The Relation between Language and National Conscientiousness, as an Aspect of Cultivation of the Romanian Language, Debated in the 19-th Century Publications from Transylvania

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This research underlines the magnificent role the language played at the time of the 19-th century, being a means of spiritual union, an element for the preservation of nationality and an expression of our historical origin and continuity. Each journalist views language as a political argument, a part of the political program, an element of national cohesion, main player in the course of development, emancipation and unity. According to the orientation of the time, the unity of the language triggered the unity of the people in a national state. The problem of the Romanian language was widely debated in the press of the time. A special attention is given to the development of the national-patriotic feeling, the result of a close connection between language and nation.

Keywords: language, nation, progress, press, consciousness

The concept of *cultivation* of the Romanian languages explicitly formulated within the cultural program of the Romanian Enlightenment. The ideal of *regeneration,* specific to this ideology, consists in reshaping the Romanian society and the old culture upon new and modern foundations. In this sense, the instrument of language receives a tremendously important role, to the purpose of its fast and systematic improvement: „No cultural progress without an evolved and enriched, or "cultivated" language could ever be possible. This is the fundamental cause for which the Romanian Enlightenment grants special attention to the language issue, through considerable preoccupation and effort, by literally initiating within the Romanian culture the systematic discussions about language."[1]

Although an education in philology was in most cases practically inexistent at the time, there is no scholar not to have expressed views towards the ideal of *cultivation* of the language. Framed as they were by

the mindset of the age, the linguistic debates stirred lively interest.

In the opinion of Adrian Marino, "the conception about the «cultivation» of language that scholars of the Enlightenment bring up and solve for the first time in the Romanian culture (…) includes firstly all the fundamental principles that make possible its raison d'etre and application at the given moment: the idea of patriotism and of «genius» of the language, its essentially conceptual and unitary structure, the purely rational method of cultivation, the great role played by the idea of progress in the language, with emphasis on the contribution of creator personalities and the enactment based on the «specificity» of the language"[2].

This article shall highlight the way in which editors and collaborators to the analysed Transylvanian periodicals were dealing with the issue of language cultivation. This can only be entirely understood in the ideological context of the time, since it is primarily a matter of *ideology*[3].

The moment the press in Romania was born coincided with the period in which the Romanian language and culture was crossing over towards modernization. Therefore, the role of publications in the exposure, clarification and theorization of issues of language was significant, revealing the passion with which scholars were discussing linguistic problems.

The assertion of Ștefan Munteanu, according which "the Școala Ardeleană[4] makes Transylvania be the cradle of our old philological traditions"[5], emphasizes the importance of this Romanian province in the development of the Romanian philology. One definitely not negligible role in the highlighting and popularization of aspects in the process of language *cultivation* was played by the Transylvanian press, and this reality is being investigated in the hereby present thesis.

In the case of the Romanian Enlightenment, "the national and patriotic feeling is playing a fundamental role, a situation similar to that of the entire European Enlightenment under the influence of the French Revolution. It is the time when the notion of *homeland* comes to be exalted, and implicitly the idea of national language to go with it."[6] The linguistic instrument is granted an essentially political function, so that the nation's destiny is identified with that of its language.[7]

The indissoluble link between *language and nation* is emphasized by G. Seulescu, who states that: "The national language or tongue (…) is not only the necessary means to a nation's illumination, but is also rightfully considered the soul of this body politic"[8]. In the author's view, the culture of the language identifies with the national existence itself:" So, if a country's people are nurturing the culture of its language, it is nurturing its own national existence". The same idea is underlined by T. Cipariu, in whose opinion the nation's history equals the history of her language: "All of the events that go through the life of a people, all improvements, all calamities that a nation faces, all the phases she is drawn through -all is equally washed over the language of that people, that nation."[9] Even more, he deplores the attitude of some scholars who do not consider the Romanian language as the nation's historical property, meant to be cherished in all its naturalness and purity, but label it as a simple means of time.

G. Bariț pinpoints the value of the language in its power to condition the general state of the nation: "a nation's language re-operates over its spirit"[10].

In the works of Heliade Rădulescu, is "in the best way observed the conversion in a patriotic national sense of the entire Enlightenment preoccupation in matters of language"[11]. In *Correspondence Over the Romanian Language. To the Minister of Taxes C. Negruzzi*, the scholar states: "Everybody knows that language (…) is the means by which a nation reveals her ideas and thoughts through sounds and voices."[12].

Petru Banu supports the idea that the *cultivation of language* determines and augments *the state of the nation:* "The more cultivated a language of a nation is, the more the nation itself will be easier to cultivate."[13]He claims for each Romanian the duty to love, respect and cultivate the mother tongue; while ignoring her would be qualified as an act of treason. He also emphasizes the beneficial role of language in shaping the human personality, by the spiritual and intellectual enrichment it provides. Zaharia Boiu underscores a similar conception: "Language is the expression of a nation's heart and mind; in it, the entire treasury of thoughts and feelings is comprised. Therefore, if we want to preserve the national values, the sweet daughters of our nation, as is our sacred duty, we must give great care to providing for their raising, upbringing and perfecting in the dear mother tongue, beginning from the home of their parents."[14].

In his allegorical polemic with G. Bariț, A. Russo reveals the importance of preserving and cultivating the ancestral customs and traditions for the progress of a nation, by highlighting the link between literature and nation: "What else is *literature* than the very *expression of a nation?* For the influence of literature to be justified and entitled, it must emerge from the degree of civilization, from the national tendencies, in its turn from the influence of the moral, social and political state; all these must be conjured up. When a person dies, the power of its literature is dead"[15].

Noticeable is the fact that all intellectuals and scholarsof the age emphasize the interdependence between the progress of language and the development of national culture, while the concepts of *language* and *nation* become *substantially identical entities*. Therefore, the cultivation of the national language represents

a patriotic act of cultural progress and Romanian renewal: "Everywhere around, the talk goes about national «rebirth» and «regeneration», and the interest in language can in general be explained essentially only by the feelings of patriotism"[16].

The relation between language and the national conscientiousness is revealed by Iosif Vulcan, in whose opinion the patriotic feeling ought to pre-empt among the efforts of cultivation of the language: "Only in this way can we secure a future, if we strive to prefer our own language, traditions and race over the foreign ones"[17]. In a different article, the same author insists upon the idea that the *language* individualizes the nation, with an overwhelming role in the *progress of society:* "Language is everything: life, national existence and assurance of the future"[18]. In this vein, "Not cultivating your own language equals suicide! (…) Take away their language and you have caused them to become extinct forever!"[19].

To Ioan Micu Moldovan, language is "the most precious treasure of each nation; it, together with the isolated individuals, provides a difference from other nations and keeps them all united–and culture in its true meaning, by its light-spreading endeavours, frees the mind from prejudices and releases the heart from evil inclinations. Through it and only through it can we reach true freedom"[20]. Dr. C. Diaconovici shares the ideas of I. Micu Moldovan, declaring that language "is what imprints the character of a nation by her origin, keeping it long lasting and immortal. A language mirrors the nation's life and the manner of thinking."[21]

Opinions about language and about the overlap of the language and nation concepts in Romanian minds are formulated by a certain I. G. B., who, on quoting P. I. Renier, claims: "Language is the banner of nationality and he who has no language has no homeland"[22]. And to the Romanian people, "language and nation have been and still are one". The speech held by philosopher Grigorie Pletosu, with the title *Criterion of nationality* expresses the same vision: "Nationality is therefore based on conscientiousness. A person having reached the awareness of the language identity and uniformity of its origin is a nation, just as an individual having attained a conscience is a person. Nationality is a nation's individuality and personality of the people. And because the race and origin are given in the language as a heard expression of the content of conscience based on the human psychological and physical organism, so it results that the language is the true psychological criterion of nationality; (…). In a language lives the nation"[23].

In an article meant for teachers, V. Roman states that language is the soul of the nation, "the sanctuary of the people. To taint or rapture it means to pluck out her life from the roots. Any people on this earth would regard such an attempt as a crime and each of them strives fiercely to defend themselves against it. In the language stays the life of a nation, in the languageis her spirit incorporated, the language is the kind and expression of her inner being"[24], a principle also expressed by Athanasie Marienescu: "In the language in which a people expresses their thoughts can be found the full expression of their nationality"[25].

The definition of language also comprises its social essence: "through the language, people have united with themselves"[26], as well as the role of the linguistic instrument in the development of society: "man, through mediation of the language, has appropriated himself to social life, which is the inexhaustible well of countless good things for the entire humankind."[27]

Functionally defined, "language is the pile of words a certain nation uses to express what they feel and think"[28], hereby revealing its essential role as communication means between members of a community.

Constantin Erbiceanu highlights the inter-conditioning between language, nation and religion: "A people without its own language cannot claim to be a nation since it lacks one of the vital elements of the foundation for the edifice of a nationality. Without its own religion, language and without mores, a nationality cannot take shape. The lack of language for a people has always been the major hurdle in its efforts to agglutinate and affirm itself as a nation."[29]

By the interest shown and the space granted to the issue of cultivation of the Romanian literary language, the analyzed publications have offered occasions for a prolific exchange of opinions, facilitating the finding of appropriate solutions and becoming arenas of affirmation of the most progressive conceptions about language.

Note:

1. Adrian Marino, *The Romanian Enlighted Men and the Issue of Cultivation of the Language, i*n the publication *The Romanian Language,* XIII, 1964, nr. 5, p. 467.
2. *Ibidem,*nr. 6, p. 585.
3. *Ibidem,* p. 468.
4. Scoala Ardeleana was a cultural nationalmovement of the 19-th century aimed at promoting the Romanian language and culture in a Transylvania occupied by the Austrian-Hungarian Empire
5. Ștefan Munteanu, *Preoccupations for the Unification and / cultivation of the Romanian Language in Transylvania at the Beginnings of the 20-th Century* ,in *Annals of the Timisoara Unversity* III, 1965, p. 123.
6. Adrian Marino, *op. cit.,* p. 468.
7. Doina David, *Language and Culture,* Timișoara, Editura Facla, 1980, p.13.

8. G. Seulescu, *Observations on the Grammar of the Romanian Language* in *Gazette for the Mind, Heart and Literature,* II, 1839, nr. 37, p. 289.
9. T. Cipariu, *The Romanian Academic Society,* in *Archives of Philology and History,* I, 1867, nr. 9, p. 162.
10. G. Bariț, *Languages,* în , *Gazette for the Mind, Heart and Literature,* V, 1842, nr. 1, p. 8.
11. A. Marino, *op. cit.,* nr. 5, p. 471.
12. I. H. Rădulescu, *Correspondence Over the Romanian Language. To the Minister of Taxes C. Negruzzi,* in, *Gazette for the Mind, Heart and Literature* II, 1839, nr. 4, p.149.
13. Petru Branu, *Speech on the Opening of the Chair for Romanian Language and Literature, 12 Oct 1859,* în *Gazette for the Mind, Heart and Literature* , XXII, 1859, nr. 38, p. 294.
14. Zaharia Boiu, *The Study of the Mother Tongue in Our Girls' Schools* in *Transilvania,* XXIV, 1893, nr. 2, p. 35.
15. G. Bariț, *War of Tongues,* in *Gazette for the Mind, Heart and Literature,* XVIII, 1855, nr. 14, p. 71.
16. Adrian Marino, *op. cit.,* p. 469.
17. Iosif Vulcan, *National Conscientiousness* ,in the gazette *The Family,* VIII, 1872, nr. 7, p. 74.
18. *Idem, Language and theStage,* in *Family,* VIII, 1872, nr. 46, p. 539.
19. *Ibidem,* p. 540.
20. Ioan Micu Moldovan, *Opening Address,* in *Transilvania,* XV, 1894, nr. 9, p. 275.
21. C. Diaconovici, *Speech on the Inauguration of the General Assembly from Deva,* in *Transilvania,* XXX, 1898, nr. 8, p. 254.
22. I.G.B., *The Romanian and his Language,* in *The Family,* XI, 1875, nr. 30, p. 345.
23. Bocsianu, *The Public Literary Meeting of the Petru Maior Society* ,in *The Family,* XIV, 1878, nr. 31, p. 194.
24. V. Roman, *The Teacher's Duty In and Outside School to Awaken and Strengthen Patriotism,* in *School's Companion,* I, 1860, brochure 4, pp. 331-332.
25. Athanasie Marienescu, *Languages in the World,* in , *School's Companion* I, 1860, nr. 10, p. 193.
26. A. Șaguna, *Opening Speech at the General Assembly of the Association,* in *School's Companion,* III, 1862, nr. 29-30, p. 227.
27. *Ibidem.*
28. G. I. Munteanu, *Attempt at Setting Principles for the Spelling with Roman Letters,* in *School's Companion,* I, 1860, nr. 14, pp. 101-102.
29. Constantin Erbiceanu, *Necessity to Reprint Devotional Bookswith Ancestral Letters* in *Transilvania,* XX, 1889, nr. 15-16, p. 114.

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