

Summary

The Romanian language is almost a perfect case of language which was originally used in a country which was later divided into two parts; the language development in both countries took a different way. As for Romania, especially in the 16th to 17th century and then in the 19th century, the Romanian language went through a natural evolution that as in other European countries was associated with the emergence of state and national self-awareness.

As for Bessarabia, since the territory between the Prut and The Nistru River was annexed to the Russian Empire, the development of the Romanian language began to be made towards a significantly different way from that in neighboring Romania. During this period, 1812 - 1918, the Romanian language was gradually losing its position in Bessarabia. In 1829, the use of the Romanian language was forbidden in the administration. In 1833, the use of Romanian language had been forbidden in churches. In 1842, the teaching in Romanian was forbidden for the secondary schools; it was forbidden for the elementary schools in 1860. After a century of Russian occupation, in the whole of Bessarabia there were released only a few hundred books in the Romanian language and primarily it was a religious literature. Also mass media were influenced by russification and their language was the Russian language. Another sensible intervention was the introduction of the Russian Cyrillic script in Bessarabia. The vast majority of Romanian-language authors had to cross the Prut River and write in Iași or in Bucharest. Among these authors, for example, were Alec Russo, Alexander Donic, Constantin Stamati, Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu, Zamfir Ralli-Arbore, Victor Crăsescu and Constantin Ster. National and social changes in Imperial Russia at the beginning of the 20th century appeared also in Bessarabia. Due to changes in Russia the Russians did not care so much about the events in Bessarabia, therefore there was place for some spiritual and

national changes in Bessarabia which were performed mainly by representatives of teachers, journalists, writers and clergymen. One of these “reformers” was Alexei Mateevici, poet and the author of poem *Limba noastră (Our language)* which later became the official anthem of Republic of Moldova. Often are also mentioned writers and journalists as Pan Halippa and Constantin Stere.

Tsar's policy aimed to russify subjugated peoples, Bessarabia was no exception. Since the mid-19th century, the majority of Bessarabic landowners were russified, the Russian empire further intensified rusification of the citizens - craftsmen, traders, teachers and church dignitaries. In this situation, the Romanian language in Bessarabia was kept only in a spoken form, mainly thanks to the villagers. At that time in Bessarabia there were more villagers than citizens. The villages could not be russified due to the absence of Russian schools, Russian media and Russian literature. The Romanian language that was preserved in the villages was archaic and did not contain any neologisms. Over time, however, it began gaining words from the Russian language. Nicoale Iorga in his essay *Bassarabia noastră (Our Bessarabia)* from 1906 wrote: „The villagers and the people from suburbs of towns speak very standard Romanian with a pleasant touch of the language of chroniclers.”

In 1917 in Chisinau there was founded The Moldovan National Party (Partidul Național Moldovenesc) which a year later played a unique role in the history of the country - formed the first democratic parliament in Bessarabia. The parliament consisted of the Bessarabians who maintained majority and it consisted of representatives of the following minorities: the Russians, the Ukrainians, the Jews, the Bulgarians, the Gagauzians, the Germans and the Polish. In 1923, most peasants enjoyed the agrarian reform, but in terms of a spiritual nature, far more people rejoiced in the return of the mother tongue in offices, schools, literature, and media - in all areas of life. At the end of the 30th of the 20th century we can talk about the kind of synchronization of Bessarabic Romanians and the Romanians from the other side of the Prut River. The

synchronization was not only in a language field but also in culture and national self-awareness field. Many retired persons think back to this era of the Moldovan/Romanian nation. For many of them this was the last period of the country which was blossoming. The Romanians developed a Romanian national consciousness and pride. The integration process was brutally interrupted in the summer of 1940 when the USSR under the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact occupied Bessarabia. After the Soviets agreed with Germany that they would limit their claims in Bukovina, which was outside the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact's secret protocols, to northern Bukovina, Germany urged Romania to accept the ultimatum, which Romania did two days later. The Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic was thereafter created following the entrance of Soviet troops on June 28, 1940.

Since 1941 the communist regime, which was ruled from Moscow, was consolidating its own power through the deportation of intellectuals, counter-revolutionaries, nationalists, rich peasants and priests. Further resistance was defeated thanks to the famine in the years 1946-1947, and then there was a forced collectivization of property, a lot of Bessarabians were deported to mines in Ukraine and Russia. According to recent estimates from 2011, issued by the Special Commission for the Investigation of Communist Crimes in the years 1940-1941 and 1944-1956, there were murdered 300 000 of Bessarabians, a similar number of them were deported to Siberia and other parts of the USSR. In addition, around 450 000 Bessarabians left the country and went over the River Prut.

As in other countries (mainly in Baltic countries), Moscow began to implement its national policy rapidly also in Bessarabia and began to move another Soviet ethnic groups in. Especially Russians were moved to Bessarabia. Thus there was a decrease of the Romanian population, however also their rights, culture and intellectual consciousness were limited and restricted. Some say that the Bessarabian/Romanian population in Bessarabia has not managed to recover and put itself together from this devaluation of morals, manners and regard yet. Values

in society need to be built to bring positive changes. The Bessarabian society has been in state of crisis since the 40th and values as empathy, mutual respect, loyalty and honesty need to be built. The Soviets well knew what they were doing. It is said that Moscow destroyed not only the society at that time, unfortunately also the future generations. Only supporters of the regime could gain high offices, positions and good jobs. That means that pro-Romanian thinking persons were expelled from the society in a better case, nevertheless usually they were persecuted, deprived of their jobs and often deported to Siberia.

According the language policy made in Moscow, since 1941, in Bessarabia the Moldovan language replaced the Romanian language and it was stated by the government that these two languages were not identical. In the same year the Latin script was replaced by the Russian Cyrillic alphabet. Media, education, and authorities began to use a primitive form of language which was created from the Moldovan dialects of Transnistria.

After Stalin's death in 1953 Bessarabia began to apply the tactics of successive small steps closer to the Romanian language which was spoken on the other side of the Prut River, but no fundamental changes were made. Nevertheless, since the 60th of the 20th century, the state of language affairs went better than in the days of Tsarist Russia. In the 60th there was a movement calling for a return to the Latin alphabet and also it was asking for permitting of the Romanian culture which was restricted. At that time also some articles about this topic were released nevertheless the movement was unsuccessful. Romanism was not tolerated and it was taken as anti-soviet thinking. The supporters of Romania were marked as enemies of the people. Some release was recognizable that's why between the 60-80th there were released some valuable books which have been translated into many foreign languages including the Czech language. Usually these authors are mentioned in connection with this era: Ion Druță, Spiridon Vangheli, Grigore Vieru, Aureliu Busuioc, Vl. Beșleagă etc.

Big shift back to the Romanian language occurred in the years 1988-

1989, when the large role was played by journalists and newspapers. During this period, there were released approximately 800 printed articles calling for a return to the Latin alphabet in Bessarabia/Moldova. In 1994 the Democratic Agrarian Party came to power after the parliamentary elections. In the Democratic Agrarian Party there were members of the former Communist Party. They rejected the anthem *Deșteaptă-te, române!* (*Awaken thee, Romanian!*) and chose a new anthem *Limba noastră* (*Our Language*). *Deșteaptă-te, române!* was a national anthem of the Moldavian Democratic Republic between 1971-1918 and between 1991-1994. *Deșteaptă-te, române!* has been also a national anthem of Romania, that was the reason why the former communist politicians did not want it as a national anthem of Republic of Moldova. In addition, they made a change in the Constitution concerning the language issue. They established the Moldovan language as the official language of the country and its writing is based on the Latin alphabet. It was a step back. From 1989 to 1994 the Moldovan language was the official language however in the Constitution it was written that the Moldovan language is identical to the Romanian language.

In the last decade the question of language issue became a hot topic in Moldova again. In 2004 the communist government initiated releasing of the Moldovan – Roman dictionary. The author of the dictionary is Vasile Stati, a communist thinker and leader of anti-Romanian movement in Republic of Moldova. This dictionary has evoked a critical discourse through the whole society. On one side there are anti-Romanians supported by the communists, on the other side there is a considerable part of the population, which, inter alia, in the census in 2004 identified themselves as “Romanians” (30% of the population of Moldova is so marked). We may say that the national consciousness and ethnic identity has begun to rise up after approximately 150 years of Russian influence which caused a loss of this ethnic identity and national awareness and consciousness. Important moment was that the Romanian government has admitted independence of Republic of Moldova earlier than Moscow. A lot Moldovan students study at universities in Romania and this fact

can be taken as a promise of development of Romanian language in Republic of Moldova. Although the situation around the Moldovan/Romanian language has improved a little bit, the future will be dramatic and dilemmatic. Words of the Professor Eugenia Bojoga: “The Romainan language in Bessarabia is a suffering without end.”