

Abridged Phraseological Dictionary, Portuguese- Romanian

Review

**Lavinia SEICIUC, *Mic dicționar frazeologic portughez-român*, Editura
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In the last decades, linguists at the “Ștefan cel Mare” University of Suceava have manifested an increased interest in the compared research of phraseology; the result of such interest consists in numerous books, dictionaries and studies involving the domain of phraseology in one or several languages.

Lavinia Seiciuc brings a new direction to our joint research by adding Portuguese to our inventory of languages. After two decades of studies in Romance Linguistics, Seiciuc is now filling a void in lexicographic bibliography with her new *Abridged Phraseological Dictionary, Portuguese-Romanian*.

Portuguese has never been the main choice of language studies in Romania. Thirty years ago there were almost no means for someone to take on Portuguese, as almost no study materials were available on the market. Things have changed ever since, as more and more practical courses, grammars and dictionaries are published every year, but an idiom dictionary that translates idiomatic expression from Portuguese to Romanian was not available until now.

Seiciuc has created an extremely useful tool for people who are interested in learning Portuguese, such as students, translators or mere *aficionados*. Her “abridged” dictionary counts no less than 8.000 fixed constructions, proverbs, idioms, locutions or usual collocations, excerpted from more than 60 fields of activity and human life. Each one is translated by the most appropriate

expression in Romanian, where available; constructions that have no equivalent phrase in Romanian are defined and explained in relation to the specific realities of the region they are used in.

The range of the phrasemes extends from extremely high-specialized domains, such as medicine or informatics, to the most common collocations people use every day; some of the latter are somehow predictable, but what the norm admits, the use might be seen as odd, as norm helps us speak correctly, while use makes us speak properly. It might seem trivial perhaps, but for someone visiting Portugal or Brazil, knowing that *sliced bread* is *pão de fatias* might be important at some point, or if someone is trying a new pastry recipe in the kitchen, translating correctly *açúcar amarelo* to *light brown sugar* can make all the difference to the success of the meal.

Some idiomatic phrases are not so transparent, so knowing their exact meaning might prove useful in concrete situations. A tourist in Portugal might be surprised to find out that someone living in *Cascos de Rolha* cannot be found easily, just by typing this toponym in the GPS system, for that person lives “in the middle of nowhere”.

Proverbs are a defining part of the cultural reflection in language, so the dictionary also includes some very interesting samples of Portuguese paremiology. For instance, the proverb *Deus tira os dentes, mas arreganha a goela* (lit. “God pulls out the teeth, but opens the throat”) has a silver lining to it, since its meaning is that “When God closes a door, He opens a window”.

Lavinia Seiciuc extends her research beyond Europe. Portuguese is the maternal language of more than 250 million people living on all continents, so this dictionary includes expressions from Portugal, Brazil, the Azores and Madeira Islands, from Angola and Mozambique, and also from the tiny islands of São Tomé and Príncipe. Again, someone might argue that such exotic places are well out of the reach of Romanian tourists or emigrants; but a well-documented inventory of phrases that are typical to São Tomé and Príncipe will be very helpful for someone who would attempt a translation of, let’s say, Miguel Sousa Tavares’s *Equador*, a phenomenon novel and TV short series that have taken Europe by storm since the publication of the book in 2003.

Over all, Lavinia Seiciuc’s *Dictionary* is a useful tool for a wide range of users: linguists, students, translators and mere tourists, due to its rich and well documented material. It will certainly be welcomed its counterpart, a dictionary that translates Romanian idiomatic constructions to Portuguese.