ADVERBIAL RESTRUCTURING IN CONTEMPORARY ROMANIAN

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TABLE OF CONTENTS & ABSTRACT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1 **Methodology**

1.1. Introduction

1.2. Qualitative Methods. Argument Development

1.3. Quantitative Methods. The Corpus and the Questionnaire – means of investigation

1.3.1. Generalities. Data Collection

1.3.2. Participants

1.3.3. The Questionnaire

1.4. Conclusions

CHAPTER 2 **Theoretical background**

2.1. Introduction

2.2. General notes on the formal approach to syntax

2.3. Chomskyan Minimalism

2.4. Distributed Morphology

2.5. Mixed Approaches

2.6. Theoretical Proposal

2.7. Conclusions

CHAPTER 3 **Descriptive Data. Preliminary analysis**

3.1. Introduction

3.2. On syntactic functions and the EAO subordinating elements

3.3. EAO constructions which integrate predication

3.4. The Subject

3.5. The interaction between subordinating elements and arguments

3.5.1. Prepositions. Adverbs

3.5.1.1. Prepositions assigning the Accusative case

3.5.1.2. Prepositions assigning the Genitive case

3.5.1.3. Decât

3.5.2. Complementisers

3.5.2.1. Complementisers [+fin]

3.5.2.2. Complementisers [-fin] + Adjective

3.5.2.3. Complementisers [-fin]

3.5.2.4. Decât+

3.6. Conclusions

CAPITOLUL 4 **Literature Review**

4.1. Introduction

4.2. Objectives

4.3. The Exception Complement

4.3.1. Semantic description (definition and typology)

4.3.2. Specific Identity Marks

4.4. The Addition Complement

4.4.1. Semantic description (definition and typology)

4.4.2. Specific Identity Marks

4.5. The Opposition Complement

4.5.1. Semantic description (definition and typology)

4.5.2. Specific Identity Marks

4.6. Romanian literature review of the EAO topic

4.7. Conclusions

CHAPTER 5 **Proposal. A New Type of Argument**

5.1. Introduction

5.2. Initial Remarks

5.3. Objectives

5.4. On Comparatives

5.5. EAO Adverbials. Arguments in favour of a unitary derivational scenario

5.5.1. Structural Parallelism and Multiple Spell-Out

5.5.1.1. Structural Parallelism

5.5.1.2. Multiple Spell-Out

5.5.2. Subordination, relations, linearization

5.5.2.1. Subordination and its means

5.5.2.2. Linearization

5.5.3. Ellipsis. Information Structure. Movement

5.5.3.1. Ellipsis

5.5.3.2. Intermediate Proposal I

5.5.3.3. Information Structure

5.5.3.4. Movement

5.5.3.5. Intermediate Proposal II

5.5.4. An analysis of quantitative data

5.5.4.1. Questionnaire analysis

5.5.4.2. Configurations with the SUPINE

5.5.4.3. Configurations with PREVERBAL vs. POSTVERBAL SUBJECT

5.5.4.4. Configurations with PREPOSITIONAL COMPLEMENTS

5.5.4.5. Configurations with PREPOSITIONAL ADVERBIALS

5.5.4.6. Configurations based on VOICE differences

5.5.4.7. Configurations with ADJECTIVES

5.5.4.8. Configurations with ADVERBS

5.5.5. Final Arguments

5.5.5.1. On subjects, direct objects and prepositional objects

5.5.5.2. On adverbs

5.5.5.3. On adjectives
5.5.5.4. On predicates and main clauses
5.6. The relevance of the Kruskal-Wallis test
5.7. The study of EAO adverbials. Consequences for further research
5.8. Conclusions

CAPITOLUL 6 **The Derivation Process of EAO adverbials**
6.1. Introduction
6.2. În afară că/În loc să
6.3. În afară de
6.4. În afara
6.5. Conclusions

CAPITOLUL 7 **Conclusions**

ABSTRACT

Key Words: ellipsis, functional arch-category, criterium features, left periphery, asymmetric relation, Minimalism, Distribuited Morphology

The present paper, **Adverbial Restructuring in Contemporary Romanian**, deals with the study of exception, addition and opposition (EAO) adverbials in contemporary Romanian, and studies these structures from the point of view of Generative Minimalism and Distributed Morphology. The main aim of the thesis is that of suggesting a unified account of the derivation pattern of EAO adverbial subtypes, namely PPs (prepositional phrases) and CPs (complementiser phrases).

The thesis which the present paper defends with quantitative and qualitative arguments is: *Adverbial restructuring in contemporary Romanian represents one of the syntactic phenomena which highlights the interplay between the timing at which a syntactic process takes place and the morphological means used by syntax.*

The paper which spans across 221 pages consists of 7 chapters and 2 annexes, the content of which will be presented in the lines that follow.

Chapter 1, **Methodology**, presents, on the one hand, the qualitative methods used in the make-up of the study proper, the principles, the process of selecting the theories to follow, and, on the other hand, the quantitative methods used, namely the process of selecting and analyzing the data.

From the qualitative point of view, the paper investigats the phenomena around EAO adverbials through the lens of present-day Generativism, trying to compensate for the lack of studies in this matter. In order to highlight the features of these structures, several phenomena were taken into account: comparative constructions, coordination processes, ellipsis and Movement.

From the quantitative point of view, the paper benefits from the evidence driven from a corpus we selected from the media, as well as from the results of an acceptability and introspection test which was administered to the 45 participants who willingly agreed to take part in the study. The participants who were split in three groups were selected so that they all meet uniform criteria in matters of education level and sex distribution. The test, consisting of 120 sentences dealing with the EAO adverbial distribution, was designed so that it required the participants to attribute an acceptability value of 1-5 on a Lickert scale. The results were then grouped and the average of each group was calculated for each set of sentences (focusing on a particular issue). The averages were later used to back-up theoretical insight and the acceptability rates were used within the non-parametric test Kruskal-Wallis in order to establish the grammar points which envision statistically significant differences. All these operations were performed in order to identify the areas which are susceptible of parametric change. The non-parametric test was performed via the SPSS program.

In conclusion, the methodology combines theoretical insight with actual language use. By devising this research scenario, we wanted to underline the role of data in formulating an argument, on the one hand, and, to clearly specify the concepts to be used. Thus, the issue of EAO adverbials is formulated as an open subject, so that future research may bring other arguments via other data sets and other theoretical premises.

Chapter 2, **Theoretical Background**, presents the principles, concepts and implications of two present-day linguistic trends in Generativism, Minimalism (phase theory) and Distributed Morphology, in order to configurate a derivational scenario for EAO adverbials. The presentation also took into account theories which display a mixed approach of syntax, thus merging features of Minimalism and Distributed Morphology, but which focus on the set of discourse-semantics interpretable features (Rizzi's criterium approach), on the way in which functional nodes are associated with their phonetic support (Uriagereka's Multiple Spell-Out), on asymmetric relations (Kayne's Linear Correspondence Axiom), on the conditions of a correct derivation (Frampton&Gutmann's Crash-Proof Syntax) and on the differential insertion of lexical vs. functional elements (Emond's „Syntacticon" approach).

The evaluation of all these approaches lead us to conclude that, in order to explain the syntax of EAO adverbials, it is necessary to set the mechanisms that license and identify a given structure, but also to establish a step-by-step derivational account that does not neglect the different insertion of lexical vs. functional elements.

In conclusion, the study of EAO adverbials envisions the necessity of a theoretical, plural approach. The complexity of the underlying phenomena highlights the fact that the theoretical arguments of present-day trends in syntax may be reunited in a convergent analysis. Moreover, considering that the studies discussed in this chapter deal mainly with English, it is interesting to see the way in which these accounts can apply to Romanian.

Chapter 3, **Descriptive Data. Preliminary Analysis**, identifies the functional elements expressing an EAO meaning, the syntactic functions integrated by the EAO frame, as well as the morphological variation of the latter. The chapter is descriptive, has a typological purpose and is organised on neo-Structuralist principles. By identifying adverbial types and their specific way of realisation, the main features of the EAO syntactic relation are formulated.

Thus, we identified the following EAO adverbials types:

- în afară că/în loc să/pe lângă că + finite mood
- în afară de/în loc de + non-finite mood (supine/infinitive)
- în afară de/în loc de + DP (Accusative)
- în afara/în locul + DP (Genitive)
- decât + DP (Nominative)

- decât + any syntactic group

In conclusion, the chapter offers a sketch of the main elements to be analysed in order to highlight the features of EAO adverbials: the functional node type, the complement type integrated by the functional node, the nature of the syntactic processed involved.

Chapter 4, **Literature Review**, represents a critical reading of the studies dealing with EAO adverbials in Romanian. Because the studies dealing with this issue are mainly Structuralist, the literature review describes the phenomenon accurately, but also sets the limits that these studies encountered.

Far from constituting a solved issue, EAO adverbials are analysed from the point of view of several ideas: the morphological status of *în afară de/că/-a; în loc să/de/-ul; pe lângă că/pe lângă*, the presence or absence of a structural antecedent for the EAO adverbial, the nature of the common-ground element and the role it plays in the restructuring process. The information analysed proves that the EAO phenomenon is not dealt with holistically, that not all EAO subtypes are taken into consideration and that many conclusions are formulated in an axiomatic manner. Moreover, the data set used by these studies is limited and a study dealing with the actual use of these EAO adverbials is completely lacking.

In conclusion, the chapter identifies the observations and the conclusions reached up to this moment, by underlining their explanatory limitations. Taking into account these limitations, the paper sets out to offer an argument that can overcome these drawbacks and propose an integrated account of EAO adverbials.

Chapter 5, **Proposal. A New Type of Argument**, offers the solution to the problems identified in earlier chapters and is centred around a common derivational process for PPs and CPs. In order to formulate a coherent proposal, the chapter debates the following:

- the similarity between the way in which comparatives and EAO adverbials work and are structured;
- the idea that there are two sentence-levels which obey: structural parallelism, semantic parallelism at the level of the common element;
- the similarity of the EAO adverbials with that of the coordination process;

- the presence of asymmetric c-command and the elements that enable it: the timing of ellipsis, the late insertion of the functional element, the formal features that attract the EAO variable or the domain of the EAO variable;
- the importance of the acceptability rates for the various EAO structures, in order to test the validity of the formulated theoretical hypotheses;
- establishing the premises of a future research hypothesis: the identification of the mechanisms which enable the activation of formal features from a neutral deep-type structure.

The empirical data have shown that in all the examples dealing with an EAO type of relation, there is an equivalence between PPs and CPs. The equivalence is perfect from a semantic point of view. Syntactically, the equivalence is dissimulated by the morphological difference of the nodes which give specificity to the resulted EAO group, namely preposition or complementiser. Identifying a common derivation for these two subtypes had to take into account this semantic equivalence, by also avoiding to by-pass the obvious morphological difference.

First, as a premise, comparatives are the constructions which exhibit the best structural resemblance with EAO adverbials, because, as with EAO, in the case of Comparatives the derivation distinction between PPs and CPs is an active issue. From this point of view, the studies so far consider that in the case of PPs, these are merged directly to an already formed base, while the CPs are merged in the base structure. With both subtypes, it is considered that the structural parallelism relation is an active principle and that ellipsis plays a role in both the derivation of PPs and CPs. The problem is that if both these ideas are accepted, then a paradox emerges: the presence of ellipsis, but the impossibility to identify its licensing mechanisms, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the idea that the PP is merged post-cyclically, which implies the absence of any ellipsis.

Second, another premise consists of the conclusions reached by recent studies on coordination, namely identifying a Coordination Group governed by X-Bar rules, where there is a structural asymmetry between the two conjunct, but not a logical one.

Third, a last premise consists of the idea that in order to provide complete syntactic derivations, the analysis needs to take into account Chomskyan “phases”. A phase represents the sentential/propositional unit which is the locus of the syntactic phenomena of the Narrow Syntax. A phase is a closed circuit Numeration-Syntax-Spell-Out-LF/PF. After the phase projects a

centre and a specifier, it will mark its left periphery, the property of which is to attract from within the phase the elements which will be active parts for the next, superior phase. Once the elements which are relevant for the forthcoming phase are attracted to the left periphery, the elements which have not undergone movement and which constitute the Phase Complement will represent the part of the phase which cannot undergo any more change. Thus, the derivational scenario was guided by this approach in order to offer a proposal powerful enough to explain the problematic areas identified so far in relation to adverbial restructuring.

In view of this, it was observed that ellipsis may be an active principle at two levels of representation, pre- and post-Spell-Out. In the first case, the computation will yield a PP, whereas, in the second case, the computation will yield a CP.

However, the identification of the two ellipsis types is not enough if it is not correlated with the complementary distribution of the functional nodes P/C/D which are the final part of the EAO subordinating elements. The alternative manifestation of one of these three values goes well with the idea that, as a whole, they constitute an initial arch-category the values of which become manifest as a consequence of syntactic processes. Further additional evidence was brought to support this claim, namely:

- the possibility to insert an incidental phrase or sentence within the so-called EAO subordinating elements;
- the fact that *de* functions as a default marker of the DP for case purposes;
- the fact that *de* is not part and parcel of the Supine mood;
- the fact that the option for either of *de* vs. *–a/-ul* represents a different way of making manifest the case value, Accusative or Genitive.

These observations helped us conclude that the EAO subordinating elements make their value (P/C/D) manifest in the Narrow Syntax as a result of attracting in its domain a variable, which thus becomes its linear complement. A very important formal feature which marks the EAO variable is [Kon], Kontrast.

Therefore, by linking ellipsis with the idea of an underlying syntactic dynamic process, we noticed that EAO structures initially start off from two propositional structures. The element which enters an EAO relation with its correlative is either sent-off to the left periphery of the phase, where the EAO operator attracts it for feature checking, the result of which being a PP, or

the domain which includes the EAO element is attracted by the corresponding operator, the result of which being a CP.

In the case of PPs, the phase complement wherefrom the EAO element was extracted is sent-off to Spell-Out, for non-pronunciation. This type of ellipsis or non-pronunciation has a constitutive role.

In the case of CPs, the ellipsis is optional, because it acts post-Spell-Out. It is rather a stylistic, rather than constitutive process which acts upon the CPs which select a non-finite IP. The result consists of syntactic structures headed by *de* + APs (adjectival phrases) or AdvPs (adverbials phrases).

In order to substantiate this argument the acceptability rates of the three participant groups (15 participants/group) who responded to the 120-sentence questionnaire were taken into account. In order to test the validity of our theoretical intuitions we compared our predictions against the acceptability average the groups provided for a given set of sentences, as well as the results of the Kruskal-Wallis test. The test revealed a statistically significant difference between groups 1 vs. 2 and 1 vs. 3, in those situations where the element attracted by the EAO operator is the complement of an initial PP.

A further research proposal is the study of a mixed Movement phenomenon, argumental and non-argumental.

In conclusion, the chapter proposes the following solution of integrating the EAO subtypes into one derivational scenario:

- the necessity to construct a derivational pattern via phases, the properties of which are relativised at interface levels;
- advocating for a functional arch-category for the P/C/D categories;
- the existence of an underspecified level of representation for functional elements;
- the manifestation of one of the three values P/C/D according to the presence or absence of the variable in the left periphery, as well as the option of sending the phase complement for non-pronunciation or not.

Chapter 6, **The derivation process of EAO adverbials**, offers a piecemeal presentation of the way in which the EAO adverbials are generated. By providing these examples, the features of our proposal are highlighted in practice.

The Merge process involves two possibilities:

- either the Operator attracts the syntactic domain of the variable;
- or the Operator attracts the variable itself.

If the operator attracts the domain which contains the variable, the adverbial will take the shape of a CP. If the operator attracts the variable only, the adverbial will take the shape of a PP.

In order for the Operator to attract the variable and to yield a PP, it is necessary that:

- the variable move in the left periphery of its phase;
- the ellipsis process be active on this phase complement (which is the result of movement) before Spell-Out

a. $[\alpha 1 \ldots \beta 2_{Kon}]\ [\alpha 1 \ldots \beta 1]$

b. Insert the [Kon] marked element and move the variable in Spec,Kon

c. $[_{Spec}\beta 2_i\ [OP_{Kon}\ [\beta 2_i \ldots [\alpha 1 \ldots t_{\beta 2}]]]]$

In order for the Operator to attract the domain of the variable and to yield a CP, it is necessary that:

- the variable not move to the left periphery of its phase;
- the ellipsis process act only post-Spell-Out (but in a limited manner, as a stylistic phenomenon)

a. $[\alpha 1 \ldots \beta 2_{Kon}]\ [\alpha 1 \ldots \beta 1]$

b. Insert the [Kon] mrked element and move the domain

În conclusion, the chapter offers examples of each EAO subtype, by offering derivations and tree representations which start-off from Numeration level and reach the final structure.

Chapter 7, **Conclusions**, presents the three major aspects of our argument : the existence of a functional arch-category for P/C/D in Romanian, the idea that ellipsis may occur at different timing in the computation, as well as the fact that the syntactic derivation of EAO structures involves phase theory with Kayne's approach.