



ASPECTS OF ORTHOGRAPHY, LEXIC, GRAMMAR AND OF CULTIVATION OF LANGUAGE FROM LATE 19TH CENTURY PUBLICATIONS IN TRANSYLVANIA

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Under the overarching category of “inestimable material and spiritual values of the national treasure” , and showing professionalism and objectivity, 19th century Transylvanian newspapers and magazines have revealed in their pages the entire turmoil on the ocean of the time’s linguistic debates, with all their relentless searches and controversies. Credit goes in this sense to editors and associate scholars, thanks to their militant, civic attitude of high humanistic responsibility.

Keywords: language, unity, press, role, culture.



Whether literary supplements, or political, social-cultural or pedagogy magazine, the analyzed periodicals all stand out through their *consistency in tackling the idea of the Romanian people’s cultural unity*². Debates over issues of Romanian literary language make up “one of the most instructional and passionate history pages of this era”³.

At a publications level, the broad and complex spectrum of themes of Romanian linguistics (*cultivation of language, orthography, lexic and grammar*) is being reflected by the six Transylvanian periodicals: *Foaie pentru minte, inimă și literatură, Organul luminării, Arhivul pentru filologie și istorie, Amicul școlii, Familia, Transilvania*. The ideal of *cultivating* the literary language was being discussed in very competent manners, the magazines publishing opinions and thoughts of illustrious cultural personalities from both Romanian Principalities. They unanimously fought for a triumph of positive principles

and solutions meant to ensure the uninterrupted evolution of the literary language. *The cultivation of language*, as well as its unification, was considered a vital *necessity* in the context of its general process of modernization and betterment. By the interest shown to the issue of *cultivation of Romanian literary language*, the six publications listed above offered occasions for prolific exchanges of opinions, which triggered the choice of adequate solutions, these becoming platforms of affirming progressive ideas about language in general. Each publication highlights the significance of the unity of language against the background of Romanians’ cultural and national life. The Transylvanian publications’ relentless and mature preoccupation for the unity and unification of literary language has served the great cause of political unification as well, and has meant a significant contribution and a progress in the endeavour of *cultivation of literary language*.

And through its diligence in following this aspect, as well as its intense efforts towards reaching the aim of language cultivation, the magazine *Foaie pentru minte, inimă și literatură* stands out in a very special way within the Transylvanian journalistic publications of those times. This periodical from Brasov has “contributed not only to the unification and cultivation of language, but also to the birth of a conscience of national unity. Credit for this goes to editors, whose advanced vision has shaped the magazine’s attitude and focus”⁴. Among the personalities of the time, that have signed articles tackling aspects of *language cultivation* in the columns of the *Foaie*...are to be mentioned I. H. Rădulescu, N. Bălășescu, G. Seulescu, C. Negruzzi, G. Bariț, T. Cipariu, At. M. Marienescu, I. Genilie, G. I. Munteanu, C. Boerescu. Considered by some linguists “a speaking platform of Latinism”⁵, the *Foaie pentru minte, inimă și literatură* has stood out in its 27 years of existence through taking up rather realistic positions, and, even to its last moments countering the latinizing exaggerations in favour of a unitary language accepted by all Romanians.

The century’s “philological fever” was rendered by this magazine through promoting the various *orthographic conceptions*: the one of Ion Heliade-Rădulescu (who was rather realistic until 1840, after this moment becoming lopsided towards an Italian influence and excessively theoretical), then the one issued by Timotei Cipariu (phonetic in the first part of this scholar’s life, and after 1841 moderately etimological), also the one proposed by Aaron Pumnul, alongside with Papiu Ilarian and G. Munteanu. The magazine offered the occasion for a fruitful exchange of ideas, ensuring that debates stay within moderate tones and attitudes, in mutual recognition of each other’s value and competence. The reputable *Foaie pentru minte, inimă și literatură* has brought its contribution to “the convergence of opinions, in attempts to alleviate the differences, to quell useless polemics and to foster cooperation and unity among scholars of the time, in their common preoccupations and efforts towards the unification and cultivation of language”⁶.

The makeup of an accessible and also modern language is regarded and understood in such diverging ways by most intellectuals. Almost each scholar has his own vision on how to reach this aim. Regarding the sources of vocabulary enrichment, some philologists endorse a massive import of terms from Latin and other Romance languages, while others prefer the use of living words of the language as it is spoken by the people, or they may recommend retorting to the *language of the Church*. This complex reality is objectively rendered by the *Foaie*, particularly through display of polemics among scholars of the time around principles that these uphold.

Of the associate columnists that have written in

favor of using *Church language* can be listed I. Heliade Rădulescu, Timotei Cipariu, G. Bariț, G. Săulescu. Heliade Rădulescu’s support for the Church language stemmed from his conviction of the fact that this was the only language that was better coagulated in comparison to the state of the literary language⁷.

In support of the *people’s language* were Ioan Maiorescu, C. Vișoreanu, Alecu Russo, all these considering it as a guiding principle. According to them, in the journey towards linguistic unification, „we must start from the living language used in a particular historical time, with all its recorded changes, which represents the most authentic stage of its evolution”⁸. It is this position that will ultimately win, since it was grounded on the language’s “authenticity and evolution in relation with communicational needs, and its richness and diversity of forms”⁹. Yet, the people’s language had to be submitted to a rigorous process of selection and perpetual adjustment, in order to have it express the realities of its time. We notice hereby an insistence on giving equal value to all Romanian regional variations and dialects alike, this rigorous approach deriving from an assumed conscience of national unity. The authors’ clear vision has kept the Brasov magazine far from being tempted to support unilateral solutions (Latinism, Italianism or Transylvanian regionalism), thus keeping it firm on positions of healthy balance, imbued with common sense and also with scientific intuition.

One important aspect, highlighted in the pages of the Brasov magazine is the necessity of achieving language unity also at a *grammar* level. The achievement of unity was designed and followed “through the very emphasis on the necessity of a grammar meant to consecrate certain unique, generally accepted norms”¹⁰. The *Foaie* published grammar studies by Timotei Cipariu and C. Vișoreanu.

In the self-issued publications *Organul luminării* and *Arhivul pentru filologie și istorie*, Timotei Cipariu grants priority to a research of the formation of Romanian language from a historical perspective, in order to confirm its Latin nature and to highlight the relation of interdependence between language and nation (both histories interspersing), as well as to underscore the role of an academic fore in setting the norms of literary language. Cipariu pleads in favour of defining the nature and the “genius” of Romanian language, as a prerequisite condition in the endeavour of intellectuals of attempting its modernisation.

The appeal to the “being”, the “nature” or the “genius” of the language was shared by all language reformers of the time equally. To them, these concepts were akin to the old background of Romanian which is Latin, this idea being also embraced by Cipariu¹¹. In



his three articles from the *Organul luminării*, Cipariu expresses his adherence to the etimological principle of orthography, without any compromise in favour of phoneticism.

The first periodical publication dedicated to studies in linguistics, *Arhivul pentru filologie și istorie*, had established its objective to be the propagation and defense of ideas belonging to the Latinist school of thought, at the very moment when this current was increasingly being criticized by its opponents. The articles on orthography are radically distinct from those on grammar, lexic or cultivation, being dedicated to the promotion of the etimological principle. Cipariu considered that the etimological principle was the only one capable of achieving the Romanians' *ideal of unity of language and culture*. *The conscience of language unity* is what is governing Cipariu's philological preoccupations in this publication. If in the first part of his career, he was proposing a type of writing based on the phonetic principle, by deciding upon a relation of equality between dialect and language, in the second part of his life he is oriented towards an etymology-based orthography, ruled by an understanding of the subordination of dialect towards language¹². Being so different by virtue of the opposite convictions expressed, the scholar's two life periods are still connected by a sameness of goals he was pursuing. According to Cipariu, Latinism had both a linguistic, as well as a political and cultural function: "His work in Linguistics was put in the service of unification and cultivation of the Romanian language, ultimately to the service of defending the rights of the Romanian nation and the forging of a national unitary state"¹³.

Cipariu's sole collaborator was I. M. Moldovanu, who fiercely criticized Maiorescu's phonetics-based theory.

Also achieving the goal of language unity in the realm of *vocabulary*, by establishing the regime and the limits of adopting Latin-originating words¹⁴ is the central idea emerging from the articles printed in the *Organul luminării*. The conception of using elements from all regional language versions, or in other words, of applying the principle of language usage is expressed in the pages of this latter gazette from Blaj. In this sense, "Latinism was called, therefore, to ensure the unification of language in all its systems, by vitalising the pure and unique structures of bygone days"¹⁵.

In the field of *grammar*, in the *Organul luminării*, Cipariu lets to print the series of articles grouped under the title *Principia de limba și scriptura*, as well as the ones constituting the groundwork of his 1854 volume *Elemente de limbă română după dialecte și monumente vechi*, considered to be "the first work of historical grammar of our language"¹⁶. A preference is noticed for

adopting Latin grammatical forms that are replacing the foreign ones. The scholar treats in succession the flexion of speech parts, also tackling from a diachronic perspective, with historical and rational arguments, the Nominal class, the declinations and cases, while permanently referring to and comparing to Latin in the explanation and justification of forms appeared throughout the language evolution, the types of articles, their pronoun status, their position, also historically justified, the pronominal flexion, the verbal flexion, with mentions on the evolution of forms at different tenses and modes and a recommendation of correct forms and condemnation of some writers' "deviations".

A reading of all studies on grammar from the *Arhivul pentru filologie și istorie* will not offer a real and conclusive image of Cipariu's conception to this system of language. Due to the scarcity of his articles, it seems like the time was not so favourable for debates on grammar issues, since the controversy on orthography tended to monopolize the discussions in the press.

Familia, under the careful watch of Iosif Vulcan, has "continued the campaign unleashed by historians and philologists for the restoration of historical truth on the origin of the people and the language, by giving a logically articulate interpretation to the relations between language, society and nation"¹⁷. The magazine's publishers admit and affirm the important role of the Academic Society *in the cultivation* of the Romanian Language, by assessing the scientific fore's activity in this respect. Although language topics intersperse with history themes, this is proof of the responsibility that the editors' board of the *Familia* undertook in the context of the time, that of being a platform of defending on scientific grounds the crucial interests of the Romanian people from Transylvania and the region of Banat.¹⁸

Along with the other gazettes of its time, *Familia* „is becoming an ally in the writers' fight for the formation of a national, unitary and correct literary language"¹⁹. We have noted the articles of Iosif Vulcan, the gazette's editor-in-chief: *Conștiința națională*, *Limb'a și scena*, *Cerem de la Societatea academică*, and also an article of Gr. Silași: *Să latinisăm ori ba?*, and the one of Simeon Manguica: *Studii limbistice*, that of T. Mera: *Scritorii de la Junimea*, the one by Ioan Marcu: *Despre necesitatea și datorința de a ne cultiva limb'a*, and finally the one by Aurel C. Popovici: *Literatura și limba ce o vorbim*.

Through its editor-in-chief Iosif Vulcan, the gazette expresses dissatisfaction towards the academic fore's decision to elaborate a "radically phonetic"²⁰ system. Yet after 1883 *Familia*'s leadership will direct its publication openly and firmly towards the position of Titu Maiorescu, which they will be holding in 1894, as well as in 1904, the

time of elaborating our first academic orthography based on phonetic principles. Although sometimes Iosif Vulcan took sides with etimologists, he still supported the necessity of phonetic writing, thrusting poisonous arrows against the latinists' blandishments²¹.

Ion, knight of Pușcariu (Ion of Ion from Buceci) is a name under the most detailed and in-depth study on orthography, called *Considerațiuni ortografice*. He is discussing Cipariu's hypotheses, with frequent incursions into history, stating his support for a moderate approach on the etimologic doctrine. According to him, the *literati* ought to respect the established and accepted norms, after the example of the French and Italians. Being a declared anti-phoneticist, Pușcariu analyses the justification of each orthographic theory, while at the same time identifying the failures of the etimologic system. He ends up finally by admitting, just like Vulcan, the soundness of a doctrine forged from a compromise between the two directions.

The anti-Junimea campaign was also supported by an energetic intervention by Gr. Silași, who declares himself for the "nonduplicated" consonants, on psychological and linguistic and historical grounds, which are specific to our language.

The Academic Society's activity is permanently brought to light by publication of reports whose content reveals discussions from general assemblies that took place in 1880 and 1881. Although accepting the 1881 adopted principles, *Familia* makes some concessions to etimologism, and in particular to the signs marking the stress in pronunciation²². We can conclude that the magazine has actively participated in the heated discussions around *orthography* of the time, adopting new, rational and realistic principles for the written language. The adoption of etimological orthography before 1881 was followed by the recognition, with some hesitation, of moderate phoneticism, and by the eventual application of the new orthography.

At the level of lexic, the magazine is siding with other gazettes, as the short but very biting writing of I. Lapedatu proves, making a statement against neologisms. His object of criticism is the language of Romanians who left abroad for study. In the opinion of Al. Crișan, if the "author has noticed what is strange to our spirit, he has omitted the illustration of the proper neologisms. The normative, programmatic character of his exposition is not estranging itself – as one can notice – too much from the faults of the criticized examples"²³.

Also involved in the confrontation between the two visions (latinist and historical popular), yet in a slightly

differing note, is professor Grigorie Silași from Cluj. With a more teacher-like authoritarian manner, and the more rigorously scientific arsenal of a specialist researcher, he is inclined towards a more pronounced conservatism²⁴. In his opinion, the *Junimea* magazine is using in too natural a manner a language spoken by millions of Romanians. Al. Crișan states that, mistakenly, "the author considers the plural forms of nouns (*vreme*) *vremuri*, (*marfă*) *mărfuri*, (*lipsă*) *lipsuri* that have been fixed by use, to be unnatural, simply to be against Silași and too zealous to defend the very criteria of selection stemming from the intrinsic spirit and nature of the language"²⁵. Just like Hasdeu, thanks to the scientific, literary and cultural progress, Silași supports the enrichment of language with terms coming from the Latin vocabulary, as being the only source that is close to the spirit and the internal structure of the Romanian language. Being aware of the popular source's potential and value, he still advocates self-helping from Latin. Etimologies are established that come to support the idea of Romance background, like the one of the noun and adjective *romanus*²⁶; elements of toponymy and names like *Dunăre*²⁷, *Olt*²⁸ will explain the same thing. From the *Magnum Etymologicum Romaniae* are reproduced meanings of words like *arici*, *alun*, *alună* and their derivatives, and Hasdeu presents his report in front of the members of the Academy about his monumental work.

The affirmation and promotion of the idea of unity of the cultivated Romanian language through all means represents the leading thread of all preoccupations and the greatest merit of the publication *Amicul școlărești*²⁹. The delineation of a scientific and articulate image on language, the understanding of its necessities of evolution and, not the least, the expression of a profound and realistic vision regarding the origin and the modernization process of Romanian language are linguistic topics ever-present in the pages of this first teaching magazine from Sibiu. Many of her columns are signed by prestigious intellectuals, among whom are: Atanasie Marienescu, Visarion Roman, G. I. Munteanu, I. R. Sbiera, Axente Sever, I. Circa. From a reading of the published articles can be concluded that „the idea of national and language unity has been the common foundation of all discussions and expressed opinions. «Amicul școlărești» has fought for the literary language's unification and evolution based on the language of the people, in a time when one of the greatest victories of the country's history, the Unification of Principalities, was in the course of consolidation, leading to the emergence of the national unitary state"³⁰. The Sibiu publication has also focused its full attention on reflecting the confrontation between etimologism and phoneticism. Its pages provided an arena of competition for primacy between etimologists like T. Cipariu, G. I. Munteanu,



Ath. Marienescu, N. Mihălțianu, etc. and partisans of phoneticism like I. R. Sbiera, Al. Papiu Ilarian, Visarion Roman, as well as “a member of the literary society” (signed as N. N., unidentified). The two parties exchanged sharp polemics, turning the magazine for a time into an „arena of fierce controversy”³¹. In the pages of V. Roman we have therefore identified confrontations of ideas between Timotei Cipariu, Gavril Munteanu and Alexandru Papiu Ilarian.

The manner of presentation and support for the etimologic principle differs, if we are to consider the representatives of this school of thought. Timotei Cipariu reveals that “between the theoretical formulation and the practical application of the principle there are differences which, as in the case of G. I. Munteanu, will prove much more circumspection and realism in his theory than in the interpretation of facts”³².

Among the supporters of phoneticism, Al. Papiu Ilarian reveals himself to be the boldest defender, as he detects the faults in Cipariu’s system and their consequences for the Romanian linguistics. In exposing his conception on orthography, Papiu Ilarian takes into consideration all historical and political circumstances that have forged the people’s language and life, while granting special attention to Romanians from Transylvania.

The editor of *Amicul școlii*, Visarion Roman, although he had in the beginning accepted the orthographic project that had been voted for by the Commission of Sibiu, finally reveals himself as an adherent to phoneticism, yet without reaching Papiu Ilarian’s radicalism. Roman pleads for a writing system easy to apply, faithful to pronunciation and more unitary. He has undertaken to cultivate in his readers the attachment to the phonetic vision, on the one hand by affirming and supporting it, and on the other hand, by ruthlessly criticising etimologism.

The *lexical* perspective is represented in the pages of *Amicul școlii*, by a listing of rules necessary in the process of “cleansing” the Romanian language. Here we have remarked a study of Gavril Munteanu, *Purismulu in limba română*, which contains a set of reflections concerning the elimination of barbarisms and replacing them with Roman-originated words, with a view to the ideal of cultivation of the language.

One other point of view is expressed by N. Mihălțianu, who is pleading for the use of the popular language, seen as the only one safeguarding the “genius” of Romanian language.

Therefore, the publication accepts both versions: the

valuing of own latent resources, as well as enriching the language with elements taken from Romance tongues.

By the content of published articles that have debated the relation between language and nation, with a revelation of the importance of mother tongue in keeping and educating national pride and patriotism, through the objective criticism of the academy’s activity, in that it had insufficiently discussed the relation between language and nation, the *Transilvania* magazine allied itself to the concept of *cultivation* of the literary language, as expressed by the press in Transylvania. As a premiere, *Transilvania* exposed a few history studies by foreign authors (German Von Rudolf Bergner, Austrian Rossler and Hungarian G. Alexics), to the purpose of highlighting an incontestable historical truth about the Latin origin of the Romanian language and nation. The magazine promoted abidance by the rules for *writing* adopted by the Romanian Academy in 1880 and 1881, also scolding intellectuals for ignoring these rules, which could erode the unity of the writing rules. These get to be printed in the magazine’s pages in order to be popularized to as many Romanians as would consider acquiring them.

Studies in *Orthoepy* take up a most special place. Here are to be noted the articles of A. Șuluțu Cărpenișeanu (*Observațiuni asupra graiului ardelenescu în raportu cu limba literară de peste Carpați*) and of I. Trăilă (*Chestiuni ortografice*). The first author reveals the differences in this respect between Transylvania and the Principalities, while the second praises the superiority of phoneticism over etimologism, and asks for adopting discrete graphic signs, to the purpose of uniformity in writing, at least for the sounds *ă* and *î*.

Also valuable by its content is the article signed by Athanasie Marienescu, who deplores the phoneticists’ indifference in face of a failure to resolve some linguistic ambiguities.

The prime time printing of the most important church books with Latin letters was considered by Zaharia Boiu as a true progress in terms of achievement of unity for the Romanian language, literature and culture.

The publication in *Familia* of the study signed by I. Pușcariu, *Chestiuni ortografice* and the reviews of some works in the field are completing the preoccupations that the Transylvanian magazine had in this domain.

Transilvania granted a similar interest to the debates on lexical problems. Worth noting are the discussions around the *Dictionary* and the *Glossary* of Massim and Laurian. By the review that Barțiș making to the book of Hasdeu, *Istori’a limbii române*, the readers are presented with his conception on borrowing words from Latin and

the Romance languages, to the purpose of expressing new ideas and original scientific ideas. Firstly, Hasdeu is in favour of making use of the popular language, just like Gr. Silași, in whose view popular poetry ought to make up the primary treasure chest for the literary language's lexic. The magazine also presents the views of I. H. Rădulescu regarding the language's "cleansing" and enrichment that should reflect the spirit and the "genius" of its Romanian people. All writers ask for an elimination of terms of Bulgarian, Turkish, Hungarian and Russian origins.

One important step in the Romanian language's development and cultivation is the printing of dictionaries (*Romanian-Hungarian, Hungarian-Romanian, Romanian-German, German-Romanian*), these works being also reviewed by the magazine from Transylvania.

We have noticed the opinion of Cârpenișeanu, to whom the authentic literary language is the one spoken in the intellectual circles of Bucharest, rather than a language learned by studying grammar books. He is the one to also formulate a norm referring to lexical

borrowings, according to which the newly entered terms had to match the Latin spirit in general, and the Romanian one in particular.

Although scarce in numbers, the articles referring to aspects of *grammar* are quite significant. The problematic of syntax is debated by G. Bariț, A. Șuluțu Cârpenișeanu and dr. Gr. Silași. The former considers essential to respect the "genius" of language when proposing clear syntactic rules, while the latter comprises the entire subject and exposes exact rules of application. In his turn, Silași firmly supports the analysis and in-depth consideration of the language of popular poetry in the context of cultivating the grammatical aspect of language.

By the articles hosted in its pages, *Transilvania* proved to be concerned with cultivating the grammar side in the general process of modernisation of the Romanian literary language.

Notes:

1. Ion Hangiu, *Dicționarul presei literare românești* (București: Editura Fundației Culturale Române, 1996), 7.
2. Șt. Munteanu and V. Țăra, *Istoria limbii române literare. Privire generală* (București: Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, 1983), 131.
3. *Ibid.*, 134.
4. Victor V. Grecu, *Limbă și națiune. Unitatea limbii în periodicele românești* (Timișoara: Editura Facla, 1988), 59.
5. D. Macrea, "Contribuția publicațiilor periodice la dezvoltarea lingvisticii românești", *Cercetări de lingvistică*, VIII, nr. 1 (1963): 12.
6. Grecu, *Limbă*, 61.
7. Victor V. Grecu, "Problema unității și unificării limbii literare în Foaie pentru minte, inimă și literatură" [The Problem of Unity and Unification of the Literary Language in Gazette for Mind, Heart and Literature], *Cercetări de limbă și literatură*, Oradea (1969): 35.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*, 38.
10. *Ibid.*, 27.
11. Munteanu and Țăra, *Istoria*, 151.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Grecu, *Limbă*, 91.
14. Victor V. Grecu, "Unitatea limbii în concepția lui Timotei Cipariu" [The Unity of Language in Timotei Cipariu's Conception], *Limba română*, XXVI, nr. 26 (1970): 67.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Mioara Avram, *Lingvistica românească între 1828 și 1870 [Romanian Linguistics between 1828 and 1870]* (București: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1978), *apud* D. Macrea, *Lingviști și filologi români [Romanian Linguists and Philologists]* (București: Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, 1979), 71.
17. Radu Popescu, "Contribuția revistei Familia la cultivarea limbii române literare" [The Contribution of the Familia Magazine to the Cultivation of the Romanian Literary Language], *Limba română*, XV, nr. 2 (1966): 186.
18. Alexandru Crișan, *Familia* (Timișoara: Editura Facla, 1973), 161.
19. Popescu, "Contribuția", 187.
20. Crișan, *Familia*, 165.
21. Radu Popescu, "Concepția lingvistică a lui Iosif Vulcan" [The Linguistic Conception of Iosif Vulcan], *Cercetări de limbă și literatură*, II (1969): 49.
22. *Ibid.*
23. Crișan, *Familia*, 162.



24. Ibid., 163.
25. Ibid.
26. G. Pop, "Originea românilor", *Familia*, XVI (1880): 48-49.
27. S. Mangiuca, "Studii limbistice" [Linguistic Studies], *Familia*, VIII (1872), 49-50.
28. At. Marienescu, "Numele râului Olt" [The Name of the River Olt], *Familia*, XXXIII (1897): 100.
29. Victor V. Grecu, *Studii de istorie a lingvisticii românești* [Studies in the History of Romanian Linguistics] (București: Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, 1971), 114.
30. Ibid., 116.
31. Ibid., 103.
32. Ibid.

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