

# GRAMMAR AND STYLISTICAL ASPECTS OF ROMANIAN LANGUAGE IN TERMS OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE LINGUIST D. IRIMIA

## ASPECTE GRAMATICALE ȘI STILISTICE ALE LIMBII ROMÂNE PRIN PRISMA CONTRIBUȚIEI LINGVISTULUI DUMITRU IRIMIA

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**Abstract.** *Our contribution comments upon the linguist D. Irimia's original, synthetic modality to present aspects of Romanian morphology and syntax. He was a disciple of Eugen Coseriu and he continued Iorgu Iordan's tradition devoting great attention to the oral aspect of our language. We mainly underline the semantic and stylistic, even prosodic, commentaries done by professor D. Irimia in his major studies: „Eminescu's Poetic Language” (1979), „The Stylistic Structure of Contemporary Romanian Language” (1986), and „The Grammar of the Romanian Language” (2008). The contribution highlights his modality of presenting the counteraction of grammatical categories, the semantic aspects of relative and absolute tenses, moods and other grammar categories with stylistic functions.*

**Key words:** *linguistics, stylistics, relation, opposition, function.*

**Rezumat.** *Contribuția noastră comentează modalitatea originală și sintetică a lingvistului ieșean D. Irimia de a prezenta aspecte ale morfologiei și sintaxei limbii române. Profesorul Irimia a fost un discipol al lui Eugen Coșeriu și a continuat tradiția instaurată de Iorgu Iordan, manifestand mare atenție pentru aspectul oral al limbii noastre. Noi evidențiem comentariile semantice, stilistice, chiar prozodice, ale profesorului D. Irimia, comentarii existente în principalele sale opere: „Limbaul poetic eminescian” (1979), „Structura stilistică a limbii române contemporane” (1986) și „Gramatica limbii române” (2008). Contribuția reliefează modalitatea sa de prezentare a interacțiunii dintre diversele categorii gramaticale, a aspectelor semantice ale timpurilor relative și absolute, ale modurilor gramaticale, precum și ale altor categorii gramaticale care au și funcții stilistice.*

**Cuvinte cheie:** *lingvistică, stilistică, relație, opoziție, funcție.*

### INTRODUCTION

Professor D. Irimia (1939-2009) was a well-known and respected academic and scientific personality who spent his entire career as a professor at “Al. I. Cuza” University, Iasi. He contributed to the development of Romanian stylistics due to his PhD thesis, “Eminescu's Poetic Language” (1979), and “The Stylistic Structure of Contemporary Romanian Language” (1986), both of them being

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considered valuable benchmarks in any reference list. He was a disciple of Eugenio Coseriu and he continued Iorgu Iordan's tradition devoting great attention and interest to the oral aspect of our language and to the richness of its oral expression which he illustrated and commented upon. His remarkable attention for Eminescu's contribution to modern Romanian literary language could be noticed in many other studies, analyses and, also, due to the annual Mihai Eminescu Symposium for students (Arhip O, 2013). He coordinated an electronic studying process of Eminescu's texts and of the program for lyric equivalences – "Dictionary of Eminescu's Poetic Language; Signs and Meanings" (two volumes in 2002 and in 2005). The stylistic diversity of the Romanian language can be discovered in another Irimia's major work: "The Grammar of the Romanian Language" – last edition in 2008. This handbook has brought "many new elements to the old academic rules" and its new-built perspective has influenced the Grammar of the Romanian Academy, published in 2008.

## MATERIAL AND METHOD

We present and comment on the original elements of D. Irimia's descriptive grammar. His points of view have been validated by other authors and have appeared as such in the Academic Grammar. Having this scientific approval, we do not address controversial subjects. Due to the fact that almost all the examples are very subtle and have complete linguistic and stylistic relevance in Romanian, we have decided to leave them un-translated and to explain the phenomena in as much details as possible. We often emphasize the stylistic and semantic interpretation of the author.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Underlining the fact that the semantic criterion is appropriate for the lexical system, not for the grammatical one, Irimia disputes the morphologic description for the quantification pronouns as "doi/ambii/câte doi", etc. The traditional grammar calls them numerals. The morphologic class of numerals has given rise to many questions for lots of researchers who tried to classify them as nouns, adjectives or adverbs (Rosetti and Byck, 1945). Some of them argued for adjectives (Iordan, I., 1954) as the numeral does not express proper qualities such as colors, shapes, dimensions, but only quantitative qualities. Iordan submitted the class of quantitative adjectives and his proposal was later adopted by B. B. Berceanu (Berceanu, 1971). Another researcher also proposed to abolish the class completely. Irimia had a more inspired solution. He took as a starting point for his argument the fact that all these words are expressing extrinsic features, not intrinsic ones, like demonstrative pronouns (doi studenți/al doilea student/acești studenți) and all of them are substitutes, even with an anaphoric connection: *Doi studenți au repetat examenul/Acești studenți au repetat examenul/Doi au repetat examenul/Aceștia au repetat examenul* or *Au dat două examene, primul, pe 5 septembrie, al doilea, pe 7 septembrie*. He, in fact, followed Otto Jespersen's hypothesis. Irimia made another relevant observation; he pointed out that quantitative pronouns could be used to cancel the ambiguity of the opposition

singular/plural in the same manner as the adverbs cancel the poly-semantic characteristic of tenses: *Plec azi/Plec mâine/Un pui/Doi pui* etc. As an independent class which must express the category of number as well, quantitative pronouns attract elements previously considered to be undefined adjectives to their paradigm: *mulți, puțini, toți, atâția* etc. Taking into account the deictic aspect, this class only seems to be closer to that of nouns, because it includes the objects of the communication process, but some of them frequently include the protagonists in the same way an inclusive pronoun does this: „*Căci amândoi vom fi cuminți,/Vom fi voioși și teferi.*” The new Grammar, edited by the Academy, agreed with Irimia’s point of view and offer more patterns: *Am analizat situația elevilor. Trei dintre ei au luat premiu.* In this example, the quantitative pronoun is involved in an anaphoric relationship as well. In mathematical sentences, the author considers that they are absolutely abstract and there are no syntactic relationships (*Doi și cu doi fac patru*).

Building on G. Gougenheim’s theory, which was incorporated by Vl. Robu and Iorgu Iordan into their own work, Dumitru Irimia included the grammatical intensity in his grammar, underlining the fact that it implies open phrases instead of close phrases required by the classic category of comparison. This distinction has been taken into account sometimes and only for the superlative. Irimia stated that this is the only authentic grammatical category for adjectives and adverbs having the required double nature: semantic and deictic features. In this context, all types of intensity categories are presented in his grammar, according to a semantic criterion, but the presence of a second correlative term is not necessary: “*Din ce în ce mai singur mă-ntunec și îngheț, / Când tu te pierzi în zarea eternei dimineți.*” (Mihai Eminescu); „*Când ura cea mai crudă mi s-a părea amor...*” (Mihai Eminescu); „*Atunci puse să îi facă altul mai greu – îl aruncă în sus*” (Mihai Eminescu). Of courses, there are contexts in which the second term is explicit: „*Mai verosimil decât adevărul / e câteodată un vis.*” (Lucian Balga); „*Așa că închipuindu-ți lacrimoasele ei gene, / Ți-ar părea mai mândră decât Venus Anadyomene*” (Mihai Eminescu). This personal view regarding the intensity category is more reliable and it renders the deictic nature expressed by infrequent stylistic means mainly met in spoken language or popular record: „*...l-a făcut bucăți, bucățele*”; „*Ce frumoasă, ce nebună / E albastra-mi, dulce floare*” (Mihai Eminescu); „*S-au cum s-ar mai zice la noi în țărănește, era frumoasă de mama focului: la soare te puteai uita, iar la dânsa ba*” (Ion Creangă). This category is applied for adverbs as well: „*O, umbră dulce, vino mai aproape/ Să simt plutind deasupra-mi geniul morții*” (Mihai Eminescu); „*Dar și mai bine-i când afară-i sloată,/ Să stai visând la foc, de somn să picuri*” (Mihai Eminescu). Irimia suggested a more complete representation of a category having its own content and specific means of expression; the very same category is present in the new grammar edited by the Academy, but without detailed explanations of the difference between intensity and comparison – reading that chapter, the general opinion might be that it is only a kind of synonymy or a modern way to name a grammatical category, which is far removed from the linguistic implications.

Dumitru Irimia studies a linguistic issue quite neglected by previous Romanian authors of grammar handbooks – grammatical aspect. It is the expression of the temporal development of an action, from the point of view of the speaker, inside the relevant relationship *statement - enunciation*. This grammatical category is very common in English and German, but not in Romanian. It reveals the oppositions: finished/unfinished, perfective/imperfective, known/unknown. For Romanian, this category is strongly related to the one of tense and can be discussed only for the Indicative Mood. The imperfective aspect is usually associated with Imperfect Tense („*Când am cunoscut-o, cânta într-un restaurant*”), and the perfective aspect is specific for past tenses such as: Simple Perfect Tense (*Traversași în fugă bulevardul*), Compound Perfect Tense (*Am traversat în fugă bulevardul*), Past Perfect Tense (*Traversasem în fugă bulevardul*). The Present Tense cancels the opposition perfective – imperfective. Other connotations expressed by this category are: frequentative, ingressive, continuity, or the opposition momentary – continued action. Sometimes, all these may be conveyed with the help of semi-auxiliary verbs or adverbs: *Începe/Prinde/Continuă să plouă; Ioana stă să plângă; Și tot vorbește; A venit din nou; Iar spune*, etc. This kind of verbs expresses the following meanings: *a începe, a prinde, a continua, a termina etc. (Începe/prinde/continuă să plouă)*. This boundary enriches narrative and stylistic distinction between narrative and descriptive predicate.

Dumitru Irimia added two new types of coordination. He considered that conjunction “ci” has not the same meaning as “dar/but” or “însă, iar”. It was called antagonist coordination. “Dar/iar/însă” has an adversative value, whilst “ci” connotes a very clear and strong opposition, the first part element of the coordination having a negative significance: „*Eminescu nu cântă incidentele unei iubiri, ci iubirea, nu cântă farmecele unei femei, ci femeia.*” (Garabet Ibrăileanu). Irimia makes a clean-cut distinction between the coordinating conjunctions “dar” and “ci”. The elements coordinated by “but” do not express parts of reality objectively mutual opposed, but the opposition between them is reflective a subjective point of view: „*Nu a citit romanul, dar vorbește cu dezinvoltură despre valoarea lui*”; „*A știut totul de la început, dar a tăcut.*” The conjunction “ci” binds elements objectively related and which cannot exist simultaneously: „*Copilul a fost determinat să apere nu adevărul, ci minciuna.*” The antagonist coordination exists between elements belonging to the same lexical field: „*Nu-i frumos, ci urât*”; „*Nu pleacă, ci vine*”; „*Nu e luni, ci vineri.*” The elements involved in an adversative coordination are not consistent: „*E bun pentru mine, dar rău pentru tine.*” A more obvious example is the following one – in Romanian, it is possible to say „*În casă nu e frig, ci e foarte frig*”, but using „dar” renders the sentence incorrect: „*În casă nu e frig, dar e foarte frig*”. Irimia also specified that adversative coordination is very close, from a semantic point of view, to a concessive subordinated sentence as has already been noted by Gh. Ivănescu: „*Citește mult, dar nu reține nimic*” meaning in fact „*Deși nu reține nimic, citește mult*”. He has also pointed out an alternative coordination realized

by parataxis: „*Domnul se plimbă de colo pînă colo pe peron, aci către partea pe unde vin pasagerii, aci către geamul în care stă în picioare omul cu sacul...*” (I. L. Caragiale). The adverb „aci” lacks semantic value.

D. Irimia did not include articles, prepositions and conjunctions into the large category of parts of speech. They are grammatical instruments. They have no lexical content, lack semantic autonomy and they belong only to the grammatical system of a language, allowing lexical units to form syntactic units. Prepositions have grammatical functions in sentences: „*Oricine are dreptul la adevăr*”. Conjunctions become effective at an upper level, that of phrases: „*El a uitat că a trimis scrisoarea*”. Irimia presents pronominal adverbs (*aici, acolo, atunci, niciodată*) as part of this class playing the role of semantic markers: „*Trecut-au anii ca nori lungi pe șesuri/Și niciodată n-or să vie iară.*” – temporal meaning (Mihai Eminescu). The same opinion can be found in the Academy Grammar several years after his contribution (*Gramatica limbii române*, II; 2005). Always interested in stylistic aspects, Irimia commented upon certain lexical units which may appear with a syntactic function or without a syntactic function: „*Crezi tu că râul curge, că unda/Care ne scaldă-i pururea nouă?*” – attributive function (St. Aug. Doinaș); „*O, moartea-i un secol cu flori înflorit/Când viața-i un basm pustiu și urât*” – no syntactic function (Mihai Eminescu).

He has also introduced two new syntactic functions: circumstantial attribute („*Curta, obosit de orele de plimbare, se așază într-un luminiș proaspăt defrișat de trunchiuri falnice de brad*” – P. Sălcudeanu) and predicative complement („*De umblat umblu ca fiecare / Cînd vinovat pe coperișele iadului / Cînd fără păcat pe muntele cu crini.*” – L. Blaga). These functions develop a double relation of subordination depending both on nominal and verbal elements.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. Dumitru Irimia was the first author to promote a modern approach to of a modern approach to Romanian grammar and his opinions were largely shared with the Academy Grammar several years after he first discussed them. His contribution deserves appreciation and great proliferation.

2. Although the text is eclectic, the author introduces several new and fertile categories in Romanian grammar.

3. D. Irimia offered the richest and most systematic comparative description of the scientific, judicial, journalistic and literary functional styles associating a great wealth of concrete language examples.

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