

LECTORATUL ȘI DIASPORA LIMBII. LIMBA ROMÂNĂ LA UNIVERSITATEA DIN SZEGED

THE DEPARTMENT AND THE DIASPORA OF LANGUAGE. THE ROMANIAN LANGUAGE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SZEGED

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Abstract

Our wish in this article is to describe the factors that contribute to the promotion of the Romanian language and culture in environments where a Romanian language department exists, institutions to promote them and especially where a lecturer works. We would also like to pinpoint the phases and factors that make teaching Romanian language, culture and civilisation possible at the prestigious University of Szeged, a university ranked 200-300 according to the Shanghai Academic Ranking of World Universities, and 80-123 according to the scientific ranking of European universities.

Key Words: *Lecturer, diaspora, lecturer of language, lecturer's activity*

Cuvinte cheie: *lector, diaspora, lector de limbă, activitatea lectorului*

1. Following our intention to present writers belonging to the diaspora in our publication's present issue, we will refer to a chair and an institution within which the Romanian language and civilisation are situated in a relationship with the native country similar to the relationship existing between a writer from the diaspora and the scattering of a language, or a culture that was formerly concentrated in one place. It is a chair which turns 60 and it has served a Romanian community since its beginning. The writer and the lecturer of language and culture have practically the same mission in such cases: that of creating through spreading of different types of linguistic and cultural elements all over the world an opening towards identity and otherness.

2. Besides some interrogations regarding what defines a lecturer, our interest lies with an effective presentation of the Romanian language department in Szeged. Its activity can be linked to a distribution kept in the consciousness of the community the department is addressed to. The presence of one or several lecturers at this department has its reason in the very desire to attenuate such a feeling.

3. But what kind of lecturer are we referring to? Any lexicographic digression confirms the difficulty of distinguishing the specificity of such a position due to the big diversity of meanings of the term "lecturer" found in any dictionary. Considered to be a member of the "foreign staff" in some universities, separated in this way from the actual teaching staff, seen as a visiting teacher who teaches a mother tongue, member of the diplomatic mission especially in the perception of some European countries, a cultural attaché with teaching duties without being a faculty member, sent through intergovernmental or interuniversity programmes, the lecturer is rather a person connected to the language of the cultural area he comes from. An etymological digression proves us that lecturer means "reader." The etymology of the word (whether it came into the Romanian language through German or French), allows us to see that the person designated by the term lecturer is a person with double authority. On the one hand, he fulfils the task of reading what has been written down – something that is determined by an authority that precedes him. On the other hand, starting from the etymologic aspect, but also by speculating what etymology allows us to

discern, the lecturer is the authority that has to create social, cultural, political interactions so that a linguistic and cultural space could interact with another; in this way the essential quality of being *somebody sent* (quality rather indicated by the term *legatus*) could be justified.

4. Consequently, the lecturer is the authority who reads and imagines in this way the necessary strategies to make the promotion of the language he represents in the objective context of a hosting university possible.

5. In the case we are referring to, imagining the strategies and teaching Romanian are accomplished in Szeged in the complex frame of language teaching ensured by an institute represented by three departments: a Romanian language, culture and civilization department, a Slovakian and a German one. The institute is part of „Juhász Gyula” Teacher Training Faculty (Facultas Academiae Pedagogicae de Gyula Juhász Nominatae), belonging to the Szeged University of Sciences (Universitas Scientiarum Szegediensis). The objective of „Juhász Gyula” Pedagogic Faculty is to prepare teaching staff at both school and high school levels and to favour the access to languages both for minority groups (in our case, Romanians living in Hungary) and Hungarian students who wish to study Romanian, Slovakian or German. The task of preparing teachers of Romanian language and literature for the Romanian schools in Hungary lies with the department belonging to the University of Szeged. Professor Galambos Gábor, Ph. D. is the Dean of the faculty and the Head of Department for Romanian language and Professor Maruzsné Sebő Katalin, Ph. D., is the Director of the Institute for Minority Languages.

6. The year 2009 has a rich significance because the Romanian department celebrates 60 years of teaching and functioning within the University of Szeged and at the same time it celebrates its 20th anniversary since the first lecturers arrived at the university from Romania in order to teach together with the department’s three tenures. Moreover, the Institute for Romanian language started offering the department support through donations of books teaching materials and subscriptions to Romanian publications 10 years ago. In addition, 2009 marks new beginnings – that of an MA Programme run by our department.

7. Understanding the lecturer’s source of authority and the factors that motivate his presence are conditioned by the lecturer’s activity. Inviting two lecturers from the country of origin in 1990 had its motif in the necessity of re-establishing a connection with the country, the language and the culture that the Romanian people living in Hungary had felt isolated from for more than half a century. For more than 20 years, several Romanian university members have contributed as lecturers or associate professors to the reconstruction of a symbolic connection and an identity retrieval of the Romanians living in Hungary: Professor Vasile Voia, Ph. D. Professor Máthe Gábor, Ph. D., Professor Gavril Scridon, Ph. D., Lecturer George Irimiaș, Ph. D., Lecturer Ema Ileana Adam, Ph. D., teachers Elena Munteanu and Maria Gavra, and the author of the present article. The predominantly Transylvanian origin of the lecturers is due to the historic connection existing between the University of Szeged and “Babeș - Bolyai” University, Cluj - Napoca. In addition, the University of Szeged and its Institute for Minority Languages has a strong collaboration with important Romanian cultural centres, especially the one from Arad. The curriculum at BA level includes an important methodology and psychopedagogical component, an initiation into economic language and translation studies. The strategy of teaching methodology was conceived by Assistant Professor Mihaela Bucin, Ph. D., so that the didactic process imagined by the future teacher graduating from the institute could transform the information regarding the history, linguistic structure and mentality into a strong argumentation in the favour of regaining a feeling of linguistic security and of cultural affirmation through Romanian language acquisition.

8. The scattering of cultural factors and, at the same time their synthesis are connected to educational programmes conceived by the lecturers invited by the department and the tenures. Students can enrol in a BA programme by choosing Romanian language and literature either as their main specialisation or by opting for Romanian language and literature as their secondary specialisation (generally associated to a main specialisation which can be in Philology or in another

field.) The graduates obtain a BA diploma in Philology which allows them to occupy teaching positions in Romanian language and literature due to the teacher training certificate that accompanies the BA diploma. They can also become translators according to the existing regulations in the field, to activate at different editorial offices of the printed media or at the Romanian radio and television, or to opt for further training by enrolling to an MA programme in the same field or in fields that are related to the ones they have graduated from.

9. Due to the efforts of Professor Gheorghe Petrușan, Ph. D., and to the scientific support offered by the department members, the main Romanian academic publication in Hungary has been issued since 1997. Having both a Romanian and a Hungarian title („Conviețuirea – Együttélés”), the publication, which according to Mihaela Bucin is *the periodical of the Romanians living in Szeged*, focuses mainly on *the problem of Romanian and Hungarian co-existence, on phenomena related to assimilation, bilingualism*, being a magazine that is interested in *the sore points of history and literature*. Moreover, the magazine is concentrated on *the existence of a Romanian community in Hungary as well as in the situation of minority groups in general as it contains numerous works of both Romanian and Hungarian specialists from the two countries.*ⁱ In the history of the Romanian printed media in Hungary, Cornel Munteanu names, among those who have published in the magazine, such personalities as *Gh. Petrușan, Mihai Cozma, Mihaela Bucin, Miskolczy Ambrus, Anamaria Brad, Tiberiu Boca, Ștefan Crâsta, Maria Berényi, Petru Câmpian, Florica Santău, Ana Hoțopan, Ioan-Aurel Pop, Eugen Glück, Ion Buzăși, Vasile Voia, Narcisa Știucă, Alexandru Roz, Weber Peter, George Irimiaș*. Numerous collaborators from Cluj – Napoca belonging to “Babeș - Bolyai” University” (Gligor Gruită, G.G. Neamțu), the Technical University (Ema Ileana Adam), „Sextil Pușcariu” Institute for Linguistics and Literary History (Veronica Vlasin) join the list together with authors of different research works in normative grammar, theory and practice of grammatical analysis, and specialists who have mentioned and reviewed books on contemporary morphosyntactic and stylistic interpretations.

10. The department and the lecturers’ activities are objectively presented in the main Romanian weekly publication *Foaia românească*,ⁱⁱ mainly in the editorials signed by Eva Iova, the chief-editor of the magazine and in the interviews taken from the students and the teaching staff by the interviewers who have been present at semester, final and graduation exams. In addition, the Romanian editorial office of the Hungarian Radio and Television offers the department the possibility to come into contact with the Romanian community and to establish the necessary relationship between the Romanians living on both sides of the border through interviews and radio series.

11. The department has been collaborating (since 2000) with important academic media being visited by linguists, historians, foreign law specialists, specialists in Romance and Romanian studies from the University of Rostock (Professor Rudolf Windisch, Ph. D.), the University of Leipzig (Professor Klaus Bochmann, Ph. D.), from Université de Caribou, Canada (Professor Anne Gagnon, Ph. D.), from „Babeș-Bolyai” University (Professor Nicolae Bocșan, Ph. D., Professor Ștefan Oltean, Ph. D., Professor Stelian Mândruț, Ph. D.), the University of Bucharest (Professor Narcisa Știucă, Ph. D.), Timișoara (Professor Otilia Hedeșan, Ph. D.), Oradea (Professor Radu Bodea, Ph. D.), Miercurea Ciuc (Professor Balázs Lajos, Ph. D.), the Romanian Cultural Institute (Brândușa Armanca, Ph. D.), the Romanian Academy (Fellow G. Mihăilă), and the Hungarian Academy (Fellow Szász Zoltan, Professor András Balogh, Ph. D.). The department has become an environment rich in Romanian culture reaching both its Romanian addresses and the Hungarian and Slovakian ones living in Hungary through the conferences held by these guests invited both by the visiting teaching staff and the tenures.

12. The department hosts the meetings of the Cultural Association of the Romanians in Szeged and the conferences of the members gathered at the Tuesday Evening Club (*Clubul de Marț’ Sara*), the Romanian film evenings and the celebrations of the main institutions belonging to the Romanians living in Hungary. The first conference, held by Professor Gheorghe Petrușan, Ph.

D, the spiritual mentor of the Romanians in Hungary, marked the beginning of a series of manifestations meant to celebrate 60 years of Romanian teaching in Hungary; the action was followed by a course approaching the anti-communist resistance in Romania proposed by the consul Răzvan Paul Ciolcă together with members of the diplomatic missions in Szeged and Gyula. The meetings of the Tuesday Evening Club continued with two conferences dedicated to the fundamental institutions, the Radio and Television sustained and illustrated by radio and cinema productions conceived by Ștefan Crâsta, Tiberiu Boca, Aurel Becan, Petre Cîmpian, Anamaria Brad.

13. We have emphasised in the examples above the relationship existing between external factors determined by the hosting-university, the institute, the associations and publications of the Romanian community in Hungary. There were and will continue to be together with our department such diplomats as Her Excellency Mrs. Irina Comaroschi, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Romania in Hungary, a real **Ambassador of the Romanian minority**, Aurelia Zmeu, Second Secretary of the Romanian Embassy in Hungary, *the diplomat who administers the relationship between the embassy and the Romanian community in Hungary*, Andrei Oancea, General Consul, Constantin Iuliu Aron, General Consul, Ioan Fodoreanu, General Consul, and consuls. The department boasts such friends as: Maria Teodora Pop, Radu Florea and Răzvan - Paul Ciolcă, members of the Romanian consulates in Szeged and Gyula. We are deeply thankful to them for their constant support offered to the lecturers and the department, their interest in promoting the Romanian culture and the teaching of Romanian language to a minority engaged in a continuous search for its own identity.

14. The department's main merit is the re-creation of the intellectual environment necessary for the existence of the Romanian community in Hungary. The majority of the editors-in-chief, the editorial board of the weekly magazine *Foaia românească* (Eva Iova, Rita Ruzsa, Ana Cioca) and the publication of the Romanian Self-Governance in Hungary entitled *Cronica* (Stăvaru Livia), as well as editors of the Romanian radio (Iulia Kaupert, Adam Bauer) and television (Aurel Becan, Ștefan Crâsta, Tiberiu Boca) have studied at the department or benefited from different MA and Ph. D. scholarships in Hungary and Romania.

15. In fact, a department equivalent to a specialization at the Faculty of Letters, the institution that invites Romanian lecturers at Szeged, Hungary involves its own tenures and the guests in the teaching process of philological disciplines such as: linguistics, literature, psychopedagogy, methodology. The department creates the necessary environment both for the teaching staff and the necessities of the Romanian minority living in Hungary. It offers an optimal environment for teaching Romanian as a foreign language and acquiring the norms of the standard language by the bilinguals belonging to the community that the department wishes to serve.

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The latest interviews, reportages, announcements regarding the events taking place at the department published in this magazine can be consulted on-line:

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