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ABSTRACT

Linguistics and Stylistics. Perspectives in the Research on Verbal Communication

The thesis entitled “Linguistics and Stylistics. Perspectives in the Research on Verbal Communication”, developed in order to obtain the habilitation certificate in the field of PHILOLOGY, traces the links between the two linguistic sciences as seen through the semiotic lenses of several foundational models. At the heart of these interdisciplinary correspondences and connections is the innovative project of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, who is now considered one of the founders of modern linguistics. A brief but systematic study of Saussure’s core ideas, as outlined in the lecture notes, manuscripts and other documentary evidence, allows us to identify the basic features and arguments on which the symbiosis between linguistics and stylistics came into being more than a hundred years ago. The perspective adopted in this work is mainly historical, and the central aspects problematised in each of the subchapters are approached with reference to the relevant scholarly contributions that I have published to date. They are also discussed in accordance with the conceptual, methodological and terminological frameworks of the university lectures that I have given at the Faculty of Letters of the "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași since 2002. The first section, entitled “Thematic directions and scientific achievements”, consists of two parts linked like communicating vessels.

The first section outlines the evolution of linguistics in relation to the intellectual environment of the Neogrammarians’ programme in which Ferdinand de Saussure was educated, and continues with a brief yet thorough analysis of his major distinctions (LANGUAGE – SPEECH; SYNCHRONY-DIACHRONY) as reflected in the scientific publications of the leading specialists in the field, i.e. from the point of view of the most notable contributions between 1916 and 2012 by the most authoritative editors and exegetes of the Saussurean linguistic project. To my knowledge, such a path, profiled in several personal scientific contributions, has not yet been developed in Romanian linguistics. The analysis also follows the impact and reactions that Ferdinand de Saussure’s conception stimulated, both in the constitution and development of structural-functional models of human language, and in the emergence of new research horizons within the generativist and cognitivist trends (prototype theory, conceptual

metaphors, frame semantics). This review is extended as close as possible to the present. Drawing upon the most valuable bibliographical resources at my disposal, I traced, by reference to relevant personal contributions, the in-depth continuity between structuralism and generativism as well as the discontinuities. Moreover, I probed the tension between the structural-functional and the cognitivist models, notably those that emerged as critical reactions to the Chomskyan linguistic agenda.

In the second part of the first section, the winding and diffuse path of the recognition of stylistics as a linguistic discipline is reconstructed. At the beginning of the 20th century, this development involved the recognition that stylistics emerged from the sphere of influence of rhetoric and philology. As in the case of linguistics, the semiotic matrix of stylistic research is inextricably linked to the ideas of both Charles Bally and his master Ferdinand de Saussure. Therefore, linguistics and stylistics flourished in the same intellectual climate, but it is no less true that, through the work of the scholars of the Prague linguistic circle, structuralism became an internationally recognised scientific trend that went beyond the creative and fervent localism of Ferdinand de Saussure's disciples. Since I have dealt with the importance and prestige of the Prague circle in several publications, I have considered it necessary to briefly highlight some of the stylistic taxonomies proposed by the leading representatives of this research group, especially since structural-functional modelling has had and continues to have important repercussions on the development of stylistic studies.

Given that the tradition pioneered by Charles Bally, consolidated by the Prague linguists and refined by scholars such as Roman Jakobson, is one of the main strands that have nourished the research on the expressiveness of verbal communication, I opted to single out the most important Romanian specialists who, in my opinion, have increased the conceptual, methodological and terminological capital of stylistics by publishing works of national and international standing: Sextil Pușcariu, Iorgu Iordan, Tudor Vianu, Gheorghe Chivu, Dumitru Irimia, Rodica Zafiu. There are also occasional references to other noteworthy linguists: Gheorghe Ivănescu, Ion Gheție, Ion Coteanu, Stelian Dumistrăcel. Finally, instead of a conclusion, I suggested an updated model of analysis, which I have tested in the elaboration of a wider range of case studies on literature, scientific works, journalistic writing, epistolary style, political discourse, the art of preaching, etc. In other words, I considered nearly all the significant areas of verbal communication in which linguistic creativity plays a major role, in order to conclude that a complex network of discursive norms and traditions generates the individuality of each linguistic act performed by exploiting the semiotic possibilities of the sign system that expresses ideas (language).

In the section dedicated to my professional career, I have indicated the main aspects of the teaching activities that I have undertaken for more than two decades at the Faculty of Letters of the "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iasi and in collaboration with other higher education institutions. I have structured the presentation according to the characteristics of the tertiary education cycles (bachelor, master, doctorate). The future didactic activities are planned according to four milestones: 1. refining the effectiveness of the didactic act; 2. adapting the resources of didactic and scientific use to the real needs of the students, in line with the current academic standards; 3. strengthening the research activities of scientific guidance for students

in order to stimulate advanced level initiatives; and 4. exploiting the opportunities offered by current technology.

Several aspects are mentioned in the description of my research activity: 1. the main published works; 2. their scientific impact, as evidenced not only by citations, references and reviews, but also by their presence in various types of national and international databases; 3. participation in research projects; 4. organisation of scientific events with national and international outreach; 5. editorial activity; and 6. the strategy for the future. With reference to this last point, I consider that:

a. I will continue to involve students from all cycles: undergraduate, graduate and doctoral, in research activities and the organisation of scientific events, according to my current participation in research projects;

b. I will deepen the main research directions mirrored by the works published so far: general linguistics, text linguistics and discourse analysis (areas studied by privileging the use of rhetoric, stylistics and pragmatics studies), psycholinguistics and ethnolinguistics;

c. I will aim to increase my international activity by participating in scientific events organised abroad, by publishing more contributions in specialised publications abroad and by taking advantage of opportunities to participate in international research projects, in line with my domains of professional competence;

d. I will develop and guide scientific work focusing on the marks of linguistic creativity in public discourse, specifically in online communication (internet linguistics) and in the media, and I will conduct advanced research aimed at capturing the semiotic features of the scientific style.

In the bibliographical section I have made use of two types of references, namely works from the scientific literature (general bibliography) and personal contributions that I have highlighted in the habilitation thesis (special bibliography). The annexes conclude the presentation.