OVIDIUS UNIVERSITY OF CONSTANȚA DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES DOCTORAL FIELD: PHILOLOGY

ABSTRACT OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS

SYNTACTIC CONNECTORS IN ROMANIAN VERSIONS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

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ABSTRACT:

1. Premise and goals of the research

Our study starts from the *premise* that *the system of connectors may provide a suggestive image of the personality of a natural, living language* – in this case, Romanian.

"Syntactic connectors" refer to both conjunctions proper (simple, compound, phrases – *şi* 'and', *dacă* 'if'; *cum că* 'that'; *din cauză că* 'because') and their substitutes, i.e. the relative pronouns (*care* 'which', *cine* 'who', *ce* 'what'), relative adverbs (*unde* 'where', *când* 'when', *cum* 'how', *cât* 'how much'), various forms of verbal (*fie...fie* 'either... or'), prepositional (*de*), noun (*graţie* 'thanks to') etc. origin.

It may seem strange that we should attach importance to mere "grammatical tools", but we are well aware of the logical, semantic, morpho-syntactic, stylistic and discursive implications of these small lexemes, such as *că, de, să* etc., despite the fact that they are often almost devoid of their own meaning.

Therefore, our main *research goal* is to highlight the evolution of Romanian literary language, between the 17th century and the 20th century, in terms of a single grammatical class – marginal and central, at the same time, within the language system.

2. Working material

Our material is based on seven Romanian versions of *The New Testament* and on two others in ancient sacred languages:

Noul Testament de la Bălgrad (NTB, 1648); *Biblia de la Bucureşti* (BB, 1688), the Arvinte/Caproşu/Gafton edition; *Biblia de la Blaj* (BBj, 1795); partially, *Biblia de la Buzău* (BBz,

1854-1856); The so-called *Biblia Cornilescu* (BC, 1924, with updated revisions); what we have called *Biblia în uz* (BU, that is, the text used by the Romanian Orthodox Church, the continuously revised versions 1914/1936/1982/2015); *Biblia diortosită de Valeriu Anania* (BA, 2001).

For certain analyses, we have also used *Biblia de Sibiu* (BS, 1858). Only in some cases have we also consulted the version based on the two manuscripts of the BB (in other words, the Paul Miron/Eugen Munteanu edition, *Monumenta Linguae Dacoromanice* – MLD, completed in 2015).

The main selection criterion was the completeness of the Gospel text, that might provide a thorough or, in any case, comprehensive image of how connectors function in the biblical language. The second criterion of selection was the chronological one.

When analysing transphrastic connectors in particular, we have also used witness-translations into other modern languages of the exemplified verses – first of all, the bilingual Greek-English version known as the *Nestle-Aland Bible* (NA 28*)*. In all cases, we have referred, as mush as possible, to the academic editions included in the final *Bibliography*.

We have referred to the original Greek version of the NT (*Novum Testamentum Graece*) as the "*basic text*", although not all Romanian translators have started directly from the *Hellenic* text. The witness-text in emphasising correspondences has been the Latin translation of the NT (i.e. *Nova Vulgata*, which included *The New Testament*). This comparison has a double advantage: of the closeness in time to the Greek one, on the one hand, and of lexical similarities with the Romanian language, on the other hand (e.g.: Lat. *fiat* = Rom. *fie*; Lat. *seu* = Rom. *sau* etc.)

Naturally, in tracing the history of some connectors, we have also used attestations in earlier texts, such as *Codicele popii Bratul* (1508), cf. the Gafton edition, as well as various other documentary sources. On the other hand, we have sometimes referred to passages from other books of the New and Old Testament in order to point out the recurrence or evolution of some forms, of certain logico-semantic meanings.

3. Working methods

The principles, methods and working tools used in our analyses are those of *historical grammar*, in addition to those of *descriptive grammar, traductology* and its corollary – *contrastive-typological grammar*. We have also employed elements of *stylistics* and *pragmatics, discourse analysis* and *linguistic stylistics*.

Based on these, we have made up an analysis grid that takes into account: a) the strictly grammatical typology of connectors (coordinating/subordinating); b) transphrastic-discursive values; c) historical evolution and personal choices of translators; c) the attempt to reconstruct the historical context which determined the choice of a certain connector in the same biblical verse, resumed throughout the centuries. The basic unit of analyses has thus become a combined contrastive-typological and comparative-historical arrangement:

Matthew 1:17

Gk. Bible: „*Πᾶσαι οὖν αἱ γενεαὶ ἀπὸ Ἀβραὰμ ἕως Δαυὶδ γενεαὶ δεκατέσσαρες, καὶ ἀπὸ Δαυὶδ ἕως τῆς μετοικεσίας Βαβυλῶνος γενεαὶ δεκατέσσαρες, καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς μετοικεσίας Βαβυλῶνος ἕως τοῦ Χριστοῦ γενεαὶ δεκατέσσαρες.*"

NV: „*Omnes **ergo** generationes ab Abraham usque ad David generationes quattuordecim et a David usque ad transmigrationem Babylonis generationes quattuordecim et a transmigratione Babylonis usque ad Christum generationes quattuordecim.*"

En.: "*So all the generations from Abraham to David [are] fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon [are] fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ [are] fourteen generations.*"

NTB (1648): „***Derept acea**, toate neamurile de la Avraam până la David, patrusprăzeace neamure; și de la David până la mutarea în Vavilon, neamure patrusprăzeace, și de la mutarea den Vavilon până la Hristos, neamure 14.*"

BB (1688): „*Toate **dară** neamurile de la Avraam, 14 neamuri, și de la David pînă la mutarea în Vavilon, neamuri 14, și de la mutarea Vavilonului pînă la Hristos, neamuri 14.*"

BBj (1795): „***Deci**, toate neamurile de la Avraam și până la David, neamuri patrusprăzeace; și de la David până la mutarea Vavilonului, neamuri patrusprăzeace; și de la mutarea Vavilonului până la Hristos, neamuri patrusprăzeace.*"

NTS (1857): „***Deci** toate neamurile de la Avraam până la David, neamuri patrusprezece; și de la David până la mutarea Babilonului, neamuri patrusprezece; și de la mutarea Babilonului (din Babilon) până la Hristos, neamuri patrusprezece.*"

BU (1914/1982): „***Așadar**, toate neamurile de la Avraam până la David sunt paisprezece; și de la David până la strămutarea în Babilon sunt paisprezece; și de la strămutarea în Babilon până la Hristos sunt paisprezece neamuri.*"

BC (1924/1930): „***Deci**, de la Avraam până la David, sunt paisprezece neamuri de toate; de la David până la strămutarea în Babilon sunt paisprezece neamuri; și de la strămutarea în Babilon până la Hristos sunt paisprezece neamuri.*"

BA (2001): „***Așadar**, întru totul, de la Avraam până la David sunt paisprezece neamuri; de la David până la strămutarea în Babilon sunt paisprezece neamuri^c; iar de la strămutarea în Babilon până la Hristos sunt paisprezece neamuri.*"

4. The structure of the study

After the necessary introductory-technical chapter, we have organised the research material in three unequal parts.

A first consistent chapter deals with the subsystem of connectors in Romanian, as it appears described in modern Romanian grammars (of 1966 – GAR; 2005 – GALR; 2010 – GBLR in principle) and in historical grammars (the Romanian Academy treatises or various others, see I. Gheție, Gh. Chivu, C-tin Frâncu etc.). We have considered GAR as "modern grammar", although there is a significant difference of conception and linguistic terminology between this one and those that ensued, up until the grammars of the 2000s. The latter ones restructure the coding of some lexical-grammatical classes and grammatical categories, eliminating the article and reconsidering the functionality of the passive voice. However, these changes in conception affect the view of the entire grammatical system: the classification of the former "agent clauses", for example, changes, with repercussions on the classification of the respective syntactic connectors.

Based on these theoretical acquisitions, we have written another chapter – on the evolution of (subordinating and coordinating) syntactic connectors (in the sentence) over the four centuries of Romanian written culture, the 17th-20th centuries. Coordination has been described starting from connectors towards types of clauses (copulative, adversative, disjunctive, conclusive), but the description of subordinating connectors begins with the types of syntactic relations within the sentence (non-adverbial and adverbial), because many of them use the same connectors, such as *că, să, de, cum, unde, care* etc. The contrastive-typological perspective has fully proven its efficiency in such analyses. As it is known, in classical languages, participial, infinitival and gerundial constructions, with object or subject values (Accusative with the Infinitive, Nominative with the Infinitive) are frequent, as are the adverbial ones, most of the times (absolute Ablative). Modern versions, including the Romanian ones, have equated such structures either with somewhat corresponding gerundial ones or with the use of connectors: *Plecând Iisus.../ După ce a plecat Iisus*. But this also goes the other way round: when a compound or phrasal connector, which is difficult to equate in modern languages, is used in the basic text, one resorts to a saving gerund structure: **Dacă așadar** (Gk, *ei gar*) **au ajuns** *acolo.../* **Ajungând** *acolo...*

The transphrastic role, i.e. of connecting entire, relatively unitary groups of verses, of relating the various episodes in the structure of the biblical text, has been analysed in a separate chapter, although the same connectors (usually coordinating, such as *așadar, deci, și, și încă, iar apoi* etc.) are sometimes dealt with. Discursive analyses are more difficult, because compound conjunctional structures, frequent in Greek, are often used in the basic text, which caused problems even among the Latin translators, then among those translating into the Slavonic and, of course, various other modern languages, as they can be interpreted in two ways:

a) A single unit with transphrastic role, of introducing a new episode: *și dacă*;

b) Two distinct units, *și/dacă*: the former, *și*, with a double role (transphrastic and grammatical, of copulative coordination); the latter, *dacă*, only with a grammatical role (subordinating, introducing a conditional clause).

It is in this chapter that we have included some information about the specific features of the Greek language in the *New Testament*, the functional and late diastratic version of classical Hellenic. Simpler than this, closer to folk speech, Christian Greek remains a rich and nuanced idiom, both in terms of the vocabulary and semantics, and in terms of the grammar. In order to understand the great effort of Romanian translators in the first centuries of written religious culture, one should know at least some of these particularities.

5. Conclusions

Our approach has confirmed the assumption that the study of connectors may provide new information about the specific evolution of the Romanian language – the literary one, first and foremost.

It is clear how the *inventory of conjunctions and other types of connectors crystallised* towards the end of the first sub-stage of old Romanian, i.e. until around 1688:

- Old forms, such as *e* "și", derived from the Latin term *et*, disappeared in favour of *și*, also derived from Latin, *sic*;
- Compound forms, such as *că...ce*, which later became *căce*, then *căci*, were lexicalised;
- Old and regional forms, such as *batăr* "măcar", were eliminated;
- Generally, the *subsystem of connectors* stabilised in forms and meanings that are still used today *faster than other lexical-morphological subclasses*, dragging with it the entire morphological and syntactic language structure.

The choice of biblical texts as material for analysis has proved particularly fruitful. The Romanian corpus we have studied consists of *translations*, but some of them are from a lexically, semantically, grammatically and stylistically richer language than Romanian; this unequal confrontation has entailed two related phenomena:

a) It forced the translators to seek all possible resources to make up for the complicated structures in the source language in order to rise to the level of the original, to render the sacred message as accurately as possible;

b) Implicitly, the target language, Romanian, was forced to mature more quickly, because many of the solutions found for these widespread texts entered the generalised usage of Romanian written language; one example is edifying in this respect: in many situations, Romanian original texts may have used the parataxis (which is proved by many original lay texts in old ages); *translation requires the use of connectors so that the original sacred text should be fully captured.* Paratactic structures such as "*Vrea, nu vrea...*", instead of junctional ones "***Chiar dacă** vrea, **chiar dacă** nu vrea...*" (with a concessive function here), are also frequent today, but only in the common, uneducated speech, or with stylistic values in the elevated register.

c) In this way, the connectors, including the complicated ones such as *și dacă, iar atunci* (which are interpretable from a grammatical and transphrastic-discursive perspective), become common in the Romanian educated language.

The study of connectors proves, once again, if necessary (but, in the study of languages, one always needs to confirm the status of a structured logical and functional organism), that language is a system, in which each element relates to the whole. When the studied "part" consists of the very relational elements, the research of the language is all the more interesting.