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THE FACULTY OF POLITICAL, ADMINISTRATIVE AND COMMUNICATION SCIENCES

„HUNGAROLOGY STUDIES" DOCTORAL SCHOOL

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Lexical changes in the Hungarian political communication in Romania between 1989 – 2004 (the Hungarian language)

PHD THESIS

SUMMARY

SCIENTIFIC GUIDE

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2. KEYWORDS: political communication, Hungarian media in Romania, electoral communication, lexical families in the Hungarian media, change of the political language, media analysis, communist media, transition period media, P.C.R., U.D.M.R.

3. SHORT SYNTHESIS OF THE THESIS

In post – December Romania there have been changes both at the level of public life and relating to the language and culture. These changes were felt within the Hungarian minority as well. This thesis has as purpose the presentation and the analysis of the changes both at lexical and at the grammatical level appeared in the Hungarian political communication in Romania between 1989 – 2004. The data base was made up of the titles appeared in two daily papers, one central and one regional (*Romániai Magyar Szó, Háromszék*) throughout the analyzed period. The content analysis and the speech analysis were used as research methods. The data was processed with the *Atlas.ti.6.2* program, the data being subsequently grouped and analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively during the different governing periods. The characteristics of political and electoral Hungarian communication characteristics during the period mentioned above were identified.

4. SYNTHESIS OF THE MAIN CHAPTERS

The central theme of the thesis is the identification and the analysis of the lexical an d grammatical changes in the Hungarian political community in Romania between 1989 – 2004 based on the titles appeared in two daily papers (*Előre, then Romániai Magyar Szó, Megyei Tükör, then Háromszék*).

The purpose of the work was the finding of the political – public language background used in the Hungarian media in Romania, respectively its change over a period of 15 years, the identification and the analysis of the new type of political communication. The analysis begins with the year of the change of the state regime (1989) and includes fives governing mandate (1989 - 2004). 1989 is a reference year due to the fact that the period is characterized by the most aggressive policy regarding language and media, the written media being marked by all the linguistic and political characteristics of the totalitarian regime. At the end of the year, respectively at the beginning of the 90's, the first elements from the transformed political communication appear and can be analyzed, then, as years pass, the political and public Hungarian language changes, as well as the lexicon used together with the grammatical

structures. A major importance is granted to the electoral years, which is proved by the slogans appeared in the media.

The dissertation starts from the initial hypothesis according to which the political transformations from 1989 have resulted into major changes from the point of view of the political language and communication too, but these new types have not been yet capable of crystallization and unifying. The following hypothesis can be issued:

- From the political – social transformations a new language and speech resulted at several levels (lexicological, syntactic, political communication);
- Until 2004 one cannot mention a unitary, standard and normative political – administrative language;
- Several mechanisms coming from the extinct era can be identified within the political and electoral communication;
- The political messages appeared in the written media show an accentuated diversity.

The following purposes of the analysis have been issued:

- The identification of the written media language characteristics from the two periods;
- The identification of those political – administrative expressions which disappeared together with the communist era, respectively of the terms which have modified;
- The systematic presentation of the expressions appeared together with the new regime;
- The analysis of the written media language during period of 16 years;
- The identification and the analysis of the characteristics of the Hungarian electoral communication in Romania;
- The multidimensional analysis of the transformed political speech.

The thesis is structured in five major chapters. The first two chapters present those theories referring to the process of communication (see Schramm 1963, Kunczik 1998, Weber 1964 etc.) and of the mass communication (see McQuail 1999, Lasswell 1927 etc.), of the propaganda (see Lazarsfeld 1948, McQuail 2003 etc.) respectively of the political communication (see Mazzoleni 2002, Gerstlé 2002, Norris 2001, McNair 2003 etc.), Chapter III deals with the language and the speech used in politics (see Mazzoleni 2002, Edelman 1976, Szabó 2003 etc.).

Chapter IV is dedicated to the research methodology. Being a paper with an interdisciplinary view, the analysis presents a few difficulties. The political communication

cannot be approached unidirectional, there being the risk of representatives of other sciences, for example political sciences, media, communication sciences, linguists etc. to consider that the analysis is incomplete.

The 16 years studied refer to two state forms totally different, respectively to five different governmental cycles. This makes it difficult to study the phenomena, and if we also consider the fact that it is not just a national analysis, but an analysis which refers to the Hungarian context in Romania, the problem becomes even vaster. The messages belonging to the Romanian political communication translated into Hungarian with the Hungarian communication of the politicians of Hungarian ethnicity in Romania must be observed. It is important to observe the evolution of the connections between the political area and the media. The change in style referring to the written media language requires special attention. Another problem is the quantitative processing and analysis method of the data base, including thousands of newspapers. This quantity has not allowed for a vast interpretation of each article, I have especially analyzed headlines.

The study is based on the methods of lexicology, of the content analysis and of the discourse analysis. The latter are methods which excellently complement each other.

There has been a significant focus on presenting the political conflicts appeared in the media. I have been curious if after the revolution a unitary political – administrative language known and used by the Hungarian ethnics from Romania was able to come into shape.

The quantitative analysis was also focused on the number of the articles appeared in the daily newspapers and on the number of words appearing in the headlines.

The data base is made up of 2600 pages (app. 3 million characters). This size caused difficulties, but with the help of the software for content analysis „*Atlas.ti 6.2*” the quantitative categorizing of the collocations and morphemes, their organization in different words families, lexical fields was possible. The headlines from the data base were attributed secondary codes where they weren't explicit enough, but the meaning could be distinguished – e.g. Meeting with Hungary's Prime Minister (= ***Markó Béla, U.D.M.R.*** – one can understand from the article that the president of U.D.M.R. met with the Prime Minister of Hungary).

The most important part of the paper, Chapter V, called "Changes of the written political communication language during the socialist era and during the transition in Romania. Media analysis (1989—2004)" contains actually the results of the analysis.

Subchapter V.1. presents the preliminary results of the analysis, results published in 2007 (Kozma 2007c).

In subchapter V.2, there is a synthesis of the Hungarian written media from Romania, where it is noticed that whereas in 1989 there were 28 newspapers nationally, their number increased significantly, reaching 311 in 1995. The researcher Magyari Tivadar distinguishes 7 characteristics about the Hungarian journalist in Romania: 1. he considers objectivity important; 2. he insists on political freedom; 3. He (she) considers the freedom of the media as being a value; 4. He (she) is non- professional; 5. He (she) is literarily; 6 (she). He is non-commercial; 7. He (she) represents a special media discourse: affirmative discourse and minority neurosis (Magyari 2000).

Subchapter V.3 presents the analyzed data base which begins with the newspapers in January 1989 and ends at the end of 2004 as follows:

Government cycle	Period	Number of newspapers analyzed				
		Előre	Megyei Tükör	RMSZ	Háromszék	Total
1989	3.01.1989–21.12.1989	283	301	0	0	584
1990—1992	23.12.1989–26.09.1992	0	0	690	682	1372
1992—1996	29.09.1992 –2.11.1996	0	0	1050	1101	2151
1996—2000	4.11.1996–25.11.2000	0	0	1222	1214	2436
2000—2004	27.11.2000–31.12.2004	0	0	1225	1227	2452
Total		283	301	4187	4224	8995

The following subchapters analyze and present the results referring to the changes and the characteristics of the 5 government cycles.

Subchapter V.4., entitled "*Political communication in the socialist media (1989): „Strong unity of our entire people around the Party and the State…*" present the following conclusions: the political communication from the studied year has propaganda purposes exclusively. The media works directly or indirectly as a channel to broadcast the messages of the ones in command. The choice of the themes is done according to the expectations of those in charge, fact proven by the huge quantity of the ideological content articles. The strong personal cult around the leader, the number of the positive attributes and of the exaggerations are another characteristic of the 1989 media. The headlines analyzed are not clear, a rough language is used. The discourse is unclear, it is too general. Many times the headlines are either made up of imperative sentences such as a slogan. Many work reports are presented. The presentation of the holidays has an important role in the media. One cannot explicitly speak about electoral communication, the messages presented during the "elections" do not differ from the propaganda - like sentences appeared throughout the year. The most commonly

met words, semantic fields are: *Ceausescu, comrade, party (P.C.R.), work, unity, solidarity, planning, performance, congress, secretary* etc.

In Subchapter V.5., the transition period is analyzed (1990—1992). Named „*Political communication during the transition period (1990—1992): protests, taking stands, Hungarian unity*", this chapter reaches the conclusion that political communication in the post – December media changes radically both from the point of view of the techniques for writing headlines and of the diversifying of the articles themes belonging to the political area. The headlines, though more stylized, still point to the past by intensely using verbs in the plural, first person. Many articles deal with the Hungarian political elite and its organization (U.D.M.R.). The political actions are shown in an exclusive Hungarian perspective. The entity of the issuers cannot be clearly seen (in the media or in politics). Many announcements appear, taking stands from the UDMR appear as direct messages, the latter being a union which appears as the only Hungarian formation in Romania which can provide unity. From the point of view of the form and of the content this message reminds of the communist discourse "*strong unity of our entire people around the Party.*" The Hungarians from Romania are presented as collective victims of the political decisions. A new theme is represented by the real presentation of the economic data. There is a real interest towards the activities of the Parliament and of the Government from the press, but also a distance from the Romanian politicians, and the Romanian parties respectively. The Hungarian media from Romania provide very large spaces to the UDMR for presenting their electoral materials. The intense use of the plural in the first person is noticed, the terms *us, unity, together* become constant. The Hungarian media from Romania is not objective; the political communication is unidirectional and subjective. The most commonly met words, semantic fields: *Parliament, direct messages from the UDMR, UDMR, law, administration, council, government, attack.*

In Subchapter V.6., called "*Political communication during the transition period: (1992 - 1996): organizational consolidation, rights promotion, bilateral treaty*" I reached the conclusion that during the analyzed period the political –administrative language starts to take shape. The UDMR is the formation which continues to provide the frame of the political communication; the *Hungarian* themes appear in the context of the organization. The Hungarian media debates often enough with those Romanian politicians who are considered the enemies of the Hungarians form Romania (e.g. G. Funar). The structural consolidation of the UDMR brings more news referring to the Hungarian organization. Starting with 1993, the

Hungarian organization sends dozens of press releases, appearing most of the times not modified. It is interesting the fact that the conflicts from within the formation don't find room in the written media. A highly approached theme is the disastrous economic situation. As a new concept, there appears the term of *autonomy*, which will render most of the themes in the Hungarian media from Romania. The Hungarian – Romanian bilateral relationships appear as a theme often approached due to the negotiations related to the signing of the bilateral treaty between the two countries.   The presentation of the Hungarian – Hungarian relationships is intensified, the politicians in Hungary appearing more often in the Hungarian daily newspapers from Romania. The electoral communication is characterized during this period by the *unity* around the UDMR. The most often met words, semantic fields: *UDMR, Parliament, bilateral treaty, Markó B. Funar G., autonomy, education law, privatization*.

Subchapter V.7. analyses from the point of view of the political communication the governing period of the UDMR (*Political communication during the partnership for the governing act (1996 - 2000): Hungarian university, retrocession of the confiscated properties, status law, the need for the renewal of the organization*). There is a lexical enrichment of the political communication. The number of the appearance of the name of the Hungarian formation UDMR tends to reach the levels of PCR in 1989. It is the first mandate where interior criticism towards the formation appears especially from different political platforms, respectively form the bishop Tőkés László. The media proves to be objective in this theme. There appear minority requests: Hungarian university, autonomy, retrocession of the community's properties. The Hungarian politicians who participate directly to the governing act have a clear positive image as opposed to the Romanian politicians. The economic articles appear in a large number. The electoral communication still displays a strong support of the UDMR. Words used often: *UDMR, government, economy, Parliament, protest, Hungarian university, Markó B., E. Constantinescu, G. Funar* etc.

Subchapter V.8., called "*Political communication during the break of the Hungarian unity (2000 - 2004)*" analyzes vastly the above mentioned period reaching the conclusion that the lexicon of the political communication developed numerically. There is a contrary attitude of the newspapers analyzed towards the break of the Hungarian unity. UDMR loses its so far clearly positive image. The rhetoric of *unity* appears to disappear, being substituted by *partnership.* There appear many polemics also referring to the Hungarian – Hungarian polemics. The electoral communication becomes much more intensive, the two Hungarian formations in Romania reach mutual attacks in the media. Words and semantic fields used

often: *UDMR, government, minority right, Hungarian – Hungarian, political action, Parliament, autonomy, regional development, Markó B.*

The thesis ends with a summary and with the formulation of the final conclusions.

The hypothesis according to which the political transformations in 1989 have resulted into major changes also from the point of view of the language and the political speech, has become true. I must notice that in the field of the myths a few parallels with the myths present in the "Golden époque" can be noticed.

The second hypothesis, according to which until 2004 one cannot speak about a unitary, standard and normative political – administrative language has become true. One cannot speak about a unitary language, although it is unifying, there are no standards or normative. This fact can be demonstrated by the use of the institutions names and by the different translations of the official documents (e.g. self – governing = local council, county council, city hall).

The third hypothesis, according to which mechanisms coming from the extinct era can be identified in the political and electoral sphere, has become true. This can be proven by the frequency of the appearance of the names U.D.M.R., Markó Béla, respectively by the use of the plural verbs in the first person and of the articles referring to the *unity* concept.

Referring to the forth hypothesis (political messages appeared in the written media, they display a tendency towards diversification), we can state that it is proven by the quantitative data mentioned in this thesis.

5. OWN PUBLICATIONS ON THE TOPIC OF THE THESIS

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KOZMA Csaba 2007d: Közös érdek, közös cél – más megközelítés? A 2004-es választási kampány konfliktusainak tanulságai Székelyföldön. [Interes comun, scopuri comune – alte abordări? Concluzii ale conflictului electorale din 2004 în Ţinutul Secuiesc] In: *Pro Scientia Administrativa. . Studii în domeniul administraţiei publice 2007.* Miercurea Ciuc – Sfântu Gheorghe, Ed. Státus. 68–75.

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KOZMA Csaba 2008c: A romániai magyar közigazgatási nyelvhasználat problémái. [Probleme lingvistice a folosirii limbii maghiare în limbajul administrativ din România] In: Botházi Mária (ed.): *Media şi cultură A IV-a conferinţă a doctoranzilor jurnalişti, Cluj-Napoca, 24. mai 2008.* Cluj-Napoca, Asociaţia „Médea" – Művelődés. 135–142.

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