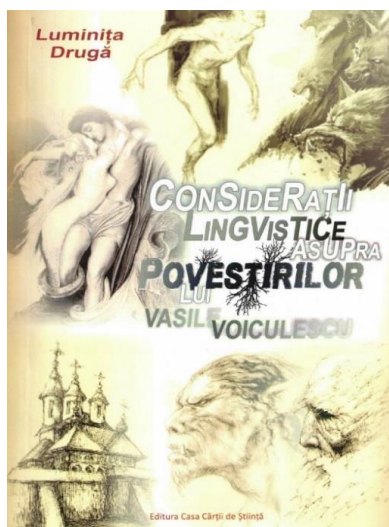


## Book Review

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*Considerații lingvistice asupra Povestirilor lui Vasile Voiculescu (Linguistic Considerations on Vasile Voiculescu's Stories)*, Luminița Drugă, Editura Casa Cărții de Știință, Cluj-Napoca, 2016.



The *Studies of Romanian Literary Language. Contributions to the Study of Writers' Language and Styles*, coordinated by Al. Rosetti, Boris Cazacu and Sorin Alexandrescu (published in Bucharest, 1969) have drawn attention towards the importance of analyzing a work of fiction not only from an aesthetic perspective, but also from a linguistic one, language being seen as a means of communicating the author's artistic intentions. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the style of a work became interesting for linguists, and it was seen as linguistic phenomenon. The trend, initiated by the Bucharest linguistic circle, was favourably regarded by an esteemed representative of the cultural circles of Iași, namely Vasile Arvinte, who, through the series of studies on the literary language norm as it is reflected in the works of the classical authors (*Normele limbii literare în opera lui Ion Creangă, The Norms of Literary Language in*

*Ion Creangă's Work*, "Al. I. Cuza" Publishing House, Iași, 2002, followed by *Normele limbii române literare în opera lui I. L. Caragiale, The Norms of Literary Language in I. L. Caragiale's Work*, "Demiurg" Publishing House, Iași, 2007 and *Normele limbii literare în opera lui Mihai Eminescu, The Norms of Literary Language in Mihai Eminescu's Work* "Demiurg" Publishing House, Iași, 2008) sheds a new light on the literary text. Paying the due homage of the disciple to her master, Luminița Drugă, through the study *Linguistic considerations on Vasile Voiculescu's Stories*, published in "Casa Cărții de Știință" Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2016, applies professor Arvinte's model on another valuable Romanian writer. The book comes as a sequel to two other studies by Luminița Drugă (*Linguistic Study on Varlaam's Homily*, EduSoft Publishing House, Bacău 2006 – PhD thesis – and *Linguistic Considerations on Mihail Sadoveanu's Prose*, "Casa Cărții de Știință" Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2016) which demonstrates the increased and constant interest in this type of applied research, certified through her PhD studies.

As the title announces, Voiculescu's *Stories*, less known to the public than his lyrical work, but valued for their mixture of the mystical and the fabulous brought in the Romanian literature from the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, are analyzed with the purpose of identifying the rapport between the literary norm and the linguistic norm.

The linguistic phenomena identified in Voiculescu's work are related to the issues specific the Romanian literary language and demonstrates the coexistence of the two widely spread literary varieties: from Northern Moldova and from the South (especially from Muntenia). As the author explains in the *Introduction*, the illustrations are not comprehensive because the author mentions she did not work with an electronic edition of the text, which does not in any way diminish the value of the analysis because what is important is the actual identification

and analysis of a certain form encountered in the text, and not the number of occurrences.

In the first two chapters (*The Phonetic Level* and *Morphology*) the author identifies the features that constitute themselves as deviations from the literary norm and we will only select several examples as an illustration: the author records the etymological form *rumîncă* (Romanian instead of *româncă*) (p. 22), the oscillating forms for the noun *zahăr* (sugar) and *zăhar* (p. 18), palatalization: *rășchira* (to spread instead of *răsfira*, p. 22), velarization: *părete* (wall instead of *perete*, p. 23), hypercorrect variants of words such as: *poftă* (from *pohtă*, wish, p. 24) (which is today the accepted norm), followed then by numerous examples of iotacization (vowel shift) in the case of verbs such as: *să puie* (instead of *să pună*, to put), *să spuie* (instead of *să spună*, to say), *să rămâie* (instead of *să rămână*, to remain) (p. 58). Illustrating all of these situations is a strong proof Voiculescu's "style", that is the sum total of deliberate choices that the author makes with an aesthetic purpose.

Luminița Drugă's study becomes even more interesting for the reader that is less familiar with specific issues connected to the history of the Romanian language and to the history of literary language, in the chapter dedicated to the study of lexis. The simple perusal of the subchapters in this section reveals genuine samples of history of the Romanian language from the perspective of the borrowings due to the contact with other languages and cultures. The stratigraphic organization of the lexis helps raising awareness upon the origin of some words with which we are familiar today and which we consider Romanian: *barabulă* (instead of *cartof*, potato), *clapon* (instead of *capon*, cockerel), *drușcă* (friend of the bride) (having, in fact, an Ukrainian origin, p. 93), *caldarâm* (instead of *trotuar*, pavement), *calabalâc* (instead of *bagaj/catrafuse*, luggage), *chilipir* (instead of *lucru ieftin*, cheap thing/product/item) (Turkish origin, pp. 100–101), together with words of an unknown origin such as: *bojoc*

(instead of *plămân*, *lung*), *comănac* (instead of *cușmă/căciulă*, for a special item to cover the head with made from wool or felt, without a brim), *jupân* (instead of *domn/stăpân*, *gentleman/master*) (pp. 134–136).

Special attention is also given to expressive creations, popular etymologies, contaminations, idiomatic expressions, and onomasiological or lexico-semantic fields. From among these, we consider that the most interesting is the one referring to the spiritual life, to the name of divinity and to the folk terms for the devil, but also those referring to mythological beings, superstitions, magical practices, which manage to create Voiculescu's special fabulous creation which combines the mystical with the religious.

This undertaking demonstrates the author's interest in researching more closely the linguistic transformations, exploitations and/or developments rather than in studying the aesthetic, artistic function of language, as an expression of an artistic view. The presentation of the lexis from an onomasiological perspective, the etymology of the words, based on specialized dictionaries (*Dicționarul etimologic al limbii române*, *The Etymological Dictionary of the Romanian Language*, by Alexandru Ciorănescu), the illustration of the richness of terms used to designate such aspects as the divinity: *Cel-de Sus* (*Holy Lord*), *Dumnezeu* (*God*), *Domnul* (*Lord*), *Cel Preaînalt* (*The Almighty*) (p. 145) or *Diavol* (*devil*), *drac* (*fiend/deuce*), *duc-se-pe pustii* (*the Evil one*), *știmă* (*imp/ogre*), *Mamona* (*Mammon*), *naiba* (*hell*), *Necuratul* (*Satan/Beelzebub*) (p.147) render the increased profuseness of the Romanian language as it used by Vasile Voiculescu.

The present volume constitutes itself as a very useful instrument not only for the ones who study Voiculescu's work, but also for another segment of specialists – translators – as it helps them, through the stratigraphic analysis of lexis to

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understand correctly aspects of linguistic finesse and not become instead “traduttore, traditore”. Thus, Vasile Voiculescu, the one that had claimed the Shakespearean model in his *Shakespeare’s Last Fancied Sonnets. An Imaginary Translation*, could gain, thanks to some translations, a reputation at an international, not only national, level.

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