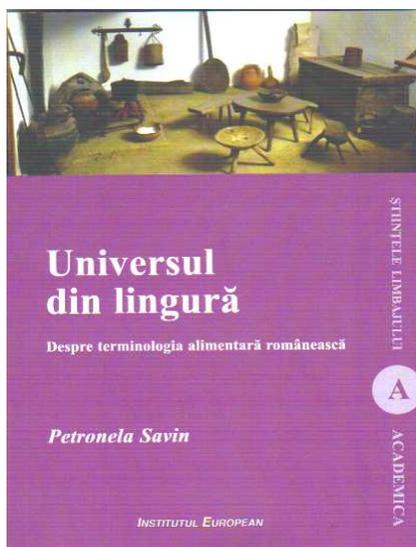


Petronela Savin, *Universul din lingură: despre terminologia alimentară românească*, Iași, Editura Institutul European, 2012, 194 p. (Cristina Radu-Golea)



The least stable compartment of language, vocabulary, is subject to changes (as compared with morphology or phonetics). Petronela Savin's work *Universul din lingură: despre terminologia alimentară românească/ The Universe in a Spoonful: on Romanian Food Terminology*, published by Institutul European in Iași, aims to point out some characteristics of Romanian food terminology, by explaining and inventorying a series of terms and expressions that give the specificity of Romanian cuisine.

The interest in the study of such a domain is not only of a linguistic nature, as the author also emphasizes: "Studiul pe care îl propunem ia în considerație cel mai larg cadru de antropologie culturală, prin punerea în valoare a cadrelor cognitive și a modelelor culturale fixate în limba

română la nivelul terminologiei alimentare"/ "The study we propose takes into account the widest cultural anthropology framework, by highlighting the cognitive frameworks and cultural models entrenched in Romanian at the level of food terminology" (p. 139). The universality of this "dominant", food, represents one of the main "tools" for the investigation of a culture or society, in any geographical area or any historical age. This work is important to Romanian culture, since it also contains food-related information, and not only.

In one of the chapters, *Nuclee ale corpusului terminologic al alimentației/ Nuclei of the Terminological Food Corpus*, the author organized the corpus of the work "într-o grilă semantică, după următoarele categorii: nume de alimente, de băuturi, acțiuni, stări, activități, însușiri, modalități, organe, simțuri, instrumente și instalații"/ "in a semantic scheme, according to the following categories: names of food, drinks, actions, states, activities, characteristics, modes, organs, senses, tools and installations" (p. 75). This classification based on semantic criteria "prilejuiește ilustrarea evoluției în diacronie a lexicului, cu relevarea modelelor culturale asumate în anumite circumstanțe istorico-sociale"/ "occasions the illustration of the diachronic evolution of vocabulary, by revealing the cultural models assumed under certain socio-historical circumstances" (p.75). The etymology of cooking terms may provide information not only on their origin, but also on the winding route of taking over foreign terms in Romanian. Romanian cuisine combines heterogeneous terminological elements of Balkan, German, French, Russian, Polish origin; but just like the history of the Romanian language, the history of Romanian cuisine does not necessarily indicate a creative will, systematically unifying imports and developing, on such a basis, a food culture of detail. It is original for the very reason that it came into being out of the combination of the great cooking trends in Europe. From the author's

perspective, food diminutives stand for a universal constant, with either objective or subjective sources. By the presence of food terms in Romanian phraseology, one also aims at the funny meaning, as well as the moralizing one, thus determining its effectiveness as an educational means.

The description of the scenes making reference to the act of feeding reveals the less known sides of some Romanian writers: Ion Creangă, Nicolae Filimon and I.L. Caragiale. Petronela Savin reaches the conclusion that there are two types of literary discourse: “unul reprezentat prin creația lui I. Creangă, care înfățișează lumea țărănească, ieșită din cadrele timpului și marcată de credințe și de obiceiuri imemorabile, și altul, ilustrat de operele lui N. Filimon și I.L. Caragiale, care descrie lumea urbană, profund așezată în epocă, definită prin modă și schimbare”/ “the former represented by the creation of Ion Creangă, which presents the world of the peasants, a world beyond time, marked by immemorial beliefs and customs, and the latter illustrated by the works of Nicolae Filimon and I.L. Caragiale, which describe the urban world, deeply settled at the time, defined by fashion and change” (p. 141).

Annexes include Romanian recipes and titles of cookbooks, as documents marking the history of cooking.

Consequently, food is a remarkable communication system. Within each historical age, food represents a model for the study of various aspects of human experience. Sometimes, a “cuisine” can be a symbol of an artistic and intellectual movement partly defined by food.