

INTRODUCTION

Eugenio Coseriu is recognized as a central figure in 20th-century linguistics and is widely regarded as the most prominent linguist of Romanian origin. His work was at the forefront of the discipline, contributing to the development of the science of language through his exploration of all areas of theoretical linguistics.

Eugenio Coseriu established himself as a leading figure in international linguistics during his time in Uruguay (1951-1963), with several fundamental and pioneering studies. Thus, in *Sistema, norma y habla* (1952) and *Sincronía, diacronía e historia* (1958), he advanced viable theoretical solutions for overcoming F. de Saussure's dichotomies. In *Determinación y entorno* (1956), which "contributed to Coseriu's worldwide fame" (Kabatek 2020, 75), he defined the three levels of language and their related disciplines: a linguistics of speech in general, a linguistics of particular languages, and a linguistics of texts. On the other hand, Coseriu did not limit himself to criticizing and amplifying the structuralist conception. In fact, he elaborated what would later be called Integral Linguistics: "a linguistics whose first task was to configure its own identity by first establishing fundamental distinctions in order to circumscribe, within this edifice, the place that each particular linguistic problem should hold" (cf. Kabatek 2020, 75). Much later, Coseriu would acknowledge that the distinction between the three levels of language organization (the universal level of speech in general, the historical level of languages, and the individual level of texts), in its three aspects (activity, competence and product) represents his most important contribution to the field of international linguistics (Coseriu 1985, xxv-xxxv). After moving to Germany, Coseriu would further develop the conceptual coordinates of his theory in landmark studies (2006, 2007, 2015a, 2015b), thus firmly laying out the foundations of Integral Linguistics.

Coseriu's contribution to the field of linguistics and cultural sciences can be outlined, in Mircea Borcilă's view, on three main dimensions. Coseriu (1) validated the need for a process of theoretical reconstruction of linguistics in relation to the specificity of its own object of study; (2) demonstrated, by exploring a central area of language study, that this process requires a theoretical foundation different from the one derived from the epistemology of natural sciences under



the influence of positivistic and neopositivistic trends; (3) proposed an overall historical and theoretical delineation of the epistemological framework appropriate to linguistics and cultural sciences in general (Borcilă 2016: 19-20).

In an interview from 2017, Johannes Kabatek sums up his outlook on the future of Eugenio Coseriu's linguistic theory on an optimistic note. Although some scholars suggest that Coseriu's manuscripts should be published as soon as possible, "or else his ideas might lose their topicality", he himself believes that preparing Coseriu's writings for printing even two or three decades from now will not diminish the relevance of his work: "E. Coseriu is already a classic. (...) his work is a collection of classic works in which many important concepts and an overall outlook on language can be found, a coherently designed architecture which also allows for many interesting aspects to be developed" (Robu&Kabatek 2017, 144).

These statements circumscribe the purport of exegeses, manuscript retrieval and conceptual follow-up approaches that linguists concerned with the work of Eugenio Coseriu (1921-2002) are currently deploying. The classification and digitization of 1,200 Coserian manuscripts within the framework of the project *Eugenio Coseriu – Erfassung und Publikationen unveröffentlichter Manuskripte* (1998-2004) funded by the DFG led to the creation of the "Eugenio Coseriu Archive" (<https://coseriu.ch/>) at the University of Tübingen in 2005. Several important manuscripts have subsequently been published. These include Coseriu 2003, 2008, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021a, 2021b and 2022. In parallel, since 2007, several international congresses have been organized under the general heading *Linguistica Coseriana* (Aix en Provence - 2007, Cluj-Napoca - 2009, Almeria - 2011; Udine - 2013, Potsdam - 2015, Lima - 2017, Cadiz - 2020, Zürich - 2021, Cluj-Napoca - 2025), and Eugenio Coseriu Chairs of Human Studies have been established at the Universities of Montevideo (Uruguay), Cordoba (Argentina) and Santiago de Chile (Chile).

The most recent major project related to Coseriu – „Über den Strukturalismus hinaus“ – *Briefe an Eugenio Coseriu und die Geschichte der Linguistik im 20. Jahrhundert* – was undertaken at the University of Zürich in 2020-2024, with financial support from the Swiss National Science Foundation.

The current volume continues the series of studies exploring the field of integral linguistics, and focuses on theoretical aspects and practical applications within the framework of Coserian theory. It comprises a wide range of studies related to each of the three levels of language proposed by E. Coseriu.

The volume opens with Eugenia Bojoga's contribution titled *La créativité dans la continuité: Johannes Kabatek sur la théorie linguistique d'Eugenio Coseriu* (*Creativity in Continuity: Johannes Kabatek on Eugenio Coseriu's Linguistic Theory*).

Starting from the premise that scholars of E. Coseriu's work consider that the Romanian linguist not only revolutionized several fields of linguistics but also integrated all of them into a comprehensive and unified conception of language, known as Integral Linguistics, Eugenia Bojoga emphasizes the importance that Coseriu scholars attach to the epistemological foundations of linguistic disciplines and highlights J. Kabatek's contribution in this context.

Like other exegetes, J. Kabatek asserts that Coseriu's epistemological principles underpin his entire scholarly work and provide the key to understanding why his oeuvre, which is so vast, is at the same time so coherent. Unlike his predecessors, Kabatek focuses in particular on two essential texts of Coseriu: *Principiile lingvisticii ca știință a culturii* (Coseriu 1992) and *Dix thèses à propos de l'essence du langage et du signifié* (Coseriu 2001).

In the article *Eugênio Coseriu e a problemática da identidade entre linguagem e literatura*, Maria Hozanete Lima and João Artur Rodrigues Fernandes base their argument on Eugenio Coseriu's idea that literature is the ideal setting for the full and comprehensive functioning of the tripartite structure of language, or, in other words, of language as a creative activity.

Within this context, literary texts function as models for analysis and description in both the linguistics of language / idiomatic competence and textual linguistics / expressive competence. This "interference" between the different levels of language can be explained by the fact that literary texts reveal the infinite possibilities for structuring and restructuring the system of any language and, consequently, the linguistic resources necessary for communication. At the same time, this is also manifested in the way concrete linguistic signs function within a complex structure of interrelationships, which is based on a set of interdependent semantic functions (Coseriu 1977).

Building on the same premise of the trichotomy of language levels postulated by E. Coseriu, Mateus Parducci sets out to define the concept of a universal level of language in the article *Ecos do legado coseriano: explorando o conceito de nível universal da linguagem*. To this end, he analyzes the relevant literature, selecting five studies which he considers particularly important in this respect: Faur 2009; Willems 2016; Schrott 2021; Ruiz and Alegría 2021; and Vucheva 2012.

The paper shows that the universal level of language, with the specific competence associated with the discipline of the linguistics of speech ("elocutional linguistics"), masterfully outlined by E. Coseriu, continues to serve as a source of theoretical inspiration for forging new conceptual frameworks. The author aims to gather, systematize and coherently organize the still fragmented information regarding the universal level of language, thus setting the stage for the development of a "Linguistics of speech in general".

A significant contribution entitled *Polyvalence and polymorphy. Multifunctionality in grammar from a language-specific functional perspective* comes from Klass Willems, who focuses on the level of historical languages and idiomatic competence. More specifically, he addresses Coseriu's theory of "functional syntax" (or "functional grammar").

Taking as a starting point E. Coseriu's distinctions in this field, such as the types of signifieds, the author examines polyvalence and polymorphism (or "grammatical synonymy") from a functional perspective (an idiomatic-specific approach to grammar). Klass Willems explores the functional status of syntactic structures viewed as complex constructions and illustrates the concept of polymorphism through a case study, namely that of ditransitive (or "dative") alternation in contemporary German.

Emma Tămâianu-Morita's paper *Textual Functions of "Expression Gaps" from the Perspective of Integral Linguistics* provides a critical-constructive examination of the role played by "gaps in expression" in the constitution and articulation of textual meaning, starting from Eugenio Coseriu's study "Die Ausdruckslücke als Ausdrucksverfahren (Textlinguistische Übung zu einem Gedicht von Kavafis) ['Gaps in expression as an expressive device (A text-linguistic exercise on a poem by Kavafis)'].

Emma Tămâianu-Morita frames this procedure within a set of text-constitutive devices, alongside evocative sign relations, textual functions (including metaphorical ones), and forms of suspending incongruence and incorrectness on the basis of adequacy, and then proposes a reconsideration of expression gaps drawing on the perspective of textual typology, both from a functional and a historical standpoint. The wider applicability of Coseriu's notion of 'expression gap' thus reinterpreted is illustrated by the analysis of the Zen-inspired story "The Ghoul-Priest" by Donald Richie, designed to showcase how expression gaps function on multiple layers of meaning and delineate strategies for the articulation of the text's overall sense.

The article of Clemilton Lopes Pinheiro and José Rubens Pereira, *Conceitos de amor em Amoris Laetitia: especificação da noção de universo de discurso*, explores the concept of 'universe of discourse' as a universe of knowledge and as a specific discursive modality. Out of the four universes of discourse theorized by E. Coseriu, the authors focus on the universe of faith. Within this context, they illustrate Coseriu's ideas through the Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, published by Pope Francis in 2016, and identify, within the text of the exhortation, the concept of unconditional (divine) love expressed through several instances: patient, compassionate, altruistic, just, kind, balanced, forgiving, authentic, trusting, hopeful, and resilient.

Furthermore, the authors state that the methodological "autonomy" of the universe of discourse of faith determines/justifies the multiple concepts of love postulated in Christianity, given the nature of the text type (Apostolic Exhortation) and the domain of knowledge to which it belongs (religious). In addition, two other universes of discourse—that of shared experience (practical/daily life) and that of science (philosophical, legal, psychological, and genetic knowledge)—contribute to defining and contextualizing the specific character of the universe of faith.

Taking as a starting point the three levels of language and their associated competencies, in their article *Japanese Product Names Involving "Contradiction": An Integral Linguistic View on Their Sense-Creating Mechanism* Keita Ikarashi and Akihiko Sakamoto adopt expressive competence as their main theoretical and methodological focus, in order to unravel how a specific sense emerges: *<the designated product is an innovative and attractive offering for consumers>*. The examples discussed (such as *nomu-purin* [drinkable pudding], a pudding-based product that is consumed by drinking), appear at first glance to be incongruous expressions, as they contradict elocutionary competence (usually, pudding is eaten, not drunk). However, incongruence is suspended by designation, and the naming device is shown to highlight the innovative characteristics of the product itself. The analysis of numerous similar examples using Coseriu's threefold model of the competencies and evaluations of speech, as well as the notion of suspending incongruence, leads to the conclusion that this particular naming strategy has already been integrated into the Japanese idiomatic competence, and its existing instances can serve, by association, as a basis for interpreting new names of similarly innovative products.

Applying Coseriu's theoretical framework to some of the most prominent trends in the field today — namely, chatbots and generative artificial intelligence — Cristina Varga, in *Assessing the Limits of Ai-Based Translation: A Coserian Perspective*, analyzes how AI-based conversational assistants such as ChatGPT can be effectively employed in the field of translation. Based on Coseriu's framework, which defines translation as: «...un tipo particular de hablar: es hablar con un contenido dado de antemano, por medio de otra lengua» (Coseriu, 1997, 168), the main focus of the article is to examine the "limits" of translation, in order to analyze the extent to which generative artificial intelligence addresses translation problems, when compared to human translation. Thus, this study outlines the translation strategies that generative AI employs in translating comic strips. Of particular interest are the limits of translation and the extent to which they are consistent with the limits of AI-based translation.

The same thematic area of addressing translation issues within the Coserian framework is reflected in Lucia Horea's article *King James Bible as Norm-Maker — Coserian and Translational Perspectives*. The article relates to the historical level of languages and builds on E. Coseriu's theory of the linguistic norm. Lucia Horea combines Coseriu's view with Gideon Toury's theory of translation and with Lawrence Venuti's approach to translation as a productive practice from a cultural perspective. Within this context, the focus of the analysis is the *King James Bible*, interpreted as "a central space for the creation and negotiation of linguistic norms in the history of the English language" in the context of 17th-century England - a case in point demonstrating that translation is not a mere act of reproduction, but rather an activity with the potential to crystallize and institutionalize certain linguistic norms. It should be noted that emphasis is placed on Coseriu's theoretical contributions regarding linguistic competence and normativity.

Each of the contributions selected for this issue brings more than a mere application of Coserian ideas and concepts: the authors aim to propose original developments on Coserian bases, which in turn can serve to inspire further explorations and open up new directions for engaging in a fruitful dialogue with other contemporary theoretical frameworks.

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