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Dialectical Survey: Dialectological Concerns and Problems of Method

Summary of the Habilitation Thesis

I thoroughly explained in the habilitation thesis in what consists the conducting of a dialectical survey, which are the theoretical and methodological premises that lead to the collection of quality linguistic material, following a direct linguistic inquiry. A diachronic sketch of the Romanian dialectological concerns, with the outline of both the precursors and the linguists who contributed to the scientific development in the history of dialectology, was imperative before presenting the main methods used in the collection of dialectal material, as well as the methods of rendering the linguistic facts accounted for in an investigation.

Romanian cartography was founded by the German scholar Gustav Weigand (who took an interest in Romanian studies and had the merit of having initiated the field surveys on the both on north and south of the Danube in Romania; he also published *Linguistischer Atlas des dakorumänischen Sprachgebietes* - Leipzig, 1909, the first linguistic atlas that came out after ALF). It was continued by the Romanian Linguistic Atlas, the work of the dialectological school from Cluj, carried out under the leadership of the reputed linguist Sextil Pușcariu, the director of the Museum of Romanian Language in the same city. The atlas would gain us a place us on the scale of European scientific values regarding the study of the spoken language.

Viewed in diachronicity, the process of taking the linguistic material needed to conduct a dialectal study has undergone a considerable development in terms of the methodology, field and processes used. In fact, the act of collecting a sample of speech, like the means for its subsequent interpretation, does not renew itself and by itself, but is subject to the dynamics of society, which also includes the evolution of language sciences. This is due to the fact that human language can no longer be researched outside the framework in which society develops and functions¹.

¹ See Eugen Coșeriu, *Lingvistică din perspectivă spațială și antropologică*, Editura Știința, Chișinău, 1994, p. 137.

The scientific interest for collecting linguistic material from the Romanian dialectal space, in order to describe the diatopic variation, has led to various forms of investigations, to the use of several methods of gathering information and to several ways of disseminating the material in systematic forms; they range from linguistic atlases, dialect monographs and specialized studies, up to glossaries and text collections. Regardless of the objectives of research or the angle of approach to the problem, the big steps that the investigator must follow are the same: the collection and recording of the linguistic material, the transcription and the interpretation of data, respectively.

Direct or on-site investigation, through which the specialist collects the linguistic material directly from the informant, is the most suitable method for obtaining a rich material, which presents the guarantee of authenticity and scientific rigor, removing the disadvantages of the survey through correspondents. In carrying out a dialectical investigation, not only the "diatopic" variety is pursued, but also the sociolinguistic perspective considered, bringing, at the same time, certain ideas on the variation of the language in relation to the status of the registered speaker, his "individual" performance within a certain historical tradition.

An important, responsible and complex stage, directly dependent on the skills and knowledge of the investigator, is the *design of the questionnaire* in accordance with the social position of the respondents or their parents, since it is known that the social factor can contribute both to facilitating an innovation and to slowing down this process; this owes to a natural conservatism that results from the need for individuals to comply with social laws in daily life.

The investigator must take into account the *sociolinguistic parameters* of the participants in the communication process (such as: *ethnic origin*, which influence how they express themselves; *the geographical and administrative area of origin and residence*, placing their fingerprint on the speaking subject's age which influence the way of communication of the individual both within smaller time intervals and during the different stages: childhood, adolescence, maturity, seniority); also, one has to consider the extralinguistic factors, which act through this parameter: the level of studies, the change of the area of residence, social status; *sex*, as there may be differences between the pronunciation of women and men; *the socio-cultural status*, which concerns the place that an individual occupies in a given socio-administrative and socio-cultural system, at a certain moment of his / her existence (as the socio-cultural status may vary throughout life, in terms of ascending/descending social mobility, vertically speaking). Therefore, belonging to one of the social layers (the upper social layer, the middle social layer, the lower social layer), the linguistic differences regarding

gender, age, as well as the relationship between the language and the profession of the different groups of speakers are relevant in this regard.

Another aspect that determines the diamesic and diaphasic differences is related to the situation of communication. The speakers change their way of speaking according to the situations of communication, also adjusting to the socio-cultural status of the interlocutor. As a rule, in addition to the standard pronunciation imposed by the literary language, we also use the language of the place of origin, which has several linguistic manifestations, depending on the situation of communication. We speak in an academic, official setting in a manner and differently in the circle of friends or family, where the rigors of the literary norm are violated or the expressions are used only by the members of that group. Al. Philippide, in *Principii de istoria limbii (Principles of the History of Language)*, states that "the same sound from the same word is not pronounced by two people in the same manner, no matter how much their speech resembles at first sight, and it is not pronounced in the same way by even one and the same person in two consecutive moments"².

The speaking subject has the capacity to detect the differences when in contact with another norm, adapting, at the same time, the pronunciation according to the investigator/ interlocutor, the requirements and the communication situations. When answering indirect questions the speaking subject has one pronunciation (this method of collecting linguistic material can easily create emotional states) and a different one, much closer to the local language in free discussions or in conversations with some family members. The investigator's feeling is that the talking subject is trying to deceive, to offer the image of his or her speech as little different from the literary norm as possible.

Some of the subjects investigated are aware of the existence of a more or less cultivated dialectal norm and, nevertheless, they retain the particularities of the language in the area of the mother tongue, because it is a mark of their identity. Others, on the contrary, refuse to display the regional particularities to those outside the community. Especially in the answers to the indirect questions, the latter give the impression that they are in front of an exam, they control their speech, and try to conceal the archaic and regional aspects.

² Alexandru Philippide, *Opere alese*, edited by G. Ivănescu and Carmen-Gabriela Pamfil, Editura Academiei Republice Socialiste România, București, 1984, p. 8.

Other subjects investigated are quite communicative, sociable and meet our research needs; but on the other hand, there are subjects who do not wish to share with the interlocutor aspects from the cultural and linguistic circle of the respective community, which is why their answers most often contain literary phonetic marks. Thus, the answers in which the literary phonetic marks coexist with the archaic ones, the corrections from the speakers, the comments made on certain terms, are relevant in this regard.

In general, the speaking subjects are *conscious of the differences of the language spoken between generations*; in their speech phenomena that denote the coexistence of two different linguistic systems occur (namely the one of the elders and the one of the younger generation).

Therefore, the dynamics of the limits acts according to the principle of uniformization of the areas, under the influence of the same dominant feature: the form that circulates in the common language, which plays the role of a leveling factor for dialectal divergences. Due to social relations, the boundaries of certain dialectal particularities can change from one generation to another.

These premises regarding the collection of dialectic material were used and perfected mainly in the surveys we carried out in more than 40 localities in Bukovina (transition area, linguistically a mosaic), but also in some points of The Stone Land, from Alba county. The two books of dialectology (*Dialectologie română. Studii și corpus de texte/ Romanian dialectology. Studies and Corpus of Texts* and *Elemente de dialectologie română/ Elements of Romanian Dialectology* which came out in Iași, at the Vasiliana Publishing House '98, in 2014) and the studies and articles that take into account the description of the language particularities of some localities or the presentation of phenomena of dialectal synthesis are part of this research direction; they contribute to shaping the image of the Dacoromanian spheres at the beginning of the 21st century. At the same time, these premises were the theoretical basis for the surveys carried out by dozens of students in the *Seminar on dialectology and sociolinguistics*, which I coordinate in our faculty, surveys that have materialized in appendices to bachelor theses and dissertations with a monographic dialectal character. Our efforts were made with the aim of developing objectives, such as the designing language surveys, the transcription of the main phenomena that characterize the language spoken in dialectal space, but also the setting of an archive and a corpus of spoken language texts. Besides deepening the theoretical notions regarding the methods used to collect the dialectal material, the phonetic transcription system,

the strategies used to obtain the cooperation of the speaking subject, the discussions were often focused on the problems arising during the investigation, the solutions that enhance the chances of success in the collection of linguistic material. Through all these investigations and scientific works, we try not only to provide an overview on the linguistic picture of the current Dacoromania, but also on the ethnolinguistic aspects specific to the Romanian village nowadays.

For this reason, many of the collaborators of the Seminar on dialectology and sociolinguistics remain faithful to the research of the spoken language, continuing the scientific investigations to be included in dissertations or even doctoral studies. Our proposals for future doctoral students are focused on two directions: dialectal monographs, on a network of cc points. 10-15 localities (e.g., *The Language from Broșteni Area*, *The Language from Bârgău Area*, *The Language from Rădăuți Area* - to account for the linguistic variation, both from a diatopic perspective and a diastatic perspective) and to perform synthesis works; they will present different phonetic phenomena in Dacoromanian, starting from *ALR* and up to current dialectal texts, following, beyond the systematic presentation, the development of phenomena over time (e.g., *Palatalisation of Labials in Romanian Language*, *Palatalisation of Dentals in Current Dacoromanian*, *Archaic Phonetisms in the Romanian Dialects*).

I believe that, over the years of research for books, studies and articles, and their writing, I have acquired the ability to coordinate research teams and to organize and manage teaching activities in the direction of researching the spoken language and establishing corpora of dialectal texts, thus earning professional prestige in the academic community.

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