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SYNTHETIC VERSUS ANALYTIC VERBAL FORMS IN ROMANIAN AND ENGLISH.

CONTRASTIVE STUDY.

DIACHRONIC AND SYNCHRONIC PERSPECTIVE

ABSTRACT

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Abstract

The thesis entitled *Synthetic versus analytic verbal forms in Romanian and English. Contrastive Study. Diachronic and synchronic perspective* represents a contrastive study which targets the illustration of the structural differences and similarities between the Romanian verbal forms and the English ones, during the period of the 16th – 18th centuries and nowadays, study based upon a Romanian-English linguistic material consisted of religious and publicist texts.

The objectives of the study are:

1. the observation of the frequency of the synthetic and analytic verbal forms in Old Romanian and Early Modern English;
2. the follow-up of the frequency of the synthetic and analytic verbal forms in Modern Romanian and Modern English;
3. the identification of the direction of evolution of the verbal forms in Romanian and English to a character predominant synthetic or analytic;
4. the contrastive analysis of the differences and the similarities between the verbal forms in Romanian and English diachronically and synchronically.

The organisation of the thesis

The study consists of two parts: one part dedicated to the diachronic analysis (*Synthetic and analytic verbal forms in Romanian and English. Diachronic perspective*) and one part dedicated to the synchronic analysis (*Synthetic and analytic verbal forms in Romanian and English. Synchronic perspective*) of the verbal forms attested by the two languages during the period of the 16th – 18th centuries, one theoretic chapter (*General techniques and concepts used*), *Introduction* and *Conclusions*. Besides these ones, the work provides an annex also which contains the corpus of Romanian and English texts used for the exemplifications offered into the study.

In the first chapter of the present work (*General techniques and concepts used*) we offer a presentation of the contrastive analysis method based on the corpus of texts, and also of the peculiarities of the lexical-grammatical class of the verb. Also, there are discussed the relations between the contrastive analysis method and the corpus of texts as a tool, between the grammatical categories developed by the verb, as well as the perspectives of which these relations were addressed from their appearance and during their evolution until today. So, the chapter is organised in five subchapters: in the first subchapter we analyse the objectives and the finality of the study, in the second subchapter we develop a description of the work method used in our study, namely the contrastive analysis method. We realized, into this subchapter, a definition and a delimitation of the domain, as well as a classification of the types developed by this method. The distinct periods when there were initiated important projects based on the contrastive analysis method (large projects during the 60s-70s) and the reinitiating, in the 90s, of this type of projects, after a decline period of

the domain, determined us to realize also a brief historical background of the important projects developed. In the third subchapter we analysed the corpus of texts or the linguistic corpus as a working tool adopted in our study, tool of what depends a well practice of the contrastive analysis. So, we realised a definition and a historical background of the domain, providing a classification of the types of corpus realised throughout time and in relation with the technological evolution. We specified some observations regarding the composition of our own corpus of texts required for the applied part of our study. The corpus built by us is divided in two types: historic corpus (of old texts from the 16th, the 17th and the 18th centuries) for the diachronic study and parallel corpus which implies the first type too, because we included texts from the both languages, both for synchrony and for diachrony. Also, we made some specifications on the application of the contrastive method in the text, both from synchronic and from diachronic perspective. In the fourth subchapter we realized a brief contrast between the structures of the verbal forms in the two languages, respectively between Romanian and English, in order to underline the differences regarding the synthetic or analytic character of these structures, character which will be materialized with eloquent examples selected of the corpus' texts. Likewise we illustrated the relation established between a contrastive analysis and a corpus of texts, as well as the relation between the contrastive analysis and the synchronic and diachronic perspective. The fifth subchapter consists of an introduction into the problem of the Romanian and English verb in order to offer a perspective upon the specialists' opinions of the two linguistic areas. Thus, we realized a synthesis of these opinions both from traditional and from modernist perspective. Combining and contrasting the definitions, the characterizations and the classifications of which the verb class disposes, as well as the grammatical categories of mood, tense and aspect the verb develops, we will state a difference of emphasis, of perspective and of approach, not only between Romanian and English as different languages, but also between the successive periods of the evolution of each of the two languages. The divergent points appear mostly among the opinions expressed by the Romanian specialists and the English ones, but inside the same language, among the traditional and the modern perspectives.

The second chapter (*Synthetic and analytic verbal forms in Romanian and English. Diachronic perspective*) presents the diachronic evolution of the synthetic and analytic verbal forms in Romanian and in English, during the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. This chapter is structured into three subchapters classified on the chronologic criterion and it approaches the verbal forms individually, providing a large inventory of specialized examples for each mood, tense, person and number. These examples are intended to illustrate the actual situation in each of the two languages, diachronically, following the direction of evolution of these forms. The selected material helps us to create an image upon the predominance of one or another character one language can have by its morphologic structures, between the synthetic and the analytic type.

In the first subchapter, we approach the synthetic and analytic verbal forms in Romanian and in English existent in the religious texts selected for the 16th century, respectively, for Romanian we chose to work on Coresi's text, *Carte cu învăţătură*, 1581, and for English we worked on Matthew's text, *New Testament*, Rhemes, 1582.

In the second subchapter we advance our study to the period of the 17th century when the structures start to change in comparison to those ones identified during the previous period. We chose to work for this century on the biblical text choosing the version *Biblia 1688*, Mitropolia Bucureştilor edition, for Romanian, and the version *King James Holy Bible*, 1611, for English. We added another two texts which we considered important for our study, for Romanian *Psaltirea în versuri* by Dosoftei (1673), and for English *Psalms* by Coverdale (1662).

In the third subchapter dedicated to the analysis of the usual verbal forms in the 18th century, we selected as working texts, for Romanian Gabriel Ştrempel edition (1972) of the volume *Opere* by Antim Ivireanu, and for English, *The Book of Common Prayer,* manuscript by John Stuart (1717).

The third chapter (*Diachronic contrastive study upon the situation of the verbal forms in Romanian and English in the period between the 16th and the 18th centuries*) is a contrastive one which takes the material registered in the second chapter and it realizes based on this material a contrastive study meant to illustrate, with suggestive examples, the synthetic and the analytic degree of the verbal forms existent in the old version of the two languages. The study will reveal a similarity among the verbal forms in the two languages superior to the situation illustrated by the present language facts. This similarity results of the multitude of periphrastic forms the verb in Old Romanian showed comparing with the numerous grammatical suffixes received by the verb in different tenses in the Old English. Each one of these peculiarities of the studied period (Romanian periphrastic forms, respectively the English endings) diminished in the meantime with the evolution and the modernization of the language, one of them being totally removed until the end of the 18th century. The analysis of this evolution shows us that Romanian and English, radically opposed as structure today, the English language being an analytical predominant one, while the Romanian language is a mostly synthetic language, they were, before the standardization of the modern literary language, much more closed structurally talking. This closeness is justified, in the specialty literature, by the religious text translators' fidelity for the source texts taken from Latin or Greek.

If in the second and in the third chapter we realized the diachronic study of the verbal forms in Romanian and in English during the 16th – 18th centuries, in the fourth chapter (*Synthetic and analytic verbal forms in Romanian and English. Synchronic perspective*) we will concentrate on the situation of the synthetic and the analytic verbal forms existent and used in the contemporary period in Romanian and in English basing our study on publicist texts. Based upon some suggestive

examples extracted of the present day media, in the two languages, it is demonstrated the predominant synthetic or analytic character of each of the two languages.

The facts of present Romanian language prove an orientation of the verbal structures from analytic to synthetic. The numerous periphrastic verbal constructions in Old Romanian (especially during the 16th – 17th centuries) gradually diminished until the 18th century as it can be observed of the information provided in the second chapter dedicated to the diachronic study.

The reality exposed by the English language facts proves a predominance of the analytic ways of construction the parts of speech. The verbal constructions synthetically formed are relatively few and thus there are many homonymous verbal forms:

> „Yet many grammatical distinctions are not marked on verbs in English. For example, there is no difference between the verb form for first person present tense (e.g. *I walk*), second person present tense (*you walk*), and the infinitive of regular verbs (*to walk*)." (Biber et al. 2002: 115).

The fifth chapter (*Synchronic contrastive study upon the present situation of the verbal forms in Romanian and English*) is the second contrastive chapter in the present work, chapter which takes the material registered in the fourth chapter and realizes basing on it a contrastive study which illustrates with suggestive examples the degree of synthetic and analytic verbal forms existent in the present day variants of the two languages. The study reveals a difference of the situation specific to the old period by establishing many differences among the verbal forms existent nowadays in the two languages. These differences result of the multitude of analytic forms the verb shows in the present day English contrastively with the synthetic verbal forms built with numerous grammatical suffixes at different tenses, in Old English.

The sixth chapter (*Contrastive study between the situation of the verbal forms in Romanian and English during the 16th - 18th centuries and the present day situation of the verbal forms in Romanian and English*) consists of a contrastive study between the situation in old period and the one in the actual period among the verbal forms in Romanian and in English. This chapter is based on the information obtained in the contrastive chapters (the third and the fifth chapters) and it aims to realize a clear image upon the differences between the verbal forms in the two languages in diachrony and in synchrony.

The sixth chapter consists of four subchapters of which the first subchapter is reserved to the identification of the similarities between the old version and the present version inside each language, respectively inside the Romanian language and inside the English language, while the second subchapter is reserved to the analysis of the differences between the old version and the present version inside the Romanian language and inside the English language. In the third subchapter there are identified and analysed the similarities and the differences between the verbal forms in Romanian and English, during the old period and nowadays. In the fourth subchapter it is

realised a comparison among the two situations exposed in the third subchapter, respectively the situation of the report between the two languages in diachrony and the situation in synchrony. On the basis of the identification of the similarities and the differences between the two languages in diachrony and in synchrony, inside this subchapter we illustrated graphically the evolution of the English language from synthetic to analytic and of the Romanian language from analytic to synthetic. The direction to which each of the two languages tends nowadays by the verbal forms used and recognized by the specialty works, after the periods of transformations during the 16th – 18th centuries, demonstrates that we deal with two completely divergent languages , languages which also presented, in diachrony, tendencies to convergence points. However, nowadays, the differences are numerical superior to the similarities the verbal forms in Romanian and in English present.

The theoretical and methodological frame of the thesis

The actual thesis was elaborated as a study which combines the contrastive analysis method with the corpus of texts as a working tool or as a secondary method without which the contrastive analysis method is not able to generate truthful results. The study has as model up-to-date contrastive researches published both in the country and abroad, researches which have a real utility both because they provide new tracks in the academic area and because they are tools that facilitate the teaching and learning of foreign languages. The thesis has as the start point the different structural character Romanian and English present nowadays. Observing the difference between a predominant synthetic language (the Romanian language) and a predominant analytic language (the English language), we straightened our attention to the lexical-grammatical class of the verb. Being given the fact that from our first consultations of the bibliography specific to the subject it is easily observed that the verbal forms used today by the native speakers of Romanian, respectively of English, were not always the same, but they suffered multiple modifications during the time, from the very first attestations of written language dated back about the 16th century in Romanian, and much earlier in English, and until the standardisation of the modern literary version of Romanian and English languages, we considered required the approach of a double perspective. So we researched the situation of the verbal forms in the two languages both from diachronic and synchronic perspective in order to illustrate the evolution of the verbal forms during the 16th – 21st centuries. Representing a contrastive study, the actual thesis highlights the similarities, but especially the differences between the Romanian and English verbal forms, between the situation in the old period and the one in the present.

The corpus of texts

For the truthfulness and the utility of the study, we have selected all the illustrative examples of direct sources and we organised them into a specialized corpus for the present paper. In order to

build the corpus we took care of the age of the used texts, choosing the religious texts in the part of diachronic analysis and we took care of the stylistic diversity which the texts offer choosing the publicist texts in the part of synchronic analysis.

In the diachronic part, we used the following religious texts for the exemplifications: for the 16th century period we selected, for Romanian, a text by Coresi, *Carte cu învăţătură*, 1581, and, for English, a text by Matthew, *New Testament*, Rhemes, 1582; for the period of the 17th century we chose to work on the biblical text, choosing for the version *Biblia 1688*, Mitropolia Bucureștilor edition, for Romanian, and for the version *King James Holy Bible*, 1611, for English, where we added another two texts which we considered important for our study, for Romanian *Psaltirea în versuri* by Dosoftei (1673), and for English *Psalms* by Coverdale (1662); for the 18th century, we selected as work texts, for Romanian Gabriel Ştrempel edition (1972) of the volume *Opere* by Antim Ivireanu, and for English, *The Book of Common Prayer,* manuscript by John Stuart (1717).

In the synchronic part, we used publicist texts which offer an important quantity of material, but also stylistic diversity. We selected both publications with informative character and publications with satirical character. Thus, we used, for Romanian, the following publications, in electronic form for accessibility: *Adevărul, Academia Caţavencu, Agerpres, Dilema Veche, Evenimentul, Jurnalul Naţional, Ştiri pe surse* and *Timpul.md*. For English we accessed the following publications, also in electronic form: *The Daily Beast, The Daily Squib, The Guardian, Private Eye* and *The Times.*

The results of the research

Realizing a comparison between the situation in Old Romanian language and the situation in Modern Romanian language, we can assert, on the basis of the provided examples that we assist at a transformation of a predominant analytic language into a language especially synthetic.

On the other hand, inside the English language, the things are much more different. The evolution of the verbal structures attested in the texts of English language appeared in the period between the 16th century and the contemporary century consists of the passing from the structures with a complex synthetic character and dependent by the subject form to structures with analytic character, more independent and very little variable.

We will present lower the common features (similarities) and the specific features (differences) which characterized the verbal forms in Romanian and English in diachrony, but which are not available anymore nowadays, after the completion of the process of standardization of each of the two languages, but also similarities and differences between the verbal forms in the two languages identifiable in synchrony, but unspecific to the old period.

a) The situation between the two languages in diachrony:

Similarities among Romanian verbal forms and English verbal forms in the old period:

1. We distinguish structural similarities between synthetic forms of the Present Tense before the standardization of the English language, when the negative and interrogative Present were formed without the operator *do/does*.

> „Căutaţi spre păsările ceriului, că *nu seamănă*, nece *seaceră*, nece *adună* în jitniţe, şi tatălu vostru den ceri *hrăneaşte* eale!" (Coresi 1581: 215).
>
> *versus*
>
> „Behold the soules of the ayre, that they *sow not*, neither *reape*, nor *gather* into barnes: and your heavenly father *feedeth* them." (Matthew 1582: 16).

2. The periphrastic Romanian Imperfect present only in the Old period is resembled structurally with the English Past Continuous.

> „Irod, împărat Iudeii, carele *au fost avînd* muiare pre Mariamna" (Ivireanul 1972: 317).
>
> *versus*
>
> „Then Herod when he saw that he was mocked of the wisemen, *was exceeding* wroth and sent forth" (BCP 1717: 17).

3. The Romanian Simple Perfect is resembled with the Past Simple without the operator *did*, when they are morphologic synonyms.

> „Şi *săvîrşi* Dumnezău a şasea zi faptele lui care le-au făcut; şi *odihni* Dumnezău a şaptea zi de toate faptele Lui care au făcut." (BB, *Fac*, 2, 1-3).
>
> *versus*
>
> „And on the seventh day God *ended* his worke, which he had made: And he *rested* on the seventh day from all his worke, which he had made." (KJB, *Gen*, 2, 2).

4. The periphrastic Past Perfect specific to the Old Romanian language is resembled with the English Past Perfect Simple.

> „Oprită fu bunătatea de pre pământu dentr'acealea zile de ce *fusease zisu*: Adecă, că se voru lăsa casele voastre pustii" (Coresi 1581: 193).
>
> *versus*
>
> „certaine of the watchmen came into the citie, and told the cheefe Priestes al things that *had been done"* (Matthew 1582: 84).

5. The Romanian Previous Future frequent in the Old Romanian and almost absent nowadays develops a relation of morphological synonymy with the Future Perfect Simple in English with which it is resemble in terms of structure.

> „Gura amu a Elisavthei numai ce slujiia, ca şi gura feateei de slujiia celuia ce era în maţele ei, fiiulu lu Dumnezeu, că de *nu vrea fi* feciorulu *jucatu-se*, *nu vrea fi prorocitu* Elisavtha." (Coresi 1581: 493).
>
> *versus*
>
> „Then the ende, when he *shal have delivered* the kingdom to God and the Father, when he *shal have abolished* al principalitie and authoritie and power." (Matthew 1582: 465).

6. The Imperative Mood specific to the 2nd person is synthetic in the both languages, even in negations, until the standardization of the English language which imposes the use of the operator *do/does*.

> *„Nu vă câştigareţi* amu grăindu: ce vremu mânca? sau: ce vremu bea? sau: în ce ne vemu îmbrăca?" (Coresi 1581: 215-216).
>
> *versus*
>
> „*Be not* careful therefore, saying, what shal we eate, or what shal we drinke, or wherewith shal we be covered?" (Matthew 1582: 16).

Differences among Romanian verbal forms and English verbal forms in the old period:

1.   The negative and interrogative forms of Romanian Compound Perfect differ by the synthetic Past Simple when these structures are formed without the operator *did,* until the standardization of the language.

> „Că iaste Dumnezeu spre loculu acesta, eu *n'am ştiutu*." (Coresi 1581: 230).
> *versus*
> „I *came not* to call the iust" (Matthew 1582: 150).

2.   The periphrastic Simple Perfect differs by the equivalent structures of Past Simple formed without the operator *did*.

> „Și *fu auzind* sluga lui Avraam cuvintele lor" (BB, *Fac*, 24, 52).
> *versus*
> „I did call upon the Lord with my voice, and he *heard* me out of his holy hill. I *laid* me down and *slept*, and *rose* up again; for the Lord *sustained* me." (Coverdale 1662: 9).

b)   The situation between the two languages in synchrony:

Similarities among Romanian verbal forms and English verbal forms nowadays:

1.   The synthetic Romanian Present is similar to the English Present Simple only in affirmative structures.

> „Sunt zile în care *merg* numai cu piciorul stâng" (JN, 14.08.2014).
> *versus*
> „I *walk* into Marianne Faithfull's apartment in Paris's sixth arrondissement" (T, 14.08.2014).

2.   The synthetic Romanian Imperfect is similar to the English Past Simple (when they are synonyms in terms of morphology) only in affirmative structures.

> „Pe unde *treceam*, maşinile *claxonau*, iar oamenii *se ridicau* în picioare şi *salutau*, spre stupoarea celor 14 cursanţi europeni, care *nu înţelegeau* cum de domnul Hagi e prieten apropiat cu toată lumea" (DV, 14.08.2014).
> *versus*
> „Shoshanna Roberts walked around Manhattan for 10 hours while a videographer *documented* her being street harassed" (G, 28.05.2015).

3.   The synthetic Romanian Simple Perfect is similar to the English Past Simple (when they are synonyms in terms of morphology) only in affirmative structures.

> „în scurt timp *fu* tuns cât de scurt admiteau moda redacţională şi exigenţele de club" (JN, 12.05.2014).
> *versus*
> „She *was* slim, with a narrow face and a large brown bob that appeared to be a wig" (T, 28.05.2015).

4.   The Romanian Compound Perfect is similar to the English Past Simple (when they are synonyms in terms of morphology) only in negative, interrogative and emphatic structures.

> „Dumnezeu *a pus* harul creaţiei în fiecare dintre noi" (A, 18.08.2014).
> *versus*
> „Naturally the low quality of immigrants that *did come* put a massive strain on the nation's welfare state" (DS, 25.02.2015).

5.   At the level of the Imperative Mood the synthetic forms for the 2nd person singular and plural are similar only in the affirmative.

> *„Încercaţi* să nu întârziaţi la serviciu!" (TMD, 20.08.2014).
> *versus*

„*try* these unforgettable horse riding experiences" (G, 20.08.2014).

6.   At the level of the Conjunctive Mood there is similarity between analytic Romanian verbal forms and the forms of analytic English Subjunctive formed with modals.

„What *shall* I *read* next?" (G, 29.04.2015).
versus
„sînt cărţi pe care le rezerv cîteodată pentru vară, de cele mai multe ori pentru că sînt mai consistente şi consider că în lunile de langoare estivală voi avea vreme *să le citesc* pe îndelete" (DV, 10.07.2015).

Differences among Romanian verbal forms and English verbal forms nowadays:

1.   The synthetic Romanian Present differs by the English Present Simple formed with the operator *do/does*.

„inima din dreapta *nu există*" (JN, 14.08.2014).
versus
„A hospital that *doesn't exist* spent almost £2 million on "operating and administrative" costs last year" (T, 20.08.2014).

2.   The synthetic Romanian Present differs by the analytic English Present Continuous which is much more frequent nowadays.

„Şi acum, în timp ce vorbesc cu tine, *studiez* în minte un pasaj din Dvorák" (DV, 20.08.2014).
versus
„I *am studying* for my finals at the moment" (G, 20.08.2014).

3.   The Romanian Imperfect exclusively synthetic differs by the English Past Continuous exclusively analytic.

„*Alergam* prin pădure şi *mă gîndeam* că ar trebui să fac şi altceva în timpul ăsta" (DV, 20.08.2014).
versus
„An international hunt for a critically ill five-year-old boy with a brain tumour *was continuing* last night as police said time *was running* out" (T, 31.08.2014).

4.   The Romanian Compound Perfect differs by the English Past Simple in affirmative structures.

„Mutarea de zilele astea *m-a ajutat* să fac bilanţul" (DV, 14.08.2014).
versus
„This book *helped* me to appreciate just how important the little things are" (G, 21.08.2014).

5.   The Romanian Past Perfect exclusively synthetic differs by the English Past Perfect Simple exclusively analytic.

„Anglia avea probabil cea mai bună echipă de după 1966, când *câştigase* unicul ei trofeu din istoria fotbalului" (A, 20.08.2014).
versus
„If Nelson Mandela really *had won*, he wouldn't be seen as a universal hero" (G, 20.08.2014).

6.   In negative and emphatic structures, the synthetic Romanian Imperative differs by the analytic English Imperative.

„Dacă vrei să vezi cât eşti de mic, *mergi* la Vatican" (A, 23.08.2014).
    versus
„*Do come*, I think you will like the governors" (T, 14.08.2014).

7.   The synthetic Romanian Imperative specific to the 2nd person singular and plural differs by the analytic English Imperative formed with *let('s)* specific to the 1st and the 3rd person singular and plural.

„Atenţie, *zîmbiţi,* sîntem filmaţi din dronă!” ([DV, 14.08.2014](#)).
versus
„So *let's be* clear” ([DB, 24.08.2014](#)).

8.   The Romanian Conjunctive is exclusively analytic and differs by the type I of synthetic English Subjunctive.

„Carevasăzică oricine poate *să spună* orice despre orice şi despre oricine” ([DV, 28.05.2015](#)).
versus
„I don't think anybody could ever look back at the 80s and *say* it wasn't a fun time” ([DB, 25.02.2015](#)).

9.   The Participle and the Gerund in Romanian present synthetic structures and differ by the Perfect Participle and Perfect Gerund in English.

10. All English verbal structures with progressive aspect are analytic and they differ by their equivalent Romanian verbal structures which do not grammaticalize this aspect.