ASPECTS OF CODE-SWITCHING CONCERNING SPANISH-ROMANIAN VIRTUAL COMMUNICATION

1 INTRODUCTORY ASPECTS

The paper *Aspects of code-switching concerning Spanish-Romanian virtual communication* aims to reveal several characteristics of the phenomenon of language contact in the case of the Romanian communities from Spain, having as starting point the characteristics of the languages involved in this process: Romanian and Spanish.

The interest in this topic stems from the large extent of the economical migration from Romania to more developed European countries: Spain, Italy, Germany, France, England etc. after 1990. According to INE (Spanish Institute of Statistics), on 1st January 2013, 868,635 Romanians were living in Spain, a number that decreased by 3.2% if compared to that of January 2012.

Therefore, this study is devoted to the analysis of the linguistic attitude displayed by the Romanian immigrants in Spain as far as the linguistic communication on the Internet is concerned. In addition, we also aim to present certain aspects of *rumañol*, the sociolect resulted from the combination of words borrowed from Romanian and Spanish and used within the same discourse and considered by most participants of the discussions on either Facebook or on forums dedicated to Romanian immigrants from Spain as the language of the Romanian immigrants.

2 METHODS

This study is based on analysis of a corpus of texts, consisting of Facebook posts, Facebook conversations with two informers, and some dialogues taken from Spain Romanian forum (Spania Românească).

Our corpus is divided into tree parts:

b) The second part (C2) is composed of conversations on the Facebook chat rooms which have taken place for two years on our Facebook page with two informers from an ancient study (Jieanu 2012), both aged 21 years and who live in Castellón de la Plana. One is male; he has been living in Spain for 9 years. His mother tongue is Romanian, but he started learning in Spanish since he moved to Spain. Now he works in Fashion industry. The other one is a female. She has been living in Spain for 14 years. She is presently studying Medicine at Jaume I University, Castellón de la Plana.

c) The third part of our corpus (C3) consists of dialogues taken from Spain Romanian forum15 on the following topics: *Job market for nurses*, *There are racism and xenophobia against Romanians in Spain*, *Rumañol - Romanian-Spanish dialect*, *How the Spanish see us*, *Romania’s image in Spain*, *Peasant in Spain*, *The stereotype of Romanians in Spain*, *How the children adapt to living in Spain*.

We decided to use these three types of internet communication, because, even if they are different (posts on the walls, discussions in chat rooms, forum dialogues), all of them are characterized by switching-code from Romanian to Spanish in certain contextual situation.

The code-switches data are divided into three categories or types as follows: emblematic code-switches, intra-sentential switches, and inter-sentential switches. There were identified a total of 11 emblematic code-switchings, 10 intra-sentential code-switchings, and 25 inter-sentential code-switchings.

As the data set was small and limited to three types of internet communication, it can be said that there are many more possible Romanian-Spanish switches. The conclusions

4 https://www.facebook.com/groups/106802239343519/.
5 https://www.facebook.com/groups/gaabrielaritok/.
10 https://www.facebook.com/groups/romanispания/?fref=ts.
drawn were exclusively based on the data collected. In addition, it was verified whether these switches are a characteristic of the Romanian spoken in Spain – called by some of the emitters, Rumañol.

3 RUMAÑOL - ROMANIAN LANGUAGE VARIETY SPOKEN IN SPAIN

Considering the communication framework of the Romanians from Spain, the permanent oscillation between the official language (Spanish) and the mother language (Romanian) has led to the creation of new linguistic means identified by the Romanians from Spain as Rumañol, with the following varieties: Rumaniol, Romaniol, Romañol. Initially, the term was used to distinguish between Romanians still living in their mother country and those from Spain, as well as to avoid using the term Rumano that had previously been deemed pejorative.

From the moment this term emerged, it has aroused contradicting opinions. Some of the Romanians living in Spain adopted it immediately, claiming that most are Rumañols and that they speak Rumañol.

Considered by some as a “linguistic handicap”, which has negative consequences on the vitality of the Romanian language, the Rumañol got inculcated in the language and in the mentality of the Romanian and Spanish people, who are currently picking up new terms day by day.

The word Rumañol is formed following the model of terms such as Spanglish (a mixture of Spanish and English in the North America, South America and Spain), Fran-glais (a mixture of French and English emerged in France), Portuñol (known by most linguists also as "Fronterizo" consisting of a mixture of Portuguese and Spanish, created at the border between Uruguay and Brazil), Gueañol (a mixture of Guarani - Paraguay native language - and Spanish), Quechuañol (a mixture of Quechua and Spanish in the Andina) (Lipsky 2005: 2), Romgleză (a mixture of Romanian and English) etc. Regardless of the name it bears, the emergence of sociolects generated by the contact between two languages is a linguistic consequence of migration, and largely of globalization.

The term Rumañol was originally used to refer to a new linguistic reality used in the communication between Romanian immigrants, however, subsequently, it enlarged its semantic sphere, reaching to denominate the results of all contacts between Romanian and Spanish: Rumañol language, Rumañol art, Rumañol habits, Rumañol music, Rumañol poetry, Rumañol beauty pageant, and culminating with the Romanians calling themselves Rumañols. In an article in El Pais published on September 9, 2013, the Rumañols are identified as the Romanians in Spain who “en su Afán renuncian integration of tanto que dejan su propia serum culture completely Ruman LLEGAR a sin ser Españoles del todo: son rumañoles” (http://ccaa.elpais.com/ccaa/2013/09/08/madrid/1378656667_361180.html, cited 10.10.2013). What we find interesting is that the Spanish individuals who
came in contact with the Romanian language and culture, those who have spouses of Romanian origin who partially learnt Romanian language call themselves also Rumañols and consider that they speak the “Rumañol language”.

The conversations in Rumañol of the Rumañol group on Facebook, a group which consists of 99 members, a quarter of whom are Spanish, are different from the other conversations of the Romanian immigrants from Spain. The mixture of Spanish and Romanian words is visible and is done intently. The transmitters switch the code (from Romanian to Spanish) within the same sentence, using the linguistic structures of both of the two languages, as in the examples (a), (b), (c), (d), (e):

a) “No has entendido nimic de acest grup [No has entendido nothing from this group!]” (C1)

b) “Hola la toată lumea! Yo cred că la mayoría vorbim rumañol. De fapt debería ser o limbă oficială de los rumanos în Spania [Hola everyone! Yo think that la mayoría speak rumañol. In fact, debería ser an official language de los rumanos in Spain].” (C1)

c) “Soy vorbitor de rumañol. Și me encanta [Soy speaker of rumañol. And me encanta].” (C1)

d) “Sunt curios cam cuantos vorbitori de rumañol estamos? [I am curious of cuantos speakers of rumañol estamos?]” (C1)

e) “Hola rumañolilor! Hay alguien? Parece que nu! [Hola rumañolilor! Hay alguien? Parece que no].” (C1)

4 CODE-SWITCHING - THEORETICAL ASPECTS

There can be noticed several specific phenomena of language-contact in the written Romanian language of the Romanians from Spain used in the virtual environment, on Facebook and on the aforementioned forums. Out of them, we can stress particularly the code-switching, lexical borrowing and loan translation. However, the present study will be focusing on the analysis of the material collected on the phenomenon of code-switching manifested in the virtual communication of the Romanian immigrants from Spain.

The code-switching phenomenon is a manifestation of the contact between languages, being frequently met in the context of bilingualism. Bilingual or multilingual speakers make alternately use of the elements of the known languages in both written and oral communications, mainly in informal situations.

16 The examples from our corpus given in order to sustain the types of switches from Romanian to Spanish are not modified. They are introduced in our study as they were written on the internet pages, in Romanian or in Spanish. The orthography is the one used by the emitters, without diacritics in Romanian or accents in Spanish. For being understood by all the readers, we have translated only the parts reproduced in Romanian, leaving the Spanish words, phrases or texts inserted into Romanian communication as they were formulated during the conversations. We also have written in italics the Spanish insertions into Romanian language.
The term code-switching was conceptualized for the first time in the second half of the last century (Blom, Gumperz 1986: 59): “code-switching involves the juxtaposition of two phenomena within the same conversational exchange, belonging to two systems or different linguistic subsystems”. Gumperz (1982: 60) describes the phenomenon as a “discursive exchange” which forms one interactional whole: “Speakers communicate fluently, maintaining an even flow of talk. No hesitation pauses, changes in sentence rhythm, pitch level or intonation contour mark the shift in code. There is nothing in the exchange case as a whole to indicate the speakers don’t understand each other. Apart from the alternation itself, the passages have all the earmarks of ordinary conversation in a single language”. Subsequent research defined code-switching based on the conception of Gumperz (Anwar 2007, Cook 1991, Duran 1994, Gafaranga 2007, Grojean 1982, Lipski 2005, Manu 2000, Poplack 1980, Skiba 1997, Stoica 2003-2004, Vinagre Laranjeira 2005).

The analysis of the code-switching phenomenon in our work has been developed by taking into consideration other aspects of the phenomenon:

a) “Code-switching is the turn used to identify alternations of linguistic varieties within the same conversation” (Myers-Scotton 1993: 1).

b) “Code-switching is the alternation of two languages within a single discourse, sentence or constituent” (Poplak 1980: 583).

In our research, we conceive code-switching as a communicative phenomenon of discontinuity created by the intersection within the same speech of two languages. The transmitter is bilingual (Romanian-Spanish) and addresses his message to a receptor belonging to the same bilingual community.

5 CODE-SWITCHING BETWEEN ROMANIAN AND SPANISH

In the analysis of our corpus, we took into consideration the distinctions between three types of code-switching:

a) the emblematic code-switching, characterized by the constant use of some flagship conversational formulas from Spanish (greetings, forms of politeness, interjections) by the Romanians from Spain;

b) inter-sentential code-switching, which is achieved by alternating the two codes (Romanian and Spanish);

c) intra-sentential code-switching, which is the insertion of discursive elements (phrases, words) of the matrix language (Spanish) into Romanian.

5.1

The emblematic code-switching as recorded in the investigated material, consists in inserting in the communicative structure of the Romanian language of some linguistic ele-
ments from Spanish, which defines like emblems the bilingual nature of a conversation:

We found that the virtual communication in the Romanian language of the immigrants from Spain has the following components:

- interjections (a):
  a) “Je, Je: Los españoles por internet se rien asi: jajajajajajajaja, jejejejejejjejejej; am studiat și literatura de a lor” [Los Españoles por internet rien aci: jajajajajajajaja, jejejejejjejejeje, we studied their literature] (C2).

- politeness formulas (b), (c), (d):
  b) Hola: “Hola la toată lumea! Yo cred că la majoria vorbim rumañol. De fapt debería ser o limbă oficială de los rumanos în Spania”; “Hola rumañolilor! Hay alguien? Parece que no”; “Nu răspundeți la hola-urile mele”; “Hola la toata humea. E cam silencio pe aqui.” [Hola everybody! Yo think the majority talk rumañol. In fact debería be an official language de los rumanos in Spain”, “Hola Rumañols! Hay alguien? Parece que no”, “Do not answer my hola”, ”Hola everyone it’s kind of silencio on aqui.] (C1);
  c) Hasta luego: “Hasta luego: plec la bar k trebuie să mai pun unele luminițe...” [Hasta luego: I go to the bar I have to put some lights...] (C2);
  d) Por favor: “21 de ani, por favor!” [21, por favor!] (C2).

- exclamatory statements (e):
  e) Animo: “Totul o să fie ok, o să vedeţi... Animo!”; “Te pup şi animo!” [Everything will be ok, you’ll see ... Animo!”; “Kisses and Animo!] (C3)

- colloquial words (f):
  f) Joder: “Hoder, dada!”; “Joder! Câți ani ai?” [Hoder, yesyes!” “Joder! How old are you?] (C2)

An explanation of this phenomenon could be the rate of occurrence of these linguistic elements in the communication of the native Spanish, as well as the speaker’s level of familiarity with their usage.

5.2

Another variant of code-switching, the inter-sentential, is encountered when the same speaker alternates several sentences in the Romanian language with the Spanish language.

In our corpus, we have come across code-switching between different sentences or distinct complex-sentences: a sentence in Romanian alternates with another one in Spanish, in various situational contexts. We found four instances of achieving the code-switching at the sentential level:

- shifting of the code is performed by the same transmitter within the same line of a dialogue. A statement in the Romanian alternates with a short query sentence in Spanish (a):
a) “Hola rumañolilor! Hay alguien? Parece que nu! [Hola rumañolilor! Hay alguien? Parece que no!] (C1)”.

• code-switching at the level of the reported speech. Direct speech from Spanish is inserted into the Romanian discourse (b), (c), (d):

b) “Personalul directiv - m-au lăsat fără cuvinte când au zis: a ver si conseguimos que te guste y que te quedes para siempre” [The managing staff - left me speechless when they said: a ver si conseguimos que te guste y que te quedes para siempre] (C3);

c) “Și îți mai zic: yo me fio mucho de ti” [And they’d add: yo me fio mucho de ti] (C3);

d) “Sunt triști și spun: mi hija me ha dejado aqui porque no me quere ver en la casa” [They are sad and they are telling you: mi hija me ha dejado aqui porque no me quere ver en la casa.] (C3).

• switching is performed within the same line - the transmitter writes a sentence in Spanish, which, subsequently, he translates into Romanian (e):

e) “Por fin alguien encontro una solucion rapida.../ În sfârșit cineva a găsit și o rezolvare rapidă....” [Por fin alguien encontro una solucion rapida.../ Finally somebody found out a quick fix] (C3).

• in a speech performed in the Romanian language, there are introduced quotations from laws or documents from Spanish, as in the examples (f), (g), (h), (i), (j):

f) “Pentru cei care locuiesc în Ontinyent [For those who live in Ontinyent]:
Reunion muy importante para toda la población inmigrante que no disponga de Tarjeta SIP:
El miércoles 26/06/2013 a las 19:30 horas hay programada una reunión en el Centro Integral de Mayores (San Rafael) de Ontinyent para explicar el convenio firmado entre el Ayuntamiento de Ontinyent y la empresa Fisiomed para ofrecer asistencia gratuita a todo aquel colectivo de inmigrantes que quedan excluidos de la asistencia sanitaria pública. Es decir, con la reciente reforma de la Ley Sanitaria, muchos inmigrantes en situación administrativa irregular no tienen acceso al sistema sanitario público, por lo tanto, el Ayuntamiento de Ontinyent, concienciado con esta problemática social que se deriva de esta política, ha intentado movilizar todos los recursos existentes para intentar salvar esta discriminación.
Muy importante que toda la población inmigrante que no disponga de Tarjeta SIP, es muy recomendable que acuda a esta reunión, ya que está abierta a la población en general.
Vă rog să difuzați informația ca să ajungă la cât mai multă lume ce locuiește în Ontinyent” [Please disseminate this information to reach to as many people living in Ontinyent] (C3);
g) “Ramona, uite ce am găsit în una din paginile afisate de tine [Ramona, have a look at what I discovered in one of the pages you posted]: „La finalidad del presente Curso de Nivelación es facilitar, al mayor número de ATS posible, la convalidación académica de su Título de Ayudante Técnico Sanitario por el de Diplomado Universitario en Enfermería con el objetivo de actualizar los conocimientos, habilidades y actitudes de acuerdo a las necesidades y demandas, académicas y profesionales, en el actual contexto enfermero. El Curso de Nivelación está dirigido a todos los Ayudantes Técnicos Sanitarios en posesión del Título correspondiente o del resguardo acreditativo de haber abonado las tasas de expedición.“  

deci încă se mai fac omologări” [so, approvals are still being done] (C3);  

h) “Fetelor, la condițiile cerute pentru prezentarea la convocatorii se cere printre altele [Girls, the conditions required for submission at roll call include]:  

No haber sido separado del servicio, mediante expediente disciplinario, de cualquier servicio de salud o Administración pública en los seis a&ntilde;os anteriores a la convocatoria, ni hallarse inhabilitado con carácter firme para el ejercicio de funciones públicas ni, en su caso, para la correspondiente profesión.  

En el caso de los nacionales de otros Estados mencionados en el párrafo a, no encontrarse inhabilitado, por sanción o pena, para el ejercicio profesional o para el acceso a funciones o servicios públicos en un Estado miembro, ni haber sido separado, por sanción disciplinaria, de alguna de sus Administraciones o servicios públicos en los seis a&ntilde;os anteriores a la convocatoria.  

Ce vrea să însemne asta???????????” [What should that mean?] (C3);  

i) “Am scris la Conselleria de Sanitat din Valencia să întreb dacă experiența profesională din țară punctează si mi-au raspuns asta [I wrote to the Conselleria de Sanitat from Valencia to ask if the country work experience scores some points and they said this]:  

„Buenos días, le informamos que en el caso de que usted haya prestado servicios en Instituciones Sanitarias Públicas si se tendrá en cuenta en la baremación de puntos. Debe de acreditar que el lugar donde trabajó en Rumania es una Institución Pública.“  

Acum nu stiu ce document” [Now I do not know what document] (C3).  

j) “Cam asta ar fi structura populației Romaniei [That’s about the population structure of Romania]:  

11 millones en Rumanía, 9 millones en Castellón y Valencia y dos millones en España, más 3 millones de vampiros;  

A ver..ce opinii aveți” [A ver..what are your opinions?] (C3).
5.3

The third type of **code-switching (the intra-sentential)** consists of mixing the two codes within the same sentence. In our materials, we noticed that within the communication in the Romanian language, Spanish syntactic groups are introduced:

- **verbal groups** (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f):
  
a. “*No has entendido* nimic de acest grup! *Cónoces el Spanglish* sau el franglais, sau el turkglish o el hinglish etc etc. *Esto se llama* LIMBA HÍBRIDA!!!” [No has entendido nothing by this group! *Cónoces el Spanglish* or franglais, or el turkglish or el hinglish etc etc. *Esto se llama* HYBRID LANGUAGES!] (C1);
  
b. ”*De fapt deberia ser* o limbă oficială de los rumanos în Spania” [In fact *deberia ser* an official languages of the rumanos from Spania] (C1);
  
c. “*Estáis* bineveniti” [*Estáis* welcome] (C1);
  
d. “*De unde eres?*” [Where *eres*?] (C1);
  
e. “Eu acuma locuest in Barcelona. Dar *vivi* aproape de Madrid la fel [Now I live in Barcelona. But *vivi* close to Madrid as well] (C1);
  
f. “*Soy vorbitor de rumañol. Și me encanta*” [*Soy* vorbitor de rumañol. And *me encanta*] (C1).

- **nominal groups** (g), (h), (i), (j), (k):
  
g. “*Yo cred că la mayorìa vorbim rumañol*” [Yo think that *la mayorìa* speak rumañol] (C1);
  
h. “*Lichidări și indemnizații (finiquito e indemnizaciones), dosare pentru pensie*” [Liquidations and indemnizations (finiquito e indemnizaciones), retirement pension] (C3);
  
i. “*Caut informații privind oposiciones, cursos, convocatorias, meritos etc etc.... știți voi deja*” [I am looking for information concerning oposiciones, cursos, convocatorias, meritos etc etc.... you already know] (C3);
  
j. “*Vom obtine și o convalidacion academica*” [We will get also and o *convalidacion academica*] (C3);
  
k. “*Se punctueaza la bolsa și notele f bune-sobresalientes,matricula de honor*” [It scores also la bolsa and the very good grades -sobresalientes,matricula de honor] (C3).

- **prepositional groups**:
  
l. “*Si en rumañol cum es???*” [And *en rumañol* how es] (C1);
  
m. “Eu acum 2 ani am făcut un curs *de urgente de la asociacion de enfermeria Valencia*” [I made a course 2 years ago *de urgente de la asociacion de enfermeria Valencia*] (C3);
  
n. “*Șefii se ocupau de hîrtii și de atencion al cliente* dar enfermera controla toate celelalte” [The superiors handled he papers and *de atencion al cliente* but enfermera controlled all the others] (C3);
o) “Nu este un loc de muncă para toda la vida” [No job is para toda la vida] (C3);

p) “Când trebuie să le execuți parcă ai mintea en blanco” [When you must perform them it is as if your mind is en blanco] (C3).

• adjectival groups:
q) “Sunt curios cam cuantos vorbitori de rumañol estamos?” [I am curious approximately cuantos vorbitori de rumañol estamos?] (C1).

• adverbial groups:
r) “Am diploma de asist la homologat dar că mientras tanto vreau să lucrez” [I have a diploma of asist for approving but mientras tanto I want to work] (C3);
s) “O să dureze până-i învăț pe toți, dar … poco a poco” [It will take till I have taught all, but … poco a poco] (C3);
t) “Este un fel de tarjetă de rezidență (mas o menos)” [This is a kind of tarjetă of residence (mas o menos)] (C3);
u) “Și eu am facut mas o menos același lucru ca tine” [And I made mas o menos the same thing with you] (C3);
v) “Cu aplicarea legislaturii spaniole mi se pare todo cam mas o menos, cel puțin în ceea ce ne priveste pe noi” [With the enforcement of the Spanish legislation, I find it todo rather mas o menos, at least as far as I am concerned] (C3).

6 CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the phenomenon of code-switching, as identified in the material that I recorded, draws attention to the following:

• code-switching phenomenon is a result of the Spanish-Romanian linguistic contact, caused by the economic migration of Romanians in Spain;

• code-switching is done at the intra- and inter-sentential level, with different frequencies and with different contextual motivations.

The emblematic switches are found in all the three parts of the corpus (C1, C2, C3), which means that this type can be considered a general trait of all the communicative situations within the discourse of the Romanian immigrants living in Spain. The inter-sentential code-switching is mainly encountered in the forum dialogues (C3), where the situational contexts such as reproducing of a direct speech or a quotation are more frequent. The intra-sentential switches are equally found in the forum conversations or Facebook posts. We have identified more switches of the verbal groups and adjectival groups level in C1 and a higher frequency of switches at the nominal, prepositional and adverbial groups level. The conclusion which arises from these facts is that the intra-sentential code-switching is used in more communicative situations and it is, therefore, encountered more often than the other two types analyzed in our study.
Permanent use of code-switching between official language (Spanish) and mother language (Romanian) is one of the characteristics of Rumañol, a variety of the Romanian language, full of significance as far as the Romanian “colonies” from Spain are concerned.

Based on the collected material, it can be distinguished between the willful Rumañol, intentionally used in communication and the one resulting from normal communication. The intended Rumañol, is characterized only by switching the linguistic code at the intra-sentential level, while in the case of the other structure, along with the shift in code, we can note other specific language contact phenomena such as lexical borrowing, loan translation, linguistic adaptation etc.

REFERENCES


**CORPUS**


**POVZETEK**

Aspekti kodnega preklapljanja iz romunščine v španščino

Prispevek *Aspekti kodnega preklapljanja iz romunščine v španščino* obravnava nekatere značilnosti jezikov v stiku, na primeru romunške skupnosti v Španiji. Pri tem se opira na jezikovne značilnosti obravnavanih jezikov: romunščine in španščine.

V studiji analiziramo jezikovni odnos romunskih priseljencev v internetni komunikaciji in predstavimo nekaj aspektov “rumañola”, sociolekta, ki je rezultat kombinacije romunskih in španskih besed v istem diskurzu in jezik romunskih migracije v Španiji.
Aspects of Code-switching Concerning Spanish-Romanian Virtual Communication

The paper *Aspects of Code-switching Concerning Spanish-Romanian Virtual Communication* reveals some characteristics of languages in contact phenomenon, in the case of the Romanian communities in Spain, starting from the characteristics of the languages involved in this process: Romanian and Spanish.

In our study, we analyze the linguistic attitude of the Romanian immigrants in Spain on internet communication and we present some aspects of Rumañiol, the sociolect resulted from the combination between the Romanian and Spanish words within the same discourse, considered to be the language of Romanian migration in Spain.

The manifestations of code-switching phenomenon are presented at emblematic, inter-sentential and intra-sentential levels. We have observed that intra-sentential code-switching appears intently, and inter-sentential code-switching is determined by the situational context in which the communication takes place.

**Key words:** emblematic code-switching, intra-sentential code-switching, inter-sentential code-switching, Rumañiol, migration, internet communication.