

Aurelia HANGANU\*

## LINGUISTIC INTERFERENCES: MOTIVATION AND CONSEQUENCES IN CASE OF REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

Sociolinguistic researches in Republic of Moldova are a quite new subject, due to the socio-politic situation of this community. Russian influence, on the Romanian language inclusively, has started almost from the 1812 year, when Bassarabia was annexed to the Tsarist Government: that means approximately 200 years on linguistic interferences between Romanian and Russian languages.

Taking as point of reference the 30-40 years of the XIXth century, we can talk about instauration of a diglossical linguistic situation, id est the Romanian language had not exercised its basically function as official language of the Bassarabian guberny, and the marginalization of its functionality was conditioned by a reactionary glotopolicy of the Tsarism which has diminished the spheres of its using until the substitution by the Russian language. In this manner and in this political condition, the Romanian language becomes a dominated language, or a vernacular language, which obtains the statue of the B language. From the functional aspect, we have in view the phenomenon of linguistic substitution – it is motivated by the main objective of the Tsarist glotopolicy which was exactly defined by A. Artsimovichi: to create a dialect close to the Slavic languages based on Romanian language spoken in Bassarabia, than the total Russianizing of the Romanian speakers from this territory. To achieve this goal the glotonim Romanian language was substituted with others „equivalents”: Moldavian language (in original, *limba moldovenească*), Moldovan language (*limba moldovană*), local dialect (*grai local*), natural language (*limbă naturală*), Moldavistics (*moldavistică*), simultaneously with the interdiction to teach

---

\* Institute of Philology, Academy of Sciences of Moldova

Romanian language in Bassarabian schools through special supreme decrees (at 9 February 1866 the interdiction to teach Romanian language in the most important Regional Lyceum from Chişinău, than, at 3 February 1871, in local schools). Starting with this date the Romanian language has the status of the discipline to be thought, but not the language of teaching. In the same time, the researches of the archivist materials (realized by Lidia Colesnic-Codreanca<sup>1</sup>) have demonstrated that even as discipline in general curriculum, the Romanian language was not thought in all laic schools of Bassarabia, but only in some of them: e. g. in Regional Lyceum from Chişinău (September 1835 – February 1866), in local school Nr. 1 from Chişinău (January 1830 – April 1869), in local school from Bălţi (August 1828 – January, 1830, and October 1843 – February, 1871) etc. The Romanian language was used as instrument for thoroughgoing study of Russian language and to enrich this goal there were edited bilingual textbooks grammars and a lot of bilingual dictionaries (e. g. teaching materials edited in 1819, 1927, 1840, 1865 and dictionaries from 1896, 1899, 1907, and 1912); in the same time the teachers of Romanian language were selected tendentiously.

A short period of normalization of functionality for Romanian language is attested, again with regular changing of „power”, from 1919 until 1940 when Bassarabia became a Soviet Republic. The reforms intending to change something from previous situation were soon forgotten and the Tsarist’s glotopolicy was applied as the policy of the Big Brother, Russian Republic. That’s important: the essence of this new policy was not different from the previous one: The URSS had the same main objectives, that means to make the people from this territory, id est the new citizens of the Moldovan Soviet Republic, to forget their national identity, their origins and history, that means to forget about all that is related to Romanian concept. It is including, of course, the Romanian language. The „instruments” of work were the same: the language is „Moldavian” which is different from Romanian language, or „Moldovan”, or even „mother tongue”, the „Big” language of the Soviet Union is Russian and it is more adapted to express soviet notions, more useful to communicate with citizens of other Soviet republics, more important, more beautiful etc. That is why the Russian has to be the official language of the Moldovan Republic, of course, „beside the Moldovan language” and, as consequence, to be used (learned) in schools.

---

<sup>1</sup> I. L. Colesnic-Codreanca, *Limba română în Basarabia (1812 – 1918)*. – Chişinău, 2002

These are the origins of the linguistic conflict we watch today in Republic of Moldova. It is the main socio-political result of the policy we have described. From the linguistic aspect that is the linguistic interference.

The languages contact understood as the linguistic situation when the simultaneous presence of two languages affects the linguistic behavior of the person<sup>2</sup> is the condition of appearing the interference, generally speaking, those cases of deviation from the norms of each language which specific for the speech of bilinguals as result of using two or many languages<sup>3</sup>, so, as result of the linguistic contact.

As about the linguistic interference, it is known, there are many modalities to interpret this phenomenon: the bilingual interference, when the speech of a bilingual person contains verbal elements from the other language<sup>4</sup>; that means deviation from the norm, also could be the negative interference, or even one of this deviation, being close to the loaning process, for instance; the difference between these phenomena is argued by the consciousness of the process, so the loans are produced consciously, but interference is deprived of the speaker's conscience<sup>5</sup>. The last interpretation is disputable, or the question is how we could decide if a loan or a lexical loan translation (calquing) is conscience or not; why the deviation from the norm or a linguistic error is not conscience if that is a visible break of the linguistic law and we mean first of all the written language, implicitly, the literary language.

A fact is clear: the interference manifests its self when the speakers don't know enough the language they use for communication. The effects of the privileged language are attested especially when the social pressure of this language is strong and the speakers are exposed with immigrants or with dominating minority. In Moldova, for instance, the Moldovan (Romanian) speakers were called allogens (rus. инородцы), and their language – local dialect (rus. местное наречие).

As the written texts prove, the Romanian language used on the territory of Republic of Moldova was affected by the interference on all levels: phonetically, lexical, grammatical and even on orthographical one; in this way the literary Romanian from Moldova has supported an important deviation

---

<sup>2</sup> J. F. Hamers, *Contact de langues*. // Marie-Louise Moreau, Sociolinguistique. Concepts de base. – Mardago, 1997, pp. 94 – 100

<sup>3</sup> Ю. Дешериев, *Социальная лингвистика*. Москва. – 1981, p. 247

<sup>4</sup> W. F. Mackey, *Bilinguisme*. // Marie-Louise Moreau, Sociolinguistique. Concepts de base. – Mardago, 1997, pp. 63

<sup>5</sup> J. F. Hamers, *Interference*. // Marie-Louise Moreau, Sociolinguistique. Concepts de base. – Mardago, 1997, pp. 178 – 179

from the literary Romanian spoken in Romania. Many Moldovan intellectuals were conscientious of this differentiation: e. g. an well known teacher and author of textbooks and dictionaries, Gheorghe Codreanu, has mentioned in the preface of one of his books: „In the translation we don't use words from literary Romanian language, *insufficiently known to the Bassarabian Moldavians*, we use words from the local popular language”<sup>6</sup>. In 1919 K. Krupoviatkin, the author of a Russian-Romanian dictionary edited then in Chişinău makes a remarkable conclusion (in the preface of the book): „In last century the Romanian language from Bassarabia did not advanced at all, so as it is very different now from the modern Romanian which, having a free development, has improved it self enriching with many new forms and words”<sup>7</sup>.

In this way, the contemporaneous „exegetes” of „Moldovan” language find arguments to sustain the existence of a Moldovan language different from the Romanian one; for instance, V. Stati, our contemporaneous, has written a bilingual Moldovan-Romanian dictionary<sup>8</sup> using in fact examples of lexical interference.

So, to argue the unnecessarily of this kind of „scientific work” we should present the manifestation of the Romanian-Russian interference as cases of deviation motivated by an insufficient knowledge of the language, which are more evident on the lexical level:

1. Unadapted loans, that means use of the Russian words for existent Romanian ones in their original form, without any adaptation at the grammatical structure of the „new” language: there were used *carandaş* (for *creion*) which represents the Russian *карандаш*; *dobrodeteli* (for *virtute*) – this is from Russian *добродетель* etc. This kind of words is invading the terminology first of all, as result of Russian professional education. Cf: *ţiferblat* – rus. *циферблат*, for rom. *cadran* (tehn.) or *podcaldka* – rus. *подкладка* for rom. *căptuşeală* (tehn.) etc. About terminology, there is the opinion that it is a manifestation of individual bilingualism. We could say in Moldova's case this is a consequence of the social bilingualism, or, to be more exactly, a consequence of the diglossia.

2. Adapted loans, which means Russian words used with grammatical paradigms of the Romanian language; the phenomenon is valid for verb as well for noun or adjective, or pronoun etc. E. g. *butelcă* (noun) – the modified form of rus. *бутылка* (the Romanian variant is *sticlă*); *a ştrăfui* (verb) – this is

<sup>6</sup> Г. Кодрянь, *Скуртэ русяскэ граматикэ ку тэлмэчире ын лимба молдовене-аскэ*. – Кишинёв, 1901

<sup>7</sup> К. Круповяткин, *Русско-румынский словарь*. – Кишинёв, 1919

<sup>8</sup> V. Stati, *Dicţionar moldovenesc-român*. – Chişinău, 2003

an adapted form of the rus. *штрафовать* (rom. *a amenda*); the word *scobce* represents a plural form from rus. *скобки* – sg. *скобка* (rom. *paranteze*) or the form *oi nacazui* is the future form of rus *накажу* (rom. *voi / oi pedepsi*) etc.

3. Lexical calking or loan translations (semantically and morphematically); these are represented by the words like *necătând* (ne + cătând) from rus. *не-смотрим* (не + смотря), the Romanian correct variant is *deși / cu toate că / chiar dacă* – in Romanian there is not at all the word *necătând* etc.

The line of the examples could be continued. And it is not our motive to be proud. From the 1989 year when the Romanian language was recognized as official language of education, the intellectuals, including the teachers, are in a continuous fight for correctitude of using Romanian language in communication and in the official spheres of its functioning. It is right, these efforts are not supported by the Government, as they recognize and try to develop the Tsarist idea of Moldovan language as an important factor of identification for citizens of Republic of Moldova. But we have our little victories, new generation with a new vision on the language they should consider and learn, for instance. This is a consequence of understanding the essence of Romanian-Russian linguistic interference, understanding the regress which Romanian language used in Republic of Moldova attests after about 200 years of Russian influence and the conscience that the regress is a sign of language exhausting, a step to its disappearing.

