

VEGAN AND ITS “FAMILY” – LEXICO-SEMANTIC AND MORPHOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

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Abstract

The vocabulary of the contemporary Romanian language is characterized by dynamism and creativity, its richness and variety being the result of our people’s material and spiritual development. Because of its spectacular dynamics, the term “vegan” occupies a special place in the actual vocabulary of the Romanian language, at least until another lexical “concept” replaces it.

Key-words: *concept, vegan, “family”, lexico-semantic aspects, morphological aspects*

Résumé

Le vocabulaire de la langue roumaine contemporaine est caractérisé par le dynamisme et la créativité, sa richesse et sa variété étant le résultat du développement matériel et spirituel de notre peuple. En raison de sa dynamique spectaculaire, le terme « végétalien » occupe une place particulière dans le vocabulaire actuel de la langue roumaine, du moins jusqu'à ce qu'un autre « concept » lexical le remplace.

Mots-clés: *concept, végétalien, « famille », aspects lexico-sémantiques, aspects morphologiques*

Introduction

Each word in a language contains a story, a beginning of life and a harder or easier path which can diverge or wind, branch out while highlighting multiple aspects of its course. One of these words which has known a rapid evolution and which is of interest, on the one hand, for the field of food and, on the other hand, for the field of ethics and philosophy is the term “vegan”. It is part of the category of “necessary loans”¹, due to its international character, relatively low phonetic body and the absence of a correspondent in our language.

Its lexico-semantic course is closely related to the morphological one, each of the three values recording many attestations and occurrences.

¹ Cf. Sextil Pușcariu, *Limba română. I. Privire generală*, București, Editura Minerva, 1976: 371.

1. By the concrete noun value of this term we mean that person who consumes only certain food, i.e. keeps a specific diet, being a follower of a lifestyle, but also of a clearly defined philosophy called *veganism*².

The particularity of these people, who receive the title of *vegans*, is that they do not eat products of animal origin, or products derived from animals, as fish, honey or gelatin are excluded from their menu. They thus oppose vegetarians³ (lacto vegetarians, ovo vegetarians and ovo-lacto vegetarians), semi-vegetarians⁴, apivegetarians⁵, etc. through a strict diet based on seeds, cereals, beans, nuts, fruit and vegetables.

This denotative loan corresponds to its introduction with the “object”, according to Horatio’s formula “Res verba sequuntur” (“Words come after/follow things.”)⁶. It is recorded in the *Oxford-Lingua English-Romanian Dictionary* with a twofold value, of noun and adjective “referring to a vegan/the diet of a vegan”, along with the term *veganism* “a vegan’s life philosophy”. Only the word “vegan” appears in *Dicționarul Oxford explicativ ilustrat*, with the same meanings mentioned above. Its attestation in Romanian probably corresponds to the period after 2000 or maybe even more recently, taking into account the fact that it does not appear in the current dictionaries, MDA, DLR, MDN⁷. Instead, it is recorded in DCR³, with attestations from 2008⁸ and in DEX, 2016, s.v. *vegan* “a person who does not consume or use products of animal origin.” from Engl. *vegan*.

The presence of this word of English origin in our language is reflected in the use of the two genders - masculine sg. and pl. *vegan-vegani* and feminine sg. and pl. *vegană-vegane*, both used in certain determined forms, either definite or indefinite. The phonetic structure, relatively simple, meant that its orthographic and morphological adaptation did not encounter difficulties:

² *Veganism* is a “lifestyle which includes a type of ethics, beliefs and political ideas for environmental protection.” Cf. ro.warbletonconcil.org/diferencia-vegano-vegetariano-13440; compared to *vegetarianism* which is considered only a diet in general. <https://www.literaturadeazi.ro/rubrici/vegstories/istoria-veganismului-9713>.

³ The first occurrence of the term “vegetarian” was recorded in April, 1843, this word being used with the meanings assigned today to the term “vegan”. Cf. <https://www.literaturadeazi.ro/rubrici/vegstories/istoria-veganismului-9713>.

⁴ By semi-vegetarians we mean those people who occasionally eat poultry coming from raising backyard chicken.

⁵ There are vegetarians who include honey in their menu.

⁶ Apud Florica Dimitrescu, *Dinamica lexicului românesc - ieri și azi* - , București, Editura Logos, 1994: 222. The “object” in this case is the diet itself or the lifestyle it implies.

⁷ *Micul dicționar academic* (MDA), volumul IV, literele Pr-Z, București, Editura Univers Enciclopedic, 2003; *Dicționarul limbii române* (DLR), Tomul XVIII, V – VIZURINĂ, Editura Academiei Române, 2010; Florin Marcu, *Marele dicționar de neologisme* (MDN), ediția a VII-a revăzută, augmentată și actualizată, București, Editura Saeculum I.O., 2004.

⁸ See Florica Dimitrescu, Alexandru Ciolan, Coman Lupu, *Dicționar de cuvinte recente* (DCR³), ediția a III-a, București, Editura Logos, 2013: 561.

“Actrița Natalie Portman este **vegană**, la fel și Lea Michele, Ellen DeGeneres, Alicia Silverstone, Alanis Morissette. De asemenea, și actorul Tobey Maguire este **vegan**, ca și multi alții.”/ ‘Actress Natalie Portman is *vegan*, and so are Lea Michele, Ellen DeGeneres, Alicia Silverstone, Alanis Morissette. Actor Tobey Maguire is also *vegan*, and so are many others.’ <https://ziare.com/viata-sanatoasa/nutritie/ce-e-bine-sa-stii-despre-veganism-1082072>.

“De asemenea, unii **vegani** evită orice produs cu origini animale, precum hainele din piele, blana, lâna sau mătasea ori unele săpunuri și lumânări făcute cu grăsimi de la animale. (...) Multe persoane devin **vegane** pentru a susține drepturile animalelor sau pentru a proteja mediul... Alte persoane aleg să devină **vegane** pentru beneficiile asupra sănătății. (...) În plus, organismul **unui vegan** ar putea să nu primească suficientă vitamina B12, care se găsește în pește, carne, lactate și este aproape inexistentă în legume.”/ ‘Along the same line, some *vegans* avoid products of animal origin, such as leather, fur, woollen or silk clothes or some soaps and candles made with animal fats. (...) Many people become *vegan* to support animal rights or protect the environment... Other people choose to become *vegan* for health benefits. (...) In addition, a *vegan*’s body may not receive enough vitamin B12, which is found in fish, meat, dairy and is almost non-existent in vegetables.’ <https://ziare.com/viata-sanatoasa/nutritie/ce-e-bine-sa-stii-despre-veganism-1082072>.

“Pe 1 noiembrie este Ziua Internațională a **Veganilor**, adică a persoanelor care nu consumă carne, dar nici lactate sau alte produse derivate din carne.”/ ‘1 November is the International Day of *Vegans*, that is people who do not eat meat, dairy or other products derived from meat.’, <https://www.ecomagazin.ro/1-noiembrie-ziua-internationala-a-veganilor>.

A context in which the term has a double value, of noun and adjective, appears in the slogan: “Alege **vegan**, salvează vieți.”/ ‘Choose *vegan*, save lives’, veganinromania.ro.

2. The adjectival value prevails, recording a surprising dynamic. The magnitude of this phenomenon in the collective mindset has direct consequences in the terminology specific to certain areas involved - food, cosmetics, clothing, social media, etc.: *catering vegan* (‘vegan catering’), *cină vegană* (‘vegan dinner’), *cizme vegane* (‘vegan boots’), *cofetării vegane* (‘vegan confectionery’), *cosmetice vegane* (‘vegan cosmetics’), *fast food vegan* (‘vegan fast food’), *haine vegane* (‘vegan clothes’), *locații vegane* (‘vegan locations’), *magazine produse vegane* (‘vegan product stores’), *prânz vegan* (‘vegan lunch’), *restaurante vegan-friendly* (‘vegan-friendly restaurants’), *restaurante vegane* (‘vegan restaurants’), *rețele de socializare vegane* (‘vegan social networks’), *statistici vegane* (‘vegan statistics’), etc. Thus, many terms in the field of food

and not only are accompanied by this “fashionable” word. Here are just a few contexts from this productive area provided by Internet resources:

vegan diet “diet based on low-fat, low-cholesterol, high-fiber products”:

“E dovedit și cunoscut în lumea medicală informată că **o alimentație vegană bine planificată** ne poate furniza toți nutrienții necesari.”/ ‘It is proven and known in the informed medical world that a well-planned *vegan diet* can provide us with all the necessary nutrients.’ <https://veganinromania.ro/resurse-si-informatii/de-ce-vegan>.

vegan cuisine

“Diferitele tipuri de oțet (alb, din cidru de mere, cu diverse arome sau balsamic) sunt ultimul produs care nu trebuie să lipsească dintr-o **bucătărie vegană**”./ ‘The different types of vinegar (white, made of apple cider, with various flavours or balsamic) are the last product that should not be missing from a *vegan cuisine*.’ <https://www.sanovita.ro/blog/14-alimente-esentiale-in-orice-bucatarie-vegana-infografic>.

“De ce ai avea nevoie de acest curs de nutriție și **bucătărie vegană**?”/ ‘Why you would need this course in nutrition and *vegan cuisine*?’ <https://www.restvegan.ro/curs-de-nutritie-si-bucatarie>.

vegan “meat” – a unique association considering the meanings of the determined:

“Tot mai mulți români au început să consume «carne» vegană.”/ ‘More and more Romanians began to eat *vegan “meat”*’.

<https://www.instagram.com/veganinromania>.

“Da, există alternative vegane (sau “carne falsă”) pentru toate tipurile de carne existente – pui, porc, vită, chiar și pește și fructe de mare.”/ ‘Yes, there are vegan alternatives (or “fake meat”) for all existing types of meat - chicken, pork, beef, even fish and seafood.’ <https://gourmandelle.com/ro/alternative-vegane-de-post-la-carnea-tocata-retete>.

vegan diet (sometimes called a plant-based diet):

“În plus, unele studii au relevat faptul că **dietele vegane** pot reduce riscul de diabet sau de unele tipuri de cancer.”/ ‘In addition, some studies have shown that *vegan diets* can reduce the risk of diabetes or some cancers.’ <https://ziare.com/viata-sanatoasa/nutritie/ce-e-bine-sa-stii-despre-veganism-1082072>.

vegan food

“Preparăm și livrăm **mâncare vegană**”/ ‘We cook and deliver *vegan food*’, <https://saragreen.ro>.

“Ce înseamnă **mâncarea „vegană**”/ ‘What “*vegan*” *food* means’, <https://www.timpul.md/articol/ce-inseamna-mancarea-vegana-23527.html>.

“O zonă în care *mâncarea vegană* se vinde foarte bine este în restaurantele de tip fast-food.”/ ‘One area where *vegan food* sells very well is in fast food restaurants.’, <https://doc.ro/dieta-si-sport/1-noiembrie-ziua-mondiala-a-veganilor>.

vegan person

“Care sunt diferențele dintre o *persoană vegană* și (o persoană n.n.) vegetariană?”/ ‘What are the differences between a *vegan person* and a vegetarian (person – our note)?’, <https://zugo.md/lifestyle/care-sunt-diferentele-dintre-o-persoana-vegana-si-vegetariana-ambele-nu-mananca-carne-insa/121759/lifestyle>.

vegan products

“...produsele *vegane* din magazinele românești s-au triplat în anul 2016”/ ‘... *vegan products* in Romanian stores tripled in 2016’, <https://veganinromania.ro/resurse-si-informatii/de-ce-vegan>.

“Piața *produselor vegane* a crescut cu 20% în 2020 față de 2019.”/ ‘The market of *vegan products* grew by 20% in 2020 compared to 2019.’

<https://www.instagram.com/veganinromania>.

vegan restaurant

“*Restaurant vegan* și vegetarian în București în zona Floreasca vă pune la dispoziție o gamă variată de mâncare vegetariană și vegană.”/ ‘*Vegan and vegetarian restaurant* in Bucharest in the Floreasca area offers a wide range of vegetarian and *vegan food*.’

<https://samsara.ro/restaurant-vegan-bucuresti>.

“*Restaurante vegane* și raw vegane.”/ ‘*Vegan and raw vegan restaurants*’; “*Restaurante cu opțiuni vegane*”/ ‘*Restaurants with vegan options*’. <https://veganinromania.ro/stil-de-viata-vegan-in-romania/vegan-oriunde-in-romania/vegan-in-bucuresti>.

vegan recipes

Most *vegan recipe* titles include this determiner in their composition, having a variable form by agreement in gender and number with the accompanied noun: *ardei umpluți vegani* (‘*vegan stuffed peppers*’), *cartofi gratinați vegani* (‘*vegan gratin potatoes*’), *chifteluțe vegane cu ciuperci* (‘*vegan meatballs with mushrooms*’), *cozonac vegan* (‘*vegan traditional Romanian cake*’), *icre vegane* (‘*vegan fish eggs*’), *lasagna vegană* (‘*vegan lasagna*’), *maioneză vegană* (‘*vegan mayonnaise*’), *negresă vegană* (‘*vegan black cake*’), *salată de boeuf vegană* (‘*vegan salad de boeuf*’), *vegan sarmale* (‘*vegan meat stuffed cabbage*’), *supă vegană* (‘*vegan soup*’), *tartă vegană cu mere* (‘*vegan apple tart*’), *tiramisu vegan* (‘*vegan tiramisu*’), *tort de ciocolată vegan* (‘*vegan chocolate cake*’)⁹.

⁹ All titles have been taken from the site <https://laviniafrasinescu.com/retete-vegane>.

All these names do nothing but demonstrate the vitality with which this term “harmonizes” with to the gastronomic field and those interested in it, becoming a symbol of the reality expressed¹⁰.

vegan lifestyle

“Numeroase personalități din lumea întreagă, între care, spre exemplu, actorul American Woody Harrelson, au devenit adepți ale *stilului de viață vegan*.”/ ‘Many personalities around the world, including, for example, the American actor Woody Harrelson, have become followers of the *vegan lifestyle*.’ <https://www.agerpres.ro/documentare/2019/11/01/ziua-mondiala-a-veganismului--394920>.

“Cuvântul *vegan* are încă multe stereotipuri și mituri care îl înconjoară, dar, pe măsură ce *stilul de viață vegan* devine tot mai cunoscut, începe să fie asociat pozitiv cu beneficii pentru sănătate și cu grija față de mediu.”/ ‘The word *vegan* still has many stereotypes and myths around it, but as the *vegan lifestyle* is becoming more popular, it begins to be positively associated with health benefits and care for the environment.’ <https://doc.ro/dieta-si-sport/1-noiembrie-ziua-mondiala-a-veganilor>.

3. The passage from the adjectival value to the adverbial one is very easy:

“Studii efectuate în lumea întreagă pe persoane care trăiesc *vegan*, dar și studii efectuate de noi, arată că veganii sunt indubitabil în medie mai sănătoși ...”/ ‘Studies conducted around the world on people living *vegan*, but also studies conducted by us, show that vegans are undoubtedly healthier on average ...’ <https://www.provegan.info › informatii-de-baza › vegan>.

4. **Veganism**, an abstract noun form, is considered not only a food style, but also a lifestyle, involving care for the planet and animals¹¹. Hence several types of veganism: “**veganismul etic** care încearcă să elimine toate formele de abuz ale animalelor (mâncare, îmbrăcăminte, încălțăminte, divertisment, experimentare), **veganismul dietetic** (care se referă doar la dietă și exclude consumul animalelor și

¹⁰ “... Language is a specific way for man to make contact with the world and to know reality, *his* reality, which the human being “translates”, in the sense that it is classified and explained, designated and expressed through symbols: symbols are, therefore, forms whose content is knowledge.” Eugeniu Coșeriu, *Omul și limbajul său*, Iași, Editura Universității “Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, 2009: 171.

¹¹ The term “vegan” and the concept of “veganism” were coined in 1944, when the British Donald Watson (co-founder of ‘The Vegan Society’ of Great Britain) described this movement of animal justice as follows: “Veganism is a philosophy and way of living which seeks to exclude - as far as is possible and practicable - all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose; and by extension, promotes the development and use of animal-free alternatives for the benefit of animals, humans and the environment. In dietary terms it denotes the practice of dispensing with all products derived wholly or partly from animals”. <https://veganinromania.ro/resurse-si-informatii/de-ce-vegan/>. The representatives of this lifestyle do not use cosmetics or personal care products tested on animals, or products made from animal skins. “But this lifestyle, with some minor differences, can be traced back to 1806, with Dr. William Lambe, *considered the father of vegan nutrition* in London, who, at the age of 40, chooses to change his lifestyle and diet.” <https://www.literaturadeazi.ro/rubrici/vegstories/istoria-veganismului-9713>.

produsele derivate: lactate, ovule (ouă) și miere (scurtat de albine), **veganismul ecologic** care se bazează pe faptul că industria animală distruge mediul înconjurător și nu este sustenabilă.”/ ‘*ethical veganism* which seeks to eliminate all forms of animal abuse (food, clothing, footwear, entertainment, experimentation), *dietary veganism* (which refers only to diet and excludes the consumption of animals and derived products: dairy products, eggs and honey (spit by bees), *ecological veganism* based on the fact that the animal industry destroys the environment and is not sustainable.’, <https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Veganism>.

“Marcarea înființării Societății Vegane a început în anul 1994 și de atunci, în fiecare an, data de 1 noiembrie este marcată ca Ziua mondială a **veganismului...**”/ ‘Marking the establishment of the Vegan Society began in 1994, and since then, every year, 1 November has been marked as *World Vegan Day*.’, <https://www.agerpres.ro/documentare/2019/11/01/ziua-mondiala-a-veganismului--394920>.

“Într-adevăr există o diferență între **veganism** și drepturile animalelor, drepturile animalelor presupune și un mod de viață vegan. Însă alimentația joacă cel mai important rol, și, din cauza motivelor variate pentru care oamenii adoptă o alimentație vegană, se generează ușor confuzii.”/ ‘Indeed, there is a difference between *veganism* and animal rights, animal rights also mean a vegan way of life. But nutrition plays the most important role, and because of the various reasons for which people adopt a vegan diet, confusion is easily generated.’ <https://veganinromania.ro/resurse-si-informatii/de-ce-vegan>.

5. The current language also records other neological terms, of English origin, related to the analyzed one, **raw vegan** which has a special meaning, attested in 2011 in DCR³ and **vegansexual**, attested in the same dictionary¹²: “Raw vegans eat vegetables, fruit, seeds, cereals and, to a lesser extent, cold processed oils - rapeseed, flax, sesame, olives”. We mention that these people who practise this type of diet prepare it more in the raw state by squeezing, crushing, softening, sprouting and dehydrating, the maximum temperature accepted for preparation being 40-48 degrees Celsius¹³. The spread of this term is directly proportional to the understanding of this lifestyle, extremely strict and less tolerant even with the followers of this style.

The word *vegan* in the *raw vegan* structure appears either invariably or agrees in gender and number with the determined noun:

“Iată alternativa **raw vegană** sănătoasă!”/ ‘Here is the healthy *raw vegan* alternative!’ <https://www.retetele-manuelei.ro/secrete-retete-raw-vegan-de-post>.

¹² Cf. DCR³: 561: “people who do not want to have intercourse with non-vegan partners”.

¹³ <https://blog.naturafresh.ro/diferenta-dintre-vegetarian-vegan-si-raw-vegan>.

rețete raw vegane, pizza raw vegană, sos de roșii raw vegan, tartă raw vegan de ciocolată cu cireșe, tort raw vegan cu cocos și multe fructe, desert raw vegan cu dovleac/ ‘raw vegan recipes, raw vegan pizza, raw vegan tomato sauce, raw vegan chocolate tart with cherries, raw vegan cake with coconut and lots of fruit, raw vegan dessert with pumpkin’, etc., <https://blog.naturafresh.ro/diferenta-dintre-vegetarian-vegan-si-raw-vegan>.

Other lexical formations that include the term under discussion, in their original form or with a partially modified form are inventoried in the following:

“Știri și informații despre întâlnire *vegan* cu **non-vegan**.”/ ‘News and information about the meeting between *vegan* and non-*vegan*’, <https://www.acasa.ro › intalnire-vegan-cu-non-vegan>

“În zilele de 21-23 iunie 2019 a avut loc la București **VegFest**, primul festival *vegan* din România, organizat de Asociația *Veganilor* din România, cu sprijinul organizației internaționale ProVeg.”/ ‘On June 21-23, 2019, **VegFest**, the first *vegan* festival in Romania, was organized in Bucharest by the Romanian *Vegans*’ Association, with the support of the international organization ProVeg.’, <https://www.agerpres.ro/documentare/2019/11/01/ziua-mondiala-a-veganismului--394920>.

“Website-ul www.ProVegan.info își propune să arate numeroasele avantaje ale alimentației *vegane* pentru oameni, animale, mediu și climă.”/ ‘The website www.ProVegan.info aims to show the many benefits of *vegan* food for people, animals, environment and climate.’

<https://www.provegan.info › informatii-de-baza › vegan>.

“Colecție de produse **vegan-friendly**”/ ‘*Vegan-friendly* product collection’, https://www.elefant.ro/balsam-regenerant-corp-cu-trandafiri-vegan-friendly-400-ml_8f5fb819-940e-4ef4-b00f-1866d13dd659.

Conclusions

The spread of this modern term which reflects a certain mentality is more of a gastronomic nature in our country. Even so, it involves an act of cultural communication since it comprises a certain way of expressing human thought and action. Its morphological values and lexico-semantic implications help to encode this sign, which has become a symbol of a certain lifestyle.

The scientific character and the high productivity of this concept will make both it and its “family” last, which will lead to their inclusion in the best-known dictionaries. The extraordinary vitality of the word *vegan* and its practical applicability will be arguments for its resilience in our language for a long time, at least until another concept from the same semantic sphere takes its place.

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ABBREVIATIONS

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- DEX= Academia Română, *Dicționarul explicativ al limbii române*, București, Editura Univers Enciclopedic, 2016.
- DLR =Academia Română, *Dicționarul limbii române*, București, Editura Academiei Române, 2010.
- MDA= Academia Română, *Micul dicționar academic*, vol. I-IV, București, Editura Univers Enciclopedic, 2001-2003.
- MDN= Florin Marcu, *Marele dicționar de neologisme*, ediția a VII-a revăzută, augmentată și actualizată, București, Editura Saeculum I.O., 2004.

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