THEORETICAL ACCOUNTS UPON SYNONYMY

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Abstract

Any kind of reseach regarding the lexical field is characterized by a special variety, having as a starting point the very great number of problems raised in this compartment of the language. The present paper is an attempt at the analysis of the synonymic system of the Romanian language from a taxonomic perspective. The semasiological category of synonymy characterizes all the languages, but every language shows specific features, and possesses a specific synonymic system. Noticed even from the antiquity, the problems of synonymy and synonyms have attracted a permanent attention on the language researchers' part. The last two centuries are known both for the reevaluation of the discussions and as an important stage especially for the evaluation and classification of examples. Nowadays, the concept of synonymy is evaluated and used in almost every linguistic field.

Key words: *language entities*, *synonymy*, *system*, *taxonomy*, *terminology*

Résumé

Les recherches relatives au domaine lexical sont caractérisées par une grande variété, issues de la multiplicité même des problèmes que ce compartiment de la langue soulève. Cet article s'inscrit dans le circuit d'amples recherches, par la thématique abordée, en se proposant l'analyse du système synonymique de la langue roumaine d'une perspective taxonomique. La catégorie sémasiologique de la synonymie caractérise toutes les langues, mais chaque langue présente ses particularités spécifiques et possède son système synonymique. La catégorie sémasiologique des synonymes en tant que lien qui pourrait expliquer le caractère de système du lexique, ont depuis longtemps intéressé les linguistes, depuis l'antiquité, comme il en témoigne le nombre de plus en plus grand des travaux consacrés à leur recherche, les deux derniers siècles se remarquant par la réévaluation des opinions et de la classification des synonymes.

Mots-clés: *entités linguistiques*, *synonymie*, *système*, *taxonomie*, *terminologie*

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In general linguistics there is a wide-spread point of view according to which the degree of a language evolution is characterized both by its total number of words and notions expressed through these words (polysemy and homonymy), and by the number of words which can express the very same notions (synonymy). Referring to this thing, L.V. Ščerba considered that: "a developed language represents a very complex system of more or less synonymical means of expression, correlated with each other, in one way or another" (Ščerba 1957: 122).

The onomasiological category of synonyms, as well as the synonymic relations as a network, which could explain the systematic character of the vocabulary, have attracted the attention of the linguists for a long time; the proof is the growing number of works dedicated to their research. "The synonymy problem – writes V.A. Grečko (1963: 23) – is in a direct connection with the problem of the systematic character of the vocabulary, which has become lately the object of a special attention on the part of the linguists, especially of the lexicologists".

Starting from the conceptions according to which the vocabulary of a language is not formed of isolated units, but of elements among which interdependency relations are established, thus giving the vocabulary its systematic character, we can talk about a very amassed relation among lexical categories (semantic spheres, paronymic constructions, antonymic dissents, synonymic connections, etc.). The tendency to consider that all the language divisions (phonetics, vocabulary, morphology and syntax) can be analyzed as systems is due to the structuralist linguistics, even though this system idea comes to light in the traditional grammars as well, but inconsequently, without a base or a general conception.

Among linguists, the first one who considers language as a conventional scheme, is Ferdinand de Saussure (1922) who starts from the clear distinction between *langue* and *parole*, claiming that language is form, not substance, that language is a system of signs which express ideas, an organic whole, a well-determined structure. He develops an entire system of notions which express the relations that can be established between the entities of the language, both on the paradigmatic axis, namely within the system, and on the syntagmatic axis, namely in the process. The

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presentation of the basic elements of the language as a system is possible only due to the existence of paradigms; within the frame of these paradigms there can be distinguished synonymic series, antonymic pairs, etc. I.D. Apresjan (1969) continues this idea by claiming that a system exists where a paradigm exists, and a structural description is possible only if there is a system. The language system is an assembly of partial systems (subsystems) corresponding to the compartments of grammar: phonetics, lexicology, etc., composed in their turn, of microsystems (synonymy, antonymy) and these, consisting of terms (e.g. the terms of the synonymic series). Therefore, the language system is an assembly of partial systems, "a system of systems" or subsystems, these constituting the immediate reality of the system. Through the system we reach the microsystems and from here, the terms. The microsystems appear during the organisation of the units within the frame of the subsystem, and the terms represent the ultimate division of the system. Therefore, if the language is a system, then, its partitions (phonetics, vocabulary, morphology, syntax, etc.) represent subsystems composed of microsystems. In its turn, the category of synonyms, seen as a microsystem of the lexical subsystem, has in its composition other microsystems represented by the synonymic series, whose components, the terms, are firmly braced between them through their meaning, reflecting identical phenomena of the real world (Király, 1979). The systematic character of synonymic series emerges from the fact that synonymy relations are totally fulfilled only on the synchronic plane, first of all requiring a descriptive study, because every period of the language evolution has its own well set-off system of synonyms, whose components are organized on the vertical plane and function on the horizontal plane. The synonymic microsystem has an open and dynamic character, being in a sustained transformation process depending on: the language development, the specific stages that the language goes through in its evolution, the different languages, and the possibilities of accumulation and assimilation of each speaker. The microsystemic character of synonymy is achieved by word associations on the base of common meaning, which form the so called synonymic series (Vințeler, 1980: 157). Josef Filipec noticed the fact that synonymic series are not only a way of manifestation, but also a system. The discovery of the

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system in the vocabulary presupposes the study of lexical categories in correlation, demonstrating that by interaction, the wholeness of the categories forms the system (Budagov, 1961: 8-9).

In spite of the attention given to synonymy by the specialists, it arises another series of problems and controversial opinions, ranging from the universalization of the synonymic relations to their denial.

The communication function of the language imposes the existence of a name for each object; therefore this fact does not generate the necessity of synonymy. Speaking about the objective requirements of communication, the academician Iorgu Iordan asserted that: “the language, through its speaking subjects, *feels* the uselessness of two or more names for the same thing and this is why it eliminates the redundant name, keeping only one” (Iordan, 1978: 43). Besides the objective communication, it is also distinguished the function of language expressiveness, which involves the possibility of choosing between equivalent forms, the fact that postulates the synonymy.

The richness of a language means of expression is given by the number of words and meanings, but also by the quality of these words to name the same notion (the synonyms) and by their frequency. The existence of synonyms in the lexical system is a positive phenomenon because it offers the speaker an ample, diversified and elastic system to express ideas, feelings and realities with maximum accuracy.

In the structuralist perspective, the word and the terms semantically related, as well as its adjacent antonyms, form a unitary whole (Iliasă-Frigură, 1980: 32), in other words, wordfield or a field of the linguistic meaning inside of which words condition each other. Because the lexical field is the superior unit of the semanteme (the unity being made up of an ensemble of semes), the significance of a lexical unit is not considered as an undifferentiated whole, but is analyzable at minimal elements level; on the base of some lexical units, they can be easily placed in a synonymic series, taking into account the arhisememe of these units, which actually represents the number of common semes.

If the semes totally overlap the synonymys is perfect, but if only a few semes concur, the synonyms are partial. The linguists have not succeeded to

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delimitate precisely the border between perfect synonyms and partial ones, to show the limits of synonymy or to give a unique definition of synonyms. What gives validity to the majority of definitions is the common meaning of terms, on the basis of which the synonymy relation is established: "synonyms are two words which have the same meaning". Most of the definitions include an approximate equivalence of meaning between two or more interchangeable words in the same context, which makes synonymy an objective reality, but also a modality of expression variation or even a modality of refinement of the linguistic expression: "...the stylistic function of synonyms is the one of being an exact communication expressing instrument. Even though synonymy creates large possibilities of stylistic selection for the lexical means, the search for the right word requests a sustained effort from the author... because often it is not easy to establish what makes the synonyms distinct, what meaning or emotional shades they express" (Vințeler, 1980: 36).

Having more words on tap, the speaker or the writer submits them to a strict selection process, keeping only one out all of them: "the one which – he hopes – incarnates more exactly and more shading the intimate landscape of his thinking and sensibility" (Tohăneanu, 1976: 11).

The assertion that synonyms are two or more words having the same or almost the same meaning is correct in its essence but it is far from being a complete definition, because not only words, but also expressions as well as phrases, sentences or some grammatical forms can be in a synonymy relation (grammatical synonymy); the greater or slighter differences between the components of a synonymic series don't have only a semantic origin, but they can also be of grammatical and stylistic nature. Even though the general definition given to synonyms is "different words in form, but close or identical in meaning "(Șerban, 1978: 23) or "different significants (different phonetic forms) which can express almost the same significance (meaning)" (Graur, 1971), it is far from being accepted and shared by all linguists.

The easiest and more general definition could be the one given by Kr. Nyrop: "The words which present the same or almost the same meaning are called synonyms", in which the author takes into consideration only the

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(almost) identical significance of synonyms. Other definitions have in view, besides the common meaning, the diversity of the synonymic forms, too": two expressions (words, groups of words, sentences) are named synonyms if they have the same meaning, being different from the material point of view".

Otto Duchaček considers that synonyms are "lexical units with identical, almost identical or close meanings, but which differ in form partially (if they have the same root: *agraire*, *agrarien*, *agreste*, *agricole*), or totally (*justesse – precision*)".

Trying to define synonyms, other linguists consider that these can substitute one another. "Synonyms are words with similar meaning, respectively with related meaning", words whose meaning spheres overlap or superpose in a certain number of cases, words which can replace each other in the same context. The linguist L. Antal (1965: 26) contests the validity of the substitution method in the definition and examination of synonyms and affirms that it would actually be about a tautology, which consists in: two words are synonyms if they can be replaced one with the other in the same sentence without changing its meaning; the only guarantee that the meaning of the sentence remains the same after the replacement of a word by another is the presupposition that the replaced words are synonyms.

A more inclusive definition was given by R.A. Budagov who says synonyms express shades of the same notions (Iliasă-Frigură, 1980: 22), and the one proposed by A.P. Evgenjeva: "synonyms are words with close or identical meaning, which name the same notion, but present semantic, stylistic differences, or stylistic and semantic differences" is considered the most appropriate. This last definition, considered incomplete by M. Király (1979: 113), could mention that synonyms may differ in distribution and substitution particularities. I.D. Apresjan admitted the general validity of the identical distribution criterion and the partial character of the substitution criterion: "the substitution of synonyms is possible only if they are syntactically and semantically identical" (Apresjan, 1957: 87).

A very interesting point of view belongs to Rudolf Carnap (1972: 31), philosopher and logician, whose logical-semantic conception is based on the physicalism thesis. Using the semantic method of extension and intension,

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he gives a series of definitions, among which the definition regarding the language of meanings, and considers that "synonymous designators are intersubstitutable in any context" and that two expressions e1 and e2 are equisignificant or synonymous, if e1 has the same meaning with e 2, and concludes that, the concept of synonymy "requires a definition or a criterion in psychological and linguistic terms". Another logico-philosophical point of view claims that "not any pair of expressions with the same intension can be considered synonymous or equipollent" and that "two expressions are synonymous, if they have the same intension I, the intension being neither zero, nor the universe, or if their intension is zero or the universe, they are equivalent in an analytic meaning".

In Romanian linguistics, I. Molnar (see Bulgăr, 2000: 3) is one of the first linguists who tries to give a definition of synonymy: "Synonymy is said to exist when, with different words and names, which mean the same thing, we express the same opinion in many ways". Molnar explains the repetition of the idea by synonyms, by juxtaposition or by synonymic coordination, referring to those who "being afraid that they did not explain as they should have, they say it again and again, with special words, even though the meaning is the same".

The problem of the very existence of synonyms gave birth to contradictory disputes which also included the idea of the inexistence of synonymy. The great linguist V. Bogrea claimed the existence of synonyms, in that epoch in which prestigious linguists denied the existence and the importance of the synonyms, considering them a luxury, predicting the collapse or disappearance, by competition, of the approximate equivalent words, i.e. of synonyms. Referring to this thing, Ana Goliş Poalelungi (1967: 180) specifies that Eminescu is right when he considers that the woed lexical sphere has been limited when reason appeared in the language, even though he himself uses *word* with its old meaning. V. Bogrea (1924: 144) affirms: "we know.... that in some opinions the very existence of synonyms is illusory, because it would presume a meaning identity which, in fact, does not exist. But we also know that when this «identity» comes down into the biological and historical reality of language contingents from

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the abstract sphere of logic transcendences… it has to be taken «cum grano salis»... the synonyms exist: it is a fact".

Being interested in synonyms, Mihail Sadoveanu considers that they cannot be considered a luxury, but a source of expressive ability of the literary language, the possible equivalences being a form of renewal and lexical variety, very useful to those writers who pay attention to the subtle values of the vocabulary (Bulgăr, 1971: 286).

Famous Romanian linguists propose definitions which are more or less comprehensive, very similar or different from the ones provided by general linguistics. Gh. Bulgar (2000: 3): "we consider that synonyms are those words which have nearly the same meaning, and the possibility of being substituted by each other in a certain context, without changing the meaning of the context". If the general meaning of the context remains the same after this substitution, then, the replaceable terms are considered synonyms.

In the preface to the *Dicționarul de sinonime/Dictionary of Synonyms* (2002), Mircea and Luiza Seche start the description of the *synonym* concept, from the idea that different words and phraseological units which denote the same semantic reality (or the same meaning) are called synonyms, and that synonymy includes the field of relations between synonyms. The definition suggested by the authors is ampler: "In order that two words, two meanings or two semantic shades should have the statute of mutual synonyms, only one condition seems to be decisive: the condition of their common content. Therefore we call synonyms all the pairs or lexical series which, substituted in a given concrete message, do not alter its essential content".

Carmen Vlad (1974: 60-65) expands the categories which could enter under the incidence of the notion of synonym, considering that "synonyms are classes (series) of homogeneous words, from the grammatical point of view, having different expressions and common content (common meanings)".

A more inclusive definition, related to the one formulated by R.A. Budagov, is the one proposed by M. Bucă, in which it is specified that synonyms express nuances of the same notion. "The synonyms are words

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which denote the same class of objects and express the same notion, being distinguished, in most of the cases, either by stylistic nuances or by semantic nuances or by all these types of nuances" (according to Iliasă-Frigură, 1980: 22); the definition given by A. Bidu-Vrănceanu (1988: 76): "two or more language units can be synonymous if they globally designate the same object in situations in which the dialectical and stylistic-functional distribution are neglected (consciously or not)" seems more complex having in view the fact that it includes the dialectal distribution as well.

As we can observe, the researchers who have studied synonymy fall into two distinct groups: some of them deny the existence of synonyms in language while others extend the sphere of the synonymy concept too much, assigning this quality even to some lexical units which are only close from the meaning point of view or they are simply part of the same semantic sphere.

The most comprehensive definition seems to be the offered by Professor O. Vințeler (1983: 33): "Synonyms are considered to be two or more words which in a certain period of time that is on the synchronic plane, and within one and the same system of a language, overlap for at least one of the existing meanings". The concept of synonym – viewed at from this point of view – has as synonymiser criteria, the meaning identity or closeness, the notional identity and the object identity; the means of controlling the synonymiser relations are: the substitution, the antonymy and the distributional identity.

The meaning kinship of words has been approached and classified in different ways, starting from the idea of the existence of perfect synonyms, usually considered rare because of the intervention of affective values. Linguists, knowing the history of words, lexicographers, studying the organizing of meanings, trying to explain the shades and their illustration through quotes, can conclude that there are very few perfect synonyms in language. S. Puşcariu, mentioning the problem of synonyms in the introductory pages to *The Dictionary of Romanian Language*, published in 1913, shows that: "having two terms for the same notion is a luxury the language does not take gladly". In these cases there are outlined differences in the semantic sphere of some of the terms of the synonymic series and the

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unneeded variants can be eliminated (for instance, the word *aratru* couldn't make head against the word *plug*).

How vast the possibility of grouping and classifying synonyms can be is a problem of vision, an aspect of the concrete systemizing, both for scientific reasons, and out of the desire to illustrate the richness of the language in a very appropriate way.

In this respect, S. Ullmann (1967: 83) considers that "the authentic synonyms are those words which can be substituted one to another in a context, without the smallest modification in the objective meaning and the affective shade of the sentence". Therefore, the English linguist considers that only the perfect or absolute synonyms can be considered authentic synonyms also showing that "only the technical terms, which can be found only in restricted contexts, are regarded as having an integral synonymy, for example spirant and fricative in phonetics".

L.A. Novikov (1968: 11) makes a first step in the classification of synonyms, starting from the idea that the main function of synonyms is their mutual replacement, and he distinguishes two types of substitution: the complete substitution which could correspond to perfect synonyms and the incomplete substitution, or the partial synonyms. Taking over this idea, M. Bucă (1971: 38) considers that the substitution has two aspects: the number of contexts in which it can be realized and the accomplishment degree in each context; depending on these two aspects, the author distinguishes four types of substitutions, corresponding to the same types of synonyms: total substitution, partial substitution, absolute substitution and relative substitution. By total substitution the author understands the possibility of the synonyms to replace each other in any context, while partial substitution restricts these possibilities to a certain number of contexts, these two types of substitution being conditioned by the degree of superposing of the synonymic distribution. The other two types of substitution reflect, in the conception of the linguist, the effect obtained after the replacement of a word with another in a certain context, namely: we can talk about absolute substitution, when, between the sentences formed, by replacing a word with another, does not exist any difference of semantic, stylistic or affective nature, while relative substitution assumes the existence of those differences

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under the same given conditions, the differences being determined by the distinct peculiarities of those words. This substitution method is considered to be the most efficient way of checking up the types of synonyms. Thus, in doublets such as *natrium – sodium*, *kaliu – potassium*, *conjunctive – subjunctive*, etc., any of the two components can stay in any context, in any kind of junction, with a more or less constant character; the substitution is complete and therefore, the synonyms are absolute.

In contrast, in the case of pairs such as *weather*/*vreme – time*/*timp* there is no complete synonymy, since the substitution of a term by the other is incomplete, in some contexts being impossible. Thus, we can say: *We have a nice time – We have a nice weather*, but we cannot say *It's high weather* instead of *It's high time* since *time* and *weather* are not always replaceable in set phrases. Within the category of complete synonyms, considered perfect or absolute, whose semantic sphere coincides entirely, consisting of either old, popular, colloquial or regional words and words from the literary language (e.g. *barabulă – cartof*, *exil – surghiun*) or words from the scientific and technical language and other generally known words (e.g. *lexic – vocabular*, *aramă – cupru*), some linguists recognize the existence of partial synonyms, whose semantic sphere is only partially common, i.e. only some of the meanings of the terms belonging to a synonymous series are synonyms.

This type of synonyms is best represented in old and polysemantic words, their meanings corresponding to meanings of other polysemantic words or even to monosemantic words (e.g. *a trimite – a expedia*; *bun – preţios*, *valoros*). Besides these, one could add the approximate synonyms, which are characterized by similarity or coincidence of terms, giving to the common words figurative values of the language (e.g. *iubire – arşiţă*).

M.F. Palevskaja (1964: 34) believes that synonyms can be divided into: semantic synonyms, present in all parts of speech, which include words stylistically neutral, distinguished from one another mainly by the shades of their main common meaning (e.g. *ud – umed – jilav*, the common meaning being "soaked moisture", each word expressing a certain stage of the water impregnation process); stylistic synonyms, including identical words in their meaning, but different according to the stylistic nuance (e.g. *a mânca – a*

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înfuleca), semantic-stylistic synonyms, including words (and their equivalents), which express the same phenomenon of the objective reality and which are distinguished by the stylistic nuance and shades of the common meaning (e.g. *duşman – inamic*, *gras – plinuţ*, in which the first component of the series contains the more outstanding meaning).

Other linguists, including R.A. Budagov (1961) and Otto Duchaček (1967: 55-56), consider that the sphere of the synonymy is much wider and that the identical lexical units represent only a certain type of synonyms. According to R.A. Budagov, synonyms can be classified into: synonyms of the common language and literary stylistic synonyms. The synonyms of the common language include, in their turn: notional synonyms and stylistic synonyms. The perfect or absolute synonyms, relatively rarely encountered in language, are placed among the synonyms of the common language (e.g. *aeroplan – avion*). In his turn, Otto Duchaček makes a more detailed classification. According to the Czech linguist, synonyms can be absolute synonyms and partial synonyms. Both types of synonyms are divided into: perfect and approximate). The linguist believes that perfect synonyms (absolute or partial) "are lexical units of the same category of words (e.g. Noun class) having absolutely identical meanings: semi-voyelle = semi-consonne", and the approximate synonyms (absolute and partial) are considered "lexical units of the same category of words, which have one and the same dominant feature: *joli – beau*".

Duchaček classifies approximate synonyms, both absolute and partial into stylistic synonyms "which differ only by their expressiveness, by the subjective value, by their phraseological and syntactic use and by employing them in different registers of the language (literary, colloquial, popular, slang)" and semantic synonyms whose content varies (e.g. *bonheur – felicite – beatitude*). The Czech linguist gives further details, subclassifying the stylistic synonyms into: sintactic-phraseological synonyms, those which are in a synonymy relationship only in certain contexts, i.e. the contextual synonyms; expressive synonyms, which are divided into: descriptive synonyms, which generally are evocative and metaphorical, and affective/emotional synonyms, expressing sympathy or antipathy of the speaker towards the person he is talking about, and which are divided, in

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their turn into: synonyms of affection, e.g. *copil – gâgâlice – pic – puştan*, etc. and pejorative synonyms, e.g. *gură – bot – fleancă – morişcă*, etc.

An interesting classification is also given by V.C. Favorin (1953:47), who distinguishes the synonyms with a specifying value, which can be absolute synonyms, denoting one and the same object of thought and relative synonyms, naming different objects or meanings, no matter how close in meaning they would be; synonyms of genre (literary), the linguist referring to discourse types: scientific, artistic, publishing, colloquial, common, etc., each genre with its own particularities, consisting especially in the choice of lexical material; expressive synonyms in contrast to which "ordinary" words seem dry, neutral, even "cold". In a separate category of synonyms are assigned the euphemisms, which represent the replacement of some unpleasant expressions, of some very vulgar words, with pleasant words and phrases or, at least with neutral ones, in order to cover and veil the direct expression of thoughts and emotions (eg. nebun-bolnav, a tăia-a amputa).

The criteria used by V.A. Širotina (1960: 13) in the classification of synonyms are more special. He believes they would differ according to: meaning (*a se înroşi – a se aprinde*), property (*mare – imens – colosal*), colours (*roşu – purpuriu*), temperature (*cald – fierbinte*), sound, degree (*încet – şoptit*), intensities of the actions (*a plânge – a boci*; *a iubi – a adora – a idolatriza*); according to the quality of words of being concrete (*a trăi – a locui – a supraviețui*) and abstract (*a gândi – a medita*), etc. V.A. Širotina talks about:

1. Expressively and stylistically undifferentiated synonyms, but which differ in meaning (*teamă – frică*);

2. Synonyms whose emotional-stylistic plane coincides, the differences in meaning occurring at the synonymical phraseological expression level (*maro-închis – căprui*);

3. Emotionally and stylistically differentiated synonyms, belonging to different functional styles (*a dovedi – a demonstra – a argumenta*).

Trying to classify English synonyms, L. Levițchi (1997: 86-89) describes them in the following systematic way: absolute/perfect synonyms

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and relative/proper synonyms, which can be: lexical or grammatical, each being subclassified, in its turn into ideographic and stylistc synonyms.

Absolute synonyms have the same semantic and stylistic value, the same grammatical structure. Ideographic lexical synonyms involve certain semantic distinctions regarding the characteristics of those concepts denoted by the synonymic series (*fence – fence-hedge – wall/împrejmuire – gard – gard-viu – zid*). Stylistic lexical synonyms have the same meaning, but belong to different functional styles (*bye – bye-bye – hello – so long /la revedere – adio – pa – salut – servus*). A subset of the stylistic synonyms refers to false synonyms (disguised synonyms), generally based on figures of speech or on expressive descriptions (Shakespeare, the loved swan of Avon – the author of *Hamlet* – the greatest English playwright/Shakespeare – lebăda cea dragă din Avon – autorul lui *Hamlet* – cel mai mare dramaturg englez). Another subset of stylistic synonyms includes euphemisms (*to pass away – to die /a trece în neființă – a muri*). Eric Partridge (1963) highlights the synonymic character of euphemisms saying that "if there were no synonyms, there would be no euphemisms".

Synonyms refer to the same reality, but sometimes considering different levels of the language. That is why some Romanian linguists express their doubts concerning the widespread recognition of synonymy, limiting it to partial, imperfect or relative lexical synonymy and considering that total, complete, perfect or absolute synonyms are only exceptions.

Thus, the opinion of the Academician I. Jordan (1978) that proper synonyms, i.e. more words for the same concept, do not exist, is similar to the opinion of the English linguist S. Ullmann regarding the genuine synonyms, both researchers talking about the same type of synonyms, the perfect ones.

The majority of Romanian researchers deny the existence of perfect synonyms or, if they accept it, they consider that this classification is valid only for scientific language. In this regard, Rodica Bogza (1960: 340) admits perfect synonymy only in scientific terminology, where "there exist synonymous doublets and triplets. They name the same concept and therefore are perfect synonyms" (e.g. *azot – nitrogen*, *lexic – vocabulary*).

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Ion Coteanu (1990) considers that "even in scientific language, perfect, total or absolute synonymy is nothing but an exceptional event, being explained either by the provenance of the synonymous terms from different languages, from different scientific schools, or by changing a certain nomenclature, etc."

On the other hand, Gh. Bulgăr, discounting the dialectal and functional-stylistic distribution, admits the idea of the existence of perfect synonyms, saying that "they correspond semantically to their entire sphere of meanings: some archaic and regional words", together with the approximate synonyms, whose semantic sphere overlap to a great extent, and with the partial synonyms, when only a limited part of the same semantic sphere of the related words coincides.

A more special and interesting point of view is offered by Silviu Berejan (1966: 200) who considers that lexical synonyms are divided into synonyms with different roots and synonyms with the same root. Within the synonyms with the same root the linguist distinguishes the affixed/derivative/homoryzic synonyms which are formed by means of derivation with suffixes and prefixes from a common root, and phonetic synonyms.

In interpreting the concept of derivative synonymy there can be found several points of view, including: the very semantic and functional equivalence of the affixal morphemes; the similitude of the derivative types or patterns regarding the formation of certain morphological and semantic groups of words; the homogeneity of the word formation procedures or the identity in meaning of the derived lexical units, which are based on the same root and differ only by the affix. The linguist makes a distinction between affixal synonymy (synonymy of affixes, for instance *-ar*, *-or*, *-ist*, *-as* are synonyms because all of them help to denote occupation: *ceasornicar*, *antrenor*, *tractorist*, *luntraş*) and affixal synonyms, as well as between derivative synonymy, which implies the existence of some types of derivation (roots of some parts of speech in combination with certain syntactic affixes), and derivative synonyms which involve the existence of some synonymous lexical units formed from the same root.

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For the derivative synonymy type, the author introduces the term of synonyms with common root (or identical) and then that of homoryzic synonyms (meaning the same root), opposite to heteroryzic synonyms (i.e. with different roots).

The problem of synonymy is tackled by Carmen Vlad (1974: 61) taking into account three basic dimensions of language: the diachronic dimension (time), the geographic dimension (space) and the socio-cultural dimension. From this perspective, synonyms can be diachronically distinct, when referring to the coexistence of the common use with archaisms with very similar meanings (e.g. *a merge – a purcede, an – leat*, etc.); synonyms in simultaneous microsystems, which include the existence of different words and phrases in dialects alongside with the literary language (e.g. in the ALB linguistic atlas, new series from 1965, on map no. 1061 the equivalents of word *flacără* occur in 48 forms including synonyms such as: *bilbară, bobot, flăcăraie, foc, hoparită, limbă/pală de foc, pară, pălălaie, văpaie, vâlvătaie*), and also the synonymy in the functional styles (e.g. *cord – inimă, algoritm – rețetă*).

In addition to these types of synonyms, she discusses gradual synonyms of the type: *drum – potecă, vânt – zefir, casă – apartament*, etc., in which the synonymical pairs include a neutral term and another enhanced one, or of the type: *a fierbe – a coace – a frige – a prăji*, etc., which, despite their notional similarity, cannot appear in a common context.

A thorough classification is offered by Doina Iliasă-Frigură (1980:26), who takes into account two criteria: the structural criterion (referring to the lexical unit structure, simple or expanded) and the functional criterion (referring to the total or partial overlap of the semes). According to the first criterion, lexical synonyms could be divided into: proper lexical synonyms, including here the simple lexical units (the words) – e.g. *a afla – a oblici, a inventa – a născoci*, etc. and periphrastic lexical synonyms, including the expanded lexical units (the author considering periphrases as groups of words, more or less integrated, with a unitary determined meaning, the close-knit groups being the phrases) – e.g. *a face popas – a poposi*.

According to the second criterion, proper lexical synonyms are classified into: perfect synonyms (monosemantic words whose semes

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overlap completely – e.g. *barză – cocostârc*) and partial synonyms or quasisynonyms or parasynonyms (usually polysemantic words whose semes do not overlap completely).

Partial synonyms are subclassified into non-figurative synonyms (e.g. *gazdă – amfitrion*) and figurative or stylistic synonyms, which come from popular language, slang, or colloquial style or are creations of the writer himself.

In their turn, figurative synonyms are divided into: figurative synonyms of the common language (taken from slang, colloquial language, etc., therefore known by the speakers and which can appear in different contexts, for example *brumar – noiembrie*) and contextual figurative synonyms encountered in the same context or in very close contexts, being creations of the writers themselves (e.g. *drăcoaică – fată vioaie – nepoată*).

Periphrastic synonyms are only partial and can be grouped into: non-figurative (phrasal synonyms: verbal, nominal, adjectival, etc. – e.g. *aducere-aminte = amintire*) and figurative or stylistic, which include periphrases based on a metaphor, a simile, etc. and which can be subclassified into: figurative periphrastic synonyms of the common language (e.g. *lăcaşul luminii = şcoala*) and contextual periphrastic synonyms (in the works of writers, e.g. *apa cerului = ploaia*). This idea of the relation of synonymy among several words, which is established either between their own meanings or between a proper meaning and a figurative, metaphorical one, also occurs in T. Vianu's view (1963: 25); he identifies another type of synonymy, namely the synonymy through a succession of metaphors (e.g. *fluturime = valuri, ploi, ninsori de fluturi*).

Periphrastic synonyms and, generally speaking, figurative synonyms can also be considered analogue synonyms; since they belong to stylistics, they are called stylistic synonyms.

Taking into account the same structural criterion, Florica Dimitrescu (1995: 37) talks about: simple or isolated synonymy, in which we are dealing with minimal groups formed of two lexical items (synonymous benomials), such as *a plodi = a naşte*, but also with the semantic equivalence between a word and a locutional group of words, e.g. *a pomeni = a-şi aduce aminte*; complex synonymy, in which the number of terms

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referring to the same referent is greater, for example: *vină – greşeală – păcat* or *vită – dobitoc – jivină – jiganie – dihanie – făptură – fiară, gadină – avuție – bogăție – bunătate – marhă*, etc.

The same type of synonymy, called expanded synonymy is identified by M. Buca (1970: 222 -223) who states that expanded synonymy, as a parameter of the richness of the vocabulary, includes not only the existence of some series of synonyms with a great number of words, but also of a large number of synonymic series, of concepts that are expressed by several synonymous units.

All the classifications presented so far have covered only the lexical synonymy area. The existence, together with the lexical synonyms, of some parallel forms and structures, allows us to talk about the category of grammatical synonyms, which caught the attention of more and more linguists.

A close examination of the facts of language clearly indicates that any language department (phonetics, vocabulary, morphology, syntax) has numerous opportunities to express the same idea, the same logical content, the same grammatical relation, in other words, to use synonyms. Taking care of some aspects of synonymy, G.I. Tohăneanu talks about phonetic synonyms, convinced that the typology of synonyms is much more multifarious than it is generally believed, as it is also met beyond word level, in other words, in all language departments, including phonetics: *vulpe/hulpe*, *băiat/băiet*.

Morphology, as well as syntax represents a favourable background for synonymy. The Romanian linguist appreciates the richness of the inflectional forms of the verb, which offer different opportunities to express the same grammatical category; for verbs, this is illustrated by using the old form of the *perfect simplu*, e.g. *văzum – văzurăm*, *şezum – şezurăm*, etc. or of the analytical pluperfect instead of the synthetic one, e.g. *Părea că printre nouri s-a fost deschis o poartă* (for *se deschisese*). The non-literary forms of the future these are also considered morphological synonyms: *m-oi duce – o să mă duc – mă voi duce*, as well as some pairs of vocative forms such as *omule – oame* (Tohăneanu, 1986: 42-49).

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An interesting vision is offered by Luminița Hoarță Lazarescu (1999), who reveals the existence of synonymy, but also of grammatical homonymy. Gh. Doca (2001: 131) also pleads "for a synonymous grammar of the Romanian language", which he considers not only possible but also necessary, asserting: "The very fact of linking «synonymy» with the «grammatical» determinant is new to many Romanian teachers, as well as to many students of linguistics". After a series of important details about the specificity of grammatical synonymy in relation to lexical synonymy, the same author also shows that the first type (grammatical synonymy) should not be limited to syntax. Actually grammatical synonymy includes grammatical forms and structures which belong to morphology, for instance the equivalence between the present and the future in constructions such as: *mă întorc peste o oră* (= *mă voi întoarce*...) or the equivalence between indicative imperfect and conditional perfect in constructions such as: *dacă-mi scriai, îți aduceam cartea* (= *dacă mi-ai fi scris, ți-aş fi adus*...).

Other examples of morphological synonymy are cited by Mioara Avram (2001: 171). These include, for example, the synonymy between various types of future (*voi veni/oi veni/am să vin* şi *o să vin*). A very frequent type of synonymy is inflectional morphological synonymy, so called because it is achieved by means of inflections – synonymous inflectional morphemes (e.g. *-e* and *-i* which help to form the plural of feminine nouns or *-e* and *-uri* which are used to form the plural of neutral nouns). This does not mean that there exists a synonymic relationship between *coperte* and *coperți* or *chibrituri* and *chibrite*, because of the two morphological variants only one is correct or literary.

When different ways of expressing the same relationship can coexist in language, we can talk about syntactic synonymy, an edifying example being that of the use of some verbs with dative instead of prepositional accusative: *stai locului – stai pe loc, aşterne-te drumului – aşterne-te la drum*, etc. Mioara Avram devotes a substantial chapter to the syntactic synonymy, and from the examples cited by the author (who sets out five types of syntactic synonymy) we note, for example, the semantic equivalence between the two different types of attribute (adjectival and nominal), e.g.: cămin studențesc şi cămin de studenți. Synonymy can also be

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established between an appositive attribute and a genitival nominal one (e.g. *luna iulie* and *luna lui iulie*), then between a verbal predicate and a nominal one (*îți datorez* and *îți sunt dator*) or between a direct object and an indirect one (*Te ajută* and *Îți ajută*), etc. The reduction of a sentence to a part of sentence with exactly the same meaning, as well as the expansion of a part of sentence leads to syntactic synonyms of great interest and importance in the process of development and diversification of literary expressions.

We can talk about grammatical synonymy even in the case of paradigmatic linguistics (the American descriptivism, the glossematics, etc.) in which the substitution classes obtained through the technique of analysis, of segmentation into immediate constituents, are actually sets of equivalent linguistic segments (Hodiș, 1980: 78-81), which can be substituted in the same context, i.e. they are synonymous linguistic segments. For example an active construction such as: *Romanii au cucerit Dacia*. and its passive correspondent *Dacia a fost cucerită de romani*. are in a semantic equivalence relationship.

The equivalence relation is a relation of correspondence or involvement, but what is called equivalence by some linguists, if we refer to the deep and surface structures, in N. Chomsky's terminology is called cognitive synonymy (1965: 162).

Within the complex sentence, the synonymy relationship can be built, preferring the juxtaposition coordination and the paratactic structure of the sentence instead of coordination and subordination by conjunctions, for example: *apa trece, pietrele rămân* (*dar* – adversative report) or *ai ceva de spus, spune* (*dacă* – conditional report), etc.

Studying very carefully the phenomenon of synonymy and relying on solid documentation, O. Vințeler (1983: 17) proposes a detailed and complex classification, viewed from several perspectives. Thus, there can be lexical synonyms, referring to similar or identical meaning words, expressing the same concept, but which differ, however, depending on the nuances and emotional colouring; ideographic synonyms, representing those synonyms that are distinguished by shades of meaning; synonyms with the same root originating from the same root and distinguished by emotional expression or distributional possibilities; synonyms with different roots, a

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category which comprises the vast majority of synonyms; derivative synonyms, which are part of the synonymy of prefixes, of suffixes, of inflections; grammatical synonyms, which identify themselves with the synonymy of the morphological categories of the parts of speech (the synonymy of cases, of tenses, of persons, etc.); syntactic synonymys or syntactic constructions, including those structures (expressions, parts of sentence, phrases, parts of phrase, etc.) which differ in form, but whose meaning is close or identical; stylistic synonyms, which include words similar in meaning, but whose components belong to different languages and are characterized by elements such as: frequency, expressive colouring; synonyms of intensity, of decoration (decorative) and of nuancing. This classification is more profoundly continued, from another viewpoint, that of stability. According to this criterion, O. Vințeler distinguishes permanent synonymous links (indicating the conventional use of the term 'permanent') or occasional synonymous links. Hence, synonymous series may be considered permanent, that is of longer duration, known to all speakers (e.g. *drapel = steag*, *a zice = a spune*, etc.) or occasional, meaning that they occur at random or in case of the figurative use of some words. Occasional synonyms are sometimes called contextual or metaphorical.

Depending on the place a synonym occupies in relation to another, in the text, they can be: synonyms in contact (or juxtaposed), usually located in the same sentence, the second term of the series determining and specifying the meaning of the first term, and distanced synonyms, which are located in different sentences or texts. In terms of meanings coverage, synonyms can be: total/absolute/perfect representing pair words or doublets, and relative/partial/imperfect, where polysemantic words are usually found.

These types of synonyms were completed by other categories proposed by Th. Hristea (1984: 98), namely affixal synonyms (which are divided into prefixal and suffixal, e.g. *ne-* and *im-* in *nepolitețe*, *impolitețe*; *-et* and *-iş* in *brădet*, *brădiş*); then affixoid synonyms (which can be prefixoidal and suffixoidal) and a last category of synonyms, which could be called onomastic synonyms, since they concern the two broad categories of proper names: names of places and of persons. This means that we can speak of toponymic synonyms, pointing to the same reality (for example:

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Bălgrad and *Alba Iulia* or *Taiwan* and *Formosa* or *Bizanț*, *Constantinopol* and *Istanbul* today) and antroponymic synonyms (naming the same person).

For example, a person's name is *Silvia* but her family or friends and colleagues call her *Silvica* or *Ica* (a hypocoristic from the previous name, which in other cases may be synonymous with the Christian name *Viorica*). Other linguistic works speak about other types of synonyms, such as metaphoric synonyms, which occur by providing metaphorical values both to simple words and to some lexical combinations; this means that metaphorical synonyms can be both lexical and phraseological. Thus, Eminescu considers that *the moon* is *the mistress of the sea*, *the golden girl*, then *the lady of the seas and of the night* or *the night dead queen* (*luna – stăpâna mării*, *copila cea de aur*, *doamna mărilor şi-a nopții* or *regina nopții moartă*). We may add lexical-phraseological synonymy or even phraseological synonymy (e.g. *a spăla putina = a o lua la sănătoasa*, *şira spinării = coloana vertebrală*, *trop = figură de stil*). It is also admitted the existence of graphical synonyms, as exemplified by the two letters *î* and *â*, which denote the same phonetic reality in contexts indicated by the current set of spelling rules.

In conclusion, starting from the different definitions of synonyms, from multiple perspectives, various kinds of synonyms could be distinguished: phonetical, lexical, grammatical, affixal, mixed, etc., all based on the assumption of binary relations, manifested in phonetics, in vocabulary and in grammar.

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