ROMANIAN MARITIME VOCABULARY. ETYMOLOGICAL DIFFICULTIES

Corina Sandiuc

Lecturer, PhD, „Mircea cel Bătrân" Naval Academy, Constanţa

Abstract: In this paper, we aim to illustrate the problems of etymological attestation of some terms belonging to the Romanian maritime vocabulary. From the point of view of their etymological sources, Romanian maritime terms stand out for their diversity, and can be classified into several categories: terms that have a single etymological origin, terms that have multiple etymological origins, terms with controversial etymology, which can be explained either by loans, or by internal lexical processes, and terms with unknown etymology. The vast majority of maritime terms have appeared in Romanian under the influence of foreign languages such as Greek, Turkish, French, Italian, Spanish, English, etc. As a result, at times, the exact origin of certain maritime terms remains difficult to establish, especially since even dictionaries often contradict themselves on their etymology, or contain incomplete etymological indications.

Keywords: Romanian maritime vocabulary, maritime terms, multiple etymology, loanwords.

Introduction

Romanian has an extensive and heterogeneous inventory of neologisms. Starting with the eighteenth century, the Romanian language went through a process of massive innovation, especially in the nineteenth century and continuing until the first half of the twentieth century. This was both a cultural and linguistic movement, which became so strong that it changed the physiognomy of the Romanian language, and especially the structure of its vocabulary.[1] The role of technical neologisms is first of all to fill a terminological void; in this sense, the insertion of neologisms has happened at a conceptual level in the scientific, technical, political and cultural fields of activity, where the greatest progress and innovations have been made. The process of receiving and assimilating Western lexical elements has proven to be a complex and often controversial, although highly necessary phenomenon. For instance, the words of French origin entered the vocabulary of the Romanian language starting with the eighteenth century, covering a long period of time, a process that continues to this day.

The evolution of the Romanian maritime vocabulary

As far as the Romanian maritime vocabulary is concerned, it evolved together with the intensification of maritime navigation. Starting with the second half of the nineteenth century, the needs related to the development of navigation determined the establishment of specialized schools and the considerable increase in the number of specialized works: textbooks, studies, courses, official documents and technical texts with pronounced applicative characteristics (instructions, regulations, codes) and popularization works (magazines, newspapers), published by companies and institutions in the maritime field, to which were added works connected to related fields, such as marine geography, astronomy,

[1] Şora 2006: 1728.

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meteorology, mathematics, physics, fishing, trade, transport, telecommunications, port operation, etc.

The Romanian maritime vocabulary developed in the second half of the nineteenth century through the translation of textbooks from traditional languages in the field of navigation, such as French or Italian. The translation of such documents was done in several ways, which allowed for the creation of new maritime terms in various ways: by linguistic borrowing from foreign languages, by using a translation periphrasis meant to convey the meaning of the term, by using the linguistic calque, by using internal lexical processes for language enrichment such as derivation and composition, by means of internal borrowing - the transfer of words from the common language into specialized languages, etc.

Maritime neologisms stand out from the rest, first of all, because they come in abundant measure. Whether they are lexical loanwords of various origins or internal creations, they represent the greatest part of the Romanian maritime vocabulary. As G. Pană-Dindelegan noticed, this predilection for neologisms, especially for the loan, is motivated by the need for speed and convenience; neologisms enter a language together with the prestige of the whole theory to which it is related, while the terms created internally or translated face additional resistance, especially when they coincide with words from the common word-stock. From a psychological point of view, the specialist may have the feeling that the exact and complete information he needs can only reside in the foreign term.[2] Another striking feature of the Romanian maritime vocabulary is its diversity of loan sources. If in the nineteenth century, loans were almost exclusively based on Romance languages (e.g. French, Italian and Spanish), in the last half of the twentieth century the main donor language is English.[3]

Studying the etymological sources in the formation of the Romanian maritime vocabulary, we need to acknowledge their diversity. Thus, we find maritime terms with a single etymology, maritime terms with multiple etymologies, i.e. terms coming from two or more different sources; maritime terms with controversial etymology, which can be explained either by borrowing or by internal lexical processes, such as derivation or semantic neology. To this classification we add the less numerous category of terms with unknown etymology.

Maritime terms with a single etymology

Modern Romanian maritime neologisms come mostly from Latin and Romance languages, especially French. These loanwords often show little phonetic or morphological changes from the French word:

> *aborda* < Fr. *aborder*, 'to berth a ship or to board another ship in order to attack it'; *acosta* < Fr. *acoster* 'to moor'; *afreta* < Fr. *affreter* 'to charter'; *amara* < Fr. *amarer*, 'to make fast, to secure'; *bigă* < Fr. *bigue*, 'derrick'; *baliză* < Fr. *balise* 'buoy'; *cargou* < Fr. *cargo*, 'freight loaded on a ship'; *cart* < Fr. *quart*, 'watch - four-hour shift performed permanently by crew members', *chilă* < Fr. *quille*, 'keel', *deplasament* < Fr. *déplacement*, 'displacement'; *habitaclu* < Fr. *habitacle*, 'binnacle - a built-in stand for a ship's compass.', *hublou* < Fr. *hublot*, 'porthole'; *pupa* < Fr. *poupe*, 'the stern – the after part of a ship', *turnichet* < Fr. *tourniquet*, 'roller chock - device mounted on a vertical shaft used to change the direction of a rope or anchor chain'.

French had one of the biggest influences on the Romanian maritime vocabulary. In this case, the transition to Romanian took place less gradually than in the case of other loans, due to the fact that many of the neologisms that entered the Romanian language after the

[2] Pană-Dindelegan, 1997: 6.
[3] Guţu-Romalo, 2005: 8.

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1850's were established from the beginning to the form they have today. However, even such terms whose etymology seems clear, could be researched further. For instance, the term *cargo* 'freight loaded on a ship' was borrowed in English in the 1650s, from Spanish *cargo* 'burden', from *cargar* 'to load, impose taxes', from Late Latin *carricare* 'to load a wagon or cart' from Latin *carrus* 'wagon'. Eventually, the French cognate gave the English *charge* (cf. OED).

A special class of loanwords are those with 'single indirect etymology', an expression designating those lexemes of different origins, coming indirectly from the French, or by using a French "pattern", indicated by *cf*. Thus, the word *ancoră* 'anchor' of Latin origin (< Lat. *ancora*), entered the Romanian language, most likely, through French. On the other hand, the word *costier* 'coastal', although derived in Romanian from the word *coastă*, follows the pattern of the French word *côtier*. Other such examples are: *barograf* < Fr. *barographe*, cf. gr. *baros* 'weight', *graphein* 'to write'; *barometru* < cf. Fr. *baromètre*, cf. gr. *baros* 'weight', *metron* 'measure', *batisferă* < Fr. *batisphère*, cf. gr. *bathys* – 'deep', *sphaira* 'sphere'; *bulb* < Fr. *bulbe*, cf. Lat. *bulbus* – 'a type of bow'; *cală* < Fr. *cale*, cf. It. *cala*, Gr. *chalan* 'cargo hold'; *canal* < Fr. *canal*, Lat. *canalis* – 'channel'; *elice* < Fr. *hélice*, Lat. *helix*, *-icis*, It. *elice*, cf. gr. *helix* – 'propeller'; *galion* < ngr. *ghaleona*, Fr., It. *galion* 'type of sailing ship'; *imersiune* < cf. Fr. *immersion*, Lat. *immersio-onis* 'immersion', *periscop* < Fr. *périscope*, cf. gr. *periskopein* < *peri* – 'around', *skopein* – ' to look'. Latin or Greek are often doubled by Italian, as in: *far*, < Fr. *phar*, Lat. *pharus*, It. *faro* – 'lighthouse'; *naufragiu* < cf. Fr. *naufrage*, Lat. *naufragium*, It. *naufragio* – 'shipwreck'; *nautic* < Lat. *nauticus*, It. *nautice*, Fr. *nautique* – 'nautical'. However, there is not always consensus between dictionaries on the etymology of these terms. Take the term *naval*, for example, according to DEX the etymon is French (< Fr. *naval*), whereas MDN and DN mention both French and Latin as sources (< Fr. *naval*, Lat. *navalis*).

Maritime terms with multiple etymologies

If some of the Romanian maritime terms have a certain, well-known origin, in the case of others, the etymon is more difficult to detect. Numerous terms have appeared in the literary Romanian language under the influence of several languages of culture, so that sometimes the exact origin of some of them remains difficult to establish. To solve this problem, Al. Graur issued the *multiple etymology* thesis[4], which was accepted by many other researchers, including: N. A. Ursu (1962), G. Ivănescu (1980), Th. Hristea (1968), etc.[5] Due to this thesis, the research of the neological lexicon from the formation period of the modern Romanian language could be carried out in better accordance with the historical truth, and the problem of the origin of neologisms in the Romanian language could be properly solved. Al. Graur, followed by N. A. Ursu notes that most scientific terminologies consist of international terms, respectively words from Greek or Latin, borrowed directly or created on the basis of elements from these languages. [6] As a result, it is very difficult to indicate the exact donor, especially when the term has a similar form both in Greek and Latin, as well as in many of the modern languages.[7]

Many Romanian maritime terms were borrowed both from French and Italian at about the same time, in the second half of the nineteenth century, through the translation of navigation related textbooks:

avarie < Fr. *avarie*, It. *avaria* 'damage, failure'; *balenieră* < Fr. *balenière*, It. *baleni* era 'fishing vessel', *capă* < Fr. *cape*, cf. It. *cappa*, 'orientation of a ship to

[4] Al. Graur, 1955: 26-35.
[5] See also : Ursu,1962: 114; Seche, 1965: 681; Hristea, 1968: 103; Coteanu, 1970: 223; Ivănescu:1980: 672.
[6] N. A. Ursu, 1962: 115 ; Al. Graur, 1954: 46.
[7] N.A. Ursu, 1962: 102.

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withstand adverse weather'; *carenă* < Fr. *carène*, It. *carena* 'the underwater part of the hull'; *civadieră* < Fr. *civadière*, It. *civadiera* 'square sail placed under the bowsprit'; *compartiment* < Fr. *compartiment*, It. *compartimento* 'compartment'; *deviație* < cf. Fr. *déviation*, It. *deviazione* 'deviation, change of the direction of the ship'; *draga* < Fr. *draguer*, It. *dragare* 'to dredge'; *drenaj* < cf. Fr. *drainage*, It. *drenaggio* 'drainage'; *flotă* < Fr. *flotte*, It. *flotta* 'fleet'; *fregată* < cf. Fr. *frégate*, It. *fregata* 'frigate'; *fila* < Fr. *filer*, It. *filare* 'to let go of a rope'; *maree* < Fr. *marée*, It. *marea* 'tide'; *gabară* < cf. Fr. *gabare*, It. *gabarr*a 'type of watercraft'; *gabie* < It. *gabbia*, Fr. *gabie* 'platform on a mast used mainly as an observation post'; *guverna* < cf. Fr. *gouverner*, It. *governare* 'to steer a ship'; *marină* < Fr. *marine*, It. *marina* 'navy'; *pavoaz* < cf. Fr. *pavois*, It. *pavese* 'set of flags used to decorate the ship'; *port* < Fr. *port*, It. *porto* 'port, harbour'; *resac* < Fr. *ressac*, It *rissaca* 'surge'; *semnal* < cf. Fr. *signal*, It. *segnale* 'signal'; *timonier* < Fr. *timonier*, It. *timoniere* 'helmsman'; *vergă* < It. *verga*, Fr. *vergue* 'yard, spar on a mast from which sails are set'; *voltă* < Fr. *volte*, It. *volta* 'maneuvre changing direction against the wind'.

Germanic influences are more recent, and sometimes coincide with Romance ones:

bac < Fr. *bac*, cf. ol. *bak* 'ferry'; *balast* < Fr. *ballast*, cf. Engl. *ballast*; *bulină* < It. *bolina*, Fr. *bouline*, cf. Engl. *bowline; busolă* < It. *bussola*, Fr. *boussole*, Germ. *Boussole* 'compass'; *canoe* < Fr. *canoë*, Engl. *canoe*; *carlingă* < Fr. *carlingue*, cf. Scand. *kerling* 'keelson'; *cavitație* < Fr. *cavitation*, Engl. *cavitation* 'airbag formed around the propeller'; *ciclon* < Fr. cyclone, Germ. *Zyklon*, cf. Gr. *kyklos* – circle; *doc* < Fr., Engl. *dock*; *feribot* < Fr., Engl. *ferry-boat*; *pavilion* < Fr. *pavillon*, Germ. *Pavillon* 'signal flag'.

At times, more than two miscellaneous, Romance, Germanic and even Slavic donor languages are possible:

aspirant < cf. Fr. *aspirant*, It. *aspirante*, Rus. *aspirant* 'midshipman'; *babord* < Fr. *babôrd*, It. *babordo*, cf. Germ. *Bachbord*, Dutch *bakboard* 'portside'; *bord* < Fr. *bord*, It. *bordo*, Germ. *Bord* 'board'; *bric* < Fr. *brick*, It. *brik*, Germ. *Brick* 'brig'; *iolă* < cf. Fr. *yole*, Sp. *yola*, Engl. *yawl*, Norv. *Jol*, 'yawl'; *manevră* < cf. Fr. *manoeuvre*, Rus. *manevr*, Germ. *Manöver* < Lat. *manus* – 'hand', *opera* – 'work'; *mecanic* < Lat. *mechanicus*, Fr. *mécanique*, It. *meccanico*, Germ. *Mechaniker*; *motor* < Fr. *moteur*, Lat. *motor*, Germ. *Motor* 'motor'; *sistem* < cf. Fr. *système,* It. *sistema*, Engl. *system*, Lat., gr. *systema* 'system'; *tanc petrolier* < Fr. *tank*, Germ. *Tank*, Engl. *tanker*; *trauler*, < Rus. *trauler*, Engl. *trawler*, Germ. *Trawler*.

This second category of terms has a direct etymon in French or Italian, and the complementary etymology in Spanish, English, Russian, German, etc. We note that most terms with multiple etymologies are indicated as French and Latin origin (e.g. *equinox* < Fr. *équinoxe*, Lat. *aequinoctium*), to which another Romance language is sometimes added (e.g. *navigation* < Fr. *navigation*, It. *navigazione*, Lat. *navigation*, *-nis*). There are also cases in which French is associated with English (e.g. *cavitation* < Fr. *cavitation*, Engl. *cavitation* 'airbag formed around the propeller') or with German (*cheu* < Fr. *quai*, Germ. *Kai*).

The criteria for verifying maritime terms with multiple etymologies are difficult to apply. For example, the formal criterion encounters difficulties in application if there are several lexical variants, which determines an increase in the number of potential loan sources. Moreover, the linguistic and the extra-linguistic criteria do not always seem to be sufficient to distinguish between borrowings which are derivatives in the source language and the Romanian internal lexical creations made up with the help of Latin and Romance affixes. Thus, we have terms whose origin is actually uncertain or probable in terms of form or meaning, depending on who does the research, whether a lexicographer or an etymologist.

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In order to solve these etymology and attestation problems and to make the distinction between the terms derived in the source language and those created later in Romanian, we corroborated the etymological indications from several Romanian dictionaries: DEX, DER, DCR, DLR, DN, MDN, NDN. However, sometimes the exact origin of some terms remains difficult to establish, all the more so as even dictionaries often contradict each other or contain incomplete etymological indications. If we study the latest editions of the aforementioned dictionaries, we can easily identify the progress that has been made in the field, but also the authors' reluctance in choosing a possible etymology over others. [8]In this matter, Florin Marcu's Noul Dicţionar de Neologisme (NDN) rectifies some wrong etymologies (e.g. sart 'shroud, rope for fixing the masts on a ship' < It. sartia (together with Turk. sart), not It. sarta 'seamstress').[9]

Maritime terms with controversial etymology

This is another problematical category of maritime terms, i.e. terms which can be explained either by borrowing or by internal lexical processes, such as derivation or semantic neology. Such is the case of native words such as *braţ, cap, măr, picior* etc., that formally came from Latin, but have considerably enriched their meanings, becoming maritime terms through semantic calques of French origin.

If we take the terms: *braţ* 'type of rope' (Lat. *brachium.* cf. Fr. *bras*), *cap* 'direction of movement of an (air)craft' (< Lat. *caput*, cf. Fr. *cap*); *măr* 'type of mast' (< Lat. *melus*, cf. Fr. *pomme*), *picior* 'type of knot' (< Lat. *petiolus*, cf. Fr. *pied*) it is obvious that their meanings are relatively recent acquisitions in Romanian, even if they are Latin in origin, which would justify the assumption that the maritime concepts could also have been inherited directly from Latin into Romanian. Nevertheless, none of the above terms is attested with a maritime meaning in Romanian before the contact with the French language. For instance, the first meaning of *braţ* is that of 'upper limb', a meaning it holds in common with the French word *bras* and, since in French maritime vocabulary *bras* is also 'a rope used to rotate a yard around the mast", the Romanian word *braţ* also enherited this meaning[10]. In the the same way, *picior* 'foot' becomes 'part of a rope or a chain' according to the French word *jambe*, and appears in phrases such as *picior de câine* < cf. Fr. *jambe de chien* 'type of knot'.

Maritime terms with unknown etymology

In the case of the following terms, it has not yet been possible to identify an acceptable etymology, neither from a phonetic, nor from a semantic point of view: *rai* 'wooden wheel on which ropes are rolled'; *rujar* 'port worker'; *rujare* 'the operation of leveling the grain loaded in bulk in order to fill the remaining gaps so that the capacity of the hold is used to the maximum'; *saulă* 'shipboard rope used for raising the flag, a sail, etc.'; *şcondru / scondru* 'long cylindrical rod used for various purposes'; *verfafor* 'type of rod'; *bandulă* 'piece of wood covered in lead, fastened to a rope, used for throwing mooring lines'; *ghiordel* 'bucket made of wood or waterproof cloth used on board a ship', etc.

Conclusion

In order to determine the precise etymology of a maritime term, we must first admit that the origin and the adaptation of neologisms is primarily a problem of language history. If we ignore this, we will not be able to make a meaningful analysis of the relationship that exists between the forms of some neologisms, their origin, the phonetic and morphological structure of a language in different periods of time and the extra-linguistic factors, etc.

[8] Zugun, 2000: 71.
[9]Cf. Zugun, 2000: 72.
[10] Here, the influence of the English term *brace* should also be taken into account.

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Although we have attempted here to create a taxonomy of etymological patterns we need to acknowledge the fact that etymology is the analysis of lexical items and not of lexical groups. Moreover, etymology is not an exact science; every so often, it can leave room for hypothesis, doubt and debate.

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