

STUDIES REGARDING THE LINGUISTIC PECULIARITIES OF THE INHABITANTS FROM THE AREAS OF THE HYDROGRAPHIC BASINS OF THE OITUZ AND CAȘIN RIVERS – BACĂU COUNTY

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Abstract

The inhabitants living in the localities of Oituz and Cașin basins belong administratively to Bacău County from the historical province of Moldavia. The geographical position, at the border of the three provinces, Moldavia, Transylvania and Wallachia, the history as well as the occupations from the past laid their print on the speech which has specific peculiarities, and so it is different from the one spoken in the localities from Moldavia. This specificity is present mainly in Poiana Sărată village from Oituz hydrographic basin as well as in Cașin and Mănăstirea Cașin from Cașin hydrographic basin. Their history is similar as they came into being by successive colonizations from Transylvania (Poiana Sărată) or from Wallachia if we refer to the localities from Cașin region. The basic linguistic stock is of Latin origin (about 80%) due to the Roman presence on the territory, but there are also numerous specific words and expressions which are rarely or never used in other places. Many borrowings come from Magyar, Slavic, Turkish-Tartar or German languages. Some of the specific words: *ăi* for *yes*, *ni* for *you*, *belmeș* for *weakness state*, *a târtuși* for *to squash*, *măitor* for *night companion*. The colonizations from Transylvania determined the appearance of certain words of Magyar origin. These words are present mainly in the speech of the inhabitants from Poiana Sărată as well as from Grozești and Ferăstrău villages where an important community of Csangos lives. We exemplify here with some words: *beteag*, *pichioci*, *pancoș*, *franghilă*, *tulcer*. We also mention the hissing speech which is used by the Csangos living in Grozești and Ferăstrău villages: *mătuși*, *cucos*, *bors*, *sarpe cărzi*, *zug*, *znur*. Besides this specific stock of words the Transylvanian accent is to be found in Poiana Sărată, while the Moldavian one in Bogdănești and Cașin villages.

Key words: language, peculiarities, influences, Oituz, Cașin

The inhabitants living in the areas of the hydrographical basins of the Oituz and Cașin rivers that belong to the pre-mountainous and mountainous zones of Bacău County have numerous language peculiarities which differentiates them from the inhabitants of other geographic zones of Moldova province. The reasons, which determined the appearance of these specific peculiarities, are diverse and they refer to the geographic position of the area, the history of the human settlements, the occupations of the inhabitants etc. The present study intended to point out the elements of linguistic specificity of this population in correlation with the factors that determined them.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The research was done in four communes situated in the mountainous and pre-mountainous zone of Bacău County – Oituz, Bogdănești, Cașin

and Mănăstirea Cașin – in the area of two geographic basins with a specific relief and climate.

While carrying out the research we used the monographic method as well as the questionnaire and the interview together with bibliographic sources and statistic data existing in every commune and county.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Geographically, the human settlements under study are localities belonging to the pre-mountainous or mountainous zones, represented by the Cașin-Onești and Hârja-Poiana Sărată depressions.

The location of the villages in the area of interference between the historical provinces of Moldavia, Transylvania and Wallachia had an important influence on the occupations of the inhabitants, the folklore and ethnographic elements and implicitly on the language peculiarities.

The language spoken by the inhabitants of these territories underwent influences from other

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zones. It includes elements both from the neighbouring provinces and elements borrowed from the more distant zones where the inhabitants made transhumance and commerce: Dobrogea, the Danube Plain but also southern Ukraine and Caucasus Mountains.

Many factors made their contribution to the specificity of the language type spoken in these human settlements. One main factor is the geographic one. The north-western part of the area is crossed by the Oituz Pass, which represents the shortest way through the Eastern Carpathians and which separates Moldavia and Transylvania.

There were continuously temporary or permanent departures for settling the residence in the human settlements of the area. This favoured the process of assimilating some linguistic components by the local speech.

A special case is represented by Poiana-Sărată village which came into being at the beginning of the 19th century by resettling populations from the south-east areas of Transylvania.

As regards the localities from the hydrographical basin of the Cașin River, although the access was relatively closed, there were some population settlements, especially shepards from zones belonging to Transylvania and Walachia

Another factor is the demographic one, as numerous groups of Romanian population settled in the area. The first ones were the free Dacians, or the Carps whose vestiges date back to the Bronze Age. Examples in point are the villages from Cașin Valley: Cuciur, Dealul Lăzii, Dealul Sf. Gheorghe or the remains of the Dacian *dava*, Utidava, from Grozești (Oituz). Subsequently, they became the present day Moldavian population.

Later successive waves of people came: inhabitants from Transylvania, Romanians from Brețcu, Săcele etc., magyarised Romanians (*ceangăi*). Other inhabitants came from the north of Wallachia – Rucăr and Muscel zones. So, a mixture of speeches took place, which lead to the appearance of a distinct dialect in which we can find words and linguistic peculiarities coming from different human groups which established on these territories.

The third factor is the economic one. The area has sub-mountainous and mountainous characteristics, with poorly productive soils that do not allow cultivating large surfaces, but only small ones with vegetables, potatoes, maize. The lands were good to be used as pastures and, to a smaller extent, with orchards, as a large part was covered with forests.

This determined, of course, the occupations of the inhabitants (animal breeders, especially

sheep, forest workers) as well as the content and specificity of the language. The basic word stock is of Latin origin, and this caused by the Romans' presence on the Dacia's territory. The Roman influence did not limit to the area occupied by the Roman Empire, but it extended outside its borders, towards East even beyond the Nistru River, while in the North to Galicia.

It is quite clear that the Roman presence left its mark on the language from bordering areas of the Empire, such as the localities from the Oituz and Cașin hydrographical basins that still preserve antique vestiges from the Dacian period.

Nevertheless, the speech of the inhabitants of these zones contains many words belonging most probably to the language spoken by the Dacian-Carps. These are connected especially to their specific activities, generally agriculture and animal breeding (mostly sheep breeding). We mention manes of tools and objects such as: *fluier* (flute), *burduf* (sack), *baligă* (dung), *traistă* (bag), *stână* (sheepfold), *ciomag* (cudgel). Of the same origin there are names of agricultural products: *urdă* (soft cottage cheese), *brânză* (cheese), *șorici* (boiled pork skin), *mălai* (maize flour), *mărar* (dill), *strugure* (grape), *horincă* (kind of brandy). Names of animals, such as *rață* (duck), *țap* (goat), *zimbru* (aurochs), *măgar* (donkey), *murg* (dark bay horse), *mistreț* (wild boar) belong to the same stock.

Other words refer to family members: *moș* (uncle), *mire* (groom), *moșneag* (old man) or names of plants: *mazăre* (peas), *copac* (tree), *brad* (fir tree), *brusture* (bur).

All these words are ordinary in the speech of the inhabitants from both hydrographical basins. The origin of these words is not known or come from Albanese (a descendent of the Thracian language), thus strengthening the belief that they most likely belong to the Thracian-Dacian language, who were the inhabitants of this region both during the pre and post Roman period.

The Slavs, migrating people who passed across this territory, partly being assimilated by the local population, left traces of their presence in numerous words of Slavic origin in everyday language.

Some words are connected by objects of the household: *greblă* (rake), *coasă* (scythe), *nicovală* (anvil), *lopată* (shovel), *bold* (pin), *ciocan* (hammer), *clește* (nipper), *coș* (basket), *coteț* (coop).

Other numerous words refer to elements from the geographical area: *mlaștină* (moor), *luncă* (meadow), *deal* (hill), *iaz* (lake), *gârlă* (brook), *izvor* (spring), *pripor* (slope), *prund* (gravel), *uliță* (by-lane).

There are several words connected to the family members: *babă* (old lady), *mătușă* (aunt), *nevastă* (wife), *rudă* (relative), *nene* (uncle), *maică* (goody), *leică*, *lele* (aunt).

Many verbs are of Slavic origin, such as: *a citi* (read), *a vorbi* (speak), *a păli* (hit), *a zdrobi* (smash), *a topi* (melt), *a năvăli* (invade), *a năpădi* (ingulf), *a răcni* (yell), *a lipi* (glue), *a iubi* (love), *a goli* (empty), *a osândi* (convict), *a vesti* (announce), *a veseli* (rejoice) etc.

Some words have a general character: *drag* (dear), *gol* (empty), *veșnic* (eternal), *boier* (boyar), *steag* (flag), *veac* (century), *știrb* (gap-toothed), *hâtru* (ugly), *vesel* (cheerful), *plocon* (crouch), *zăpadă* (snow), *ceas* (watch), *brazdă* (furrow), *ogor* (field), *bogat* (rich), *bolnav* (sick), *slab* (weak), *tavă* (tray), *slobod* (free), *zdravăn* (sound), *șfadă* (argument), *vorbă* (word), *zăbavă* (tardiness), *noroc* (luck) etc.

The Slavic influence can be noticed especially in the religious domain: *utrenie* (matin), *vecernie* (vesper), *evanghelie* (gospel), *sfășnic* (candlestick), *patrafir* (stole), *liturghie* (liturgy), *sposedanie* (confession), *iconostas* (iconostasis), *clopot* (bell), *ceaslov* (religious book), *cădelniță* (censer), *maslu* (holy oil), *molitvă* (prayer).

An important influence on the speech of this zone was the vicinity of Transylvania, due to the numerous words of Magyar origin, present especially in the speech of the inhabitants of Poiana Sărată village, who were colonists that came from Transylvania (Brețcu, Săcele, Mărginimea Sibiului). The same influence is present in the speech of the inhabitants of Grozești and Ferăstrău villages, where there live an important community of Csangos, magyarized Romanians who came in waves and settles in these territories.

The speech of the inhabitants of these localities preserved numerous words of Hungarian origin, even if there is much pressure of the Moldavian dialect spoken just in the vicinity. We exemplify with the words: *beteag* (sick), *pichioci* (potatoes), *pancoș* (omelette), *hibă* (defect), *mintenaș* (immediately) *cioaclă* (sleigh), *franghilă* (frying pan), *tulcer* (funnel), *fecior* (young man) and also with the words: *marfă*, *tâlhar*, *viteaz*, *neam*, *hotar*, *viclean*, *oraș*, *gând*, *băi*, *fierăstrău*, *vameș*, *chin*, *răvaș*, *tobă*, *chipeș*, *uriaș*, *a tămădui*, *a îngădui*, *a bănu* etc. Also, we can mention words ending in -ău: *lingău făgădău*, *mâncău*, as well as words ending in -isug, -eșug sau -ișag: *betșug*, *vicleșug*, *meșteșug*, *prietetșug*, *rămășag*, *furtișag* etc.

The migration of the population, especially of the shepherds, but also of the merchants to the

territories situated north to the Black Sea (Crimea) where a Turkish-Tatar population lived, together with the Turkish influence from Moldavia and Wallachia left their mark on the speech of the inhabitants living in the area. There are of Turkish-Tatar origin, especially Cuman, words like: *hambar* (barn), *maramă* (raw silk headdress), *giumbir* (head-kerchief), *suman* (thick long coat), *ilic* (vest), *dovleac* (pumpkin), *odaie* (room), *casap* (butcher), *lichea* (knave), *ibric* (kettle), *pușlama* (scurvy), *berechet* (plentiful), *ursuz* (morose), *cusur* (defect), *bucluc* (trouble), *zevzec* (nincompoop), *chimir* (money belt), *bacșiș* (tip), *lulea* (pipe) etc. The word *giumbir* is met only in Poiana Sărată village. It refers to a silk material sewn in the shape of a funnel which covers the hair of the married women. The object belongs to the traditional women's costume which is quite similar to the one in Săcele area, where there is much Transylvanian Saxon influence. But this specific object was brought in Poiana Sărată by the shepherds who moved their flocks to Crimea.

There is another category of words which are not used in other areas and whose origin is not known. Here are some examples: *măitor* (night companion), *a tărtuși* (to squash), *pepeș* (soft fruit), *belmeș* (weakness state), *băiată* (very young girl), *ăi* (yes), *ircă* (vegetable snack), *locioreală* (soft mud).

We also find here some words that are used in the whole region: *leică* (old woman), *bădiță* (uncle), *fecior* (unmarried young man), *copil de țâță* (baby), *citov* (healthy).

As regards phonetics and phonology, we found out that there are distinct peculiarities of the language spoken in the localities situated on the valleys of the two rivers.

In Oituz commune, especially Grozești and Ferăstrău villages, most of the people are Csangos (magyarized Romanians who came from Transylvania) and they speak a hissing language which is similar to the one spoken by the population living on the Siret valley from Moldova who is of Szeckler origin and whose religion is Catholic. The hissing speech is called by the population "sâsăită", which refers to the specific way of pronouncing certain sounds. Thus *ș* is pronounced *s* and *j* is pronounced *z*. Here are some words pronounced hissing: *mățusi*, *cucos*, *bors*, *sarpe*, *mosoiog*, *cârzi*, *zug*, *zale*, *znur*, *cozan* etc.

In Mănăstirea Cașin and Cașin communes as well as in some villages of the Oituz commune (Marginea, Grozești, Ferăstrău, Hârja) there appears the palatalization of some consonants: *ghine* – *bine*, *cheptine* – *pieptine*, *chicior* – *picior*, *schin* – *spin* etc.

In Poiana Sărată village, the accentualization of the words comes from Transylvania and preserves the speech of the first inhabitants. Due to historical reasons (the village belonged to the Austrian – Hungarian Empire for almost one hundred years) and some prejudices, the mixture with the population from Moldova was lower and this determined, to a great extent, the preservation of the Transylvanian speech.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The localities situated geographically in the Oituz and Cașin hydrographical basins are at the border of three historical provinces: Moldavia, Transylvania and Wallachia. This left its mark on the speech of the inhabitants living in the area.
2. The predominant linguistic stock is of Latin origin as the border of the Roman Empire was in this region. Also, numerous words of Carpathian-Dacian origin are quite likely to have been preserved, the existing vestiges of some Dacian dăvas helping us explain that. In Poiana Sărată, Oituz and Ferăstrău villages we find strong

Magyar influences. They were determined by the historical conditions of the period when these localities developed, as well as by the migrations of the population from Transylvania.

3. Another characteristic is the hissing speech of the Csangos living in Grozești and Ferăstrău villages and palatalization of some consonants present in the speech of the people from the localities situated on the Cașin valley or on Oituz valley (Bogdănești, Hârja).

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