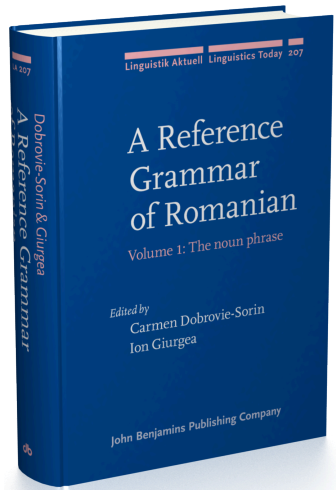
Linguistik Aktuell/Linguistics Today

207

Preface

https://doi.org/10.1075/la.207.003pre



Pages xxv–xxviii of
A Reference Grammar of Romanian: Volume 1: The noun phrase
Edited by Carmen Dobrovie-Sorin and Ion Giurgea
[**Linguistik Aktuell/Linguistics Today**, 207] 2013. xxviii, 900 pp.

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Glossing principles

In order to facilitate the reading, some grammatical categories have been omitted, when irrelevant for the discussion (e.g. gender and number on adjectives and determiners). The person and number on verbs are not indicated when they are inferable from the immediate grammatical context, i.e. when there is an overt preverbal subject. The person and number of reflexive clitics are usually not indicated, as they are inferable from the verb form.

Preface

The main goal of this book is a fine-grained, complete and systematic description of the grammatical system of Romanian. The present volume is dedicated to nominal categories and all the constituents that can occur inside the Noun Phrase. The grammar is planned to contain a second volume, on the Verb Phrase and the sentence.

The description we provide is systematic and comprehensive, verging on the exhaustive, offering fine details of the data, some of them not discussed previously. This careful description would not have been possible without the large theoretical literature that has been most recently produced. Accordingly, the present grammar is 'post-theoretical' (adopting a term coined by the editors of the *Grande grammatica italiana*) – the description of empirical facts has been extensively guided and influenced by the most recent work in theoretical linguistics.

The book bears the imprint of the intellectual climate of which it is a product: that of the spectacular development of cognitive sciences, with the emergence of the generative paradigm in linguistics as an intrinsic part of the cognitive revolution. In this paradigm, stress is laid on those areas of language that had been neglected (syntax) or even ignored (the study of sentence meaning) earlier.

The past fifty years showed a substantial progress in the study of the semantics and of the syntax-semantics interface of natural languages. The use of abstract representations in syntax has made it possible to systematically relate syntactic and semantic representations by providing compositional rules of interpretation for the output of structure-building operations (merge, move). The constantly renegotiated interface of abstract syntax and formal semantics has extensively informed the development of linguistic theory over the last decades. As part of this enterprise, the description of the Romanian nominal phrase presented in this work pays equal attention to the syntactic (distribution, inventories of units and constructions and their generation) and semantic components of grammar (types of denotation of various phrases, combinatory rules), based on the idea that meaning is always read off syntactic structure. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first in-depth description which offers an integrated account of morpho-syntax and semantics (and, where relevant, pragmatics) of such a large fragment of Romanian.

A second asset of this work is the attempt to strike a balance between description and explanation through brief presentations of the main arguments that have been given in the most recent literature for or against a particular interpretation of the data. We have retained what seemed conceptually and empirically well-motivated (such as the role of functional categories) and important for the explanation of the empirical generalizations we outlined. We have left aside what seemed rather speculative and limited ourselves to providing relevant references for each chapter at the end of the book.

An essential programmatic feature of the grammar is to present a solid empirical base – a reference framework, which sheds new light and provides better access to the results emerging from earlier work and seeks to stimulate future research. This work does not defend any grammatical doctrine or particular analysis, but attempts to provide a systematic and coherent information about the structure of Romanian, expected to be useful not only for linguists, students or professors of Romanian, but for all the community of Romanian language users (school teachers, editors, media workers, etc) who need or simply wish to complete their knowledge of and about Romanian.

Last but not least, the consistently used theoretical framework has made it possible to offer an implicitly comparative description of Romanian, shedding light on the characteristic features of the language in a parametrized study of linguistic variation. At the same time, the detailed presentation of the properties of the Romanian nominal phrase may be used as a textbook and can guide further in-depth studies of nominal structures across languages. We hope that this book confirms the view that any of the individual languages may serve as an entrance point in the understanding of the general properties of natural languages. In other words, we hope that this book can constitute a starting point for the study of the syntax and semantics of other languages, regardless of whether or not they are typologically related to Romanian.

The NP is understood in an extended sense: the various chapters of this book examine not only nominal classes, the form of the various types of nominal phrases ('bare nominals', i.e. nominal phrases without determiners, proper names, nominalizations, vocatives), determiners and pronouns, but also all the adnominal phrases: genitive-marked DPs, adjectives, relative clauses, appositions, prepositional phrases, complement clauses and non-finite modifiers.

Although written by theoreticians, the various chapters of this book are intended for the largest possible audience. No familiarity with theoretical linguistics is assumed, but we have nevertheless made use of some basic analytical tools, and widely acknowledged operations (movement or displacement) and constraints. The technical concepts are briefly explained when they are used. We hope, however, that the best pedagogy in acquainting the reader with such terms is to let him appreciate how explanatory these terms are and the extent to which they contribute to the better understanding of the data.

In the writing of this grammar we have learned from similar descriptions of individual languages produced elsewhere (Renzi, L. & G. Salvi (1988–1995), *Grande grammatica italiana di consultazione.* Bologna: Il Mulino; Bosque, I. & V.Demonte (1999), *Gramática descriptiva de la lengua española*, Madrid: Espasa Calpe; Solà, Joan et al. 2002, *Gramatica del català contemporani,* Barcelona, Empùries; Broekhuis, H. et al. (eds.) (2003) *A Modern Grammar of Dutch,* vol. 1–4, Tilburg University, Tilburg (work in progress); G. K. Pullum and R. Huddleston, *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). Indeed the elaboration of all these monumental works reflects a deeply-felt need for synthesis and evaluation of the progress that has

been made in understanding the structure of natural languages. We have also benefited from the new perspectives on Romanian opened by the recently published edition of the Grammar of the Romanian Academy (*Gramatica limbii române*, Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 2005).

As to the actual genesis of the book, it should be stressed that this book is the result of a large-scale collective enterprise, which was however meant to be not a collection of linguistic studies on Romanian, but rather a complete grammar of the Romanian Noun Phrase written by several authors but revised by the editors in such a way that it has become a unitary piece of work. To achieve this goal, all the chapters were carefully discussed during collective meetings and workshops, revised by their authors and then further revised by the two editors, who have attempted to make the whole as coherent as possible. A common descriptive vocabulary was used, internal references from one chapter to the other were established, repetitions were avoided, taking care to find the best place for the various observations.

The practical difficulty of writing a complete grammar should nevertheless be stressed: theoretical arguments point out interesting empirical generalizations, but they never cover the whole system of a language. And the problem is, of course, that our current knowledge has not reached the stage where the generalizations regarding partial aspects of a language, solid as they may be, never contradict each other. Once again team work, discussions in workshops and careful rethinking of the chapters by the editors were necessary.

Because the book has the format of a descriptive grammar, it contains no references in the text to the linguistic literature that was used for its writing. We have nevertheless provided bibliographical lists for each chapter, which will allow the interested reader to pursue the research. This is also a way for the authors to acknowledge their intellectual debt to the previous literature.

The project of writing this grammar was initiated by Carmen Dobrovie-Sorin and Gabriela Pană Dindelegan around 10 years ago, when the collaboration between the Institute of Linguistics of the Romanian Academy and University of Paris 7 was made possible due to financial support from bilateral projects. Gabriela Pană Dindelegan helped us with the outline of the Grammar, the division into chapters. During 4 years (2004–2007), when the first drafts of many chapters were written, she organized in Bucharest the work of an enthusiastic team of linguists. Mention must also be made of the fact that the project of this reference grammar occasioned the elaboration of several important dissertations on Romanian by students who were integrated among the authors of the grammar: Blanca Croitor, Alexandru Mardale, Mihaela Miron Fulea, Isabela Nedelcu, Ion Giurgea, Mihaela Tănase-Dogaru, and Ruxandra Vişan. The project significantly contributed to the training of a new generation of Romanian linguists, who were working side by side with experienced linguists such as Sanda Reinheimer Rîpeanu, Camelia Stan, Andra Vasilescu, Rodica Zafiu. Because of her many other projects, Gabriela Pană Dindelegan could not pursue this project, which nevertheless survived due to Ion Giurgea, who joined the enterprise more