

SPACE AND TIME EXPRESSIONS IN THE ROMANIAN LINGUISTIC IMAGINARY

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ABSTRACT. *Space and Time Expressions in the Romanian Linguistic Imaginary.*

This work aims to inventory, with the help of space and time conceptual metaphors, the expressions that contribute to shaping a linguistic imaginary. The expressions represent a *sine qua non* condition of linguistic creativity and once identified, they pave the way to other cultural spaces. The language is our home, and the way we live in it, through expressions, proverbs, sayings, represent an unstable balance between *inside* and *outside*, between *up* and *down*, between *then* and *now*, creating a protective space - time and, at the same time, exposed to the outside world's actions. To highlight the role of space and time expressions in shaping a linguistic imaginary, we used the conceptual metaphors theories as they were defined and illustrated by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. We will try to demonstrate that in the Romanian linguistic imaginary there is *a vertical spatiality* (in terms of an *up-down* metaphor), which belongs to the pastoral world, in which the archaic man raises his eyes to the sky in a perfect communion with the Divinity (the expressions with *sky*, *earth*, *sun*, *moon*, *stars*, etc.). As far as it concerns time, we will inventory those expressions and sayings that reflect, in the collective mind, the time perception between ephemerality and eternity. In the Romanian linguistic imaginary, there is *an eternal temporality* (the expressions with *vreme*, that reflect the past-present-future triad) and *a stationary one*, representing the measure of a time slot (the expressions with *ceas* that reflect simultaneity, sequence, and duration). We will demonstrate, with the help of ontological metaphors, that temporal perception, through expressions, varies depending on the different possible consciousness states (pain, joy, love, dream, etc.). The research-based result will be to highlight the space and time linguistic images and their role in shaping the Romanian linguistic imaginary.

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REZUMAT. *Expresii ale spațialității și temporalității în imaginarul lingvistic românesc.* Lucrarea își propune să inventarieze, cu ajutorul metaforelor conceptuale spațiale și temporale, expresiile care contribuie la conturarea unui imaginar lingvistic. Expresiile reprezintă o condiție *sine qua non* a creativității lingvistice și, odată identificate, deschid drumul către alte spații culturale. Limba este casa noastră, iar felul în care locuim în ea, prin expresii, proverbe, zicători, reprezintă un echilibru instabil între *interior* și *exterior*, între *sus* și *jos*, între *atunci* și *acum*, creând un spațiu-timp protector și, în același timp, expus la acțiunile lumii exterioare. Pentru a evidenția rolul expresiilor spațialității și temporalității în modelarea unui imaginar lingvistic, am folosit teoriile metaforelor conceptuale așa cum au fost definite și ilustrate de George Lakoff și Mark Johnson. Vom încerca să demonstrăm că în imaginarul lingvistic românesc există o *spațialitate verticală* (în termenii unei metafore *sus-jos*), care aparține lumii pastorale, în care omul arhaic ridică ochii spre cer, într-o comuniune perfectă cu Divinitatea (expresiile cu *cer, pământ, soare, lună, stele* etc.). În ceea ce privește timpul, vom inventaria acele expresii și zicători care reflectă, în mentalul colectiv, percepția timpului între efemeritate și eternitate. În imaginarul lingvistic românesc există o *temporalitate eternă* (expresiile cu *vreme*, care reflectă triada trecut-prezent-viitor) și una *staționară*, reprezentând măsura unui interval de timp (expresiile cu *ceas* care reflectă simultaneitatea, secvența și durata). Vom demonstra, cu ajutorul metaforelor ontologice, că percepția temporală, prin expresii, variază în funcție de diferitele stări posibile ale conștiinței (durere, bucurie, iubire, vis etc.). Rezultatul cercetării va fi evidențierea imaginilor lingvistice ale spațialității și temporalității și rolul acestora în modelarea imaginarii lingvistice românesc.

Cuvinte-cheie: *expresii ale spațiului, expresii ale timpului, imaginar lingvistic, metaforă conceptuală, limbă, spațiu cultural*

1. Linguistic Imaginary

The paper entitled *Space and Time Expressions in the Romanian Linguistic Imaginary* aims to list the expressions that contribute to the shaping of a linguistic imaginary by means of conceptual metaphors of space and time.

This paper is a follow-up of my interests in the field of linguistic imaginary in recent years, as a member of the research team of a large-scale project, completed with the publication of a fundamental work, in five volumes, for the Romanian culture, namely: *Enciclopedia imaginariilor din România*².

² *Enciclopedia imaginariilor din România (Encyclopedia of Imaginaries from Romania)*, Corin Braga (general coordinator), Iași: Polirom, 2020 – 5 vol. ISBN 978-973-46-8183-9. This *Encyclopedia of Imaginaries*

At first sight, the linguistic imaginary concept may seem a paradox; how is it possible for a descriptive discipline like linguistics, to intertwine with the unstable waters of the imaginary, a concept, too difficult to define, for a long period of time? This concept, however, is not a new one; it has been theorized since the '70s in international cultural circles. In the Romanian cultural space, there were two different approaches regarding the linguistic imaginary concept: on the one hand, with some caution, there was an approach more related to the surprise of a possible rapprochement between *linguistics*, seen as a discipline that studies the varieties of language and their characteristics, and the *imaginary*, viewed as an undulatory space, undefined and imprecise. On the other hand, in the Romanian space, a space of both territorial and cultural interferences, there has also been some openness towards this concept, an approach in an appropriate and unprejudiced manner, being regarded as an "open theory" that offers new possibilities of deciphering "the Language reality" (Coroi 2013). There are several approaches to the concept of linguistic imaginary by the different branches of linguistics: *the metalinguistic perspective*, *the ethnolinguistic perspective*, and *the cognitivist perspective*. Firstly, *the metalinguistic perspective* proposes an approach on how the speaker relates to the language he speaks. The metalinguistic function of language (in Roman Jakobson's view) implies, on the speaker's part, an in-depth check of how the speaker is understood or the speaker understood what had been communicated to him. According to several researchers in the field of metalinguistics, including Houdebine-Gravaud (1997), the speaker's relationship with language implies an intimate dimension, which "contains the subject's own phantasms and fictions", not supported by a social discourse and not shaped by any prescriptive academic nature norm, as well as "a sociological and ideological one, shaped by the knowledge of grammatical norms and the proximity to a specialized discourse" (Platon 2020, 14). Secondly, *ethnolinguistics* offers the levers for the second approach to the linguistic imaginary; ethnolinguistics perceives language as a function of culture, meaning that the language is a society product. This approach focuses, therefore, on the way in which the world's variety of representations is reflected in language. Finally, there is also *a cognitivist perspective* of the linguistic imaginary. Cognitive linguistics focuses on the process of producing linguistic facts and on the internal mechanisms that explain linguistic creativity.

To highlight the role of space and time expressions in shaping a linguistic imaginary, we used the conceptual metaphors theories as they were defined by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. The conceptual metaphor theory was formulated for the first time in the '80s by Lakoff and Johnson and explains the mechanisms of lexical creativity through *metaphorical type transfer*. From a cognitivist

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perspective, the metaphorical transfer is a transfer of double association: both everyday language and poetic language are associated with it: “Our concepts structure what we perceive, how we behave in the world and how we relate to others. Our conceptual system plays a central role in defining our everyday realities. If we are right to suggest that our conceptual system is largely metaphorical, then the way we think, what we experience and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 12, 124). Metaphorical expressions thus become a reflection of our way of thinking: “linguistic expressions are manifestations of conceptual metaphors” (Kövecses 2010, 7). The presence of metaphor in everyday language is explained by the need to express certain abstract concepts, such as time, ideas, emotions, phenomena with the help of other concrete concepts, which can be easier understood due to the individuals’ direct experience. According to the cognitivist perspective, there are three large categories of conceptual metaphors: a) structural metaphors, the ones that are mostly used, through which a concept is metaphorically structured in terms of another concept, which thus allows the restructuring of the first concept, b) orientation metaphors that give concepts spatial orientation based on individual’s body experience such as *up-down*, *left-right*, *forward-backward* and c) ontological metaphors that are focused on human experience, having as target domains the objects of the experiential world, emotions, ideas or different events. Through ontological metaphors, individuals perceive non-physical entities, such as events, activities, emotions, and ideas as physical entities.

2. Vertical Spatiality. Space Expressions in the Linguistic Romanian Imaginary.

Mother tongue is a vast repository of spirituality, it is living thought, the language to which we owe a good part of our human quality. The expressions contribute to shaping a linguistic imaginary and represent a *sine qua non* condition of linguistic creativity. For our research, we will consider the space expressions that, once identified, pave the way to other cultural spaces. The Romanian cultural space is a space of cultural, historical, and social interferences. Situated at the crossroads of several empires, between the East and the West, with a continuous presence of ethnic minorities, with a turbulent historical past (Boia 2016) and with a fascination for other European cultural models, the Romanian cultural space was a real identity mosaic in which the language and “its infinite philosophizing possibilities” (Noica 1987) experienced meaning changes and acquired new ones, creating a linguistic imaginary, in which the self is (re)discovered through the other and the other is (re)discovered through the filter of one’s aspirations and experiences. In the Romanian linguistic imaginary, we can talk about a double spatiality: on one hand, a vertical spatiality, which belongs to the pastoral world,

in which the archaic man raises his eyes to the sky in a perfect communion with the Divinity. On the other hand, we witness a horizontal spatiality³, easily identified in expressions that describe the other, the foreigner, who can be good or bad, depending on one's individual or collective experience. The first part of our paper will deal with vertical spatiality and will seek to inventory the expressions of this spatiality in the Romanian linguistic imaginary, starting from two defining concepts for the matrix of the Romanian people: *cerul* (the sky) and *pământul* (the earth).

2.1. Expressions with *cer* (sky)

According to the folk mentality, the world is the image of a perfect communion between two fundamental entities: *cerul* (the sky, the heaven) and *pământul* (the earth). *Cerul*, in the collective mind of an archaic society, has a constitutive ontological dignity: it is the starting point of genesis, but it is, at the same point, the home of God, Sun, Moon and stars. Romanian legends and folk tales present the sky as a large vault, too far and totally untouchable, in reality, by the archaic man. One of the legends says that there is a bridge, from which the heavenly world would be up, and the earthly world down; the bridge would be imagined, again, as a thick iron vault, placed on the water that surrounds the earth and, on the pillars, but also having doors where the angelic creatures walk, to transmit the news from the earth to God (Antonescu 2016, 144-145).

Regardless of the meaning and interpretation provided by Romanian legends and traditional beliefs, there is a certainty regarding *cerul* and the way in which people perceived it. *Cerul* remains untouchable, having sacred values, a place for the transcendent. There are many expressions in the Romanian language that best reflect this transcendental side of *cerul*. The *up-down* spatial orientation metaphor associates everything that is *up* with the idea of good, and everything that is down with the idea of evil / bad. In terms of the same metaphor, verticality represents, every time, a form of ascent, light, refinement, and wealth, whereas darkness, pain, poverty are, every time, marked downward.

Therefore, *cerul* is used in expressions like: *A fi în al nouălea cer*⁴ (To be on cloud nine; this is an expression used to express a state of bliss, elation, or

³ For a detailed description of the horizontal spatiality (expressions, proverbs, sayings, and the written press), see the article Balaban, Maria-Zoica. 2020. "Expresia Alterității". In *Enciclopedia imaginariilor din România*. Vol. II. Patrimoniu și imaginar lingvistic, volume coordinated by Elena Platon, 277-295. Iași: Polirom.

⁴ All expressions from this paper are taken from Dumistrăcel, S. (2001). *Până-n pânzele albe. Dicționar de expresii românești. Biografii. Motivații*. 2nd edition, revised and augmented. Iași: Institutul European, Dumistrăcel, S. (2011). *Lexic românesc. Cuvinte, metafore, expresii*. Iași: Casa Editorială Demiurg Plus, Zanne, I. (1895-1903/2003-2004). *Proverbele românilor*. Anastatic Edition, vol. I-IX, București: The Romanian Association for Culture and Orthodoxy "Scara" and Muntean, G. (1967). *Proverbe românești*. București: Editura pentru Literatură.

full happiness)⁵; *A înălța pe cineva la cer* (to praise someone very much); *A privi la cer* (to be proud); *În înaltul cerului* (at a very high point or Up to the sky!); *Împărăția cerurilor* (the Kingdom of Heaven – a biblical meaning, that of God’s house, the heaven). All these expressions reflect a vertical ascent, valued, each time, positively. Greater attention should be paid to the expression *Până-i cerul!* (as far as the sky goes which means never) used to represent, in terms of a spatial metaphor, one of the most abstract time dimensions, that of *never* and the expression *La poalele cerului!* (At the feet of the sky, which means far away) used to represent, also in terms of a spatial metaphor, one of the undefined space dimensions, that of *being far*. *Cerul* is not only a fundamental, untouchable entity, but it is also a reference point while referring to expressions that draw attention to the sky’s immensity and the archaic man’s need to relate to its overwhelming greatness in carrying out certain actions that require effort and sacrifice: *Nu cade, nu pică din cer*⁶ (it doesn’t fall from the sky which means that you cannot get anything for free or nothing comes ready); *Doar nu s-o face gaură în cer!* (there won’t be much damage / loss). The expressions with *cer*, that reflect certain inappropriate human behaviours, also have engaging meanings. Because of these types of behaviour, *cerul*⁷, in its spatial and temporal immensity, will not remain indifferent and will be able to give certain punitive signals: *Nedreptate strigătoare la cer* (Blatant injustice to the sky – which refers to obvious injustice that leads to revolt); *A cădea / a pica cerul pe cineva* (to fall / to make the sky fall on someone which means to be very ashamed of someone).

The expressions *A fi picat din cer* (to have fallen from the sky) and *A pica / a cădea din cer* (to fall from the sky) need special attention. The first expression signifies the state of a disoriented man, paradoxically cut off from reality on earth, but fallen from a heavenly reality that he cannot transcend; what we have here is a de-semantization of the original meaning and a re-semantization of it. The second expression, when used affirmatively, has a positive meaning (something that happens unexpectedly: e.g., receiving good news, unexpected help, etc.).

2.2. Expressions with pământ (earth)

If *cer* appears, most of the time, in expressions that reflect the heavenly ascent (up), wealth, elegance, refinement, hope and light, the expressions with

⁵ According to a Romanian legend, it is said that there are nine skies/heavens, God living in the last one – this is where the use of number nine in the expression comes from – therefore, the expression is a possibility sign, that of acquiring a divine state of happiness of a divine nature.

⁶ *A cădea* and *a pica* are Romanian verbs that are both translated in English with the verb *to fall*. In the Romanian language, these two verbs are synonyms; there is still a difference in meaning between the two: *a cădea* is formal, whereas *a pica* is informal, and it is mostly used in spoken Romanian.

⁷ In the case of these expressions, *cerul* is associated with the image of God.

pământ reflect the exact opposite (down); the different degrees of pain are marked downward, whether we speak of poverty, sadness, neglect, vulgarity, darkness or death. The expressions: *A face una cu pământul* (to make havoc among/in/of or to make one's mash); *A băga în pământ* (to make a fadeway); *A fi la pământ* (to look crest-fallen); *A intra în pământ* (to be very sad, depressed; this expression is used in contexts that assume a very great shame that someone can feel); *A nu mai încâpea pe cineva pământul*, *A nu mai răbda pământul pe cineva* (these expressions are used to characterise lowly, very bad people). Special attention needs to be given to the expression: *A fi cu picioarele pe pământ* (to be with one's feet on the ground; this expression always has a positive meaning and indicates a vertical ascent, determined by the feet, and describes a person who has a sense of reality).

2.3. Expressions with *cer* (sky) and *pământ* (earth)

The second fundamental entity is *pământul* (the earth). In the folklore language, *pământul* seems to be subject to the sky, having a secondary importance compared to the sky. In popular culture, there is the belief that things that were originally organically united and then separated, remain united forever; it is the case of *cer* and *pământ*. Moreover, the connection is so intimate that any action applied to the detached part also affects the whole from which it originates, no matter the distance that separates it from the whole. This is directly reflected in the case of the Romanian expressions that are formed with both words: *cer* and *pământ*. In the Romanian mythology, the earth is the sky's pair, between the two a harmonious relationship is established, a perfect correlation, either analogical or contrastive and which is present in all types of sky imaginary modelling. The analogical correlation between *cer* and *pământ* is reflected by expressions such as: *A (se) ruga cu cerul și cu pământul* (to pray with the greatest perseverance), where each of the two elements (*cer* and *pământ*) indicates the same involvement degree, and verticality no longer has a strictly ascending meaning, but it reflects a perfect symbiosis between *up* and *down*, a flattening of verticality at the level of horizontality. A good reflection stimulation on the space expressions in the Romanian linguistic imaginary is represented by: *Când s-a lipit cerul de pământ* (when the sky stuck to the earth) or *A promite cerul și pământul* (to promise the sky and the earth), the first rendering the most abstract dimension of temporality, that of *never*, while the second one refers to impossible, unachievable things.

Between *cer* and *pământ*, there is also a contrastive correlation, that emphasizes the infinite and immeasurable distance between the two concepts, perceived as extremes/limits. The unique distance that separates the sky from

the earth has also become the greatest unit ever imagined to measure abstract notion, such as the distance or the intensity of some human states, enciphered in expressions that are still extremely fashionable: *Departe cât cerul de pământ* (Far as the sky from the earth - an expression used to refer to a very long distance); *Ca de la cer la pământ* (As from heaven to earth - an expression used to draw the clear distinction between two things); *A fi cu o falcă în cer și cu una în pământ* (To be with one jaw in the sky and one on the earth - an expression used to describe a very angry person); *A răscoli cerul și pământul* (To scour sky and earth - an expression used to describe all possible actions you can do to find a lost thing).

2.4. Expressions with cer (sky), soare (Sun), lună (Moon) and stele (stars)

The expressions of vertical spatiality in the Romanian linguistic imaginary are not limited to the expressions with *cer* and *pământ*, but go further, introducing us to the inhabitants, par excellence, of the sky: the Sun, the Moon, and the stars, all of them representing the two temporal faces: light and darkness, day and night. In popular mythology, the moon is believed to be *the eye of God* and the Sun's younger sister. Another legend says that the two brothers, Cain and Abel, would live on the Moon, and the spots that can be seen on the Moon represent the scene of Abel's killing by his brother, Cain.

The Moon represents the time that passes; it metaphorically evokes beauty, but also light in the immensity of darkness. In the collective mind, the Sun has a privileged position representing warmth, light, life, fertility, and immortality. A popular legend says that the Sun would be the big star, the Moon, the middle one and the stars would be the sky's small lights. In terms of an *inside-outside* spatial orientation metaphor (with the variants: day-night or dark-light), the Sun's ascent on the celestial vault is an ascent movement (from bottom to top) grabbed in three important moments: sunrise, followed by the slow ascent on the sky until noon, and later, the descent towards sunset, during which the Moon goes through, in the opposite direction, the same movement of ascent and later, of descent, less visible. The expressions with the Sun and the Moon reflect this ascent of the stars on the celestial vault: *A se uita ca la soare* (to look at someone with full appreciation); *A trece pe sub soare* (to live), or the sayings: *După ce apune soarele, laudă ziua* (After the Sun sets, praise the day - this is an expression used to express as a sign of thanksgiving for the things that happened every day); *E mai cald soarele când răsare, decât când luna asfințește* (The Sun is warmer when it rises than when the Moon sunsets - this expression is used to express the joy and happiness that one can experience in the morning, and the regret in the evening); *Să n-ating luna cu mâna, nici soarele cu picioarele!* (Do not touch the moon with the hand, nor the Sun with the feet! -

this is an expression used to show the deep respect that archaic people used to have for God's creation; touching the divine creation is forbidden to humans). In popular fictions, the Sun appears, almost without exception, anthropomorphized: it wakes up in the morning, rests at night and has human qualities. In the archaic perception, the Sun is subject not only to daily rejuvenation and aging, but also to annual birth and death; it is born at the winter solstice, when it is as small as the day, it grows and becomes strong enough at the vernal equinox, when the day is equal to the night, it reaches its full strength at the summer solstice, when the day is the longest of the whole year, after which the day wanes, the Sun wanes, the forces of darkness become strong and the Sun dies; the Sun's symbolic metamorphoses and ages (in anthropomorphic terms – birth, youth, old age, death) are the fundamental rhythms of life on earth. In terms of an up-down spatial metaphor, the Sun and the Moon are the sky's messengers; through anthropomorphic extrapolation, they could see everything is going on in the earth. There are many expressions with the sky's messengers in the Romanian language, with a wide range of meanings: *A fi cu stea în frunte* (to be born with a silver spoon in one's mouth; this is an expression used to characterize very special people); *A (nu) se naște sub o stea norocoasă* (to be or not to be born under a lucky star – this is an expression used to describe a(n) lucky/unlucky person); *A crede în steaua ta* (to believe in your star – this expression is used as an urge to believe in your own destiny); *A fi rupt din soare* (to be very beautiful or handsome); *A se uita ca la soare* (having an endless love for someone); *clar de lună* (a shiny light). All these expressions reflect the Sun and the Moon's anthropomorphism. The distance between the earth, the Sun and the Moon is highlighted in expressions such as: *A cere (și) luna de pe cer* (to ask for the impossible); *A promite cuiva și luna de pe cer* (to make impossible promises); *A dori câte-n lună și-n soare* (to have a lot of wishes difficult to achieve); *A făgădui/a povesti câte în lună și în soare și în stele* (to talk a dog's/donkey's/horse's hind leg off – this is an expression that could also be used for impossible promises); *A căra soarele cu oborocul* (to do useless things). There are also few expressions in the Romanian language that reflect other human states and behaviour: *A vorbi câte-n lună și-n soare/ A vorbi câte-n lună și-n stele* (to talk nonsense); *A fi vai de steaua lui!* (this expression is used to express pity for someone); *A vedea stele verzi* (to see stars; this expression is used when you receive strong blows); *A se uita ca la lună nouă* (this expression is used for someone who doesn't have the necessary knowledge and has no idea about a topic/subject, etc.); *A fi căzut din lună* (to live in the clouds - this expression is used when someone is unprepared or doesn't have knowledge), *A-i rășări* or *a-i ieși cuiva luna în cap sau în ceafă* (an expression mostly used in popular language; the Moon loses its initial meaning and has a totally new one, being used in a context that involves alopecia and its effects on the individual).

3. Time Expressions in the Romanian Linguistic Imaginary

In the Romanian linguistic imaginary, *timpul* (the time) “is part of that strange category of entities that, while familiar, they are still impenetrable. The easier we sense, the harder it is to conceptualize it. No one has been able to define it”⁸ (Marcus 1985). The same idea of time eternity appears in Saint Augustine’s definition: “time – the moving image of eternity”. So, time can be imagined and represented. In the case of language, as in the case of perception, time symbolizes a limit in duration, a way of drawing the border between our world and the timeless world of eternity. Time is a fundamental dimension of life and society. Each human being has their own time, a time that represents a small part of the absolute time. The man’s whole spiritual life is, to some extent, a form of his continuous fight against death and his ambition to control time, to be one step ahead of it. But, on the scientific level, all time relative considerations can be organised with the help of two interacting triads: a) simultaneity – succession – duration and b) past – present – future. Temporal perception varies not only depending on the age and the individual, but also in relation to the different possible states of consciousness, such as wakefulness, pain, pleasure, dream, etc. In the linguistic Romanian imaginary, the image-time is formed, on one hand, on the linear axis of chronological time (from left to right), in the form of three steps, convincingly described by Tudor Vianu (1968, 77)⁹: “*time in posse*: it suggests a possible action, having a virtual character; *time in fieri*: it represents the image in the process of becoming, its character being a possible one; *time in esse*: the image-time is already finished, this time corresponding to the real defined as: past, present, future”. The present is the central point of the axis, being an extension of the past, that is, on a time that really existed, and, at the same time, the present is also an extension towards the future, on a time that hasn’t been yet, it’s fictitious.

3.1. The stationary time in the Romanian linguistic imaginary. Expressions with *ceas* (clock)

The process of understanding the concepts is naturally done with the help of metaphors. The metaphor of *stationary time* and the observer moving

⁸ Marcus, Solomon. 1985. *Timpul*. București: Albatros: “Timpul face parte din acea stranie categorie de entități pe care, pe cât de familiare, pe atât de impenetrabile. Pe cât de ușor îl intuim, pe atât de greu îl conceptualizăm. Nimeni nu a fost în stare să-l definească.” (Marcus 1985)

⁹ Vianu, Tudor. 1968. *Studii de stilistică*. București: Editura Didactică și Pedagogică: “*timp in posse*: sugerează o acțiune posibilă de realizat, având un caracter virtual; *timp in fieri*: reprezintă imaginea în curs de devenire, caracterul ei fiind unul posibil; *timp in esse*: imaginea timp este deja încheiată, acest timp corespunzând realului definit ca: trecut, prezent și viitor”. (Vianu 1968, 77)

through time, seems to be preferred in the European culture. In this metaphor, the role of time is changed with that of the observer. Time is perceived as a spatial landscape, in which an observer moves. The past is behind the observer, and the future is in front of him. The observer is in the present and moves towards the future. Each landmark in this landscape is associated, in our minds, with a moment of time. In the Romanian linguistic imaginary, the stationary time is reflected with the help of different expressions with the word *ceas*: *Ceasul morții* (sau de moarte, de apoi, cel (mai) de pe urmă) (this expression refers to the last moments in one's life); *Ceasul nașterii* (or de naștere) (this expression refers to the birth moment); *Cât e ceasul, a crăpat ceasul!* (în sfârșit!) (this expression is used to express the meaning of finally); *A da ceasul înainte/înapoi* (to change the hands of the clock – forward or backward); *A se da de ceasul morții* (to struggle a lot, to make desperate efforts); *Din ceas în ceas* (from moment to moment); *În ceasul al doisprezecelea* (in the last moment, a moment before it's too late); *Pe ceas, pe ceas* (from moment to moment); *Nu aduce anul ce aduce ceasul* (this is an expression used to define a short moment, which could be very important); *A veni ca ceasul cel rău* (to come quickly); *Ceasul rău* (an unhappy moment), *A-i veni ceasul* (one's time has come to die); *Ceasul dimineții e aurul vieții* (this is an expression used to describe the fact that any action done in the morning is more successful on the long run); *Ceasul pierdut nu-l întoarce anul* (this is an expression used to realise that time is irreversible).

3.2. The eternal time in the Romanian linguistic imaginary

3.2.1. Expressions with *vreme* (time)

The eternal time has no limit, and it always refers to an unspecified period. In the Romanian language, there are two terms that refer to *timp* (time): *vreme*¹⁰ (time) and *timp* (time). *Vreme* has doubled the concept of time in the Romanian language, without replacing it because it does not cover its entire meaning register. This noun has a fascinating linguistic development. There is a very meaningful saying in the Romanian language that explains both the similarities and the differences between *the stationary time* and *the eternal time*: *Ceasul bate, lovește și vremea stă, vremuieste*. There is also a more widespread version of this proverb, also retained by George Munteanu in his volume *Romanian Proverbs* (1967) that says: *Ceasul umblă și lovește iar vremea se odihnește* (The clock walks and strikes, and the time rests). The Romanian philosopher Constantin Noica has an extraordinary essay about the term *vreme*, the verb *a vremui* (to

¹⁰ The noun *vreme* is the term that doubled the concept of time in the Romanian language. Therefore, the Romanian language has two terms for the English word: time; one is *timp* and the other one is *vreme*.

time) and their meanings: “First, you are astonished at this contrast between the clock and time: the hour striker would be the one moving forward, while time would still stand. Second, it amazes you – and if you have the urge for philosophy, it even delights you – to see that *vremuirea* (the time) does not have the more widely known meaning of bad, wintry weather, but it means something related to thought, bringing into play a deep and, perhaps, bitter meaning about the still-flowing part of the world”. (Noica 1987, 54)¹¹ In the saying mentioned above, there is the noun *vremea* but there is also the derived verb *a vremui*, with the present form *vremuieste*. What seems to be interesting is the fact that the verb *a vremui*, derived from the noun *vremea* is something uncommon and Noica explains how the derivation process took place, in a very meaningful way: “not all languages, however, succeeded in forming the *internal verb* from a noun, and success occurs only with a few nouns ... but, in the case of *vreme* or, by extension *timp*, success is not complete in other languages, because a contraction occurs. In Slavic language from which we have borrowed *vreme*, this noun doesn’t seem to admit any verbs, except a verb with a restricted meaning: to temporize. In English, the verb *to time* simply means: to fit to time, to measure” (Noica 1987, 57)¹². And he concludes by saying that “Our *vremuire* is natural and preserves almost all the concept’s meanings, respectively of the noun from which it is derived” (Noica 1987, 57)¹³.

In the Romanian language, there are a lot of expressions with the noun *vremea*, all of them rendering the image of a time that cannot be defined, an eternal time: *A-și căuta vreme* (to look for the right moment/opportunity); *A cumpăra vremea* (to gain time); *La vremea potrivită* (at the right moment); *De la o vreme* (since a while); *În ultima vreme* (lately); *Din vremea lui han-tătar* (since immemorial times); *Din vreme în vreme* (sometimes); *La răstimpuri fără vreme* (too soon); *A fi bătrân ca vremea* (to be very old/ as old as a hill); *A fi de pe vremea lui Pazvante (Chiorul)* (sau a lui Tata Noe) (since immemorial times); *A fi în pas cu vremea / A ține pas cu*

¹¹ The original text: “Ești surprins, întâi, să vezi opoziția aceasta între ornic și vreme: băătorul de ore ar fi cel care înaintează, pe când vremea ar sta pe loc. În al doilea rând, te miră - iar dacă ai îndemnul filosofiei, te și încântă – să vezi că *vremuirea* nu are aici sensul, mai larg cunoscut, de: vreme rea, viscoleşte, ci înseamnă ceva de ordinul gândului, punând în joc un înțeles adânc și poate amar despre partea de curgere nemișcată a lumii” (Noica 1987, 54) (my translation).

¹² The original text: “nu tuturor limbilor, însă, le reușește crearea *verbului intern*, născut dintr-un nume, iar reușita are loc în cazul prea puținoor nume ... dar, iată, în cazul *vremii* sau, mai larg, al timpului, reușita nu e totală în alte limbi, căci se petrece o îngustare. În limbile slave, de unde am luat *vreme*, substantivul acesta nu pare a îngădui decât un verb cu sens restrâns, de a temporiza. În limba engleză, verbul *to time* înseamnă doar a potrivi la timp, a măsura” (Noica 1987, 57) (my translation).

¹³ The original text: “*Vremuirea* noastră e firească și păstrează aproape toate sensurile conceptului, respectiv ale substantivului din care se trage” (Noica 1987, 57) (my translation).

vremea (to be modern / fashionable); *În vreme ce* (while); *A intra vremea în sac* (to pass the time); *A încurca vremea / A pierde vremea* (to waste time); *Nezăbavă vreme* (soon, right away); *O bucată de vreme* (a moment in time); *A păzi vreme / a pândi vreme* (to wait for the right moment); *Vremea patului* (bedtime); *Vreme bună* (nice/god weather); *Vreme câinească* (very bad weather); *Vreme cu prilej* (the right opportunity / the right moment); *Din vreme în vreme* (from time to time).

3.2.2. Expressions with *timp* (time)

In addition to the expressions with *vreme*, in the Romanian language, there are also a lot of expressions with *timp* (time), all of them reflecting the image of a time that cannot be defined, a time that suffers changes, modifies itself, expands and contracts, but it remains endless or seemingly endless: *A avea tot timpul* (to have all the time); *Cât timp* (as long as); *Câtva timp* (some time); *Cu cât trece timpul* (as time goes by); *Pe măsură ce trece timpul* (as time goes by); *De la un timp* (since a while); *Din alte timpuri* (other times); *Din timp* (before being too late); *Din toate timpurile* (all time); *Era și timpul* (it was about time); *A fi de-o seamă cu timpul* (to be very old); *Înainte de timp* (too early); *În alte timpuri* (in the past, time out of mind); *În contratimp* (against the clock, inappropriate, to be in a hurry); *În doi timpi și trei mișcări* (very fast); *Cât ai clipi din ochi* (very fast); *În noaptea timpurilor* (in the night of time, time out of mind); *În răstimp* (in the meantime); *În timp ce* (while); *La timp* (on time, on the dot); *A-i fi timpul* (the favourable moment has arrived, it's time to). All these expressions reflect the image of an eternal time, that can no longer be organized on the usual past-present-future line, but according to its importance in different circumstances, depending on the needs' intensity and their fulfilment.

There are also a few sayings with *timp* that have compelling meanings; one of the most common sayings with *timp* is: *Timpul e un sfetnic bun* (Time is a good advisor, mostly used in circumstances that express the need for a tough decision) or the saying *Timpul vindecă toate* (Time cures all things/Time is the best healer, mostly used in situations that involve a high level of sadness, stress and anxiety). The period of time is not specified but the healing power of time in space is used in an efficient way to achieve a goal, that of healing a spiritual or physical wound). It is worth mentioning a few more Romanian sayings that focus on the eternal side of time: *Timpul trece mai încet pentru cine așteaptă* (A watched pot is long in boiling/A watched pot never boils; this saying is mostly used to express the idea that, as human beings, we need to know how to wait; time is patient, but individuals need to be patient too; we mustn't be faster than time; therefore time is a very valuable capital, which we must use wisely, especially since we cannot give it back). Another saying is *Amânarea e hoțul timpului* (procrastination

is the thief of time) which is used in life-related contexts when people tend to postpone things till the last moment and, sometimes, they sadly realise that there is no time left; a saying that denotes that procrastinating - postponing things unnecessarily - causes people to waste a lot of their time. This saying is meant to encourage people to take action in a timely manner, instead of delaying.

4. Conclusions

Space and time expressions in the Romanian language represent a *sine qua non* manifestation of linguistic creativity and true nuclei of the imaginary. One of the main challenges was to explain space and time expressions from the Romanian language in English, taking into consideration the distinctiveness of Romanian expressions in contrast with universal or common expressions from English. Many of them were meant literally in their original use, but sometimes the attribution of the literal meaning changed and the phrase itself grew away from its original roots - typically leading to a folk etymology, as pointed out in the following fragment from *Cuvânt împreună despre rostirea românească*: "what words are the ones we cannot detach from? They do not belong to the linguist, for whom the words should also have a uniqueness, since they are scientific. Nor are words as a means of communication, because then any other word would be good. [...] A whole range of meanings can be concentrated in one word or one sentence"¹⁴ (Noica 1987, 321). The fundamental entities, so close to the collective mind, yet so far because of conceptual abstractization, best reflect both space and time in the Romanian linguistic imaginary; the expressions and sayings associated with them reflect, most of the time, pertinently and undoubtedly, different levels of time and space (without these levels, we would be so empty). The individuals in a space relate to Divinity, but they must also relate to their own self in a time that is both *stationary* and *eternal*. The clear awareness of space and time's existence, creates a space-time image, where there is *un cer* (a sky) and *un pământ* (an earth), and in which the expressions and the sayings take their freedom to change, tending to reflect not only the meanings covered by the thought but also all kinds of analogical and metaphorical meanings.

¹⁴ The original text: "Ce cuvinte sunt acestea de care nu ne putem desprinde? Nu sunt ale lingvistului, pentru care cuvintele ar trebui să aibă și unicitate, de vreme ce se vor științifice. Nu sunt nici cuvintele ca mijloc de comunicare, căci atunci orice alt cuvânt ar fi bun. [...] În câte un cuvânt sau câte o formulare se poate concentra o totalitate de înțelesuri." (Noica 1987, 321) (my translation)

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