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**PHD THESIS**

ROMANIAN ACADEMIC GRAMMARS  
BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNITY

-SUMMARY-

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# ACADEMIC GRAMMARS OF THE ROMANIAN LANGUAGE BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNITY

(summary)

**KEYWORDS:** academic grammars of the Romanian language (*GA* 1954, 1963, 1966, *GALR* 2005, 2008), linguistics/traditional grammar, linguistics/structural grammar, linguistics/functional grammar, speaking parts/lexical-grammatical classes, semantic-functional classes, grammatical categories, morphematic/lexical categorial means, syntactic/syntagmatic units in the academic grammars of the Romanian language, syntactic/syntagmatic structures, reorganized syntactic structures, syntactic/syntagmatic relations, syntactic/syntagmatic functions/positions.

This comparative analysis of the two academic grammars of the Romanian language (*GA*, *GALR*) is based on the need to clarify the way in which the two studies, which are at the forefront of the current Romanian grammar, are related to the Romanian grammar reality, in its dynamics, and to the extended, international one, in which they are included, from a methodological, conceptual, terminological, structural point of view.

The stability of the linguistic domain, of the interpretation of the grammatical structure of the Romanian language, due to the generalized implementation of the classical normative system, through the *appearance* of *GA*, a grammar with a prescriptive, historical, atomistic character, etc., is constantly influenced by the evolution of international linguistic research, the change of general theoretical perspectives and, above all, the propagation of the elements of modernity in Romanian linguistics. The publication of the current academic grammar of the Romanian language (*GALR*), as an autonomous, descriptive, synchronic theoretical "construct", represents a moment of change of the traditional coordinates in the interpretation of the language facts, of the methodological reorientation towards a modern, integrative approach to the language structure, in an extended, formal and/or functional-pragmatic context, etc. Admittedly contradictory, in articles, studies, etc. favorable/unfavorable, *GALR* aims to be the national theoretical reference, of academic level, which synchronizes the current grammatical description of the Romanian language with grammars of other languages, resulting from the transition from tradition to modernity in general and/or particular linguistic research (specific to a delimited language area).

The comparative study of the two academic grammars has as a general objective the detection of conceptual bridges, of form and/or content congruences between the two academic studies, of a complementary report of the descriptions of the grammatical structure of the

Romanian language, as well as the dismantling of the argument of antagonism of the two scientific perspectives displayed in the analyzed works. Also, the comparative analytical approach has as specific objectives the identification of the elements of novelty, of the innovations that have occurred in the description of the grammatical structure of the Romanian language, as well as of the linguistic (theoretical) causes that have generated the changes in the methodological, conceptual, terminological, structural or functional perspectives. The linguistic causes of the changes of perspective are correlated with the visible effects at the level of the interpretation of the grammatical structure of the current Romanian language, in order to facilitate the understanding of the new contents, methods, elements of grammatical terminology, etc. and their integration in the usual theoretical corpus, in the general grammar discourse, in the Romanian language curriculum/textbooks in schools.

The objective research of the academic grammars of the Romanian language implies, necessarily, the probing of the research stage in the specific field of the proposed theme and aims. The current stage of research in the field of linguistics, respectively, grammar of the Romanian language, granted with the scientific, cultural, historical, social meta-reality etc. is characterized by a blurring of the rigid boundaries between the departments of science and other related fields of research, by an emphasis of the importance, functionality, rank of each component in an inter-, multi-, transdisciplinary, multicultural, multifaceted extended system structure.

The gradual development of the linguistic phenomenon, itself, includes, besides its previous present and latest stage, and the previous stages, whether or not completed, whose concrete manifestations are, in the case of the Romanian language grammar, the studies of grammar, linguistics, or the works that interpret and validate grammatical theories themselves. The identification of additional sources (complementary, in our opinion), relevant in achieving the objectives pursued, and the analysis of their contents, highlights the existence of a substantial corpus of linguistic texts, which includes theories that have changed the course of the science of language and have determined structural or functionalist-pragmatic reconsiderations of linguistic phenomenon. The knowledge and correlation of these theoretical foundations with the effects of their implementation in the description of the language justify the changes that have occurred in the grammar of the present Romanian language.

A distinct strand of bibliographic sources consists of all studies, grammatical articles, grammars of the Romanian language or grammars of other languages (French, Italian, Spanish,



Portuguese, English). In the category of secondary sources of the present research are included (analyzed, quoted) traditional grammars of the Romanian language of the 19th, 20th centuries and current grammars, with exhaustive character, as well as specialized studies of morphology, syntax, morphosyntax, pragmatics etc. which represent aspects of the Romanian language, approached synchronously and meticulously. To reach the objectives of this study, we consider it useful to corroborate the analysis of the two primary sources of research (*GA*, *GALR*) with the analysis of these additional sources, traditional grammars, which appeared before or after the *GA* moment, and modern works that promote elements of formal, structural, analytical or generative grammar, functional grammar, etc. that is, studies that anticipated *GALR* or completed, exemplified and essentialized the academic description. The identification of common aspects, of continuity in the classical and/or modern description of language facts, supports the understanding of the process of transition from one paradigm to another in the current grammar and accesses the new perspectives of interpretation, in comparison to the classical, normative conception.

By comparing the two academic grammars of the Romanian language, representative of two distinct types of research in general and native linguistics (classical, comparative-historical method vs. modern, formal/structural, functionalist method), the adequate methodological options in the current research are restricted, the fair way to achieve the objectives pursued being a comparative qualitative research of the content of the two theoretical constructs. The comparative research has a theoretical (descriptive) character, by the specificity of the sources manipulated in the analysis, whose linguistic (theoretical) or grammatical content is covered, selected and objectively interpreted. At the same time, there is obviously a practical, argumentative character of the analysis, recovered in the effective comparative process, by elaborating a general analysis grid and comparative grids (tables), by identifying and arguing connections between the multiple relevant, distinct, theoretical sources, by designing and/or selecting conclusive, relevant examples for the highlighted theoretical aspects.

In the first stage of the comparative approach (Chapter 2, THE ACADEMIC GRAMMARS OF ROMANIAN LANGUAGE), the two central elements of the analysis (*GA*, *GALR*) are integrated in the general, historical, scientific, cultural, social, etc. context in which they were conceived, published, implemented, by presenting the stage of research in the field, corresponding to the grammatical descriptions that preceded their appearance, anticipating each academic paper. Analyzing the two academic we can identify important aspects relating to their corresponding

typology, their basic methodology and linguistic influences on *GALR*, their specific terminology and their structural concept. To analyze each item, the following tools are necessary: a pattern of the grammatical description, a theoretical framework of comparable levels or of those without an equivalent element, which is located on the same level of the comparative analysis (lexical-grammatical classes, functional units, minimal units, minimal or complex syntagmatic/ syntactic structures, reorganized syntactic structures, syntagmatic/syntactic relational typologies at the level of syntagmatic structures, syntactic functions and/or positions etc.).

The drawing up of a general analysis grid, based on the content elements and contained in the two descriptions of the grammatical structure of the Romanian language, is the next methodological stage in the actual research. The analysis grid, designed in accordance with the objectives of the present research, aims, first of all, to identify, define, characterize and classify key concepts of grammar present in both the classical (the description) and modern approaches. The second level of the analysis grid corresponds to the integration of the key concepts in the conceptual, terminological networks, associated with processes, methods of grammatical analysis, linguistic theories specific to the multiple research directions in the field of language. The analytical process (according to the analysis grid) continues to highlighting the innovative or reconsidered elements, the aspects of complementarity or congruence present in the current description of the grammatical structure of the Romanian language (*GALR*), as compared to the traditional description (*GA*).

The presentation of the two academic grammars of the Romanian language based on their specific, distinctive features (aspects related to the conception of the two studies, methodological elements and theoretical (linguistic) influences, conceptual and terminological corpus, modalities of structuring the contents etc.), is followed by the comparative, sequential analysis of the essential aspects of the content approached in differently in the two grammatical descriptions.

Thus, morphological elements of content, concepts, classifications, etc. are compared: parts of speech/lexical-grammatical classes, grammatical categories, means of manifesting grammatical categories, minimal units of language. Also, content elements are found at the border between morphology and syntax, in classical or modern, morphosyntactic approach: grammatical categories, minimal/complex analyzable syntagmatic structures of the language, reorganized syntactic structures, updated syntagmatic structures at the level of syntagmatic structures, syntactic functions/positions etc. Under the magnifying glass of the comparative analysis there are also

syntactic/semantic-syntactic elements such as: syntactic units in traditional grammar, semantic-syntactic units in modern grammar, syntactic structures, relations and functions updated at the level of syntactic structures. And, last but not least, semantic-functional contents/interpretations of language facts are at the forefront of the analysis itself: semantic-functional classes, functional-pragmatic and/or semantic-discursive implications of grammatical categories, manifestations of relations syntactic/syntagmatic in communication etc.

The levels of the comparative analysis and the contents corresponding to each analyzed level are organized in three distinct sections during the present research (1. parts of speech/ lexical-grammatical and semantic-functional classes; 2. grammatical categories; 3. syntactic/ syntagmatic structures). Specifically, the issues addressed in separate chapters in this study bring to the front a series of perspective changes, identified in the grammar of the current Romanian language, following the comparative research of the two academic grammars (*GA*, *GALR*).

In the second section of the present study (PARTS OF SPEECH/LEXICAL-GRAMMATICAL OR SEMANTIC-FUNCTIONAL CLASSES IN THE ACADEMIC GRAMMARS OF THE ROMANIAN LANGUAGE), the comparative analysis continues with the detection of the continuity elements or of the innovations that occurred while classifying them in a morphological typology of the lexical-grammatical units of the Romanian language or while their transition from the traditional to the modern description of these grammatical aspects: parts of speech vs. lexical-grammatical and semantic-functional classes. The following aspects reconsidered in the *GALR* are identified, in comparison with the established normative interpretation present in the *GA*:

- delimiting and defining the classes of lexical and grammatical units on the basis of exhaustive criteria: morphological, syntactic, semantic, functional-pragmatic, thus exceeding the area of the characteristic features allowed in the traditional grammar, in the case of each part of speech; determining the belonging of each lexical and grammatical unit to one of the prototypical classes, in context (in use), by analyzing the concrete result (utterance/text) of the enunciation process;
- the withdrawal of the speaking part status in the case of the article and its reconsideration as an integral part of the nominal morphological paradigm: the grammatical morpheme as a mark of the category of determination and as a utterance integrator etc.;
- accepting the existence of certain difficulties in framing the lexical-grammatical units in

single classes and acknowledging the status of "problematic classes" as classes with multiple lexical-grammatical/semantic-functional manifestations: pronouns – pro-forms, deictic, anaphoric; numerals – substitutes, quantitative, quantifiers etc.;

- the reorganization of the morphological typology into semantic-functional classes (quantitative, determinants, pro-forms, substitutes, deictic, junctions, connectors).

The third analytical section of the present study considers the comparative disclosure of the problems of the grammatical categories recovered in each of the two academic grammars. Expression of the logical categories of thinking, a notion associated with morphology or an inflexion of the parts of speech, in *GA*, this concept is interpreted in the new academic grammar in accordance with the theoretical elements of structural and functional linguistics, concepts that have determined the following reconsiderations:

- the definition of the concept of grammatical category as a biplane unit (expression-content), morphematic (part of a morphological, analyzable syntagma), active in a paradigmatic and syntagmatic plane, in an inherent system of oppositions with morphological, syntactic/relational, semantic-pragmatic implications etc.;
- the introduction of new grammatical categories in the nominal (determination) and verbal (aspect) bending patterns;
- updates of some classical grammatical categories based on the structural principle of manifesting in the oppositional system (binary) of the grammatical categories (the gender of nouns, diathesis) or by virtue of the functional values manifested/unmanifested (the grammatical category of the mood, in the case of non-predictive, non-personal/nonfinite verbal forms).

The fourth comparative analytical sequence (SYNTACTIC/SYNTAGMATIC STRUCTURES IN THE ACADEMIC GRAMMARS OF THE ROMANIAN LANGUAGE) focuses on aspects of the current Romanian language syntax. The identified interpretations are identified, based on modern linguistic theories (analytical structuralism/generativism, functionalism, etc.), in the light of which the syntax is the relational, functional, decisive field in communication, to which the other branches of grammar (morphology, semantics, pragmatics etc.). The first major change is the reconsideration of the relationship between the fundamental levels of grammar (morphology-syntax), described, in the *GALR*, in an integrative way, by interconnecting the constituent elements of the grammatical structure: morphological (bending

paradigmatic), categorical, syntactic/syntagmatic, semantic-syntactic, relational/combinatorial, functional-pragmatic, semantic-discursive etc., in the structural, syntagmatic, functional manifestation of the language, in use, in the enunciation (communication) process. The following formal or content reconfigurations are identified at the syntactic level:

- valorization at syntactic/relational level of the concepts of syntactic and syntagmatic structure, minimal or complex, analyzable syntagms, semantic syntactic phrases, utterance;
- extension of the inventory of the grammatical analysis methods of the syntactic/syntagmatic structures possible in the Romanian language: morphological, syntactic analysis, in traditional practice, morphematic analysis, immediate constituents analysis (parenthetical), in the current grammar;
- the hierarchical reorganization of the language units: the *word* - a minimal unit of the language, characterized morphologically, and distinctly, syntactically, as part of a sentence, together with a *sentence*, *phrase* (text), constitute the fundamental syntactic units of classical grammar; the units of the language are reconsidered, organized hierarchically in modern grammar (each unit is included in units of higher level/rank, decomposable, in turn, analyzable in units of lower rank): the morpheme (grammatical, lexical), considered a minimal unit, recoverable at syntagmatic level, component of the analyzable morphematical syntagma: the word or phrase (text), defined as a complex, analyzable, decomposable semantic-syntactic unit in semantic-syntactic groups or morphematical syntagms (lexical-grammatical or semantic-functional units), morphemes etc.;
- the introduction of the concept of *reorganization* of syntactic structures, a process (transformation) either accidental (Supplementary Predicative), or obtained through the grammaticalization (passivization, impersonalization of active constructions, reflexivization etc.) of the in-depth structures (syntactic/logical-semantic), with manifestation in the surface structure (syntactic/semantic-syntactic) of the concrete statement, made;
- the reconsideration of the importance of the relational system (of the paradigmatic, syntagmatic/ syntactic relations) as a cohesion factor, inherent in the grammatical structure of the Romanian language recovered at the level of the syntagmatic/syntactic structures; reconsidering the relational typology by renaming the classical syntactic relations (coordination/non-dependency, subordination/unilateral dependence) and including in the

classic typology the following relations: relations of subordination/bilateral dependence [interdependence between noun phrase (NP)-verbal phrase (VP)], relations of subordination/unilateral dependence in ternary structures [Subject complement, Supplementary predicative, Secondary object, Adverbial modifier of opposition, Adverbial modifier of addition, Sociative adverbial modifier, Adverbial modifier of exception)], of appositive equivalence ratios;

- the introduction of the notion of syntactic position, a segment on the syntagmatic, linear axis of the statement, accepted as a succession of syntactic positions (Predicate, Subject, Object, Adverbial modifier, Attribute, Subject complement, Supplementary predicative, Apposition), or on the syntagmatic axis of the semantic syntactic phrase (center, deputies, arguments, determinants, modifiers etc.); each syntactic position, hierarchically imposed by the group/phrase center or the predicate (Subject like a special type of complement), is associated in the concrete enunciation (utterance) process with a unique syntactic manifestation - the syntactic function;
- the update on the concept of syntactic function and inventory of functions with new syntactic functions, derivatives of the classical syntactic functions [Secondary object, Prepositional complement, Possessive dative (complement), Object complement] or results following the reconsideration of syntactic/syntagmatic relations (Comparative Complement, Quantitative Modifier etc.).

The reconsideration of the methodological, conceptual (content) aspects in the grammar of the Romanian language, a process closely correlated with the extended phenomenon of the transition to modernity in the field of general linguistics, implies the diversification of the grammatical (morphosyntactic) terminological corpus, either by revaluation and enriching the meanings of some classical terms (analysis, complement, adverbial modifier, determiner, group, text etc.), either by introducing new terms. Included in the category of "new entries" in the terminological corpus of current grammar are terms of structural-analytical origin (lexical/grammatical morpheme, morphemic analysis, class of forms, syntagmatic-paradigmatic report, syntagmatic axis, syntagmatic, syntagmatic relations, structure etc.), of generativist origin (semantic-functional group, in a depth structure, surface structure, group center, thematic roles etc.), functional-pragmatic origin (semantic-functional classes, speech acts, discursive-pragmatic organization of utterance etc.).

The changes of conceptual invoice entail the inherent reorganization about the contents in the current academic grammar (*GALR*). The two volumes of the paper under discussion no longer distinctly correspond to the fundamental domains of grammar (morphology, syntax), this perspective specific to traditional grammar being replaced by a morphosyntactic approach in the description (definition, classification, inflexion/categorical characterization, inventory of combinatorial possibilities etc.) of the lexical-grammatical classes (*GALR* I). The relational, syntagmatic, functional-syntactic, pragmatic-discursive aspects recovered at the level of syntagmatic/syntactic structures (enunciation, group, semantic-syntactic syntagma), are treated separately (*GALR* II). This way of organizing the contents in the *GALR* determined the route of the present research, the three sections (chapters) of the actual analysis of the grammatical content (lexical-grammatical and the semantic-functional classes, grammatical categories, syntactic/syntagmatic structures in the academic grammars of the Romanian language) closely following the structure of the new academic grammar (*GALR*) for an objective (comparative) decoding of the principles, objectives and methodology of designing this study.

The conclusions, obtained after the sequential analysis of the grammatical contents, highlight the existence of conceptual, terminological, structural correspondences etc., elements of continuity between the two academic grammars of the Romanian language, regarding the modernization of the native grammatical domain through updates of some contents, concepts, terms, methods of analysis which were intuited and anticipated also in *GA* (or in other traditional grammars), but not implemented in the classical grammatical description of the language: article status, morphology-syntax connection, hierarchy of language units, article status, heterogeneity of pronouns, numerals etc. From the perspective of the current academic grammar, maintaining some aspects of congruence with the previous grammar could have the role of facilitating the understanding and acceptance of the grammar innovations at any level of the description they would be located. In the analysis, however, elements of absolute novelty, of analytical/generative structural or functional-pragmatic source were revealed: the notion of morpheme, the method of morphological analysis, the morphosyntactic description of lexical-grammatical classes, functional-semantic units, complex semantic-syntactic units etc.

The objective of integrating the grammar of the Romanian language into the category of current grammar descriptions justifies the reconsiderations, the innovations registered after the comparative analysis. However, we consider that the foundation of the current grammar is still

classical. The starting point in the actual process of rewriting the grammar of the Romanian language, in modern key, is the traditional grammar (*GA*). The existence of the elements of continuity and of equivalence punctuated in the effective analysis, the conceptual, terminological elements common to both grammars justify this claim, although in the general bibliography of the *GALR* the use of *GA* as a bibliographic source is not recorded. One possible motivation would be the authors' intention to present a new theoretical construct, autonomous, modern, distinct from the grammatical tradition. The bibliographic sources present in the *GALR* are works of structural, functional-pragmatic linguistics and grammars, partially or totally associated to these linguistic currents. Another argument in this regard is the absence of the traditional grammars from the bibliography of some current/modern grammars of other languages present in the *GALR* bibliography (grammar of French, Spanish, Italian, English languages).

The process of modernizing the academic description of the grammatical structure of the Romanian language must be understood as a process of reconfiguring the grammatical tradition, a reconsideration according to new perspectives of the linguistic/grammatical approach in a new terminology, starting with the classical basis of the grammar of the Romanian language.

The comparative analysis of the two academic grammars (*GA*, *GALR*) clarifies how two distinct descriptions of the grammatical structure of the Romanian language relate to the linguistic, respectively, grammatical reality in its intensity and extension. A constantly changing scientific reality through the multitude of theories, interpretive perspectives, studies published in the last decades, directly influences the general conception of the facts of the language, determining a permanent search for the balance between tradition and modernity in the Romanian grammar. The present study brings to the fore this transition from a classic, normative approach to the native grammar system (the only one widespread at all levels of schooling between the second half of the twentieth century – the beginning of the 21st century) to a hybrid, inter-, multi-, transdisciplinary, integrative perspective of the grammatical domain, not as easily accessible through dimensions, conceptual and terminological corpus, structuring mode etc. By this, we consider justified the contradictory critical reception of this new theoretical construct, as well as the need to publish some works subsequent to the emergence of *GALR* (Pană Dindelegan, Dragomirescu, Nedelcu 2010, *GBLR* 2010, Pană Dindelegan 2019), which will alleviate the problematic aspects through accessibility, emphases and decoding of concepts, contents and methods of the grammar analysis promoted in the new academic grammar. At this step of identification and decoding of the



reconsiderations, equivalences and innovations, in order to facilitate the comprehension of the new description of the grammatical structure of the Romanian language, we also adhere, by conducting comparative research of the academic grammars, *GA* and *GALR*, bridges between tradition and modernity.