



The Noun Phrase in Dosoftei's Writings. The Complement

Mihai-Andrei LAZĂR

PhD Student, Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania

ABSTRACT

In the present paper, we aim to analyze the noun phrase in Dosoftei's writings, focusing on the syntactic function of complement. The paper will be divided into two parts, the first one dealing with the theoretical framework and the second one being dedicated to the analysis of the investigative corpus. After providing an overview of the syntactic function of complement in both traditional and modern Romanian grammar, we will define the noun phrase and describe what kind of adjuncts it might select. Then, we will observe the peculiarities of the complement as a syntactic function introduced in the *Basic Grammar of the Romanian Language*, describing the types of nouns that select complements as their adjuncts, namely postverbal, postadjectival and relational nouns. As far as the investigative corpus is concerned, we will first discuss the class of substitution of the complement. We will then proceed to the description of complex noun phrases, in which complements co-occur with other syntactic positions, namely determiners, (denominative) modifiers and appositions. We will first discuss the internal structure of each noun phrase and then we will provide examples to support our demonstration. All in all, the examination of the investigative corpus will reflect the complex possibilities of structuring the noun phrase, illustrating the diversity of syntactic constructions in Old Romanian, as far as the complement is concerned.

Keywords: noun phrase, complement, postverbal nouns, postadjectival nouns, relational nouns.

Introduction

In the present paper, we aim to analyze the noun phrases in Dosoftei's writings, paying particular attention to those which have complements as adjuncts. We will first provide a theoretical overview of complements and then we will proceed to the analysis of the investigative corpus.

The corpus is represented by Dosoftei's main writings, namely, *Psaltirea în versuri* (DPV.1673) and *Viața și petrecerea svinților* (DVS.1682-6). We chose this corpus because of the great variety of syntactic patterns found in Dosoftei's writings. We will adopt the perspective exposed in the *Basic Grammar of the Romanian Language* (GBLR).

1. The theoretical framework

1.1. The syntactic function of complement in traditional Romanian grammar

In traditional Romanian syntax, the complement is a secondary part of the sentence which subordinates to a verb, an adjective, an adverb or an interjection. When interpreting a word as having the syntactic function of complement, it is therefore important to verify what part of speech it subordinates to. The complement is thus distinguished from the syntactic function of attribute, which subordinates to a noun, a pronoun or a numeral. Within the syntactic function of complement, there is a distinction between non-circumstantial complements (direct, indirect, expressing the agent) and circumstantial complements (of place, time, manner etc.) (DTG 2023: 147).

1.2. The syntactic function of complement in modern Romanian grammar

In modern Romanian grammar, the complement can be subordinated to a verb, an adjective, an adverb, an interjection, a preposition or even a noun functioning as its center¹. The complement is necessary to complete the meaning of its center, which dictates its form (imposing restrictions concerning case, preposition and word order) and assigns a thematic role. As far as the logical and semantic structure of a sentence is concerned, the complement corresponds to the internal arguments. Complements of the noun, which will be discussed in the present article (e.g., *fratele Mariei/Mary's brother*), should be distinguished from complements of verbs (e.g., *I-am dat o ciocolată./I gave him a chocolate.*), complements of adjectives (e.g., *dragă nouă/dear to us*), complements of adverb (e.g., *aidoma ei/like her*), complements of interjections (e.g., *lat-o!/There she is!*) and complements of prepositions (e.g., *lângă tine/near you*) (DTG 2023: 146).

1.3. The noun phrase

The noun phrase can be defined as that part of the sentence which has a noun, a pronoun or a number as its head, along all the constituents subordinated to it, known as adjuncts (e.g., *acea fată inteligentă pe care am întâlnit-o ieri/that smart girl I met yesterday*).

¹ For more details regarding this shift, see Adelina Patricia Băilă (2018b), *Uniqueness in the Romanian Syntax*, in „Journal of Romanian Literary Studies”, XXI, no. 1, p. 703.

In traditional Romanian grammar, the syntactic function specific to the noun phrase is the attribute.

In modern Romanian grammar, the syntactic function of the attribute is abandoned and replaced by other five syntactic positions: the determiner, the modifier, the possessor, the quantifier and the complement.

1.4. The syntactic function of complement as described in the *Basic Grammar of the Romanian Language*

The complement only occurs within the noun phrase under some special conditions, being required by certain types of nouns, namely postverbal (e.g., *ascultarea poveștii/the listening of the story*), postadjectival (e.g., *mândria bărbatului/the pride of this man*) and relational (e.g., *sora lui Mihai/Michael's sister*). These complements are strongly linked to the head-noun. The first two types of nouns retain their capacity to accept complements because they were originally verbs and adjectives, respectively, while the third type of nouns accepts complements because they are required in order to define a family or social relationship².

The complement can be expressed by a noun phrase in the genitive case (e.g., *prietena lui Andrei/Andrew's girlfriend*) or in the dative case (e.g., *soră tatălui/sister to my father*), by possessive adjectives (e.g., *fratele meu/my brother*), by possessive dative clitics (e.g., *sora-ți/your sister*), by prepositional phrases (e.g., *citirea de cărți/the reading of books*), by subordinate clauses introduced by a conjunction (e.g., *Dorința să plece în vacanță este mare./He wishes to go on a holiday.*) or by relative clauses (e.g., *Dorința oricui participă la olimpiadă este să câștige./Anyone who participates in the olympiad wants to win.*) (GBLR 2016: 82).

As far as postverbal nouns are concerned, the complement(s) internal to the noun phrase correspond(s) to one or more complements internal to the verbal phrase, as follows:

- subject: *Maria se întoarce./Mary returns.* (in the verbal phrase) corresponds to *întoarcerea Mariei/Mary's return* (in the noun phrase);
- subject and predicative name: *Unii oameni devin lideri./Some people become leaders.* (in the verbal phrase) corresponds to *devenirea unor oameni lideri/the becoming of some people leaders* (in the noun phrase);
- subject and direct object: *Maria citește o carte./Mary is reading a book.* (in the verbal phrase) corresponds to *citirea cărții de către Maria/the reading of this book by Mary* (in the noun phrase);
- direct and indirect object: *Acordă premii elevilor./He offers pupils prizes.* (in the verbal phrase) corresponds to *acordarea de premii elevilor/the offering of prizes to pupils* (in the noun phrase);
- direct and secondary object: *Îi învață pe copii o limbă străină./He teaches children a foreign language.* (in the verbal phrase) corresponds to *învațarea copiilor o limbă străină/the teaching of a foreign language to children* (in the noun phrase);

² The syntactic function of complement can thus be distinguished from the syntactic function of possessor within the noun phrase. For more details, see Adellina Patricia Băilă, (2018a), *Funcții sintactice vs funcții semantice în gramatica limbii române*, in „Dacoromania”, XXIII, no. 1, p. 20.

- direct object and predicative complement of the object: *Îl numesc director./I name him manager.* (in the verbal phrase) corresponds to *numirea lui director/he being named manager* (in the noun phrase);
- prepositional object: *Utilizează bețișoare./He uses chopsticks.* (in the verbal phrase) corresponds to *utilizarea bețișoarelor/the use of chopsticks* (in the noun phrase).

Of all these complements, only the subject and the direct object change their form in the noun phrase, while all the other types of complements preserve their original form from the verbal phrase.

As far as postadjectival nouns are concerned, the complement internal to the noun phrase corresponds to one or more complements internal to the adjectival phrase, as follows:

- prepositional object: *Copiii sunt solidari cu colegii lor./Children are solidary with their peers.* (in the adjectival phrase) becomes *solidaritatea copiilor cu colegii lor/ children's solidarity with their peers* (in the noun phrase);
- indirect object: *O rasă este superioară alteia./A certain breed is superior to the other.* (in the adjectival phrase) becomes *superioritatea unei rase asupra alteia/the superiority of a certain breed over another* (in the noun phrase) (GBLR 2016: 386-387).

Alexandru Nicolae observes that, within the noun phrase, the syntactic position of the complement is not unique³. For postverbal and postadjectival nouns, the original verbs and adjectives, respectively preserve all their complements when they become nouns, so that there may be more than one complement in the noun phrase. For example, there are three different kinds of complements in the verbal phrase *Profesorul acordă premii elevilor./The teacher (subject) offers his students (indirect object) prizes (direct object).*, which will correspond to three different complements in the noun phrase *acordarea de premii elevilor de către profesor/ the offering of prizes to his students by the teacher.* (Nicolae 2011: 639).

Remark: the determiner is the most important position within the noun phrase, having the function of referentializing the noun phrase and of enunciative integration. Therefore, there should be a determiner in any noun phrase. Consequently, under special conditions, i.e., is there is no other word which might function as a determiner, the complement itself becomes the determiner (e.g., in the noun phrase *tristețea sa/his sorrow*, the word *sa* functions as a complement, because there is already a determiner, *-a*, while in the noun phrase *a sa tristețe, a sa*, although it would normally be a complement, becomes the determiner, because there is no other word that may function as a determiner)⁴.

³ For a discussion regarding the uniqueness of the position of complement within the noun phrase, see Adela Drăguțoiu (2018), *Problema principiului unicității funcțiilor sintactice în gramatica românească*, in „Dacoromania”, XXIII, no. 1, p. 55.

⁴ For more details regarding this shift of syntactic position, see Lavinia Dălălău-Nasta (2018), *Observații privind funcțiile sintactice din grupul nominal*, in „Dacoromania”, XXIII, no. 1, p. 43.

2. Analysis of the investigative corpus

2.1. Class of substitution

The complement can be expressed by the following parts of speech:

- (a) proper noun in the dative case: *stăpân Moldovei/master of Moldavia* (DPV.1673, p. 4);
- (b) common noun in the dative case: *craiului hiică/the daughter of the philanderer* (DPV.1673, p. 100);
- (c) possessive adjective: *cu frații săi/with his brothers* (DPV.1673, p. 7);
- (d) personal pronoun in the genitive case: *cu cinstita lor maică/with their respected mother* (DVS.1682-6, p. 30).
- (e) pronominal phrase in the genitive case: *fiica Mării-tale/the daughter of Your Highness* (DVS.1682-6, p. 13).

2.2. Syntactic patterns containing complements

The complement can co-occur with other syntactic positions, illustrating a diversity of syntactic patterns, as follows:

- 1) determiner (definite article) + complement (possessive adjective): *cu frații săi/with his brothers* (DPV.1673, p. 7);
- 2) modifier (adjective) + determiner (definite article) + complement (possessive adjective) + apposition (common noun): *cu iubita sa hiică, cu doamna Maria/with his beloved daughter, lady Mary* (DPV.1673, p. 7);
- 3) modifier (adjective) + determiner (definite article) + modifier (adjective) + determiner (definite article) + complement (pronominal phrase in the genitive case) + modifier (relative clause): *iubita și-ntâi născuta fiica Mării-tale, carii ți i-au dăruit milostivul Dumnădzău acmu tineri în nuntă de bucurie/the beloved and first born daughter of Your Highness, who was given to you by the merciful God and now they are young and in a wedding of joy* (DVS.1682-6, p. 13);
- 4) modifier (adjective) + determiner (definite article) + complement (personal pronoun in the genitive case) + apposition (proper noun): *cu cinstita lor maică, svânta Sofie/with their beloved mother, saint Sophia* (DVS.1682-6, p. 30);
- 5) determiner (demonstrative adjective) + complement (common noun preceded by a preposition) + denominative modifier (proper noun) + modifier (relative clause) + modifier (adjective) + modifier (adjective): *de acel călcătoriu de leage Antalt, care toată lumea au turburat, cumplit și aspru/by that lawbreaker named Antalt, who unsettled everyone, terrible and harsh as he was* (DVS.1682-6, p. 41);
- 6) modifier (adjective) + determiner (definite article) + determiner (definite article) + complement (possessive adjective) + denominative modifier (proper noun) + modifier (relative clause): *preacuvioasa maica noastră Anna, ce ș-au pus numele bărbătește Eofimian/our most pious mother Anna, who called herself manly Eofimian* (DVS.1682-6, p. 89);
- 7) emphatic determiner (demonstrative adjective) + modifier (adjective) + determiner (definite article) + complement (possessive adjective) + denominative modifier (proper noun): *această preacuvioasă maica noastră Anna/our most pious mother Anna* (DVS.1682-6, p. 90);

- 8) modifier (adjective) + determiner (definite article) + determiner (definite article) + complement (possessive adjective) + denominative modifier (proper noun) + apposition (common noun): *preacuviosului părintele nostru Theodor, igumenul/our most pious father Theodor, the egumen* (DVS.1682-6, p. 112);
- 9) determiner (definite article) + complement (possessive adjective) + denominative modifier (proper noun) + apposition (common noun) + apposition (common noun): *părintele nostru Proclu, patriarhul de Țarigrad, ucinicul svântului și fericitului Ioan Rostul de Aur/our father Proclus, the patriarch of Țarigrad, apprentice to the holy and happy John Chrysostom* (DVS.1682-6, p. 127);
- 10) modifier (adjective) + determiner (definite article) + complement (possessive adjective) + apposition (four proper nouns): *preacuvioși părinții noștri și pustinici, Ioan, Iraclemon, Andrei și Theofil/our most revered and reclusive parents, John, Iraclemon, Andrew, and Theophilus* (DVS.1682-6, p. 168);
- 11) modifier (adjective) + determiner (definite article) + determiner (definite article) + complement (possessive adjective) + denominative modifier (proper noun) + apposition (common noun) + apposition (common noun): *preacuviosul părintele nostru Ioan, episcopul de Polivot, făcătorul de minuni/ our most venerable Father John, Bishop of Polivot, woner maker* (DVS.1682-6, p. 176).

3. Conclusions

In Dosoftei' writings, the complement internal to the noun phrase can be expressed by a common noun in the dative case, a proper noun in the dative case, a possessive adjective, a personal pronoun in the genitive case or a pronominal phrase in the genitive case. The complement might function as a unique adjunct within the noun phrase or might co-occur with other internal constituents, namely determiners, (denominative) modifiers and appositions. The complement most often subordinates to relational nouns describing family or social relationships but it might also subordinate to postverbal nouns. All in all, the syntactic patterns we have identified reflect the complex possibilities of structuring the noun phrase in Dosoftei's writings, illustrating the diversity of syntactic constructions in Old Romanian in the corpus to be analyzed, as far as the complement is concerned.

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