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STUDIA UNIVERSITATIS BABEŞ-BOLYAI PHILOLOGIA
Horea str. no. 31, 400202 Cluj-Napoca, ROMANIA
Contact: philologia.studia@ubbcluj.ro

Current Perspectives in Coserian Scholarship and the Development of Eugenio Coseriu's Linguistic Theory

Call for Papers

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philologia.studia@ubbcluj.ro

Guest editors

Eugenia Bojoga, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj, eugenia.bojoga@ubbcluj.ro

Emma Tămâianu-Morita, Kindai University, Osaka, emmorita@intl.kindai.ac.jp

Cristina Varga, Babeş-Bolyai University, cristina.varga@ubbcluj.ro

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" 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), and *Eugenio Coseriu* Chairs of Human Studies have been instated 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.

All these events attest to the interest in Coseriu's theory of language among present-day linguists, and point to the soundness and relevance of this conception (cf. Haßler, Stehl 2017; Garatea Grau, Wiese 2021; García Martín, Maiseyenka 2022; Kabatek 2023).

In the call for papers of the congress *Linguistica Coseriana VI* held at the University of Lima in August 2017, the organizers state that “in 20th-century linguistics E. Coseriu was an exceptional figure, perhaps the last one who, by dedicating his whole life to the science of language, managed to master all the thematic areas - both central and marginal - of theoretical linguistics in general, as well as of the study of a large number of particular languages. From a theoretical-conceptual point of view, E. Coseriu’s work was situated at the forefront of our discipline, and was in many ways ahead of the language science of its time. Many of his theoretical notions are now part of the general culture of linguistics, although it is often forgotten that they originated with Coseriu” (Garatea Grau, Wiese 2021:6-7).

E. 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 the text), 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 (cf. Borcilă 2016: 19-20).

It is in this context that we invite, for this special issue, contributions related to the entire domain of Integral Linguistics. Priority will be given to the thematic areas indicated below; well-founded critical interrogations and constructive reflection on the works of E. Coseriu are particularly welcome.

- The content and nature of linguistic competence on the three levels of speech (elocutionary competence, idiomatic competence, expressive competence): comparative landmarks / contrastive analyses between integralism and other theoretical orientations;
- Creativity in language and the issue of linguistic change;
- Principles of linguistics as a science of culture;

- Possibilities of terminological clarification and development of Coseriu's conceptual framework concerning Text as a layer of idiomatic structuring (Level II) vs. Text as an autonomous language level (Level III);
- Application of the integralist conceptual framework in the field of language teaching: case studies, comparative analyses of advantages/disadvantages as compared to other methodological orientations, proposals for adaptation and/or development;
- Strategies for constructing textual meaning in the translation process;
- Further exploration of the historical level of language, i.e. particular languages, in a Coserian perspective.

Articles can be written in English, French, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese.

Submission calendar:

- December 15, 2024 - deadline for submitting an article proposal (200-word abstract, 7 keywords, minimum 5 theoretical references) to the following email addresses:
philologia.studia@ubbcluj.ro
eugenia.bojoga@ubbcluj.ro
emmorita@intl.kindai.ac.jp
cristina.varga@ubbcluj.ro
- 15 January 2025 - notification of acceptance of the proposal;
- 16 July 2025 - submission of full papers (instructions for authors on formatting rules and style sheets can be found on the journal website:
http://studia.ubbcluj.ro/serii/philologia/pdf/instructions_En.pdf);
- 31 martie 2026 – publication of the thematic issue.

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