ON A STRANGE FASHION OF RUMANIAN ACCENTUATION ABROAD.
A CONTRASTIVE SKETCH WITH GERMAN AND ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT
Each language has its own, particular ways of accentuation, which must be observed in emphatic speech too. Thus, according to their prosodic specificity, an additional first-syllable accent is frequently allowed in German and English but not in Rumanian emphasized polysyllabic words.

Our paper presents a recent extreme development of an erroneous first-syllable accent in Rumanian words, affecting all prosodic features. It usually occurs in some western broadcasting programs, as a strange, deliberate speech fashion.

1. Introduction
1.1. A language is constantly undergoing change. But this change can hardly affect the specific physiognomy of the language, in general, thanks to its inner conservative tendencies and to the feeling for correct idiom of the native speakers. An excellent example offers us the Rumanian language, which could preserve its Romanic character for almost two thousand years, in spite of having been cut off from the main part of the Romanic world, developing among foreign languages of other groups, e.g., Slavic, Germanic, Ugric etc. There seems no doubt that also in our times of immense change in the life of mankind, languages will keep on maintaining their particular characters, even if this becomes more and more complicated.

1.2. We must admit that our bright technical period, making possible most accurate research in many fields of human activity casts its shadows, by: the constant decrease of respect for and appreciation of everlasting human cultural achievements, deterioration of moral standards and of the sense of harmony and beauty (to consider just what is accepted for music and dance nowadays).

1.3. The positive and negative sides of our era have unavoidably touched the field of language as well: while sophisticated technical devices facilitate minute language research and language teaching/learning, quite shocking negative tendencies - far from being grounded on deeper scientific research, rather disregarding language specificity - are developing in many countries: e.g., strange speech fashions, adoption of unnecessary foreign terms, frequent use of wrong grammatical forms etc. As a rule, they are also far from being the result of natural interference of languages in contact. Most likely, the native speakers sustaining them are similar to the superficial "enfants terribles" of our days, who seek publicity for their extravagant originality at any price.

1.4. Undoubtedly, improper alterations of everyday speech have occurred in the past too, without influencing standard speech at all, as fashions come and go. But about that time mass-media possibilities of spreading such speech fashions were not at hand. Now they are and language misuse can influence the speech of millions of listeners and
can become a danger to the specificity of any language.

1.5. Let us concede that we, phoneticians, also deserve unfavourable criticism, as we have not at all done our best for the extension of useful pronunciation knowledge to the masses of language speakers. In general, even school and university handbooks still lack the important information on the specificity of language, mainly in the field of pronunciation. Phonetics continues to be underestimated in the study and practice of language.

1.6. Under the circumstances, it seems to be high time for linguists and especially for phoneticians, joined in international associations, to unite their efforts, at least, to protect standard speech from deliberate alterations, chiefly in programs to be broadcast for radio or television all over the world. Our paper is meant to draw attention to this apparently overlooked problem.

2. Main Features of German-English and Rumanian Accent in Contrast

2.1. For space restriction, we shall pick out just a few main word / vs. sentence accentual characteristics of these languages.

2.2. Similarities

2.2.1. The accentual pattern of these languages is free, in the sense that the accent is not constantly placed on the same syllable in all words. But it is also fixed, as their accent has a fixed position in the lexical pronunciation of each word; e.g., G. zukommen, A. kommen, R. căzu. The stress accent becomes more frequent, being added to the main stress.

2.2.2. They have a dynamic or intensity stress, but it is usually associated with pitch variation. More often, the stressed syllable is higher in pitch than the unstressed syllables. Thus, the term "accent" can be used to define the correlation of stress and pitch (the same in this paper; e.g., G. Gättin, A. žalān, R. cară. Their accent can have a distinctive function, a trait which increases the importance of learning each word of these languages with its proper accent; e.g., G. zukommen, A. kommen, R. căzu.

2.3. Differences

2.3.1. Most G. and E. words have their accent on their initial part—as the Germanic tendency is to place the accent to the beginning, not to the end of words; whereas most R. words have their accent on the final part (the penult) — because the Romanian tendency is just the reverse.

2.3.2. G. and E. polysyllabic words often have a primary and a secondary accent; but this is a rare case in Romanian, where words normally contain a single accent. Compare the: G. Schokoladener and B. Schokoladenher with the R. fotografi with the R. fotografi. Certain G. and E. compounds can have two primary accents (a double accent) but b) this is a rare case in E. compounds; e.g., G. härzacher, A. ëll-advised, R. rehuvolnitch but reh-volnitch.

2.3.3. a) Although in all three languages form words are generally unaccented in the sentence, the G. and E. prepositions are frequently stressed and get a considerable high pitch. b) Since almost all R. prepositions are unaccented, even in emphatic speech, they are never given the high pitch of main words. Compare G. Erklim der Welt, B. Cine este, R. Vino într-ur. The added secondary accent is in German and English very frequent. It is possible in G. and E. to add an emphatic first-syllable secondary accent on certain polysyllabic words; e.g., G. die individuelle Opposition can be: die individual Opposition, likewise R. the inferiority complex (1), but the same unit can be in R. only: opposition individuale, the complex of inferiority. If emphasized, the beginning of words can be uttered somewhat louder, but without a higher pitch. Otherwise we would adopt the main error of the new speech fashion and would say: opposition individuale, complexul de inferioritate, what is quite opposed to the particular tone of the R. speech flow. As an exception, a secondary accent is possible in R. standard speech!) when emphasizing the contrast between two terms, e.g., A. As zie: posizione mu nonposizione; or 2) on very few prefixes of negation and repetition; e.g., naincept but neceas, a posizione (to cite again), but a recit (to declaim).
Phase 4. The unfortunate development reaches its first extreme point, namely, the word initial accent is added even on such words which have their original accent on the second syllable. A sequence of two accented syllables is the result. Quite an absurd situation in R., where even at sentence level the succession of two accents is avoided, e.g., partitive. But this change determines some other important changes: two successive accents cannot be uttered within joined syllables, they must be disjoined, even separated. Thus the meaning of words is altered, e.g., combativitate, speriatii (II, 87). Phase 5. The strong intensity of the added accent causes the decrease of the original primary accent, which becomes secondary and its pitch is lowered, e.g., combativitate, speriatii (II, 87). Phase 6. The original accent is dropped out while the added, word-initial accent is maintained. This second extreme point of the development is the cause of the low pitch level of the previously accented syllable; e.g., conferinta, probleme, danz (II, 87) for conferinta, probleme, danz. As a consequence, the intonation contours together with the rhythm are considerably changed. Even vowel change and reduction of syllables are resulting; e.g., soiie (so-ti-e) becomes stie (6.86), reaciile (re-ak-ti-le) becomes reaciile (II, 87). Phase 7. The accentuation fashion has now reached its third extreme point: because of the tendency to stress any word-initial syllable, even form words, which are almost never stressed, become accented, being given a high pitch level. By this drastic change two wrong ways are open: either to introduce a pause between the accented form word and the following content word — if the accented syllables follow each other — or to maintain the strong accent on the form word and to make the content word unaccented, with a low pitch level, e.g., vorcontinua (6.86), vor continua, crealisti f o realisti, la vedere f. la vedere (II, 87).

4.2. Our division into seven phases of development is certainly subjective as their characteristics are co-existing and interchanging. But it helps us to briefly follow the negative influence of this prosodic error on all other prosodic features. Namely, it leads towards a new tune, opposed to the R. specificity. Thus, the relatively smooth speech flow, with harmoniously rising and falling pitch of voice and being more joined than disjoined, turns into a rather abrupt speech with many high pitch levels, sounding sometimes irritated or commanding.

4.3. No use to add that the radio speakers committing these prosodic errors pretend to be or even are Romanians, who are thus very likely to be imitated by their fan-listeners. As a rule, a native is more often imitated by other natives than a foreigner and his unusual speech is not perceived as mistaken, even if it is so.

Remarks 1. The terms: German, English, Rumanian occur very often in the text, so we use them abbreviated: G., E., R.
2. The accent is marked right above the stressed vowel letter.