

Communicative patterns in Romanian workplace written texts¹

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Abstract: Romanian workplace communication has changed significantly in the past two decades. Multinational companies have implemented Western European and American communicative practices and pattern. Thus, new communicative patterns have emerged in professional Romanian. In this paper we present part of the results of a larger on-going research project, 'Professional Language in Present-day Romanian. Linguistic Patterns and Discursive Structures', which is supported by a governmental, grant (CNCSIS, ID 142). Within the frameworks of sociolinguistics and discourse analysis, we will focus on three aspects that cover various linguistic compartments: new textual patterns, lexico-semantic innovations, and salutation formulas. The data for this paper have been selected from the corpus 'Workplace communication. Tentative typology of Romanian professional written texts'. The corpus contains 126 texts, which were written in various fields of activity (commercial, production, administrative, educational, military, and medical). In this paper, we argue and exemplify the ways in which various discursive structures have been adapted to the Romanian specificities of intra-organizational communication, and we lay special emphasis on the reorganization of the lexical level as a result of the influence of English on Romanian as well as on the alterations brought about by the familiar 'you' and first name address in salutation formulas.

Key Words: Professional language, corpus-based analysis, discursive structures, lexical change, communicative competence.

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Modelos de comunicación en los textos redactados en el ámbito profesional rumano

Resumen: En el ámbito rumano, la comunicación en el lugar de trabajo ha experimentado cambios importantes en las últimas décadas. Las compañías multinacionales fueron implementando gradualmente modelos y prácticas comunicativas occidentales y norteamericanas. Por consiguiente, se puede hablar hoy día de la aparición de nuevos modelos comunicativos en el lenguaje profesional rumano. En el presente trabajo, nos enfocamos principalmente en tres aspectos que conciernen diferentes sectores de la lingüística: los nuevos modelos discursivos, las innovaciones léxico-semánticas, y las fórmulas de saludo. Los datos de este trabajo fueron seleccionados del corpus 'Workplace communication. Tentative typology of Romanian professional written texts' original. Dicho corpus contiene más de 126 textos redactados en diversos ámbitos de actividad (comercio, producción, administración, educación). Los textos escogidos varían en cuanto a sus marcos participativos, su estructura y su temática. Este trabajo demostrará e ilustrará la modalidad en que diferentes estructuras discursivas han sido adaptadas a lo específico de la comunicación intra-organizacional rumana, pero asimismo se concentrará en la reorganización del nivel léxico bajo la influencia del inglés; además, pondrá de relieve las modificaciones que se pueden detectar en un análisis pormenorizado a nivel micro-estructural de las fórmulas de saludo en que predominan el tuteo familiar y el nombre de pila como apelativo.

Palabras Clave: Lenguaje profesional, análisis basado en corpus, estructuras discursivas, cambio léxico, competencia comunicativa.

INTRODUCTION

Romanian workplace communication has changed significantly in the past two decades, ever since the fall of the communist regime in December 1989. The changes were caused by the implementation and development of a new means of communication (mainly electronic mail) and by significant (though not so obvious) influences on the mentality of the people. Being no longer controlled by censorship and propaganda, workplace communication has developed independently, on already-existing Romanian patterns, or based on recognized practices implemented by multinational organizations. People, especially the young generations, began avoiding the use of existing communicative practices, trying to differentiate their new workplace communication patterns from the old ones described as belonging to a so-called "wooden language"². As a result, Romanian workplace communication is now defined not only by an increased use of worldwide spoken languages in everyday talk, instead of plain Romanian as it used to be, but also by the implementation of Western European and American communicative practices and patterns. Many linguistic innovations were adapted and adopted by the Romanian language both at the structural and discourse level. Thus, new communicative patterns have emerged in professional Romanian.

Romanian research in this field began in the 1960's (Slama-Cazacu, 1962, 1963, 1964a, 1964b) and developed within the framework of psycholinguistics (Slama-Cazacu, 1999). Despite this encouraging start, Romanian linguists ceased developing such research projects for decades. But since 2000, interest has grown in specific fields of activity: human resources, sociology, psychology, management, and others, all of which have proven the necessity for constant and consistent research on workplace communicative mechanisms and techniques. After a series of independent research studies (regarding e-mail communication (Măda, 2004); gendered communication (Măda, 2006); meeting discourse (Măda, 2007); Gheorghe, Măda & Săftoiu, 2008), in this paper we present part of the results of a larger on-going research project, *Professional language in present-day Romanian. Linguistic patterns and discursive structures*, commenced in 2007 at Transylvania University of Braşov (2007-2010). This is the first Romanian research project supported by a governmental grant (CNCSIS, ID 142) which focuses on the linguistic aspects of workplace communication in Romanian³. Among the objectives of our research are the following: building two corpora, one for written texts and one for interactions in the workplace; identifying some characteristics of effective communication in various Romanian workplaces; and disseminating the results of the analysis among communication and workplace practitioners.

1. Data and methodology

The data for this paper have been selected from the corpus entitled *Comunicarea la locul de muncă. Schiță de tipologie a textelor redactate în mediul profesional românesc* [Workplace communication. Tentative typology of Romanian professional written texts] (Gheorghe, Măda & Săftoiu, 2009). The corpus contains 126 entries (complete documents or relevant excerpts), which were chosen from various fields of activity (commercial, production, administrative, educational, military and medical), having different participatory frameworks, structure, and topics.

The methodology used in collecting the data derives from participatory methodology (used by the *Language in the workplace project*, based at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand - Holmes & Stubbe, 2003). Using the same basic methodological principles (giving the participants as much control as possible over the data collection process, reducing the researchers' involvement in the physical process of collecting data to a minimum, providing useful preparation in advance and relevant feedback in the end in order to increase reliability and trust between the organisations and the research team), we have adapted the participatory methodology to collecting written texts.

The first step in collecting the data was to approach organizations from various fields of activity either directly (face-to-face meetings) or indirectly (using institutional contacts or sending a formal letter). Many of the organizations answered our request positively and were genuinely interested in being part of this project. Together with the organizations' decision-makers, we established guidelines for collecting the written documents: variety, reasonable length, relevance, frequency, recent date of issue (within the last 5 years).

The second step involved only the participant organizations and it consisted in the actual collecting of the written materials. The researchers did not become involved in the process of selecting the material. Thus, the participant organizations had the freedom to edit the texts according to their business standards. Meanwhile, the research team gathered relevant data about the field of activity and the context in which the documents were issued.

The third step involved data processing through initial qualitative analysis. At this stage, the research team organized the texts according to a tentative typology and eliminated all the identification elements: name of the organization, names of people, places, phone numbers, addresses, registration number, etc.

The final step of collecting the data included offering 'reflexive feedback'. This means that some preliminary results of the analysis were presented to the participating organizations and we agreed on the final form to be published.

A distinctive feature of all the data is that they represent only internal communication between participants who belong to the same organization or to different branches of the organization.

Generally speaking, professional written texts resemble institutional discourse in many ways (Drew & Heritage, 1992). Professional communication is always oriented to a goal, usually (but not always) transactional. The institutional character of written communication is embodied first and foremost in its 'form' (the business format of letters, e-mails, reports, or memos), and also in its content. The constraints imposed on written texts are institutional in character or origin. Particular constraints (such as taboo subjects or sensitive matters) determine how the text is shaped and give its 'formal' character.

Due to the increased formality of written texts, the context is more fixed than in the case of interactions. Professional writing has the function of preserving the information accurately for future reference. We would mention only the importance of written documents in announcing a meeting, establishing the agenda, recording the results in the protocol of the meeting, and implementing them through follow-up procedures.

Institutional writing may be associated with inferential frameworks and procedures that are particular to specific institutional contexts. A common example is that of chained e-mail messages whose inferential frameworks are similar to those used in linking the 'turns' in verbal interactions. The reason for activating such mechanisms lies in their efficiency.

In this paper we will focus on some new textual patterns (farewell letter, welcome letter, etc.) and on the various influences brought about by the use of English as the lingua franca in multinational organizations.

2. New discursive patterns in Romanian professional written texts

In this part of the paper we will focus on some new textual patterns that have appeared in the Romanian professional context in the last few years. In our data we have identified patterns such as welcome and farewell letters or messages, jokes, and some formal and informal invitations to team-building events. They were created after foreign models, but now they tend to display Romanian features and specificity. It may be argued that the occurrence of these patterns is entirely due to the development of electronic mail, but there are strong arguments in favour of the 'change of mentality' factor. Among these factors we cite the function of group solidarity and collegiality (they are no longer part of the 'wooden language' expressions, as they used to be in the communist period, but part of organizational culture), the liberty of expression (especially in jokes and puns that touch on political or administrative issues), and the encouragement of creativity.

Institutional discourse is closely linked to the social relationships created in a specific workplace. As we will see in the final part of this paper, forms of address represent a means of creating social identities not only in interactions, but also in writing. Gender, ethnicity, status, occupational role, and power are significant features in building written discourse.

2.1. Context: E-mail message with an announcement about some reorganization following the appointment of an employee in a different position (originally in Romanian, translated by the authors)

To the Organization

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Liana Coroian, presently **Customer Service & Logistics Manager, Romania** in the position of **Customer Service & Logistics Development Manager, CEEMA**, reporting to Herbert Kueng, Customer Service and Logistics Director, CEEMA, starting from 1st October 2004. Liana is Stuart Martin's successor, who left the company, choosing to continue his career outside [company]. Liana will be based in Vienna.

Liana joined [company] in December 1997, as IM&S Purchaser. Before that, she accumulated experience in production, import, and export in the furniture industry. During her career with [company], Liana enlarged her work experience with missions in Production Planning, Demand Planning and Logistics Operations, before being named Customer Service and Logistics Manager, Romania, in August 2002. In this last position, Liana actively supported initiatives at CEEMA region level in Customer Service & Logistics. Liana graduated from Transylvania University of Braşov, Engineering Department.

In her new role, Liana will be a close partner to the customer service & logistics managers in the country, in order to implement the alignment and development of functional programs and practices. She will lead/coordinate the design and the implementation of these programs in CEEMA. Liana's experience in positions from customer service & logistics, combined with her leadership abilities, recommend her for this challenging and important mission.

Liana's successor in Romania will be announced at a later date.

Please join me in wishing Liana good luck in her new mission.

Herbert Kueng
Director Customer Service & Logistics,
CEEMA

Stephan Warley
Managing Director, Romania

Welcome and farewell letters are good examples of formal statements in creating group solidarity. The power relationships and the hierarchy are strict and obvious from the content of the above announcement. The tone, the succession of paragraphs, the salutation and closing formulas are means of enforcing power relationships within the organization. This type of text is new for Romanian institutional discourse which had no formal written means of announcing and welcoming new employees. The same function may be observed in a slightly less formal situation, an announcement at departmental level (see 4.1).

The discursive frame is completed by farewell letters, in which the formal tone is always replaced by a semiformal one.

2.2. Context: Farewell message to all colleagues (in Romanian and English in original. For conformity, we will provide the English version)

Dear all,

As some of you already find⁴ [sic] out, today is my last day in [company]. Since I've decided that [sic] is the right time for [sic] change, I've choosed [sic] another path for my career.

Looking behind [sic] to the last five years spent with [company], I want to thank you for everything: trust, support, cooperation and nice times [sic]. I'll take with me good memories and some good friends.

I wish all of you many successes [sic] and achievements in both professional and personal life.
All the best,
Manuela

The use of a foreign language in professional communication, especially in writing, is relatively new in Romania. The multinational companies have imposed the use of the predominant language (in most cases, English) in almost all communication that goes beyond the departmental level. This constraint has had numerous influences upon the cultural, social, and professional identity of the Romanian labour force. For most employees it was a matter of either pick it up fast or leave the company. Thus, frequent grammar mistakes appear in English texts. In turn, the use of English influences Romanian texts. We will address this matter later in this paper.

Strictly forbidden in written professional discourse before 1989, jokes and puns circulated orally and were endowed with connotations of conspiracy. The openness and freedom of expression guaranteed by democratic rights brought about humour as a new discourse type in written communication as well.

2.3. Context: Email message containing a joke (originally in Romanian, translated by the authors)

A drunkard who smelled of cheap liquor and who had an old newspaper got on a bus and sat next to a very honourable-looking priest. Then the drunkard took out of his bag an almost empty bottle of liquor, drank it to the bottom, then started reading the newspaper.

At a certain point, he asked the priest: "Excuse me, sir, do you know the causes of spondylosis?"

"Of course", the priest answered, obviously disgusted, in a cold and sarcastically polite tone. "The factors which lie behind spondylosis are a disorganized life, the company of women of a questionable quality, smoking and drinking exaggeratedly, drinking parties ending in nights spent in brothels... all these lead to spondylosis..."

"Uuuuuuuuuuuuuuu", answered the drunken man and returned to his paper.

The priest, otherwise a merciful person, after considering what he had said, addressed the drunkard once more, in a kind and conciliatory manner: "Sorry, I didn't mean to offend you... how long have you suffered from spondylosis?"

"Me??? No, father... I have never suffered from anything like this... I have just read in the paper that the Pope..."

Workplace humour has numerous functions in interaction (Holmes & Stubbe, 2003). In written discourse it proves to be an efficient means of creating solidarity and collegiality in the workplace because people send humorous messages to their co-workers, exchange opinions, and comment on them--things they were previously forbidden to do.

2.4. Context: A message posted on a door in a research institute (originally in Romanian, translated by the authors)

Whoever has taken for analysis the F-I volume from D.A. is asked to bring it back discreetly!

A subtle irony is embedded in the above message. The ‘take for analysis’ gesture is, in fact, forbidden, because no one was allowed to take the volume out of the room. The ‘discretion’ of the bringing-back repairing action is a must in preserving the ‘face’ of the addressee.

Team-building as a concept has appeared relatively recently in Romanian workplace culture. Events such as Christmas parties or going on trips with workmates were highly improbable twenty years ago. Still, both the concept and the events seem to have become popular and prove worthwhile activities in any organization. A core of written texts has emerged from the necessity of managing such activities: announcements, invitations, and programs.

2.5. Context: Part of the program of a Christmas team-building event (originally in Romanian, translated by the authors)

We promise you, Kab Fresenian people, unique moments of happiness and warmth, as they appear only between old and dear friends, who are separated by seas and countries and cannot meet each other very often, but only now and then, and much too rarely do they have the chance to swap stories leisurely, by the fireside. Greater is our joy and double the pleasure of our meeting again!...

This excerpt was chosen in order to exemplify a means of creating a certain atmosphere before the annual Christmas party. The scene recaptures medieval times of joy and everlasting friendship, now present only in fairytales.

Another specific creative pattern in Romanian literature is that of ‘The Little Plough’, a traditional wishing poem meant to bring prosperity.

2.6. Context: An e-mail message in verse, in which the colleagues contributing to a common volume are asked to submit their papers to the sender of this message, instead of Razvan, the previous addressee, by the end of 2008 (in Romanian in original, translated word-by-word without verse constraints, by the authors)

Romanian	English
Dragi colegi, Mai adastati, Cercetarea sa imi dati si 2008 completati. Cu modelul dinainte ca e proaspat si e-n minte. De urat v-as mai ura Dar Razvan e-n tura lunga, Materialul sa il stranga Si la rector sa ajunga. Mie, va rog, de-l pasati Veti fi gata aranjati, In sinteza-l integrez Lui Razvan i-l emailz. Va multumesc, Craciunita [family name]	Dear colleagues, Wait no more, The research to give to me 2008 to be fulfilled. Take the model as before 'cos it's fresh and in your minds. I would wish you even more But Razvan is on the rush To gather the entire material To present it to the rector Please, pass it to me To arrange it To integrate it in the synthesis To e-mail it to Razvan. Thank you, "Christmiss" [family name]

Creativity and the ability to re-create a mythical time and even the language of our ancestors is characteristic of such written texts. No longer adapted after foreign patterns, they are creations of a living workplace culture that seeks identity landmarks in a world dominated by foreign patterns.

3. Professional Romanian -the new language of work

The massive changes that have affected all strands of life in Romania and the increasing exposure of Romanian professionals to Western communicative patterns have determined the linguistic dynamics visible both in workplace contexts and in the field of mass media.

The re-shaping of a language register always has linguistic consequences, and this is the case with the Romanian language of work, too. As mentioned above, Romanian workplace communication is now characterised by an increased use of worldwide spoken languages (mostly English) in everyday talk. This is the main source for a great number of innovations both at the 'lexical-semantic level' (loans, calques, language-internal word formation processes, and conversion of certain categories) and at the 'morpho-syntactic level' (changes in subcategorization of verbs or changes in the valency grill of a category, adoption of clichés that affect, by analogy, the functioning of structures specific to other registers, etc.).

In this section, we provide several examples of innovations at the lexical-semantic level, which

are based on English models. We leave the other sources of influence and their consequences on the other levels of language for future research.

Apart from several words that are frequent in most registers, the examples are taken from the above-mentioned corpus.

3.1. Borrowings

In the context of globalization and adoption of Western organizational patterns, Romanian has borrowed a large number of words from English⁵. According to Ryazanova-Clarke and Wade, (1999: 138-139), the reasons for resorting to a foreign word are:

“(1) the need to name the profusion of new goods, objects and concepts; (2) the need to differentiate one meaning from another; (3) the acceptance of a loan into the language according to the principle of language economy; (4) the preference for a loan over native words due to socio-psychological factors, such as the prestigious status of a foreign word”.

In our opinion, the productivity of this procedure depends on the predisposition of the replica language (the target-language) to accept and to process foreign lexical material. Romanian is a very ‘hospitable’ language⁶ that freely accepts loanwords, even from languages that are not genealogically related to it (as is the case of English, a Germanic language, while Romanian is a Romance one). The lexical system of Romanian has great power of adaptation, so a new term may easily be adopted and its lexical root may even become productive by means of internal derivational and inflectional affixes.

Depending on the frequency of the word and also in relation to its graphic and phonemic aspects, the orthography and pronunciation of the new loan word is adapted or is preserved as in the donor language. For instance, the process of adaptation was accelerated for several terms by the fact that nothing in their spelling seems peculiar to Romanian speakers, thus, words like ‘audit’, ‘barter’, ‘grant’, ‘holding’, ‘monitor’, ‘manager’ (pronounced /ma-na-ğer/), ‘management’ (pronounced /ma-na-dje-ment/), ‘marketing’, ‘multimedia’, ‘sponsor’, ‘plotter’ (also spelled ‘ploter’ and pronounced /plo-ter/ or /plo-tər/), etc., could easily be adopted even by people without any knowledge of English. Stoichițoiu-Ichim (2006: 231) shows that the assimilation of a new word may be slowed down by both objective and subjective factors. Objective factors are “the dissimilarities between the two languages or the limited circulation of highly specialized REB (recent English borrowing)”. ‘Anglicisms’ belonging to the vocabulary of a restricted group of people have less chance of being assimilated. Recently borrowed English terms in the field of technology, economics, and business are not yet orthographically adapted;

their pronunciation is also similar to the one in the source language: ‘broker’, ‘cash-flow’, CD’ (pronounced /si: di/), ‘PR’ (pronounced /pi: ar/) ‘clearing’, ‘deadline’, ‘dealer’, ‘design’, ‘display’, ‘feedback’, ‘folder’, ‘forecast’, ‘franchiser’, ‘hardware’, ‘know-how’, ‘laptop’, ‘leadership’, ‘leasing’, ‘player’, ‘printe’r, ‘replay’, ‘scanner’, ‘server’, ‘shuttle’, ‘software’, ‘target’, ‘template’, ‘tuner’, ‘Walkman’, etc. Other reasons for the preservation of the original shape of a loanword may be some subjective factors mentioned by Stoichițoiu-Ichim (2006: 231) “the anglophile linguistic trend” and “speakers’ better command of English”. For many (mostly young) Romanians, the terminology of professions is more prestigious if English terms are used instead of their Romanian equivalents: ‘account manager’, ‘area sales manager’, ‘chief executive officer’, HR Trainee’, ‘IT manager’, ‘marketing manager’, ‘program officer’, ‘regional representative’. Departments in both multinational and Romanian organizations also have English names: ‘Controlling Department’, ‘Corporate Affairs’, ‘HR Department’, ‘IT Department’, ‘PR manager’, etc.

The morphological adaptation of foreign borrowings clearly shows that Romanian is a “highly tolerant” language. According to Ciobanu (2004: 44), the process of morphological adaptation of English loans is generally achieved before phonologic and graphemic assimilation.

Integration of nominal Anglicisms to the rich Romanian inflectional system entails the use of nominal classifiers like enclitic determiners: *tunerul*, *printerul*, *software-ul*⁷ (*soft-ul*), proclitic determiners: *un / niște ploter(e)*, *folder(e)*, inflectional affixes, i.e. plural morphemes like *-e* or *-uri*: *servere*, *foldere*, *audituri*, *laptopuri*, *display-uri*, *holdinguri*, *trenduri*, or case markers: *holdingului*, *a unui manager*.

Verbs are often created from English verbs or nouns using Romanian verbal classifiers, like derivative suffixes: *-a*: *forcasta* (cf. *forecast*), *targheta*⁸ (cf. *target*), *printa* (cf. *print*); *-iza*: *sponsoriza* (cf. *sponsor*), *globaliza* (cf. *global / globalize*), *computeriza* (cf. *computer / computerise*), *-ui*⁹: *a brandui* (cf. *brand*), *a bipui* (cf. the interjection *bip*), *a chatui* (cf. *chat*), *a șerui* (cf. *share*), *a zipui* (cf. *zip*) or inflectional suffixes: *downloadați fișierul* [download the file]: *femeia care îl body-guard-ează pe N.* [the woman that *body-guards N.] (GALR, 2005). The affix-(a)re is specialized for abstract nouns, and is used as a means of completing the lexical family of the loanword: *auditare*, *forcastare*, *printare*, *targhetare*, etc.

In the professional environment, the main motivation for foreign borrowings is the need to denote concepts and activities. Thus, nouns and verbs are more frequently borrowed than other parts of speech.

3.2. False friends and calques

In order to enrich their vocabulary, more conservative languages resort to calques rather than borrowings. Though not a conservative language, Romanian frequently adopts the procedure of calque in professional register. Workplace language is the source of numerous calques (mostly semantic) that are now spread in everyday communication.

3.2.1. A 'semantic calque'

Is a semantic loan, a procedure that involves the use of an already-existing word in the replica language, but with an extended sense, which is modelled after its use in another language. Two conditions are necessary to be fulfilled in order to transfer the new sense from a foreign term: the word in the replica language should be at least bi-semantic and at least one of its meanings should correspond to the meaning of the loanword.

Examples of semantic calques in professional lexis may be found in the terminology of computer science (and some in business terminology), but it is important to point out that they are not very specialized terms and some of them are used in parallel to their foreign counterpart: *a aplica* (Engl. to apply), *a descărca un fișier* (Engl. to download a file), *a licenția*¹⁰ (Engl. to licence), *a naviga* (Engl. to surf), *a opera* (Engl. to operate), *provocare* (Engl. challenge), *portofoliu de produse* (Engl. product portfolio), *promoție* (Engl. promotion), *virus* (Engl. virus), *vierme*, (Engl. worm)¹¹, etc.

From a normative perspective, Avram (1997) and Stoichițoiu-Ichim (2006), among others, draw attention to the potential danger of semantic calque. The new creation may be deceptive for speakers who are not familiar with the source language. The fact that the word still 'looks' like the old Romanian word¹², but is endowed with supplementary meaning may lead to an incorrect use of it, to 'homonymic collisions'¹³ ('false friends').

Professional linguistic context is probably the most important source for such semantic deviations in present-day Romanian. The examples below are extracted from our corpus of written texts. Taking into account the fact that written varieties of a language are more conservative than oral ones, the relatively high frequency of 'false friends' found in a small corpus is an indicator of the dimensions of the phenomenon.

- a) **a agreea₁** (transitive verb, with the meaning of 'to like somebody, to be fond of', DEX, 1996)
a agreea₂ (transitive verb, cf. Engl. to agree, 'to decide together', LDOCE, 2003)
să agreeăm strategia [in order to agree on the strategy]
a agreea₃ (cf. Engl. to agree on / that 'to have the same opinion', LDOCE, 2003) - as an in-

transitive verb, used in Romanian only with a subordinate clause (never with a prepositional phrase)

sperăm să agreeți că... [we hope that you will agree that...]

b) **atașament**₁ ('attachment to / for somebody or something', DEX, 1996);

atașament₂ (cf. Engl. attachment 'a document or file that is sent with an email message', LDOCE, 2003)

vă rog să trimiteți chestionarul din atașament completat până cel târziu 28 ianuarie 2008 [please send the questionnaire enclosed in the attached file by 28th of January 2008 at the latest]

c) **competiție**₁ ("race")

competiție₂ ("people or groups that are competing against you", LDOCE, 2003)

îmbunătățirea [...] imaginii mărcii față de competiție [improvement of the image of our brand against competition] - the innovation may have both an internal and an external explanation.

d) **dedicație**₁ ('a text written at the beginning of a book, album, etc., as a means of expressing appreciation or affection for somebody')

dedicație₂ ('hard work or effort that someone puts in a particular activity because they care about it a lot', LDOCE, 2003)

succesul mărcilor dvs. demonstrează dedicația pe care ați avut-o [the success of your brands proves your dedication]

e) **design**₁ ('pattern', 'drawing')

design₂ ('concept', 'process of planning', LDOCE, 2003)

va conduce / coordona designul și implementarea acestor programe [X will conduct / lead the design and the implementation of the programs]

f) **facilitate**₁ (noun, 'the quality of being easy, facile'; in pl. 'amenities', DEX, 1996)

facilitate₂ (noun, cf. Engl. 'a place or building used for a particular activity or industry, or for providing a particular type of service', LDOCE, 2003)

închiderea facilității de producție [closing of production facility]

g) **locăție**₁ (noun, 'lease'; 'rental fee', DEX, 1996)

locăție₂ ('site, place, position, spot, a particular place, especially in relation to other areas; the position of something')

numărul / poziția locațiilor [the number / the position of the locations]

***a loca** (vb. "to be located"), a regressive derivative from *location*

dacă persoanele sunt locatate acolo [if the persons are located there]

h) **oportunitate**₁ (noun, ‘characteristic of something that is proper or adequate’) **oportunitate**₂ (cf. Engl. opportunity ‘chance to do something’; ‘a chance to get a job or improve your situation at work’, LDOCE, 2003)

Sperăm ca și de această dată să folosiți oportunitatea ce vi se oferă [we hope that this time you will take advantage of the opportunity offered to you]

3.2.2. A ‘phraseological calque’

Consists in a literal translation of an entire expression, with less adaptation to the syntactic patterns of the replica language. Stoichițoiu-Ichim (2006) shows that expressions like *târg de joburi* (Engl. jobshop) or *lider de piață* (Engl. market leader) are not calques, because the structure of the model is altered in translation, and is adapted to the structure of Romanian noun phrases.

In a professional context, phraseological calques are not very frequent. In our corpus, we found only the original expressions ‘e-mail’ and ‘e-commerce’, which seemed to be preferred to the Romanian calques (*poștă electronică* and *comerț electronic*).

We found, instead, the use of certain translations of English expressions which are not well-formed in Romanian. The resulting phrases are syntactic calques that affect the subcategorization pattern of the verb: *a face diferența* (Engl. to make the difference); or determines changes in the valency grill of the verb: *a suna înapoi* (Engl. to call back).

4. Salutation formulas in workplace written texts

In this part of the article, we will address the use of salutation formulas in Romanian workplace written texts. In our analytical framework, we start from the assumption that “linguistic phenomena can be analysed both in the context of language itself and in the larger context of social behaviour” (Gumperz & Hymes, 1972, quoted in Ionescu-Ruxăndoiu & Chițoran, 1975: 107).

In an analysis carried out in the early 1980’s regarding the linguistic behaviour of Romanian speakers, Pietreanu (1984) noticed that using salutation formulas was not only a matter of individual freedom, but also a matter of adhering to the norms of behaviour that exist in a particular linguistic community at a certain moment. What is more, salutation formulas must take into account “the specific semantics of the situations in which a formula is actually used” (Pietreanu, 1984: 24). As a speech act, a greeting is defined as “communicative behaviour, either gestural or verbal (or both), that has a certain significance for a social micro- or macro-

group, by means of which attention is paid, respect or politeness is shown to a person or to a group” (Pietreanu, 1984: 29).

Actual information is not conveyed by the use of salutation formulas; they are mainly used to construct and maintain personal relationships. In the context of written workplace communication, we are mainly interested in identifying the main salutation formulas and in commenting on their uses.

We will further focus on the main salutation formulas as they were identified in the corpus described at the beginning of this paper. We will take into account the beginning formulas of written texts such as announcements, welcome and farewell messages, invitations, and calls for meetings.

Forms of address are specific ways of building a relationship between sender and receiver. In Romanian, addressing is achieved by means of specialized lexical units that call the attention of the receiver (appellatives) and that may be associated with corresponding grammatical elements (vocative, second person, interrogative, or imperative utterances) or with interjections whose role is to intensify the verbal mobilization (GALR, 2005). What is more, Romanian distinguishes between deferential and non-deferential pronouns (*dumneavoastră - tu*), just as happens in French (*vous - tu*), Spanish (*usted - tú*), German (*Sie - du*). In other respects, Romanian resembles Portuguese and Italian since these languages have developed a third unit for what we call ‘mitigated politeness’, creating thus a contrast between ‘emphatic deference’ (distant respect) and ‘non-emphatic deference’ (familiar respect) (Niculescu, 1965: 43): *dumneavoastră / dumneata*.

Avram (1997: 164) observed that, in Romanian, the opposition *tu-vous* is linguistically achieved by means of a subclass of personal pronouns that help “establish an attitude that is marked by respect and distance.” In her opinion, this opposition has the following distribution (in English, the translation for these forms is invariably ‘you’): non-deferent form of address (*tú*; we can also add the first name); a form of address that expresses ‘politeness among peers and close friends or politeness towards subordinates’ (*dumneata*); a form of address that expresses ‘distant politeness, in official relationships, especially towards superiors’ (*dumneavoastră*).

We start from the assumption that forms of address as a means of constructing relationships with the interlocutor are ‘message exchange triggers’ which allow the sender (source) to establish a certain social relationship.

In institutional settings, message exchanges by means of written texts are definite, i.e., they can no longer be modified. In interaction, messages and forms of address may be negotiated

on the spot, while in written messages they may be indirectly negotiated either in the body or at the end of the message. In the following extract taken from an announcement of a food and beverage company, the Human Resources manager introduces a new trainee to the rest of the employees:

- a) I am pleased to announce that **Silviu Georgescu** was named HR Trainee starting August 18, 2003. **Silviu** has 5 years experience with AIESEC student organization [...] Please join me in welcoming **Silviu** to our organization and in wishing him success in his career.

One sees that at the beginning of his message, the manager uses the new employee's full name (first name and surname), but when describing the activities and past results he uses only the first name, i.e., Silviu. In the ending paragraph, the manager sets a trend by using again the first name, suggesting that other company employees should use an informal form of address. The message is followed by some replies from employees showing that they rapidly took the covert piece of advice from the manager and referred to the new employee by his first name:

- b) What faculty, where and when did **Silviu** graduate?

Once the form of address is set, the relationship -at least at the level of written texts- will emerge accordingly: in the previous example, the manager used an informal form of address (first name) and one of the employees acted in accordance with it. In the following extract, a recruitment specialist from the same food and beverage company sent a message to several employees, addressing them differently. What is more, she even used different languages -English and Romanian- when giving the employees their tasks.

- c) [message 1, in English]

Dear all,

Cristian Niculae, the preferred candidate for Sales Controlling Specialist, accepted our offer and will start on December 2. Cristian will attend the Orientation Program on December 2 (Bucuresti) and December 3 (Brasov).

[message 2, in Romanian]

Mrs. Popescu,

I am sending you Cristian's resume in order for you to contact him about the necessary documents for his employment.

[message 3, in English]

Cristina,

Please prepare a cash advance for Cristian's trip to Brasov for the Orientation Program and also the accommodation in Brasov for the night of December 2.

Thanks for your support and have a good weekend!

Sending messages with multiple addressees seems to be a common corporate practice. This may be done so that everybody knows what their specific tasks are together with letting everybody find out general information. In this example, the sender firstly uses a group form of address ('dear all') and informs them about a new colleague who joined the company. Secondly, she specifically addresses a specialist giving her a specific task and thirdly, she addresses a person from the financial department.

In specialized studies (Ionescu-Ruxăndoiu & Chițoran, 1975; DSL, 2002), researchers showed that choosing a particular form of address is not accidental, but it is a choice based on the communicative competence of the speakers. This concept presupposes the existence of a set of social and cultural norms and conventions and it mainly refers to "the totality of linguistic, interactional and cultural knowledge that has been internalized by a native speaker and which will allow him to have an appropriate behaviour in specific communicative contexts" (DSL, 2002: 121).

In the messages presented above, our attention was captured by the forms of address: if in message 1, the sender used a group form of address and in message 3, she used the first name - both of them informal forms of address- in message 2, the sender used a formal form of address. This may show that the second addressee was an older person. Showing respect and deference to older persons when addressing them is still common practice today in Romania. With regard to this example, it means that the sender has selected from a variety of forms of address only those that will present her as a respectful person, yet having authority.

Although these are individual messages, one sees that they are linked, all of them addressing the same issue: preparing for the arrival of a new employee. At the end of the message, the sender no longer uses both English and Romanian for the ending formula, but only English.

The comment we have just made for the previous examples brings to the forefront another issue that is of interest for written professional communication: 'institutional forms of address'. In many written messages, we observed that there was a shift from individual first name address to a category-based form of address:

d) **Dear employee** of CEEMA region...

Esteemed employee of KFI...

Dear associate KFI...

The explicit use of a membership category (Pomerantz & Mandelbaum, 2005) such as 'employee' or 'associate' is relevant to understanding the way in which the sender will build his

message. People do not very often use categories as forms of address, but when they do so this may show there is something underlying their use.

The sender -usually the President or the Vice President of the company- uses a specific category taking into consideration the fact that there are “activities, motives, rights, responsibilities, and competencies that they regard as appropriate for incumbents of a relationship category” (Pomerantz & Mandelbaum, 2005: 149). By invoking the category of ‘employees’ at the beginning of the written message, its sender states that he specifically addresses the people who perform a certain activity ‘in return for financial or other compensation’ (AHDEL, 2000).

By beginning his discourse as such, he acts as the type of person who has the power to formulate requests on the basis of a difference of social status. It is only the adjective (either ‘dear’ or ‘esteemed’) that mitigates the form of address.

Apart from these categories, we also encountered another one, which was used on a larger scale than the previous categories: ‘colleague’ (fellow worker in a profession).

e)

Romanian	English
Dragi colegi, Incepand cu data de [DATA] vom avea un nou coleg in HR, biroul din Bucuresti.	Dear colleagues, Starting [DATE], we will have a new colleague in HR, Bucharest office.
Dragi colegi, la ora 15.30 ne intalnim pentru o scurta sedinta cu privire la termenul de inchidere. Va rog sa fiti pregatiti cu informatii concrete despre ceea ce mai este de inregistrat si stadiul fiecarei sarcini restante ramase, precum si o estimare a timpului de finalizare.	Dear colleagues, At 15.30 we will have a short meeting about the closing term. Please be prepared with concrete information about what we need to record and the stage of each remaining task as well as an estimated time of closing.
Dragi colegi, Am facut parte sase luni din minunata familie [NUME FIRMĂ]. Astazi este ultima zi din cele mai scurte sase luni din viata mea. Va multumesc tuturor pentru fiecare clipa petrecuta in companie si va doresc sa va atineti scopurile si sa va realizati visurile. Doar asa voi va veti simti impliniti si fericati si veti duce compania pe cele mai inalte culmi ale succesului.	Dear colleagues, For six months I have been part of the wonderful family of KFI. Today is the last day of the shortest six months in my life. Thank you everyone for every moment that we spent in the company and I wish you to reach your goals and fulfill your dreams. It is the only way you will feel fulfilled and happy and will take the company to the highest peaks of success.

In our examples, the noun was used in the plural ('colleagues') and it was always accompanied by the adjective 'dear' when addressing peers. This shows that individuals use such "classifications or social types to describe persons" (Psathas, 1999: 144). Moreover, by means of membership categories individuals can efficiently organize the information they have about certain persons. In other words, it is easier to remember a category, a pattern that one can use every time he recognizes part of its characteristics, than to use individual descriptions.

Unlike the category 'employee' used in the messages from management, the category 'colleague' is more intimate; it is closer to the people involved in the message. Besides, the category 'employee' is connected to a profession, foregrounding a certain activity, while the category 'colleague' carries with it other characteristics: close relationship, unitary group, understanding, common values, sharing common interests, etc.

Besides the use (in Romanian *a stima*), which adds respect to the meaning of the salutation formula. of 'dear', we noted that another adjective was largely used when addressing colleagues. It is a derivative from the verb 'to esteem'

f)

Romanian	English
<i>Stimati colegi,</i> Va rog sa verificati articolele din Buletinul Universitatii din sectiunea dumneavoastra si sa imi comunicati ordinea in care o sa apara.	<i>Esteemed colleagues,</i> Please check your articles to be included in the Bulletin of the University, your section and communicate the order of their appearance.
<i>Stimati colegi,</i> Va invitam sa participati la instruirea pentru subprogramul Capacitati din cadrul programului PN-II.	<i>Esteemed colleagues,</i> We invite you to take part in the instruction programme for Capacities within the PN-II.
<i>Stimati colegi,</i> Se convoaca Senatul [NUME INSTITUȚIE], joi [DATA], in Aula Universitatii, la ora 13,30. Va rog sa confirmati primirea mesajului.	<i>Esteemed colleagues,</i> The Senate of the University will take place on Thursday [DATE], in the Aula Magna of the University, starting from 13.30. Please confirm receiving this message.
<i>Stimati colegi,</i> In urma atentionarilor repetate din partea dept. Controlling, ma vad nevoita sa va reamintesc ca pentru orice incadrare a unei cheltuieli, mijloc fix, sau orice alta inregistrare care are legatura cu un centru de cost, trebuie consultata d-ra [NUMELE ȘI PRENUMELE].	<i>Esteemed colleagues,</i> As a result of repeated attentioning from the Controlling department, I have to remind you that for any type of expenses, asset or any other type of record that is connected to a cost center, Ms Cristina Popescu needs to be contacted.

Although the noun ‘colleague’ focuses on the idea of fellowship and membership in the same professional category, the use of the adjective ‘esteemed’ turns the salutation formula into a more formal one than its counterpart, dear ‘colleague’. If we take a closer look at the content of the message that follows the salutation formula, we see that it is about serious actions that need to be taken: it may be an invitation to a formal meeting (the University Senate, a new programme that offers funding opportunities), the sender may draw attention to what should be done (‘I have to remind you that...’).

We can argue that the use of the formula ‘esteemed colleagues’ carries with it a mode of seriousness and it even highlights the tone of the message that was sent. In other words, the recipients can infer what the message is about (business that needs urgent attention vs. business that may be postponed) by just reading the salutation formula.

In Romanian, unlike in English, the noun ‘colleague’ has different forms for masculine (*coleg*) and feminine (*colegă*), both for the singular and plural. The same situation holds true for ‘employee’ (*angajat - angajată*) and *associate* (*asociat - asociată*), categories that were analysed above. In almost all salutation formulas in our corpus, the predominant one was the masculine (*colegi, angajat/ angajați, asociat*), either in the plural or in the singular, although there may have been female addressees. In the case of ‘employee’ and ‘associate’, we could argue that the sender used such generic nouns in order to be formal. If the sender had used both the feminine and the masculine, the distance between communicators (manager - employees) would have decreased alongside with the degree of formality embedded in the salutation formula.

In the last two decades, Romanian has undergone a number of changes due to pressure from English (especially at the level of vocabulary and at the pragmatic level too). As a result, one may say that managers from multinational companies brought with them the issue of political correctness, the use of expressions or actions intended to make amends for unfair representations. In Romanian, as we show above, the dominant grammatical gender when talking about both feminine and masculine participants is the masculine. This fact is a reasonable explanation for the discursive uses of category nouns such as ‘employee’, ‘associate’, and ‘colleague’ since in Romanian there is no cultural code as far as ‘politically correct’ forms of address are involved. The English influence may actually be visible in general salutation formulas, when the recipient is unknown:

g) [word for word translation from Romanian]

Esteemed Ms./ Mr. Manager

Some women who work in an all-female company or institution may feel offended if they are

addressed by a masculine form. For example, in a farewell message, we can see that the sender of the message was aware of the fact that his audience was made up exclusively of women and he chose a relevant form of address:

h)

Romanian	English
<p><i>Stimate doamne și domnișoare,</i></p> <p>Cu părere de rău vă transmit decizia mea de a întrerupe buna colaborare cu [nume firmă]. Vă mulțumesc pentru încrederea și sprijinul acordat în tot acest timp.</p>	<p><i>Esteemed ladies,</i></p> <p>I am deeply sorry to let you know about my decision to end the good collaboration with [company name]. Thank you for the confidence and support that you showed me throughout this period.</p>

Among people who know each other very well and who have an interactional history, one of the senders in a written text may even use a ‘signature salutation form’ (Schegloff, 1979), his/her own way of addressing the recipient(s) in the beginning of the message. Unlike the serious tone imposed by *esteemed colleague*, a signature salutation form may bring along familiarity, openness, intimacy.

i)

Romanian	English
<p><i>Salve voua, popor KabFresenit!</i></p> <p>Iata ca se apropie si momentul Marii Revederi... Speram ca, asemeni noua, il asteptati cu aceeasi nerabdare si ardoare ca dupa secole de despartire!</p>	<p><i>Greetings to you, KabFresenian people!</i></p> <p>Here is the moment of the Great Reunion... We hope that, just like us, you are waiting for it with the same anxiety and ardour as if centuries had separated us from it!</p>

Apart from being a signature hello, the salutation formula consists of a humorous pun that comes from the name of the company (Fresenius Kabi) which is deconstructed and reorganized into KabFresenian. The made-up name reminds us of alien people, just like the ones in the Star Trek series (to name but a few, Klingonian, Lorillian, Xyrillian). By means of a unique form of address, which is in fact a play upon words, the sender of the message succeeds in defining the characteristics of a group. It is no longer a generic noun like ‘colleague’, but it is a member of a particular community, it is no longer an adjective (like ‘dear’) that precedes the noun, but it is a colloquial formula that lowers the barriers.

Humorous puns are not the only way of creating solidarity at the beginning of a written text. Sometimes, people who know each other well and who have had good work relationships ‘indulge’ themselves in referring to literary texts. This means they come up with ready-made intertextual salutation forms, just like in the example below, taken from an exchange of e-mails between two colleagues from the same company.

j)

Romanian	English
<i>Să trăiești, stimabile!</i>	<i>Long live, my honourable fellow!</i>

In his message, the sender uses a formula that was firstly used in Romanian literature by I. L. Caragiale, an author who was a keen observer of the society in the 19th century. At that time, formal forms of address were the rule even among people who knew each other very well, showing thus respect to their counterpart. Over time, salutation formulas have changed in the ways we have presented so far.

There are situations in which the sender does not want to take responsibility for the message because (s)he is not its source. This is obvious in the salutation formula that is reduced to ‘indicators’ (either *to* or *to the attention of*) as in the following examples taken from educational institutions as well as from companies:

k) *To* all the teaching staff of the Department

To the attention of all the teaching staff

To the attention of master’s programmes coordinators

To the attention of Mrs. Manager Prof. eng. Cristina Popescu, PhD

To: Organization

To all the employees of KFI

To the employees in the production unit of KFI

Such instances are depersonalized and they cannot transmit anything to the recipient but mere facts and information to be taken into account or tasks to be fulfilled. If we take into consideration that a company’s main concern is with productivity, then such salutation indicators have the role of making things more efficient.

Finally, we want to briefly analyse a neutral form of address: salutation formulas that are related to the time of the day.

- l) ***Good morning!***
Good afternoon!

If one has to choose between being close to the recipient ('dear' + name) or distant (see the comments about 'indicators'), (s)he may choose a common and neutral phrase according to the moment of the day. Such greetings are safe and they do not carry with them 'hints' of the message that follows. Yet, such forms of address were quite rare in our corpus probably because they are felt to be more spoken and more commonly used in interaction than in writing.

CONCLUSIONS

Whether discursive, lexical, or pragmatic, the changes in Romanian professional written communication in the past two decades are significant. Under the influence of American and Western European organizational culture which was implemented in multinational organizations in Romania, new discourse patterns have occurred especially in communicating via electronic mail. Among these, we have identified the use of humour in written discourse and the appearance of context-related texts such as welcome and farewell letters or invitations to team-building events.

Business e-mails were approached in an earlier study (Măda, 2004) from various perspectives: the oral-literate continuum and the reduced cue context that is specific to e-mails, the "framing devices" (Herring, 1996: 84) which assist the reader in understanding e-mail messages, and the role of the "participation framework" (Schiffrin, 1987: 27) in dividing e-mail messages into 'public', 'private' and 'overhearing'. In the present study, we have emphasised the new discourse patterns which have emerged in Romanian business communication via electronic mail: jokes, announcements, invitations, and programmes.

Many discourse patterns have developed along with the Romanian society. Humour was uncommon in workplace written communication two decades ago. Nowadays it comprises various forms, from witticisms to generous humorous scenarios, whose aim is to create and reinforce workplace harmonious relationships.

The changes in the professional environment have also brought about a re-organization at the linguistic level. The native vocabulary has been strongly influenced by English, leading to loans, calques and hybrid forms made of native and foreign elements. The dynamics of the vocabulary influence the dynamics of the morphological system. This means that a certain inflectional class becomes more productive than it used to be (i.e. the old verbal classifier *-ui* is reactivated in new verbs such as *a brandui*, *a chatui*, *a șerui*, etc.). Apart from borrowings, which represent

a natural process of vocabulary enrichment, false friends and calques are just a few examples that illustrate the practice of setting up a new linguistic code, an idiolect, rather than a specialized vocabulary, with its own linguistic and pragmatic features.

Significant changes may be observed when carrying out an analysis at the level of microstructures such as salutation forms. By far, the most significant change brought about by an increasing use of English (especially in multinational companies) is first-name address, which is more colloquial and lowers the barriers among communicators. This practice is not widespread in state-owned institutions, where the shift to colloquial forms of address is only now beginning to be used: among peers, first name address is age-dependent, and ‘indicators’, which depersonalize the message, are more often used.

It is interesting to note that speakers are aware of the fact that not all their workmates have the same level of English (which is used as a lingua franca in many organizations) and switch between two linguistic codes. It is also worth mentioning that -whenever the President or the Vice President of the company addresses the employees- there is a shift from the individual first-name address to a category-based form of address (‘employee’, ‘associate’). Unlike such forms of address, signature salutation forms of address are used so that the social distance is reduced and the focus is on maintaining good work relationships.

Not only by mimetically reproducing foreign models, but also by developing traditional values, Romanian organizational culture and discourse seek their own identity.

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NOTES

- ¹ A shorter version of this paper was first presented at the Inaugural Conference of the Asia-Pacific Rim LSP and Professional Communication Association, Hong Kong, 8-10 December 2008. The present paper is an enlarged and revised version of the initial presentation and we take this opportunity to thank all the anonymous reviewers for their comments and suggestions.

- ² Words that sound good, but are void of meaning. The expression was first mentioned by Thom (1987) “langue de bois” and in English by Fairclough (2006).
- ³ Institutional talk in English and its intercultural aspects were addressed by another research project based at Transylvania University of Braşov, entitled ‘Institutional Talk and Intercultural Communication in Multinational Companies (Case Study)’ (CNCSIS, A1052), with Liliana Coposescu as coordinator.
- ⁴ The grammar and lexical mistakes made by the author of this letter are marked with.
- ⁵ This is also the situation of other former communist countries, where the liberalization of the economy determined massive linguistic changes (Ryazanova-Clarke & Wade (1999) for evidence in Russian; Medgyes & Laszlo (2001) for Hungarian; Gardt & Hüppauf (2004) for German; etc.). In each of them, English is the main source-language for innovations in the professional vocabulary.
- ⁶ Avram and Sala (2000) who point out that Romanian displays a natural disposition towards adopting foreign words, without endangering its identity.
- ⁷ For recent borrowings or for those having a ‘foreign’ final, the hyphen is used to link the root to the inflectional mark.
- ⁸ When the new creation goes too far away from the original loanword, it may be orthographically adapted, in order to indicate the correct pronunciation. For instance, *targetare* is spelled *targhetare*, because in Romanian the group of letters *ghe* is pronounced /*g̃*/, while *ge* is pronounced /*g̃*/.
- ⁹ The suffix *-ui* is used in informal, colloquial language.
- ¹⁰ The participle of this verb *licențiat*, ex. in *software licențiat* (licenced software), comes in semantic ‘collision’ with the homonym ‘graduate’.
- ¹¹ For an extensive list of semantic calques from English in various registers of Romanian (Stoichițoiu-Ichim, 2006: 78-79).
- ¹² The word in the source language is often similar to the word in the replica language with respect to the phonetic and/ or graphic aspect. The similarity may be a coincidence or may be the result of common etymology.
- ¹³ For the concept of “homonymic collisions” (Stoichițoiu-Ichim, 2006: 76).