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S U M A R

	<u>Pag.</u>
EDOUARD GIUDICELLI, DAMIEN DELONCA, PIERRE BELLET și STEPHANIE MAILLES VIARD METZ, Sprijinirea muncii colaborative: recomandări pentru crearea grupurilor și evaluarea muncii colective (engl., rez. rom.)	9
GABRIEL ASANDULUI, Administrația locală românească de la Mica Unire la Primul Război Mondial (1859-1918) (engl., rez. rom.)	29
GISÈLE PIEBOP, Predarea/învățarea limbii chineze în Camerun: împrumutul ca problematică centrală a contactelor lingvistice (franc., rez. rom.) . . .	43
ELENA SIMINA BĂDĂRĂU, Balzac și Micuța Croitoreasă chineză: omagiul lecturii într-o lume răsturnată (franc., rez. rom.)	67
CĂTĂLIN NICOLAU, Inovații narative în romanele lui Thomas Hardy (engl., rez. rom.)	73

Section

SOCIO-HUMANISTIC SCIENCES

CONTENTS

	<u>Pp.</u>
EDOUARD GIUDICELLI, DAMIEN DELONCA, PIERRE BELLET and STEPHANIE MAILLES VIARD METZ, Supporting Collaborative Work: Recommendations for Group Creation and Collective Work Assessment (English, Romanian summary)	9
GABRIEL ASANDULUI, The Romanian Local Administration from the Little Union to the First World War (1859-1918) (English, Romanian summary)	29
GISÈLE PIEBOP, Enseignement/Apprentissage du chinois au Cameroun: L’Emprunt au cœur des contacts linguistiques (French, Romanian summary)	43
ELENA SIMINA BĂDĂRĂU, Balzac et la Petite Tailleur chinoise: Hommage a la lecture dans un monde a l’envers (French, Romanian summary)	67
CĂTĂLIN NICOLAU, Narrative Innovations in Thomas Hardy’s Novels (English, Romanian summary)	73

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**SUPPORTING COLLABORATIVE WORK:
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GROUP CREATION AND
COLLECTIVE WORK ASSESSMENT**

BY

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Abstract. This study focuses on the impact of the composition of groups of students on subjective psychological factors and the evaluation of collaborative work. The main results of collaborative work carried out by eighty undergraduate students show that the feelings of satisfaction and cohesion are different depending on the group composition. There is also a strong effect of affinity on peer evaluation and the accuracy of self-evaluation. It was also noted that some evaluation criteria for collaborative work are more interesting than others. Students are more likely to assess themselves more accurately when it comes to taking initiative regarding the amount of work done, or to an overall assessment of the work.

Keywords: Student groups; cohesion; satisfaction; self-assessment; peer assessment.

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1. Introduction

Being able to work in a team is a soft skill (Bouret *et al.*, 2014), which teachers are supposed to integrate and evaluate in their teaching activity. Currently, we can see that this skill is often considered to be acquired from the moment that pedagogical situations allow students to work in groups. However, working together, collaborating to achieve a goal is not a sufficient condition for developing this skill. Moreover, the idea of collective work is often at odds with the representations that teachers have. In practice, teachers sometimes prefer to assess the skills that they taught whereas the students estimate their level in a global way, in relation to all the work carried out in the training program. Also, the execution of the group project, is far from what the teacher had in mind initially. Thus, we observe a collective execution of the work by the students, but for a set of work to be produced, it is not unusual to see “projects” carried out by a single student with a formative evaluation that will benefit several. This collective approach is a little different from what the ability to work in a group implies. Indeed, carrying out collaborative work involves interactions and actions from each member of a group to form a collective result, and not working separately by dividing up the tasks (Gangloff-Ziegler, 2009; Dillenbourg, 1999).

In this study, we explore three leads regarding the issue of pedagogical support for the development of this group work skill: the effect of the composition of the groups on psychological factors, peer evaluation and the effectiveness of self-evaluation of collaborative work.

1.1. The Composition of Student Working Groups: An Impact on Subjective Psychological Factors

First, we thought it was important to question ourselves on the constitution of the groups and how this modality can have an influence on collaborative group work. How do students choose the members they wish to work with? Does the composition of a group in a pedagogical situation have an impact on individual feelings throughout the work to be carried out collaboratively? To answer this question, we looked at the literature works on the effects of group composition on the feelings of satisfaction and team cohesion.

Some authors define team composition as the configuration of individual characteristics within a group (Levine and Moreland, 1990). It has been shown that composition can have an impact on work through its effect on certain relational processes such as conflict or trust (Le Pine *et al.*, 2011). According to Hansen (2006), in the context of university projects, students are generally led to form two types of groups: the groups formed by the teacher and the group formed by the students.

When the groups are formed by the teachers, a technique that is particularly used is random assignment. The empirical results found in literature have shown the benefits of this type of composition. McClelland (2012) points out that when students are confronted with a collaborative work situation with randomly selected individuals, they will be out of their “comfort zone”. This position then requires efforts to mobilize their skills to make the best use of them. The results of his study showed that random assignment increases individual abilities as well as learning capacities. This finding is shared by several authors who argue that collective learning is more effective in groups whose members did not know each other before working together (Marsick and Watkins, 2001; Laird, 1985). Hernandez (2002) suggests that the groups randomly formed by teachers can result in a positive learning experience for the students. Blowers (2010) justified this hypothesis by stating that random assignment is a collaborative modality that the students will later find in a professional context.

The second category of team composition is the composition made by the students themselves. Students prefer the groups in which they have chosen the members, but admit to wanting the teacher to give them direction (Alexander and Stone, 1997). Chapman *et al.* (2006) also found benefits in groups formed by the students. In their field experiment, conducted with 583 students in groups of 2 to 6 members in a business and marketing school, the authors administered questionnaires to students at the end of the semester during which they had to achieve a team project. The results showed that students who had chosen their own team communicated more (with each other), were more enthusiastic, were interested in the other members and had more confidence in the ability of their group.

Thus, faced with the positions noted in the literature and if several works have revealed the positive impact of group composition mainly on the performance, other works have also shown an effect of these group compositions on subjective psychological factors such as the perceived satisfaction and the cohesion perceived by its members.

Satisfaction is “the positive emotional state that results from an individual's assessment of his or her work experience” (Locke, 1976). Group satisfaction is a recurring assessment in the literature on work teams, which shows a consistently positive impact on the different social processes and group performance (Zedda *et al.*, 2017).

Cohesion can be defined as “a dynamic process that reflects the tendency of a group to stay united in the pursuit of its goals, in order to satisfy the emotional needs of its members” (Carron *et al.*, 1998). In the past, cohesion has been demonstrated to have an impact on the work of student groups, particularly through its association with motivation (Gu *et al.*, 2011).

Thus, if in the literature, the composition of student groups has shown to have an impact on satisfaction and the feeling of cohesion, which are

important factors in the conditions of success of a collective work, we therefore assume that the stronger satisfaction and cohesion are, the more the students will be motivated to work together and so to develop collaborative work skills.

1.2. Peer Assessment

Evaluating group work is a complex activity for several reasons. It is difficult for a teacher to assess the group work activity. Asking students to assess the work of their group and its members can be a way of dealing with this pedagogical difficulty, but it can also be a way of training them to the assessment activity. Indeed, evaluating the work of others in an objective way, especially when it involves people with whom we have an affinity, can be difficult. And learning how to evaluate others is a skill to be developed to become more professional. We have therefore tried to explore how students evaluate others in a group: on what criteria and according to what factors?

Assessment is traditionally used to obtain information about students' learning processes and to improve their abilities (Pandora and Mardapi, 2017). Peer assessment is defined as the act by which individuals consider the amount, level, value, quality or success of a product or learning outcomes of peers of similar status (Topping, 1998). Within a classroom, the students have different levels of affinity with each other, some don't speak to others, others are long-time friends. When, in a team, individuals with different levels of affinity work together, peer evaluation is a way to enhance interaction and the objectivity of evaluations (Azarnoosh, 2013). We can assume that, in the hope of being objectively assessed by their peers, the students will want to be as objective as possible in their assessments. In a study by Azarnoosh (2013) conducted on students from a foreign language teaching background, the authors measured the impact of the affinity level of the members of the class on the evaluation of a written assignment by peers. This assignment consisted in writing in a foreign language on specific topics given by the teachers. The authors had made a sociogram based on the students' affinity by asking each participant to give them the names of three people in the class with whom they were the closest. The peer evaluation consisted in estimating the language level of the students they were evaluating on different established criteria. The results show that the assessments of the peers who were friends are not significantly different from the assessments of the peers who are not friends. Moreover, regardless of the level of affinity, these assessments were not different from the teacher's assessments, suggesting some objectivity in the assessment. Thus, we can assume that peer assessment is an effective tool to identify and communicate the important criteria in a teamwork.

1.3. Effective Self-Assessment through Peer Review

Each person lives this collective work experience according to feelings but is rarely able to evaluate it objectively in order to be able to progress on these aspects of collaborative work. However, knowing how to evaluate one's own work in relation to the one of others is necessary to develop one's sense of personal effectiveness (Bandura, 2005). In addition to our interest here in the mechanisms needed to set up appropriate collective work, we are interested in how each member self-evaluates his or her participation in the group, in relation to the evaluation that the other group's members can make of this member's work themselves. We have thus attempted to explore how students self-evaluate themselves and others in a group: on what criteria and according to what factors?

In order to progress and to motivate themselves, students need to increase their sense of effectiveness (Bandura, 2005; Zimmerman, 2001). This is achieved by self-evaluating one's own work in relation to the work of others. The perception of peers is therefore very important. To feel effective, we think that the student must develop a certain accuracy in this self-evaluation, i.e., the closer to peer evaluation the evaluation is, the more effective the student will feel. Self-assessment in a group work context is thus a strategy for students to get involved in their task and a guide to regulate their learning (McMillian and Hearn, 2008). For the individuals being assessed, peer assessment allows them to focus on what is considered quality work. Feedbacks help to be productive by preventing an individual from making the same mistakes (Bangert-Drowns *et al.*, 1991). Peer evaluation helps to compare to benchmarks, and to indicate the gaps that need to be filled to improve. Oppl (2017) emphasize in their study that it is important in collaborative work that the individuals engaged in the task, explicit their point of views on the task itself, to adapt the construction of a working pattern. This is underpinned by the fact that individuals need to develop a shared understanding of their interactions in the work process (Škerlavaj *et al.*, 2007; Stary, 2014). Furthermore, while this assessment modality may cause anxiety, it improves the acceptance of negative feedback, self-confidence, empathy, personal responsibility, and motivation (Topping, 1998). In Azarnoosh's (2013) experiment, the results also show that being engaged in peer evaluation positively changes the students' perceptions of the activity.

The nature of the criteria can also be important in the evaluation, whether personal or collective. Let's take the example of three criteria that have been studied in the literature as predictors of the final performance: team spirit, use of skills, and initiative.

Team spirit is defined as "psychological attachment to the group" (Turel and Connelly, 2012). It describes the feeling that team members share towards the group and their sense of collectivism, especially in overcoming failures and

conflicts between members in order to achieve common goals (Silva *et al.*, 2013). According to Boyt, Lusch, and Mejza (2005), team spirit is associated with helping behaviors among members, loyalty, enthusiasm, and devotion. In a field experiment conducted on 250 teams from a manufacturing firm, researchers measured the links between team spirit and team performance. Performance was measured by two indicators: the achievement of objectives and the respect of project deadlines. The results reveal a positive link between team spirit and performance (Ratzmann *et al.*, 2018).

Another studied criterion is the use of skills. Competencies are defined as “the knowledge, skills, and personal characteristics required to be effective in a job defined by standards” (Crawford, 2007). In a longitudinal study conducted on 57 student teams formed as part of a management course, the students had to compete with other student teams in a simulation of automobile companies (Mathieu *et al.*, 2015). The performance was measured by the fictitious economic level of the teams calculated by specialized business simulation software that the teams had at their disposal. The results reveal that individual skills in a team are significantly related to performance.

The third criterion is individual initiatives. It occurs when an individual voluntarily takes an active approach to work beyond what is formally required (Frese *et al.*, 1996). Taking initiative is sometimes linked to performance in the literature as it suggests that the individuals with a high level of self-help are particularly active in taking relevant information and planning their work effectively (Wall *et al.*, 1992). Baer and Frese’s experiment (2003) with German professional teams suggests that the level of individual initiative can create a climate of initiative within the team and that taking initiative also creates a sense of security within the team. This feeling of security, in turn, facilitates initiative.

These three criteria show the importance of communication and view sharing in collaborative work activities. In his study on the evaluation using the technologies of the participation of the members of a group of engineering school students, Boland (2010) suggests characterizing the work requested according to these three criteria as well as the presence, the quantity and quality of work. Each student must evaluate the work of the members of his-her own group.

1.4. Assumptions

The state of the art presented provides answers to our questioning and leads us to formulate the following three sets of assumptions.

Firstly, if the modalities of group composition do not seem to have any effect on the final performance on the requested task, they could have an impact on psychological factors such as satisfaction and cohesion.

Secondly, we question ourselves on how the members of a work team can evaluate their peers and assume that the affinity perceived between the members of a group should not influence this peer evaluation.

Thirdly, since self-assessment has been demonstrated as an important activity and skill in the literature, we think that the composition of the working group, if chosen by its members, can help to improve the accuracy of self-assessment and have an impact on the sense of self-efficacy.

To test these hypotheses and to deepen this knowledge on the evaluation of group work, we choose to carry out a study with students and within the framework of pedagogical productions that require teamwork.

2. Methodology

2.1. Participants

80 second-year students (17 women and 63 men) preparing a bachelor's degree in Computer Technology at the University of Montpellier in France (IUT), between 18 and 25 years old ($m = 19.56$ years old, $sd = 2.25$) participated in the study. All the students took part in two group projects. The composition of the groups differed from one project to the other. For the first project $N = 49$, the students could form their own team. For the second project $N = 79$, the participants were randomly assigned to working groups. Each working group consisted of 3 to 6 members.

2.2. Material

To measure teamwork satisfaction, we used a scale developed in the experience of Oetzel *et al.* (2012), consisting of four items. This scale allowed the authors to measure the effect of team composition on several collective variables such as satisfaction. The answers were measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree), which had a good internal consistency in the original validation (.87).

To measure team cohesion, we used the QAG or Group Atmosphere Questionnaire (Heuzé and Fontayne, 2002). The QAG is the French adaptation of the Group Environment Questionnaire (Carron, Widmeyer, and Brawley, 1985). The French scale, composed of 18 items, measures cohesion based on four factors: integration into the group on the task level (internal consistency = .79), integration into the group on the social level (internal consistency = .83), individual attraction to group tasks (internal consistency = .83), and individual attraction to socialization within the group (internal consistency = .71). The participants were asked to respond on a 9-point Likert scale (1 = strongly agree to 9 = strongly disagree).

To evaluate the level of affinity between the members of the same group, we did not find a scale in the literature, and we identified four levels to be contextualized with the situation in which the study is conducted. To the question “Did you have any affinity with this person before starting the project”, students could answer: “Not at all, we had never spoken together”, “Not really, I knew him/her by sight”, “Yes, but I don’t know him/her”, “Yes, he/she is a friend”.

Finally, the questionnaire developed in this study (the TEAM questionnaire) consists of six items, with one item corresponding to each factor. This questionnaire is taken from Boland's study (2010) and duplicated in two versions: one version for each group member to evaluate him/herself (e.g., “you took initiatives during this teamwork”) and another version for each group member to evaluate each member of his/her own group, then corresponding to the evaluation of one member (e.g., “this group member took initiatives during this teamwork”). In addition to these six factors, a general assessment of the overall appreciation of the group work is asked from the participants following the same scheme. Each item is scored on a five-point Likert scale (1 = I disagree completely; 5 = I agree completely).

2.3. Procedure

Considering two separate projects, the students must form two different working groups (one per project). For the first project, the composition of the groups is random and imposed: the teachers randomly assign a number to each student. All those who have received the same number must form a team. In the framework of this research, we call these groups, the random teams (RT). For the second project, the students can form the groups as they wish. These are the teams formed by the students (ST). In both projects, the students have to carry out a creative work related to their university course, in the second year of Bachelor’s degree in Computer Science. For the first RT project, the aim is to simulate a company creation process and for the second RT project, to design a project in computer science based on a customer’s request (e.g., website, games, ...). The first RT project is accompanied by a teaching team for 3 hours per week within 8 weeks. The project is evaluated under the form of an oral presentation and several documents that deal with the organization of the created company, in economics, management and human resources terms. The second ST project is accompanied by tutoring: each group of students is followed by one or two teachers and must participate in meetings, hand in reports and progress reports throughout the semester (about 14 weeks).

A first data collection with questionnaires is carried out when the students complete the first RT project. This is then spread over four days, for a duration of approximately 30 minutes per session. At the beginning of each course, we orally present the instructions for the questionnaires and have a

consent form filled in. After returning the consent form, all participants are asked to complete the questionnaires listed above about working in teams on the computers they use to work. A link available on their personal university spaces then connects them to the online questionnaires (Google Form). The students must first answer questions that allow the experimenters to identify them and their groups. They must give their first and last names, their age and the working group they belong to. Then they answer questionnaires measuring satisfaction (Oetzel *et al.*, 2012), cohesion (Heuzé and Fontayne, 2002) and the TEAM questionnaire, the relevance of whose indicators we wish to validate. Through the latter questionnaire, students are asked to assess themselves and each member of their own group about seven indicators that measure collaboration.

Later that same semester, we ran these questionnaires again. This was for the second ST group project, i.e., the groups composed by the students themselves. We therefore administered the satisfaction and cohesion questionnaires and the TEAM questionnaire a second time to the students but concerning this second ST project.

3. Results

3.1. Group Satisfaction and Cohesion

To verify the effect of the team composition modalities (RT and ST) on the satisfaction and cohesion of the members, we used the student *t* (Table 1). Our hypothesis is that the satisfaction and cohesion rates are higher in the teams whose composition was randomly made (RT). After completing the questionnaires, it was found that RT team members were more satisfied ($t(80.82) = -3.2$; $p < .01$) and less cohesive ($t(59.97) = 3.52$; $p < .001$) than ST team members (Table 1). These results thus confirm our hypothesis regarding cohesion: the students felt more cohesion during their work when they chose their working group members, but they also contradict our hypothesis regarding satisfaction: the students did not feel more satisfaction at the end of the group work when they chose their working group members.

Table 1
Means (M) and Standards Deviations (SD) of the Results of the Cohesion and Satisfaction Questionnaires Depending on the Team Compositions

	ST (n=49)	RT (n=79)
Satisfaction	13.9 (4.00)	15.99 (2.96)
Cohesion	44.5 (16.36)	35.76 (7.51)

3.2. The Nature of Peer Review and the Level of Affinity

Here we wonder how the students can evaluate their peers and whether this evaluation is different depending on the criteria and level of affinity. In this case, we hypothesized that peer evaluation does not depend on the level of affinity.

In terms of criteria

On a scale of 1 to 5, regardless of the criterion, ratings are never less than 3.92 (SD = 1.14) on average (Fig. 1). The level of peer evaluation for the ST group for the criteria is significantly lower than that of the RT group peers for initiative ($t(229.41) = -2.58$; $p < .05$), team spirit ($t(228.98) = -3.35$), and teamwork ($t(228.98) = -3.35$; $p < .001$), presence ($t(201.39) = -5.83$; $p < .0001$), quantity of work ($t(221.25) = -2.86$; $p < .01$), quality of work ($t(216.39) = -3.39$; $p < .001$), and overall for general assessment ($t(229.55) = -3.79$; $p < .001$). This difference was not observed for the skill-based criterion ($t(225.6) = 1.45$; $p = .15$) even though the variation was reversed: the ST group had a higher peer rating compared to the RT group.

From an overall perspective, regardless of the team, there is little difference between the evaluations (Table 2). Indeed, most of the criteria used for this evaluation are fairly highly correlated with each other. The assessment of the amount of work carried out is strongly correlated with taking the initiative ($r = .65$) and the feeling of presence ($r = .73$). The other criteria are also slightly correlated (r between 0.4 and 0.6). Only the feelings related to the use of skills are weakly correlated with the feelings of team spirit ($r = .32$) and the quality of the work done ($r = .34$).

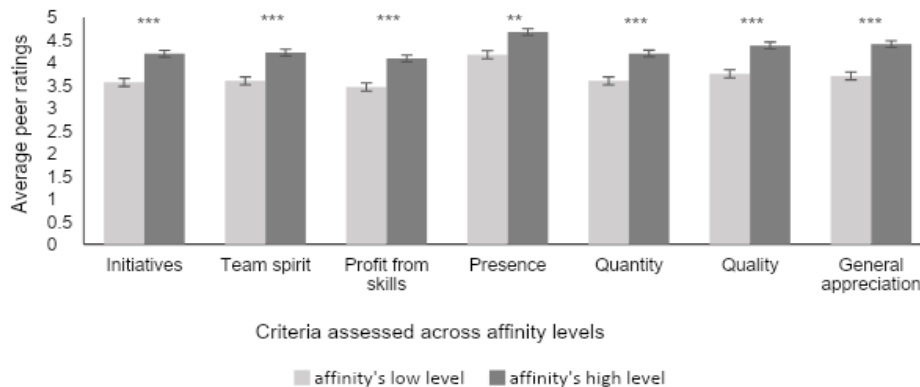


Fig. 1 – Results of peer reviews based on criteria and groups.

Note: Group comparison between ST (light grey) and RT (dark grey), with associated p-value (***) = $p < .0001$; ** = $p < .001$; * = $p < .05$).

Table 2
Inter-Item Correlation for all Conditions

	Initiative	Team spirit	Competencies	Presence	Quantity	Quality	General
Initiative	1	0.46	0.49	0.58	0.65	0.48	0.66
Team spirit	0.46	1	0.32	0.45	0.5	0.4	0.52
Competencies	0.49	0.32	1	0.46	0.51	0.34	0.48
Presence	0.58	0.45	0.46	1	0.73	0.48	0.65
Quantity	0.65	0.5	0.51	0.73	1	0.55	0.75
Quality	0.48	0.4	0.34	0.48	0.55	1	0.55
General	0.66	0.52	0.48	0.65	0.75	0.55	1

In terms of affinity level

We then look at how the RT participants assess their peers according to their previously reported level of affinity, the ST participants reporting very homogeneous levels of affinity. As a reminder, our questionnaire on self-reported prior affinity includes four response modalities: “Not at all, we had never spoken together”, “Not really, I knew him/her by sight”, “Yes, but I don’t know him/her”, “Yes, he/she is a friend”. Initial analyses show real differences when these levels are grouped into two categories: a low level of affinity (the first two modalities) and a high level of affinity (the last two modalities). These results indicate a split between low and high affinity levels. The evaluation of group members appears to be dependent on these two levels of affinity: $t(130.36) = -5.16$; $p < .0001$. The specific results for each scale show that the students who reported a previous high affinity score rated their teammates more generously compared to those who reported low affinity levels. This result is found for the scales on taking initiative ($t(148.67) = -4.68$; $p < .0001$), team spirit ($t(136.8) = -4.5$; $p < .0001$), using skills ($t(150.03) = -4.84$; $p < .0001$), presence at work ($t(116.7) = -3.96$; $p < .001$), quantity of work ($t(145.72) = -4.25$; $p < .0001$) and quality of work ($t(134.16) = -4.99$; $p < .0001$). We observe an influence of self-reported affinity on peer ratings for all the scales in our questionnaire.

Figure 2 shows the assessment scores according to affinity levels and each criterion.

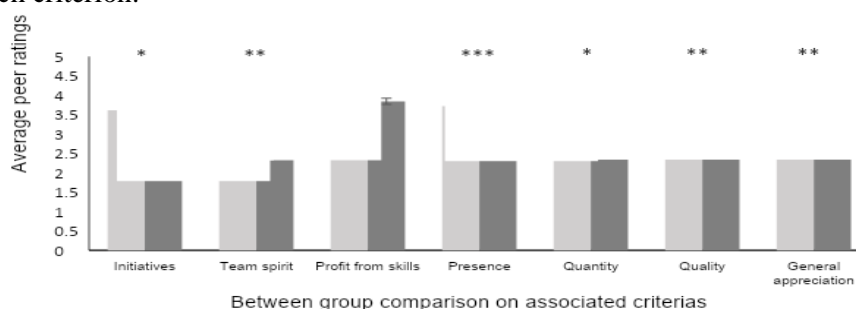


Fig. 2 – Average peer ratings on the questionnaire’s scales according to the declared level of affinity.

Note: Comparison of low (light gray) and high (dark gray) affinity levels, with the associated p -value for each scale.

It appears here that, contrary to our hypothesis, the reported level of affinity affects peer evaluation, i.e., the students with a higher prior level of affinity evaluate their teammates more generously than those with a lower prior level of affinity.

3.3. Assessment Accuracy

We calculated the degree of similarity between the self-assessment and the peer evaluation on our questionnaire. This analysis was conducted using the Bravais-Pearson correlation for the RT group and the ST group. We then assessed the similarity of the two groups in terms of their correlations using the Fisher transformation (Table 3). As a reminder, the hypothesis was that students working in a self-selected group should have higher correlations between self- and peer assessments than those working in a randomly selected group.

Table 3
Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations between Self and Peer Assessment within Groups and Intergroup Comparison of Correlations

Heading	ST (n=49)			RT (n=79)			Z score
	Self-assessment	Peer assessment		Self-assessment	Peer assessment		
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Pearson	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Pearson	
<i>Initiative</i>	3.77 (1.07)	3.77 (1.07)	0.62	3.82 (0.9)	3.9 (0.91)	0.4	1.61
<i>Team spirit</i>	3.76 (1.16)	3.76 (1.03)	0.44	3.95 (0.88)	3.92 (0.87)	0.35	0.57
<i>Competencies</i>	3.84 (1.08)	3.84 (1.17)	0.49	3.81 (0.94)	3.81 (0.78)	0.28	1.32
<i>Presence</i>	3.84 (1.08)	3.84 (1.17)	0.47	4.46 (0.73)	4.46 (0.71)	0.43	0.27
<i>Quantity</i>	3.7 (1.1)	3.7 (1.28)	0.56	3.91 (0.69)	3.91 (0.94)	0.42	0.99
<i>Quality</i>	3.78 (1.01)	3.77 (1.09)	0.32	4.1 (0.83)	4.1 (0.75)	0.42	- 0.62
<i>General</i>	3.8 (0.87)	3.81 (1.1)	0.63	3.9 (0.83)	4.07 (0.84)	0.41	1.64

Any subsequent estimation of the strength of our correlations is based on Cohen (1988). The student's self-assessments are generally very similar to the member's assessments (Table 3). They are also highly correlated with those of others when the students selected their group members (ST) for general assessment ($r = .63$), initiative ($r = .62$) and amount of work ($r = .56$). However, globally, there is no difference in self-assessment accuracy between the two conditions, regardless of whether the students choose their teammates. Indeed, as a complement, we conducted a significance analysis of these coefficients between the ST and RT groups. Fisher's transformation analysis was conducted for each of the items (z-score in Table 3) and does not represent a significant

difference between the assessments conducted in the ST team compared to the RT team, since the value of the z-score never exceeded the lower or upper bound of [-1.96:1.96].

These results therefore do not allow us to confirm our hypothesis regarding the influence of group distribution on the correlations between self-assessments and those of the members of each team: the participants do not seem to assess themselves more accurately depending on whether they chose their team members. Nevertheless, the criteria of initiative, amount of work and general appreciation are criteria that are more fairly assessed in the ST group.

4. Discussion and Recommendations

4.1. Satisfaction and Cohesion

First, we expected certain marker effects such as cohesion and satisfaction on the feeling of collaborative work. Satisfaction seems to be a marker of the effective functioning of a collaborative working group, as opposed to frustration as a marker of inadequate functioning, according to McClelland (2012). In addition, this variable appears to be related to the way groups are constituted according to Connerley and Mael (2001). We therefore assumed that the students who are able to choose their team members would generate greater satisfaction from their collaborative work. The results of our study indicate the opposite effect: the students who did not make this choice reported higher satisfaction with their work. Although this effect is surprising compared to the original hypothesis, it echoes other studies that argue that group learning is more effective outside the comfort zone (Laird, 1985; Marsick and Watkins, 2001). Moving outside the comfort zone would encourage the emergence and development of latent soft skills. Indeed, group work activity, especially in imposed configurations, tends to require more learning on skills such as managing complex, ambiguous situations, and uncertainty, as well as communication and group work skills (McClelland, 2012), all of which are identified as soft skills by Schulz (2008). If we consider these studies in relation to our results, we can then consider satisfaction as an important marker of the effectiveness of collaborative work, but whose modalities of appearance are different from what we expected. Indeed, satisfaction is higher when the members of a working group do not choose each other. It is therefore likely that this type of organization leads to a decrease in the feeling of efficiency at the beginning of the collaborative work activity, for example, related to the difficulties of planning the achievement of objectives in a context that is difficult to control. Following this logic, the completion of the work would contribute to a comparatively greater positive feeling for these teams, compared to the teams in which the members choose to work together, because of the lower expectation of success and the greater number of obstacles supposed to be overcome.

The second factor we have identified is cohesion, which is supposed to reflect a relevant marker of a working group's functioning, explaining performance. Cohesion is relative to the success of goal setting and other steps to create adequate group dynamics and the achievement of goals subsequent to successful work as described by Oppl (2017) taken from the model of Bandara *et al.* (2007). In this framework, we formulated our second hypothesis: the students should feel a greater sense of cohesion during the course of their work when they choose the members of their working group. Our study shows congruent results with this hypothesis, since our tests do indeed reveal greater cohesion for self-selected groups of students. This element reveals an interesting element of reflection added to the satisfaction results. Indeed, we may wonder whether cohesion is not an independent marker of the effectiveness of group work. It would rather be a marker of the fluidity of work. Reciprocally, we can ask ourselves whether satisfaction would not be linked only to the final product of the work. To answer this question raised by this study, it would be useful to replicate the experiment by introducing as a dependent variable a criterion-based and objective evaluation obtained by the group, graded by the teachers according to an inter-rater agreement method, this method guaranteeing a better measurement through intersubjectivity (Boissart, 2014). Such a method would make it possible to acquire qualitative data (judgements) from teachers concerning collaborative work, while at the same time having a high degree of objectivity concerning quantitative data (formative evaluation).

In addition, we can make some recommendations for education professionals such as teachers regarding team composition and its relationship to satisfaction and cohesion. From a pedagogical perspective, constraining the composition of student teams increases the student's satisfaction with the accomplished work. We hypothesize that in a group composed by the teacher, being less enthusiastic than working in teams composed by the students themselves, the students should focus more on their work, and they should end up being pleasantly surprised by their group. They are forced to make more effort to adapt to the behaviour of the individuals in their teams, which, once completed, may increase the sense of satisfaction. On the other hand, choosing the members of one's group is a modality of composition that could consolidate the positive relationships already established between the students. According to Hassakhah and Mozaffari (2015), student-composed groups help to facilitate cooperation, communication, and acceptance among team members. Finally, it should be considered that these results should be verified on other populations since they concern undergraduate students with a technological background in computer science, who may be more accustomed to carrying out team projects than in other domains.

4.2. Settings for Evaluating Group Work

Students were asked to evaluate the work of their team members based on several criteria, predictive of the performance according to the literature. The results show that when the students feel that the team members provided a great deal of work, they also feel that the team members took initiative and were present. Feelings differ for only three criteria: someone who uses their skills is not necessarily a person with a team spirit or even a person who does quality work. Thus, to support teachers in evaluating collaborative work, we could recommend that they use three criteria that are explanatory of the work done: team spirit, taking initiative and making use of skills. The other criteria used are not necessarily useful for the evaluation and could make it more cumbersome. Furthermore, the low dispersion of results in the evaluation could be linked to the scale of the questionnaire: from 1 to 5 and the lack of precision in the meaning to be given to each point. Bandura, in his work on the scales to measure self-efficacy, recommends 100-point scales (Bandura, 2006). It may be that, in our study, this way of responding, which accentuates the level of subjectivity, may imply a weak consideration of the levels of response to be given with a preference for strong levels that are less involving for the respondent. Indeed, even if in this questionnaire, it is asked to judge the other's behaviour, if the scale is not precise enough, this judgement may be mixed-up with the subjective judgement about a person, which could generate a certain discomfort and lead to these strong observed levels. Replicating this study would give us the opportunity to develop a scale that we would pre-test and whose psychometric qualities would be defined after testing a population of students. This scale could allow us to validate the impact of the three criteria that stood out in our study: team spirit, use of skills, and taking initiative and experimenting with new ones.

4.3. Peer Evaluation Based on Group Composition Choices

We were also interested in the implications of the previous level of affinity reported by our participants on how to evaluate peers in a working group. As a reminder, we made the assumption, in light of the state of the art, that prior stated affinity would not influence the value of the evaluation. This hypothesis is invalidated by our results, showing an influence of this affinity on the evaluation made by the students. Moreover, this influence depends on the presence or absence of this affinity and not on the intensity of the affinity felt.

In addition, the students are more generous in evaluating their peers when they declare an affinity for them prior to the start of the assignment. These results were obtained from the students in the groups that did not choose their teammates, even though the overall assessment was less generous in the groups that did choose their teammates. This is a contradictory result because we had

postulated that the groups to which the choice of composition was left realized it on the basis of the presence of an affinity. This result thus shows that factors other than affinity influence these evaluations. Here are some possible explanations. First, as it was found that satisfaction is higher when the students do not choose their teammates, being, by chance, with someone for whom one has affinity reinforces this positive appreciation of the other. Secondly, the generosity of peer evaluations is always lower when the students choose their teammates, except for the criterion of “profit from skills”. This result is interesting because it emphasizes the importance of the task requested in each group: disciplinary skills are indeed more mobilized in the groups where the students choose their teammates. From this view, we can think that the group choices were also made on the participation of each individual to increase performance. Thirdly, and this is related to the previous point, there may be a methodological bias about the nature of the tasks in each team. Indeed, the working groups that chose their composition were not confronted with the same pedagogical modalities as the others: more autonomy, fewer imposed moments to meet physically and work together.

These findings lead us to advise education professionals to consider the affinity of the members when composing a group, when the students have to get involved in evaluating their peers. If such an assessment is necessary, consideration of the nature of the criteria to be scored is particularly important to consider the nature of the criteria to be marked so that affinity does not bias the rating. For example, grading the quality and quantity of the work of one’s peers, when those are the assessor’s friends, can be tricky if the members being assessed have not provided the expected level of work.

4.4. Self-Assessment and Accuracy of Peer Evaluation

Self-assessment has a central influence on the level of self-efficacy. This self-evaluation is also a means of taking a step back from the activity of the task that has been performed. Thus, the more this self-evaluation is carried out on objective criteria, the more it will influence the effectiveness of the task itself and therefore an impact on the level of self-efficacy. In our study, we notice that the accuracy of the evaluation is not dependent on the composition of the group, whether it is chosen by its members, even though we thought the opposite was true. Only the evaluations carried out on the criteria of initiative, amount of work and general appreciation are criteria that are evaluated more accurately when the students choose the members of their group. Let us note that the criterion presence does not present significant results on this correctness of evaluation even though we could think that it is an objective criterion: everyone should know if he/she has been present or if the others have been present. It is also observed that the evaluations are very little dispersed on the 5-item scale, whatever the criteria. The evaluations are therefore carried out on

feelings and are not attached to precise indicators of the situation. One possible interpretation is that these evaluations are not sufficiently guided by our scale and are not sufficiently explained by the students. The criteria may also not make enough sense to the students either. It would therefore be interesting to experiment with new criteria regarding the results of this study, such as participation in a specific activity, such as group coordination, respect of the rules, etc., and to contextualize the level of the items. However, the criteria “taking initiative”, “quantity of work” and “general appreciation” show that the students agree when they know each other. It can be assumed that the answers to the questions were oriented to personality or contribution in general and not to these specific work activities. This interpretation would be consistent with the idea that each student imagines the work in a collective global way over the whole training and not in relation to each pedagogical activity. It would therefore be necessary to work with the students on the representation of the elements that make up their training, and thus the competency-based education and training approach takes on its full meaning (Hodge *et al.*, 2020).

5. Conclusions

This study shows that the way the groups are composed has a positive and different impact on the students’ feelings depending on whether they choose their team members or not. Furthermore, there is an effect of the level of affinity on peer evaluations but also a difficulty for the students to make sense and be objective in their evaluations. These results deserve to be further explored in future studies in order to consider specific recommendations for teaching practices.

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SPRIJINIREA MUNCII COLABORATIVE: RECOMANDĂRI PENTRU CREAREA GRUPURILOR ȘI EVALUAREA MUNCII COLECTIVE

(Rezumat)

Acest studiu se concentrează asupra impactului alcătuirii grupurilor de studenți asupra factorilor psihologici subiectivi și asupra evaluării muncii în colaborare. Principalele rezultate ale muncii în colaborare desfășurate de optzeci de studenți de licență arată că sentimentele de satisfacție și coeziune sunt diferite în funcție de componența grupului. Există, de asemenea, un efect puternic al afinității asupra evaluării colegilor și asupra acurateței autoevaluării. S-a remarcat, de asemenea, că unele criterii de evaluare pentru munca colaborativă sunt mai interesante decât altele. Studenții sunt mai predispuși să se evalueze mai precis atunci când este vorba de a prelua inițiativa față de cantitatea de muncă depusă sau de o evaluare generală a muncii.

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THE ROMANIAN LOCAL ADMINISTRATION FROM THE LITTLE UNION TO THE FIRST WORLD WAR (1859-1918)

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Abstract. The present study aims to present and analyze the normative acts that led to the reorganization and modernization of the local administration in the period between the reign of Alexandru Ioan Cuza and the outbreak of the First World War. The Law for Urban and Rural Communes and the Law on the Establishment of County Councils were the normative acts that regulated the proper functioning of the administration in the territory for almost half a century. The changes they were brought were not substantial and did not affect their essence, thus their spirit remained in force until the interwar period, specifically until the adoption of the 1925 Law for Administrative Unification.

Keywords: local administration; reform; Alexandru Ioan Cuza; Parliament; Little Union.

1. Historical Considerations

In the years that followed the Organic regulation period, which ended de facto in 1848, a series of events took place that influenced the future of Romanians in the Principalities. The first of these was the Crimean War (1853-1856), which had a major impact on the subsequent political course of Moldavia

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and Wallachia. The Congress of Paris (1856), which officially put an end to this conflict, offered the two Romanian provinces, on the one hand, the chance to consolidate their autonomy, collectively guaranteed by the European powers, and on the other hand, led to the removal of the Russian protectorate. To the insistent request of the Romanians to resolve the issue of the Principalities, the Great Powers responded with a postponement, invoking the necessity of waiting for the conclusions of the Ad hoc Divans and the Committee for the information of the European powers (Berindei, 1979, p. 38). In reality, the Guarantor Powers (England, Austria, France, Prussia, Sardinia, Russia and Turkey) could not reach a compromise and because of this they postponed the solution of the Romanian problem (*ibidem*).

The establishment of the collective protectorate, the abolition of the Russian uniprotectorate, the recognition of Moldavia's historical right to rule over the south of Bessarabia (Bolgrad, Cahul and Ismail counties) and above all the consultation of the Romanians through the Ad hoc Divans represented gains that the representatives of the unionist movement used in their action to fulfil the desired Union. The Ad hoc Divans gave the unionists the opportunity to discuss, in addition to the problem of the Union, other problems that would be solved, for the most part, during the reign of Alexandru Ioan Cuza (Berindei, 1979, p. 55). The two Consultative Assemblies, with attributes of national representation, convened in accordance with the provisions of the Congress of Paris, pronounced themselves in favour of the union of the two Romanian provinces (Platon, 1993, p. 83).

The debates held within the two Ad hoc Divans served as a source of information for the report drawn up by the Committee for the information of the Guarantor Powers, specially established for this purpose. In addition to the information provided by the discussions held during the two meetings, the commission also added its own conclusions indicating the reforms that had to be adopted: the abolition of privileges and equality before tax and the law, the revision of agrarian relations, the modernization of municipal institutions, the reorganization of the Ministry of the Interior, the separation of the executive power from the judicial one, the introduction of the immovability of magistrates, the improvement of the education system and the establishment of higher education, the development of transport routes and the simplification of the financial system (Berindei, 1979, p. 68).

The report of the Information Commission served as a source of information for the proceedings of the Paris Conference of 10 May (Old Style) / 22 May 1858 which was to establish the definitive organization of the Principalities. Unfortunately, the divergent positions of the Great Powers on this issue made the Paris Convention take on a heterogeneous form, containing, on the one hand, advanced provisions and, on the other hand, also stipulating retrograde provisions (Berindei, 1979, p. 70). According to the provisions of the Convention, the United Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia remained

under the suzerainty of the Porte but were to benefit from the collective guarantee of the Guarantor Powers. The administration of the two principalities was to be exercised freely, outside the interference of the Porte, under the direction of the rulers, who were to govern with the help of the ministers appointed by them. The legislative power was to be exercised, collectively, by the ruler, the Elective Assembly and the Central Commission and the judicial power was to enjoy independence from the other powers, while the immovability of judges was to be applied progressively. As an element of unity, the Convention of Paris stipulated that the ruler was chosen by the Elective Assembly, for life, subject to the suspensive condition of obtaining the investiture of the Porte within one month of the announcement of the results. In order to be elected as rulers, the candidates had to have the citizenship of one of the two principalities, an income of three thousand guildens and they had to have held public positions for ten years. Other elements from the category of unity features mentioned by the provisions of the convention were: the establishment of a common Central Legislative Commission for the two principalities, a Court of Cassation and the possibility of establishing a single army. Among the provisions with a retrograde character, we mention the introduction of the census voting system which limited the participation in public life of a large number of inhabitants of the Principalities (Berindei, 1979, p. 70-71).

Although the Paris Convention of 1858 did not fully correspond to the aspirations of full union that the Romanians had, it left open the way for its realization by the Romanians. On an institutional level, the provisions of the convention created the legal framework for reforming state institutions and for imposing modern principles of administration (Platon, 1993, p. 88). However, the objective of the union could only be achieved through the direct and immediate involvement of the Romanians. This task was undertaken by the National Parties of the two countries. By mobilizing the popular masses, they managed to impose the double election of Alexandru Ioan Cuza as ruler of the Principalities, taking their first step on the long and winding road to the realization of the Romanian unitary national state.

The election of Alexandru Ioan Cuza in January 1859 as ruler of the two principalities was the result of the desire for the union of the Romanians from Moldavia and Wallachia, which was not immediately recognized by all the Guarantor Powers. France, Prussia, Russia and Sardinia were favourable to the double election, England had an inconsistent attitude, rather opposed than favourable towards the union, while Austria and Turkey vehemently opposed the Romanians' manifestation of will. In this context, Alexandru Ioan Cuza and the progressive forces from the two principalities, relying on the mass of the population, adopted a courageous attitude, managing to impose and carry out the Little Union. Relying on internal support, Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza proclaimed the constitution of Romania, announcing the unification of the governments and the Elective Assemblies of Moldavia and Wallachia, fulfilling

the age-old wish of the Romanian people. To give weight to the act of union, the ruler addressed the nation through a proclamation announcing that “the Union is accomplished” and “nationality is established” (Berindei, 1979, p. 102). The recognition of the political-administrative union had as an immediate consequence the resignation of the two governments and the establishment of a single cabinet.

The Union of the Principalities represented a first step in the process of establishing the modern Romanian state, but there was an urgent need for fundamental reforms in various fields, including at the administration level. The ruler, supported by his close associates, engaged in the process of qualitative transformation of the public administration in Romania by presenting a package of laws that were supposed to bring about changes.

2. The Administrative Legislation during the Reign of Alexandru Ioan Cuza

At the beginning of his reign, Alexandru Ioan Cuza administered the two countries as two separate state entities, with distinct governments, different legislative assemblies and separate administrations. This double organization lasted until January 1862, when the double election was recognized on a European level by the seven protector states. The establishment on 22 January/3 February, 1862 of the first single government of Romania with eight ministries (Internal, Foreign, Finance, Public Works, Justice, Religion and Public Instruction, War, Control) represented the first act of independence of the Romanian state (Filitti, 1935, p. 73). Having in its composition people originating from both principalities, the new cabinet decided that the existing ministries in the capital of Moldavia would become directorates of the ministries in Bucharest. The work of the first Parliament of Romania opened on 24 January/5 February, 1862, on which occasion ruler Alexandru Ioan Cuza proclaimed “the definitive union of the Principalities” in front of the Elective Assemblies of Moldavia and Wallachia, gathered in joint session.

Romania had to go through an extensive process of legislative unification that had to be reflected at the administration level as well. The Central Commission from Focșani, established in 1859, took timid steps in this direction. An extensive legislative campaign was needed in this field to ensure, on the one hand, administrative uniformity and, on the other hand, to modernize the Romanian administration. Unfortunately, the state modernization process was obstructed by successive legislative assemblies that were hostile to the legislative proposals presented by the ruler’s collaborators. Under these conditions, Alexandru Ioan Cuza and his collaborators drew up a draft Constitution that would substantially increase the powers of the ruler and, at the same time, reform the Romanian parliamentary system by introducing bicameralism. The new parliamentary chamber, made up of both members by

right and members appointed by the ruler, was to be called the Senate. This project was the basis of the Statute of 1864 which was elaborated and adopted to counteract the hostile opposition of the Legislative Assemblies to the reform proposals envisaged by the ruler and his close associates, especially to the draft of the rural law (Baciu, 1996, p. 30-31).

A normative act with the power of fundamental law was needed to allow the adoption of sectoral measures to ensure the continuation of the modernization process of the state. This role was played by the *Statute expanding the Paris Convention*, also known as *Cuza's Statute*, which is considered by some specialists to be Romania's first indigenously inspired Constitution (Focșeneanu, 1998, p. 22). Approved, together with the Electoral Law, by plebiscite in May 1864, the statute needed the approval of the Guarantor Powers. An intense and skilful diplomatic activity was carried out so that the members of the Commission of Ambassadors of the Guarantor Powers, gathered in Paris at the proceedings of the Paris Conference in June 1864, recognized this act of will of the Romanian people, with some reservations. The statute and the Electoral Law of July 1864 established the principle of legislative autonomy which allowed the Principalities to modify or change their internal administrative legislation with the legal contest of the guarantor powers but without any external intervention (Negulescu, 1938, p. 177).

Cuza's Statute established the supremacy of the executive power over the legislative one, specifying that "public powers are entrusted to the Ruler, to a Ponderative Assembly and to the Elective Assembly" (art. 1). They collectively exercised legislative power (art. 2), but the right of initiative in this matter belonged only to the ruler (art. 3). The latter also had the possibility to govern alone, without parliament, with the support of a Council of State. The same act consecrated the bicameral parliamentary form, by establishing a new assembly that we find mentioned sometimes as "Ponderative Assembly", sometimes as "Ponderative Body" and later called the Senate. *Cuza's Statute* allowed the ruler and his collaborators to initiate a series of jurisdictional reforms aimed at profoundly transforming Romanian society. Among the normative acts promulgated during the reign of Alexandru Ioan Cuza, we mention: the Law for Judicial Organization, the Law for the Organization of Rural Communes, the Law for the Establishment of County Councils, the Civil Code, the Code of Civil Procedure, etc. Our interest is limited to the normative acts that were adopted to regulate the activity of the local administration and that remained in force, with some modifications, until the interwar period. This is the case of the law on the organization of rural communes and the law on the establishment of county councils.

A first step in the process of modernization and standardization of the Romanian administration was made with the publication in "Monitorul. The Official Journal of the United Principalities" Part I, of 2/14 April, 1864 of the *Law on the Establishment of County Councils*. The normative act in question

enshrined the principle of administrative decentralization, assigning to the County Council the role of representing the local, collective and economic interests of the county (art. 1). In accordance with the provisions of the law, the county, as an administrative-territorial entity, with legal personality, had three types of attributions: *administrative, legislative, judicial*. These were exercised by the county council established on the basis of the elections organized at the level of the *plăși*, intermediate administrative-territorial units between the county and the commune. Each *plasă* could be represented in the council by two members, elected for a period of four years (Ursu, 1935, p. 352).

Initially, the County Council was headed by a president elected by the members of the council. Later, out of a desire to have control over local structures, the government amended the law and assigned itself the right to appoint the president from among the first three councillors who received the highest number of votes. The council's duties concerned important aspects in the administration process of the county: voting on the annual budget, drawing up regulations and economic-social strategies, adopting decisions regarding building development, authorizing loans for the benefit of the county, establishing the seat of the *plasă*, addressing complaints to the Ministry of the Interior. The activity of the Council took place in an ordinary, autumn session, and in several extraordinary sessions.

For the period between sessions, a permanent committee – an administrative authority inspired by Belgian legislation – was mandated to take over part of the council's duties. Made up of three members elected from among the councillors, the permanent committee was chaired by the prefect. The duties generally concerned the preparation of the materials and of all the necessary information for the issues that were to be debated in the next meeting of the County Council. In cases of emergency, it could also rule on matters reserved exclusively for the latter, with the obligation to bring them to the attention of its members at the first meeting. Also, the committee had the task of verifying the situation of the county's revenues and expenses, having oversight over administrative matters (Ursu, 1935, p. 86). Each member of the permanent committee was remunerated for the activity carried out with an annual allowance of 8000 lei. In the large cities of Romania (Bucharest, Iași, Craiova, Galați, Ploiești and Ismail) the amount that the members of the permanent committee received was higher, namely 10,000 lei per year (art. 87).

In the period between 1864 and 1872, the County Council and the Permanent Committee were served by the institution of the secretary. His attributions concerned: writing the minutes and protocols of both bodies, managing the archive, managing the current activities of the chancellery and, from 1866, collecting statistical data. The secretary's status as a civil servant prevented him from holding another position at the governmental, county or communal level. Moreover, the law even forbade him to represent the interests of other natural or legal persons, in matters that concerned, directly or

indirectly, the county whose interests he was called to defend (art. 103). Starting from 1872, his duties were transferred to the director of the prefecture, an institution created by Alexandru Ioan Cuza in 1861. In 1894, the position of secretary of the county council and the delegation (appointed by the king) was re-established, the director remaining only the head of the prefecture's chancellery (Guțan, 2005, p. 198-199).

Another institution regulated by the Law for County Councils was that of the prefect, who represented both local interests and those of the government (art. 104). The prefect coordinated the activity of the institutional-administrative apparatus of the county, being both a commissioner of the government and a representative of the county. His main attributions concerned the implementation of the decisions of the County Council and the observance of the legislation in force by all the factors within the subordinate institutions. The institution of the prefect represented the interests of the central administration in the county and was the link between the government and the local administration, watching over how the laws were put into practice in the territory. Legal actions concerning the interests of the county were exercised by the prefect on behalf of the permanent committee (art. 106). At the same time, the prefect could attack the documents issued by the County Council or by the permanent committee which he considered illegal or which would harm the interests of the county. In this sense, he had at his disposal the possibility of appeal to the government, within ten days from the issuance of the act in question. The law, however, required the prefect to notify the Council and the Permanent Committee of his action (art. 107). By the same normative act, the prefect was granted, for a short period of time, the position of president of the Permanent County Committee. After 1872, this attribution was withdrawn, the new normative act enshrining the ruler's right to appoint the president, on the recommendation of the minister of the interior, "from among the members elected to form the permanent committee" (Ciobotea and Cioarec, 2011, p. 81).

By the same law of the County Councils, the institution of the sub-prefect was created, this being the prefect's representative in the administration of the *plăși*. According to the provisions of the aforementioned normative act, the sub-prefect was obliged to visit, at least twice a year, all the communes in his *plasă*, inspecting the registers of civil status and verifying their financial situation. The reported irregularities and abuses had to be brought to the attention of the Permanent County Committee, which was the entity entitled to solve these problems (art. 110). The sub-prefect also had the task to submit (one month before the meeting of the County Council) to the permanent committee a detailed report on the needs of the respective *plasă*, specifying the measures which he considered necessary to improve its situation (art. 111). After 1904, the name of sub-prefect was replaced by that of communal inspector and starting with 1908 the designation of *plasă* administrator and later that of prime-*praetor* was used.

Also during the reign of Alexandru Ioan Cuza, the **commune** was institutionalized as a form of institutional expression of the administrative reform in Romania. In this way, it was granted legal personality, establishing a new form of local administration in Romania. The commune became the foundation on which the entire administrative organization of the modern Romanian state was laid, laying the groundwork for a subsequent decentralization conceived on the basis of local autonomy. The *Law on the Organization of Rural Communes* of 1/13 April, 1864, of Franco-Belgian inspiration (Ghițulescu, 2011, p. 102), consecrated, from a legal point of view, the new institution.

The new administrative entity, the commune, would impose new rules on administrative life from which rights and duties arose for its members (Nistor, 2000, p. 35). The law contained provisions of an institutional-administrative nature, such as: the formation of communes and their attributions, the election and duties of mayors and members of communal councils. Communal administration was entrusted to deliberative bodies, such as communal councils and town halls. Regarding the composition of the members of the communal councils, the law established that their number depended on the number of inhabitants of the commune, the minimum limit being 5 members and the maximum 17 members. The members of the councils and the mayors of the rural communes were elected directly by the citizens of the locality. For the right to vote, the latter had to meet certain eligibility conditions established by law: minimum age of 25 years, stable domicile in the respective locality and payment of a direct tax established according to the category of the administrative-territorial unit (art. 22). The following categories had the right to vote without having to prove the payment of the mentioned contribution: priests, teachers, elementary school teachers, doctors, engineers, architects, civil servants and retired career soldiers who had an annual pension of at least 2,000 lei (art. 25). The following categories could not be communal voters, regardless of the contribution they paid to the state: servants who were remunerated for the activity they performed, people who had certain prohibitions, people who had been declared bankrupt and had not been rehabilitated, people who had been convicted criminally or who had committed certain offenses provided by law. Likewise, owners of prostitution or gambling houses (art. 27).

Drawing up the electoral lists was the responsibility of the town halls, who had to display them on the first Sunday of January. Complaints about the way the lists were drawn up were addressed to the Prefecture within three weeks from the date of publication. Any person registered on the electoral lists could complain about the registration or omission of his or another person's registration on the list. The electoral lists had to be finalized by 1 March and were valid for one year (art. 28-31).

Elections for the designation of members of the Communal Council

were organized every four years, in the case of urban communes, and every two years in that of rural communes (art. 32). The law also touched on the issue of the rights of indigenous Jews (Nistor, 2000, p. 103). According to the compromise between the liberals and the conservatives, only certain categories of indigenous Jews could vote in the communal elections: those who had served in the country's army and had acquired at least the rank of non-commissioned officer; those who had attended the courses of a college or a higher education school in Romania; Jews who had obtained their bachelor's or doctorate degree abroad, provided that it was recognized by the Romanian state, but also those who established a factory or a manufacturing plant in the country which had at least 50 employees.

In order to be elected as a member of the council, it was necessary to meet the same conditions as in the case of registration on the electoral lists. The status of a member of the Communal Council was incompatible with any other remunerated salaried position within the state apparatus. At the time of the investiture, the elected members of the communal council took an oath of allegiance to the ruler (art. 51). The members of the council met both in ordinary meetings, convened monthly, and in extraordinary meetings convened whenever the interests of the commune demanded it. The meeting was called by the mayor of the locality or by at least one third of the council members. The main duties of the members of the Council concerned the supervision of the administrative activities carried out at the level of the commune and supporting the mayor in his endeavour to manage the activity of the communal administration (art. 67-75).

The law established that the administration of the commune was the responsibility of a magistrate called the mayor. However, the candidates for the mayor's seat had to fulfil certain conditions: to be Romanian citizens or to prove that they had become naturalized; to have resided in the commune for at least six months; to pay a contribution to the state, depending on the number of inhabitants, from 48 lei in rural communes, to 80 lei in urban communes with 3,000-15,000 inhabitants and 110 lei in communes with more than 15,000 inhabitants (art. 18). According to the provisions of the law, the mayors of rural communes were directly elected by the citizens of the commune, along with the designation of the members of the communal council, their appointment requiring the prefect's approval. However, the appointment of the mayors of the urban communes fell to the ruler, who chose one of the first three councillors who had obtained the most votes. The government also played a role in this equation of appointing the most important members of the local administration, having the task of nominating the assistant mayors (vice-mayors) from among the municipal councillors. The number of vice-mayors differed depending on the population of the respective locality, six for urban centres with over 40,000 inhabitants, four for towns with between 15,000 and 40,000 souls, three for localities with between 6,000 and 15,000 inhabitants,

two for communes with they had between 3,000 and 6,000 souls and one for smaller communes (art. 83-84).

In accordance with the provisions of the law, the mayor was the only person empowered to administer the commune. The duration of a mayor's mandate, as well as the method of his election, differed according to the specifics of the commune. The main attributions that belonged to the mayor of a locality were: the management and conservation of the properties/assets of the commune; supplying it with the necessary goods; drawing up the budget; presiding over the municipal council meetings. In his capacity as a representative of the communal power, the mayor was the head of the local police, he supervised how the laws and their application norms were put into practice and he took care of the observance of order and peace within the locality he administered (Nistor, 2000, pp. 33-34).

Unfortunately, the law did not impose a certain level of school training on the mayors. This deficiency brought Romania to the situation of having, in 1904, only 242 mayors with school training out of a total of 2884 that existed throughout the country (Guțan, 2005, p. 232).

In addition to the mayor, the government appointed one or more assistants for him. These positions too were incompatible with that of Romanian state public official, as well as that of "entrepreneur of the commune's public works and revenues" (Ciobotea and Cioarec, 2011, p. 77). The mayor and assistant mayors could be suspended by the county prefect, if the commune had up to 3,000 inhabitants, and by the minister of the interior if this number was exceeded. The dismissal was done, in the first case, by the minister of the interior, and in the second case, by the king. The mayor's salary was paid from a so-called "charity box", whose amount was set by the municipal council and could be modified by the permanent Council (*ibidem*).

The importance of the communal institution was directly proportional to the multitude of new problems that the modern era brought, resulting both from the affirmation of the Romanian economy and from the cultural-citizen emancipation but also from the alignment of our country with the European spirit. The *Law on the organization of rural communes* imposed a democratic work system at the level of communal administration. Thus, all decisions had to be adopted only with the majority vote of the councillors, while the mayor participated in the vote only in the case of a runoff, with the aim of achieving the majority necessary to make a decision. The democratic character of the communal institution resided also in the fact that annually its elected bodies had to present reports that were brought to the knowledge of the inhabitants. At the same time, the meetings of the City Council were public, with community members having the opportunity to participate directly in the implementation of the local administration act. In this regard, Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza himself expressed his optimism that "the prosperity of the communes will emerge from the new communal institutions" (Ciobotea and Cioarec, 2011, p. 77).

The *Law on Urban and Rural Communes*, no. 394 of 1/13 April, 1864 and the *Law for the Establishment of County Councils*, no. 396 of 2/14 April of the same year were the first normative acts that tried to put into practice the principle of decentralization in the field of public administration. Unfortunately, this objective was almost impossible to achieve in the absence of a certain managerial maturity at the public administration level, as well as in the absence of competent personnel. The two normative acts were supplemented by the provisions of the Constitution of 1866, which established that the territory of Romania was “divided into counties, the counties into *plăși*, the *plăși* into communes”, their composition only able to be changed or rectified by law (Hamangiu, 1907, p. 5). In Moldavia and Wallachia, since the end of the 17th century, *ocoale* and *ținuturi* were established, as territorial subdivisions of counties and *ținuturi*, with the aim of ensuring the effective coordination of affairs in the territory, as well as the collection of dues by the population of the villages. There were five *ocoale* in Moldavia, one for each county. In Wallachia, there were also five county subdivisions, but they were called *plase*. During the reign of Alexandru Ioan Cuza, the term *plasă* was extended to the level of both provinces. As before, this administrative-territorial subdivision included several rural settlements (communes, after 1864), without recognizing its legal personality. The operating status of the *plăși* was modified by the laws of 1 May, 1904 and 29 April, 1908 (*The Law for the Organization of Rural Communes and the Administration of Plăși*). The legislator of 1908 considered the *plasă* to be devoid of administrative attributions, at that time, therefore the Parliament tried a material and spiritual regeneration of the villages through institutional reorganization. The resulting regulations did not give the expected results, the *plasă* still proving to be an inefficient administrative division (Guțan, 2005, p. 142). The *plăși* were artificial legal creations, which did not respond to the needs of a modern, rational and efficient administration. Because of this, from 1864 to 1925, no fewer than 12 legislative changes took place, which explains why the number of *plăși* varied between 170 and 300. A 1918 draft law of the Marghiloman government rehabilitated the *plasă*, granting it legal personality as well (Oroveanu, 1986, p. 74).

Through the administrative legislation of 1864, the existence was established, at the level of the whole country, of 33 counties: Argeș, Bacău, Bolgrad, Botoșani, Brăila, Buzău, Cahul, Covurlui, Dâmbovița, Dolj, Dorohoi, Fălciu, Gorj, Ialomița, Iasi, Ilfov, Ismail, Mehedinți, Muscel, Neamț, Olt, Prahova, Putna, Râmnicu-Sărat, Romanați, Roman, Suceava, Tecuci, Teleorman, Tutova, Vâlcea, Vaslui, Vlașca (Nistor, 2000, p. 85). This territorial organization remained unchanged until the First World War, while the two laws adopted during Cuza’s reign underwent a series of changes. Thus, through the normative acts of 1874, 1887 and 1904 on rural communes, and through the one of 1894 on urban communes, new criteria were established for the establishment of a commune, other than those established by the law of 1864. Also, by the law

of 9/21 April, 1874, it was decided that the appointment of the mayor should be made by the prefect and the division of urban communes into three categories was established: large cities (Bucharest, Iași, Craiova, Galati, Ploiești, Botoșani, Brăila, Bârlad, Ismail), county seat towns and non-county-seat towns. The process of transformation and modernization of the Romanian administration continued through the law of 5/17 April, 1882, which stipulated that the mayor should be elected by the municipal council and confirmed by the prefect.

The *Law for the Organization of Rural Communes and the Administration of Plăși* laid the foundations for a new form of administrative-territorial organization, suburban rural communes. This category included those rural communes located less than 3 km from the edge of a county seat or inside the fortifications of the Bucharest citadel (Nistor, 2000, p. 38-39). The difference between these communes and the rural ones consisted only in the fact that, for certain categories of acts, the approval of the mayor of the adjacent urban commune and/or of the prefect was needed (Ghițulescu, 2011, p. 212). By the same law, the village council abolished in 1864 was re-established. It was to be made up of five members elected for a period of four years by those with the right to vote in the country's villages and communes. Other regulations of the law mentioned above concerned the establishment of the post of notary in each commune, the change of the title of the officials who were at the head of the posts from sub-prefects to administrators, appointed by royal decree (Ciobotea and Cioarec, 2011, p. 79).

Also, the Law of 5 April, 1874 raised the minimum number of inhabitants that a commune had to have in order to acquire this status, to 500 taxpayers. This requirement was modified by the law of 7 May, 1887, which reduced the minimum number to 200 taxpayers, a figure also maintained in the law of 1 May, 1904. This last normative act established the legal and administrative conduct of Romanian villages. It defined the village as a subdivision of the rural commune, a small population centre of at least 100 inhabitants. A subdivision of the rural commune was the hamlet (*cătun*), a community with less than 100 inhabitants. The villages that were not commune seats had, according to the commune model, a governing body called the village council, which had the right to decide on local issues. The council delegated a representative of the village within the communal council who had to support the interests of the community. The mayor of the commune could empower the representative designated by the village council to deal with the problems of the village he represented. The legislator from 1904 considered it useful for each rural commune to have a minimum income of 8,000 lei to be able to fulfil its financial obligations imposed by law. The communes that failed to secure this minimum income could associate themselves in circles, a kind of compulsory or voluntary associations of communes. Through such solutions, the aim was to help poor villages without causing too much damage to the budget of those who had a better financial situation. A principle of efficient administrative organization was introduced, also valid for the subsequent periods.

3. Conclusions

The second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century brought a maturation of Romanian society, an increase in the quality and number of institutions and administrative bodies, concentrated in a system that constituted the basis of the mechanism of the state apparatus. The administrative reform of 1864 imposed, at the level of local administration, a series of institutions that have been maintained to this day: county councils, prefectures, communal councils and town halls. These administrative entities acquired legal consistency, first of all, through the legislative package of 1864, then through the Constitution of 1866, but also through a series of subsequent normative acts.

The modernization process of Romania concerned the administrative system in Romania, which was reformed and adapted to the new political-historical realities. The administrative apparatus of the state has grown continuously and its institutions have gone through an extensive process of structuring and of defining attributions and obligations.

The union of 1859 was the triggering moment of the process of institutional reorganization of the Romanian state, administration being one of the domains that needed to be modernized and adapted to the new political-historical reality. The newly created institutions had to be put in the service of the citizen, therefore the merit of Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza was that he understood this and initiated a series of political-administrative measures that helped to transform and modernize Romania.

The administrative legislation adopted during Cuza's reign sought, on the one hand, the modernization of local administration and, on the other hand, the harmonization of the interests of local communities with those of the central authorities. The decentralization process was slow and bore no significant results, thus the decision-making act still remained in the hands of the Bucharest authorities. Even so, with the implementation of these essential reforms on the proper functioning of the local administration, Romania became one of the well-organized European states from an administrative-territorial point of view. The short duration of the reign of Alexandru Ioan Cuza left open the issue of institutional achievements. The administrative reforms imposed in 1864 continued to make their effects felt even after his forced abdication. The subsequent evolution of the Romanian state imposed a series of legislative interventions at the administrative level, but without profoundly affecting the legislation adopted during Cuza's reign.

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ADMINISTRAȚIA LOCALĂ ROMÂNEASCĂ DE LA MICA UNIRE LA PRIMUL RĂZBOI MONDIAL (1859-1918)

(Rezumat)

Studiul de față își propune a prezenta și analiza actele normative care au condus la reorganizarea și modernizarea administrației locale în perioada scursă între domnia lui Alexandru Ioan Cuza și declanșarea Primului Război Mondial. Legea pentru comunele urbane și rurale și cea privind înființarea consiliilor județene au fost actele normative care au reglementat buna funcționare a administrației din teritoriu pentru aproape jumătate de secol. Modificările aduse acestora n-au fost de substanță și n-au afectat esența acestora, spiritul acestora a rămas în vigoare până la momentul adoptării legii de unificare administrativă din 1925.

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**ENSEIGNEMENT/APPRENTISSAGE DU CHINOIS AU
CAMEROUN : L'EMPRUNT AU CŒUR DES CONTACTS
LINGUISTIQUES**

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Abstract. The circulation of people and goods, in the same way as capitalism, has led China to further accentuate its presence on the African continent and in Cameroon in particular. To achieve its objectives, it opted for the establishment of many strategies, in order to outdo its Western competitors who until then had given themselves pride of place in Africa and made it their safe hunting ground. These strategies include the dissemination of Chinese civilizations, language and culture in Cameroon, through the Confucius Institutes on the one hand, and bilateral agreements establishing Chinese as a second foreign language inserted in Cameroon's schools, alongside German, Spanish and Italian on the other. These agreements have led to the opening of the Chinese language and cultures sector at the Higher Teachers' Training College in Maroua, with the aim of training and professionalizing Chinese language teachers. In fact, these measures as a whole increase the enthusiasm of Cameroonians for the Chinese language.

Given this observation, the present work aims to examine the learning and teaching practices of this language, in order to better understand how the contact and much more the appropriation of Chinese language is done in Cameroonian context. This examination is carried out by making special stopping points on linguistic borrowings, which assert themselves as well in Chinese as in French

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and English, the two official and teaching languages of Cameroon. This linguistic phenomenon is then seen as a trick to fill or expose the linguistic insecurity of speakers on the one hand and to build or consolidate individual social identities on the other hand.

Keywords: Chinese language and cultures; Cameroonian context; teaching-learning; French; English.

1. Introduction

La mondialisation et bien plus encore le vent de démocratisation qui souffle sur le globe terrestre en général a poussé la Chine à s'extravertir et de ce fait, à développer de nombreux rapports bi et multilatéraux dans des domaines diversifiés, aussi bien avec les pays du Nord qu'avec ceux du Sud. Au rang des partenaires d'affaire de la Chine, figure en bonne place l'Afrique. En effet, l'Afrique assiste depuis quelques peu à une invasion des Chinois sur son continent. Ces Chinois, la plupart du temps attirés en priorité par des enjeux ou intérêts économiques, sont impliqués partout en Afrique dans plusieurs projets développementaux de construction de routes, d'hôpitaux, des projets d'agriculture, des projets d'ingénierie, des projets de commercialisation d'articles de tous genres etc. Cette présence chinoise se fait chaque jour plus persistante, au point où des conventions ont été signées dans l'optique d'une vaste entreprise de sinisation des populations africaines en général et camerounaises précisément. C'est ainsi que le chinois est venu relever à 4 le nombre de langues étrangères enseignées dans les lycées et collèges en plus de l'allemand, de l'espagnol et de l'italien. Toujours dans le même dessein, un institut Confucius hébergé dans les campus de l'université de Yaoundé II-Soa a vu le jour, avec des extensions à Douala et Maroua, afin d'enseigner et de la sorte agrandir l'auditoire chinois au sein du peuple camerounais. Dès 2007, l'antenne de Maroua de cet institut s'implique également dans la formation des enseignants à l'université de Maroua. Depuis lors, l'Ecole Normale Supérieure de Maroua n'a cessé de mettre sur le marché de l'emploi des enseignants qualifiés dans la didactique et la pédagogie du chinois ; ces enseignants devant à leur tour enseigner cette langue aux élèves des établissements d'enseignement secondaire disséminés sur tout le triangle national. A l'heure qu'il est, la langue chinoise fraie autant que faire se peut son petit bonhomme de chemin dans le babel linguistique camerounais. Ce faisant, elle se frotte à d'autres langues camerounaises et principalement au français et à l'anglais, à qui l'Etat, garant de la politique linguistique, a octroyé le monopole du territoire national en les érigeant au statut de langues co-officielles. De la cohabitation de la langue chinoise avec les langues officielles en cours dans le système éducatif et dans bien d'autres domaines, découlent dans chacune de ces langues des emprunts qui trahissent parfois les types de relations verticales et horizontales qui se

développent entre elles. On est alors en droit de s'interroger : Quels rapports entretient le chinois avec les langues qu'il côtoie sur le sol camerounais ? Quel est le principe de fonctionnement de ces emprunts ? Pour quel but ? Sont-ils une menace les uns pour les autres ? Ou alors constituent-ils simplement un mode de renouvellement de leur fond lexical ? Quelle est la portée significative des emprunts linguistiques au Cameroun ? Comment parvenir à une lisibilité de la présence chinoise au Cameroun au moyen de contacts et bien plus de l'emprunt linguistique ?

Répondant à cette problématique, le présent travail ambitionne de combler le gouffre engendré par la rareté d'études portant sur les emprunts chinois et bien plus leur focalisation sur l'anglais, lorsque ces travaux existent. Ainsi, il partira d'une approche descriptive et synchronique pour analyser les différentes incidences de la présence des Chinois au Cameroun. Des données orales et écrites collectées selon la méthode du GARS dans les rues, les campus, les quartiers ou les entreprises de Yaoundé, Douala et Buéa, tout comme des réactions tirées des sites Internet seront également exploitées dans cette entreprise.

2. Emprunt linguistique, quid est ?

Le contact des langues et des cultures engendre des scénarii multiformes de bilinguisme, mieux, de plurilinguisme. Cela étant, il en découle une pluralité de phénomènes linguistiques tels les calques, les interférences linguistiques, les alternances et les mélanges de codes, les sociolectes et précisément l'emprunt linguistique. L'emprunt traduit avant tout un contexte de bilinguisme ou de plurilinguisme, car il se situe en plein carrefour des langues et des cultures, et est à la limite inévitable. L'emprunt linguistique renvoie, d'après Duroy (1956), Dubois *et al.* (2001), Piebop (2014, 2016, 2018, 2019a,b) aux formes d'expression ou aux termes que les communautés donnent et reçoivent les unes aux/des autres. Autrement dit, on parle d'emprunt linguistique quand « un parler A utilise et finit par intégrer une unité ou un trait linguistique qui existait précédemment dans un parler B (dit langue source) et que A ne possédait pas. Et dans ce cas « un parler A, l'unité ou les traits empruntés sont eux-mêmes qualifiés d'emprunts », ainsi que l'expliquent Dubois *et al.* (2001, p. 177). Cette définition rejoint en plusieurs points celle de Ngalasso (2001, p. 16) qui cette fois explique en de termes plus techniques que l'emprunt renvoie à des « éléments qui passent d'une langue à une autre, s'intègrent à la structure lexicale, phonétique et grammaticale de la nouvelle langue et se fixent dans un emploi généralisé de l'ensemble des usagers, que ceux-ci soient bilingues ou non ».

Les emprunts linguistiques se déploient de plusieurs façons dans une langue.

C'est ainsi qu'on rencontre d'une part des emprunts qui se font par plusieurs procédés à l'intérieur d'un même système linguistique donné. C'est le cas de sociolectes, des idiolectes, des technoclectes etc. Une langue emprunte alors dans ce cas à elle-même. C'est ainsi qu'une énonciation imposant un registre de langue courant peut par exemple emprunter à un registre ou familier, ou soutenu. Pareillement, un vocabulaire spécialisé peut aussi emprunter à un autre vocabulaire spécialisé dans un domaine qui lui est étranger, ou à un vocabulaire courant etc. On assiste alors à un entremêlement de registres de langues.

A côté de ces emprunts internes à une langue, il existe aussi des emprunts externes à une ou plusieurs langues. Avec ce modèle d'emprunts, une communauté linguistique (C) reçoit des formes d'expression d'autres communautés (D, E, F,...) Ensuite, les mêmes traits de substances des unités référentielles dénommées dans ces dernières (langues d'origine du locuteur) sont pris en considération et insérés dans la langue d'accueil (langues étrangères). Tout au long de l'étude, c'est ce dernier type d'emprunt qui fera l'objet d'attentions particulières.

Par ailleurs, les emprunts sont en général opérés à divers degrés sur tous les compartiments d'une langue. On parlera alors d'emprunts sémantiques, prosodiques, phonétiques, syntaxiques, morphologiques et surtout d'emprunts lexicaux qui demeurent la facette la plus facilement détectable des emprunts. De la sorte, ce sera donc sans surprise que cette dernière variété d'emprunts figurera en tête de file des occurrences repérées dans la présente étude.

En effet, un grand nombre d'emprunts lexicaux se dégagent des nombreuses interactions des enseignants et des apprenants de chinois qui meublent les campus des instituts Confucius et ses annexes disséminés d'un coin à l'autre du territoire camerounais, de l'Ecole Normale Supérieure de Maroua, des établissements scolaires qui intègrent depuis près d'une dizaine d'années déjà l'enseignement du chinois comme langue étrangère. Faut-il le rappeler, l'Ecole Normale Supérieure de l'institut Confucius de Maroua, une des annexes de l'institut Confucius de l'université de Yaoundé II-Soa, est la première innovation en son genre dans toute la côte Ouest africaine qui professionnalise officiellement l'enseignement dans les langue et culture chinoises dans les établissements. D'abord un choix de dépit pour la plupart des postulants, cette filière Langue et culture chinoises est très vite devenue la coqueluche des populations camerounaises qui, progressivement, ont alors pris conscience des nombreux enjeux et atouts qui accompagnaient « l'Offensive chinoise en Afrique » (Struye de Swielande, 2009) en général et au Cameroun précisément, à travers de nombreux projets qu'ils y réalisent actuellement. Qui plus est, de nombreux particuliers et compagnies éprouvent le besoin d'apprendre la langue chinoise pour des raisons aussi variées les unes que les autres. A cet effet, une population camerounaise sans cesse croissante ne cesse de s'intéresser à la langue chinoise ainsi que le témoignent les effectifs

exponentiels des postulants à l'apprentissage de cette langue frappant aux portes à l'École Normale Supérieure de Maroua, des instituts Confucius et des établissements qui offrent cette spécialité. Au sein de ce public sinophobe à des degrés divers variant de L1 à Ln, les interactions sont marquées par de nombreux emprunts chinois qui transparaissent, même lors de leurs conversations en français et en anglais, à travers les deux langues de scolarisation. Et dans ces cas, les discussions ont très souvent trait aux activités régulièrement exercées par les Chinois. Réciproquement, les échanges en chinois portent aussi des traces du français et de l'anglais et dans une certaine mesure d'autres langues en contact au Cameroun. Pour une meilleure lisibilité de ces termes étrangers, il sera judicieux de les classer en fonction de leur degré d'insertion dans la langue emprunteuse en xénismes, pérégrinismes et emprunts de sens plein. Il s'agit là d'une typologie entérinée par Duroy (1956, p. 224), qui explique qu'« au point de vue de l'usage à un moment donné de l'histoire d'une langue, c'est-à-dire de la synchronie, l'emprunt total se présente [...] avec de multiples nuances d'extension ».

2.1. Les Xénismes

Par xénismes, explique Duroy (1956, p. 223-224), on entend des termes « sentis comme étrangers et en quelque sorte cités ». Et en tant que tel, ces termes devraient normalement être suivis de gloses pour éclairer la lanterne de l'interlocuteur et maintenir le contact communicationnel avec lui. Et dans ce cas, il pourrait s'agir de paraphrases, d'explications, d'annotations, de parenthèses ou crochets, de glossaires etc.

Le xénisme constitue la phase initiale de l'emprunt. Ce qui suppose qu'il demeure sous sa forme brute et, en même temps, est une nouveauté pour les interlocuteurs qui le reçoivent peut-être pour la première fois. Le Dictionnaire CNRTL (<http://www.cnrtl.fr>) et surtout Steuckard (2006) cité par Gannier (2010, p. 17) précise que « le xénisme désigne l'introduction de mots étrangers dans une langue donnée sans altération de la graphie, sans les marques du genre et du nombre de la langue hôte. A ce titre, il paraît tout à fait naturel que l'on imprègne les locuteurs de la langue emprunteuse de ce nouveau vocabulaire en le leur traduisant ou en le leur expliquant, s'il s'avère intraduisible. Des termes répondant à ces critères apparaissent dans le corpus recueilli au cours de la période allant de mars à septembre 2018 dans les établissements d'enseignement primaire et secondaire, des instituts Confucius, des bureaux des villes de Buéa, Douala et Yaoundé.

1. 排序 (páixù = ordre, ordonner) : Mettre les mots des phrases suivantes en ordre.
2. 翻译 (fānyì = traduction/traduire) : Traduire en français le texte suivant
3. 数字 (shùzì = nombres) : Write the following numbers.

4. 连一连(lián yī lián = (joindre) : Match the following words to their corresponding meanings
5. 选词填空(xuǎn cí tián kōng = choisir le mot/compléter) : Fill the blank spaces with the appropriate words.

On peut remarquer que dans ces cas, qui pour la plupart sont des libellés de sujets d'évaluation, un souci de clarification des apprenants au sujet de ce que l'on attend d'eux. On cherche à combler l'insécurité linguistique autant que possible en début de chaque rubrique ou exercice. On comprend donc sans ambages qu'il est question d'interactions avec des débutants en chinois. Raison pour laquelle on est obligé, ne serait-ce que pour un début, d'expliquer ou d'interpréter la consigne qui, du reste, est constituée de termes encore nouveaux pour eux, afin de les installer progressivement dans leur répertoire linguistique. Le but est également d'habituer les mécanismes de cognition des apprenants à ces nouveaux vocabulaires et structures. Cette stratégie didactique a pour ultime objectif d'enclencher chez les apprenants, des processus cognitifs qui leur permettront déjà d'établir même à un niveau implicite, des points de convergence et de divergence avec l'anglais et le français qui pour eux sont en principe des langues déjà acquises. Ceci dans la mesure où ils constituent les langues maternelles, donc premières pour une frange importante et chaque jour un peu plus croissante de la population camerounaise. Cela est d'autant plus sensé qu'il est établi que la maîtrise des langues maternelles constitue un atout majeur pour la réussite de l'apprentissage d'autres langues (Piebop, 2016), Makouta-Mboukou (1973), Nzessé (2005), ceci d'autant plus que « le raisonnement à partir de l'ordonnement des schèmes de langue maternelle favorise l'analyse et l'organisation syntaxique des langues étrangères », explique Piebop (2019b, p. 252). A ce moment, on peut déjà déduire que didactiquement parlant, la compétence plurilingue constitue un atout prééminent pour les enseignants de langues et ceux de langues étrangères encore plus.

Dans les exemples, non seulement les caractères chinois, qui ne sont d'ailleurs pas encore nécessaires à ce stade sommaire de l'apprentissage, mais également les formes pinyin des mots sont proposées. Ces caractères repris en pinyin ne sont en fait que des groupes de mots sans plus. Mais que les gloses se chargent non seulement d'expliquer littéralement, mais aussi d'adapter au contexte d'apprentissage ou de communication. Ainsi, 排序 (páixù) par exemple signifie juste *ordonner*. Pourtant, la paraphrase explicative précise bien dans la langue maternelle ou première des apprenants qu'il s'agit exactement d'ordonner les mots et expressions qui apparaissent dans les phrases proposées. 连-连 (lián yī lián) veut dire *joindre, lier* de façon générale et vague. Or la version anglaise de la consigne spécifie bien qu'il est question de faire correspondre les termes chinois proposés à leurs significations en anglais et vice versa. Idem pour 翻译 (fānyì) correspondant chinois du terme *traduction*, et que

la consigne adapte davantage au contexte de communication en orientant sa direction qui va du pinyin au français. 选词填空 (xuǎn cí tián kōng) signifie *choisir le mot et compléter*. Pour combler l'insécurité linguistique qui pourrait survenir du fait d'un malentendu, il est mentionné à la suite « Fill the blank spaces with the appropriate word. » Par là, l'apprenant comprend bien qu'il n'est pas question d'inventer des mots, mais de choisir les plus adéquats parmi les séries qui lui sont proposées pour remplir les vides laissés sciemment. En dehors de la contextualisation, d'autres types de précisions sont également perceptibles.

6. 上海中心大厦 (Shànghǎi zhòngxīn dà shà) appelé en français *la tour de Shanghai*, est un gratte-ciel du quartier financier de Pudong à Shanghai.
7. 汉语 (Hànyǔ), the chinese language, includes many dialect groups.
8. 声调 (Shēngdiào) which means *tones*, refers to the pitch variation within syllables.
9. A complete Chinese name consist of a 性 « xìng » (surname) and a 名 « míng » (given name) and the former preceding the latter.

Dans cette autre séquence, tout porte également à croire que les interactions se situent toujours à un niveau pas très élevé de l'apprentissage du chinois, car les langues premières des apprenants (français et anglais) dominent encore les échanges au détriment du chinois en termes de proportions. Les explications se font encore dans les langues maternelles des apprenants, dans la mesure où ceux-ci ne possèdent pas encore un réservoir lexical assez fourni pour assurer une communication sécurisée en chinois. Raison pour laquelle pour inhiber l'inconfort linguistique, les termes chinois sont suivis de traductions tantôt introduites par le terme « appelé en français » comme dans le premier exemple, des virgules explicatives (*the Chinese language*), des parenthèses ou encore des guillemets suivis de parenthèses pour signaler le caractère nouveau des termes et la nécessité de clarification. C'est le cas de « xìng » (surname) et « míng » (given name).

On retient qu'à un niveau élémentaire de l'apprentissage du chinois, les Camerounais s'appuient encore considérablement sur les langues officielles qu'ils utilisent comme canal de transmission des connaissances en chinois. Ce qui leur permet de partir des structures endogènes pour asseoir progressivement les structures chinoises. A ce niveau, apparaît toute la pertinence des emprunts chinois, généralement des termes et des expressions clés du chinois en général, qui par la suite seront régulièrement utilisés. Par conséquent qui méritent une bonne fixation. Ce qui confirme alors la théorie de l'utilité, voire la nécessité de la maîtrise des langues premières et maternelles comme facteur de réussite d'enseignement-apprentissage d'autres langues, par les apprenants mais bien plus encore par les enseignants. En effet, pour que cette réussite soit possible, il

faudrait que les enseignants de chinois, soient à leur tour suffisamment imprégnés des différentes langues maternelles des apprenants, pour comprendre le fonctionnement cognitif des apprenants et guider adéquatement les raisonnements de ces derniers. D'où la nécessité chez les enseignants de la compétence plurilingue dont parle Cuet (2011), qui permettra également à ce dernier de mieux orienter les apprenants à d'autres phases des emprunts.

2.2. Les pérégrinismes

Selon Deroy (1956, p. 224), le pérégrinisme renvoie tout comme le xénisme d'ailleurs, à un terme senti comme hétérogène au système d'une langue. En réalité, le pérégrinisme appartient surtout aux langues spéciales et il ne devient un emprunt proprement dit que s'il est employé non plus occasionnellement, mais couramment dans la langue « commune ». On les appelle aussi des « mots voyageurs » ; appellation tirée de l'étymologie du terme « pérégriner » qui signifie se déplacer, faire un long voyage. En clair, le pérégrinisme est d'abord un xénisme, mais qui n'est employé que dans certaines circonstances, le plus souvent historique. En d'autres mots, les pérégrinismes traduisent généralement les spécificités historiques, géographiques et bien plus culturelles d'un pays. Très souvent, ces termes pèlerins se regroupent sous l'aile de l'onomastique, entendue comme science ou étude des noms propres. Mieux, il s'agit d'après Nola (2004, p. 126) d'une branche plus ou moins récente de la sémantique qui étudie « la manière dont les noms [...] forment un système et s'inscrivent dans le jeu des noms communs ». Ainsi, rentrent dans le répertoire de cette notion les ethnonymes, les hydronymes, les ornitonymes, ... et surtout les anthroponymes et les toponymes qui passent pour être les plus expressifs dans la présente étude.

2.2.1. Les Anthroponymes

L'anthroponyme désigne une personne dans une communication déterminée (Dubois *et al.*, 2001, p. 189) En d'autres termes, ce sont des noms de famille, des prénoms, des surnoms etc. L'examen du corpus permet de dégager cette autre catégorie d'emprunts.

10. Bonjour Lǐ laǒshī !
11. J'ai rencontré Kǒng laǒshī ce matin dans le taxi.
12. It is instead with Mrs Tòng that we have class this morning.
13. Welcome Zhāng xiānsheng.
14. Good bye laǒshī.

Les items mis en exergue sont les noms et prénoms de personnes *Li*, *Kǒng*, *Tòng*, *Zhāng* et *laǒshī*, surnom par lequel on désigne presque tous les enseignants de chinois dans les établissements. Ainsi qu'on peut le constater, ils

ne sont pas expliqués comme c'était le cas avec les xénismes. On suppose que les interlocuteurs savent de quoi il est question. C'est le lieu de relever que contrairement aux xénismes qui sont généralement suivis de gloses, les pérégrinismes ne sont pas astreints à cette exigence et peuvent ou pas être précédés ou suivis d'indications ou d'explications. On pourrait aussi remarquer que ces noms renvoient à la socioculture chinoise, puisque les termes *laōshī* et *xiānsheng* qui les accompagnent peuvent être identifiés comme appartenant au système linguistique chinois.

Par ailleurs, il convient aussi de relever qu'à ce niveau évolutif de l'apprentissage l'on n'est plus obligé d'expliquer ou de définir tous les termes que l'on emploie parce que l'habitude de la nouvelle langue, tout comme les mécanismes basiques (vocabulaire, syntaxe, sémantique, morphologie), commencent à se mettre en place dans le système de raisonnement cognitif des apprenants. La langue chinoise prend alors de la vitesse avec beaucoup plus de constructions chinoises. Mais étant donné que cette langue se déploie en territoire étranger, elle va rencontrer à son tour des réalités propres à ce milieu étranger qu'il lui faudra absolument prendre en compte. D'où la présence égale d'anthroponymes camerounais dans les échanges en chinois.

15. 欢迎 Piebop 老师。(Huānhíng Piebop laōshī) (Bienvenu(e) M./Mme Piebop)
16. 你好 Atikou 老师。(Nǐ hǎo Atikou laōshī) (Bonjour M. Atikou)
17. Mvondo 太太, 我迷路了, 我怎么办? (Mvondo tài tài, wǒ mǐlù le. Wǒ zěnmébàn? (Mme Mvondo je suis perdu. Que faire?))
18. 请进 Smith 先生。(qǐng jìn Smith xiānsheng) (S'il vous plaît entrez M. Smith).
19. 我性 Marianne/你呢? (Wǒ xìng Marianne, Nǐ ne?) (Je m'appelle Marianne et toi?)

Les noms issus de la série d'exemples sont originaires des aires socioculturelles camerounaises (Piebop, Atikou, Mvondo), française (Marianne), et anglaise (Smith), bien qu'apparaissant dans des extraits en chinois.

On comprend donc que les emprunts anthroponymiques se font à sens réciproques. Autant on retrouve des termes chinois dans les énoncés en français ou en anglais produits au Cameroun, autant des camerounismes, des francismes et des anglicismes apparaissent dans le chinois. Les manipulations de codes permettront d'examiner ce phénomène plus loin et plus en profondeur. La remarque vaut d'ailleurs également pour les toponymes.

2.2.2. Les toponymes

Ainsi que l'explique Piebop (2014, p. 169), « tout comme l'anthroponymie, la toponymie est la branche de la linguistique focalisée sur

l'onomastique et a la caractéristique de canaliser les investigations sur l'ensemble des lieux d'un village, d'une ville, d'une région, d'un pays, d'un continent... de même que sur les relations que ceux-ci entretiennent avec les langues ».

Il faudrait noter que les toponymes dénotent un réalisme certain, puisqu'ils permettent de référer non seulement à des endroits localisables, mais aussi à des sociétés et cultures clairement identifiables. Quelques illustrations :

20. Avez-vous visité le célèbre opéra de **Beijing** ?
21. The **Shanghai** tour is a touristic site.
22. À Hong-Kong, l'anglais se parle facilement.
23. **Guandong** and **Longshang** are also very beautiful.
24. Le français est enseigné à l'université de **Nankin**.

Les termes Beijing, Shanghai, Hong-Kong, Guandong et Longshang désignent des lieux qui existent réellement en Asie et en Chine. Leurs emprunts ne sont donc pas fortuits, et s'avèrent être de nécessité, car en dehors de Beijing, un emprunt de luxe qui mène désormais une âpre concurrence à son équivalent français Pékin, les autres sont pris tels quels et à la limite anglicisés ou francisés.

Comme avec les anthroponymes, les toponymes camerounais se distinguent également dans les extraits chinois. Ce qui n'est que naturel, car tels des habits qui doivent être taillés aux mesures du corps, ils doivent s'adapter aux réalités de la société dans laquelle ils sont déportés.

25. 呀温得离吗鲁阿很远 (Yǎwēndé lí Mǎlǔ'ā hěn yuǎn) (Yaoundé est très éloigné de Maroua).
26. 我家在喀麦隆 (Wǒmen jiā zài Kāmǎilóng) (Mon pays c'est le Cameroun)
27. 玛丽住在法国 (Mǎlì zhù zài Fǎguó) (Marie habite en France).
28. 我明天想去英国 (Wǒ míngtiān xiǎng qù Yīngguó) (Je voudrais partir demain en Angleterre).

Bien que légèrement déformées, les items *Yǎwēndé*, *Mǎlǔ'ā*, *Kāmǎilóng* ne sont en réalité que des formes chinoises de Yaoundé, Maroua et Cameroun. Ce sont des termes identitairement camerounais, c'est-à-dire portant des traits idiosyncratiques camerounais que le chinois ne peut remplacer. C'est pourquoi il les intègre dans son système linguistique pour des raisons de nécessité. Il en va de même pour les noms de lieux *Fǎguó* et *Yīngguó* qui eux se retrouvent tout naturellement parmi les occurrences non seulement grâce à la mondialisation qui facilite la mobilité des hommes partout sur le globe terrestre, mais surtout parce que ces deux pays entretiennent beaucoup d'affinités avec le Cameroun où le chinois est enseigné, étant donné qu'elles sont toutes deux les puissances colonisatrices du Cameroun. Ainsi, en dehors du réalisme évident qui se dégage à travers les toponymes, on peut aussi voir en ces noms de lieux

camerounais qui, du reste, ont la particularité d'avoir déjà transités par le français et l'anglais avant d'atterrir dans le chinois, une forme de légitimation de la convergence de l'homologie entre les appellatifs d'une part, et les cultures camerounaise, anglaise et française d'autre part.

Ainsi, à l'issue de cet examen des pérégrinismes, on peut retenir que tout comme les anthroponymes, les pérégrinismes sont des facteurs d'intégration sociale et remplissent une mission importante dans la compréhension des sociocultures chinoises, camerounaise et par ricochet française et anglaise impliquées dans le processus d'enseignement apprentissage. Greimas (1987, p. 261) n'énonce pas autre chose lorsqu'il déclare que

du point de vue de l'organisation du discours, on peut considérer l'onomastique comme une des composantes de la figuration censée conférer au récit le degré souhaitable de reproduction du réel. La composante onomastique permet un ancrage historique visant à constituer le surlignage d'un référent externe et à produire l'effet de ses réalités.

2.3. Les emprunts de sens plein

Le terme emprunt linguistique de sens plein, selon Piebop (2014, p. 175) désigne les emprunts qui sont entièrement installés dans la langue emprunteuse, et ce de manière durable. A ce niveau, l'auteur n'a plus du tout besoin de notes métalinguistiques pour pallier l'insécurité linguistique, dans la mesure où ces mots et expressions sont déjà intégrés dans la langue d'arrivée et bien accueillis par cette communauté linguistique qui l'intègre dans son contexte socioculturel, voire politique et économique.

En effet, qu'ils soient de luxe ou de nécessité, les emprunts de sens plein sont généralement employés par des utilisateurs désintéressés pour la plupart des motivations sociolinguistiques habituelles. Cela revient à dire que leurs emprunts ne dépendent pas de facteurs tels la classe sociale des individus, de l'âge, du sexe, des traditions familiales. Le principal facteur pris en considération dans ce cas demeure le degré d'enracinement dans la langue et la culture de la langue d'emprunt. Il s'agit en fait de locuteurs expérimentés de la langue chinoise qui de la sorte, ne se soucient plus de d'imprégner leurs interlocuteurs dans les contextes linguistiques et sociolinguistiques de leurs emplois ; cela étant déjà mis au compte des acquis consolidés tout au long de l'apprentissage et de l'expérience. Rentrent dans cette catégorie des enseignants, des traducteurs confirmés, tout comme les apprenants de niveau avancé ou des expérimentés, (HSK 5, 6) etc. Il est question de ceux-là qui, tout au long de leur formation en chinois, ont eu le temps d'assimiler suffisamment de termes spécialisés ou étrangers et qui ont fini par s'y habituer au point de les couler de façon automatique dans leurs discours et d'en faire des nuances subtiles de langage. C'est ce qui se dégage de cette autre suite :

29. 你明天可以在巴力来报名 (Nǐ míngtiān kěyǐ zài Bālì lái bàomíng)
(Tu peux passer demain à Bali t'inscrire.)
30. 欢迎汉语水平考试 (HSK)^o (Huānhíng hànǔ shuǐpíng kǎoshì, HSK)
(Bienvenue au test de niveau de chinois HSK)
31. Je n'ai pas enseigné cette année parce que je suis allée faire mon 大功
(dàgōng = entreprise) à Bertoua.
32. A quel niveau du HSK es-tu ?
33. Jack, ton 老板 (lǎobǎn= patron) est-il compréhensif ?
34. I really hate that 听力 (tīng lì = oral comprehension) section. I rather
prefer the 阅读 (yuè dú= reading) section.
35. According to me, 书写 (shūxiě = writing) is the easiest part on that test.
36. I am HKS 四级 (sì jí = level 4) and I am intending to sit for the 五级
(wǔ jí = level).

On pourrait commencer par notifier que les emprunts non siniques sont généralement l'apanage des locuteurs chinois de souche (natifs), qui cherchent à intégrer les réalités camerounaises, qui à leur tour avaient déjà transitées auparavant l'anglais et le français du fait de la relation historique de colonisation qui les lie. On peut le déceler dans le premier exemple où la réceptionniste chinoise demande à un potentiel candidat de passer le lendemain s'inscrire à leur centre situé au quartier *Bali* à Douala. Elle n'a pas d'autre choix que d'emprunter le nom de lieu Bali.

Pareillement, ces expatriés chinois éprouvent plus d'affinités avec l'anglais qu'avec le français. Certainement aussi en raison de la proximité linguistique que l'anglais entretient avec le chinois, tout comme l'héritage historique de la grande influence qu'elle subit et continue de subir de l'anglais. Tian (2007, p. 63, *apud* Shen, 2009, p. 63) relève justement à ce propos que « with the increasing frequency of the language on Chinese with other languages, it is believed that more words borrowed into Chinese are English. »

Pour cette raison, ils sont plus enclins à emprunter à l'anglais qu'au français qui domine pourtant l'anglais au Cameroun. Il n'est d'ailleurs pas sans objet de relever que les rares études qui existent sur les emprunts en chinois portent exclusivement sur les anglicismes qui de loin, sont les plus nombreux en chinois (Wiebusch and Tadmor, 2009 ; Shen, 2009). L'illustration « HSK » en est une preuve. Cette abréviation est chinoise d'origine puisqu'elle signifie *hànyǔ shuǐpíng kǎoshì*. Mais dans l'extrait audio en vigueur partout dans le monde entier des tests de connaissance de la langue chinoise, on décèle aisément le prononciation anglaise /eitʃ-ɛs-ke/ alors que tout l'extrait sonore est en chinois. On pourrait néanmoins mettre cette hybridation linguistique au compte d'une adaptation de l'alphabet que l'on verra plus tard.

Contrairement aux natifs chinois, les locuteurs camerounais empruntent plus au chinois dans une conversation dans les langues officielles; surtout

lorsqu'ils se retrouvent entre eux ou alors avec des apprenants ou des personnes qu'ils savent conquises par le chinois, donc suffisamment outillées pour décoder les artifices qu'ils pourraient ajouter à leurs discours. Les emprunts siniques deviennent alors pour eux un moyen de consolider leurs apprentissages en chinois, tout comme pour mieux exprimer les réalités endogènes auxquelles ils sont confrontés. On le voit par les termes *dàgōng* (entreprise, qui offre des services de traducteur en général), *lǎobǎn* (le patron, généralement dans des entreprises chinoises où l'on est embauché), ou encore le vocabulaire spécialisé de l'examen de certification du niveau du chinois : 阅读 (*yuè dú*) HSK 四级 (*sì jí*), 书写 (*shūxiě*), 听力 (*tīng lì*), 五级 (*wǔ jí*) etc.

L'apparition de ces items étrangers dans des énoncés chinois d'une part, puis français et anglais d'autre part, mettent automatiquement en exergue un autre phénomène sociolinguistique, à savoir l'alternance et le mélange de codes linguistiques qui sont de façon générale le passage d'une langue à une autre. L'alternance de code ou *code switching* est le changement de langue d'une phrase ou d'un énoncé à un autre, alors que le *code mixing* ou mélange de codes est la variation de plusieurs systèmes linguistiques dans une même phrase ou un seul énoncé (Gumperz, 1982).

Ces phénomènes se détectent dans les occurrences suivantes avec le chinois qui se mélange au français et à l'anglais *Molyko*. Eux-mêmes ayant empruntés ce terme à la langue camerounaise *bakweri*. Le *code mixing* s'observe aussi lorsque dans le même énoncé, on retrouve « *barbecue* » découlant de l'anglais, *kung-fu* du chinois et le reste d'éléments de la phrase en français.

37. 他叫 John 还 他 住在 Molyko (Tā jiào John, hái tā zhù zài Molyko = Il s'appelle John et il habite à Molyko)
38. Je vous sers votre barbecue maintenant ou après votre séance de **kung-fu** ?

C'est apparent, les emprunts de sens plein sont utilisés à souhait dans le français, l'anglais et le chinois qui cohabitent dans l'enseignement au Cameroun ; et en grande partie, pour combler l'insécurité linguistique. Mais bien souvent aussi pour des raisons non pragmatiques. Mais pour que l'on en arrive à cette utilisation non pragmatique ou fantaisiste donc aisée de termes étrangers provenant du chinois ou des langues parlées au Cameroun et réciproquement, il faudrait que ces termes passent au préalable l'épreuve de la naturalisation.

3. Intégration des emprunts

D'entrée de jeu, il faudrait signaler avec l'appui de Piebop (2019a, p. 222) que l'usage des emprunts et leur insertion dans une langue est une tâche

qui incombe surtout aux « locuteurs bilingues [...] Ce qui paraît tout à fait logique, car ils possèdent la maîtrise des [deux] langues, ce qui leur permet de les manipuler à bon escient et à leur guise ». Et lorsque les emprunts sont appelés à fonctionner dans un milieu nouveau, différent milieu initial, avec l'apport de sens et de signification qu'il intègre dans une autre, se pose alors le problème de leur acceptabilité.

Les emprunts utilisés en contexte camerounais ne se naturalisent pas toujours de la même façon, selon que, les communications principales sont faites sur un compartiment ou l'autre de la langue.

3.1. Au niveau sémantique

En rappel, on pourrait définir la sémantique comme la science des significations linguistiques (Essono, 1998, p. 133).

L'examen du corpus dans sa globalité donne de remarquer que les emprunts faits au chinois au cours des conversations dans les langues officielles du Cameroun ne subissent pas d'altérations sémantiques. Dans l'ensemble, les items chinois apparaissant en français et en anglais revêtent les mêmes significations qu'ils avaient en chinois avant d'être transposés dans ces langues ; à quelques exceptions près. Il convient d'ailleurs de signaler que des modifications de sens n'interviennent que très rarement dans le processus de naturalisation de termes étrangers (Piebop, 2014, p. 182).

De la sorte, insérés dans le français ou l'anglais du Cameroun, les termes initiaux *laōshī* 老师 (*enseignant(e), maître/maitresse*), *jīngjù* 京劇 (*opéra*), *májiàng* 麻将 (*mah-jong=jeu à tuiles*), *laōbǎn* 老板 (*patron*), *pīnyīn* (alphabet chinois), *hànzì* 汉字 (*caractère chinois*), *Xī'ān* 西安 (*Xian=ville de Chine*) ... gardent en principe les mêmes sens en chinois comme en français et en anglais.

Pareillement, dans le système linguistique chinois, les mots *Bali*, *Piebop*, *Douala*, *ngondo*, *ngouon* qui tatouent les interactions en chinois s'y déportent en conservant tous les traits sémiques qu'ils avaient acquis lorsqu'ils transitaient des langues endogènes pour le français et l'anglais, et qu'ils prêtent à leur tour au chinois.

3.2. Sur le plan phonético-phonologique

Piebop (2014, p. 185) définit la phonétique comme la branche de la linguistique qui étudie les phonèmes qui sont à leur tour des éléments sonores du langage articulé, considérés du point de vue physiologique (formation par des organes vocaux) et acoustiques (caractère objectif ou subjectif de l'audition).

Appliqué au contexte de la présente étude, il ressort que les mots empruntés aussi bien au chinois qu'au français et à l'anglais par les locuteurs

camerounais et chinois au Cameroun ne gardent pas toujours leurs prononciations originelles. Par ricochet, leur prosodie s'altère pour en produire d'autres qui ne sont qu'approximatives, lorsqu'elles ne sont pas complètement différentes.

39. Le **chai** est bon pour l'organisme.
40. Les produits au **ginseng** sont efficaces pour le nettoyage des reins.
41. Le **taichi**, le **mah-jong** et le **kung-fu** sont nés en Chine.
42. **Amacatatoumtoumtoumitoum**is an excellent balm.
43. **Hong-Kong** is far from **Shanghai**.

Les modifications de prosodie sont moins apparentes avec les mots chinois déjà internationalisés comme *ginseng*, *mah-jong*, *taichi*, *kung-fu* et *amacatatoumtoumtoumitoum* qui ont fini par perdre les accents de prononciation qu'ils avaient en chinois pour garder une prosodie atone désormais. Par contre, tel n'est pas le cas pour *chai* /tʃai/ qui s'éloigne quelque peu de la prononciation chinoise *chā* (茶) /tʃaa:/. Idem pour Hong-Kong et Shanghai en français et en anglais, qui sonnent plutôt *Xiānggǎng* (香港)/siākāŋ/ et *Shànghǎi* 上海/ʃā :ai/ en chinois.

Pour ce qui est des francismes, des camerounismes et des anglicismes qui alimentent les discours des sinisants au Cameroun, ils passent par des procédés similaires et parfois même plus exigeants, pour s'adapter en chinois.

44. Wǒ xiànzài qù ! Bái bai ! (Je m'en vais à présent, bye-bye).
45. Ōu kēi, wǒmen yī qǐ qù. Hǎo de ? (Ok. Nous partons ensemble, d'accord ?)
46. Tāmen cóng dù ālā lái. (Ils viennent de Douala)
47. Wǒmen dōu shì Kāmàilóng rén. (Nous sommes tous Camerounais)
48. Yǎwēndé lí Bāfùsàmù hěn jìn. (Yaoundé est très proche de Bafoussam).

La prononciation anglaise /baj-baj/ a muté en /pa-paj/ en chinois. OK/o-ke/ est quant à lui devenu *òu kei* /u-kei/. Une fois dans le chinois Douala /duala/ se dit /tu-a-la/, Bafoussam /bafusam/ se dit /pafusa-mu/. Cameroun /kamərun/ change en /ka-majlō/, Yaoundé /jawunde/ en /jawəndə/.

Chaque système linguistique impose ses règles alphabétiques et de prononciation en général aux mots qu'il accepte. Ce qui est pareil avec les règles morphosyntaxiques.

3.3. Au niveau de la morphosyntaxe

La morphologie concerne les différentes physionomies ou formes que purement les mots dans un énoncé ou une production tout court. Et dans la mesure où ces transformations de termes dépendent étroitement des règles que leur dicte la syntaxe, leur examen simultané pourrait se justifier ici.

S'il est établi comme cela a été le cas dans la précédente section que les termes empruntés subissent des changements articulatoires qui découlent de leur adaptation dans la langue emprunteuse, alors il va de soi que sur le plan morphologique, les graphies des mots en fassent autant. Les formes alphabétiques rendant l'orthographe obéissent à ce moment aux sons issus de la prononciation. A considérer les mêmes exemples de la section précédant celle-ci, on se rend à l'évidence que quoique renvoyant aux mêmes réalités extralinguistiques, la physionomie de /u-kei/ est différente de celle de /o-ke/. En outre, les noms *Issa, Jack, Marie, Lucien, Gisèle, Mirabelle*, se disent plutôt *Yisa, Jieke, Mali, Lù xī ēn, Jí sài ěr, Mīlābèi'ěr*.... en chinois.

Concernant l'aspect syntaxique en rapport avec l'ordre d'agencement des mots dans la phrase, on observe également des variations dans le traitement de la langue, car chaque langue pèse de tout son poids pour assujettir les termes étrangers à son système linguistique. Une preuve patente de cette influence concerne la position des titres de civilité qui sont obligés de se placer avant le nom en français et en anglais, et après celui-ci si l'on bascule dans le système chinois. Ainsi, dira-t-on comme indiqué dans le Tableau 1 :

Tableau 1
La position des titres de civilité

<i>En chinois</i>	<i>En anglais</i>	<i>En français</i>
Piebop laoshi	Mr /Mrs Piebop	M./Mme Piebop
Mvondo tai tai	Mrs Mvondo	Mme Mvondo
Atikou xiansheng	Mr Atikou	M. Atikou

Par ailleurs, bien que l'ordre canonique de la phrase (S-V-C) soit valable aussi bien en chinois qu'en français et en anglais, les compléments circonstanciels de temps et de lieu ont obligation de se placer avant le verbe en chinois, contrairement aux rouages des autres systèmes. Ainsi dira-t-on :

49. Wǒ míngtiān wǎnshang qù. (Je partirai demain soir).

50. Wǒ zài Bālì zhù. (J'habite à Bali ?)

Les groupes de mots complément circonstanciel de temps *míngtiān wǎnshang* et de lieu *Bali* précèdent automatiquement les verbes *qù* (*partir*) et *zhù* (*habiter*). Alors que ce sont plutôt les constituants du groupe verbal en français et par conséquent se placent en principe après le verbe tel que l'indiquent les positions de *demain soir* et *Bali*.

A ce niveau des analyses des emprunts opérés par les sinologues à des degrés L1 à Ln, il apparaît que ces emprunts dépendent quasi exclusivement des niveaux de compétences et des performances que les locuteurs possèdent de la langue chinoise. Ces emprunts vont des xénismes aux emprunts proprement dit, en passant par les pérégrinismes. Pour s'intégrer dans le français, l'anglais ou le chinois qui sont les principales langues qui cohabitent le plus dans le présent

contexte, les emprunts sont obligés de se soumettre aux contraintes que leur imposent les langues d'arrivée. Malgré tout, ces contraintes ne découragent pas le nombre de plus en plus grand de locuteurs enthousiastes du chinois au Cameroun.

4. Les représentations de la langue chinoise au Cameroun

De l'avis de Calvet (1993, p. 162), les représentations regroupent « l'ensemble des images, des positions idéologiques, des croyances qu'ont les locuteurs à propos des langues en présence et des pratiques linguistiques, les leurs et celles des autres ». Appréhendé de cette façon, on pourrait spécifier cette définition aux langue et cultures chinoises sur le sol camerounais. Ce qui aura pour avantage de mieux cerner les raisons et les motivations des Camerounais toutes les tranches d'âges confondues, pour l'enseignement-apprentissage du chinois. En fait, il s'agit dans cette section d'essayer d'avoir une idée claire et nette sur les idéaux langagiers vers lesquels les locuteurs de cette langue sinique aspirent, en jetant de plus en plus leur dévolu sur elle.

Avant d'aller plus loin, il est opportun de rappeler qu'après avoir créé et installé dans le campus de l'IRIC relié à l'université de Yaoundé II en 2007 le premier centre Confucius lors d'une visite sur le territoire camerounais de Hu Jintao alors présent de République populaire de Chine, l'instauration de l'enseignement du chinois s'est faite officielle au Cameroun. Ce grâce aux fruits de la coopération Chine-Cameroun. Depuis lors, cette langue a gagné du terrain au Cameroun après ce coup d'essai qui s'avéra être un coup de maître. Ce qui encouragea l'année d'après, c'est-à-dire en 2008, la signature d'autres conventions pour l'expérimentation du chinois à l'Ecole Normale Supérieure de Maroua où un centre Confucius avait concomitamment été créé. De 15 élèves-professeurs lors de la première livraison de cette école en 2011, ce chiffre a carrément doublé à 30 pour la deuxième cuvée. Ces effectifs continuent de croître jusqu'alors. Et entre temps, les instituts Confucius de Douala Maroua et Yaoundé ainsi que les nombreux centres qui leur sont annexés, continuent de prêter main forte à l'ENS de Maroua dans la sinisation des citoyens camerounais de plus en plus nombreux. Pour s'en convaincre on pourrait évoquer les discours laudatifs et roses sur toute la ligne que tiennent, chiffres à l'appui, les responsables des Instituts Confucius. En effet, d'après Yu Guoyang, directeur de l'institut Confucius de Yaoundé, leurs centres sont passés à plus de 3000 inscrits après 6 ans d'existence. « Chaque année, le nombre d'inscriptions augmente de plus de 1000 élèves ». Et à cette période, il confirmait déjà les constats de la présente étude en soulignant que

l'institut (Confucius) a réalisé d'importants progrès, le nombre d'apprenants camerounais de la langue chinoise est en augmentation constante. Actuellement, nous avons 14 centres d'enseignements de la langue chinoise à

travers le Cameroun ; à Yaoundé, Maroua et Douala. Cette année, nous allons ouvrir un nouveau centre à Kribi (...) Et dans l'avenir, nous allons atteindre 20, voir 30 centres créés. Cela va permettre de dépasser le chiffre de 10 000 apprenants. Nous avons un plan de développement sur 10 ans qui prévoit la création chaque année de deux nouveaux centres. La langue et la culture chinoises deviennent de plus en plus populaires au Cameroun. Beaucoup d'établissements scolaires et universitaires s'y intéressent.

Et si ce constat d'engouement des Camerounais pour le chinois s'affirme de la sorte, alors, il devient tout à fait sensé d'interroger les pratiquants de cette langue sur les motifs de la « love story » qu'ils entretiennent avec cette langue. Autrement dit, pourquoi les sinophones du Cameroun affectionnent-ils tant le chinois ? Comment voient-ils cette langue ? Quelles sont les idées qu'ils se font d'elle ? Pour quels enjeux ? Est-ce un engouement innocent ?

Ce questionnement a été apprécié diversement par les personnes physiques interviewées (27), ceux du quotidien *Mutation* du 11 avril 2016 (Li, 2013), et les répondants virtuels, c'est-à-dire ceux qui se sont exprimés sur des sites Internet tels *french.china.org*, etc. et ont tous constitué le public cible de la présente investigation. De toutes les réponses obtenues, les morceaux choisis suivants ont retenu l'attention de par leur précision et leur concision.

51. Je voudrais devenir enseignante pour bien parler et transmettre le chinois aux autres.
52. Je suis attiré par le métier de traducteur [...] Il y a beaucoup d'entreprises qui s'implantent au Cameroun. Le métier de traducteur, c'est un métier d'avenir, d'après moi.
53. Avant de venir, [apprendre le chinois] j'ai d'abord fait l'Ecole Normale en Chimie. Ce n'était pas bon. J'ai maintenant essayé le chinois et ça a marché.
54. Moi je vise surtout les bourses qu'on nous offre pour la Chine, afin d'aller perfectionner notre chinois.
55. Vu la position actuelle de la Chine à l'échelle mondiale, je ne serais pas étonné que cette langue s'internationalise, donc je suis avant-gardiste.
56. La Chine est actuellement l'un des plus grands partenaires de l'Afrique. Je crois que le chinois va finir par s'imposer comme les langues des autres puissances étrangères au Cameroun et partout où ils sont d'ailleurs.
57. Mon père a eu une bourse de formation en Chine et il tient actuellement un cabinet privé de médecine traditionnelle chinoise à Bafoussam. Et comme je souhaite prendre la relève il est tout à fait normal que j'apprenne chinois pour ne pas me tromper ne serait-ce que sur les notices des produits qui généralement sont en chinois.
58. Je me suis inscrite aux cours de chinois par curiosité. L'opportunité étant là, j'ai profité et grande a été par exemple ma surprise de savoir

qu'on disait « Nǐ hǎo » et non « hi-hong » comme j'avais l'habitude d'entendre au quartier et dans certaines chansons. C'est une motivation supplémentaire pour moi.

59. Après avoir échoué à huit concours, j'avais décidé, après une étude minutieuse et personnelle, de choisir la langue chinoise, parce qu'au vu de l'expansion chinoise à travers le monde, j'avais observé que la Chine nous offre maintenant de grandes ouvertures, notamment dans le social, le culturel et même l'artistique.
60. Nous sommes formés pour devenir professeurs de langue et cultures chinoises [...] Il est aussi possible pour nous d'être détachés dans les autres ministères, notamment aux relations extérieures ou à la santé, ou travailler aussi avec des sociétés chinoises qui sont implantées ici au Cameroun, en tant que traducteurs ou bien interprètes.
61. C'est devenu un plaisir. J'ai cultivé cet amour et puis c'est devenu une passion. Maintenant, je peux m'exprimer en chinois très facilement.
62. Mon entreprise traite beaucoup avec les investisseurs chinois. Du coup, il devient impératif pour moi de savoir communiquer dans leur langue pour le bien et les intérêts de mon entreprise.
63. Cette année, les Chinois vont réaliser une dizaine de nouveaux projets au Cameroun [...] pour espérer un contrat de travail avec ces entreprises, il faut sans doute parler un peu de chinois [...] vu le nombre de chantiers en cours, il est clair qu'il faudra vite recruter d'autres traducteurs. Il s'agit d'une opportunité réelle pour les jeunes.

Des avis recueillis sur les différentes motivations des Camerounais à l'apprentissage du chinois, on remarque une forte propension de ces derniers à saisir les opportunités professionnelles que leur offre cette langue (illustrations 1, 2, 4, 7, 9, 10, 13). Ces opportunités concernent des bourses d'études en général, et également des bourses de perfectionnement dans la langue chinoise en Chine. Ces bourses concernent les étudiants camerounais, toutes filières confondues, désireux de poursuivre leurs études en Chine, et bien plus encore les étudiants des centres Confucius et les élèves professeurs de l'Ecole normale supérieure de Maroua qui obtiennent, chaque année, des bourses d'immersion et de formation en Chine. On peut noter à ce titre l'exemple de Didier Nama, auteur de livres de langue chinoise au programme des lycées et collèges du Cameroun ; devenu inspecteur national de Chinois en 2019, et à qui les différentes bourses chinoises ont permis de suivre des études jusqu'à soutenir sa thèse de langue chinoise en avril 2019 en Chine. D'autres cas de ces bourses sont reliés aux Instituts Confucius qui entretiennent de nombreux partenariats avec une pluralité d'universités chinoises. Les « summer camp », avec tout ce que cela comporte de tourisme, d'imprégnation et de perfectionnement socio-culturel et linguistique, guidés pendant 3 semaines ne sont pas en reste. La fameuse compétition du « Chinese bridge » constitue aussi un élément

suffisamment galvaniseur pour ses lauréats, à l'exemple du Camerounais Yannick Bouli qui a eu la possibilité d'aller découvrir la Chine dans ses profondeurs tout en représentant valablement le Cameroun aux côtés d'autres lauréats venus du monde entier.

En outre, plusieurs spécialistes camerounais compétents dans la médecine traditionnelle chinoise (Pokam, 2011) sont allés pour leur approfondissement linguistique en Chine et au Cameroun. De même, la bonne marche des cabinets de médecine traditionnelle chinoise et même la distribution efficace des produits médicaux chinois (amacatatoumtoumtoumitoum, fianching, produits variés au Genseng etc.) nécessitent des distributeurs, des connaissances ne serait-ce que sommaires du chinois, qui permettraient de lire, de comprendre et d'expliquer les notices des produits à vendre.

Les hommes et femmes d'affaires, les entrepreneurs en général composent l'autre catégorie de locuteurs sinophones camerounais (12). Ils disent apprendre le chinois pour se mettre à l'abri d'éventuelles entourloupes ou des duperies et autres mauvaises surprises qui pourraient découler de leur méconnaissance de la langue de leurs partenaires chinois.

Il existe à côté des stratèges Camerounais qui ont opté pour le chinois par calcul mercantile, quelques-uns (3, 9) qui s'y sont retrouvés par dépit, ayant essuyé des échecs partout où leurs choix et passions les portaient. Mais avec le temps et surtout les retombées pécuniaires, ils ont fini par y prendre goût et même développer une passion pour cette langue qui devenait le gagne-pain et leur redonnait espoir et dignité.

Il y en a aussi qui atterrissent dans l'apprentissage du chinois par souci de curiosité (1, 8), car dévorés par l'envie de maîtriser les méandres des langues et cultures chinoises. Une curiosité qui à coup sûr ne peut que fermenter leur passion pour cette langue.

Enfin et pas des moindres, l'opportunité de l'apprentissage du chinois concerne également des enseignants désireux d'utiliser le tremplin de l'enseignement pour rallier le ministère des relations extérieures plus difficile d'accès, ou même d'autres ministères du Cameroun (ministères de la santé, de l'enseignement supérieur, etc. ; où ils pourraient opérés dans les cellules de traduction. L'apprentissage du chinois intéresse aussi des personnes indépendantes ou opérant pour le compte de l'Etat auprès des entreprises chinoises installées au Cameroun. Toutes ces opportunités pour lesquelles les Camerounais optent par calculs et projections demeurent tout à fait pragmatiques si l'on examine les relations diplomatiques qu'entretiennent la Chine et le Cameroun.

En effet, grâce à la richesse de ses matières premières (pétrole, or, cobalt, bois, uranium, ivoire etc.), la conquête de l'Afrique par les grandes puissances en général, au rang desquelles la Chine, est d'un enjeu incommensurable aujourd'hui. En effet, aspirant à « sa part de gâteau », la Chine accroît de plus en plus son offensive en Afrique en général et au

Cameroun précisément. Elle a accru sa présence (Jiang, 2004) dans ce qui constituait, il y a encore peu, le pré carré historique européen (Struye de Swielande, 2009, p. 1). La preuve en est qu'elle constitue actuellement le troisième partenaire commercial de l'Afrique après les Etats-Unis et la France. Pour en arriver là, la Chine a activé depuis l'orée des années 1980 la signature de plusieurs accords dans des domaines variés de compétences, à savoir dans ceux des infrastructures à coûts modiques, la télécommunication, le commerce, l'électronique, la construction de routes et autres infrastructures etc. Par conséquent, des contingents de chinois débarquent chaque jour au Cameroun afin de réaliser de nombreux projets issus des accords bilatéraux Chine-Cameroun. On pourrait mentionner la construction du palais des sports de Yaoundé, construction des routes, l'exploitation de l'or dans région de l'Est, du bois dans les forêts du Cameroun, de la pratique de l'agriculture de rente dans le Sud (riz de Mvomeka), les travaux de réhabilitation et de développement des hôpitaux gynéco-obstétrique de Ngouso, les hôpitaux de Guider, de Mbalmayo et bien d'autres. De même, de nombreuses sociétés chinoises basées dans les grandes métropoles du pays exerçant dans la restauration, le commerce, l'électronique etc., exploitent également un nombre impressionnant de Chinois et Camerounais. Pour mener à bien tous ces projets, s'impose alors la participation de natifs qui généralement assument les fonctions de guides, négociateurs, accompagnateurs, interprètes, traducteurs. D'où cet engouement des Camerounais pour l'apprentissage/enseignement du chinois afin de trouver des voies de sortie du chômage et de la misère ambiantes. Le chinois devient donc pour eux une occasion à saisir pour tirer leur épingle du jeu en assurant ou en rallongeant leurs fins de mois.

5. Conclusion

Pour clore cette étude sur l'enseignement-apprentissage du chinois et son impact sur les langues qu'il côtoie au Cameroun, on peut retenir que les emprunts linguistiques s'imposent aussi bien dans les échanges en chinois que dans ceux dans les deux langues officielles du Cameroun. Les emprunts se répertorient aussi bien parmi les xénismes et les pérégrinismes que parmi les emprunts de sens plein. Phénomène qui s'avère tout à fait logique, car devant des carences terminologiques avérées du chinois du fait de son inaptitude à traduire avec exactitude certaines réalités typiquement camerounaises, il n'y a rien de mieux que les langues déjà adaptées à ce milieu pour combler ces vides et prendre la relève. Il en est de même des faits idiosyncratiques de la Chine, que seule la langue chinoise peut rendre dans ses nuances les plus fines, dans les échanges en français et en anglais des sinisants camerounais. A ce titre, il apparaît que bien que ces emprunts soient de nécessité et quelques fois aussi de luxe, ils ne sont nullement à craindre. Ceci dans la mesure où ce sont « des procédés universels d'enrichissement des langues » (Sablayrolles, 2003, p. 18).

On pourrait voir en ce phénomène l'expression d'un partenariat linguistique. Qui plus est, un changement linguistique (emprunt) est « annonciateur de la recherche d'une identité culturelle ou d'une quête d'identité perdue ; car de tels processus sont intrinsèquement liés à la problématique de l'identité » (Nzessé, 2012, p. 15).

A travers le changement de codes linguistiques engendré par les emprunts, l'étude a déduit, à la lumière du contexte camerounais essentiellement plurilingue, de la nécessité pour les enseignants de chinois d'une « compétence plurilingue » pour mener à bien leurs activités didactiques et pédagogiques. Il s'agit, explique Cuet (2011, p. 96), « d'une compétence à communiquer langagièrement et à interagir culturellement possédée par un acteur qui maîtrise à des degrés divers plusieurs langues, et a, à des degrés divers, l'expérience de plusieurs cultures, tout en étant à même de gérer le capital langagier et culturel ». Une telle approche permettrait l'activation d'une ou de plusieurs langues à la fois, pour la construction de l'interlangue. (Une expérimentation plus approfondie y afférente pourrait faire l'objet d'une prochaine publication.)

Enfin, le travail s'achève sur un fond d'examen des représentations, des idées que les apprenants se font quant à la langue chinoise. Ce qui permet au demeurant de comprendre que l'instauration de la langue chinoise au Cameroun n'est en réalité que l'une des nombreuses stratégies de la puissance de l'Empire du Milieu au Cameroun, car elle permet d'assurer à son Etat sa stature de grandeur, en contribuant au rayonnement de son *soft power*, c'est-à-dire en apportant une solution bon marché et culturellement marquée aux problèmes récurrents qui gangrènent et avilissent les Camerounais et l'Afrique en général. A regarder de près, ce phénomène d'instauration des centres Confucius au Cameroun et partout ailleurs, afin d'enraciner et vulgariser les langues et cultures chinoises, est carrément indissociable au phénomène de mondialisation (Senarclens, 2005). La langue chinoise permet à la Chine de participer activement à ce processus, en s'imposant dans un domaine aussi stratégique que celui des langues, comme acteur de cette mondialisation dont la migration qui la porte passe pour être aussi bien un enjeu qu'un effet.

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PREDAREA/ÎNVĂȚAREA LIMBII CHINEZE ÎN CAMERUN: ÎMPRUMUTUL CA PROBLEMATICĂ CENTRALĂ A CONTACTELOR LINGVISTICE

(Rezumat)

Circulația oamenilor și a mărfurilor, la fel ca și capitalismul, au determinat China să-și accentueze și mai mult prezența pe continentul african și în special în Camerun. Pentru a-și atinge obiectivele, China a optat pentru crearea mai multor strategii de depășire a concurenților săi occidentali care până atunci ocupaseră locul de cinste în Africa și făceau din ea un „teren de vânătoare” sigur. Printre aceste strategii se numără diseminarea civilizației, limbii și culturii chineze în Camerun, prin institutele Confucius, pe de o parte, și prin acordurile bilaterale de stabilire a chinezei ca a doua limbă străină introduse în școlile din Camerun, alături de germană, spaniolă și italiană, pe de altă parte. Aceste acorduri au condus la deschiderea filierei de limbă și cultură chineză la École Normale Supérieure din Maroua, cu scopul de a forma și profesionaliza profesorii de chineză. De fapt, aceste măsuri în ansamblul lor cresc entuziasmul camerunezilor pentru limba chineză.

Având în vedere această observație, lucrarea de față își propune să examineze practicile de învățare și predare ale acestei limbi, pentru a înțelege mai bine modul în care contactul și mai mult însușirea limbii chineze se realizează în contextul camerunez. Această examinare are loc prin efectuarea unor puncte de oprire speciale asupra împrumuturilor lingvistice, care se afirmă la fel de bine în chineză, precum și în franceză și engleză, cele două limbi oficiale și de predare în Camerun. Acest fenomen lingvistic apare așadar ca un „truc” care vizează acoperirea sau expunerea insecurității lingvistice a vorbitorilor, pe de o parte, și construirea sau consolidarea identităților sociale individuale, pe de altă parte.

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BALZAC ET LA PETITE TAILLEUSE CHINOISE : HOMMAGE A LA LECTURE DANS UN MONDE A L’ENVERS

BY

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Abstract. *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress*, the novel by the Chinese and French author Dai Sijie, is inspired by real events. The story takes place at the time when Mao makes the decision to completely change the paradigm of social values during The Cultural Revolution, close universities and “re-educate” intellectuals. But as the novelist himself says, historical events are rather the perfect framework or background of the story than the action itself, as the real subject of the book is a testimony of the effects of the act of reading and its direct consequences. In other words, the actual theme is about how books can thoroughly change one’s destiny and their power to transform lives.

Keywords: communism; reading; constraint; metamorphosis; irony; emancipation.

1. Introduction

L’une des formes de manifestation les plus dures et les plus profondes, qui ont voulu changer l’ordre social reste, indubitablement, le régime communiste, qui a renversé les valeurs préétablies au long des siècles. La Chine n’a pas échappé à ce fléau qui a pris les formes du maoïsme, courant marxiste-léniniste qui a imposé le collectivisme et la dictature du parti unique. C’est un

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sujet qui a fait couler beaucoup d'encre et a déclenché des polémiques ardues. C'est par le biais de la littérature qu'on a essayé de saisir les nuances les plus fines du vécu humain, les changements qu'une telle révolution culturelle et sociale a entraîné. *Balzac et la Petite Tailleuse française*, le roman de l'écrivain franco-chinois Dai Sijie, paru chez Gallimard en 2000, est d'autant plus profond et bouleversant qu'il s'est inspiré de faits réels.

2. La maison sur pilotis

L'histoire se déroule à l'époque où le président Mao, surnommé le Grand Timonier, prend la décision de changer complètement le paradigme des valeurs sociales, de fermer les universités et de faire « rééduquer » les intellectuels par des paysans dépourvus d'éducation. C'est aussi le cas de deux adolescents de 17 et 18 ans, Ma et Luo qui sont désormais obligés de vivre dans la montagne du Phénix du Ciel, dans la province du Sichuan, dans une maison sur pilotis, portant le fardeau de l'origine *malsaine* de leur famille. Voilà le contexte historique qui sert de toile de fond à ce roman, dont la portée va plutôt du microcosmos au macrocosmos, car l'intention de l'écrivain n'est pas d'écrire un roman qui présente la réalité telle quelle, mais de surprendre les avatars, les transformations que les livres peuvent entraîner dans le destin des gens ordinaires. Ses propos, repris également par le journal *Libération*, en sont la preuve incontestable :

Le thème principal n'est pas la vie d'un rééduqué mais comment un livre peut changer la vie d'une personne, comment la culture débarque dans un endroit où tout le monde est illettré. La Révolution culturelle est la toile de fond, pas l'objet (Haski, 2001).

Ce qui compte c'est, finalement, le côté humain, la substance, la profondeur, les ressorts les plus intimes de nos pensées, de nos gestes ou de nos réactions qui sont également la somme des lectures que l'on fait. C'est une démarche donquichottesque dont les voies, les perspectives sont illimitées et imprévisibles.

L'écrivain-narrateur fait souvent appel à des éclaircies ironiques et satiriques pour mettre en évidence l'absurdité du régime totalitaire, pour grossir les traits de certains personnages, en les ridiculisant. C'est un procédé visible dès la première page. Ainsi, le roman présente un début *in medias res*, par la description d'une scène grotesque : le chef du village examine un objet étrange trouvé chez les deux « garçons de la ville ». Comme on soupçonne tout ce qu'on a du mal à comprendre ou à identifier, on lui met une étiquette qui entraîne, inévitablement, l'idée de s'en débarrasser, car c'est « un jouet bourgeois, venu de la ville », qu'il faut brûler sur-le-champ. En réalité, ce n'est qu'un violon, qui va être sauvé au moment où Luo trouve un subterfuge : ils jouent une sonate de

Mozart dédiée au président Mao. C'est une scène qui s'est passée aussi dans la réalité, comme le souligne Dai Sijie en tant qu'invité dans l'émission de Bernard Pivot - *Bouillon de culture* du 21 janvier 2000 (*Dai Sijie à propos de son livre "Balzac et la petite tailleuse chinoise", 2000*). La musique entraîne un changement inattendu dans la réaction de la foule qui semble être apprivoisée sous l'emprise d'un sentiment nouveau:

Les visages des paysans, si durs tout à l'heure, se ramollirent de minute en minute sous la joie limpide de Mozart, comme le sol desséché sous la pluie, puis, dans la lumière dansante de la lampe à pétrole, ils perdirent peu à peu leurs contours (Sijie, 2000, p. 13).

Mais le violon n'est pas le seul objet qui suscite l'intérêt du maire, car la maison des deux garçons l'attire comme un aimant à cause d'un autre objet-fétiche - un réveil en forme de coq orgueilleux à plumes de paon qui incarne aux yeux des villageois, un véritable « phénix », autour duquel gravitent les activités quotidiennes. Il exerce un pouvoir extraordinaire sur les gens qui le perçoivent comme quelque chose de sacré, d'intouchable. Il permet aux garçons de tromper la vigilance du maire, de dompter le temps, en changeant les aiguilles du réveille-matin en fonction de leur état d'esprit.

Un autre subterfuge pour tromper la vigilance des autorités locales est le récit des films coréens, comme par exemple *La petite marchande de fleurs*, que les protagonistes faisaient aux villageois. Bien que le film soit médiocre, l'histoire devient captivante grâce au don des conteurs, qui en profitent pleinement afin de pouvoir éviter quelques jours de corvées dans les champs. On y a affaire à une sorte de *mise en abîme*, à un récit cadre qui leur sert de refuge. On pourrait penser que le récit devient aussi une autre forme de cachette, forgée de mots et d'images. De cette manière, le temps acquiert une autre dimension - le temps du récit, avec de fortes touches personnelles, fait une intrusion dans la réalité du roman, en créant des subterfuges. Qu'on parle des films ou des romans qu'ils ont lus et qu'ils racontent par la suite ou des chansons populaires vecteurs de la propagande, le côté intertextuel est fortement représenté:

Le roman lui-même est un exercice intertextuel. On peut le considérer comme le Grand Meaulnes à la chinoise (Fritz-Ababneh, 2006, p. 97).

3. Le coffre à secrets

Néanmoins, le véritable « phénix » reste, incontournableement, la valise du Binoclard, le fils d'une famille d'écrivains tombés en disgrâce. Celle-ci cache des trésors inestimables - des traductions de Balzac, Victor Hugo, Stendhal, Dumas, Flaubert, Baudelaire, Romain Rolland, Rousseau, Tolstoï,

Gogol, Dostoïevski, Dickens, Kipling, Emily Brontë, toute une série d'auteurs interdits par le régime communiste et envisagés comme des éléments dangereux et corrupteurs. Mais au-delà des obstacles idéologiques, il y a un autre, plus concret. Le Binoclard cache son trésor précieux qu'il refuse obstinément de partager avec les deux autres lecteurs.

Mais la valise remplie de livres occidentaux opère comme un appât, comme un monde interdit et d'autant plus fascinant, qui ne se laisse pas attraper. Au moment où ils la découvrent, celle-ci est lourde et bien verrouillée, en devenant un véritable « obstacle psychologique », si l'on se rapporte à la phénoménologie bachelardienne.

Dans le coffret sont les choses inoubliables, inoubliables pour nous, mais inoubliables pour ceux auxquels nous donnerons nos trésors. Le passé, le présent, un avenir sont là condensés. Et ainsi, le coffret est la mémoire de l'immémorial (Bachelard, 1961, p. 111).

C'est tout un monde qui va surgir et agir sur la géométrie intérieure des protagonistes, dont le destin sera désormais jalonné par la « psychologie du secret »:

Nous nous approchâmes de la valise. Elle était ficelée par une grosse corde de paille tressée, nouée en croix. Nous la débarrassâmes de ses liens, et l'ouvrîmes silencieusement. À l'intérieur, des piles de livres s'illuminèrent sous notre torche électrique ; les grands écrivains occidentaux nous accueillirent à bras ouverts : à leur tête, se tenait notre vieil ami Balzac, avec cinq ou six romans, suivi de Victor Hugo, Stendhal, Dumas, Flaubert, Baudelaire, Romain Rolland, Rousseau, Tolstoï, Gogol, Dostoïevski, et quelques Anglais : Dickens, Kipling, Emily Brontë... Quel éblouissement ! (Sijie, 2000, p. 72-73).

Le premier roman auquel ils ont pourtant accès, c'est *Ursule Mirouët* de Balzac, un livre de chevet censé créer une illusion référentielle déconcertante, capable de brouiller les frontières de la réalité, « un intrus » qui éveille des pulsions, tout en l'initiant dans le monde du désir, de l'amour:

Malgré mon ignorance totale de ce pays nommé la France [...] l'histoire d'Ursule me parut aussi vraie que celle de mes voisins. Sans doute, la sale affaire de succession et d'argent qui tombait sur la tête de cette jeune fille contribuait-elle à renforcer son authenticité, à augmenter le pouvoir des mots. Au bout d'une journée, je me sentais chez moi à Nemours, dans sa maison, près de la cheminée fumante, en compagnie de ces docteurs, de ces curés... Même la partie sur le magnétisme et le somnambulisme me semblait crédible et délicieuse. Je ne me levai qu'après en avoir lu la dernière page (Sijie, 2000, p. 72-73).

Ce livre opère comme un miracle sur la jeune Tailleuse, que les deux garçons se proposent d'éduquer, et qui se métamorphose, progressivement, dans

une femme raffinée, plus cultivée. En effet, celle-ci se forge un monde idyllique d'où le présent est banni, enveloppé de rêves illusoires, une fois qu'elle a compris, grâce à Balzac, que « la beauté d'une femme est un trésor qui n'a pas de prix » (*Ibidem*, p. 229). C'est d'ailleurs la phrase qui clôt le roman et qui nous fait penser aux célèbres moralités de Perrault. Emportée par des fantasmes bovariens, elle quitte le village et s'en va vers d'autres horizons. Affolé par le départ de la Petite Tailleuse et conscient de l'impact des romans sur son émancipation et du rôle joué par les livres dans sa décision de rompre avec leur passé amoureux, Luo brûle les livres qu'il avait tant convoités mais, qui sont devenus en fin de compte, comme un paradoxe de la rééducation, la cause de son malheur.

4. Conclusion

La scène finale est chargée de symboles : la lecture déconstruit des poncifs, mais nourrit également des illusions et des idées en herbe. Somme toute, elle représente cet espace de *l'entrouvert*, un seuil à franchir, un risque assumé (plus ou moins consciemment), un épanouissement et une quête de soi, autrement dit, la liberté de rêver, de s'évader, en dépit des contraintes d'un monde à l'envers.

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BALZAC ȘI MICUȚA CROITOREASĂ CHINEZĂ: OMAGIUL LECTURII ÎNTR-O LUME RĂSTURNATĂ

(Rezumat)

Balzac și Micuța Croitoreasă chineză, romanul scriitorului franco-chinez Dai Sijie, se inspiră din fapte reale. Povestea se desfășoară în epoca în care președintele Mao

ia decizia de a schimba din temelii valorile sociale, închizând universitățile și «reducând» elitele cu ajutorul categoriilor sociale neinstruite. Dar așa cum precizează însuși autorul, evenimentele istorice nu constituie decât cadrul, fundalul, adevăratul subiect având în centru efectele lecturii, consecințele pe care aceasta le poate avea asupra destinului unei persoane, răpusă de fantasmale bovarice.

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NARRATIVE INNOVATIONS IN THOMAS HARDY’S NOVELS

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Abstract. This survey is an attempt at invalidating, at least partially, the idea that Thomas Hardy is a writer subject to the tradition of the 18th-century novel. While there are reasons to support this idea, it is also true that the Victorian novelist’s narrative strategies anticipate, to a certain degree, the modernist authors’ concerns and stylistic devices. It is these narrative techniques that this article will be focused on.

The first part of the survey will provide readers with a theoretical and historical introduction which will include the definitions of showing and telling and a historical account of the segments of reality that various generations of writers were interested in. This is meant as a theoretical and historical background that is needed for the proper understanding of Hardy’s narrative specificity.

The second part contains a few analyses of certain excerpts from three of Thomas Hardy’s novels based on which I try to support the novelist’s pre-modernist dimension.

Keywords: telling; showing; indirect free style; omniscience; realism.

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1. Introduction

19th-century British literature marks an interesting phase in the history of the English novel, both aesthetically and technically. From the former perspective, we see the diminishing of the Romantic impulse, which coexists with the adherence of most Victorian authors to the realist manner of writing. European realism seems to have found a fertile field in 19-century Britain, which marked the dominant aesthetic orientation of Victorian fiction.

The latter point of view is at least equally rewarding as it reveals a period marked by significant technical experimentations and narratological shifts that prefigure the great revolutionary changes brought about by the early 20th-century modernist fiction. Thus, Victorian literature can be seen as a phase that marks the transition to modernist writing, a period in which elements of the 17th and 18th-centuries novel co-exist with pre-modernist innovations.

My focus will be on three of Thomas Hardy's novels, whose modernity I will try to assess from a narratological perspective. As we know, the general perception of the late Victorian novelist is that of a writer very much indebted to the traditional novel. In this brief survey, I want to try to disprove this opinion (at least partially) by arguing that Hardy actually anticipates, to a certain degree, the concerns and the narrative strategies of modernist writers.

In order to be able to appreciate whether or to what extent such a statement is justified, it is necessary to make reference to some theoretical notions of narratology that are applicable to various phases in the history of the novel. I also find it useful to very briefly sketch the basic forms that narratives had taken up to the first half of the 20th century. This will enable me to be more convincing in assessing Hardy's modernity.

2. Theoretical and Historical Background

The first distinction that any discussion on narratology should start with is that between the narrative material and the way in which an author chooses to expose it. In this formulation, the *material* refers to the narrative substance itself, i.e. the sequence of events that are supposed to be narrated, while the treatment pertains to the strategy by which that narrative substance is shaped and presented to readers. It is easy to imagine that one and the same material may be narrated in a variety of ways. The discussion on the modernity of a literary work will naturally be focused primarily on the latter term of the distinction. It is also worth pointing out that modernist writers and theoreticians were particularly interested not in the *what* was narrated, but in the *how* this was done. In other words, they were especially focused on the narrative technique rather than the narrated material.

Another distinction that is useful and necessary to this discussion is that between *telling* and *showing* (Volceanov, 2000, p. 124-125), two terms that are

connected to the narrative techniques used for presenting a plot. The former term refers to a way of narrating which involves not only the presentation of the plot, but also the narrator's personal commentaries on characters and the various sequences that make up the plot. It is a subjective type of narration and it is specific to the epic literature ranging from ancient times up to the early nineteenth century.

Since the French realist writer Gustave Flaubert, most authors and critics have agreed that this kind of direct, unmediated commentary should no longer be used in fiction. Instead, they adhered to and tried to achieve an objective or impersonal mode of narration, which they considered superior to the subjective one, practiced in older epic forms. In other words, instead of *telling* the plot to readers, they focused on *showing* it to them. Thus, the term *showing* points to an impersonal type of narration, in which the narrative voice refrains from making any subjective comments upon the narrated material but sticks to the facts (Pavel, 1999). In a way, this tends to become similar to the way in which dramatic texts work. In dramatic plays, we are only *shown* what happens and what characters do or say; we are not provided with any personal comments on the part of the playwright.

These technical shifts may be related, on the one hand, to the pragmatic context in which at least in ancient times literature was delivered; on the other hand, narrative techniques also have to do with the spirit of the age, the so-called *Zeitgeist*, by which we mean a set of beliefs and philosophical ideas that are specific to the people living in a particular historical period.

Historically speaking, the narrative form stems from the old oral tradition of story-telling that precede the invention of writing. It is at least as old as the great ancient epics the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. As the oral delivery was the only way in which these stories reached other people, the narrative discourse was shaped by the same factors that typically influence the oral everyday communication, particularly by the speaker's subjectivity. The ancient narrator found it perfectly natural not only to tell his story but also to express his personal attitudes towards the narrated material, just as our oral speech is permanently "coloured" by our emotional reactions and our personal beliefs. So, from a historical perspective, the *telling* strategy is naturally rooted in the way in which the everyday oral communication works.

The artificial dimension of this narrative discourse had to do with the God-like attributes of this type of narrator. The typical kind of narrative used in the ancient epics and reaching the eighteenth-century fiction illustrate an omniscient narrator, a "person" who gives the impression of knowing everything about all his characters, including their past and even their inner thoughts. The narrator also proves to be omnipresent as he can tell things that happen (or have happened) anywhere in the fictional world he is describing.

If the early nineteenth century saw the rejection of the *telling* in favour of the *showing* strategy, the second half of the same century witnessed a

“revolt” against the omniscient narrator, which was also supported later, by the modernist writers in the first decades of the twentieth century.

First of all, it should be underlined that this moving away from the traditional way of narrating did not appear out of the blue. It was, to a great extent, the result of the philosophical background, the *Zeitgeist* mentioned earlier. In his study *Noua structură și opera lui Marcel Proust*, the Romanian modernist writer Camil Petrescu insists on the existence of a correlation between literature and this scientific and philosophic spirit of the respective period. In his opinion, the scientific discoveries and the philosophic ideas of a certain era have consequences upon the readers’ and literary critics’ mentality, but they also influence the narrative techniques of writers (Petrescu, 1971). Although Camil Petrescu’s study appears in the 1930s, its thesis is also applicable to the aesthetic and technical changes undergone by the Victorian novel.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, a revolutionary change occurs in the way in which the concept of reality is understood. Until then reality had been thought of as having an objective existence which could be grasped holographically by the human mind. This view upon the world was reflected in the traditional novel under the form of the omniscient perspective of a God-like narrator who knew everything about his fictional world. The impersonal narrative voice proved its omniscience and ubiquity (omnipresence) by providing information regarding events occurring in various places and by entering the minds of any of the individuals that took part in the plot. In pre-modernist and especially in modernist times, reality comes to be conceived in a different manner. People realise that they cannot perceive reality as a whole. Our capacity of perceiving the world is limited. The German philosopher Edmund Husserl demonstrates in his *Phenomenology* the restrictive character of our perception by using the so-called “metaphor of the cube”. His argument is that if one looks at a cube, one can only see one, two, or three of its six facets but never the cube as a whole. In order to see other facets of the same object one has to change one’s position in space and, implicitly, one’s perspective (Cuțitaru, 2004, p. 12-13). Our perception of the world functions in a similar way.

The French philosopher Henri Bergson, especially known for his intuitionism, goes even further, stating man’s impossibility to understand reality through his reason. In his opinion, the world can only be grasped by means of intuition. It is an obvious separation from the classic rationalist way of understanding reality.

This philosophical direction is anticipated to a certain degree in the narrative techniques employed by the Victorian writers. One of their technical innovations refers to giving up the omniscience characteristic of the traditional authorial voice. They realised that the use of the impersonal God-like narrator

was not realistic as nobody can possess full knowledge about what happens everywhere outside his/ her own person, including other people's minds.

The first decades of the twentieth century saw the manifestation of another great cultural movement: modernism. Essentially, modernism meant a total break with everything that meant tradition (Bădulescu, 2005, p. 9). As far as literature is concerned, this break pertained to both the worldviews and the narrative formulas employed by then. Modernist authors such as Virginia Woolf or James Joyce, for instance, rejected the unitary vision of the world in favour of the fragmentary perspective, they rejected omniscience in favour of relativity, they discarded clarity in favour of ambiguity and open-endedness, and they also renounced predictability in favour of the unfamiliar and the unexpected.

The cause of all these changes was the artists' aim at making art as true to life as possible. This is what artists have always aspired to. What has differentiated one generation of artists from another is the understanding of reality corresponding to their culture and the component of reality that their *Zeitgeist* favoured. Let us see some examples and see how various generations of artists related to reality.

For Aristotle, art was supposed to imitate reality (Aristotel, 2010, p. 76), more specifically, the way in which reality works. The theory of art the ancient thinker explained in his famous *Poetics* is a mimetic theory, in M.H. Abrams' terms (Abrams, 1971, p. 8).

In neoclassical times, Samuel Johnson remarked that valuable literary works are only those that illustrate "just representations of general nature", so, again, literature is appreciated based on its relation to reality. The next generation of artists, the Romantics, were interested in the affective dimension of human existence. As William Wordsworth famously writes in his Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, poetry is supposed to convey a "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (Wordsworth, 2008, p. 598). So, similar to the previous theories, for the Romantic generation, literature is meant to focus on a certain segment of reality: the emotional part of human life.

19th-century realist writers were, too, preoccupied with reality, but they specifically focused on its social dimension. However, realists gradually oriented towards individuals and their psychological investigation. Thus, the inner reality of the individual began to matter more and more, to the detriment of the social milieu. This tendency, that marked Victorian writers, continued and even intensified in the twentieth century in the works of modernist authors. The latter also attempted to make their works as true to life as possible, but the segment of reality that they focused on was man's inner world (Cuțitaru, 2004, p. 195) and the way in which life is actually experienced by us.

The summary of these thematic preoccupations of several generations of writers clearly illustrates their permanent interest in their works faithfully reflecting various segments of reality.

3. Hardy's Narrative Perspective(s)

Thomas Hardy is a late Victorian writer, from a chronological point of view. However, narratologically speaking, he is often thought of as a traditional novelist. Wayne C. Booth (1983, p. 27), for instance, points out the novelist's tendency to convey certain theses, which is seen as a limitation, as a flaw that diminishes the artistic value of his works.

It is true that, apparently, Hardy's prose works seem to use the traditional omniscient and omnipresent narrative perspective. This impression is, to a large extent, due to the novelist's "habit" of providing his readers with plenty of circumstantial details whenever the plot is projected against a new setting or a new character is introduced. In *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, for instance, the narrator stops his account in the fourth chapter in order to inform us (in detail) about what Susan Henchard and Elizabeth-Jane did after they had been sold to Richard Newson.

However, if one carefully follows the manifestations of Hardy's narrative voice, one may notice its lack of "epistemologic steadiness". Traditional realist narratives were told by narrators who permanently gave the impression of knowing everything about their characters and about the events in which they were involved. Their degree of awareness remained the same from the beginning up to the end of the novel. With Hardy, the narrative voice employed by the novelist does not preserve its omniscience along the whole story. The extent to which his narrator is aware of what happens in the fictional world varies in the course of the narrative. It is no longer the same. We no longer have the impression of an omniscient source of information throughout the whole literary work. If at the beginning of his novels, Hardy's narrator makes us think he is omniscient (by providing all sorts of detailed information about setting and characters), very soon we realise that this God-like attribute is gone. The narrative voice seems to occasionally lose its omniscient perspective upon the fictional universe, especially at crucial times, when we get the feeling that the impersonal narrator does not know about certain circumstances more than a mere witness would. Hardy's favourite technique in this respect seems to consist in having his narrator focus on the perspective of one character and relate from that character's point of view. The result is that the account becomes thus more authentic. I am going to analyse a few fragments in order to illustrate this narrative practice and to prove that the use of this technique is not accidental, but it is typical of Hardy's narration.

Passages in which we may notice this narrowing of the narrative perspective may be found even in Hardy's early novels. In *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, for instance, it is illustrative for our discussion the episode in which Elfride Swancourt searches for Stephen Smith in the Luxellian Manor. Here, we may notice the narrative voice giving up its omniscience by concentrating on the

girl's perspective. The result is that we are offered the exact details of what Elfride sees and of what she thinks.

Thus, we are given a sense of immediacy and authenticity. On the other hand, however, the narrator can no longer tell us what exactly happens beyond the window, or the identity of the woman whom Stephen seems to have kissed as he seems to have temporarily lost his omnipotent qualities; in this position, he can only record (and narrate) what Elfride perceives and the way in which she reacts (physically and mentally). All he can do here is adopt the girl's doubts without being able to draw any certain conclusion. As it can be seen, the technique employed by Hardy has both advantages and disadvantages.

The same narrative strategy is again made use of only few chapters further, when, returning home after a walk on the seashore with Stephen, Elfride hears two people kissing on the lawn, but, as it was dark, she finds herself unable to distinguish anything. Having adopted the girl's perspective again, the impersonal narrator cannot inform his readers of who the two lovers in the dark are. All he can do is share Elfride's suspicions, but, again, nothing that can be taken for granted, nothing we can be sure of. Elfride's narrow perspective (as compared to that of a God-like narrator) and her lack of information become attributes of Hardy's narrative voice in this section of the novel. Only later, when the narrator regains his initial omnipotent position will we find that the two lovers are in fact parson Christopher Swancourt, Elfride's father, and his new neighbour, widow Charlotte Troyton (Hardy, 2002).

In chapter 30, we notice the transformation of the narrative perspective again. We are provided here with the detailed description of the valley lying between Endelstow Crags and the seashore in which widow Gertrude Jethway lives; as soon as the evening falls, a mysterious person appears in this setting and approaches the widow's house. It is interesting that the narrator does not know who this person is. Only when the enigmatic guest takes the hood off does the narrator (and immediately us, the readers) find out that "he" is in fact Elfride. In this passage, the narrative voice gives the impression of belonging to a person present in the valley who first hears some steps approaching, then distinguishes a woman's silhouette, and only after the "stranger's" face becomes visible does he realise the identity of the person. The episode illustrates, maybe better than the previous ones, the focus on the way in which reality is perceived. If Hardy had employed here the strategy of the traditional omniscient narrative perspective, the "all-knowing" narrator would have told us from the very beginning the identity of the visitor without waiting for "him" to uncover "his" face. We would also have known the motivation of this visit prior to Elfride writing the letter.

In *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, the episode in which Henchard spies on Farfrae and Lucetta is illustrative to our discussion. In this passage, we can notice again how the narrator focalises on Henchard's point of view. The perspective narrows very much as it records only the information perceived by

the ex-mayor. Its omniscience is thus lost. The impersonal narrator seems to have been contaminated with Henchard's uncertainty as he is no longer sure of what he relates. On account of the darkness and the distance which he keeps from Farfrae and Lucetta, Henchard cannot be sure of their destination and his doubts seem to have been transferred to the narrator:

Candle-lights were flitting in and out of her bedroom, and it was obvious that she was dressing for the appointment, whatever the nature of that might be at such an hour. The lights disappeared, the clock struck nine, and almost at the moment Farfrae came round the opposite corner and knocked. That she had been just inside for him was certain, for she instantly opened the door herself. ... guessing where they were going he determined to follow (Hardy, 1994a, p. 222-223).

Later in the novel, the narrator explicitly asserts his lack of omniscience by asserting that he does not possess knowledge about what Lucetta tells Farfrae about her past before she dies: "What and how much, Farfrae's wife ultimately explained to him of her past entanglement with Henchard, when they were alone in the solitude of that sad night, cannot be told" (Hardy, 1994a, p. 332).

In *The Return of the Native*, the modulation of the narrative voice becomes something current; quite often in this novel the narrator's horizon of awareness narrows significantly, equating that of various characters. In other words, Hardy's narrator frequently gives the impression that he knows as much as the character whose perspective he focuses upon. Let's take a few examples to illustrate this idea.

An interesting passage for noticing Hardy's ability to focus on his characters' viewpoint is the one in which we are presented the conversation between Eustacia Vye and Damon Wildeve. What matters to our analysis is that the two people's discussion is related through the perspective of Diggory Venn who overhears them. Consequently, we do not find out the beginning nor the end of their conversation but only what the reddleman manages to hear. Their dialogue is interrupted just when Wildeve proposes Eustacia to follow him to America, so neither Venn (and the narrator) nor us learn the girl's answer:

As Eustacia uttered the latter words she retired from the base of the barrow, and Wildeve followed her, so that the reddleman could hear no more. He lifted the turves and arose. Their black figures sank and disappeared from against the sky. They were as two horns which the sluggish heath had put forth from its crown, like a mollusc, and had now again drawn in (Hardy, 1994b, p. 91).

Hardy's narrator does not follow one character to occasionally relate through his eyes, like Lewis Carroll, for example. The character whose point of view is "borrowed" may not be the same throughout the whole novel. The narrative voice adopts the characters' perspectives selectively, according to the

situations in which they are involved. Thus, not only Diggory Venn's viewpoint is used, but also those of other characters.

Mrs. Yeobright's party, for example, is described through Eustacia's eyes. The description of the participants is made according to the girl's interests. As a result, very few things are told to us about the guests, whereas quite a lot of information is given about Clym Yeobright.

Another direction of overstepping the traditional narrative refers to the reduction of the informative function of the narrator in Hardy's novels. This has nothing to do with the use of the technique of the circumstantial detail, which implies providing readers with plenty of information about the time and place of events and about some of the characters involved. Hardy's readers are no longer put in the picture with the essential data of the story as it happens in the traditional novel. This role is passed by Hardy to his characters. Some of the crucial information comes to us from the characters' talk. In this respect, the text gets very close to drama. A dramatic text is made up of characters' speeches and didascalies so the playwright can only intervene in his stage directions. Thus, the details concerning the plot of a play are known by readers (or audience) directly from characters. A similar thing may be noticed in Hardy's novels. Very often the narrator leaves important pieces of information unmentioned, letting the reader learn about them from his characters' conversations. This may be a sign of lack of omniscience on the part of the narrator, or it may be related to Hardy's aim at achieving tragedies, which are essentially dramatic works.

In *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, after Henchard sells his wife and daughter to Richard Newson, all the narrator tells us is the promise he makes of not drinking alcohol for twenty-one years and the fact that he settles in Casterbridge. Several years later, when Susan and Elizabeth-Jane come to Casterbridge, we know nothing about what Michael Henchard has done all this time. The narrative voice is silent on this issue and lets us find out about it from some characters' conversation, namely, from Elizabeth's discussion with Solomon Longways. It is this old man that informs the girl (and us, readers) of the fact that Michael Henchard is the mayor of the town.

Only few chapters further there is another example. Henchard has just met Susan and has decided to pretend to woo her (for the town people's eyes) and finally to marry her. Knowing this information, no reader can suspect the dramatic conflict that begins to take shape inside Henchard's soul. The narrator seems not to be aware of this either. We are revealed the mayor's past by means of the confession that Henchard makes to his new administrator, Donald Farfrae. It is from their conversation that we find out that he has promised another woman, Lucetta Le Sueur (Templeman), to marry her. In a way, the narrator takes distance, letting the characters play their parts in front of us. Things are not very different when we become aware of the truth about Elizabeth. The narrative voice does not mention anything about this; we actually

learn from Susan's letter that the girl is not Henchard's daughter, but Richard Newson's, the mayor's Elizabeth having died three months after being sold to the sailor (a fact that contributes significantly to Henchard's tragedy).

In the case of *The Return of the Native*, we may notice that the novel starts very much in a typically Shakespearian manner. Shakespeare's plays usually begin with a conversation between two minor characters by means of which readers (and audience) are given some data about the initial situation of the protagonists. Hardy's *The Return of the Native* opens in a similar way by presenting a traditional celebration that the villagers have on the Egdon Heath plain, occasion on which they speak about Wildeve and Thomasin's announced marriage, about Mrs. Yeobright's opposition to this, and about Clym Yeobright's expected return. Thus, it is through these people's discussion of the opening state of facts concerning the main characters and the relationships among them that we are made aware of the initial state of affairs of the novel. In other words, this is how we are introduced to the plot of the novel. Further information on the protagonists' relations with one another is also related to us by the same dramatic device: dialogue.

Eustacia Vye, another important character, is introduced in the sixth chapter, but without any informative frame on her past love affairs. Only from her conversation with Damon Wildeve do we find out that the two of them were together until he deserted her for Thomasin Yeobright and that only a new passion for Eustacia prevented Wildeve from marrying Thomasin.

Another means by which Hardy avoids giving important details on the relationships among is the use of a letter, which appears here as well. It is through Thomasin's letter to Diggory Venn that we come to know about the latter being in love with her, a fact that will motivate most of the reddleman's actions throughout the novel.

So, the only omniscient manifestations of Hardy's narrator are the very detailed presentations of settings and of some characters' past. The most important information, essential to triggering the tragic conflict, is usually related to us indirectly, by means of the characters' dialogue or by the use of letters. This practice may be seen as a way of surpassing the traditional manner of giving the reader all the necessary data for the latter to understand (and even to predict) the future course of the action. Hardy's technique of leaving unmentioned essential details and having his characters inform the reader gives his novels a certain degree of unpredictability which may be related to the early twentieth-century prose, in which the plot (if any) is thoroughly freed from the traditional canons and patterns, being thus totally unpredictable.

Another element which I consider significant to the pre-modernist character of Hardy's fiction refers to the way in which the impersonal narrator manages to render the inner thoughts of his characters. The protagonists of Hardy's novels have a rich inner life to which our access is facilitated by means of direct speech, indirect speech, and free indirect speech (also known as

indirect free style). These are the three main ways recognised and theorized by stylists by which a person's sayings or thoughts may be rendered. All the three means combine the plane of the narrator with that of various characters. The direct speech renders the exact words or thoughts of the character without modifying them in any way. The character's plane is dominated by first and second person verbs and pronouns, whereas the narrator's is represented by various verbs of saying used in the narrative tense. Thus, the two planes are separated, any intersection between them being excluded. The character's utterance is rendered as such, while the narrator's intervention is parenthetical. The indirect speech brings closer the two dimensions. This time the character's plane is subordinated to that of the narrator (more exactly, to the narrator's verb of saying) by means of a subordinating conjunction. This relation of subordination modifies the person and tense of the verbs contained in the character's plane, reporting them to the third person and (usually) the past tense, respectively. Direct and indirect speech are the most frequently used means of rendering the character's plane in the traditional prose. The third device is what we are especially interested in here. The free indirect speech intersects the two planes to such a degree that sometimes they become very difficult to distinguish. The narrator's *verba dicendi* no longer appear, only the "internal speech" being rendered. The person and tense of the pronouns and verbs are reported to the narrator's position. It may be considered a freer version of indirect speech on account of the absence of subordinating elements. The free indirect speech enables the narrator to assume his characters' identity, thus dissolving the borders between the two planes. The use of this device allows the authorial voice to "go inside" the minds of the characters and to give readers samples of their inner world. One may say that the free reported speech was also employed some traditional authors (Jane Austen, Sir Walter Scott). It is true that traditional prose was mainly interested in narrating events external to the characters involved, without aiming at developing their psychological dimension. This is why we may consider the appearance of indirect free style in traditional works as purely accidental, devoid of any analytical intention on the part of the narrator. In pre-modernist and especially in modernist times the situation is different. Nineteenth and early twentieth-century literature is strongly oriented towards "psychologism". Many psychological novelists become concerned with the portrayal of "internal speech", so it is their intention of evoking the inner life of their protagonists that underlies their use of the free indirect speech. As a result, the frequency with which this device is employed increases significantly in works of such writers as George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, Henry James, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, and D. H. Lawrence. Their making use of the indirect free style is to be related to the general tendency of evoking man's inner world. It may even be considered a step closer to the stream of consciousness technique, developed brilliantly by the twentieth-century writers.

Thomas Hardy is one of the Victorian authors that resort to this device in order to open their readers the access to the unseen dimension of their characters. His employment of free indirect speech is a manifestation of his intention to reveal the inner motivations of his protagonists. In *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, especially in the second half of the novel where Henchard's crisis deepens, Hardy's narrator resorts to this technique to help us grasp the complexity of his protagonist by understanding better the "forces" that clash inside his soul. After Henchard lies to Newson about Elizabeth's death, the narrator dedicates quite a lot of space to the presentation of this character's inner "fight" between the guilt for separating the girl from her real father and his desperate desire of not being deserted. He alternates direct thought with free indirect speech:

Was Elizabeth-Jane to remain his by virtue of this hardy invention of a moment? "Perhaps not for long," said he. Newson might converse with his fellow-travellers, some of whom might be Casterbridge people; and the trick would be discovered. ...

His grief! – what was it, after all, to that which he, Henchard, would feel at the loss of her? Newson's affection cooled by years, could not equal his who had been constantly in her presence. And thus his jealous soul speciously argued to excuse the separation of father and child (Hardy, 1994a, p. 339).

The narrator then shifts to the direct presentation Henchard's thoughts: "At this moment her heart is as warm towards me as mine is towards her; she would live with me here in this humble cottage for the asking! Yet before the evening probably he will have come; and then she will scorn me!" (Hardy, 1994a, p. 340). The same alternation of narrative perspectives can be noticed in the following pages:

Suppose he were to communicate to Farfrae the fact that his betrothed was not the child of Michael Henchard at all – legally, nobody's child; how would that correct and leading townsman receive the information? He might possibly forsake Elizabeth-Jane, and then she would be her step-sire's own again.

Henchard shuddered, and exclaimed, "God forbid such a thing! Why should I still be subject to these visitations of the devil, when I try so hard to keep him away?" (Hardy, 1994a, p. 354).

Thus, by the use of indirect free style, the narrator manages to render the protagonist's inner thoughts by adopting his perspective, and, at the same time, to maintain the third-person narrative.

In *Jude the Obscure*, the same technique is again made use of. After Jude finds out that Arabella planned to fool him from the very beginning with her fake pregnancy, he realises that his future is completely destroyed. Having heard of his family's peculiarity of being unsuccessful in marriage and of his

mother's suicide, Jude thinks about drowning himself, too (Hardy, 1968). His despondency and the thought of being unable to escape his ancestors' fate (his attempt of drowning himself failed) are again rendered by means of free reported speech. As it can be noticed, this stylistic device is used as a means of psychological investigation. Through the use of indirect free style Hardy manages to reveal his characters' inner life anticipating the way in which his modernist followers investigated man's inner world.

3. Conclusions

Thomas Hardy is a late Victorian novelist whose novels look very much like traditional novels: he uses chronological narratives, consistent plots and often tries to illustrate his theses. These features are obvious at the first reading. However, on a closer analysis, one may also notice that, apart from these traditional features, there are also signs that prefigure modernist visions and technical devices. Thus, by occasionally avoiding the traditional omniscient perspective through modulating his narrative voice, by trying to replace *telling* with *showing*, by resorting to the free indirect speech (a device frequently used by modernists) for the purpose of disclosing his protagonists' inner states, and by continuously modifying his narrative perspective, Hardy clearly surpasses the traditional strategies, paving the way for the twentieth-century authors.

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INOVAȚII NARATIVE ÎN ROMANELE LUI THOMAS HARDY

(Rezumat)

Acest studiu este o încercare de a invalida, măcar parțial, ideea că Thomas Hardy este un scriitor tributar tradiției romanului secolului al XVIII-lea. Deși există argumente care să susțină această afiliere, este, totuși, adevărat că strategiile narative ale scriitorului Victorian anticipă, într-o anumită măsură, preocupările tematice și procedeele stilistice ale scriitorilor moderniști. Prezentul articol se va concentra pe aceste tehnici narative.

Prima parte a studiului va constitui o introducere teoretică și istorică ce va include definiții ale procedeelelor *showing* și *telling*, precum și o prezentare istorică a segmentelor de realitate de care au fost interesate diferite generații de scriitori. Aceste elemente teoretice și istorice sunt necesare pentru înțelegerea specificității narative a lui Hardy.

Partea a doua conține câteva analize ale unor fragmente din romanele lui Thomas Hardy, pe baza cărora susținem dimensiunea pre-modernistă a scrierilor romancierului.