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The Structure and Dynamics of Romanian. Synchronic and Diachronic Aspects

Abstract

This thesis, devoted to *The Structure and Dynamics of Romanian. Synchronic and Diachronic Aspects*, presents the relevant scientific contributions I made after my doctoral studies (which took place in the period 2000–2007) and the defence of my PhD thesis *The Partitive Category in Romanian* (in February 2008), as well as my new scientific and professional projects, which are in different stages of progress. This presentation is structured in two parts: *Scientific and professional accomplishments* and *Plans for the development and expansion of my professional and scientific career*, preceded by a short introduction in which I mention my scientific research prior to the finalization and defence of my PhD thesis, which, for the most part, I continued afterwards.

In the first part of this presentation, *Scientific and professional accomplishments*, I present my main research contributions, materialized through a series of author studies and works in collaboration, in the following domains: Romanian morpho-syntax, the dynamics of Romanian and normative grammar, and school grammar. This part also contains a short presentation of my teaching activity, which is strongly related to my scientific work.

The most extended section of the first part of this thesis is dedicated to the domain of morpho-syntax, with my essential contributions to three major themes, *nominal heads (nouns and pronouns) and the nominal phrase, prepositions and the prepositional phrase*, and *the infinitive*, besides other themes that I worked on in collective publications (verbal morphology, conjunctions, adverbials). The research of these topics, in a series of collective works, in articles and in my book *Syntactic Characteristics of Romanian in a Romance Context. The Infinitive* (2013), consists of the description of the topics not only in contemporary Romanian, but also in diachrony, and in the larger context of the sister

Romance languages, to illustrate the specificity of Romanian. The description of these topics is completed by the discussion of theoretical stance that I assume in my works.

Another section of the first part of this thesis refers to my contributions in the domain of the dynamics of Romanian and normative grammar, materialized first and foremost in my book *101 Grammatical Mistakes* (2012), as well as in articles and studies. In these works, which target a wider audience, but also specialists, a series of mistakes and difficulties of the native speakers of Romanian are explained. Besides this, the tendencies of the language that manifest themselves in production are signalled and discussed, beyond the aspects of norm and error. The description of the structure and conception of the main works of Romanian linguists with respect to difficult/controversial structures, in different stages of the evolution of the language, works that contribute to a great extent to the explanation and spread of the official norm, was also a theme that I researched (in the study *Dictionaries of Language Difficulties in Manual of Standardization in the Romance Languages*, forthcoming).

Yet another section, also in the first part of the thesis, describes my contribution to the realization of the *Grammar of Romanian for the Middle School* (2019), a work that, being a school grammar, is related to my teaching activity at the university, which is a continuation of the students' middle and high school education. In this work, I wrote the chapters *The Noun and the Article* and *Adverbials*, from which I selected for this section of my thesis a few aspects that are relevant for the structure and conception of the book.

The first part of my thesis closes with a short section regarding the courses that I have been teaching over the years at the Faculty of Letters of the University of Bucharest, courses that harmoniously intertwine with my research activity, using, besides a large Romanian and foreign bibliography, also my personal research.

In the second part of my thesis, *Plans for the development and expansion of my professional and scientific career*, I focus on the presentation of two research projects that are work in progress, namely, *The infinitive in the non-standard varieties of Romanian* and *Prepositions in regional varieties of Romanian*. These topics continue my previous studies, in which I analysed and described the infinitive and the preposition in contemporary and in old Romanian, with the aim of obtaining a wider perspective on the

behaviour of these categories, emphasizing the elements that are conserved from old Romanian, and innovations in their use in non-standard Romanian.

Other projects that I present in short in the second part of my thesis are two collective works that are in progress, entitled (working title) *Small Words, Big Difficulties* and *Morphological Variation in Present-day Romanian. A Quantitative Study*. The first project contains a large list of words with a interesting/controversial “history” or/and with a special behaviour, which can raise problems of interpretation. Each article dedicated to a word discusses problems of analysis and, if that is the case, presents interesting facts of linguistic evolution. In the latter project, *Morphological Variation in Present-day Romanian. A Quantitative Study*, I analyse the variation of ethnonyms and relational adjectives of the type *român/românesc* “Romanian”, *italian/italienesc* “Italian”, *americană/americană* “American” etc., whose behaviour I analyse in a series of contexts extracted from a relevant corpus. The results obtained from the corpus will be completed with those offered by the questionnaires that I will give to a significant number of native speakers to test the degree of variation of these forms in different contexts.

At the end of the second part of my thesis I launch a series of proposals of topics of research for the doctoral studies, which can be the continuation of Bachelor and/or Master theses, and which are aimed at a deep research of categories or linguistic phenomena from a theoretical and descriptive perspective (based on corpora).