

# Romanian-Spanish Onomastics Interferences

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## Abstract

The present paper establishes some interferences (at the level of people's names and company names) in the communication of Romanian people who live in Spain and who changed the idiom that they speak under the influence of Spanish, which is spoken most of the time. The article concentrates on the alteration which I coined as "Spanishalization" of the names borne by Romanian immigrants in Spain. The handiest explanation for this phenomenon may have been their desire to integrate or adapt names to the Spanish phonetic and morphological systems. The article distinguishes between two main tendencies for naming newborns: the usage of Romanian first names or Spanish ones and the usage of a Spanish name followed by another Spanish one, on the basis of the research of the Register of baptized children from the Saint Nicholas Parish in Castellón.

**Keywords:** *interferences, onomastics, rumañol, immigrant*

Onomatology, as a branch of linguistics, is a vast domain which permanently interferes with other sciences such as sociology, psychology, geography and history. With bilingual speakers, proper names undertake different transformations, in relation to the contextual character of the manifestation of meanings, "the relation between proper names and the denoted object being temporary, dependent on the verbal and situational context" (Tomescu, 1999, 1, my translation).

In the present paper, I will use the term linguistic interference as a result of the contact between languages (Weinrich, 1964, 1), which is "encountered among bilingual speakers, who use in a language (A) a phonetic, morphological, syntactical or lexical characteristic of another language (B) [...] the interference represents an aspect of cultural spreading" (Rusu, 1984, 757, my translation). My study focuses on the onomastic interference between Romanian (A) and Spanish (B), within the Romanian communities from Spain, with a special emphasis on anthroponyms.

The present research is based on the information acquired during the dialectal investigation undertaken in Castellón de la Plana, in February 2009. During this period I contacted Romanians settled in this city, as well as people who deal with the integration of the Romanian people in the Spanish society and with their existential problems (the President and the employees of the Association of Eastern Countries (AIPE), the President of the Association from Almazora, the Vice-consul within the Romanian Consulate in Castellón de la Plana, the Priest Nicodim, Vicar of the Orthodox Church in Castellón). Important data were supplied by Cristian Linares Bayo and Isabel Rios, professors at Jaume I University from Spain, as well as by a group of teachers from Lope de Vega College from Castellón. The obtained data were completed with other

information published on different sites and forums of Spanish Institutions (www.adevarul.es, www.romadrid.com), as well as official information supplied by the Spanish National Institute of Statistics.

My research had three main objectives: (1) observation and interpretation of the interferences which appear in communication in the case of proper names of Romanian people who emigrated to Spain, (2) classification of proper names of the newborns in Romanian families settled in this country and (3) tracking the onomatology of the Romanian companies from Spain.

I will start from the functional and semantic peculiarities of proper names: denomination by identification and “individualization and the denotative mobility and liberty which determines the contextual character of the manifestation of meaning” (Tomescu, 1999, 1, my translation) and I will attempt to follow the evolution of proper names of the Romanians in Spain, as well as christening names and surnames.

## Romanian Anthroponomy

In Romania, in identity documents (birth certificates, identity cards) as well as in all the official documents (from the name of a student in a register or a diploma to the ownership papers), the surname is entered in initial position and is followed by the first name. Usually, the child bears the father’s surname. Some exceptions may be encountered as well: the child whose father is unknown will undertake the mother’s surname; the children whose parents have different names may undertake both names<sup>1</sup> (this situation, although mentioned by the Family Code, is rarely encountered in Romania).

New-borns are usually given one or two first names; there are situations in which certain people have between three and five first names: *Catalina Elena Natalița Maier*.

“Christening names are practically unlimited and subjected to fashion” (Bidu-Vrânceanu et al., 2005, s.v. *onomastică*). In Romanian, Latin names such as *Sânziana*, *Traian*, *Enea* have been preferred in certain regions of the country, in certain periods; in other spaces the Slavonic ones are preferred: *Mihail*, *Neculai*. Christening names from Romanian have multiplied themselves over time: common names originating from plants (*Crina*, *Viorica*, *Narcisa*), from animals (*Mioara*) or from other common names (*Doina*) or foreign names (*Jana*, *Johnny*) (Bidu-Vrânceanu et.al., 2005, 359).

Surnames “were institutionalised relatively late and constitute a relatively closed class in relation to christening names, because acquisitions and losses are unimportant” (Bidu-Vrânceanu et al., 2005, 359). In Romania, after marriage, the woman usually takes the surname of her husband, but there are other possibilities too: both the bride and the groom “can keep their maiden names, or can take each other’s name or both names.” (*Family Code*, Article 27, my translation).

## Spanish Anthroponomy

<sup>1</sup> “The child from a marriage takes the family name common of both parents. If parents do not have common family names, the child will take the surname of one of them, or their joint names. (*Family Code*, Article 62, my translation).

In Spain documents (except D.N.I.)<sup>2</sup> initially register the first name (usually one, which may be compound, or maximum two) and then the surname. The latter is formed by two compound nouns: the first surname of the father, followed by the first surname of the mother. Recently Spanish legislation was modified, allowing people to exchange the order of names. The most frequent Spanish surnames are formed with the suffix *-ez*, which means “son” or “daughter of...” (for instance, Gonzalez means “the son of Gonzalo”).

Analyzing the statistic data published by the Spanish National Institute of Statistics in 2008 and 2009, in order to notice the most frequent christening names of new-borns from Spain, we observed that most encountered were *Maria, Lucia, Daniel* and *Antonio*.

Out of 255,045 boys in Spain in 2009, 6,227 are named *Daniel*. The following first names for boys are frequently encountered: *Alejandro* (5895), *Pablo* (5700). Out of 237,887 girls, 6,897 received the name *Lucia*, and 6544 *Paula*, followed by *Maria* (6113), and *Sara* (4417). Frequently encountered in the case of girls are the names *Maria Carmen, Carmen, Josefa, Isabel, Maria Dolores, Maria Pilar*, and for boys *José Manuel, Manuel, Francisco, Juan, David, José Antonio, José Luis, Jesús, Javier*.

Among the first one hundred names of newborns used in 2009 in Spain, foreign first names are encountered as well: *Alexandra, Manuela, Valentina, Yeray, Gisela, Laia, Lola, Malak* (feminine), *Kevin, Mikel, Mohamed, Pol, Izan* (masculine).

In the Civil register from Castellón, among the most frequent names of newborn children, we also encountered Arab names such as *Fatima, Mohamed, Mariam* as well as traditional Romanian names *Nicoleta, Adrian, Georgiana* (<http://www.elmundo.es/suplementos/cronica/2005/510/1122156004.html>).

The emergence of Arab and Romanian names among the Spanish names of newborn children in Spain is a recent development in direct connection with the immigration of Romanians and Moroccans to Spain.

It was shown that natality increased in Spain, during the last years, especially in regions chosen by immigrants (Madrid, Valencia, Catalonia). Although the number of Romanians from Castellón is larger than the one of Muslims, in the Civil Register there are more Arab names than Romanian ones which have been registered. In assessing this phenomenon, we must take into account that the Islam prohibits the use of other names than the Muslim ones.

Unlike Moroccan families, Romanians have the freedom to choose their children's names. Researching the Register of baptized children of Saint Nicholas Church we noticed four ways of naming newborns:

1. Registered children bear Romanian names: *Nicolae, Daniel, George, Ion, Andreea, Raluca, Monica, Ioana*. Alfonso Perez, the President of the Romanian Association from Castellón explains the use of names of Romanian origins as a manner to “recollect the native country and Romanian traditions” (<http://www.elperiodicomediterraneo.com/noticias>).

2. Some of these children, baptized in this Parish, have both a Romanian and a Spanish name: *Sara Dorina, Nicoleta Dolores, Alexandra Pilar, Antonio George, Ángel Catalin*. This union of Romanian and Spanish names may be explained by the

<sup>2</sup> Documento nacional de identidad (National document of identity)

Romanians' desire to integrate themselves in the Spanish society, doubled by their homesickness and recognition of origins. This interference of christening names may also represent one of the characteristics of Rumañol, the sociolect of the Romanians from Spain, characterized by the mixture of Romanian linguistic notions with the Spanish ones in written, as well as in verbal communication (Jieanu, 2010, 23).

3. Some parents opted for a Spanish name when they baptized their children: *Alisadora, Eric Josep* (Catalan first name), *Javier, Andrés, David Nicolás, Maria Isabel*.

4. There is a category of Romanian people, less numerous, who name their children with first names common both to Spanish and Romanian: *Maria, David, Carmen, Ana Maria, Lucia, Paula, Laura, Daniel*.

### **The Christian names of the Romanian immigrants in Spain**

As far as the Romanians' names used in communication in Spanish is concerned, two major tendencies may be noted: on the one hand, the names of the Romanian are modified or "Spanishalized" and on the other one, surnames are used instead of first names.

The alteration of Romanian names with similar Spanish ones is frequently encountered. Some Romanian people voluntarily introduce themselves using the Spanish alternative of their names, not only for their names to be remembered more easily, but also in order not to display the fact that they are immigrants: *Ion, Ioana* are replaced with *Juan, Juana, Nicolae* with *Nicolás, Alexandru* with *Alejandro*.

The Romanian name of masculine gender rarely receives the ending *-o*, which is typical for Spanish names. Thus, some persons named *Valentin* or *Adrian*, introduce themselves with *Valentino* or *Adriano*.

Many times the "Spanishalization" of Romanian names is caused by the impossibility of the Spanish people to pronounce the names correctly. These transformations emerged at the phonetic level and were determined by the absence in the Spanish phonetic system of the corresponding sounds for the letters or groups of letters: *ă, â, î, ș, ț, v, ge, gi, ce, ci*. Thus, a person named *Laurențiu* is called *Laurentiu* and a girl named *Cătălina* is called *Catalina*. Moreover, because Romanian people introduce themselves initially using the order surname, first name, they are called by their surnames: *Nita* is actually *Niță Alexandru*, one of our informers.

When Spanish people use Romanian names, two phonetic accidents occur: betacysm and prosthesis. Betacysm is a "phonetic modification which consists in the confusion of *b* with *v*, especially in initial position" (Bidu-Vrânceanu et al., 2005, 86-87, my translation). The phenomenon is frequently encountered in the Spanish language. In communication, almost in all situations, the names *Viorica, Viorel, Victor, Vasile, Vlad* are pronounced *Biorica, Biorel, Bictor, Basile, Blad*.

Prosthesis is a "phonetic accident which consists in adding a non-etymological sound to the initial position of the word in order to ease pronunciation, adding a vowel to the beginning of the word" (Bidu-Vrânceanu, 2005, 417, my translation). In Spanish, prosthesis is encountered in the case of words which begin with the sound *s* followed by a consonant. In front of the words the *e* sound is added. Prosthesis is encountered in the pronunciation of the Romanian names: *Ștefan, Ștefania, Stela* which become *Estefan, Estefania* and *Estela*.

## The surnames of Romanian immigrants in Spain

The surnames of Romanians from Spain are modified only in the case of children born out of mixed marriages. Neither the husband, nor the wife changes the name when they marry. If the husband is named *Ion Popescu*, and the wife, *Maria Simion*, they both keep the same names after marriage. If they have children, they will have the surname of the father, according to the Romanian legislation. If both parents obtained Spanish citizenship before having children, the children who will be born will bear both surnames, the first one being the surname of the father and the second one, the surname of the mother: *Adrian Popescu Simion/ Adriana Popescu Simion*, according to Spanish legislation.

In the case of mixed marriages, the child will undertake the first surname of the father and the first surname of the mother. For instance, if the child's mother is of Spanish origin and is named Feliciana Rodríguez Bosch, and the father is Romanian and is named *Ion Popescu*, the child will be named *Florian Popescu Rodríguez* or *Diana Popescu Rodríguez*. If the father is of Spanish origin – Jorge Molina Fuster, and the mother is Romanian - *Maria Simion*, the child will be named *Florian Molina Simion* or *Diana Molina Simion*. Thus, the children of Spanish Romanian couples or vice-versa, will have surnames compound of a Spanish name and a Romanian one (*Alejandro Gabriel Lopez Gliga*).

Some Romanian women married to Spanish men, who wish to undertake their husband's name, succeed after they declare the marriage in Romanian or within Romanian institutions from Spain (Embassy, Consulate).

## Company Onomatology

After more than ten years spent in Spain, some of the immigrants decided to open their own business. Initially, the majority of the companies were focused towards the needs of other Romanian immigrants, thus their names are based on Romanian toponyms: *Maramureș, Carpați*, the shops: *Transilvania, Muntenia*. In the first shops opened by Romanians, Romanian foods and deli were being sold. Later, the merchandise became diverse: transport companies, translation offices, insurance companies, banks, bank transfer companies, sales companies, respectively, construction companies, restaurants, discos were opened. As we may notice, the target group aimed by the merchants are Romanian consumers (the ones who send money to Romania, travel to the native places at least once a year, send parcels home and need authorised translations in order to obtain various documents).

One may easily see the multitude of the names for Romanian companies which may be seen on the streets of a Spanish city, such Castellón. In an article published in *El Mundo* (<http://www.elmundo.es/suplementos/cronica/2005/510/1122156004.html>), Alexandru Petrescu speaks about *The Little Romania* from Castellón, a city in which approximately 40,000 Romanians live. These people have shops (*Mara Market*), restaurants with Romanian cuisine (*Bucarest* and *Dacia*), sweet-shops (*Transilvania* and *Betty*), discos (*Neptun, Vox Maris* and *Cristal*), *Muntenia* butchery, three newspapers in Romanian (*Tara Mea, Ziarul Nostru, Xpress*), their own music (“rap-manele”) and their own idiolect (Rumañol). All these are completed by Saint Nicholas Orthodox Church,

the Romanian Consulate in Castellón and more associations which benefit from the support of the Local Council.

In the onomatology of companies from Spain there are considerable differences according to the branch. The majority of companies dealing with transportation have names containing the words transport or journey in their Spanish equivalents: *Viajes Baliber*, *Vampiro's viajes*. The name of some of the Romanian restaurants from Spain is made of a compound noun from the word restaurant, followed or preceded by a Romanian toponym or a common name: *Restaurantul Carpati*, *Restaurantul Acasa Madrid*. The names of insurance companies contain the Spanish word *seguros* (insurance): *Estrellas Seguros* or an abbreviation of it: *Segurfer*.

In the names of Romanian enterprises from Spain three tendencies may be observed:

1. Firms with names in Spanish: *Viajes Baliber*, *Escuela Infantil San Fernando*, *Panaderia IKA*, *Propan*, *Estrellas Seguros*, *Rekap Ainamur*, *Tu Voz*, *Autocasion*.
2. Firms with names in English: *Coinstar*, *Amad Touristik*, *Logistic Express*, *Naty Express*.
3. Firms with names in Romanian: *Carpați*, *Restaurant Acasa Madrid*, *Carmangeriile Maramureș*, *Măgura Ady & Bogdy*, *Transilvania*, *Muntenia*.

There are interferences between the three categories: some names are composed of a Spanish noun and an English one: *Comercial Perla*, *Vanity Rumañol*, and others composed of a Spanish word and a Romanian name (supra-name): *Caras Gugolanul SRL*.

In an example such as *Vampiro's Viajes*, both nouns which compose the proper name are Spanish, but possession is marked as an English synthetic genitive ('s).

Even if the names of the Romanian firms from Spain are obtained through the interference of three languages (Romanian, Spanish and English), the denotative possibilities are limited, leading to several predictable results:

- A board sign composed of initials which are pronounced letter by letter: *GSM*, *MKL*, or which is read as if it would make up a regular word: *TEIA* (Romanian Bank), *UMO*.
- A compound word by abbreviation, made up of fragments of words (*Eurobun*, *Eurocenter*, *Autocasion*, *Segufer*).
- A totally invented word, sonorous and easily memorized: *Natex*, *Alunare*.
- A metaphorical common name: *Estrellas Seguros*, *Tu voz*, *Coinstar*.
- A proper name – toponyms: *Carmangeriile Maramures*, *Carpati*, *Muntenia*, *Transilvania* function in symbolical plane, accentuating the idea of Romanian specificity.
- Person names, which indicate, usually, the owner: *Tom&Don*, *Simion's SRL*, *Magura Ady&Bogdy*.

“The local cultural traditions and international practice from a certain period of time determines the preference for some of these procedures, which may be exchanged among themselves, producing names with a complex structure” (v. *Vampiro's Viajes* or *Propan Service*, *Panaderia IKA*) (Zafiu, <http://www.dilemaveche.ro/sectiune/tema-saptamanii/articol/onomastica-srl>, consulted 20 April 2011. Online).

## Final remarks

Reanalyzing the information extracted from Romanian periodicals from Spain and the websites dedicated to the Romanians from the Iberian Peninsula, one may notice that Rumañol, the idiom spoken by the Romanian people from Spain led to a mixture of christening names in the case of newborn children from mixed marriages as well as a blending of Spanish and Romanian lexical elements in names of companies.

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## **Interferențe onomastice româno-spaniole**

### **Rezumat**

În cercetarea de față am analizat interferențele onomastice între limba română și limba spaniolă, survenite în comunicarea românilor din Spania, sub influența limbii spaniole vorbite în cea mai mare parte a timpului. Atenția noastră a fost atrasă de „spaniolizarea” numelor purtate de imigranții români din Spania, cauzată de dorința de integrare a oamenilor sau de adaptarea a idiomului la sistemul fonetic spaniol, precum și la cel morfologic și de onomastica firmelor românești din Castellón. În urma cercetării Registrului pentru înscrierea copiilor botezați al Parohiei Sfântul Nicolae din Castellón, am observat că există două tendințe de numire a noilor născuți: folosirea prenumelor românești sau a celor spaniole și utilizarea unui nume românesc și a altuia spaniol. Interferențele româno-spaniole pot fi observate și în alegerile numelor de companii românești.