Universitatea *Transilvania* din Braşov

HABILITATION THESIS
SUMMARY

LANGUAGE, TEXT AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

Domain: HUMANITIES

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LANGUAGE, TEXT AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

The present Habilitation Thesis contains an overview of the work I have been conducting in the academia for the past fifteen years, since I earned my Ph.D. degree in Philology, specifically, in the area of Indo-European linguistics.

A retrospective analysis of this time span has allowed me to identify three milestones in my professional development and evolution. Chronologically, the first is located in the year 2001, and coincides with the completion of my doctoral research and the subsequent defence of my thesis at the University of Bucharest. The second is temporally situated one year later, in 2002, when I managed to graduate a Master's programme in Education at the University of Manchester, in which I had enrolled a few years earlier. The third event that constitutes a turning point in my career occurred in 2007, with the start of a two-year research project accepted and funded as a result of a national competitive bid.

Each of these moments marks a definite stage in my involvement in three lines of research which fall within the purview of contact linguistics, literacy studies, and lexicography. While such precise dating is useful in providing a sense of orientation in time, it is also conceivable that the groundwork for the research reported here was laid years in advance.

Part **B**, the main unit of **LANGUAGE, TEXT, AND CULTURAL CONTEXT**, has a tripartite structure. It consists of: a survey of my professional contribution to research, teaching, and other areas of academic interest (**B-i**); an outline of research ideas, topics and concerns that form my professional agenda for the foreseeable future (**B-ii**); and a final unit (**B-iii**) which includes an abridged list of resources used.

The survey in **B-i**, *Scientific and Professional Achievements and Evolution*, streamlines my research thematically into four main areas of academic inquiry. Each area is the subject of a distinct chapter, as follows: Chapter 1 – *Linguistics and Related Research*; Chapter 2 – *Literacy Studies and Related Research*; Chapter 3 – *Lexicography and Metalexicography*, and Chapter 4 – *Educational Work and Varia*. In the first three chapters, the discussion progresses along similar

lines: it situates my own research in the larger investigative area by providing a conceptual background of the domain in question. Further, it seeks to legitimize my investigation by highlighting a gap in the current research and by delineating the methods used to address it. Finally, it attempts to argue for the validity of my contribution to the knowledge pool by bringing evidential support, summarizing the main findings and their impact or relevance for future research.

In essence, Chapter 1 begins by introducing my doctoral research in the area of contact linguistics. The discussion starts with an outline of the theoretical underpinnings of my investigation and a description of the methodological approach used to find answers to my initial research questions, which relate to the amount and magnitude of the Latin contribution in the overall development of Standard English. Taking a diachronic approach to this virtually uninterrupted contact situation, the analysis reported in this chapter involves taking stock of the Latin borrowing operated during every historical period in the evolution of the English language, explaining its causes, finding patterns in the treatment of Latin loans and assessing their level of integration in the fabric of the vernacular idiom. There is compelling evidence that the influence of Latin has been, to variable degrees, both lexical and structural. But beyond such tangible traces, Latin has made a more subtle but no less valuable contribution to the diversification of language registers in English and to boosting its internal potential for innovation. The latter part of this chapter describes further explorations of theoretical and practical aspects of language contact, making a more general case for the weight carried by linguistic data in reconstructing the social history of a community.

Chapter 2 assembles studies undertaken in the field of academic writing practices and text production. There is an impressive and eclectic body of relevant literature available internationally. In contrast, very little is known about the ways in which novice writers evolving in our cultural context become socialized in the discursive practices of their disciplines. The discussion here starts with background information about the epistemic status of contrastive rhetoric and, from this theoretical platform, it focuses on an investigation performed within the contrastive rhetoric paradigm. Its aim has mainly been that of putting forward an *ad hoc* framework for a contrastive Romanian-English analysis and of testing its validity on a corpus of persuasive native language texts composed by English and Romanian students. The following section in this chapter includes further research in contrastive rhetoric, text linguistics and

academic literacy. This work is predicated on two main views: firstly, theoretically, genres are categories with intercultural relevance; their reification, however, varies across cultures and disciplines. Secondly, awareness of one's native discoursal and rhetorical repertoire may facilitate the acquisition of a non-native repertoire. This explains the focus on the sociocultural and linguistic aspects of the writing practices in the Romanian academic context, its pedagogical implications, and my efforts towards rhetorical conscious-raising.

Chapter 3 is devoted to research in the field of lexicography. It opens with a brief outline of the two divisions which currently make up the domain: practical lexicography and theoretical lexicography (or metalexicography). This helps create a backdrop for a fundamental research project aimed at optimizing intercultural communication by suggesting ways to enhance the quality of online dictionaries. The ensuing discussion consists of an overview of the main stages in the development of this project, with their respective goals and outcomes. This and related research in the field have become the foundation of *Research and Practice in Lexicography*, a full-length study of the domain, delineated in the second section of this chapter.

Chapter 4 includes a summary of my current teaching commitments and goals, followed by a brief overview of my other contributions in the line of book editing and as a member of the academic community.

Finally, Part **B-ii** of the present thesis has a prospective orientation. It contains an outline of both work in progress and future directions for research within the broad domains of macrolinguistics, discourse analysis, and lexicography. The discussion here points at my intention to increase the cross-disciplinary validity of my investigations and to cast more light on the specificities of Romanian language discursive practices by integrating them more firmly into the sociocultural paradigm.