lexicology by illustrating the differences between the phraseologic unit and the compound word and, on the other hand, the separation from syntax by differentiation from syntagm or the phrase of an accidental, unrepeatable, unstable nature.

Fulvia Ciobanu and Finuța Hasan attempt to outline stable syntactic groups of words, starting from the premise that a compound represents one single word and the syntactic group, several words. Taking into account the three characteristics of a word, morphological unit, syntactic unit and syntactic behaviour, the authors aim at defining the category of compound words. Morphologically speaking, the elements which distinguish compound words from fixed syntactic groups are the presence of inflection, the indefinite article, the existence of a single main accent. Semantically speaking, the relations between the terms of the compound are, most of the times, understandable. In terms of syntactic behaviour, the compound word which displays morphological unity, behaves like a simple word, not allowing the insertion of a determinant, and compound words with no morphological unity can be separated by possessive or demonstrative adjectives (Ciobanu - Hasan, 1970: 8-19).

The difference between phraseological units and free word combinations is derived precisely from the syntactic stability of the former which, having been established through usage, are felt as distinct units due to the very fusion (to a larger or smaller extent) of the constitutive elements.

Anyway, the borders between free word combinations and phraseologic units, as well as those between a phraseologic unit and a compound word are volatile: due to frequent use, a free word combination may turn into a phraseologic unit and, in its turn, this may become, in time and also through

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frequent and long use, a compound word.

In *Stilistica limbii române*, Iorgu Iordan defines phraseologic structures, referred to in the paper by the term "isolations", as "fixed formulas, somehow created for good, that are handed down through tradition and remain unchanged both in terms of formal aspect and as meaning", motivating his calling it "isolation" with the fact that their "constitutive elements also isolate themselves from the rest of the linguistic material, in the sense that they are treated separately". These structures are "interesting exclusively for their meaning which is unitary, just like in the case of a single word" (Iordan, 1975: 209).

An essential thing to be taken into account is the connection between phraseologisms and metaphor. In *Lexic românesc. Cuvinte, metafore, expresii*, Stelian Dumistrăcel claimed that "*the connection between metaphors and idiomatic phrases* asserts itself on its own by the fact that they have the same stylistic function, expressivity and, logically speaking, by the fact that both carry a certain (figurative) meaning" (Dumistrăcel, 1980: 124). Concerning proverbs, Cezar Tabarcea went as far as to claim that they are deictic metaphors (Tabarcea, 1982: 42). It is known that in structures with a fixed nature, the degree of connotativeness accumulates from several sources. Elena Slave compares the connotative resources of a word with those of a lexical combination, showing that, whereas the connotation of a word results from addition, that of an idiom results from synthesis. For example, the connotation of the word *îngeraş* (*little angel*), with the meaning of "child" is obtained from the latent connotation of the meaning "child", plus the affective connotation of the suffix *-aş* and the one springing from the metaphor used, while the connotation of the compound *zgârie-brânză* (*tight-fisted*; literally: *scratch-cheese*) is the result of a synthesis superior to the two sources, namely *brânză* (literally, *cheese*) which, by the referential and socio-cultural aspect evokes a certain atmosphere, and *zgârie* (literally, *scratch*), whose connotative value results from the meaning of the act as related to the object *brânză* (Slave, 1974: 75). A very significant fact is that, as Cristina Florescu also observed, the connotativeness of fixed structures often manifests itself at the level of the colloquial register (Florescu, 2007: 175).

Therefore, the features which may be taken as criteria for distinguishing phraseological units are *stability* (manifested in the high frequency of occurrence in the language) and *semantic unity* (reflected in the lack of the correspondence between the general signification of the structure and the accumulation of significations of the constituent elements). The two characteristics are closely interconnected: the global signification associated with the group leads to its repetition, its frequent use leading to stability (Boroianu, 1974, I: 24).

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As recurring phenomena, phraseological units belong, therefore, to language in the Saussurean meaning of the term, or to the norm, as a field of linguistic tradition in the triadic distinction made by E. Coşeriu.

2. Types of phraseologic units

The variety of phenomena comprised by phraseology makes classification attempts difficult. External marks for recognizing a certain category of phraseologisms are related to the form of the group, the fixed order of elements, the reduced possibilities of separating them, the impossibility to replace one element or another, whereas internal marks are related to the fact that the entire ensemble embodies an act of unitary thinking, equivalent to a single word, the existence of certain syntactic-semantic phenomena characteristic of the group (the presence of certain lexical, semantic or syntactic archaisms, ellipsis or redundancy).

The types of phraseological units, which have received most attention in linguistic literature, have been *phrases* and *idioms*.

The definitions proposed for the term *phrase* generally have the same structure, highlighting traits such as stability, syntactic and semantic unity: "expression constituée par l'union de plusieurs mots formant une unité syntaxique et lexicologique" (Guiraud, 1962: 5), "the group of words more or less that are joined together, that has a unitary meaning and grammatically behaves as a single part of speech" (GA, I, 1966: 34), "a grouping of two or more words, unitary in meaning that relates to the context as a single element, no matter whether these relations are achieved by one of its constitutive elements or whether the group, as a whole, establishes connections as a single term" (Boroianu, 1974, II: 243).

Th. Hristea regards lack of expressivity as a criterion for distinguishing among phrases, although it is difficult to draw the line between phrase and idiom; most of the times, "a phrase comes from an idiom that was grammaticalized due to long use and loss of its expressiveness" (Hristea, 1977: 589). This criterion of expressiveness cannot be regarded as definitive for distinguishing the phrase from the idiom, given the fact that the majority of phraseologic units that have a unique grammatical function exist as a unity only on the basis of their figurative value. There are relatively few phrases – according to Elena Slave – that have been established by usage (Slave, 1966: 398). To distinguish among these units, Petru Zugun proposes to trace back their lexico-grammatical structure and their lexical-functional use (Zugun, 2000: 33). Therefore, the main feature of phrases is that they have a unique grammatical function, they play the role of a part of speech, a fact which springs from the relations it establishes with the context.

Concerning the second fundamental type of phraseologic unit, *the idiom*, despite the frequent use of the term in the well-established literature

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of phraseology, its features have been revealed particularly by relation to the stylistic-functional behaviour of phrases. Sometimes, there is not even a clear distinction between these two terms, their parallel use with the same meaning being the common practice.

The majority of studies dedicated to defining and describing idioms take into consideration the functional-structural and expressive criteria, although there is no common viewpoint concerning this issue. In terms of functionality, idioms have been defined by Ioana Boroianu as "fixed word groupings that cover a whole sentence, which have, therefore, a subject (expressed or general, widely-understood) predicated with contingent complements" (Boroianu, 1974, II: 243). The conclusion of the author cannot be accepted, the criterion of equivalence with a syntactic unit of the type of a sentence being irrelevant in defining this category. In *Locuțiunile verbale în limba română*, Florica Dimitrescu distinguishes between *phrases* ("group of words that are joined together in various degrees, with an established unitary meaning, that grammatically behaves like a single part of speech") and *idioms* ("word combinations – exceptionally, idioms may consist in only one word – carrying emotional content, characteristic of a certain language") (Dimitrescu, 1958: 62-68). One may notice that the concepts defined are not opposed, the particularities for each of them being selected from different classes of relations. For Theodor Hristea, given the fact that a clear line cannot be always drawn between phrases and idioms, the differences between the two categories may be identified on three levels: idioms are usually more complex than phrases in terms of structure, less "knitted together" or "petrified" and are, necessarily, the carriers of expressiveness due to the fact that their constituent elements are not too intimately joined together (Hristea, 1984: 250-251).

One category of idioms which raises analysis and definition difficulties is represented by *idiomatic phrases* (also called *idiotisms* or, even *idiomatisms*). The main characteristic of this category is that it has a figurative meaning which belongs to the entire phraseologic group, which is impossible to translate literally into another language (Hristea, 1984: 143).

The attempt to clearly outline the concept of idiomatic phrase fosters difficulties concerning the distinction between the idiomatic feature and the non-idiomatic feature, the degree of fusion of the constituent elements, and possibilities to translate from one language into another.

Moving from language towards the theory of language, Gertrude Gréciano has attempted to describe idiomatic phrases by tracing back their figurativeness, understood as a remetaphorisation of a literal signification with an explanatory or emotional function. According to the author, "the idiomatic phrase always results from a conceptual, and sometimes also simultaneous, reasoning; it is the result of symbolical thinking". The solution

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to disambiguation, understood as the reverse of "opacification", cannot be found but in the context and the speaker and, thus the epistemological dimension of idiomatic phrases is revealed (Gréciano, 1983: 274).

Having as a fundamental criterion the establishment of the stylistic value of idiotisms based on the relations among their intellectual values, objective communication and expressiveness degree, Al. Andriescu proposes - in *Valoarea stilistică a expresiilor idiomatice* - a classification of these "according to their power to sensitize communicant ideas". The author speaks about "idiotisms that have lost part of their initial emotional value by losing the ability to act as images" (the stylistic value is given by the presence of the terms in the passive background or by syntactic phenomena such as ellipsis), "idiotisms that have been created in certain historical circumstances" and that "no longer nurture their ability of concretisation by relating to the realities that created them but are based on some new associations, with no link to the initial realities" and "idotisms that ever since they were created - and nowadays, too - have been serving the needs of emotions as images" (Andriescu, 1956: 63-75). This classification has the disadvantage that it uses the degree of expressiveness as a criterion which involves a high level of subjectivity.

In *Lexic românesc. Cuvinte, metafore, expresii*, Stelian Dumistrăcel establishes a typology of idotisms taking into account the circumstances in which an expressive function occurs, distinguishing between two categories: *imaginary idioms*, with an unmediated stylistic function that were born as figures of speech properly, and *children-of-reality* idioms that were originally "technical" formulas whose stylistic function, in figurative use, is a derived one (Dumistrăcel, 1980: 136-137). Directed by non-contradiction and simplicity requirements, this classification has broad applicability.

Proverbs represent a syntactic combination whose simple level is the sentence and whose elements are used with a special meaning, with an overall symbolic value (Slave, 1967: 174). This distinguishes them, on the one hand, from the free word combinations and, on the other had, from fixed combinations with no symbolic value or from *sayings*, structures where only some observation is made and which represent "a fragment of a linguistic statement (whose centre is mainly a verb) that is part of the logic-semantic structure of the entire statement in which it occurs" (Tabarcea, 1982: 93).

Although they are said to be the research object of paremiology, proverbs and sayings may be included in phraseology, because they present the general functional traits of phraseologisms (stability, idiomaticity), features which cannot be ignored. Although they have not been a constancy in terms of language theory, the concerns for theorizing paremic structures have materialized in studies which aimed particularly at the possibilities of definition and classification as related to minimal phraseologisms, they

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themselves also divergently classified from this perspective.

A relevant systematization of proverbs is provided by applying the criterion of figurativeness and the cultural-historic approach, as they lead to establishing the originating fields. Iuliu Zanne makes a thematic organization of proverbs, distinguishing among the following areas: physical nature, animals, man and human organs, physical life, social life, history, beliefs, superstitions, customs, intellectual and moral life, philosophy. The same author, correlating the semantic perspective to the cultural-historic criterion, has stated a first difference between *universal proverbs* which "express a worldwide and always acknowledged truth", and *particular proverbs* which "rest on a fact found by experience, but a special and local experience concerning one or other people", a class which also includes sayings and idiotisms (Zanne, 1895, I: xx). Proverbs are also the object of interest for folklorists, being approached from the perspective of language ethnography.

Other types of phraseologisms are the *periphrases*, structures located, according to Ioana Boroianu, "on the edge between free word associations and phraseologic units" (*a face de mâncare* (*prepare a meal*), *a avea poftă* (*have a craving for*), *a-i fi foame* (*be hungry*), *a-i fi poftă de* (*crave for*); Boroianu, 1974, I: 33), defined and integrated by Th. Hristea in the object of study of phraseology, after having identified certain features characteristic of phraseologisms: frequency, expressivity, repeatability, age, meaning unity (Hristea, 1984: 145). The same category also comprises *synapses*, units that are made up of a determined and a determinant carrying the meaning of one single word [*alcool metilic* (*methanol*); Zugun, 2000: 21], *common combinations*, representing the names of certain institutions, titles of literary, scientific, cinematographic works, etc. (Zugun, 2000: 21), *emphatic phrases*, "fixed collocations where one of the terms adds a superlative meaning to the other" [*beat turtă* (*dead drunk*); Boroianu, 1974, II: 245], *stereotypical similes*, "emphatic phrases" where the comparison is maintained [*ieftin ca braga* (*as cheap as dirt*); Hristea, 1984: 146], *international formulas and clichés*, structures of a conventional and international nature, occurring in various languages of culture and civilisation [*mărul discordiei (the apple of discord)*, *oul lui Columb (Columbus' egg)*; Hristea, 1984: 144].

Theodor Hristea regards the origin or etymology of phraseologic units as essential for the study of phraseology, origin which might be *external*, loans from other languages and transfers from foreign patterns, and *internal*, by creation inside a language from pre-existing material (Hristea, 1977: 590). The issue of phraseologic units, approached in terms of the language from where they were taken, has involved the discussion of such aspects as their adjustment to the peculiarities of the Romanian language and frequency at the level of speech, such investigations leading to the introduction of the concepts of *phraseologic family*, "the totality of

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phraseologic units (of external or internal origin) that have at least one constitutive element" (Hristea, 1977: 593), *phraseologic derivation*, the process achieved "each time when, from a combination of words with a constant nature, another fixed lexical combination is created" (Hristea, 1984: 154), and *phraseologic field*, representing the totality of phraseologic units synonymous with the given term (Hristea, 1984: 157).

The inventory of terms related to phraseology and the research of the meanings of various terms bespeak the difficulties that the delimitation of the sphere of this linguistic discipline implies. Such efforts prove the complexity of the problems raised by theorizing phraseologisms, a complexity that is irreducible to unique and definitive solutions.

3. Repeated discourse

The concept of *repeated discourse* as theorized by Coşeriu and developed by Stelian Dumistrăcel, situate the discussion concerning phraseology in an area different from the one of previous linguistic contributions. A reason for changing the approach is provided by Coşeriu's view concerning *language* as a main object of linguistic research.

Having been identified by Coşeriu while describing functional language at the level of synchronous language and comparatively discussed in relation to the free technique (which consists of the constitutive elements of language and the "present" rules concerning their modification and combination), repeated discourse represents "everything from a community's language that is repeated in a more or less identical form, as an already made discourse or a more or less flexible combination, as a long or short fragment from «what has already been said»" (Coşeriu, 2000: 258-259).

In Coşeriu's view, a "concrete discourse may often be analogous to a painting partially realized as [a] collage; the painting may also contain, besides parts executed by the technique of the painter, fragments taken from other paintings, painted by other painters" (Coşeriu, 2000: 259), observations which are rephrased as follows: "in all these idioms, fixed phrases, proverbs, quotations etc, speech is like a kind of painting with simultaneous collage, namely, it is partially actual technique and partially fragments of already existing and carried on – so to say, by tradition – speech" (Coşeriu, 1994[a]: 55).

E. Coşeriu then gives examples of acts of speech belonging to repeated discourse: quotations, "repetition of fragments of literary or other - known as such – texts", proverbs, fixed phrases, wellerisms, i.e. "phrases introduced (or accompanied) by certain formulas" and that "claim to be referring to somebody's verbal reaction in a certain situation", certain syntagms, lexical periphrases, traditional comparison formulas, with the indication that the last three mentioned forms might constitute "an

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autonomous behaviour of idiomatic competence" (Coşeriu, 2000: 259-262).

In terms of functionality, the forms of repeated discourse, according to E. Coşeriu, differ in that their elements are not linguistically "structurable" because, since they are fixed, they are not substitutable ("commutable"); therefore, they are not part of actual functional oppositions (Coşeriu, 2000: 259). Although we "often play with these phrases, we understand that the new phrase alludes to the old phrase" (Coşeriu, 1994[a]: 55-56). Also, repeated discourse may be subjected to construction rules that have gone out of date, may contain unidentifiable forms (Coşeriu, 2000: 260). These are the reasons for which repeated discourse is eliminated from the field of functional language, as it does not take part in a system of oppositions that are current in language. Functional language is a homogeneous system, at the same time, *syntopic* (without differences in space or ignored differences in space), *synstratic* (without socio-cultural differences, at the same level, at a certain level, but not on more levels) and *symphasic* (a certain style of language), constituting the object of study of structural linguistics (Coşeriu, 1996: 25-26).

If repeated discourse is removed from the study of functional language, it is recovered by the study of speech that has to explain and observe "everything related to knowing things, everything that metalinguistic techniques imply, what repeated discourse is, what the diachrony of speakers is and the architecture of language known and used by speakers" (Coşeriu, 1994[a]: 62).

Eugeniu Coşeriu finds it necessary to distinguish among: 1) knowing language and knowing "things"; 2) language and metalanguage; 3) synchronic and diachronic; 4) free technique and "repeated discourse"; 5) "architecture" and "structure" of language (or *historic language and functional language*; Coşeriu, 2000: 250) not only to justify the separation of language as a homogeneous system, but to justify speech. Coşeriu reverses Ferdinand de Saussure's principle, who viewed language as a measure for all language manifestations and takes speech as a basis, as a measure for language.

As far as the technique or repeated discourse is concerned, the Romanian scholar concludes: "Therefore, we need another science for repeated discourse" (Coşeriu, 1994[a]: 56).

Using Eugeniu Coşeriu's comments concerning the inter-subjective dimension of language viewed (particularly) as an assignment of the self towards others (Coşeriu, 1994[a]: 52), and positioning himself in the area of a linguistics of speech, Stelian Dumistrăcel associates the enunciation belonging to repeated discourse (ERD) first of all to the phatic function, in its widest meaning, of language as a way of action in conventional, "self-referential" utterances which aim at sociability, the connection between

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sender and receiver (Dumistrăcel, 2006[a]: 27). The ERD contributes in setting up a "phatic communion" whose textual manifestations may be of a manipulative nature, oriented, beyond the establishment of empathy, towards seducing and even the direct incitation of the receiver.

Stelian Dumistrăcel deals with the functionality of repeated discourse, going beyond the perspective of his mentor, Eugeniu Coşeriu. The elements of repeated discourse, in Coşeriu's view, are distinguishable by the fact that since they are fixed, they are not substitutable ("commutable"); by not participating into present functional oppositions (Coşeriu, 2000: 259), be it even modified, the new phrase alludes to the old one (Coşeriu, 1994[a]: 55-56). What is interesting, according to Stelian Dumistrăcel, although it does not generate functional oppositions, is the modification of the repeated discourse itself which represents a means of "updating" (in Coşeriu's use of the term) this technique by "transforming the virtual designation into current designation" (Coşeriu, 2004: 302-303).

Analysing the intended, conscious and occasional changes of utterances pertaining to repeated discourse in the journalistic discourse of current Romanian press, Stelian Dumistrăcel believes that they are an expression of the primary universals of language (creativity and alterity), and, technically speaking, they prove to be governed by the rules of the four "construction figures" that Quintilian referred to as solecisms in *Institutio oratoria*, and which he called *adiectio* (addition), *detractio* (deletion), *immutatio* (substitution) and *transmutatio* (permutation; cf. Dumistrăcel, 2006[a]: 134-149). The universality of these "schemes" is given by their presence, starting with the level of the syntax of parts of speech and order (facts which constituted the focus of attention for Quintilian) and up to the modification of narrative structures, studied in *Rhétorique générale* by the μ Group, as well as by Heinrich Plett, in *Textwissenschaft und Textanalyse: Semiotik, Linguistik, Rhetorik* , the phenomenon actually being the foundation for structuring the respective exegeses (Dumistrăcel, 2006[b], 45-55).

Carrying out a systematic approach to ERD contexts, from the perspective of cultural anthropology, a criterion which has the advantage of an assessment at the level of the theory of language and of "language universals", Stelian Dumistrăcel also proposes an actual classification of ERD, a classification which succeeds in realizing a full organization of the material.

The author distinguishes between two main types:

[A] "anonymous" sayings and

[B] sayings by known authors.

"Anonymous" sayings [A] are, in turn, of two types:

[A^1] folk and

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[A²] literate.

The first category [A¹] comprises two classes:

[α] EDR representing "speech" and

[β] "quotations" from folk literature.

[α] Speech contexts are mainly organized in the following categories:

[a] expressive phrases;

[b] idiomatic phrases;

[c] parimies (sayings, proverbs);

[d] common phrases / stereotypical similes.

[β] The following categories of utterances, from folk literature, are considered when they behave like ERD:

[a] actual lyrics;

[b] stereotypical fairytale formulas;

[c] "riddles".

[A²] Literate anonymous utterances are generally represented by the following categories of contexts:

[a] formulas from the religious discourse;

[b] dicta;

[c] slogans;

[d] technical formulas from various texts belonging to functional styles;

[e] famous proper names, a less important category included here because of the general resemblance in the status within the process of communication, to the previous ones.

[B] Utterances (mainly) belonging to known authors are represented by the following categories:

[a] titles of various genres of works (fiction, history, essays, musical works, films, works of fine arts);

[b] quotes from (written) works belonging to the previous category;

[c] "famous" words attributed to historical, cultural (literature, philosophy, arts) key figures, in the field of sciences and public life (Dumistrăcel, 2006[b]: 156-157).

This typology of contexts of the type of utterances belonging to repeated discourse favours the analysis of the issues of "destructuring" and "restructuring", as means of meaningful utterance whose effects are related to subtle communicational strategies.

If the recently cited works (published in 2006) of linguist Stelian Dumistrăcel, *Limbajul publicistic românesc din perspectiva stilurilor funcționale* and *Discursul repetat în textul jurnalistic. Tentația instituirii comuniunii fatice prin mass-media*, generally situate the discussion concerning this ERD in the field of speech and particularly that of discourse, the same subject, but approached in terms of historical speech, as a

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community's specific way of speaking, has been presented since 1980 in *Lexic românesc. Cuvinte, metafore, expresii* as well as in the two editions of the dictionary *Până-n pânzele albe. Expresii româneşti* (1997, respectively, 2001). These works raise the issue of repeated discourse, considering the sign of language as a "historic way of speaking", "a 'science' of speaking according to a tradition (Coşeriu, 2004: 292). Following Coşeriu's view upon a linguistics of speech, Stelian Dumistrăcel has formulated the principle according to which language should be explained from the point of view of speech and not vice-versa. To explain the value of a phrase in terms of language, the quoted author makes use of circumstantial tools of linguistic activity, elements referred to by Coşeriu as "frames" and of which he says that they interfere "in any speech activity, for there is no discourse that occurs outside certain circumstances, without a certain "background" (Coşeriu, 2004: 315).

4. Closing remarks

Relating the research of linguists Eugeniu Coşeriu and Stelian Dumistrăcel in the field of repeated discourse provides the opportunity to reveal the process of setting up and developing a field of investigation. One may catch a glimpse of the path opened by Coşeriu's view towards defining and situating the object of research, repeated discourse, within the linguistic system but, at the same time, one may evaluate, by means of the work of Stelian Dumistrăcel, the movement of this discipline of ERD towards improving the investigation methods and discovering the laws that govern it.

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