EUGENIO COSERIU AND HIS DISCIPLES ON THE ISSUE OF SYNONYMY

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Rezumat:

În această lucrare, ne propunem o scurtă trecere în revistă a ideilor lui Eugenio Coseriu cu privire la sinonimie şi la câteva contribuţii ale discipolilor coserieni (fie ei direcţi sau indirecţi), referitoare la acest subiect. Cu toate acestea, cea mai mare parte a acestui articol prezintă propria noastră contribuţie la studiul sinonimiei, al cărui punct de plecare l-a reprezentat lingvistica integrală a lui Coseriu, considerată un cadru epistemologic de referinţă. Am încercat să aplicăm, în cadrul studiului general al sinonimiei (lexical, frazeologic şi lexico-frazeologic), deosebiri precum: limbajul ca *activitate* [*enérgeia*], *competenţă* [*dýnamis*] şi *produs* [*érgon*] la cele trei niveluri (*universal*, *istoric* şi *individual*); *normă* şi *sistem*; *limbaj istoric* şi *limbaj funcţional* etc. În ce ne priveşte, am urmărit să evidenţiem, pentru fiecare nivel de-al lui Coseriu în parte, diferenţa dintre *sinonimia in actu* (cea reală) şi *sinonimia in potentia* (cea virtuală sau potenţială). Am urmărit, de asemenea, să atragem atenţia asupra importanţei competenţei (în principal a celei idiomatice şi a celei expresive), în analiza diferitelor tipuri de sinonimie ca formă de 'cunoaştere' în folosirea sinonimelor.

Cuvinte-cheie:

Sinonimie, discipoli coserieni, lingvistică integrală, competenţă lingvistică, limbaj funcţional.

Abstract:

In this paper we aim to briefly review Eugenio Coseriu's ideas regarding synonymy and some Coserian disciples' contributions (be they direct or indirect) concerning this issue. The largest part of this article, however, presents our own contribution to the study of synonymy, whose starting point was Coseriu's integral linguistics, considered as an epistemological frame of reference. We have tried to apply, within the general study of synonymy (lexical, phraseological and lexico-phraseological), distinctions such as: language as *activity* [*enérgeia*], *competence* [*dýnamis*] and *product* [*érgon*] to its three levels (*universal*, *historical* and *individual*); *norm* and *system*; *historical language* and *functional language*, etc. As far as we are concerned, we were interested in pointing out, for each of Coseriu's levels in turn, the difference between *synonymy in actu* (the real one) and *synonymy in potentia* (the virtual or potential one). We also aimed at drawing attention to the importance of competence (mainly the idiomatic and expressive ones) in the analysis of different types of synonymy as "knowledge" in using the synonyms.

Key-words:

Synonymy, Coserian disciples, integral linguistics, linguistic competence, functional language.

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0. In this paper we aim to briefly review Eugenio Coseriu's ideas regarding synonymy, but, most importantly, some Coserian disciples' contributions (be they direct or indirect) concerning this issue. The largest part of this article, however, presents our own contribution to the study of synonymy, whose starting point was Coseriu's integral linguistics, considered as an epistemological frame of reference.

1. Eugenio Coseriu on the issue of synonymy

Even if, at times, Eugenio Coseriu makes some observations on synonymy, he did not write a special study on this topic. What is more, he uses the words *synonymy* and *synonyms* between inverted commas.

1.1. The same happens with the terminological phrase "*cognitive synonymy*"[1] by which he means those situations of equivalence in designation (such as: *John read this book – This book was read by John*) given as examples in the transformational-generative grammar (see Coşeriu, 2000: 129-130)[2].

1.2. According to Coseriu, when he refers to things from his structural semantics or lexematics point of view, which only concerns the functional language, the so-called "synonyms" are cases of neutralizable oppositions:

"*la mayor parte de los «sinónimos» de una lengua (cuando no se trata de términos pertenecientes a lenguas funcionales diferentes dentro de la misma lengua histórica, por ejemplo, a «estilos de lengua» diferentes) son, en realidad, casos de oposición «suprimible» (neutralizable)*" (Coseriu, 1977b: 31; cf. *ibid*.: 128)[3].

Furthermore, Coseriu also refers to synonymy when he theorizes on the *principle of functionality*, stating that there is no need in language for the same forms to express the same signification (*signifié*) in all units, just as it

[1] The term does not belong to Coseriu. It can be found with J. Lyons (1968: 449) also, who did not invent it either and who uses it with a different meaning.

[2] And, in general, if Coseriu does not use inverted commas, he associates determiners such as: "*the supposed*", "*the so-called*" to the term *synonymy* (e.g.: "De aquí, precisamente, la igualación de expresiones como *Corto el pan con el cuchillo – Corto el pan utilizando para ello un cuchillo*, etc., cuia supuesta sinonimia es, en realidad, solo «equivalencia» en la designación." [Coseriu, 1977b: 204]).

[3] See also E. Coseriu, *Româna în **Vocabulario** de Lorenzo Hervás*: „(rom. *mână* şi *braţ* se află, din perspectivă structural-semantică, într-o opoziţie «neutralizabilă», în care *mână* este membrul neutru, *braţ*, dimpotrivă, cel marcat)" (Coseriu, 1994a: 92).

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is not necessary for a unit of signification to be expressed in all the units of the two plans by the same form. The relation between form and content is constant within the same unit in its various usages, but it is not necessarily *regular* in all the units of a language. As a proof, one can mention the existence of homophony (or of "polysemy") and that of *synonymy* (Coşeriu, 2000: 161 & 169-170). The study *Hacia una tipología de los campos léxicos* is another case in point where Coseriu touches on the topic of synonymy, mainly where he theorizes the concept of *antonymic field* ("campo antonímico"), saying:

"*En el léxico, la verdadera «privatividad» (ausencia o indiferencia de un rasgo distintivo) se encuentra, no en el dominio de los antónimos, sino en el de los términos que se consideran como «sinónimos», es decir, en oposiciones tales como* ***maîtriser – dominer, candidus – albus***." (Coseriu, 1977b: 224).

More than that, even the proper privative oppositions can be called *synonymic* («sinonímicas») (*ibid*.; cf. Coseriu, 1995: 114).

1.3. Coseriu does not seem to have been much interested in synonymy, not even from the point of view of the history of ideas (or of *the principle of tradition*, which he himself set). We found, however, a note regarding the way in which Juan Luis Vives (in the XVIth century) defines synonymy (*synonymia*) two times: firstly, as a special type of "polysemy" ("*un tipo especial de «polisemia», a saber, la diversidad de los significados de palabras materialmente idénticas dentro de una lengua histórica, especialmente, en las diversas lenguas técnicas o en los distintos autores*"), and later on, correctly, as we see it nowadays *("«voces, quae significatione incomplexa idem notant», como, por ejemplo* ***valde y multum****", opposed to "las voces pares sive aequales, que «explicatione idem notant», como, por ejemplo,* ***Socrates y Sophronisci filius***.)" (*Vives y el problema de la traducción*, in Coseriu, 1977a: 94).

2. Contributions of E. Coseriu's direct and indirect disciples regarding synonymy

Since synonymy does not seem to be a semantic structure (cf. Lyons, 1968: 452), it is thus clear why Coseriu did not pay much attention to it in his studies on semantics (cf. García-Hernández, 1997b: 385). This may also be the reason for his disciples not to have been very interested in the study of synonymy.

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2.1. At Tübingen, Hans Martin Gauger dealt with synonymy and the history of synonymy. Although he claims to be one of Coseriu's disciples («Je suis, quant au milieu dans lequel je me meus, un élève de M. Coseriu, bien qu'un peu contestataire» [Gauger, 1973: 160]), he does not apply Coseriu's lexematics on the study of this phenomenon. One can easily notice Coseriu's influence regarding the idea of language as technique (as *saber*), but, on the whole, he seems to have been devoted to his master, Mario Wandruszka. Among Coseriu's most devoted disciples (even from the first generation), Horst Geckeler seems to have been the best in lexematics. However, he was more interested in antonymy, and only later in synonymy, on which he wrote short articles, but always pointing back to antonymy. Actually, he refers to synonyms and antonyms as having a common signification basis and some distinctive features; just as with synonyms the similarity of signification counts most, with antonyms the opposition of the distinctive features prevails (Geckeler, 1989: 260; cf. García-Hernández, 1997b: 397).

2.2. Among Coseriu's indirect disciples from Spain, interested in synonymy and having a good knowledge of lexematics, Benjamín García-Hernández and Gregorio Salvador Caja should be mentioned as the most remarkable[4]. Though Coserians, it is odd that the two of them should have contrary ideas regarding synonymy and synonyms.

2.2.1. B. García-Hernández, author of a comprehensive work (published in two parts in 1997 – almost 60 pages), in which he offers a bird's-eye-view of the conceptions on synonymy from Antiquity up to the present, goes further with Coseriu's ideas (see 1977b: 46-50), establishing the fact that *onomasiology*, and not *lexematics*, have to deal with the study of synonyms, since:

"*Si la sinonimia no es una pura relación entre significados, no será una relación propiamente semántica. […] es una relación entre expresiones en torno a un significado, más o menos homogéneo; es una relación entre*

[4] At an international congress in 1993, Coseriu named B. García-Hernández his "intellectual son" (cf. García-Hernández, 2002: 79). As to G. Salvador, he is probably appreciated the most by Eugenio Coseriu. The latter applied and developed Coseriu's lexematics, having important contributions mainly in what concerns "las solidaridades léxicas" (cf. Coseriu, 1995: 121-124).

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ese contenido y sus posibles expresiones; los sinónimos no son sino los nombres asociados a un contenido." (García-Hernández, 1997b: p. 385)[5].

García-Hernández also makes a classification of synonymy, proposing the distinction "sinonimia débil o clasemática" (e.g.: *arriver* y *atterrir*) vs. "sinonimia fuerte o de campo semántico" (e.g.: *arriver* y *parvenir*).

2.2.2. G. Salvador finds himself on a rather singular position. He asserted that there is only absolute synonymy and this can only happen within the language system:

"*Si hay sinónimos – y los hay y espero demonstrarlo – tienen que ser absolutos, porque si no fuesen absolutos no serían sinónimos*." (Salvador, 1985: 51).

And he proved it from the point of view of lexematics, taking into account the *idiolect* (which allows the individual to understand other speakers and to be understood by them), the simplest unit of the system of language, that is the functional language of the individual. Here the perfect synonymy would really exist, since all the dialectal, social, stylistic differences belong to the domain of the *norm* or of the *speech* (cf. García Jurado, 2003: 40). As it always happens, Salvador's theory was criticized[6], but it also underwent further developments[7].

[5] See also Coseriu & Geckeler, 1981: 9-10 – "We call the entire discipline of the science of lexical meanings *semantics*, which can be either of descriptive-synchronic (analytic) or of historical-diachronic orientation. By *semasiology* we mean only a sub-discipline with a very limited range of application: *semasiology* takes the word qua *signifiant* as a point of departure and investigates the contents (meanings) associated with it in their multiplicity and their change (polysemy and change of meaning), while *onomasiology* proceeds from the contents (*signifiés*) or concepts – in practice even, in part, from the objects of extralinguistic reality itself – and studies the various *signifiants* (designations) which can designate the content in question (in diachronic perspective = *Bezeichnungswandel*)". Taking L. Weisgerber's classification for granted, Coseriu asserts that four lexicological disciplines can be distinguished as follows: *lexicología de la expresión*, *lexicología del contenido*, *semasiología and onomasiología* (Coseriu, 1977b: 47).

[6] See, for instance, Cerda (2004: 397-420) who argued that the intuitions of the speakers about the virtual uses of any word are necessarily arbitrary, so they do not allow the linguist to conclude anything about the existence of absolute or total synonyms.

[7] See María Luisa Regueiro Rodríguez (2002), one of Salvador's disciples, whose doctoral dissertation was *Lexicografía sinonímicas: estudio critico: confirmación de la sinonimia* (defended in 1998, cf. Núñez, 2006: 179).

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The fact that Salvador's demonstration seemed convincing to Coseriu should be pointed out:

"*En cuanto a los sinónimos, Salvador ha desbrozado el camino para su estudio adecuado y coherente, distinguiendo claramente los falsos sinónimos (o «sinónimos parciales») de los sinónimos «perfectos» y demonstrando la existencia de éstos aun en una misma lengua funcional, precisamente desde el punto de vista lexemático, es decir, en cuanto a su estructura sémica y a nivel del sistema de oposiciones (lo cual, por supuesto, no implica necesariamente existencia también a nivel de las normas individuales y sociales ni, mucho menos, en cuanto a los valores «estilísticos» añadidos)*" (Coseriu, 1995: 123).

On the other hand, García-Hernández finds the way chosen by Salvador unacceptable, since he stipulates that synonymy, in order to exist, should only be absolute (García-Hernández, 1997a: 6).

2.3. A recent contribution in this domain is owed to Marina Zorman, who comes from Slovenia, a place where Coseriu is almost unknown. She applied some concepts from Coseriu's linguistics (including lexematics) in order to analyze the Slovene synonymy and synonyms. Her book (her doctoral dissertation, see Zorman, 2000) proves the fact that synonymy represents an interesting phenomenon in speech, in texts, and not so interesting in language[8].

The author was mainly interested in the reasons for which the speakers/writers choose some synonyms to others, while at the same time setting some functions of synonymy in contexts. It is welcoming the fact that, treating synonyms as linguistic signs, the author applies Coseriu's distinctions concerning the interrelation of the linguistic sign with other signs, texts, things, etc. What is more, in Marina Zorman's opinion, the choice of synonyms (from a psycho and socio-linguistic point of view) can also reflect other aspects (such as solidarity or social distance).

2.4. We did not find the works on synonymy of these more or less direct disciples of Coseriu while writing our doctoral dissertation. Since we share the same opinions about language, it is thus clear why we have some common ideas concerning synonymy, especially with García-Hernández and Marina Zorman. However, to our knowledge, none of those who dealt with this topic before us dwelt on this phenomenon for all the three levels of

[8] Since we do not know Slovene, we read a paper (Zorman, 2007) which summarizes the research done by Marina Zorman, which she kindly offered us.

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language and for all its three aspects as they were identified by Coseriu. As a consequence, we will refer in what follows only to our own conception designed in the epistemological frame of reference which was justified by Coseriu[9].

3. Our contribution regarding synonymy

We also aim to prove here the importance of Eugenio Coseriu's linguistic theory in the study of synonymy, by synthesizing, at the same time, some results we obtained in our doctoral dissertation, *Sinonimia frazeologică în limba română din perspectiva lingvisticii integrale* [*The Phraseological Synonymy in the Romanian Language from the Integral Linguistics Point of View*] (defended in 2006 and published in 2007 – see Munteanu, 2007)[10].

Since we will use Coseriu's distinctions, we think it necessary for us to present them briefly. Eugenio Coseriu distinguishes within language, on the one hand, three levels: the universal one (the level of designation), the historical one (the level of signification[11]) and the individual level (that of sense), since "*language is a universal human activity which is done individually but always following some historically established techniques* («*langues*»)" (Coşeriu, 2000: 233 - our translation). The language is generated, on the other hand, according to some acquired knowledge and is presented as some objective facts, that is why Coseriu adopts, just as W. von Humboldt did before, the terms used by Aristotle: *érgon* (product), *enérgeia* (creative activity), which goes beyond the *learnt* technique and *dýnamis* (competence – found only with Aristotle). Language is not essentially *érgon*, but *enérgeia*, *creative activity*.

[9] Which was very helpful to Coseriu himself in approaching different aspects concerning language (see Coseriu, 1985: XXV).

[10] We presented an outline of our opinions on synonymy, starting from Coseriu's ideas on the structure of language as a whole in 2005 in a paper (see Munteanu, 2006a), even if we applied these ideas before, starting with the beginning of our research, in 2002.

[11] *Significado* (*signifié*) was translated either by *signification* (see Coseriu & Geckeler, 1981: 54), or by *meaning* (Coseriu, 1985: XXXIV).

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Points of view / Levels	***enérgeia*** Activity	***dýnamis*** Competence / Knowledge	***érgon*** Product
Universal	Speaking in general	Elocutional competence	Totality of utterances
Historical	Concrete particular language	Idiomatic competence	(Abstracted particular language)
Individual	Discourse	Expressive competence	Text

One can clearly see from the table above[12] what means activity, competence and product for each of the three levels to Coseriu. However, it is worth mentioning the fact that at the universal level, the *elocutional competence*, as a technique, means *to be able to speak, in general*; at the individual level, *expressive competence* refers to the knowledge regarding the way discourses are made, while at the historical level, the *idiomatic competence* refers to language as traditional knowledge of a community. The *érgon*, seen at the historical level, is also worth mentioning: *product* can only refer here to the *abstract language*, that is the language "deduced from speech and materialized in a grammar book or in a dictionary" (Coşeriu, 2000: 237).

Starting from the brilliant manner in which Coseriu comprehends the general structure of language (see the grid below), we drew a few distinctions in the field of synonymy. With reference to its occurrence, we distinguish *grosso modo*, first of all, a *synonymy* <u>*in actu*</u>, a *real* one, corresponding to "speech" and a *synonymy* <u>*in potentia*</u>, *virtual* or *potential*, corresponding to "language". But, since things are not that simple in language, using Coseriu's distinctions, we are forced to draw some new distinctions in order to be more precise.

In short, our opinions are rendered in the following grid, aiming to organize the study of synonymy. In addition, the grid comprises all dimensions of synonymy, for each and every compartment.

[12] Taken and adapted from Coseriu, 1985: XXIX.

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Theoretically speaking, one can say that the synonymy *in actu* corresponds to the language seen as *enérgeia* at all levels, while synonymy *in potentia* corresponds to the language seen as *érgon*. What would thus be the role of competence (*dýnamis*) in this analysis of synonymy? That it operates both on the real synonymy and on the virtual one, and we will later see how; up to then, the table presents this by the fact that the drawing line between the two important types of synonymy crosses the competence (be it elocutional, idiomatic or expressive).

<table>
<tr><td>Synonymy
as it occurs</td><td colspan="2">synonymy in actu
(real)</td><td colspan="2">synonymy in potentia
(virtual/potential)</td></tr>
<tr><td>points of view
levels</td><td>enérgeia
(activity)</td><td>dýnamis
(competence)</td><td colspan="2">érgon
(product)</td></tr>
<tr><td>UNIVERSAL
(level of designation)</td><td>speaking in general</td><td>elocutional competence</td><td colspan="2">totality of utterances</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="4">[synonymy as a possible linguistic universal]
“cognitive synonymy”</td></tr>
<tr><td>HISTORICAL
(level of signification)</td><td>concrete language</td><td>idiomatic competence</td><td colspan="2">(abstracted language)</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2">internal variety synonymy:
1. diatopic synonymy
2. diastratic synonymy
3. diaphasic synonymy
4. diachronic synonymy</td><td colspan="2">synonymy as inventory:
the synonymy existing in dictionaries of synonyms of a certain language (e.g. DSLR by Mircea & Luiza Seche)</td></tr>
<tr><td>INDIVIDUAL
(level of sense)</td><td>discourse</td><td>expressive competence</td><td colspan="2">text</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2">synonymy in praesentia</td><td colspan="2">synonymy in absentia</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2">1. synonymy in contact/juxtaposed
2. distanced synonymy</td><td>latent synonymy:
the synonymy of the units excluding each other in context</td><td>synonymy as inventory
(for instance, that taken from a writer’s work)</td></tr>
</table>

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3.1. The universal level

We agree with the fact that synonymy is established only between the units of the same language[13]. To consider that there can be a relationship of *interlinguistical synonymy* between the terms belonging to different languages is a mistake, which is generally rejected by linguists and accepted by some logicians and philosophers. This would lead to the idea that a polyglot lexicon of technical terms, for example, would thus become a dictionary of synonyms. The synonymy at the universal level is worth talking about only if it represents one of the linguistic universals. At the same time, taking into consideration the fact that Eugenio Coseriu distinguishes the essential universals, the necessary universals and the possible universals (Coseriu, 1987: 151-152), one can claim that *synonymy is one of the possible universals of language*. Although it goes beyond the lexical or phraseological synonymy, if wanted, the so-called "cognitive synonymy" can be placed here.

3.2. The historical level

As we already know, Coseriu draws the distinction between *architecture of language* and *structure of language* or between *historical language* and *functional language*:

"*The synchronic technique of discourse within a* ***historical language*** *(i.e. a language as for example German, French, etc.) is not of a homogeneous nature. It exhibits three types of internal differences which can be more or less far-reaching: [a] differences in geographical space:* ***diatopic*** *differences (i.e. dialectal differences); [b] differences conditioned by the socio-cultural classes of the linguistic community:* ***diastratic*** *differences (concerning language levels or 'niveaux'); [c] differences in the intention of expression:* ***diaphasic*** *differences (concerning language styles*)" (Coseriu & Geckler, 1981: 52).

On the other hand, *the functional language* "*presents a* ***syntopic*** *(i.e. without differences in space), synstratic (i.e. without differences in the*

[13] Also in accordance with John Lyons' principle: "all the meanings recognized by a given language are unique to that language and have no validity or relevance outside it" (Lyons, 1968: 55). See also Munteanu, 2006b: 106-111. It is obvious that synonymy is a semantic relation established between words and not (only) between meanings [cf. Lyons, 1968: 444 – "Just as 'having the same length' is a relation which holds between two objects (and not between the 'lengths' inherent in them), so 'having the same sense' - or synonymy – is a relation which holds between two lexical items (and not between the 'senses' associated with them in the minds of the speakers)"].

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socio-cultural layers) and ***symphasic*** *(i.e. without differences in the intention of expression) technique of discourse*." (*ibid*.: 53).

The things presented so far refer only to the structural description, since it deals with the language seen as a syncronical technique of speech, but, as to what we are concerned, we cannot leave aside the study of diachronic synonymy, since, after all, in a language of culture (mainly in the written one, but also in the spoken one)

"*even the real diachrony can be syncronical, that is it can be present at any time, since these older texts are known and can be resumed anytime, not only as texts, but also as elementary functions, meaning that there is some kind of coexistence of diachrony in syncrony for these languages*" (Coşeriu, 1994b: 56-57 – our translation)[14].

The *synonymy of internal variety* will be made up of *diachronic*, *diatopic*, *diastratic* and *diaphasic synonymy*[15]. It also corresponds partly to a traditional classification of synonyms (according to the time, place and circumstance of their usage) into *chronological*, *geographical* and *stylistical synonymy*. Before dealing with the synonymy of internal variety, further explanatory notes are worth mentioning. The distinction between *synonymy in actu* vs. *synonymy in potentia* can also be applied at the historical level. Following Coseriu's distinctions, the first type of synonymy (the real one) is linked to the concrete particular language (which is characterized by dynamism and variety), the second type belongs to the abstract language, deducted or taken out by the linguist from *texts*, language which can be found, according to Coseriu, in a grammar book or in a dictionary (as *érgon*). We should at this point mention the *synonymy as inventory*, product of many linguists' research, who are interested in drawing up dictionaries of synonyms. An excellent example in what lexical synonymy is concerned is the lexicographical work of the couple Luiza and Mircea Seche[16], which also illustrates the internal variety of the Romanian language, since it catalogues archaisms, regional terms, colloquial terms, words used in their connotative meaning, stylistically marked, etc.

At the same time, one should point out that the figurative meanings, the metaphorical synonyms used by poets are facts of system, since they

[14] At the same time, there are diachronic differences between the youngsters' speech and that of the elders.
[15] Cf. García-Hernández, 1997b: 393-394.
[16] See Seche & Seche, 1982.

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come out of new associations regarding the signification (images) possible in system (that is virtually existing), but new in norm. That is why we consider worth mentioning the situations_when no selection from a synonymic series is done, but when a new term is coined occasionally by using a metaphor. This aspect is highly important since it leads to the drawing up of occasional synonymic series which can, in time, turn into constant series. Neutralization is also worth mentioning within the system (in Coseriu's terms), since, although it is a *speech fact*, the possibility of performing neutralizations belongs to language (*langue*).

In order to prevent possible misunderstandings, we assert that, since the historical language is a collection of functional languages, at this level (of the idiomatic tradition from a community), the "situation" of synonymy is born at the meeting point of techniques (competences) on whose basis the homogeneous languages function. Competence, as virtual technique, includes the system and the norm. The functional languages partly coincide, mainly in what concerns the system. Diversity, however, is to be found in the group of norms. On the other hand, the system (as open technique / group of possibilities) leads to the birth of new synonyms.

3.3. The individual level

At this level, to the three points of view: *enérgeia* (activity), *dýnamis* (competence) and *érgon* (product) correspond the discourse, the expressive competence and the text. The real synonymy is made up in speech; it is, as shown before, dependant on the context, as a result of the suppression of the semantic differences between words. Before going further, we should, at this point, accept as useful the distinction between *synonymy in praesentia* and *synonymy in absentia* (cf. Zugun, 2000: 243).

3.3.1. *Synonymy in praesentia*, seen as creative activity in this dimension of language, is materialized in speech / discourse. According to the place a synonym gets to another, one can differentiate between: [1] *synonymy in contact* (or *juxtaposed*), which, according to O. Vinţeler, refers to that case when two synonyms

"*are found in the same sentence, next to each other and usually the second synonym is a determiner of the first, pointing out to its meaning*" (Vinţeler, 1983: 19)

and [2] *the distanced synonymy*, referring to those synonyms which

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"*are to be found usually in sentences or even in different texts, which can be used with different nuances or even with a similar meaning, so as to avoid repetition within a given context*" (*ibid.*: 21)[17].

3.3.2. The *synonymy in absentia* refers to the selection in a discourse of only one term from a synonymic series, by leaving out all the others. Obviously, at this level, this type of synonymy is included, as a technique, within the expressive competence, since it presupposes (at least theoretically) that the most adequate word for the discourse should be chosen in some circumstances.

We think that the functions of synonymy within this type are linked to this very competence (see Munteanu, 2005). Synonymy *in absentia* also implies the idiomatic competence by the fact that speakers have to know / be aware of the differences between words, differences which sometimes fade in the context, by neutralization. This type of synonymy concerns, in our opinion, the text (seen as *érgon*) and not the speech / discourse. We accepted the existence of *synonymy in absentia*, starting from Petre Zugun's definition, but within this category we drew a further distinction, differentiating between the *latent synonymy*[18] (suitable to Zugun's definition) and *synonymy as inventory* (which can also be found at the historical level). Both types owe that to the linguist (and not necessarily to the speaker, mainly to the writer), who infers it, guesses the first and catalogues the second.

We can speculate as regards the units which a speaker (or writer) gives up in order to use only one, the most appropriate one, in a given context, but how sure could we be regarding certain things that cannot be seen? The synonymy as inventory can be useful in such a case since it can establish, for example, how many expressions Mihail Sadoveanu uses for

[17] The distinction was taken, probably, from rhetoric, being related to the classification of repetition (see Lausberg, 1998: 274-281, who mentions *the repetition in contact* and *the repetition at a distance*).

[18] A quote from M. Bréal suggested this type of synonymy to us: «Une question qui concerne plutôt le philosophe que le linguiste serait de savoir comment cette répartition se fait en nous, ou, pour dire les choses de façon un peu grossière, mais intelligible, si nous avons dans notre tète un dictionnaire des synonymes. Je crois que chez les esprits attentifs et fermes ce dictionnaire existe, mais qu'il s'ouvre seulement en cas de besoin et sur l'appel du maître. Quelquefois le mot juste jaillit du premier coup. D'autres fois il se fait attendre: alors le dictionnaire latent entre en fonction et envoie successivement les synonymes qu'il tient en réserve, jusqu'à ce que le terme désiré se soit fait connaître.» (Bréal, 1897: 42).

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the verb *a muri* 'to die'[19]. But still, we will not be able to pretend that we have the whole series of phraseological synonymy that Sadoveanu knew. As to the *latent synonymy*, one can mention those situations in which some terms are fully justified, which have an evocative function. For example, the fact that archaisms are required by those literary works with a historical content is generally accepted, since they evoke a certain epoch, or the fact that some words are used in poetry for the sake of rhyme, rhythm, etc.

The distinctions we have drawn or accepted and varied so far are not groundless, especially that the types of special synonymy, as well as the various values of synonyms were partly intuited since Antiquity (see Munteanu, 2008)[20]. As to the framework of analysis drawn here concerning lexical synonymy, it holds true in many respects both for the phraseological synonymy and for the lexico-phraseological one.

4. By way of conclusion

We proved in another paper (Munteanu, 2009), *in extenso*, with numerous arguments, that Eugenio Coseriu's *integral linguistics* can be considered the very *Organon* for the research on language. Just as Aristotle's *Organon* (a real *logica perennis*) represents the very instrument of the correct thinking (a *modus scientiarum*) that scientific demonstration cannot do without, Coseriu's linguistic theory offers the basis for a correct and efficient approach of each aspect of language. This Coserian *Organon* or this *linguistica perennis* is made up of a series of fundamental distinctions which refer both to the reality of language and to the linguistic methodology. In the field of research, these distinctions prove to be of great use when applying them to concrete matters. That is also the case of the study of synonymy as we have tried to demonstrate.

[19] For this type of synonymy (as inventory) studied mainly in Sadoveanu's literary work, see Iliasa-Frigură, 1980. Another good case in point of the synonymy as inventory is the competent stylistic analysis of synonymy (not just lexical) from Ion Creangă's work drawn by G.I. Tohăneanu.

[20] We have to mention the fact that B. García-Hernández's foray in the history of synonymy is superior to the one we tried to do. We were not mainly interested in defining synonyms at the old ones (as the above mentioned Spanish linguist did), but rather in the finding at our forerunners (whether intuitive or not) of the distinctions we decided upon in agreement with the reality of language. Thus, we were primarily interested in the way competence was related to synonyms in Antiquity (at Quintilian, for example), but also later on (at Du Marsais or Fontanier – who are not mentioned by García-Hernandez).

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