

ROMANIAN LANGUAGE AND DIASPORA. THE SPANISH CASE

1. Introduction

This study looks at the measure in which the use of Romanian by the migrants is affected in their host countries, with a focus on the Spanish context, and proposes a new instrument which could contribute to motivating the migrants to continue using their mother tongue/heritage language: language testing. The research starts from two premises related to the use of mother tongue by migrants and builds on recent findings about the use of Romanian in the context of economic migration after the Revolution in 1989. The first premise is that of the language as a defining element for people's identity and it will be followed in this study along the lines given through the framework of the integral linguistics founded by Eugenio Coseriu at the middle of the twentieth century. The second premise is that migration, irrespective of its causes, will affect, to different extents, the use of the mother tongue by the migrants in their host country. This has been shown through numerous studies conducted on migrating groups, in different geographical, political and social contexts (e.g., Poplack 1980, Fishman 1971, Buzilă 2016). Statistics show that at the beginning of 2022 more than three million Romanian born people were usual residents in the rest of the European Union (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained>) and more than six million lived outside the Romanian borders, according to the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (www.mae.ro).

A large majority of the Romanian migrants are long term or permanent residents in their host countries. Their use of Romanian language is continually decreasing both in terms of the context in which they use the language and from one generation to the next. This tendency grew in time and the Romanian authorities became preoccupied with the continuous distancing of the migrants from the Romanian language and culture, starting to implement measures, especially in the spheres of culture and education (Arieșan 2020). The efficiency of these instruments was analysed and decision makers understood that more needs to be done in order to encourage and help the Romanian migrants to keep the ties with their language and culture.

This study looks at the evolution of the use of the mother tongue/heritage language by the group of Romanian migrants in Spain and proposes testing Romanian as a foreign language as a new instrument which can add to the ones that might determine increased motivation for the preservation and use of Romanian by migrants. The results, materialised in the use of the language competence certificates, are analysed in two contexts: by members of the second or third generation of migrants who want to pursue their academic studies in Romania, on the one hand and by long term or permanent residents in Spain for improving their job prospects in the host country,

on the other hand. The results of this study can serve as an example for encouraging the use of Romanian in other contexts where there are groups of migrants and also for other less spoken/taught/tested languages which lose speakers as a result of the process of migration.

2. The theoretical framework and the data

This research is related, at the level of language theory, to the background of integral linguistics. The foundation which Eugenio Coseriu laid, grounding his theory in the language philosophy and the language theories existent by the middle of the twentieth century, continues to be extremely productive and allows a comprehensive study of language, in all its levels – as the general human activity of speaking, as manifested in historical languages and as text/discourse, at the individual/expressive level (Coseriu 1988/1992).

The decision to set this study in the framework of Eugenio Coseriu's linguistic theory is grounded in several reasons. Firstly, Coseriu was preoccupied not only in the language as an object of study analysed in itself, in its diachronic evolution and synchronic functioning, but also in its social and political dimensions. The way in which languages relate to each other politically is determined by the relations of power between states and by economic factors which result in the fact that some languages become dominant in relation with others, within the borders of a state, or across borders, regions, even continents. From this point of view, Coseriu was primarily interested in the situation of Romanian language in the present Republic of Moldova. Secondly, he showed in one of the first books he published (*Introducción a la lingüística*, 1951) the features through which a language can be defined in relation to its speakers. An analysis based on these factors can lead to better understanding the way in which the migrants' attitude towards their mother tongue evolves. Thirdly, the framework of integral linguistics can offer the theoretical ground for showing the intrinsic power and values each language has in itself and for the people who speak it, contributing in this way to linguistic democracy, to the preservation and protection of less widely used languages.

The phenomenon which will be analysed through this perspective is that of the Romanian economic migration towards the Western world, which started after the Revolution in 1989, developed in successive stages, more or less intense, and is currently still far from reaching its end. A survey conducted by the international organization **Save the children**, whose results were published in 2023, shows that more than half of the Romanian children (55.1%) want to leave the country and live abroad and a third of the children would like to continue their studies abroad (<https://www.salvaticopiii.ro/>). This situation is not of the nature of endangering the use or the existence of Romanian language. From the point of view of language vitality, Romanian has the most consolidated position, labeled as *institutional*: the language has been developed to the point that it is used and sustained by institutions beyond the home and community (UNESCO 2003, <https://www.ethnologue.com/>).

However, through economic migration, Romanian constantly loses speakers. A look at the statistical data will show the extension of this phenomenon.

At the beginning of 2022 Romania had by far the highest number of residents living in other countries of the European Union (EU): more than three million people officially registered (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>). By comparison, the second country in this top has 1.5 million citizens usual residents in the rest of the EU. A very large group of the Romanian migrants went to live, work and/or study in Spain. In the same year, 2022, according to Spain's National Institute of Statistics, a total of 539,418 Romanian born citizens lived in Spain (www.ine.es). Romania's political and economic situation as part of Europe and later of the European Union determined, according to Buzilă (Buzilă 2016), four phases of migration, which he correlated with the use of Romanian language in relation with Spanish. The first wave of migrants (1990–1992) experienced a total linguistic immersion. Determined to adapt and to integrate in the host country and having only themselves to rely on from the point of view of language contact, these migrants learnt Spanish in a short time and used it for work, for their contact with diverse institutions and for integrating in the educational system. The situation changed with the second wave (1993–2002), when migrants were less in need to learn Spanish immediately, since a network of middle men, who made the connection between newcomers and locals, was already in place. The third phase saw a huge growth of the number of Romanian migrants in Spain (2002–2008), while in the current one (2008 – present) the number of migrants has slowly decreased, but it is still very high.

In the light of the theoretical framework of integral linguistics, on the one hand, and of the data related to the phenomenon of economic migration in Spain, on the other hand, the use of Romanian in this context will be further analysed.

The following factors are identified by Eugenio Coseriu for defining a language by reference to its speakers: intercomprehension, speaker's awareness, cultural community, religious community, economic and social situation (Coseriu 1951/1999, p. 31–46).

3. Defining language by reference to its speakers

3.1. Intercomprehension and speaker's awareness

The criterion of intercomprehension is not an absolute one; it cannot differentiate between all languages. Coseriu gives the example of the Romance languages, which can be differentiated from this point of view (a Spanish speaker will not understand a French one), but it does not work in the case of some Slavic languages or of Scandinavian languages (a Danish speaker will understand a speaker of Swedish) (Coseriu 1951/1999, p. 34). It is interesting to see how the criterion of intercomprehension was reinterpreted, or the focus of its interpretation moved, from making the difference between languages to finding connections between them – the possibility for speakers of different languages (even very different) sharing common interests to understand each other, at least in part, in contexts like: teaching, business

relations, translation, etc.) (European Commission, 2012). This is currently considered a valuable ability, related to plurilingualism and encouraged in many linguistic contexts, due to the positive consequences this has in relation to preservation of less widely used languages (European Commission 2012).

Normally, this criterion should not even be discussed in the context of migrants' mother tongue, especially when we refer to the first generation of migrants, the ones who keep their language best. However, as it results from Buzilă's study, the first generation of migrants was also the one most in need of learning the language of the host country, keeping, at the same time, the closest connections with their country of origin and also usually using Romanian to communicate in the familial context. Due to the deep need of using both languages, it is not surprising that the Romanian of the first wave of migrants gradually transformed, being more and more added with elements from the language of the host country, some of them replacing the ones in their mother tongue. Many elements of Spanish vocabulary were integrated in the natural flow of speaking (but also in writing, especially when we speak of messaging). Influences were also recorded at the level of grammar, intonation, or cultural references. Consequently, the migrants began to use a Romanian language which, given the strong influence from Spanish, got to be named *Romañol* or *Rumañol* (Buzilă 2019). Basically, for the first migrants in Spain, the dimension on intercomprehension was partially altered, in the natural flow of their new way of speaking Romanian, in relation with the speakers of their mother tongue. They developed, consequently, different levels of communication in different contexts. Horizontally, they speak at least three 'languages', probably the most natural for them being the one named *Romañol* or *Rumañol*, at least in social contexts (when they meet people from the same community) and sometimes even in the family, with Spanish at work or school and Romanian used with the people in the country of origin who do not speak Spanish. Another level can be visualized as vertical, with two stages in time. This situation would be represented in the context in which they speak *Romañol* or *Rumañol* in the country of origin and are, sometimes, simply not understood, or not understood entirely. Naturally, they are able to adapt, to remember and use all the words in Romanian. However, it is sometimes the case that a second stage in expressing what they want to say is necessary, in order to switch back completely to Romanian.

This criterion of defining a language through reference to its speakers closely relates, in the situation discussed here, to the one of speaker's awareness, which refers to the fact that the speaker is aware that his/her acts of speech belong to a certain language (Coșeriu 1951/1999, p. 34). In relation to the use of mother tongue, Coseriu also defines alterity as both positive and negative: "Through language and speech you recognize yourself in others, in those who, in a certain manner, speak the way you speak and, at the same time, you are different from others, whom you do not consider as belonging to your linguistic self" (Coșeriu 1997, p. 81).

According to Jieanu's study in 2015, when asked what language they spoke, the migrants in the first generation said that it was Romanian, but actually their linguistic

and cultural identity had started to change. As they themselves reflect on this, a whole new culture/identity developed around this new variety of Romanian; the changes are noticed at the level of art, customs and practices, music, etc. (Jieanu 2015a, p. 54).

One of the premises of this study is that of language as defining for the human being, through the mother tongue. The situation in which migrants lose in part intercomprehension with other speakers of the same language could determine the questioning of their identity in relation to the language they speak. This stage can appear later in their life, when recovering the mother tongue/heritage language which the parents had not transmitted at all to them in childhood can be really problematic. One example comes from Mithu Sanyal (Sanyal 2023) who writes about the pain of language loss in the families, reflected in her own situation and in the regret that she cannot even say her name correctly in her parents' language. At the same time, Sanyal, now a renowned journalist in Germany, considers that recovering her heritage language is, regrettably, difficult, if not impossible, for her.

3.2. Cultural community and religious community

Culture is reflected in language (Coșeriu 1951/1999, p. 57) and the history of language is inseparable from the political and cultural history. The conclusion of many studies that the preservation of cultural identity is specific to the first generation of migrants comes as no surprise (Grigoriu 2014, Arieșan 2020). In the case of the community this study is focused on, the celebration of the traditional religious holidays, at least of the most important ones (Christmas and Easter) is very relevant. The most important moments in people's lives (birth, marriage and death) need also to be celebrated not only according to the general framework of the Christian faith, but also to so many local specific traditions in the country of origin. For many representatives of the first generation of migrants the two features mentioned in the title of this subchapter (culture and religion) are intertwined, which is why they are approached in this section together.

Transcultural identity is specific to the second generation of migrants. Studies show that the young people belonging to this group consider themselves Romanians, but they use in a creative way elements from two different cultures (Arieșan 2020).

Research on many other migrating groups, in various situations, shows that the next stage is often the one of acculturation: cultural modification of an individual, group or people by adapting to or borrowing traits from another culture (Sam and Berry 2010). An outcome of the stage of acculturation can be assimilation.

3.3. The economic and social situation

The last criterion mentioned by Coseriu in his analysis of the way in which language can be defined according to the way speakers relate to it is the one of the economic and social dimensions. For illustrating this situation, Coseriu uses the example of the relationship between Romanian and Russian, in what was called the era of 'harmonious bilingualism', part of the language policy in the USSR. In a conference in 2001, Coseriu shows that in those times, the Romanian language was actually reduced to the local, the familial context, it meant poverty and it had a local character (Coșeriu 2001). The phenomenon of migration from Romania to the

countries of Western Europe and to the North-American continent was largely determined by economic factors. The changes which were visible in the use of Romanian by the migrants reflected also this: for many of them Romanian was the language they left behind, together with the hard life they had in their country and which determined most of them to leave Romania.

4. The use of Romanian by migrant community in Spain

Along with the changes at a cultural level, studies show the dynamics of the migrating communities from the point of view of language use. There are more homogeneous migrant communities, which preserve their language and continue to use it, with some members code-switching (see Poplack 1980), while in other cases the attrition of language is noticed already in the second generation of migrants, leading to language loss by the third generation.

The object of this study is not to follow in depth the changes which appear in the use of language in the migrant communities, at the level of morphology, grammar or vocabulary. These very interesting developments have been the object of relevant studies, which opened the research in this area and will be definitely continued in future (Jieanu 2015a, Jieanu 2015b, Buzilă 2019). The main interests here are to follow the dynamics of the use of the mother tongue in relation with the language of the host country by the migrants and to see what the tendencies are from this point of view and to what extent the mother tongue will be used by the migrants in future.

In his study in 2019, Buzilă shows the changes in the use of language between the first and the second generation of migrants. He notices that the number of linguistic contact phenomena, like fixed interferences, for example, is rising and he also notices a tendency of prevalence of the Spanish language, for instance through code switching. The results of his ample study show that Spanish gains ground with the second generation of migrants not only at the expense of Romanian, which will probably get to be used only in the familial context, but also at the expense of Rumañol, which Buzilă considers to be a kind of sociolect of recent immigrants. His conclusion does not leave much hope for the use of Romanian in future by the migrant community in Spain: “If these tendencies continue in future, when the second generation reaches maturity, it is expected that Spanish will gradually replace both Romanian and the hybrid variant called Rumañol” (Buzilă 2019, p. 243).

Muñoz Carroble showed in a study conducted in 2011 that the migrants use Spanish more at work, at school and in institutions, as a means of integration in the host country, while Romanian is used more in the family, but less with friends. The researcher also looks at the attitude of the Romanians towards the use of the mother tongue in future and finds that most of the migrants wish their children to speak Romanian. However, they are not really preoccupied with language transmission (Arieșan 2020, p. 205). The use of the mother tongue is thus more persistent in the context of the family, decreases when it comes to the social environment and it is

more reduced at the level of professional and educational context. In formal contexts, the predominant language will be the one of the host country.

Along with surveys including large numbers of speakers, like the ones mentioned in the first part of the study, personal and very recent investigations (2022–2023) which I conducted with members of the migrant community, confirm the fact that the use of Romanian by the migrant community heads towards a continuous decrease in terms of contexts of use and also level and register. I consider the persons I interviewed representative for the migrant community in Spain in terms of experience, connections with other members of migrant communities, use of language in very various contexts (from the familial one to the professional, educational and even formal one) and variety of current location in Spain. The respondents in my investigation share the experience of seeing members of the second generation of migrants using Spanish in more diverse contexts and often limiting their use of Romanian to the familial context, sometimes only when they visit members of their family who live in the country of origin.

The preservation of the mother tongue by the migrants in their new context has been encouraged at the level of the European institutions through language protection policies and through recommendations towards the local, regional and national authorities for encouraging the use of minority languages or the language of the migrants, according to the context. The recommendations are based on studies which show the immense pressure under which the use of mother tongues usually is in context of regional languages, indigenous languages or migration. The document *Language Vitality and Endangerment*, published by UNESCO in 2003, shows that language endangerment or language attrition are determined mainly by external forces (military, economic, religious, cultural or educational). However, it is not rare to see that the external forces identified by researchers are transferred at the level of the community and become internal forces, determining the community's negative attitude towards its own language. The possible (and very often likely) outcome of this process is the halt of intergenerational transmission of language and culture. The use of indigenous and minority languages and the use of the mother tongue in the context of migration often have in common this evolution of the language use. Without any doubt, the parents' choice of abandoning the mother tongue and stopping its transmission to the next generation is determined by their conviction that this will result in a better future for their children, at the level of education, work market and social integration. In their analysis of the Saami language in the Northern countries, Magga and Skutnabb-Kangas explain and show this negative attitude of the parents towards the use of the mother tongue in relation with their children: "To avoid humiliation and to give their children better chances in life, indigenous and minority parents often decide to speak a dominant or official language with their children" (Magga and Skutnabb-Kangas 2001, p. 26). A similar conclusion is reached by Arieșan in her study in 2020 on the use of the mother tongue by the Romanian migrants in Spain. She writes that there are Romanian parents "who prefer

to give up their mother tongue and to speak to their children in the language of the host country, in order to avoid potential inconvenience” (Arieşan 2020, p. 201).

A very significant contribution to the preservation of less widely used languages in the context of minority and regional linguistic dimension and in the context of migration can be brought by the linguistic policy the local, regional, national and international decision makers choose to implement. A growing interest for the multilingualism and linguistic diversity has been shown at the level of European political institutions and this preoccupation and openness to linguistic diversity is sometimes seen at the level of national institutions and/or organisations. On the territory of the European Union, people are free to travel, study, work and live in any country they choose. However, national governments are often preoccupied with ensuring the preservation of ties and connections of the migrants with their country of origin. A phenomenon of migration of the proportions registered in connection with Romania, along with its consequences on the preservation of the Romanian culture, traditions and language is not something which can or should be overlooked by the national authorities. Consequently, the Romanian political and cultural institutions took measures to encourage and help the Romanian migrants to keep their language and culture, even if they have decided to leave their country of origin for a long term or not to return to live in Romania. Among the instruments the Romanian state tried to create and to put at the migrants’ disposal are the courses of Romanian language, culture and civilization, introduced in schools, in some countries of destination for migrants. The authorities also tried to support the scientific and cultural cooperation, for example, through the organization of artistic events, the publication of newspapers and magazines or the promotion of the literature of migration (Arieşan 2020, p. 196). Romanian language has also been promoted (taught or used as language of communication) in study centres, associations of migrants, churches and also through sites and forums.

5. Language policy and language testing

In 2016 Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca and the Romanian Cultural Institute formed BBU-RCI Consortium for Testing Romanian as a Foreign Language, which administers examinations and offers certificates of linguistic competence in all levels in the *Common European Framework of Reference: learning, teaching, assessment*, from A1 to C2 (www.roexam.com). Until now, the highest numbers of candidates who took examinations for obtaining a certificate have been at the Faculty of Letters in Cluj-Napoca and at the Romanian Cultural Institute in Madrid, Spain. A surprising outcome of the candidature analysis from the point of view of biodata was the one related to the country of origin and the mother tongue of the applicants. No less than 84% of the test takers were Romanian born citizens or children from families of migrants who had Romanian as mother tongue or heritage language. Their knowledge of Romanian varied greatly, in accordance with their use of the language, with where they had done or have been

doing their studies and with their experience with the (written) literary language and this showed in the results they obtained. The results varied according to where they had studied or have been studying and also according to the level in which they took the examination. The results were better for those who had studied in Romania. For example, for level C1, out of 100 points maximum the candidates who had done their academic studies in Romania obtained an average of 94.55 points, the ones who had done their secondary studies in Romania and their academic studies in Spain obtained an average of 80.03 points, while the candidates who were educated in Spain from primary school obtained an average of 78.90 points.

The main motivations of the candidates for obtaining a certificate in Romanian as a foreign language were related to work and study. Some of them were very young, still doing their high school studies in Spain, but with the plan of pursuing their academic studies in Romania, while others used the certificate in order to improve their prospects in the labour market in Spain. Like in any other country, mastering another language than the official one or the one of the majority is an asset for almost any workplace, especially the ones where spoken (or written) interaction with other persons, potentially foreigners, is involved. Thus, it is not surprising that for everyone working in airports, hotels, transportation, and many other domains, speaking another language is very useful and much appreciated by the employers. More than that, in a country where the second largest group of migrants, after the one in Morocco, is that of Romanian migrants (www.ine.es), the competence in Romanian of any employee is highly valued.

Besides these contexts, the Spanish authorities can be considered an example of good practice in the domain of language promotion and preservation. The different autonomous communities in Spain have their own systems of employment when it comes to hiring in the domain of education, administration and every domain related to the state activity. However, it is common practice to include certificates of linguistic competence in other languages than the one of the country/regions among the documents necessary for a job application. What is special about this requirement in Spain is the fact that normally certificates in any language will be accepted. Usually, institutions around the world will indicate the languages for which they accept certificates and these will usually be the most widely used languages (e.g., English, French, German, Spanish). For some institutions involved in relations with countries where these languages are spoken it is perfectly normal to require linguistic competence in these languages from their future employees. However, the administrations in the Spanish regions accept language certificates in any language, and these will increase an applicant's chances of obtaining a job. For example, in 2022, the autonomous community of Castilla y León added 0,2000 points for each certificate of competence in a foreign language, level B2, 0,4000 points for each certificate, level C1 and 0,6000 points for level C2, for temporary jobs in the educational system. A number of 0,5000 points was granted for a certificate in language competence, levels C1 or C2, for permanent employment in the educational system (<https://www.educa.jcyl.es/es/resumenbocyl/orden-edu-1866-2022-19-diciembre->

convocan-procedimiento-sel). This can constitute a real incentive for the persons with Spanish as a mother tongue as first language to learn new languages, but also for the migrants to keep their mother tongue or heritage language and continue to use and value it in a very practical way, for example, for the labour market.

6. Results and discussion

The discussion on the results of this study will tie together the premises and the data it started from and also the benefits which might come from the use of the language certificate as an instrument of language promotion and preservation, especially in the case of less widely used, taught and tested languages.

1) In the light of previous research, my recent study confirms the fact that the use of the mother tongue of the community of Romanian migrants in Spain is affected. The data show that gradually fewer members of the migrant community, especially in the second (or already third generation of migrants), use Romanian extensively.

2) The criteria Eugenio Coseriu indicated for defining a language through reference to its speakers show the fact that the relationship between the speakers of a language and their mother tongue is intimate, part of their identity, whether they are aware of this or not. For the members of the first generation of migrants, the certitude that their mother tongue is Romanian is not questionable. For the ones in the second generation of migrants this is not necessarily an absolute truth. Asked what their language is, they will often answer: well, it depends on the context. They do not necessarily see Romanian as their first language and the language of the host country as the instrument they use for integrating in the social, educational and professional environment within which they function. However, some of them might experience an identity crisis and emotional turmoil when confronted with the question of the cultural and linguistic space they relate to.

3) In relation with the conclusions expressed in the fragments above, under 1) and 2), the decision makers at a political, cultural and educational level have the duty of creating instruments to help the migrant communities preserve their mother tongue, if they wish to do this. In the light of the documents on linguistic policies elaborated and promoted at the level of the European Union, the authorities at regional and national level have the duty, while having at their disposal, at the same time, the legal and scientific grounds, to offer these instruments for use to the migrants. Without putting any pressure on the members of the migrant community, these instruments need to be available in order to make possible the preservation of their ties with the cultural and linguistic grounds they or their parents were initially part of.

4) Both parents and children (if we talk about the members of the first and second generation of migrants) need motivation for preserving the mother tongue/heritage language. In the case of the members of the second generation, the pressure of giving up the mother tongue/heritage language comes from multiple directions: the parents' possible conviction that it is better for their children to learn only the language of the host country; the weaker ties with the country of origin; the integration already in

the educational environment, not only in the professional one; the social life which often evolves in circles in which many participants do not know the mother tongue of the migrant, etc. In these conditions, the motivation(s) which can lead a migrant to continue using his/her mother tongue can be of an emotional nature, but also of a very practical nature. Through the experience presented in this study it has been proven that linguistic certification of the mother tongue or heritage language as a foreign language can contribute to such a decision.

7. Conclusions

The last part of this study is concerned with the modalities in which its results can be used for future developments. First of all, this can be an incentive for the continuous research in this domain. The use of the mother tongue/heritage language by the migrants in different generations is a very dynamic and complex process. While there are already extensive and relevant studies in the field, their continuation will only bring more data to our attention and will create an image of the phenomenon while it is developing. Second, information like the one related to the possible relevance of the language certificate for the job market might become a motivation for the migrants to continue using and cultivating their language. However, it is important for the information to be disseminated within the community and instruments for language learning/maintenance to be offered. Third, the dissemination of these results is important also at the level of decision makers and policy makers. An example of good practice like the one of the authorities in Spain, combined with the experience in Madrid of certifying Romanian as a foreign language, can contribute both to strengthening the grounds of political and administrative decisions for language promotion and preservation and to offering a model for other contexts, for other languages in the position of losing speakers, as so many actually are nowadays. The overarching conclusion is that, in the context in which less widely used, taught and tested languages are often confronted with a political and economic environment in which only a few very largely used languages are circulated, things can be done to support and to strengthen their position, with the purpose of promoting multilingualism and of maintaining language diversity.

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ROMANIAN LANGUAGE AND DIASPORA. THE SPANISH CASE (Abstract)

This study focuses on the use of the mother tongue by the Romanians who migrated to Spain after the Revolution in 1989. It draws on analysis and results of previous studies, but it is mainly concentrated on investigating how the speakers relate to their mother tongue, on the one hand, and the language of the host country, on the other hand, the factors which influence this relationship and the tendencies which can be anticipated for the future. These aspects are followed along the lines of certain criteria:

intercomprehension, speaker's awareness, the linguistic community as a cultural and religious community, the economic and social situation associated with a language by the speakers. These criteria were identified by Eugenio Coseriu, founder of the integral linguistics at the middle of the twentieth century, as relevant for defining a language in relation to its speakers and were considered to provide an adequate theoretical framework for this study.

The phenomenon of language attrition, and even of language loss have been identified in the migrant community, along with a gradually decreasing connection with the Romanian culture. The national authorities tried to address this phenomenon with a range of instruments (e.g., associations of the Romanians in Diaspora were formed, newspapers and magazines have been published and courses of Romanian were introduced in schools for the children in the second generation of migrants). This study proposes a new instrument which might contribute to the promotion and preservation of Romanian in the communities in Diaspora: the test of Romanian as a foreign language. Its advantages will be shown specifically in connection with the Spanish context.

Cuvinte-cheie: *limba română; diaspora; lingvistică integrală; limbi mai puțin folosite; certificat lingvistic.*

Keywords: *Romanian language; Diaspora; integral linguistics; less widely used languages; language certificate.*

*Babeș-Bolyai University, Faculty of Letters
Cluj-Napoca, str. Horea, 31
dina.vilcu@ubbcluj.ro*