AN ENQUIRY INTO ROMANIAN ANGER-LIKE
AND HAPPINESS-LIKE EMOTIONS

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Except where otherwise acknowledged, this thesis is the original work of the author

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TMC

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to shed light on the inner lives of the Romanian people via the language they use to communicate about their emotions. It is the first detailed study that analyses Romanian emotions by examining the words referring to them, as well as the syntactic constructions in which they occur. It also highlights Romanian belief systems and other cultural aspects that influence the Romanian emotional experience. In particular, the thesis focuses on ‘Romanian anger-like emotion words mânie and supărare and the happiness-like words fericire and veselie.

By using the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) and by drawing on instances of natural language, mainly extracted from the Romanian Corpus Linguistic, as well as proverbs, sayings, poems and songs, this study shows that Romanians feel very intensely and have highly responsive behaviors and reactions. In addition, it was found that Romanians feel and think socially rather than individually; for example, Romanians’ ability to feel something good is intensified when they share this good feeling with someone else.

Another strength of this thesis is that it demonstrates that basic and universal labels such as anger or happiness cannot be applied to emotion terms in the Romanian language because the emotional reality expressed in Romanian does not match the Anglo concepts described by these labels.
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