

DELIA RĂCHIȘAN DĂNCIUȚ¹, ROMÂNIA

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Jocurile de copii. Aspecte ale limbajului poetic

Rezumat

Jocul ca joc, apanajul ființei umane, este o componentă inalienabilă a culturii, o constantă de ordin epistemologic, o activitate esențială și indispensabilă pentru om, asemenea religiei, limbii, filosofiei, artei.

Formalismul pregnant, limbajul bazat pe euritmie, eufonie este întâlnit în frământările de limbă. Actul de divinație al copiilor, comparativ cu descântecul propriu-zis, este minimalizat printr-un *joc de-a limbajul*, menit să producă amuzament, plăcere, armonie.

Limbajul poetic din jocurile de copii, determinând un veritabil *joc de-a limbajul*, o punte de acces spre / dinspre repertoriul adulților, relevă un folclor infantil cu repertoriu de sine stătător, autonom.

¹ Universitatea Tehnică Cluj Napoca, Centrul Regional Nord, Baia Mare, România

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Games for Kids. Aspects of the Poetic Language

Summary

The game, as a proper game, the privilege of the human being, is the inalienable component of culture, an epistemologic element which preserves its constancy, an essential and indispensable activity, similar to religion, language, philosophy or art.

The striking formalism, as well as the language based on eurhythmics and euphony is mainly encountered in . The children's divination act, unlike the incantation itself is being reduced to its proportions throughout a specific *language game*, which is meant to produce entertainment, pleasure and harmony.

The poetic language which accompanies children's game, and which determines a factual *language game*, an access bridge towards /from adults' repertoire highlights the borders of children's folklore, a specific area which has its own, particular repertoire.

Games for Kids. Aspects of the Poetic Language

The game as play, appanage of the human being, is an inalienable part of culture, an epistemological constant, an essential, indispensable activity for the individual, as religion, language, philosophy, art.

In and through play, the transmitter and receiver, knowing the playfulness code, achieve a reverse connection: "*The language issue is an individual mood and organizes a social report*"². In children folklore we observe a dynamic system of syncretic related elements, in which the word (*verbal language*) combines with gestures, mimicry, movement (*non-verbal language*), with emphasis, tambre, intonation, silence (*paralanguage*). When there is a prejudice, rupture of the message occurs, and sharing roles, the feed-back stop.

Children lack the aesthetic consciousness, however adults can see in infantile folklore (in texts) poetry, a beauty of functional and syncretic nature. For children, *language* is a semiotic system developed by society, for adults, poetic language of children games lacks special language skills, considering it rather "*a rudimentary form of folk beauty*"³.

The word becomes an instrumental sign, the opposition signifier / signified disappears, language adopts a status of poetry⁴, the latter no longer representing the children's game bearing for existence, means: "*one of the activities characteristic to humanity that resembles the game to a higher extent*"⁵. Thought of like a game, poetry must "*fall from time to time in pure speech to draw attention to its ceremonial*"⁶, *the game being an activity performed observing "voluntarily accepted, but absolutely binding rules."*⁷, receiving features of a ritual.

The language is subordinated to rhythm which establishes order, through game attempts are made to repeat the universal order. Childish rhythm, emphasized by words is a vocal rhythm that does not necessarily imply music⁸. To verbal language is added musical language, infant of rhythm resulting a symbiosis between musical and poetic text, or functional syncretism.

Constantin Brailoiu focuses on the series of eight measures. The pace is subject to isochrony (equal measures), while syllables (in the children games) are subject to duration.

Eugen Coseriu considers that language has gained independence and is used to communicate, but it's also a way of intuitive knowledge. Human beings have built a real world (work) and spiritual one (language)⁹.

The Jakobsonian functions: *emotional / expressive, referential, poetic, phatic, co native, metalinguistic* target what is specific to them (sender, context, message, actor, receiver, code), so that one of the functions will affirm itself.

² Tudor Vianu, "Dubla intenție a limbajului și problema stilului", în vol. *Arta prozatorilor români*, 1941;

³ Ovidiu Bârlea, *Poetica folclorului*, Editura Univers, București, 1979, p.28;

⁴ Maria Foață, *Jocurile de copii. O definiție poetică*, în "Folclor literar", vol. IV, Timișoara, 1977 p. 164;

⁵ G. Călinescu, *Principii de estetică*, Editura Litera Internațional, București, 2003, p. 96;

⁶ ibidem, p. 81;

⁷ Johan Huizinga, *Homo ludens*, trad. H. R. Radian, Editura Univers, București, 1977, p. 70;

⁸ Constantin Brăiloiu, "Ritmica copiilor", în *Studii muzicologice*, vol. I, București, 1965, p. 64-65;

⁹ Eugen Coșeriu, "Prelegeri și conferințe", în *Supliment al Anuarului de lingvistică și istorie literară*, tom XXXIII, 1992 / 1993, p. 8-26;

In children's games multiple functions of language are manifested simultaneously, some being, however, dominant in certain sequences. The main function of language is communication. Through the poetic function (aesthetics), the message isn't a simple tool, but text with repetitions, rhythm, rhyme, figurative words, etc. The expressive function centered on the emitter has a certain weight in children's games.

There is a concept that works with style – *expressiveness*, influencing children's games. Roman Jakobson affirms that expressiveness relates to aesthetics (emotional function poetic function), while Stefan Munteanu asserts that- it determines the necessary ratio between form and substance. Whether expressiveness is spontaneous or contemplative, it involves emotion, feeling. Opposing arbitrary, expressiveness operates on texts as well, with new lexical forms (pseudo-words), apparently without logic: *Uni, duni, tini, pani, cinca, rinca, ochi, scochi, baba, clonț*. the first five words suggest numbers (false suffixes), the other being a reflex of indicating different parts of the head (*rinca* < *gr. nose*, *clonț* < *beak, fig. mouth*). The word *baba* (omitted consonant) refers to chin, the word *sochi*¹⁰ is associated with eyes, and in Vasile Bogrea's opinion it suggests the number eight.

Elisions, the various appendices, the parasitic sound connections, the aloglote loans from other languages reveal a cryptic language, morpho-lexic plasticity, the aesthetics of language, allusion to the expressive meaning /the children's manner to master foreign words: "*Carno / Parno / Socardea / Șoșeara / Sunacbun*"; "*Nu mă redoa, / Nu ma gule, / Nu mă camân, / Nu mă cufre, / De m-ar redoa / M-aș gule; / De m-ar cămân / M-aș cufre*"¹¹. <romani lang; Roma language exemplified counts imitate the language sonority : the strong pronunciation of compressed phrases (*car nou, par nou, soc ardea, și o șea rea, și un ac bun*) and change in the usual order of syllables in words (*nu mă doare, nu mă legu, nu mă mânâncă* etc.)

- *ant, sfai, drai, fir, finem, zim, zect act, vain, tai* (all from German);

- *an, doa, troa, catr, san, sis, set, iut, nov, diz* (all from French);

Numbers, taken from German and French, were inserted in counting by learning the wrong form, through distortion of sounds.

Regardless the origin for *cvanter, cvinter* (in Latin), *egy, keto, Harom, regy* (in Hungarian), *carabela bo, cara si* (in Italian), words rhyme and evoke sonority when included in texts such as: "*Două babe scârțovite / Stau pe canapea trântite / Și sorbind dintr-o cafea / Franțuzește – așa vorbeau: / Parlez-vous? — zise una, / Parlez-vous? — zise alta, / Parlez-vous, le vu, le vu? / leși afara tu!*" (Emilia Comisel, p. 203).

Strong formalism, language based on eurhythmy, euphony found in language convulsions (*Capra calcă piatra, / Piatra crapă-n patru. / Să crape ochii caprii în patru, / Cum a crapat piatra-n patru*) require some musical perception "*to distinguish properly isolated vocables from the entire fabric*"¹². In the first two variants we can distinguish groups of sounds: *cra, pra, tra, tru*, in other examples we intercept sound complications:

→ *Rața ragnița piscuparnița cu cincii puișori negrișori, albișori, toți cu rața ragnița piscuparnița.* (Tudor Pamfile, p. 382).

→ *Lesne a zice boul breaz bârlobreaz, dar anevoie a debârlobrezi debârlobrezitura din boii bârlobrezenilor.* (Ovidiu Papadima, p. 331).

Language convulsions are a way of linguistic dexterity exercise, a simulacrum of language

¹⁰ Vasile Bogrea, *Pagini istorico-filologice*, Editura Dacia, Cluj, 1971, p. 202;

¹¹ Victor Păcală, apud Maria Foarță, art. cit., p. 168;

¹² Ovidiu Papadima, *Literatura populară română*, Editura Pentru Literatură, București, 1968, p. 330;

that relies on an accurate and rapid speech.

Phonic and semantic expressiveness, plasticity, are not bordering on words, isolated phrases, but are totally monopolizing whether it is dealt with formula-song / count / convulsions regarding language or scrupulous definitions.

Sometimes, a rigorous discipline such as physics, framed by formulas, exact and brief definitions, can be overwhelmed by an atmosphere designed to reduce tension, stiffness through a game of *language*.

Archimedes' Law (a body immersed in a liquid is pushed from the bottom up with a force equal to the weight of liquid displaced), a definition that deals with the clear consequence of the statements heretofore demonstrated, can be acquired, appealing to the game as play / reproduced by dialects / sub-dialects using language specific to region in which live:

↔ *Un pietroi ciuflincat într-un bolotroc pierde din terhetiu lui pont atâta cât terhelește apa desciuflincată de sub pietroi* (Țara Codrului);

↔ *Un bolovan țâpat într-un tău păgubește din dolofănia lui hăpt cât îi musai apei să dolofănească pân destuparea ei de sub bolovan* (Țara Maramureșului);



Jocuri de copii; foto: Mihaela Mihai

Extending the semantic field, the same language game can be accomplished not with regionalisms but with neologisms:

A body inserted into a liquid is propelled to the surface with a force equivalent to pressing robust substituted substance.

Poetic language in children's games, points out a real *language game*, an access bridge to / from the adult repertoire, revealing an infantile folklore with its own independent, autonomous repertoire.

Children's conjurations, whether revealing the relation light-dark or part-whole tend to humanize celestial elements (sun, moon, rain, clouds, rainbow).

The terms sun and moon reveal the relation human - nature - universe. In the structure of infantile poetic imagery, notions are active elements that develop open meanings. The performers

(children), through an act of divination personify and invoke celestial bodies belonging to the universe. By conjurations to the sun and the moon (remnants of the solar cult), the actors perceive (resorting to intonation, gesture, movement), and place elements of the universe under the human nature.

Conjurations to the *Sun* rely on word power (magic function), appeal to the poetic arsenal and generate repeated variants of stereotyped formulas.

Simple, overriding formulations highlighted by these texts, even threatening such as those in chants: „*Ieși soare, din 'chisoare / Că te tai / C-un mai / C-un pai, / Cu căciula lui Mihai*” (Emilia Comisel, p.145), alluring: “*Ieși soare / Din închisoare / Că-ți dau pâine cu unsoare*” (Nelu Ionescu, p. 15), emotional language, “*Luci, Soare, luci / Că-ți dă mama nuci - / Dacă n-or fi bune / Îți dă un pumn de alune*” (Nelu Ionescu, p.12).

In the first two songs - chants, the simple but imperative formula, *ieși* - suggests dissatisfaction, and the juxtaposition of *sun-prison* words creates benchmarks, announces the opposition light / dark (a much better shaped rapport in variants where *Murga* appears) and develops the image of life and death. Sun - prison terms rather develop a plastic image and connects through synonymy relations to the antinomian pair light-dark in the imaging significances' background and in that of notional semantics as well. The repetitive word *luci*, (shine) mentioned twice, reveals the repetition *geminatio / duplication*, involving a stylistic function and highlighting a culturally established language code. Repetition (<fr. Repetition <lat. *repetitio, repetare*), by reiterating the word *luci*, stresses the idea that the sun is meant *to shine, to give*.

Imprecating "*Luci, soare-frățioare*" reveals an attempt to give new meaning to the shadow plan (humanized myth), and through the abridging process, the verse is semantically nuanced.

Lyrics such as "*Cu sabia lui Mihai / Cu toporul Domnului / Taie capul omului*" (Andrei Oisteanu, p. 342) announces that pre-Christian myth was superimposed over the Christian one, that the food offerings are substituted by human sacrifices in order to unsteel / banish the aquatic – weather spectres (*rain – taking-over* through degradation from the adult repertoire).

Rain, element of nature, invoked by personalizing and humanizing is put in opposition with the sun through poetic materialization that aims the victory of light (sun) in the fight with darkness (*Murga*): „*Stai ploaie călătoare, / Ca te-ajunge soarele / taie picioarele / Cu un mai, cu un pai / Cu sabia lui Mihai / Dă, moșule, gluga/ Să mă urc pe murga, / Murga-i scofârcită, / Ploaia-i risipită!*" (Emilia Comişel, p. 146) *Murga* (*amurg, murg > însereare*), often mistaken for the cow, is conformed to desemantisation.

In rural areas, rain is banished with an ax, with the help of an enchantress, certified practice by Tudor Pamfile / found Memories...of Ion Creanga “*Ieși copile...la soare, doar s-o îndrepta vremea...și vremea se îndrepta, mama alunga norii, înfingând toporul în pământ afară, dinaintea ușii.*” (the magical power of the word, taking the urge, homeopathic magic.)

Not just rain, but also the clouds are chased away through threats / preventions: "*Negurice-rice / Du-te-n pădurice / C-o să vie soarele / Să-ți taie picioarele*" (Emilia Comişel, p. 147) or by abridging, the clouds are allured to bring rain: "*Nor, nor drageilaș, / Adă ploaie, nouraș, / Ca să crească grânele, / Să se facă pâinile*" (Nelu Ionescu, p. 21).

The lunar celestial body, generator nocturnal light: *Lună plină, lună plină, /Dă-ne nouă lumină*" (Nelu Ionescu, p.19) highlights people's desire to have a rich harvest: "*Lună nouă, / Lună nouă, / Sănătoși ne-ai găsit, / Sănătoși să ne lași (anaforă) / Lună nouă / Lună nouă, / Tare ca argintul ne-ai găsit, / Tare ca argintul să ne lași / Lună nouă, / Lună nouă, / Cu bani ne-ai găsit, / Cu bani să ne lași*" (G. Dem. Teodorescu). The repetitive structure *Lună nouă, lună nouă* (*New*

moon, New Moon) reiterated three times marks the beginning of a new sequence, so that the listener enters and leaves the action. Conjurations to the moon reveal: healing properties: „*Lună nouă, lună veche / Scoate-mi apa din urechi* ” (Virgil Medan, p. 80), cleanliness - „*Lună nouă-n case, / Puricii să iasă, / De la noi a treia casă* ”. (Emilia Comișel). The repetitive structure appeals to the figure three, in order to obtain success. Conjurational-chant highlights the intention to annihilate the evil (*puricii*- fleas). The figure three, by the idea of totality, distinguishes the intention of destroying all hellkite that breaks the order. Using the conjunctive tense with imperative value - *să iasă* (to leave) - will implement the performer's intention to act with force of the magic word.

The celestial universe (sun, moon) is prefigured not only in infantile folklore, but also in the ballads, carols, fairy tales, etc. Plasticized sometimes, abstract concepts are closer to reality, so that riddles take the path of stylistic figures through anadiplosis (<fr. Anadiplose, cf gr. Anadiplosis <ono, "again" + diplosis, "double"): "): „*Am un poloboc = pământul / peste poloboc / un prosop = cerul / peste prosop / mazărele = stelele / peste mazărele / două tălgerule / ce s-aseamănă-ntre ele = soarele și luna*".¹³

In children's games, through conjurations to the sun, moon, rain, clouds, children oscillate between the antinomian valorisations light-dark.

The rainbow, sign of the covenant between God and Noah, „*pun curcubeul meu în nori.. și-mi voi aduce aminte de legământul meu...nu va mai fi apa potop spre pierzarea a toată făptura*”¹⁴ is for children a sign of joy „*Curcubeu-beu* (paronomasia) / *Roșu e al tău, / Verde e al meu, / Curcubeu-beu*” (Emilia Comișel, p. 147) / „*Curcu-curcubeu, / Vino pe cer, vino. / Verdele-i al meu*” (Ovidie Bârlea, p. 408) / „*Curcubeu, curcubeu, / Be d'i und'e-i be, / Be din gura me / Să sie cât o ulce*” (Virgil Medan, p. 102) / *Beu curcubeu, / Roșu e al meu / Galbenu' e al holdelor, / Albastru al zărilor*” (Nelu Ionescu, p. 23).

The term *rainbow* is seen as the French *arc-en-ciel* / in Italian - *arcobaleno* (*arco* <*arc baleno* <*fulger* (*lightning*), Romanian children in conjurations, also call it *cucurbeu* (lat. *cucurbita*). It is possible that this word has been formed from the term *cucura* (ngr. <*quiver of arrows*)¹⁵.

Of the seven colors of the rainbow is preferred the sympathetic mono chromatic which targets four dominant colors: *red, green, yellow, blue*.

Infantile poetic symbolic language word (red, "health" green "beim" yellow, "wealth" blue "serenity") follows the semantic analogy driven by rhythm and rhyme. Semantic coherence of the lyrics pinpoints gradual emergence of visual, radiant signs, "of the main components of *the solar spectrum* (*black, red, yellow, blue*)¹⁶. Black is replaced with green, the lexemes *red, green, yellow, blue*, appear noun forms, painting the rapport part-whole, the need to assume (*Red is mine*). In some versions, reiteration of addressing, strengthened by paronomasia (rainbow-bow) relate to the verb *to be* in present tense, showing a continuous, durable action, a trend of direct communication with humanized rainbow.

Children's divination act, as compared with the actual chant is minimized through a *game of language*, designed to produce: fun, pleasure, harmony. In order to understand *children's incantations*, we examine them according to the *chant itself*.

It is necessary, as Professor Nicolae Constantinescu highlights, the distinction between phenomena (*chant*) as a set of ritual practices with magic connotations, guidance, with severe

¹³ Gh. Vrabie, *Din estetica poeziei populare române*, Editura Albatros, București, 1990, p. 98;

¹⁴ *Biblia, Facerea*, Editura Institutul Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, cap. 9, 1997, p. 13-15;

¹⁵ ****Mic dicționar enciclopedic*, Editura Enciclopedică română, București, 1972, p. 249;

¹⁶ Ivan Evseev, *Cuvânt, simbol, mit*, Editura Facla, Timișoara, 1983, p.8;

restrictions regarding the place and time of practice, the performer's nature, who establishes a adjuvant relationship with a superior force of objects, plants and poem (*chant*) as „*a form of art*”¹⁷.

Through chants and spells, people try to remove diseases (*the wall-eye, large bumps / Sweet bumps, the plague, the evil eye, fever, etc.*), fade natural disasters away (*earthquake, rain*), annihilate certain insects (*lady beetles, wood lice / bugs, mosquitoes*), prevent and stop physical, coercive harm, or the contrary produce the malign to others.

The enchantress, an experienced woman (*medicine woman, midwife, witch*) or the sorcerer, the Old Man (*enchanter, shaman, wizard*) through a synchronization of functions and related languages in a ritual context, resort to *original formula* (adjunctive relationship between actors, placing the action in the sacral area) as well as *final formula* (end of the ritual, placing the action in the profane).

According to Professor Nicolae Constantinescu, the free verse, the absence of any tendency of stanza organization, the apparent disinterest shown for the rhyme, are in fact other brands of the category. Rich rhymes result of tautological rhymes like: "*din cap // de sub cap, din păr // de sub păr*"; "*S-o luat omul negru // ponegru, // De la casa neagră // poneagră*", sufficient rhymes owe this to the presence in the end verses of the same parts of speech required by the exhaust process, enumeration, accumulation. The reiteration "*în oglindă*", (*in the mirror*) is frequent, the affirmative expression being repeated in the negative ("*Cu mături de argint mătura-v-oi // Cu mături de argint nu ne mătura*")¹⁸ or the other way around.

There are also spells that can be said in time of need, by anyone (eg the evil eye incantations, magic-healing practices), not only by specialists, and therefore by children as well. Moreover, in conjurations, exorcisms of children there can be observed formulae which signal the semantic equivalence between different ways of expression and gesture-object components / the use of a language code accessible to initiates / threat / temptation / annihilation of the evil factor.

Children's chants, sometimes take the form of exorcisms („*Ieși furnică din picior / Că ți-a murit un fecior*") or conjuration („*Melc, melc, codobelc / Scoate coarne bourești*"), sometimes want banish certain, almost insignificant pathological estates: chills after bathing, deafness caused by water in the ears, numbness of the legs / the desire to rule over the animal world etc. The incantation: „*Scuturice-rițe, / Nu mă scutura pe mine, / Scătură pe cel din apă, / Cu un mai, cu un pai, / Cu cuțitu lu Mihai. / Cine nu se scutura / Vede gura*". (Emilia Comișel, p. 122) appeals to an euphonic figure of style (*Scuturice-rițe — paronomazia*), even tools (*mai, pai, cuțit*) used to practice magic with therapeutic purpose, for the active divine principle (Michael, the archangel), to the usual meanings (denotative level –water). The last two verses also draw after themselves tension and increased formalism. The language code, accessible to the initiates announces that evil water spirits exist as well, being mythically represented (*Scuturici / Cel din Apă / Cel din Baltă*, certified in carols, in cosmogony legends, in Ion Creanga's Childhood Memories, in the game Locking of the Devil / in V. Voiculescu, etc.). Associations such as, *migura / frigura, paraura*, from other versions strengthen Leo Frobenius' "*paideumatic infantile language is capable and viable to develop as long as it has the possibility to create*"¹⁹.

Conjurations having a curative purpose, such as removing water from the ears, are

¹⁷ Nicolae Constantinescu, "Fișe pentru un dicționar de folclor (IV) Anecdota, Descântecul, Funcția", în *Revista de etnografie și folclor.*, tom 30, 1985, p. 143;

¹⁸ art. cit., p. 145;

¹⁹ Leo Frobenius, *Paideuma*, Editura Meridiane, București, 1985, p. 104.

relatively few: *apa, din ureche, / Că-ți dă" neica para veche, / Cu un mai, / Cu un pai, / (anadiplosis) / Apa a ieșit"* (Emilia Comișel, p.126). The threat is intensified by the cumulative list of magical instruments: *mai, pai, căciulă, drugă*. The imperative-vocative addressing relies on the force of verbal command (*ieși / get out*), reinforced by the conjunctive present tense form having an imperative values as well (*să omor*). Currently all form connective imperative value (saddle murder). The semantic aspect of objects due to eliminate evil becomes complex by association with *Iuda cu demonul acvatic* (Judas, the aquatic demon).

Sometimes, temptation by reward seems far more effective: „*Ieși apă din urechi / dau parale vechi, (epithet) / Brânză, urdă și smântână, / Ieși, acuma, nu mai sta!*” (Ovidiu Bârlea, p. 412). The performer’s desire to heal the health condition is shaping through the repetition that can be used consciously or serves as a mnemonic trick. The epithet (<fr. *épithète*) results from joining the adjective *old* along with the noun *parale*, the performer's intention being to highlight the value of an object that the water can acquire if it gets out of the child-victim’s ears *apa dacă iese din urechile copilului-victimă*.



Jocuri de copii; foto: Mihaela Mihai

Conjurations in which St. John the Baptist appears announce the desemantisation, desacralization: „*Mă Ioane-scântioane, / Scoate-mi apa din urechi / Că ți-o da un castravechi*” (Emilia Comișel, p. 127). Direct statement, euphemism, doesn’t imply irony, but fun, generated by confusion. Rhyming difficulties are blurred by unexpected phonic and semantic analogies. The conjuration appeals to the verbal language which is reinforced by the nonverbal: „*Sare într-un picior și zice de trei ori...i-o ieșit apa pe două pietre calde, uscate, puse la ureche*” (Emilia Comișel, p. 127). By saying this three times (multiplication effect) the efficiency of the treatment is intended.

To remove numbness (caused by an ant bite to the foot), children resort to exorcism, making use of deception (*ți-a murit un fecior*). The dialogue reveals the force rapport, the euphemistic language: „*Ieși, furnică, din picior / Că ți-a murit un fecior. / Care, care? / Al mai mare / Care, care? / Al mai mic cu cămașa-n borangic.*” (Emilia Comișel, p. 129).

In and through game, conjurations, incantations reveal the children’s power of divination.

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