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ASPECTS OF IDENTITY AND ALTERITY IN THE NAMES OF ROMANIAN PUBLIC SPACE. UKRAINIAN COMMUNITY FROM MARAMUREŞ

ASPEKTY IDENTITY A ALTERITY VE JMÉNECH RUMUNSKÉ VEŘEJNÉ SFÉRY. UKRAJINSKÁ KOMUNITA Z MARAMUREŞE

Tento článek přináší analýzu komerčních názvů v severním Maramureši, oblasti s multi-etnickou populací sestávající z Rumunů, Bulharů a Ukrajinců. Tato oblast leží na severu Rumunska na hranicích s Ukrajinou a je zde vysoký počet emigrantů. Cílem tohoto článku je ilustrovat vztahy mezi etnikem a jazykem používaným v komerční sféře, ale také důvody, kvůli kterým je upouštěno od užívání mateřského jazyka u vlastních jmen ve veřejné sféře v Maramureši. Hlavní část článku obsahuje jména firem, obchodů a produktů získaných terénním výzkumem, nebo specializovaných internetových stránek. Analýza byla provedena z lexikálně-sémantického, typologického a socio-kulturního hlediska a zdůrazňuje myšlení pojmenovatelů, kteří se při pojmenovávání nových obchodů uchylují k mezinárodně používanému jazyku a také, jak jméno odráží identitu etnické skupiny nebo přijímání alterity. Od doby, kdy se Rumunsko připojilo k Evropské Unii, neexistují zde žádné jazykové bariéry, protože v Maramureši, v oblastech s aktivní emigrantskou majoritou, se v pojmenování firem objevují názvy v angličtině, italštině a francouzštině nebo hybridní pojmenování tvořená rumunskými pojmy a cizími výrazy. Stejně tak je tomu i v obcích náležejících k menšinám. Zde byla však díky postavení, jaké zaujímá jedinec ve společnosti, zaznamenána silnější náklonnost k mateřskému jazyku. To je dáno vzájemným vztahem mezi jazykem a společností, zejména mezi jazykem a komunitou.

Keywords

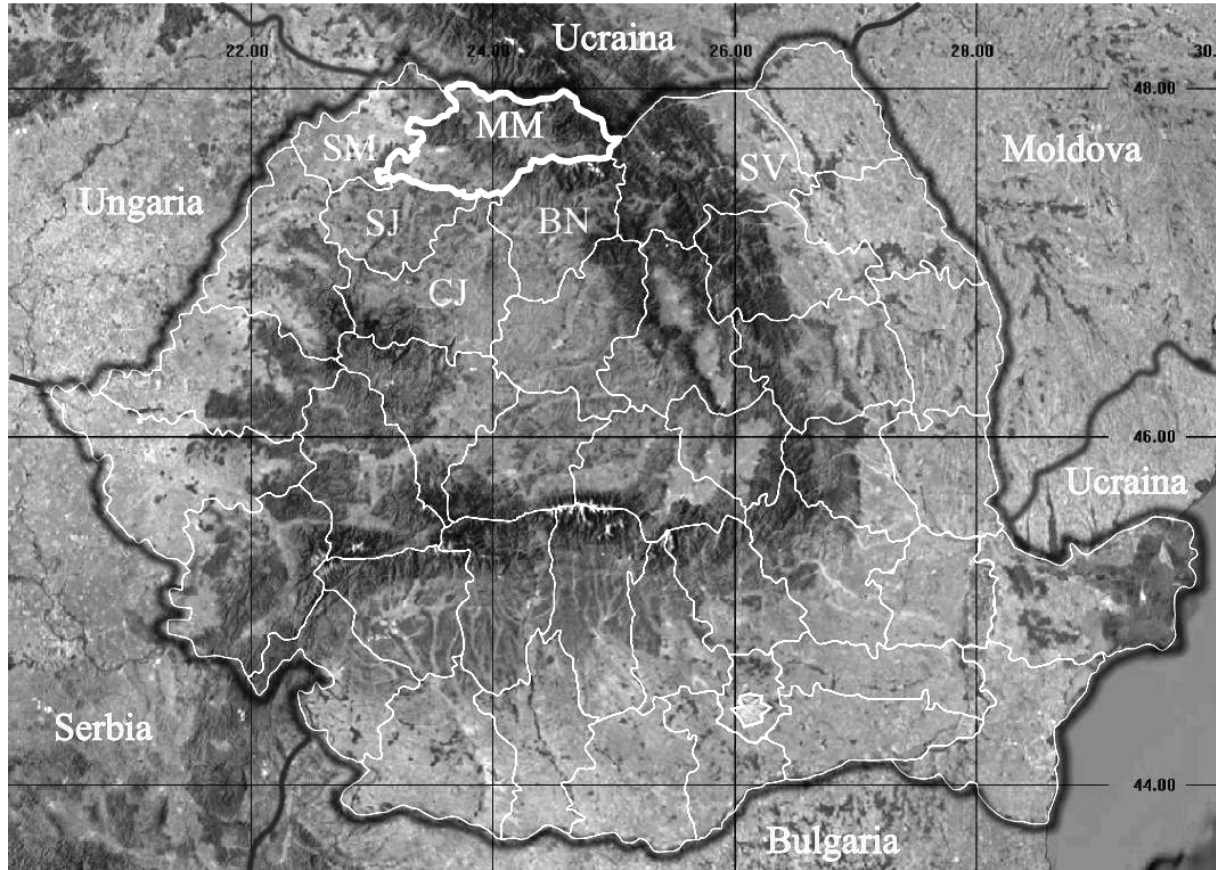
onomastics, identity, alterity, society

1. Introduction

Language is in an interdependent relation with power,¹⁾ and this is why sociologists have focused on the study of minority communities. In the case of minorities, language acts as a mediator between the need for affirmation, social integration and preserving cultural and linguistic identity. In order to reflect the relationship established between the subjects' linguistic choices, social environment and identity, I have analysed names of businesses, shops, clubs, and pubs from the multi-ethnic

¹⁾ S. May, *Language and minority rights. Ethnicity, Nationalism and the Politics of Language*, Second Edition, New York – London 2012, p. 135; B. Spolsky, *Sociolinguistics*, Oxford 1998, p. 58; J. Blommaert, *Language Policy and National Identity*. In: T. Ricento (ed.), *An Introduction to Language Policy: Theory and Method*, Oxford 2006, p. 240; J. Blommaert, *The Sociolinguistics of Globalization*, Cambridge 2010, p. 3.

villages from the north of Maramureș: Bistra, Bocicioiu Mare, Poienile de sub Munte, Repedea, Remeți, Rona de Sus, Ruscova.²⁾



In Maramureș, 6.67 % of the total population are Ukrainians, more than half of the Ukrainians that reside in Romania. Many of them live in the aforementioned communities. In order to help illustrate the socio-linguistic aspects of the studied areas, the following table reflects their demographic structure, as it was established by the 2002 census:

Village	No. inhabitants	Romanians	Ukrainians	Hungarians	Germans
Bistra	4,405	397	4,006	2	–
Bocicioiu Mare	4,468	1,447	2,639	371	5

²⁾ Maramureș is a county situated in the north-west of Romania, bordered in the north by the Tisza river, which is the natural boundary between Romania and Ukraine. All the villages mentioned are found in the north of the county, either at the foot of the Maramureș Mountains (Poienile de sub Munte, Repedea, Ruscova), along the Vișeu river, a tributary of the Tisza river (Bistra), along the Ronișoara river, a tributary of the Iza river (Rona de Sus), or on the bottom land of the Tisza river (Bocicioiu Mare, Remeți).

Poienile de sub Munte	10,037	253	9,711	60	5
Repedea	4,761	87	4,650	7	1
Remeți	3,058	399	2,260	382	3
Rona de Sus	4,698	207	4,062	421	5
Ruscova	4,854	161	4,578	3	3

The corpus collected in the field or from specialised online sources was analysed³⁾ from both a socio-linguistic point of view, as well as from a cultural one. I should mention that I opted for larger businesses (Ltd.) because family organisations or self-employed persons bear the names of the owners.⁴⁾

Proper names individualise, designate. They contain a semantic assumption as to the uniqueness of the referents. The result is that these recipients are perceived as unique (particular) individuals and a semantic assumption of prior naming, responsible for the fact that particulars are observed as the bearers of the name.⁵⁾ As a *designatum* of a business, the name – in its entirety – consists of two components: a verbal one (by means of which a series of information on the product, owners, and firm is conveyed) and a nonverbal one (with a great impact on the clients' psyche through the use of graphics and the iconic component).⁶⁾ Therefore, commercial names must attract the intended target, be easy to use and decode. However, in a time of necessity to adapt to new things, of rapid information assimilation due to the internet, there is a high demand of colourful enigmatic names, at the same time attractive and representative. There is, therefore, an oscillation between explicit and ambiguous names (there are many articles posted on the internet that refer to the manner in which one must choose the name of a firm so as to have an impact on the customers and to become a brand).

³⁾ This article is part of Onomastics in Contemporary Romanian Public Space: Socio- and Psycholinguistic Research, a project funded by CNCS within the PN II Human Resources programme, designed for the stimulation of young independent research teams (TE, code 3/2010, project manager: Assoc. Prof. Oliviu Felecan).

⁴⁾ There is a series of small businesses in Romania, which are in fact a group of two or three members of the same family, usually husband and wife. These firms are registered under the last name of the owners. This same situation is encountered in the case of the people who are legally self-employed.

⁵⁾ M. Miron-Fulea, *Numele Proprii. Interfață semantică-sintaxă*, București 2005, p. 37.

⁶⁾ O. Felecan, *Tipologia numelor de firme din spațiul public românesc actual*. In: R. Zafiu – C. Ușurelu – H. Bogdan Oprea (eds.), *Limba română: ipostaze ale variației lingvistice. Actele celui de-al 10-lea Colocviu al Catedrei de limba română* (București, 3–4 decembrie 2010), vol. I, București 2011, p. 249.

From a semantic viewpoint, proper names have been defined contradictorily, either by the absence of meaning (the theory of the label), or by having an absolute or unique meaning. Recent Western theories aim at distinguishing the differences between proper and common names, both semantically and pragmatically. Van Langendonck considers proper names to be linguistic signs, devoid of meaning, nominal, which are based on a proper, pluri-referential lexeme. Although proper names do not have meaning, they can develop assumptions, associative significations that pertain to the category to which they subscribe, which derive from their form or are triggered by the bearer, or they imply emotional or grammatical meanings.⁷⁾ Coates approaches names from a pragmatic perspective, emphasising two referential types: a semantic one, characteristic to appellatives; and an onymic one, which refers to proper names.⁸⁾ These are connected by the linguistic convention only in their categorical meaning.⁹⁾

It is considered that there is an interdependency relationship established between the meanings triggered by proper names, the contexts in which these are used and the implications of the users. This situation is reflected in the names of the businesses from the surveyed areas. Moreover, linguists distinguish between evolving names, created through onymisation, and given names.¹⁰⁾ In the case of businesses, more often than not, it becomes a performative naming act established in an ad hoc convention.¹¹⁾ Under these circumstances, in small communities that have tight-knit interpersonal relationships, the person that names the firm resorts to various signs, including linguistic ones, which are known by the people who will use the name in communication.¹²⁾ This naming act can be interpreted socio-linguistically as an act of self-expression, of shaping one's own identity. The choices individuals make reflect the manner in which they perceive themselves and others, as well as the dialogic relationship between identity and alterity.

2. Theoretical aspects regarding identity and alterity

The current exegeses define *identity* and *alterity* as antonyms. Identity is defined as “the matter of being at any time identical to oneself; the state of an object of being

⁷⁾ W. Van Langendonck, *Theory and Typology of Proper Names*, Berlin – New York 2007, p. 62.

⁸⁾ R. Coates, *Name theory – Théorie de noms – Namentheorie*, *Onoma* 41, 2006, p. 66.

⁹⁾ R. Coates, o. c. in note 8, p. 82.

¹⁰⁾ W. Van Langendonck, *Do proper names have an etymological meaning?* O. Felecan – D. Felecan (eds.), *Confluente lingvistice si filologice*, Omagiu profesorului Nicolae Felecan la împlinirea a 70 de ani, Cluj-Napoca 2011, p. 484.

¹¹⁾ M. Miron-Fulea, o. c. in note 5, p. 36.

¹²⁾ T. Slama-Cazacu, *Psiholingvistica. O știință a comunicării*, București 1999, p. 119.

what it is, of keeping its fundamental qualities for a certain amount of time”,¹³⁾ whereas alterity is “the quality of being different from a self, which constitutes a separate, different entity; the feeling a self has of being another, of being someone else”.¹⁴⁾ Therefore, identity means being equal to oneself, and this implies a series of acts significant to an individual, to a people etc.;¹⁵⁾ alterity is everything that is different from the self, being in strong connection with change.

What matters is that identity is always built in relation to alterity.¹⁶⁾ It ensures continuity, even if its own identity changes over time; it represents a guarantee of stability of the world.¹⁷⁾ How an individuality is shaped is closely connected to the context, as the shaping takes place in temporal interactions, negotiations, relations with other social actors or with governmental institutions.¹⁸⁾

In discussing about how Marx, Freud and Saussure define identity, Hall¹⁹⁾ states that there has been, throughout history, a destabilisation of this concept, a fact that is based on the different opinions regarding individuality (Saussure considers that identity is always placed within a system of languages people partially speak and towards which they are for or against; Marx believes that identity is the dialogical link between past and future; and Freud says that identity is born in people’s subconscious). Moreover, the modern age and the discovery of other identities have led to the stabilisation of the feeling people have towards themselves, but it has also led to social inequalities²⁰⁾ and linguistic ones.²¹⁾ The effect is the fragmentation of the social identity. Therefore, it is necessary to rediscover, in the context of diversity (enabled by globalisation²²⁾), a lost identity. At the same time, a re-conceptualisation of the meaning of

¹³⁾ Dicționar explicativ ilustrat al limbii române (DEXI), Chișinău 2007, s. v.

¹⁴⁾ DEXI, o. c. in note 13, s. v.

¹⁵⁾ A. Hastings – P. Manning, Introduction: acts of alterity. *Language & Communication* 24 (4), 2004, p. 295.

¹⁶⁾ A. Hastings – P. Manning, o. c. in note 15, p. 293; S. Hall, *Etnicity: Identity and Difference*, *Radical America* 23 (4), 1989, p. 16.

¹⁷⁾ S. Hall, o. c. in note 16, p. 10.

¹⁸⁾ M. Bucholtz, Sociolinguistic nostalgia and the authentication of identity, *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 7 (3), 2003, p. 408.

¹⁹⁾ S. Hall, o. c. in note 16, p. 11–12.

²⁰⁾ S. Hall, o. c. in note 16, p. 12–13.

²¹⁾ J. Blommaert, *The Sociolinguistics...*, o. c. in note 1, p. 3; P. Trudgill, *Sociolinguistics: an introduction to language and society*, London 2000, p. 126.

²²⁾ In some situations, globalisation is seen as a threat to the shaping of identity (A. Hastings – P. Manning, o. c. in note 15, p. 296), because, in the current context of globalisation, the aim is to build a common identity and to annihilate differences, which, even in a global world, are inevitable. Therefore, the efficient solution for cohabitation in such an environment is an

“identity” as “the structure of «identification» itself”, as a “process of identification”, a process that is not always stable and which connects the past and the difference.²³⁾

Analysing the relationship between language and national identity, Blommaert²⁴⁾ says that the latter is, in fact, a repertoire of different, possible identities, each having a role, a field of employment and a function. Thus, national identity is a descriptive label attached to people. In this context, the relationship between identity and language is focused exclusively on the speakers because they, through speech – seen as “acts of speakers expressing or voicing themselves”²⁵⁾ – “express” themselves. Although in the current society language cannot be a determining feature of an ethnic and national identity, it still remains significant in many cases²⁶⁾ because one of its most important aspects is “its capacity for generating imagined communities, building in effect *particular solidarities*”.²⁷⁾

3. Minority – language – identity

The language used in everyday communication is essential to one’s individuality to the extent to which one defines oneself through it.²⁸⁾ Speakers have certain views as regards the language they use. These refer to quality, value, status, norms, functionality, and social relations.²⁹⁾

The relationship between language and identity is influenced by culture and politics.³⁰⁾ As regards culture, social and individual identities – as well as their inter-relational system – are mediated by language. As for politics, the influence refers to the social status the speakers have in connection to the language used: they have a high status when the language they speak is also being used in national and international communication, government, commerce or education.³¹⁾ Most of the times, the state seems a guardian of monoglot idealisation; it promotes an ethno-linguistic identity that pertains to a monolingual speaker of a national language.³²⁾ In this context, the symbolic role of language to set limits becomes evident as language acts as a “symbolic

intercultural dialogue that aims at preserving cultural identities, accepting differences and at getting to know oneself through the other.

²³⁾ S. Hall, o. c. in note 16, p. 15.

²⁴⁾ J. Blommaert, *Language Policy...*, o. c. in note 1, p. 245.

²⁵⁾ A. Hastings – P. Manning, o. c. in note 15, p. 292.

²⁶⁾ S. May, o. c. in note 1, p. 135.

²⁷⁾ B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd ed., London 1991, p. 133.

²⁸⁾ S. May, o. c. in note 1, p. 141.

²⁹⁾ J. Blommaert, *Language Policy...*, o. c. in note 1, p. 241.

³⁰⁾ S. May, o. c. in note 1, p. 137.

³¹⁾ B. Spolsky, o. c. in note 1, p. 57.

³²⁾ J. Blommaert, *Language Policy...*, o. c. in note 1, p. 244.

border guard".³³⁾ This differentiating process is even more noticeable in minority groups since they are aware of the need of clear linguistic limits in relation to a dominant culture and language.

The matter of distinguishing these limits in a globalised society and of clearly telling apart the state and the linguistic borders still remains. Globalisation can be regarded as the favourable context for interrelations between people and companies, having language as the basis for social interaction.³⁴⁾

A great onomastic and linguistic diversity has characterised the Romanian commercial names after the fall of communism in 1989. This was brought about by the people's need to synchronise with the Western world, but also by the massive migrations that were favoured by the integration into the EU. This context enables an attempt to highlight the linguistic identity of the Ukrainian minority from the north of Maramureş, Romania, and the acceptance of the diversity of names in public space.

4. Names of public space in the Ukrainian community from Maramureş – the portrayal of self in contact with the other

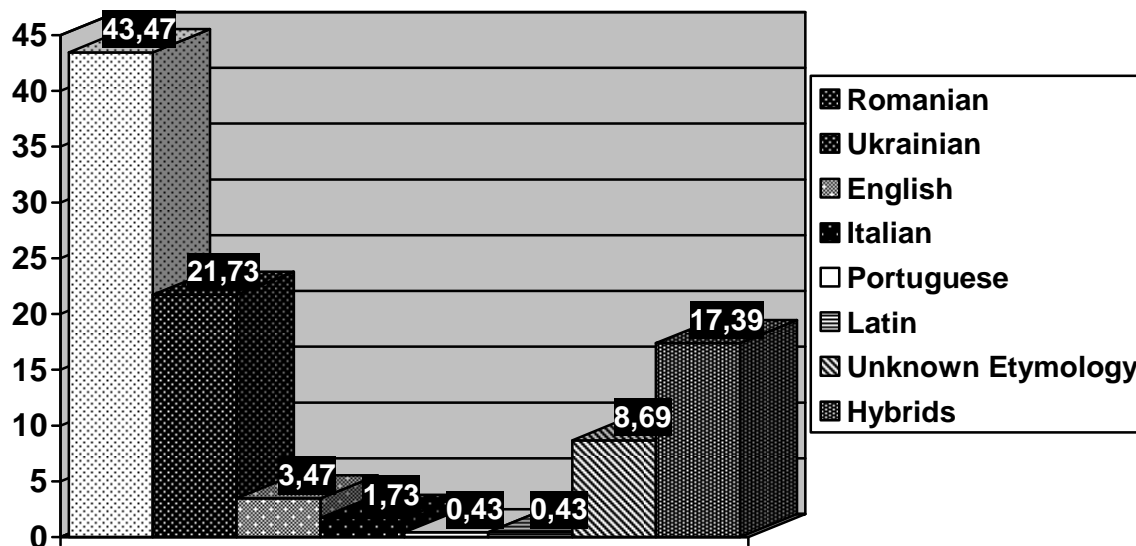
A great linguistic diversity stands out in the names of businesses from the surveyed Ukrainian communities. The use of the native tongue at the same time as the national one and other international languages emphasises the need to preserve the cultural and linguistic identity, as well as the desire to gain power. It is interesting that, although these communities use a variety (low-variety) of Ukrainian (Rusyn), this language is less frequently seen on the frontispiece of businesses than Romanian or English. Romanian seems to be the perfect intermediary between clients and firms when the latter want to address a larger audience, even outside the local community. Therefore, the national language mediates the relationship between cultural identity and power, social and economic recognition. At the same time, many business owners from these communities use English – since commerce is dominated by this language – when naming their firms in order to facilitate their recognition and to attract customers.

Out of the approximately 230 commercial names registered in the seven villages, a hundred are in Romanian; circa fifty are in Ukrainian; eight are in English; four are in Italian; one is in Portuguese; one is in Latin; forty are hybrids, and approximately twenty have unknown etymology.

³³⁾ S. May, o. c. in note 1, p. 137.

³⁴⁾ M. Cheung, The Globalization and localization of persuasive marketing communication: A cross-linguistic socio-cultural analysis, *Journal of Pragmatics* 42, 2010, p. 355–356.

Linguistic distribution of the commercial names of Ukrainian community in percents



4.1. Ukrainian – mother tongue. As regards Ukrainian commercial names, it is necessary to mention that they do not belong to the standard language, but to a dialect spoken in the Ukrainian community from Maramureș, called Rusyn. This is considered by some specialists to be a distinct language. These names are not written in Ukrainian letters, but Latin ones, following its phonetic principle. There are three classes of commercial Ukrainian names:

1. commercial names based on names of persons;
2. commercial names based on toponyms;
3. commercial names based on appellatives.

4.1.1. Commercial Ukrainian names come from family names encountered in the community (*Albuski, Czifrac, Dubacove, Dubuschei, Kupciuc, Mahliuc, Martuk, Matan, Medvejai, Misleaten, Parascineți, Sehlean, Seneș, Țariuc, Țudic, Zelenciuc*), from the owner's full name (*Berfela Covana, Ivan Pekura, Iurco Simone, Metro Godzea, Mitiță Bilan*), first name + nickname (*Cucusca Iur, Ivan Berfi, Metro Maghen, Rofeli Gagun*), female names (*Ancas, M2 Caniuca, Maziga*), female names derived from male ones (*Vasuca, Volosianca Prod*), female adjectives derived from proper names (*Deucova, Oblazeana Serv*). The use of one's own name for the newly created firm becomes a confirmation of self, of one's own identity in relation to others. Another reason for this is that the proprietors try to reinforce their position in the community, and to attract customers by means of reputation, trust, dignity etc.

4.1.2. I have recorded some Ukrainian toponyms that are used as commercial names and that strengthen the owners' affirmation of identity. The proprietors display their ethnic and local origin, thus confirming the relationship between languages, individuals and social environment. Here are some names that belong to this category:

Lujana Serv (the name of a part of the Repedea village + commercial abbreviation), *Neresen* (a hill in Remeți), *Pereslup* (a part of the Rona de Sus village, Ukr. *pereslup* “ravine, gorge, gullet”), *Polianska Derevo* (the name of a hill in Repedea + Ukr. *derevo* “wood”), *Topoleu* (hill), *Zaselo* (a street in Remeți, Ukr. *zaselo* “inhabited”), *Zadiloc* (a part of Rona de Sus, Ukr. *za d’iloc* “behind the hill”).

4.1.3. There are few names that are based on appellatives. They aim, semantically speaking, especially at the field of activity of the firm or at local aspects: *Cupalo* (“mines”), *Hort* (“hound”), *Jidicia* (“Jewish”), *Pobeda* (“victory”), *Traistone* (“bag”), *Itif Smereca* (Ukr. *Smereca* “pine spruce”).

A higher frequency of proper names or their derivatives can be noticed in the commercial names, as opposed to Ukrainian appellatives. This is explained by the very criteria of selection of a commercial name: to be unique; not to be transparent; to individualise; to be easy to remember; and to suit the image of the company.³⁵⁾ A Ukrainian designation ensures uniqueness, transparency. And in this context, it is about the emblem, not the linguistic sign. It is not necessary to understand the linguistic sign, but to grasp the meaning of the emblem.³⁶⁾ This explains the different perceptions of a word. It no longer gives linguistic meanings to all the customers, but only to those that perceive it as a linguistic sign.³⁷⁾ To them, language becomes a constituent element of cultural identity.

4.2. Commercial names originating from other languages mediate between identity and alterity, facilitating cultural exchanges between Romanians, Hungarians and Ukrainians. Cultural dialogues and inter-linguistic relations are necessary in multi-ethnic regions. These sociolinguistic and cultural interdependencies can also be observed when it comes to economic signs.

4.2.1. Romanian. As it has been mentioned above, the percentage of Ukrainian commercial names is less than that of the Romanian ones. This fact is explained by the relation between language and power, since Romanian is the national language and as such, it ensures the speaker’s possibility to reach a higher status in the social, economic and political life of the community. Proprietors tend to promote their business both in the community, and outside it. Therefore, a Romanian name facilitates the promotion of cultural identities by means of relationships with others, neighbours, with other identities. Here are a few names that fall into this category and are representative for intercultural dialogue: *Armeanca* (armean „Armenian” + suffix *-ca*), *Coop. Rona de Sus* (oikonym), *Farcău* (oronym), *Ioan Tomnatic* (first name + oronym), *Maghiar*

³⁵⁾ J. Schack, Distinctive names: constraints on brand name creation, *Onoma* 43, 2008, p. 57.

³⁶⁾ J. Blommaert, *The Sociolinguistics...*, o. c. in note 1, p. 30.

³⁷⁾ J. Blommaert, *The Sociolinguistics...*, o. c. in note 1, p. 31.

Construcții, *Muncelu* (hill), *Remeți* (oikonym), *Repedeana Impex* (from the oikonym “Repedea”), *Ronișoara* (hydronym), *Rusul* (byname given by Romanians to the Rusyns from the area), *Ruten* (related to the ethnicity of the minority communities surveyed), *Ruscoveana* (from the oikonym “Ruscova”) *Ucrarom* (Ukrainian + Romanian). These can also be added to the list: *Eliztrans*, *Eurovulcanizare*, *Loredana Eco Lemn*, *Lacrima lui Bachus*, *Radu RMC Trans*, *Remarcabil Ales*, *Sf Construct Serv*, *Turița Mare*, *Vârful*³⁸⁾ *cu Dor*.

4.2.2. English. The use of English in commercial naming, even in minority villages from Maramureș, is a consequence of globalisation. And in this respect, its purpose is to promote, to recreate a different social order. These designations are preferred by the younger generation that knows English; whereas the elderly often resort to owners’ nicknames since the names of the business are too difficult for them to remember. Here are some examples: *Connect Group*, *Green Valley Comp*, *Law*, *Office Commander*, *Old Wood*, *Valley of Hope*, *Work Corporation*, *WKM Logs*. The influence the English language has is also visible in the spelling of commercial names: *Chrys-Syle* (two Romanian hypocoristics, *Cris* < *Cristian*, *Cristina*; *Sile* < *Vasile* – English spelling), *Maya Minx*.

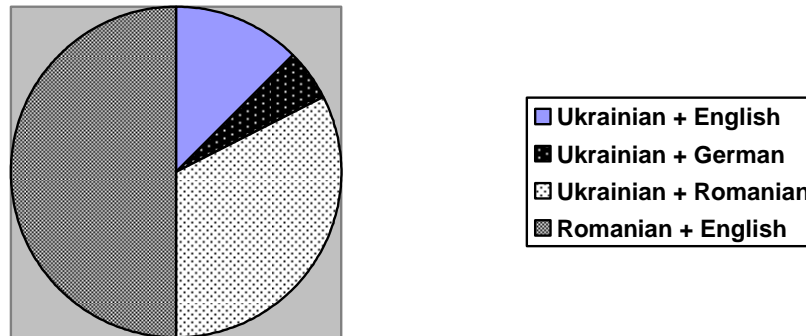
4.2.3. Other languages. Except the Latin *Vivat*, registered as a commercial name, designations in Italian (*Edil Carton Gest*, *Edil 2009 di Longa*, *Privan Edil*, *Todio Silv*) and the one in Portuguese (*Rio de Mouro*), were brought about because of the emigration that has taken place since 2000. Paraphrasing Carol Eastman, Stephen May³⁹⁾ underlines the fact that language is only a superficial characteristic of ethnic identity and adopting a new language affects only the way in which the language of the ethnic identity is used, and not the identity in itself. Language is essential in relation to identity to the extent to which a person lets language define them. That is exactly why many emigrants, who have either returned to their homeland or not, give up on naming in their mother tongue their businesses located in their native country. They opt for the language of their adoptive country because they want to be perceived differently. This phenomenon is present in all the communities from which a relatively large number of people have emigrated.

4.3. Hybrid names are those based on appellatives or other proper names coming from two or more different languages. Unusual associations of words lead to unique, enigmatic, and emblematic names which are more and more frequent in the

³⁸⁾ The spelling, without the definite article and following the phonetic principle, is frequent in colloquial language.

³⁹⁾ S. May, o. c. in note 1, p. 141.

recent years. A great stylistic and associative variety of unusual names has been noticed in the areas surveyed.



4.3.1. A relatively large number of compound names were created by juxtaposing a person's name or a Ukrainian expression and a Romanian commercial abbreviation or term that refers to the field of activity: *Antem Poieni Horb*, *Beuca Prodcum*, *Dubuvet Construcții*, *Gagun Impex*, *IvankaFarm*, *Luiba Construct*, *Lujana Serv*, *Longa Prod Com*, *Navocsur Impex*, *Vanidai Construct*, *Zelena Zemnia Cooperativa Agricolă*, *Susman Import Export*.

Here are some Ukrainian anthroponyms that are juxtaposed with English terms: *Eagles Țudic Impex*, *Sabuc Forest*, *Severa Forest*, or German ones: *Bileac Holz Forstarbeiten*, *Forstarbeiten Cepil*, as a result of the globalisation of the field of economy.

4.3.2. However, most compound names are created with Romanian terms (oikonyms, anthroponyms, commercial abbreviations, terms that refer to the activity performed) and English ones: *Agronuc Industry*, *Anamona Blue*, *Bombar Boys*, *Center Construct*, *Ecoturism Park*, *Energy Fast N&C Transport*, *Forest Coștiui*, *Petric Beauty*, *Pucas Explo Forest*, *Remeși New York Oil*, *Sandy Bella Bia*, *Sim Hold Prod Com*, *Streerpower Transport*, *Transilvania Extractions*, *Total Green Metal*.

Hybrid names mirror a demand for unique designations which are enigmatic, and that – at the same time – individualise. The use of anthroponyms or oikonyms emphasises a need for self-expression, for affirmation of one's own individuality.

5. Conclusion

The commercial names found in the surveyed communities mirror the role they play in socio-human, economic and politic relations. As a minority, the Rusyns from Maramureș are torn between: preserving and promoting their cultural and linguistic identity; and social recognition, ascending to a higher social, political and economic status. Therefore, the choice of commercial names in their mother tongue shows an attachment to their linguistic identity. On the other hand, in the case of anthroponyms, this decision is explained by the social status of the individual (the owner, because he

names the firm) in the community. Equally so, Ukrainian names promote certain recognition of identity because it refers directly to an ethnicity.

Even Romanian names mirror the relationship between self-others, especially those that refer to ethnicity, specific locations or regions. Under these circumstances, the use of official languages marks the acceptance of alterity, and the contextual meaning points to identity.

What stands out in these areas is a great opening towards new things, especially towards the values and languages (mostly English) of the Western world. And here as well, language is strongly connected to power because English dominates social, economic and political relations, a fact that explains why an English commercial name is considered “cool” and soon-to-be popular. In the case of Rusyn emigrants that have businesses in their homeland, the naming reflects the relation between language – individual – identity. Language is not a fundamental element of ethnic identity, much less in a globalised society; it is important for the individuals to the extent to which they let it define them. The use of a world language in naming businesses also has an important social role, even more so since Romania is a former communist country. Therefore, a foreign name is perceived as hinting at quality since the maxim “everything that is foreign is good” has become deeply rooted in the minds of many Romanians.

Globalisation prevents language from being a mark of ethnic identity as linguistic borders are shifting and they are difficult to pin point. Inside the Ukrainian community from Maramureş, the language used in the names of public space mirror the social, cultural, political and economic expectations the speakers have in regards to society and linguistic mediation.

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