ASPECTS OF SYNONYMY IN THE TEXTS OF SCIENCE POPULARIZATION WRITTEN BY THE "ŞCOALA ARDELEANĂ" SCHOLARS

Liliana SOARE
University of Piteşti

ABSTRACT

The research of synonymy, *well-represented in the texts of popularization science elaborated by the Transylvanian scholars*, *represents an important source of identifying some decisive elements for the configuration of the literary language of the period. In order to obtain an accurate image of the synonymy relations*, *we selected texts belonging to various scientific fields* (*medical texts*, *texts of natural sciences*, *geography*, *mathematics*, *linguistics*), *both translations and original works. The study pinpoints the resources of synonymy and how they manifest in the texts analyzed*; *thus*, *it was observed that the relation of synonymy is established between: old*, *traditional and regional terms*; *old terms and lexical borrowings*; *terms created in the language by calques or*, *more seldom*, *by derivation and lexical borrowings*; *regional terms and lexical borrowings*; *groups of words and lexical borrowings*; *lexical borrowings entered in Romanian from the same or various culture languages*, *in the same time or in different periods of time. As regards the number of the terms which are equalized within the linguistic mechanism of glosses*, *there were established synonymic series with two*, *three*, *four and five terms*, *with the observation that the bi-member series are the most frequently used. The series are also discussed from the perspective of their development*, *being emphasized the various changes at various levels.*

Key words: *lexical borrowings*, *synonymy*, *synonymic relations*, *synonymic series*, *terminology*

Synonymy, as "an indicator of each language's development and perfecting level"[1], represents a semantic category relevant for the constitution of the various special vocabularies in the science fields. Vocabulary, the most flexible language sector, permanently adapts to the society's requirements of denoting, as accurate as possible, the new concepts and ideas. The changes in the vocabulary have direct consequences in the area of lexical synonymy, a phenomenon which, being sensitive to its transformations, "records all the moves caused by neologisms in the vocabulary"[2]. Thus, synonymy is in deep concordance with the language and vocabulary development. The existence of synonyms provides the language with more various and nuanced

[1] M. Bucă, I. Evseev, *Probleme de semasiologie*, Timişoara, 1976: 118.
[2] O. Vinţeler, *Probleme de sinonimie*, Bucureşti, 1983: 97.

BDD-A3776 © 2008 Editura Sitech
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-02 05:18:49 UTC)

possibilities of expression, their appearance being closely related to the language history and evolution[3].

The perspective of our analysis is a historical one, in our attempt to retain several elements of diachronic constitution of synonymic equivalents: "By observing the relations between old and new, between tradition and innovation within the vocabulary, by the concrete research of diachronic constitution of synonymic equivalents, a historical approach of synonymy can always lead to interesting conclusions"[4]. Such understood, synonymy represents "a diagnostic factor in the evolution of literary Romanian"[5].

The borrowing from various culture languages both in diachrony and synchrony, have contributed to the constitution of synonymic series[6]. Even at a superficial research of the vocabulary of science popularization texts, the synonymic series distinguish themselves through frequency, being characteristic to each special vocabulary. The variety and complexity of synonymic relations from special terminologies have multiple causes: the old tradition of some sciences (medicine, for example), the special interest shown by the Transylvanian scholars for one or other of the science fields, as well as the existence of parallel lexical strata in all terminologies; they are formed by a superposition of two types of vocabularies: an old, traditional one and a neologic, erudite one. The permanent interpenetration between the old and neologic terminologies caused the development of synonymic series with profound implications in the stylistic configuration of these texts.

We are to observe, as follows, which are these resources of synonymy and how they manifest in the texts researched, trying to catch the complexity of the relation constituted. Thus, the synonymy relations[7] are established between:

1. **old**, **traditional and regional terms**: *bale* "salivă" (LB, s.v., VA, 49) – *scuipat* (SIN, 90, VA, 49); *ghindură* "glandă" (SIN, 90, FDB, 88) – *ghindă* (VA, 242) – *gâlcă* (LB, s.v., VA, 243); *guturai* "catar" (LB, s.v.) – *troahnă* (LB, s.v.); *foale* "abdomen" (VA, 101) – *vintre*, *vintricel* (LB, s.v.), etc.

[3] O. Vințeler, *op. cit*.: 92.

[4] Doina Babeu, *Sinonimia*, *particularitate relevantă a lexicului*, în S. Drincu, Maria Purdela Sitaru (coord.), *Limba română literară în secolul al XVIII-lea. I. Lexicul tipăriturilor blăjene din perioada 1750-1760*, *II*, Timişoara, 1984: 18.

[5] Florica Dimitrescu, *Dinamica lexicului românesc – ieri şi azi*, Bucureşti, 1994: 30.

[6] Although the concept of *synonymic series* represents a common place in specialty literature, referring to synonyms' organization in (quasi)equivalent terms classes, its acceptation differs, due to the various criteria used; thus, the series are formed either by terms identical from the perspective of their meaning but different from a stylistic point of view or by terms which distinguish from each other at a semantic level by certain features (cf. Angela Bidu-Vrănceanu, Narcisa Forăscu, *Modele de structurare semantică. Cu aplicații la limba română*, Timişoara, 1984: 66).

[7] The synonymy is mostly partial, seldom total.

BDD-A3776 © 2008 Editura Sitech
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-02 05:18:49 UTC)

2. **old terms and lexical borrowings**: *adunare* (OPA, 22) *adaogere* (SIA, 12) – *adiție* (SIA, 21, PA, 91, OPA, 22); *miazăzi* (GSP, I, pref.) – *sud* (GSP, I, pref.); *apus* (GSP, I, pref.) – *vest* (GSP, I, pref.); *boală* (FDB, 81) – *morb* (FDB, 74); *bold* (VA, 163) – *instinct* (VA, 163); *brâncă* (FDB, 74) – *anghină* (FDB, 74); *căciulie* (LB, s. v.) – *bulb* (SIN, 5); *ceapă* (SIN, 5) – *bulb* (SIN, 5); *cerul gurii* (FDB, 72, LB, s.v.) – *palat* (SIN, 48, FDB, 72); *cleşte* (FDB, 115) - *foarcepă* (FDB, 115); *dobitoc* (SV) – *animal* (FDB, 64, VA, 91); *fir* (HPP, 23) – *fibră* (PMV, 4); *grai* (BDT, 44v) – *vorbă* (MIR, 320) – *verb* (BDT, 38v, DLGR, 82); *guturai* (LB, s.v.) - *troahnă* (LB, s.v.) – *catar* (PAM, 10, LB, s.v.); *hotărâre* (GSP, I, 172) – *sentență* (GSP, I, 172); *hrană* (LB, s.v.) – *nutriment* (FDB, 107); *miazănoapte* (GSP, I, pref.) – *nord* (GSP, I, pref.); *ostrov* (SIN, 15, GSP, I, pref.) – *insolă* (GSP, I, 20); *rană* (FDB, 64) – *plagă* (FDB, 64); *răsărit* (GSP, I, pref.) – *est* (GSP, I, pref.); *râie* (FDB, 94) – *scabie* (FDB, 94); *pildă* (OPA, 83, PA, 14) – *exemplu* (LB, s. v., HPP, 30); *rod* (MVV, 25) – *fruct* (MVV, 7, TAO, 80, VA, XVI); *scoc* (PMV, 4) – *canal* (PMV, 4); *târâtoare* (SIN, 103) – *amfibii* (SIN, 103); *trup* (PAM, 16, LB, s.v.) – *corp* (FDB, 96), etc.

3. **terms created in the language by calques or**, **more seldom**, **by derivation and lexical borrowings**: *acrime* (SIN, 36, PAM, 29) – *acid* (MVV, 85); *activă* (VA, 57) – *lucrătoare* (TVM, 20, VA, 57); *aprindere* (FDB, 57) – *înfocare* (SIS, 13) – *obrântitură* (FDB, 57) – *înflămație* (FDB, 57); *arătare* (FDB, 83) – *fenomen* (FDB, 83); *aşezământ* (MVV; 33) – *strat* (MVV, 33); *cânțime* (MVV, 63) – *cvantitate* (TAO, 62); *câtuitor* (SIA, 28, PA, 27) – *cvoțient* (SIA, 28, PA, 27) "cât"; *cunună* (HPP, 29) – *corolă* (SIN, 6); *deînmulțit* (SIA, 22) – *multiplicand* (SIA, 22, PA, 21); *dempărțit* (SIA, 27) – *divident* (PA, 26, SIA, 27); *frângere* (PA, 53) – *spargere* (OPA, 58) – *fracție* (PA, 53); *hotărâre* (SMS, 74) – *definiție* (VA, 189); *lucrător* (VA, 57) – *activ* (VA, 57); *față* (TGR, 107) – *personă* (MIR, 320); *făcător* (SIA, 22) - *factor* (DMA, 56, OPA, 29); *femeiesc* (TGR, 8, DLGR, 43) – *feminin* (IO, 145); *ființă* (SIF, 87) – *subştanție* (VA, 21); *ființă* (LB, s.v.) – *existență* (TAO, 57); *fire* (SIN, f.t., FDB, 55, LB, s.v.,) – *natură* (SIN, f.t., FDB, 55, LB, s.v.); *floare* (IST, 60) – *față* (SIN, 29) - *color* (SEC, 108, SIF, 101, TAO, 61, SIN, 4, LB, s. v.); *hotărâre* (LB, s. v.) – *definiție* (VA, 189); *lucrare* (SIA, 12, PA, 12) – *şpețieş* (SIA, 12, PA, 45) "operație matematică"; *împărțitor* (SIA, 28, PA, 26) – *divizor* (SIA, 28, PA, 26, OPA, 35); *încuiere* (FDB, 66), *încuietură* (LB, s.v., PAM, 21) – *constipație* (FDB, 66); *împărțire* (PA, 11) – *divizie* (SIA, 27, OPA, 35); *înmulțire* (PA, 11) – *multiplicație* (SIA, 21, PA, 94, LB, s. v.); *nealcătuit* (**SMS**, 76) – *simplu* (PA, 80); *nefățesc* (TGR, 156, DLGR, 82) – *impersonal* (TGR, 159); *răsuflare* (SIN, 73, FDB, 63, PAM, 7) – *respirație* (FDB, 63, LB, s.v.); *pieliță* (FDB, 88) – *membrană* (FDB, 88); *sugător* (PAM, 7) – *limfatic* (PAM, 7); *tăiere* (FDB, 111, LB, s.v.) – *amputație* (FDB, 111); *treaptă* (MVV, 60) – *grad* (PAM, 4, VA, 181), etc.

BDD-A3776 © 2008 Editura Sitech
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-02 05:18:49 UTC)

4. **regional terms and lexical borrowings**: *farbă* (VA, 5) – *culoare* (VA, 5), *fânari* (SIN, 6) – *alge* (SIN, 6); *sudoare* (LB, s.v.) – *transpirație* (FDB, 19), *galițcău* (SIF, 99) – *vitrior* (SIF, 99).

5. **groups of words and lexical borrowings**: *comete* (SIF, 190) - *stele cu coadă* (SIF, 190); *hippopótamul* (SIN, 60)- *calul de apă* (SIN, 60); *flus* (GSP, I, 101) - *curgere de mare* (GSP, I, 101).

6. **lexical borrowings entered in Romanian from the same or various culture languages**, **in the same time or in different periods of time**: *alifie* (LB, s.v.) – *pomadă* (LB, s.v.); *aligatore* (SIN, 71) – *caiman* (SIN, 71); *apoplexie* (LB, s.v.) – *gută* (VA, 2, LB, s.v.); *a contamina* (FDB, 91, LB, s.v.) – *a contagi* (LB, s.v.); *doctor* (PAM, 9, LB, s.v.) – *medic* (LB, s.v.); *paradigmă* (LB, s.v.) – *exemplu* (LB, s. v., HPP, 30, MVV, 23); *spețier* (*spițer*) (PAM, 24, LB, s.v.) – *apotecar*(*iu*) (PAM, 24, LB, s.v.); *spițerie* (PAM, 24, LB, s.v.) – *apotecă* (LB, s.v.); *stih* (TGR, 195) – *vers* (TGR, 195), etc.

The existence of synonymic series can be explained both by the different origin of the constituents and by the fact that, in the basic vocabulary, there are more words from the same lexical family. The semantic equivalence of synonyms is realized through glosses. The analysis of glosses, which are also representative for the phenomenon of synonymic equivalence, allowed us to identify several synonymic series (in each series, the lexical borrowing is placed first):

1. **with two members**: *acid – acrime*; *activ – lucrător*; *amputație – tăiere*; *canal – scoc*; *castrația – jugănirea*; *cauză – pricină*; *consilier – sfetnic*; *corp – trup*; *cvoțient – câtuitor*; *dirigență – sârguință*; *divident – dempărțit*; *divizie – împărțire*; *divizor – împărțitor*; *est – răsărit*; *evaporație – răsuflare*; *fantasme – năluci*; *element – stihie*; *feminin – femeiesc*; *fenomen – arătare*; *fibră – fir*; *foarcepă – cleşte*; *forță – silă*; *fruct – rod*; *i*(*n*)*solă* “insulă” *– ostrov*; *moment – cirtă*; *multiplicand – deînmulțit*; *multiplicație-înmulțire*; *nega – tăgădui*; *nociv – vătămător*; *nord – miazănoapte*; *ocasie – prilej*; *opac – întunecat*; *plagă - rană*; *protector – apărător*; *remediu – leac*; *respirație - răsuflare*; *scabie – râie*; *scop – sfârşit*; *simplu – nealcătuit*; *sud – amiazăzi*; *teritoriu – ținut*; *alleanță – unire*; *vapori – aburi*; *vassal – supus*; *vest – apus*;

2. **with three members**: *addiția – adunarea – adaogerea*; *afte – răniturі – beşicuțe*; *antene – coarne – pipăitori*; *catar – guturai – troahnă*; *celeritate – pripire - iuțeală*; *constipație – încuiere – încuietură*; *diferență – disclinire - deosebire*; *exemplu – paradigmă - pildă*; *fantazie - năIucire – închipuire*; *fluid – moliciune - curătorie* (*de aer*); *fracție – frângere – spargere*; *golf – boaz – sân*; *grad – treaptă - stepenă*; *înflămație – aprindere – obrintitură*; *melanhonie – mâhnire - întristăciune*; *palat – ceriul gurei – limbă*; *pistil – mez – fămeie de floare*; *principiu – început – temei*; *verb – grai – vorbă*;

BDD-A3776 © 2008 Editura Sitech
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-02 05:18:49 UTC)

3. **with four members**: *astremitatele – marginile – capetele – sfârşiturile*; *culoare – față – farbă – floare*; *înflămație – aprindere – obrântitură – înfocare*; *port – vad – liman – schelă*;

4. **with five membres**: *reştanție – rest – rămăşiță – osebire – deschilinire* “rest”.

The most numerous are the series with two synonymic terms, which demonstrates the intention of the Transylvanian scholars of finding the most adequate equivalents, capable of providing the accuracy of communication; it has already been observed that “...the more the synonymic chain is longer, the more the possibilities of replacing a term with the others are rarer. Generally, there can be established a relation of reverse proportionality between the length of the synonymic chain and the possibilities of substitution due to the fact that the semantic spheres of the synonyms are intersected only on a limited surface, each term bringing new meanings on a functional and stylistic level. Thus, the commutation operation, specific of synonyms identification, can attract the modification of the semantic value of the statement”[8].

The synonymic series have experienced their own history, with common or specific features for each of them. From the perspective of their circulation in time, we can observe that some have disintegrated, keeping only the neologic terms, whilst its old synonym has entered the passive vocabulary or has become an archaism: *boaz*, *cirtă*, *sân*, *silă*, *sfetnic*; some belong to the literary language: *castrație*, *remediu*, others to the popular language: *jugănire*, *leac*. There are series, rather numerous, in which the lexical borrowings continue to coexist with the old terms, already existent in Romanian at the time of their penetration, contributing to the creation of synonymic series: *castrația – jugănirea*; *cauză – pricină*, *exemplu – pildă*, *diferență – deosebire*, *ocasie – prilej*, *opac – întunecat*, *respirație – răsuflare*, etc. “This coexistence, this symbiosis has created delicate problems of competition and synonymy. Thus, such pairs bring the Romanian language richness unknown by other languages”.

Some lexical borrowing has not integrated in the literary language: *malleol – ciocănuț* “mlădiță”, whilst others are only used in the literary language and the scientific vocabulary. In spoken language, they are still resisted by the speakers, who prefer using old synonyms: *boală* instead of neologisms like *maladie*, *morb*, *întunecat* for *opac*, *leac* for *remediu*, *râie* for *scabie*, etc. Another situation is that in which the terms have differentiated semantically and they are no longer synonyms in the literary language: *arătare – fenomen*, *sfârşit – scop*, *silă – forță*, etc. Thus, in the lasting process of Romanian synonyms evolution there has already manifested a competition between old and new, phenomenon which has produced

[8] Florica Dimitrescu, *op. cit.*: 34.

BDD-A3776 © 2008 Editura Sitech
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-02 05:18:49 UTC)

semantic extensions or limitations, as well as substitutions or disappearance of words and meanings[9].

The components of the synonymic series also differ from the perspective of their stability and position within the series. Depending on the period, the context as well as the linguistic conceptions specific of the period and the scholars, some components gain priority towards others. The texts of science popularization reveal the preeminence held by the neologic term which is equalized, in a synonymic series, with its old correspondent. This phenomenon is in perfect agreement with the scholars' desideratum as regards the dissemination and popularization of the new terms in order for them to penetrate the linguistic consciousness of the people. The main majority of the neologic terms introduced by them have resisted and the situation in which some neologisms: *apotecar*, *apotecă*, *spițer*, *spițerie*, etc., have become obsolete are very rare.

The synonymic series analyzed prove the utilization of a high number of neologic elements borrowed from Latin and Romance languages. The international borrowing of terms which exist in most of the European modern languages, "leads, on one hand, to a bigger stability of the borrowed words and, on the other, to drawing languages closer"[10]. These synonymic borrowings enrich the erudite vocabulary of the literary language and contribute to the precision of some meanings of the words already existent in the language, as well as to the refining of its stylistic possibilities. The great number of neologisms introduced and used by the scholars has created numerous interferences and synonymies in the literary language. The existence of synonyms can be explained by the coexistence and the superposition of the cultural patterns (because the texts reveal a syncretism of cult, erudite and old, traditional terminology), rather than by terminological inaccuracy.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Babeu, Doina, *Sinonimia*, *particularitate relevantă a lexicului*, în S. Drincu, Maria Purdela Sitaru (coord.), *Limba română literară în secolul al XVIII-lea. Lexicul tipăriturilor blăjene din perioada 1750-1760*, Timişoara, 1984.

Bidu-Vrânceanu, Angela, Forăscu, Narcisa, *Modele de structurare semantică. Cu aplicații la limba română*, Timişoara, 1984.

Bucă, Marin, Evseev, Ivan, *Probleme de semasiologie*, Timişoara, 1976.

Dimitrescu, Florica, *Dinamica lexicului românesc – ieri şi azi*, Bucureşti, 1994.

Vințeler, Onufrie, *Probleme de sinonimie*, Bucureşti, 1983.

[9] Id., *ibidem*: 103.
[10] *Ibidem*: 98.

BDD-A3776 © 2008 Editura Sitech
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-02 05:18:49 UTC)

SOURCES

BDT = I. Budai-Deleanu, *Temeiurile gramaticii româneşti*, BAR, ms. rom. 2426.

DLGR = Constantin Diaconovici-Loga, *Gramatica românească pentru îndreptarea tinerilor*, Sibiu, 1822.

FDB = *Învățătură pentru ferirea şi doftoria boalelor celor ce se încing prin țeară...*, Buda, 186, traducere din maghiară efectuată de P. Maior (130 p.)

GSP = *Gheografia sau scrierea pământului*, Buda, două volume, 1814, 1815, traducere de Nicola Nicolau.

HPP = Fr. Haintl, *Învățătură pentru prăsirea pomilor*, Buda, 1812, traducere din germană efectuată de P. Maior.

IO = P. Iorgovici, *Observații de limba rumânească*, ediție critică, studiu introductiv, tabel cronologic, note, bibliografie de D. Bogdan-Dascălu şi C. Dascălu; prefață de Şt. Munteanu, Timişoara, 1979.

LB = *Lesicon românesc-latinesc-unguresc-nemțesc*, *care de mai mulți autori*, *în cursul a trideci şi mai multor ani s-au lucrat*, Buda, 1825.

MVV = L. Mitterpacher, *Învățătură despre agonisirea viței de vie şi despre măiestria de a face vin*, *vinars şi oțet*, Buda, 1813, traducere din germană efectuată de P. Maior.

OPA = Gr. Obradovici, *Povățuire către învățătura socoatei sau aritmetica*, Buda, 1805, traducere din germană.

PA = Gh. Şincai, *Povățuire cătră aritmetică sau învățătura numerilor*, Buda, 1806, traducere din germană.

PMV = *Meşteşugul lungimei de viață*, *prin doftoreasca grijă a trupului şi a sufletului*, traducere din latină făcută de preotul Iosif Paşca, la îndemnul lui S. Vulcan, 1815, Biblioteca Filialei Cluj a Academiei Române, fondul Oradea, ms. 79a.

PAM = Vasilie Popp, *Apele minerale de la Arpătac*, *Bodoc şi Covasna şi despre întrebuințarea aceloraşi în deschilinite patimi*, Sibiu, 1821.

SIA = Gh. Şincai, *Îndreptare către aritmetică*, Blaj, 1785.

SIF = Gh. Şincai, *Învățătură firească spre surparea superştiției norodului*, aprox. 1804-1808, Biblioteca Filialei Cluj a Academiei Române, fondul Oradea, ms. 39.

SIN = Gh. Şincai, *Istoria naturei sau a firei*, manuscris autograf din jurul anului 1810, Biblioteca Filialei Cluj a Academiei Române, fondul Oradea, ms. 40.

SIS = A. Szöts, J. Eckstein, *Învățătură adevărată pre scurt a vindeca boala sfrânțului*, Sibiu, Cluj, 1803, traducere din maghiară aparținând lui Ioan Molnar.

BDD-A3776 © 2008 Editura Sitech
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-02 05:18:49 UTC)

SV = Gh. Şincai, *Vocabular ce ține de istoria naturei*, aprox. 1804-1808, Biblioteca Filialei Cluj a Academiei Române, fondul Oradea, ms. 125.

TAO = Al. Teodori, *Scurtă arătare despre om şi despre întocmirile lui*, publicat în *Carte de mână pentru nația românească*, Buda, 1825.

TGR = Radu Tempea, *Gramatică românească*, Sibiu, 1797.

VA = P. Vasici-Ungurean, *Anthropologhia sau scurtă cunoştință despre om*, Buda, 1830.

BDD-A3776 © 2008 Editura Sitech
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-02 05:18:49 UTC)