ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MODALITY AND ASPECT IN OLD ROMANIAN LANGUAGE[1]

Abstract*: The research intends to describe the modality and the aspect operator verbs, and aims to categorize the semi-auxiliaries in the diversity of the mood and the verbal tenses, as they appear in the old Romanian language.*

Keywords*: operator-verb, semi-auxiliary, predicative character.*

1.The main feature that connects the modality verbs with the aspect ones is their semi-auxiliary character. This character imposes the predication marks in a succession of verbs. The fundamental semantic role goes to the second component of the construction, nevertheless, most of the times, this component bears its own predicative marks. **1.1**.The modality/aspect verbs are different from the *predicative verbs* as it is emphasized in the definition: "Term adopted in Romanian grammar, distinct from the *auxiliary,* to terminologically suggest the characteristic of these verbs which lost only partially their autonomy, ranging from the status of autonomous verb and the one of grammatical mark (auxiliary)" (DSL, 2001: 463). In addition, the dissociation from the auxiliary verbs is highlighted here: "The *semi-auxiliary* vs. *auxiliary* discrepancy reflects mainly a difference of grammatical degree: the auxiliaries are grammatical instruments (...) while the semi-auxiliaries are grammatical instruments at the semantic and syntactical level only" (*ibidem*). The semantic cohesion of the group led to consider it among the syntactic units as complex verbal predicates, the respective verbs being operator-verbs (the modality and aspect ones).

1.2.The fact that the second verb possesses predicative marks, has led linguists to consider that the group could be set apart in two independent verbal predicates, which belong to different sentences, and if the second verb is in a non-personal mood, it would have to fulfill a function, also dissociated. The fact that the operator verbs impose the predication marks on the support verb, allows them to retain their semantic content, and occasionally some of them gain polysemous meanings being located next to the support verb. (cf. Minuț, 2002: 19). Therefore, *a putea* expresses the ability to do / to think (*Nu pot să vin; Nu pot să mă concentrez*…); the event (*Tu ai putea veni dacă te-ar lăsa*), the unreal situation (*Pot să câştig, dar n-am cu ce*), the concession (*Poți să lucrezi zi şi noapte, tot n-o să-ți iasă*) ... These meanings are determined by the context where they are located, as well as by the values of the their moods and tenses.

In conclusion, setting apart the group by semantic methods was abandoned, because the operator verbs have a polysemous character: "The verbs *a putea* and *a trebui* have the same syntactic behavior, however they do not possess modal semantic value in all their uses (these verbs act as operators, whenever they are located next to other verbs that constitute the semantic support) " (*GBLR*, 2010: 400).

1.3. Some linguists consider that these operators can be included in the auxiliary class when they have certain meanings. For example, D. Irimia thinks: "Semi-

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auxiliaries are closer to predicative verbs by keeping a lexical meaning (not the usual, but a derived one)" (Irimia, 2008: 187). The verb *a trebui* as semi-auxiliary "no longer expresses the need – its fundamental meaning as predicative verb – (...) and neither the sense of needing (...) In terms of semantics, the semi-auxiliary verb *a trebui* expresses mainly the eventuality, by introducing a hypothetical modal shade in the phrase's structure: *Negru trebuie să fie sufletul tău*" (Irimia, 2008: 188).

GALR does not consider this semantic argument "Aspect and modal verbs are verbs that either have an intrinsically aspectual / modal value (*începe / continuă / termină de învățat; poate învăța; trebuie să învețe*), or they gain it in the context of verbs' vicinity, which semantically own the lead role in the phrase, though syntactically, these verbs are subordinated" (*GALR,* 2008:330). The long dispute over the syntactic behavior, at the normative grammar level is yet to be settled.

2. Among the predicate typology there are: the complex verbal predicate with modal operator (PVCom) and the complex verbal predicate with aspectual operator (PVCoa). The difficulty appeared when the section/ text is being analyzed, but is solved by setting apart the complex structure in different predicates, which belong to different sentences: "For the syntactic level to analyze the group is solved by setting it apart, with the delimitation of a center and a subordinate" (*ibidem*: 201). The last edition of the normative grammar also specifies: "Most complex predicates have an internal structure which can also be analyzed as well; the operator-verb behaves like a syntactic predicate, which imposes formal restrictions (...) on the predicate's semantic support. The semantic support acts as a complement for the support verb" (*GBLR*, 2010: 400).

The group cannot be dissociated in these two cases: when the structure's accord is acquired by attraction (Ei trebuiau pedepsiți; Ei trebuiau să plece =PVCom) and when the structure belongs to these types: Copiii erau să cadă; Casa stă să cadă; Ion dă să plece; El trage să moară; Ia de mănâncă (=PVCoa)" (Găitănaru, 2010: 67).

3. The establishing of operator-verbs in terms of form, according to the century's norm and the different contexts in which they appear, either as (semi-) auxiliary verbs, or as predicative verbs, should be analyzed as facts of old language.

3.1. Formal analysis is mainly required for the important modal semi-auxiliaries: *a vrea, a trebui,* and *a putea*. Therefore, it was consulted one of the oldest texts translated (before 1520) *Psaltirea Hurmuzaki*.

3.1.1. The verb *a vrea* (lat. *volere*, cf. *MDA*, IV: 1314) has a complex paradigm, being the most commonly used predicative verb in this text: *Veseli-se-vor care vor dreptatea* (PH, 30^{v}/27); *Binre-i vruşi, Doamne* (72^{r}/2); *Trudi-se cinre vru în veaci* (41^{r}/9); *De cumândare şi aducere n-ai vrutu* (34^{r}/7); *Cinre e omul de va vrea viață* (28^{r}/13); *Carii vor vrea mie rreu* (59^{v}/4); *Nu stă în putearea cailor ară vrea, nice în vârtutea bărbaților ară vrea* (123^{v}/10); *Vrear-ară pre cei ce se tem* (123^{v}/11).

A statistic of these semi-auxiliaries (*a vrea, a trebui,* and *a putea*) based on Romanian language in the sixteenth century can be done only on a corpus of expanded texts, but in the analyzed text these semi-auxiliaries are less frequently encountered: *Vruiu se me aruncu* (71^{v}/11); *În leage lui nu vrură a îmbla* (65^{v}/10).

In Old Daco-Romanian and later in the sixteenth century Romanian language, there was not any difference between the predicative and the auxiliary value for the form of the verb *a vrea*: "After the sixteenth century the differentiated paradigm for the predicative function (with the radical *vrea/vre-*) has appeared. The analyzed texts allow us to observe the complete paradigm of *a vrea* used as predicative verb (the forms with auxiliary value ... are without any exception, coincidental with the paradigm we discuss here" (Zamfir, 2005: 59). The verb *a vrea* has three problematic forms for present tense

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indicative (due to its phonological evolution). Therefore, the second person singular, the first person plural, and the second person plural have several variants: "The forms for second person singular *veri* and first person plural *vom*, which, on the other side, represent two extreme types, *veri* being the most archaic form of evolution *velis – veri – vei*, as for *vom(u)* that was in last phase of use in the sixteenth century: *volemus- vrem(u)- vem(u)- văm(u) – vom(u)*" (*ibidem*: 62).

The morph-syntactic features of the verb *a vrea,* manifested since the old language, are apparently due to its weak transitivity: it does not engage in the transformation of passive acting, the imperative is not used, and the use of subjunctive mood (conjunctiv) is completely accidental. These features do not occur in the same way in the Slavic synonymous series: *a voi, a dori, a pohti* (*ibidem*: 61).

3.1.2. The verb *a trebui* is marked once – personal form – in *Psaltirea Hurmuzaki* (*nu trebuieşti*: 9^{v}/18), in a context in which it is not used as modal operator. Borrowed from Slavic (*трбоѵати*), the verb *a trebui* had to impose the impersonal form and the weak conjugation (with the suffix *-esc*), compared with the current norm. In old Daco-Romanian the forms with suffixes and the personal ones were predominant: *trebuescu, trebu(i)eşti, trebuiaste, trebu(i)esc, să trebuiască* (*ibidem*: 353).

The strong configuration (with emphasis on lexeme), coinciding with the single-member specialization, was originally supposed to be a dialectal innovation: "It is possible, but not certain, that the innovation started in Muntenia, and expanded in Moldavia and Transylvania, to a quite pronounced degree" (*ibidem*: 354).

3.1.3. Many of *a putea* forms coincide, in Old Romanian Language, with the dominant norm, the predicative value of *a putea*, as opposed to *a vrea* is reduced in *Psaltirea Hurmuzaki*: *Cându nu va putea tăriia mea* (60^{r}/9); *Nu veţi putea, talpele meale* (13^{v}/37). However, the use as modal semi-auxiliaries appears in more contexts: *Împânşi fură şi nu pot sta* (30^{r}/13); *prinsără-me fărădeleagile meale şi nu putui previ* (34^{v}/13); *aceale nu le putură împreura* (16^{v}/2). The major phonetic problem for the verb *a putea* is the widespread of consonants' softening under the influence of an IOT form: "First forms of indicative and subjunctive (conjunctiv) are used everywhere in the first half of the seventeenth century, preserving their singular and emphatic appearance, as earlier in the sixteenth century"(*ibidem*: 423): *eu poč(u), să poč(u)*.

The above described linguistic phenomenon only stopped in the following century: "We consider that this phenomenon's ceasing was very unlikely for the first form of *a putea* before 1700, however, Gheţie, (1994:122), gave a Transylvanian attestation from 1650 and a Banat one from 1697" (*ibidem*: 428).

3.2. In the *Morfosintaxa verbului în limba română veche* (Ana-Maria Minuţ), the analysis did not go through the whole system of the aspectual operator-verbs. Thus, the verbs belonging to the groups *a începe* and *a continua* were not approached. However, the verbs that assert the end of the action manifest a wide range of synonyms: *a curma* (p. 207); *a înceta* (p. 307); *a cunteni* (p. 334), *a potoli* (p. 359).

The verb *a începe*, unreported probably because it has no phonetic features, even though it occurs often, but it is very common. In *CV*, for example, it occurs as predicative verb, as well as auxiliary: *Începu Terrtilu a lua* (29^{r}/6); *Începură urii de ceia ce se nevoia iudei descântători a meni* (2^{v}/13-14); *că vreame e a înceape giudeţul* (81^{r}/7). The verb *a continua* cannot be found in old texts, obviously because it was borrowed from French recently. The synonym verb found in old texts is *a urma*. In *Psaltirea Hurmuzaki* the verb belonged to a different conjugation (*Sămânţa lui urmi-va pământul*, 20^{r}/13), and in *Index lexical paralel (secolul XVI)* (Dimitrescu, 1973) it is found only once.

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4. In the studies of Language History, the complex predicate is addressed, without specifying the analytical perspective on the structure "The use of the complex predicate, consisting of modal, and aspect verbs and infinitive, was more frequent than in the current language"(Frâncu, 2009: 344). On the other side, the rare use of the complex predicate is motivated, probably, by the massive replacing of infinitive with the subjunctive (conjunctiv) (Frâncu, 2000), although in *GALR* and *GBLR*, the complex predicate involves the realization with the infinitive, as well.

Many of the aspectual verbs have predicative values in archaic texts: „*a se apuca, a se pune, a termina, a se opri, a conteni, a isprăvi, a sfârşi, a înceta.* Some of them may have in Modern Romanian Language semi-auxiliary inflexion forms, when they are followed by supine verbal forms. These are part of the dominant verbal syntactical joints (compound verbal predicates). The operators appear in the old texts with predicative inflexion forms only" (Minuț, 2002: 20). For example, the following are notified: *Cum amu isprăvit-au de să iubească vecinul; nu mai înceată turburând; nu înceta învățându-i; deci nu-şi încetă el a grăi iar; de-a pururi nu se opreaşte a alerga spre reale* (apud Minuț: 209).

In all these statements with infinitive or gerund structures the syntactical unit is complex / compound verbal predicate.

5. The conclusions derived from this analysis, show that understanding the concept of the complex verbal predicate knows itself an evolution. At the level of language facts, the operator verbs (modality and aspect ones) functioned in the same time with the predicative values, where the uses were largely complementary ones.

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