A PRAGMATIC STUDY ON ROMANIAN INTERJECTIONS. DIRECTIVE ACTS EXPRESSED BY SOME ROMANIAN INTERJECTIONS

Florentina Gisela CUMPENASU[*]

Abstract: *The paper is concerned with a very important aspect of Romanian interjections that related to the speech acts they express. From this point of view, the analysis has been concentrated on the directive acts that some interjections manifest in Romanian. This pragmatic study has as a starting point the theories of the linguists John Austin and John Searle and the taxonomy proposed by the latter regarding the speech acts.*

Keywords: *speech acts, directive acts, interjection.*

Introduction

Although many linguists consider interjections as one of the marginal and perhaps least discussed upon classes of words, they exist in language due to their importance. Over the years, they have neglected by the linguists but recently they have gained the adequate place within the language system.

The pragmatic study presented here is an attempt at analyzing the interjections starting from the theories of John Austin and John Searle and the taxonomy proposed by the latter, classifying them into:expressive acts and directive acts. The paper does not concentrate on the expressive acts that the majority of interjections denote, but on the directive ones that some types of interjections express in the Romanian language. Only two types of interjections are taken into account in this study: the persuasive and addressative interjections.

The directive acts

Unlike the type of expressive act that was directed to the locator, the directive type is directed to the allocator. A directive act relates to the future, while an expressive act relates, most of the times, to the present. The most important component of the motivation degree of intentionality is represented by the intentionality of the act.

John Searle defines the intentionality of the act concerning an order as 'une tentative de faire faire quelque chose a l'auditeur'. (Searle, 1975:369). According to Searle, the performative verbs specific to render a directive act are the following: *to demand, to order, to command, to complain, to ask, to invite, to allow, to advise, to request, to challenge, to suggest, to insist.*

The Role of the Interjections Expressing Directive Acts

The interjections hold the force to denote directive acts, to express the locator's will, to determine the allocator to fulfill a certain action. One may consider that the interjections specialized to perform such directive acts are those integrated in the eight classes, presented by *GALR.*

[*] University of Pitesti, necu_gisela@yahoo.com

BDD-A14490 © 2014 Universitatea din Pitești
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 08:53:55 UTC)

The Persuasive Interjections Realizing Directive Acts

These types of interjections have a well- marked intention, that of making the allocator obey an order, an urge or a command. The directive act of this type can be directed to both animal addressees or persons.

The interjection *hai* which is analyzed further on has a strong directive role to express an urge addressed by the locator to his allocator in order to perform a certain action. Using it, the locator manifests his will to change the world by making the interlocutor perform this act. In such a case, when it is about an urge of this type, one can remark a lack of affectivity.

Hai! *ia-ţi porcul de-aici şi ieşi afară.* (Creangă, 2009:112)

Another variant of expressing a directive act is rendered with the interjection *hai* that, sometimes, is insufficient, that is why, it is doubled by the corresponding verb in the subjunctive mode (hortative). In this case, it refers to an urge/a call to action, that is, to leave, which is given by the locator to his allocator and this one has accepted it thus, the preparatory condition is fulfilled, and the act is considered successful.

Lache zice:

- ***Hai*** *să mergem!*

Amicul zice:

- ***Hai!*** (Caragiale, 2010: 81)

The interjection *hai*, that expresses an urge, can be accompanied by an interrogative utterance which represents a request of information.

Hai *nepoate, gata eşti?* (Creangă, 2009:20)

The locator addresses the interlocutor by requesting a certain information. He wants to know if the latter is ready to perform a certain action.

This interjection can express, at the same time, another directive act, representing a request addressed by the locator (the father) to his interlocutor (his son). Therefore, the interlocutor's status is different, the intentionality of the directive act is that of making the allocator obey the request addressed by the locator.

Hai *cu tata, băiete, s-aducem noră mâne-ta!* (Creangă, 2009: 111)

The interjection *hai* is sometimes used by the locator to address an invitation to his allocator:

Când pleacă pe jos, te invită:

Hai*, că te iau în dreapta*. (Caragiale, 2010: 56)

The form ***haidem!*** is rarely used. In the following example, this is used instead of the form *haideţi*, that involves addressing multiple recipients. It is used when the intentionality of the act is that of expressing an urge from the part of the locator in order to be fulfilled by the allocators:

Gata sunteţi? ***Haidem!*** *că eu vă aştept cu caii înhămaţi*. (Creangă, 2009:71)

A call to action is rendered by this form that implies the performance of the directive act by both the locator and the allocator(s).

*...****haidem*** *să pornim la drum!* (Creangă, 2009:73)

Another form that occurs in the familiar and popular registry is ***haide***, that is perceived as a more aggressive form than the other ones and that involves an urge to motion:

Candidatul: ***Haide*** *la grandirop!* (Caragiale, 2009:188)

The form ***haideţi***, usually precedes a verb in the first person plural in order to render a polite urge from the part of the locator. This call to action involves both the locator and the allocators:

BDD-A14490 © 2014 Universitatea din Pitești
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 08:53:55 UTC)

Haideţi *să mergem pe acolo!*

The following **addressative** interjections: *hei, ei, e, mă, măi, bă, băi, fa, fă, făi,* can function as pragmatic marks in order to express the urge to realize the contact between the speakers' (Manu-Magda, 2003:118). This directive act implies the desire or the will of the locator to establish the contact with the allocator.

The addressative interjections also called,,expresii antionorifice)" (*ibidem*:746) can figure as interjections that accomplish some directive acts when the locator uses them to draw the attention of the allocator.

Mă! *spune lui nen-tu Chiriac să nu uite de ce ne-a fost vorba...să fie cu ochii-n patru.* (Caragiale, 2009:24)

To realize these directive acts with the help of these addressative formulae the interlocutors'status is also involved. Thus, the interjections *bă!* or *fă!* are especially used in the popular and familiar registers, excepting the addressative interjections *mă!, măi!* that are used in the urban environment, where *măi* is a more polite form than *mă,* but their use is not excluded in the rural environment, too.

The variants *fă/făi* (for women) and *bă/băi* (for men) are considered more vulgar, even defiant and they allow the locator to render to the allocator an inferior social status through their use.

As to the variants *bă/băi*, Iorgu Iordan states that,,*bă* is considered a less polite variant of *mă*" (Iordan, 1956:490), although there are cases when within an utterance both forms occur without having a clear distinction as to the status of the interlocutors.

*Iar lui Parasciv o să-i spună aşa: ,,**Bă**, nene, ia spune, **mă,** ce înveleşte pisica?" adică o să-i aducă aminte de cuvintele lui tâmpite de la secere, când a plâns din pricina lui.* (Preda,2009: 331)

The use of these addressative formulae depends, as well, on the relationship that exists between the interlocutors. In case there is a close relationship between the two female interlocutors , the interjections *fă/făi* are employed but, in case there is an inferiority relationship between the two male partners, *bă/băi* are used, though, one may state that it is preferable to avoid these formulae in the urban environment because they are tougher and more vulgar.

These addressative interjections may be found at a distance, separated by a proper name, in order to mark a directive act, the intentionality of the act being that of drawing the allocator's attention.

*- **Băi,** Nilă, **bă**! O să te tragă fetele de turul pantalonilor, ca pe Năstase Besensac. Zici şi tu că eşti flăcău! Eu m-aş fi însurat până acum de zece ori, dar n-am vrut*!... (Preda,2009:198).

The social context where the communication takes place, determines, implicitly, the use or not of such addressative formulae. These interjections are to be avoided under the circumstances when the locator manifests an inferiority relation towards his allocator, their use leading to the idea of lack of respect.

As one may affirm 'the verbal cooperation between individuals is possible only if the principle of politeness is respected, its breach blocking the communication channels" (Ionescu-Ruxandoiu, 1991:20).

Therefore, the principle of politeness is at the basis of the selection of certain linguistics elements, especially, in terms of the interlocutor's age and social status.

'Through interjections, the intentionality of the linguistic act is emphasized. On the one hand, avoiding certain interjections (*fa, fă, bă, mă*) and resorting to others that approach the collocutor (*făi, măi, băi*), the speaker manifests a cooperation attitude

BDD-A14490 © 2014 Universitatea din Pitești
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 08:53:55 UTC)

and, on the other hand, using the interjections *fa, fă, bă, mă,* the locator expresses a hostile attitude towards his partner' (Krieb-Stoian, 2003:5).

According to the dialectical texts, one ascertains that the Romanian language presented a great number of 'short terms of interpellation meant to renew the linguistic contact already established with an interlocutor: for instance, when it is about something important, worthy of attention or when the interlocutor's attention has diminished" (Manu-Magda, 2003:115) towards a certain stimulus. By its injunctive value, the interjection is an important linguistic element used by the locator in order to draw the attention of the allocator or to establish contact with him.

The interjection *măi!* can be followed by an assertive utterance, emphasizing the intentionality of the directive act to draw the allocator's attention:

Măi! *adaugă el...mai am doi ani până să ies la pensie...douăzeci o să mi se pară...* (Caragiale, 2010:117)

In order to render the same directive act with a higher degree of intensity, one may use the repetitive form of the interjection *măi!* + noun in the Vocative case:

Măi*, omule,* ***măi!*** *Ai să te duci în fundul iadului şi n-are să aibă cine te scoate, dacă nu te-i sili să-ţi faci un băiet popă.* (Creangă, 2009:17)

In conclusion, this analysis on the directive acts expressed by certain interjections constituted the main interest of this article and an attempt at emphasizing this important aspect that interjections possess, in general and, in Romanian, in particular.

Bibliography

Austin, J., *Quand dire, c'est faire*, în Alexandrescu Vlad (2001). *Choix de textes, Pragmatique et Théorie de l'énonciation,* Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti, Bucuresti, a. 1962

Austin, J., *Performatif- Constatatif* în Alexandrescu Vlad (2001), *Choix de textes: Pragmatique et Théorie de l'énonciation,* Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti, Bucuresti, b.1962

Ionescu-Ruxăndoiu, L., *Conversaţia. Structuri şi strategii*, Editura All, Bucuresti, 1999

Iordan, I., *Stilistica limbii române*, Editura Stiintifică, Bucuresti, 1975

Krieb-Stoian, S., *Sensuri implicite ale interjecţiilor de adresare*,2003 în Annales Universitatis Apulensis, series Philologica

Magda (Manu), M., *Elemente de pragmalingvistică a românei vorbite regional*, Editura Dual Tech, Bucuresti, 2003

Maingueneau, D., *Pragmatică pentru discursul literar*, Institutul European, Iasi, 2007

Moeschler, J., *Théorie pragmatique et pragmatique conversationnelle*,, Armand Colin, Paris, 1986

Păduraru, C., *Eugeniu Coşeriu*. *Contribuţii la pragmatica lingvistică*, Editura Lumen, Iasi, 2009

Reboul, A., Moeschler, J., *Pragmatique du discours*, Armand Colin, Paris, 1998

Récanati, F., *Qu'est-ce qu'un acte locutionnaire?*, în Alexandrescu Vlad (2001) *Pragmatique et Théorie de l'énonciation. Choix de textes*, Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti, Bucuresti, 1980

Searle, J., *Les actes de language*. *Essai de philosophie de language*, Hermann, Paris, 1972

Searle, J., *Une taxinomie des actes illocutoires,* în Alexandrescu Vlad (2001) *Pragmatique et Théorie de l'enonciation. Choix de textes*, Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti, Bucuresti, 1975

BDD-A14490 © 2014 Universitatea din Pitești
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 08:53:55 UTC)

Sources

Caragiale,I.L., *O noapte furtunoasa*, Editura ErcPress, Bucuresti, 2009
Caragiale, I.L., *D-ale carnavalului*, Editura ErcPress, Bucuresti, 2009
Caragiale, I.L., *Momente si schite*, Editura Tedit FZH, Bucuresti, 2010
Creanga, I., *Amintiri din copilarie*, Editura ErcPress, Bucuresti, 2009
Creanga, I., *Povesti*.*Povestiri*, Editura ErcPress, Bucuresti, 2009
Preda, M., *Morometii*, vol.I,II, Editura Curtea Veche, Bucuresti, 2009

BDD-A14490 © 2014 Universitatea din Pitești
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-14 08:53:55 UTC)