
A paradigm of Comparative Lexicology. By Floriana Popescu
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Papers have been written on Romanian and English comparatives in different areas of language, code switching (Bancu 2013), Parentheses (Gorbani 2014) just to name a few, but no major work like this one, which now stands out as a model in comparative lexicology has been written on these two languages. In this state-of-the-art Paradigm of Comparative Lexicology, Floriana Popescu's considerable breadth and depth of knowledge is organised into an accessible series of four parts made up of eight chapters. Each part is made up of unequal number of chapters just as each chapter is made up of unequal number of pages. The only part with chapter division is part two, comprising five of the eight chapters, while the other parts have a single chapter each. I personally think that this work would have been divided into two parts instead of four. Parts that constitute single chapters could have been written under a single part while chapter two to six, another. Chapters also vary much in length with the shortest and the longest being chapter 6 with eight pages and chapter two with 25 pages respectively. This constitutes, in my opinion, a strength and a weakness in that it gives the impression (which may not be true) that the author finds it difficult to synchronise, in a balanced manner, easy-to-reach materials to the disadvantage of difficult-to-access ones. This is probably true in the sense that longer chapters have been enriched with more examples than shorter ones.

Much of the book is written in a pure expository style, making appropriate reference to key research studies in the domain. The chapters are rich in content and most of the items discussed, begin with an etymological study which is supported by up-to-date references, especially those of the English origin that are generally more than those of Romanian.

This book has handled what **Антрушина, Афанасьева & Морозова** (2004) call the main lexicological problems, the problem of word-building which is associated with prevailing morphological word-structures and the processes of making new words. This work, however, leans more on the paradigmatic than the syntagmatic approach.

To begin the content survey of this text, chapter one, which is titled Basics in Comparative Lexicology, succinctly brings out the theoretical considerations and lays a comparative foundation by outlining common aspects related to European history and culture that English and Romanian share. Three of these aspects are insularity, language similarities noticeable at the macro and micro-structural levels of vocabulary and lastly, lexical, semantic and associative similarities. The chapter ends in a very unusual but innovative fashion wherein the author, in prelude to the chapter's conclusion, introduces an introduction to the book in which she examines the study sources and resource, research and work sources and an outline of the book. This chapter also presents some weaknesses that must not be ignored: I am unable to make out the style sheet used in this text because there is quite a lot of inconsistencies in the in-text citations. At one point, all the names of authors are written before their works like in "Hans Marchand's *The categories and Types of Present-day English Word Formation*," and at another, only single names are written as in "Plag's *Word formation in English*," just to indicate a few (22). In addition, comprehension would be eased if a language other than the one used in the text is translated. This is the case with the citation in French from Benveniste (1966, p. 50) (32), which is not translated into either English or Romanian.

Part two, a Compendium of Word Formations, can be termed the beginning chapters that tackle substantive comparative elements in both languages. It is subdivided into five chapters. Chapters two and three, titled Base-Enriching Word Formations and Base-Reducing Word Formations respectively, describe asymmetric processes in English and Romanian through which words are formed through a contradictory process of adding letters or word parts to existing lexemes to create new ones, or by a process of lexical shrinking, otherwise termed a process of subtracting letters or words parts to create new words. In a very extensive manner, the author, Floriana Popescu, outlines the different processes that facilitate word formation processes in the two chapters. Affixation, compounding, telescoping, blending, just to name a few, constitute the core of base-enriching word formation processes (41-80), while abbreviations, clipping, back-formation, lexical ellipsis amongst others (89-120), constitute the core of base-reducing word formation processes. The plenty of examples used to illustrate each of the elements discussed, helps to drive home the point. There are, however, some inconsistencies in this chapter at the level of translation and

classification of words. Firstly, the author provides English translations just for some selected Romanian lexemes. It would have been more rewarding to have all lexemes in Romanian translated into English or leave out the idea of translation altogether. Secondly, examples that are provided for each language in some cases are classified separately from each other, which to me is the ideal form of classification, but in other cases, both Romanian and English examples are mixed up without distinctions and no explanation is given to that. Mixed classifications or illustrations actually create some confusion as it is not clear whether they go for both languages or they can be separated as in other examples.

In yet another comparative presentation of lexeme-inventing pattern found in the two territorial distant countries under study, Popescu, in this chapter entitled Base Creating Word Formations, looks at proper nouns and personal names as naming sources. To achieve this, she uses the processes of coinage, eponymization and toponymization. As has been the case with the other chapters in this book, English lexical creativity far exceeds the inventiveness of the Romanian. It may be safe to say that the “the campaign for language protection against any possible influx of foreign elements” (130-131) might have created a wall against creativity in Romanian. It is clear in this chapter that lexical creativity has played a great role in the growth of English and Romanian Vocabularies.

Chapter five is titled Base-Preserving Word Formations. It presents other creative methods which show no formal distortion of the base form, but whose long-established meaning reveal significant change. Base-Preserving Word Formations go by different appellations, “conversion,” “word shifting,” and “zero derivation.” This chapter shows how English and Romanian have each enriched their vocabularies by interpreting words and their traditional meanings. This is done in three subtopics, Lexical Shifts, Evolutional Shifts and Semantic Shifts. The manner in which the author presents the lexical items, through historical context and then evolution in meaning, makes her analysis not only convincing but relevant (159-161). The discussion on generalization of meaning (159) and extension of meaning (160) all present extension of meaning because in both cases, meaning has changed over time. The two would have been better discussed under extension of meaning because there is actually no theoretical

argument to this division and the chapter's contents remain perfectly in order without it.

In chapter six, Popescu, in another word formation process, Base-Altering word process, shows how language has come under threat as a result of the speakers' personal analogies, interpretations, confusions and mistakes. She highlights random alterations consequent to personal misinterpretations which cover corruption, folk etymology, false analogy, deflection, meta-analysis and metathesis. Although all fall under base-altering word formation, the author, in a bit to facilitate understanding, has drawn a parallel between non-analogy-based distortions of words and false etymology, and folk etymology. One of the outstanding things in this chapter is that unlike in most cases where English stands out than Romanian in word creations, metathesis has been more productive in the former than the latter (187). Deflection is well articulated under vowel deviations, consonant deviations, lexico-phonetic deviations and double deviations. Nonetheless, the lexico-phonetic deviations seem not to adhere to the phonological rule for the selected words that end in *-ate* represented by the sounds /ɪt/ and /eɪt/ for nouns and verbs respectively (190-191). The *-ate* segment is presented as /ət/ and not /ɪt/ for nouns as the outlined words in this section indicate (Cambridge Advance Learner's Dictionary). The /ɪ/ sound in the diphthong /eɪ/ is always a short sound not a long one as presented by several words in this section.

In chapter seven, titled Naturalization and Adoption in English and Romanian, the author indicates that linguistic travellers were in traditional literature named "borrowings," "loans," "assimilations," "Adoptions," and "calques." The nomenclature has changed and all these are simply referred to as "foreignism," suggesting that a "borrowing" or a "loan" will have to be given back to their owners. In very clear terms, the author states that, "unlike any other valuables, these immaterial foreignisms, which have become English or Romanian possessions, may or may not be fully naturalized, but they can become somebody else's prized possession" (194). This statement gives credence to the title of this chapter and forms the core of the discussion here. A common thing about the two languages under study is that some Latin syntagms such as *modus operandi*, *annus horribilis*, *annus mirabilis*, *mutatis mutandis* and many others (196-197), are part of their general vocabulary, though it is not clear if they carry the same

semantic orientation in both languages. In mapping out the foreignisms that have added new shades of colour, flavour, and exotic tastes to the English and the Romanian vocabularies, the author has shown that although Romanian and English benefitted from some common sources like Greek, Italian and French, just to name a few, their sources of enrichment are also very diverse (195).

Chapter eight is entitled Multi-Layered Webs of Words and their Interrelationships. The author further subdivides these multi-layered words into two sections, lexically web related words and semantically related words. Popescu deviates from the historiographic and etymological debates on the nature of word relationships that had been the practice in the study of English and Romanian, to a synchronic study that focuses on real word relationships and lexical strata, enabling her to reveal quite much that the two languages have in common (see pages 237-240). In her discussion of lexically-related webs of words, she goes beyond the usual norm of familiar elements like homonyms, homographs, hyponyms, acronyms amongst others, in most lexicology text (Howard and Ze, Amvela 2001; Plag, 2002; Sala and Ubanako, 2008) to less familiar ones such as Capitonyms, contronyms and palindromes (241-244). Students and teachers who have been used to traditional text will certainly find this book excitingly innovative.

The bibliography is very rich and up-to-date and relevant to the subject, although it does not take care of certain details that may not affect the text, yet important to its general presentation. It is not clear from the entries which style sheet is used because in some, all the names are written in full, while others, parts of the names are abbreviated (267). This stretches from the in-text as I have already mentioned.

In all, Floriana Popescu's *A Paradigm of Comparative Lexicology* is a complete piece with chapters that cover very relevant subjects that are well researched. Despite the different lapses indicated at the chapter levels, the core concepts in this book remain aligned with the major objectives of the author and would be of utmost relevance to her readership. In each of the aspects handled in the various chapters of this book, Popescu gets to the heart of current debates and succeeds in elucidating these in accessible terms. This book, therefore, presents a concise, appropriate and nevertheless, informative survey of a paradigm of comparative lexicology which can be used for the comparative and a contrastive

study of other languages. As a resource textbook in the hands of lexicologist, it deserves to be heartily recommended.

References

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