ON THE SCALAR STRUCTURE OF THE ADJECTIVE: THE CASE OF ROMANIAN RESULTATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS

Imola-Ágnes Farkas[*]

Abstract: The aim of the present paper is two-fold. On the one hand, based on the fact that AP resultative constructions are severely restricted in Romanian (and more generally in Romance languages), the paper offers a range of devices that improve the interpretation of (i) unambiguous depictive/attributive structures, and (ii) ambiguous depictive/attributive–resultative sentences towards an unambiguous result reading. On the other hand, it discusses the reasons why these strategies derive such an interpretation and it proposes a syntactic structure for the resulting AP constructions. The underlying idea is that the predicates of these newly obtained structures are all adjuncts and not complements.

Keywords: adjective, resultative construction, scalar structure, adjunct, complement, Romanian

1. Introduction

Although Romanian AP small clauses are perfectly possible if they are in adjunct positions, or if they occur as complements in *consider*-type constructions or causatives, most of the time predicate structures fail to express the resultative interpretation. It is the purpose of the present paper to discuss some syntactic and semantic strategies that improve the meaning of different AP predicate constructions towards an unambiguous result sense. While similar tests have been proposed for certain Romance languages, to the best of our knowledge such an approach has not been undertaken for Romanian. We focus exclusively on scalar tests, but we go beyond their illustration when we discuss their syntactic consequences.

The paper is organized as follows: Section 2 is a brief introduction to (Romanian) resultative constructions with particular interest in two relevant models proposed for their syntactic structure. Section 3 discusses scalar approaches put forth for Italian resultatives. Section 4, the most original part of the paper, presents several strategies that lead to unambiguous resultative translations in Romanian. Section 5 is concerned with the syntactic consequences of this approach and it claims that the modified predicates are all adjuncts and not complements. Section 6 summarizes the main findings of the study.

2. Resultative constructions: The view from Romanian

2.1 Definition and the Coextensive Homomorphism

A resultative construction (DP_1-VP-(DP_2)-XP) is a predicate structure where VP expresses the causing process and XP denotes the end state/location achieved by the (surface) subject (DP_1) or the postverbal DP (DP_2) as a direct consequence of the action

[*] "Babeş-Bolyai" University, Faculty of Letters, farkas.imola.agnes@gmail.com.

BDD-A9894 © 2013 Universitatea din București
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:56:24 UTC)

of the verb. We argue that there is an abstract Path argument relating the causing process with the result state/location. This means that in a resultative like (1) the secondary predicate *flat* denotes not the pure state of the postverbal DP, but the end state from a series of states of flatness.[1]

(1) The gardener watered the flowers flat.

This resultative has either a temporal interpretation (i.e. the gardener watered the flowers until/up to the moment they became flat) or a causal reading (i.e. the gardener watered the flowers and, as a result, they became flat). Some may argue that a consecutive interpretation (i.e. the gardener watered the flowers (for) so much (time) that they became flat) is also possible.

What is essential is that all the interpretations above imply that (i) the flowers were not flat before the action of watering or at least not as flat as they became as a result of watering, and (ii) as the watering event proceeded, the flowers became correspondingly flatter and flatter. This latter idea points to the existence of a homomorphism between the event of the verb and the path/property scale of the predicate in the sense that parts of the event of V correspond to parts of the scale of XP and vice versa, cf. Beavers (2004), Wechsler (2001 and 2005a), and many others. This is illustrated below:

(2) the event of V: $e_{water} = e_{water\ 0}\ e_{water\ 1}\ e_{water\ 2} \ldots \ldots e_{water\ n-1}\ e_{water\ n}$ (end of the event)
$\downarrow \quad \downarrow \quad \downarrow \quad \downarrow \downarrow$
the scale of XP: $s_{flat} = s_{flat\ 0}\ s_{flat\ 1}\ s_{flat\ 2} \ldots \ldots s_{flat\ n-1}\ s_{flat\ n}$ (complete flatness)

A paraphrase directly encoded in (2) is that 'the degree to which the gardener watered the flowers paralleled the degree to which the flowers became flatter'. More importantly, (2) also entails that the end of the event of watering means the achievement of complete flatness, or, in other words, the activity of watering is over only when the state of (complete) flatness is achieved. Furthermore, according to Wechsler's (2001 and 2005a) requirement that the telic event and the path must be coextensive, the event of watering starts when the flowers are at the beginning of the path ($e_{water\ 0}$ corresponds to $s_{flat\ 0}$) and ends only when the flowers reach the end of the path of becoming flat ($e_{water\ n}$ corresponds to $s_{flat\ n}$).

2.2 The syntactic structure of resultative constructions

2.2.1 Bowers (1993, 1997 and 2001)

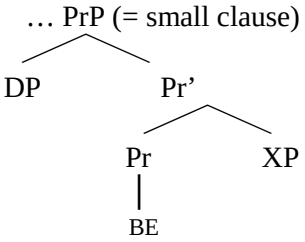
In a series of papers Bowers proposes that every form of predication reduces to the functional head Pr (a mnemonic for Predicate or Predication) which is the head of the maximal projection PrP. PrP is required for predication and thus it is present regardless of how many arguments the verb takes. As such, predication between the DP subject and the

[1] For details about the Path argument of resultative constructions see Farkas (2011).

BDD-A9894 © 2013 Universitatea din București
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:56:24 UTC)

XP predicate of the result small clause is mediated by this functional head and, more importantly, predication is usually considered to reduce to BE.[2]

(3)



While Bowers' arguments against Carrier and Randall's (1992) ternary branching analysis might seem to be on the right track, we question his explanation given to the way in which his theory explains the specific result meaning of the PrP complement in resultative structures, as opposed to the descriptive meaning of adjunct depictive clauses. Moreover, Bowers' (1997: 57) argument in favour of the correctness of his analysis – namely that "if another goal phrase is added to the sentence [as in (4) below], the resultative interpretation of the PrP is no longer possible, only the depictive one" – was already formulated by Simpson (1983: 147): "if a verb attributes a change of location of some argument, it is not possible to have a secondary predicate attributing a change of state involving the same argument".

(4) They raced the horses to the barn sweaty. (Bowers 1997: 57)

On the view that goal PPs are result predicates, their complementary distribution with AP state result predicates would be made to follow either from syntactic constraints (they compete for the same syntactic position) or from semantic/pragmatic constraints, as predicted by Goldberg's (1991) Unique Path Constraint or Tenny's (1994) Single Delimiting Constraint.

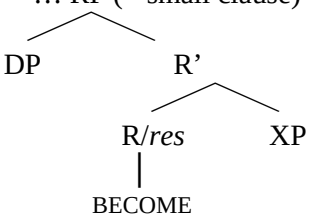
2.2.2 Ramchand (2008)

Ramchand's (2008) l-syntactic approach embraces the fundamental syntactic structure of location and state resultative constructions by assigning them a small clause structure mediated by the *res* functional head. As opposed to the analysis put forth by Bowers (1993, 1997, 2001) where predication between the subject and the predicate of the result small clause is universally mediated by the Pr functional head and predication usually reduces to BE, in Ramchand's (2008) approach the *res* functional head does not only mediate the predication relation between the subject RESULTEE in [Spec, RP] and the XP predicate, but it also encodes the semantics of 'result' or 'become'.

[2] Bowers makes a distinction between transitive and intransitive resultatives. He claims that whereas in transitive constructions the postverbal DP is generated in the higher [Spec, VP] position and there is a PRO in [Spec, PrP] coindexed with it, in intransitive structures the postverbal DP moves to the case-marked [Spec, VP] position in order to be assigned Accusative case by the verb and it leaves a coindexed trace in [Spec, PrP]. In the present analysis we are not interested in this fine-grained distinction.

BDD-A9894 © 2013 Universitatea din București
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:56:24 UTC)

(5) … RP (= small clause)



Hence, the XP predicate does not denote the pure location or the overlapping state of the subject RESULTEE, but rather the terminus or the resulting state as a consequence of the action denoted of the verb. In fact, the RP functional projection provides syntactic evidence in favour of the existence of a Path argument relating the causing process (expressed by the verb) with the resultant location/state (expressed by the predicate).

2.3 The Romanian data

It is a generally acknowledged fact that Romanian – together with its Romance sisters – severely restricts the class of AP resultative constructions. That AP is not the preferred category for the result predicate in Romanian is shown in the examples in (6b)–(6e), which all demonstrate the fact that instead of APs, Romanian prefers PPs (6b), NPs (6c), AdvPs (6d) or gerunds (6e) for the expression of result states. In spite of this restriction, AP property resultatives are not completely absent in Romanian, as proved by the example given in (6a).

(6) a. Copiii au crescut înalți.
children-the have grow-PERF tall-PL.M
'The children grew tall.'

b. Emma a tăiat hârtia ?pătrată / în pătrat.
Emma has cut-PERF paper-the square-SG.F in square
'Emma cut the paper square.'

c. Lacul a înghețat *solid / bocnă.
lake-the has freeze-PERF solid bone
'The lake froze solid.'

d. Hoțul a fost împuşcat *mort / mortal.
thief-the is-PERF shot-SG.M dead-SG.M deadly
'The thief was shot dead.'

e. *Patrick s- a țipat treaz /s- a trezit
Patrick CL3rd SG has scream-PERF awake-SG.M CL3rd SG has wake up-PERF
țipând.[3]
screaming
'Patrick screamed himself awake.'

[3] According to *Gramatica limbii române* (2005) the equivalent of (6e) would be *Patrick a țipat trezindu-se* 'Patrick screamed until he woke up'. In this case the gerund can be interpreted either as having a result meaning or as being simultaneous/posterior to the event of the verb.

BDD-A9894 © 2013 Universitatea din București
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:56:24 UTC)

The felicitousness of (6a) could be explained by the fact that *a creşte* 'grow' is a change-of-state verb which independently involves the meaning of change or shows a certain disposition towards a result state (i.e. it is an accomplishment or an achievement type of verb). Unfortunately, these verbs are further restricted in Romanian resultatives. This means that not all resultatives headed by such verbs are possible in Romanian.

Moreover, even within this restriction we note that one and the same change-of-state verb prefers a PP predicate instead of an AP predicate; cf. *a vopsi gardul roşu* 'paint the red fence/paint the fence red' (which is ambiguous between a depictive and a result interpretation) versus *a vopsi gardul în roşu* 'paint the fence red' (which has an unambiguous result reading). Thus, we have reasons to believe that restrictions are related not only to the properties of the governing verb, but also to the properties of the secondary predicate (i.e. the adjective).

3. The scalar structure of the adjective

3.1 Preliminary considerations

In the present paper we adopt a model in which the semantic analysis of gradable adjectives is stated in terms of abstract representations of measurements or scales, which are formalized as totally ordered sets of points or degrees; cf. Hay et al. (1999), Vanden Wyngaerd (2001), Kennedy and McNally (1999 and 2005), Wechsler (2001, 2005a and 2005b), etc.

Our point of departure is that bare or unmodified APs in Romanian (and possibly more generally in Romance languages) describe only a point on a gradable or non-gradable scale, or in a multi-valued space of A-*ness* (e.g. *flat* in *flatness*) and they denote the pure state of the DP they are predicated of. This means that they do not denote the final state of transition from one state to another (i.e. from lack of a state to the acquisition of that state) and they are unable to express path to a final state.

3.2 Previous approaches

While there is a rich literature on scalar adjectives, boundedness, measuring arguments, and their relationship to resultatives in English, less attention has been paid to the correspondent phenomena in Romanic languages. As our study focuses on Romanian, in this subsection of the paper we try to illustrate the most representative scalar approaches proposed for resultatives in Romance languages. It is important to mention that we are interested only in the strategies that focus on the scalar structure of the result AP.[4]

3.2.1 Napoli (1992)

Napoli (1992) focuses on an entire range of restrictions on Italian AP resultatives. From the perspective of her Resultative Interpretation[5] she proposes, among others, that

[4] For other strategies, cf. Napoli (1992: 73-84).

[5] Napoli's (1992: 75) Resultative Interpretation: "In a sentence with a resultative AP, the primary predicate must be interpreted as focusing on the endpoint of the activity denoted by that predicate".

BDD-A9894 © 2013 Universitatea din Bucureşti
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:56:24 UTC)

the repetition of the adjective is a means of intensification. In this respect, if the predicate is modified enough to draw attention to the endpoint of the action denoted by the verb rather that the process itself, an otherwise inappropriate resultative improves. Consider the following example taken from Napoli (1992: 74, 75):

(7) Ho stirato la camicia *piatta / piatta piatta.
have iron-PERF the shirt flat flat flat
'I ironed the shirt *flat/flat flat (very flat).'

Napoli concludes by stating that although the term "heavy" and the definition of the concept of "heaviness" is controversial, there is no doubt that if the adjective is modified or intensified, it becomes heavy and it derives an unambiguous result interpretation.

3.2.2 Folli and Ramchand (2005)

Similarly, Folli and Ramchand (2005: 102) show that AP resultatives become possible if the result predicate is complex: it is either doubled (see the sentence in (8a)) or it is preceded by a modifier such as *troppo* 'too' (see the sentence in (8b)):

(8) a. Gianni ha martellato il metallo *piatto / piatto piatto.
Gianni has hammer-PERF the metal flat flat flat
'Gianni hammered the metal *flat/flat flat (very flat).'
b. Paola ha cucito la camicia *stretta / troppo stretta.
Paola has sew-PERF the dress tight too tight
'Paola sewed the dress *tight/too tight.'

The explanation offered by Folli and Ramchand (2005) discloses that these morphologically complex APs are in fact syntactically complex as well: a doubled AP like *piatto piatto* 'flat flat' corresponds to a functional structure consisting of a head matching to the process of flattening and a head matching to the state of flatness. Their explanation foreshadows the existence of an analogy between such double APs and morphologically complex APs in change-of-state resultatives, and complex PPs in change-of-location resultatives.

It is precisely this idea that we further develop in section 5 of the present paper.

3.3 Our approach

In what follows we would like to discuss some strategies that derive a result interpretation for certain Romanian AP constructions. We have conducted a questionnaire in order to test native speakers' judgements about the interpretation(s) raised by several sentences featuring bare and modified AP predicates. Respondents were asked to pass judgements on all the sentences of the questionnaire by providing scores from – 2 (purely descriptive/depictive) to +2 (purely resultative), with intermediary scores like – 1 (rather descriptive/depictive), 0 (ambiguous resultative–descriptive), and +1 (rather resultative).

BDD-A9894 © 2013 Universitatea din București
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:56:24 UTC)

After providing their judgements, respondents were given the opportunity to answer several questions comparing different sets of sentences. Interestingly, the results were not always homogeneous in that not all the respondents accepted an improved result interpretation with all the devices proposed by us. More importantly and more interestingly, not all the respondents accepted an equally improved result interpretation with one and the same device proposed for different sentences/phrases.

Our results are based on the responses and comments given by native speakers for the sentences included in the questionnaire. Given the evidence from Italian (see above), our expectation was that a modified – or, to use Napoli's (1992) term, heavy – AP predicate should in principle improve the interpretation of the construction towards a result reading. This expectation was borne out by the results we got, as they felicitously match the empirical data presented for Italian.

Some of the examples may be differently judged by different people, but probably not in violation of the general principle. We hope that, overwhelmingly, our data are indicative.

The symbols used to mark examples are the ones conventionally used in the literature. It is important to mention that in the present study these symbols are used to mark that phrases/sentences are ungrammatical/unacceptable, quite ungrammatical/ unacceptable, or grammatical/acceptable under a result interpretation.

4. Strategies for an unambiguous resultative interpretation

4.1 Comparative morphology

The first section of our questionnaire focused on comparatives. Comparatives are based on specialized morphology in Romanian: the morpheme *mai* 'more/-er' establishes an ordering of superiority and the morpheme *decât* 'than' identifies the standard against which an entity/an item/an object is compared.[6] We contrasted positive (i.e. unmarked) AP predicates with comparative AP predicates and we were especially interested in the changes the comparative morphemes *mai* … *decât* 'more/-er … than' can bring in the interpretation of the predicate (and hence the entire sentence). Some relevant examples are given below:

(9) a. Ariel a spălat rufele */?curate / mai curate decât …
Ariel has wash-PERF laundry-the clean-PL.F more clean-PL.F than …
'Ariel washed the clothes */ ?clean / cleaner than …'

b. Cenuşăreasa a frecat podeaua */?curată / mai curată decât masa
Cinderella has scrub-PERF floor-the clean-SG.F more clean-SG.F than table-the
'Cinderella scrubbed the floor */?clean / cleaner than the table.'

[6] We have not tested the semantic behaviour of comparatives of inferiority (*mai puțin* AP *decât* 'less AP than') and equality (*la fel de* AP *ca* 'as AP as').

BDD-A9894 © 2013 Universitatea din București
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:56:24 UTC)

The generalization from these two examples is that there is a semantic difference between bare AP predicates (which have a descriptive reading or, for some speakers, an ambiguous depictive–resultative interpretation) and the same predicates preceded by the degree modifier (which have thus a more emphatic result interpretation).[7]

As described in Kennedy (2006), as opposed to positive APs, where the value of the degree argument is contextually fixed to an implicit norm or standard of comparison, comparatives explicitly fix the value of the degree argument of the predicate. They fix the value of the degree argument of the predicate by requiring it to stand in a particular relation to a second degree which is provided by the comparative clause.

In view of these considerations, our explanation for the phenomenon in (9) above is that comparative APs represent milestones of a more extended path and they presuppose the existence of previous milestones on the scale of A-*ness*. In other words, a comparative AP (e.g. *mai curată* 'cleaner') requires an AP lower on the scale of A-*ness* (e.g. *mai puțin curată* 'less clean' on the scale of cleanliness) or, to put it differently, the overt end state implies the existence of a previous, covert source state. Comparatives map their arguments onto abstract representations of scales, hence these arguments are claimed to undergo metaphorical movement along that scale, deriving not pure descriptive, but result interpretations. To quote Vanden Wyngaerd (2001: 78-79) "a comparative always carries with it a norm of comparison, implicitly or explicitly. In the latter case, the norm of comparison appears in a *than*-constituent. This norm of comparison constitutes the lower bound of the scale […]. Given that there is a lower bound […] the upper bound is straighforwardly deducible".

This part of the questionnaire proved to be the most problematic. Some native speakers did not judge the examples with modified APs to have a resultative (+2) or a rather resultative (+1) interpretation, but a rather descriptive (+1) reading. Others simply ruled them out as completely ungrammatical and suggested that (9a) would be acceptable only with the light verb *a face* 'make', cf. (10) below, in which case the AP would include a specification of result even in the absence of an overtly realised degree modifier:

(10) Ariel a făcut rufele curate / mai curate decât …
Ariel has make-PERF laundry-the clean-PL.F more clean-PL.F than …
'Ariel made the clothes clean/cleaner than …'

We consider that Romanian constructions based on the light verb *a face* 'make' – which imply a result state, but which do not specify the causing activity – are not resultative constructions in the sense denoted at the beginning of this paper. As a matter of fact, building resultatives with this verb would not be problematic in Romanian, as, in order to denote the resulting state, the light verb could virtually head a large variety of (AP) constructions. But as the resulting structures are all causative structures, we do not take them into account here.

[7] For some speakers the VP *a spăla rufele curate* 'wash the clothes clean' can have a (rather) result (+1) interpretation due to the semantic interpretation of the matrix verb. These speakers justify their choice with the fact that the activity of washing clothes is usually done with the purpose of making them clean and not with the purpose of washing clothes which are already clean.

BDD-A9894 © 2013 Universitatea din București
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:56:24 UTC)

All in all, the generalization is that those who accept the Romanian correspondent of the English *wash–clean* resultative with the matrix verb *a spăla* 'wash' feel a difference between the sentences with a positive AP and the ones with a comparative AP in the sense that in the latter case the interpretation is 'more resultative' than in the former case.

Naturally, non-gradable adjectives do not accept comparatives (and, more generally, degree modifiers) and they lack scalar structure. This is the explanation why the comparative correspondent of the advertising slogan from (11a) is infelicitous, as illustrated in (11b) for English and (12) for Romanian.

(11) a. Raid kills bugs dead.
b. *Raid kills bugs deader/more dead than …
(12) *Raid omoară/ucide gândacii mai morți decât …
Raid kill-PRES bugs-the more dead-PL.M than …
'Raid kills bugs deader/more dead than …'

As the adjective *dead* is non-gradable, it rejects comparatives and all kinds of (degree) modifiers. It only describes a point on a non-gradable scale and it cannot express degrees of A-*ness* (*deadness*) leading up to A (*dead*).[8]

4.2 Degree Phrases

In the second section of the questionnaire we tested our intuition that unambiguous depictive or ambiguous depictive–resultative APs can be rescued by a range of other devices, namely if the adjectival predicate is modified by diverse DegPs like *prea* 'too', *complet* 'completely' and degree words like *ce* 'how', *cât de* 'how', etc. Two examples with the DegP *prea* 'too' are given below:

(13) a. Mama a prăjit cartofii *crocanți / prea crocanți.
mother has fry-PERF potatoes-the crisp-PL.M too crisp-PL.M
'Mother fried the potatoes *crisp/too crisp.'
b. Ion a ciocănit metalul *plat / prea plat.
Ion has hammer-PERF metal-the flat-SG.M too flat-SG.M
'Ion hammered the metal *flat/too flat.'

Sentence (13b) casts light on the fact that although the canonical state resultative *hammer the metal flat* is not possible in Romanian with a bare AP predicate, it can become acceptable if the same predicate is preceded by the DegP *prea* 'too'.

Personal communications with university colleagues have revealed that similar DegPs (*aproape* 'almost', *parțial* 'partially', *jumătate* 'half', *cam* 'rather', *destul de* 'quite', *(in)suficient de* '(in)sufficiently', etc.) derive similar results. Repeating the

[8] Note that in this case the verb is punctual, therefore it is compatible only with a non-gradable predicate. For more details on the correlation between durative events and gradable scales (adjectives), as well as punctual events and non-gradable scales (adjectives), cf. Wechsler (2001 and 2005a).

BDD-A9894 © 2013 Universitatea din București
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:56:24 UTC)

examples from (13), we have the sentences under (14), which have not been included in the questionnaire:

(14) a. Mama a prăjit cartofii *crocanți / cam / destul de / suficient de crocanți.
mother has fry-PERF potatoes-the crisp-PL.M rather quite of sufficient of crisp-PL.M
'Mother fried the potatoes *crisp/rather/quite/sufficiently crisp.'

b. Ion a ciocănit metalul *plat / suficient de plat.
Ion has hammer-PERF metal-the flat-SG.M sufficient of flat-SG.M
'Ion hammered the metal *flat/sufficiently flat.'

None of these DegPs derive meaning with clear endstates, however, they express the degree of change of the internal argument and they all contribute to a result interpretation.

Moreover, as expected, AP resultatives in Romanian are more readily accepted if the predicate is modified by the DegP *complet* 'completely' as in (15) below:

(15) a. Ariel a spălat rufele */?curate / complet curate.
Ariel has wash-PERF laundry-the clean-PL.F completely clean-PL.F
'Ariel washed the clothes */?clean/completely clean.'

b. Carmen a şters vasele *strălucitoare / complet strălucitoare.[9]
Carmen has wipe-PERF dishes-the shiny-PL.F completely shiny-PL.F
'Carmen wiped the dishes *shiny/completely shiny.'

The use of the maximality modifier *complet* 'completely' makes explicit reference to an endpoint of a scale as part of its meaning. The effect of this modifier is to specify that an endpoint of the scale introduced by the AP must be (and is) reached. This bounded scale modifier can be attached to a large variety of APs, even to those that denote unbounded scales in non-resultative environments.[10]

Finally, as confirmed by the great majority of our respondents, APs preceded by degree words like *ce* 'how' and *cât de* 'how' also derive unambiguous result sentences. Some relevant examples are given in (16a)–(16c):

(16) a. Ce curate ai spălat rufele!
what clean PL F have wash-PERF clothes-the
'How clean you washed the clothes!'

b. Cât de mititele ai tăiat cubulețele astea!
how of small-DIM.PL.F have cut-PERF cubes-DIM.PL-the these
'How small you cut these little cubes!'

[9] One of my informants noted that if the first syllable of the AP is stressed (e.g. *STRĂlucitoare*), then the sentence is acceptable under a result interpretation even with a bare AP.
[10] The English maximality modifier *completely* can also mean *very*, cf. Kennedy and McNally (2005: 354).

BDD-A9894 © 2013 Universitatea din București
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:56:24 UTC)

c. Cât de subțiri ai bătut șnițelele![11]
how of thin PL M/F have beat-PERF schnitzels-the
'How thin you beat the schnitzels!'

DegPs like *ce* 'how' and *cât de* 'how' show the degree to which the internal argument undergoes change of state and hence they derive a result interpretation.

Related to these data, it is important to note that *foarte* 'very' and superlatives in general do not provide an upper bound for a scale. *Very* is an intensifier that qualifies unbounded scales, but it does not establish an absolute position on a scale, only a position relative to the members of contextually given set, cf. also Vanden Wyngaerd (2001) about modification by *very* in English and Dutch. Also, as noted in Kennedy and McNally (1999, 2005), the difference between A and *very* A is that the latter denotes a property whose meaning is like the former one, except that the relative standard is raised by some amount. Our expectation that the intensifier *foarte* 'very' does not convert descriptive predicates into resultative ones was also borne out by the judgements provided by our native informants.

4.3 Adjectival polarity

Even if some X adjectives are not compatible with varying degrees of X-*ness* over an interval (e.g. square is rather a yes–no state that either holds or does not hold), an adjective and its direct antonym pair (belonging to the same class) correspond to the two ends of a scale, hence sentences with such AP predicates are likely to have a result translation.

Our results confirm this, as the interpretations given by our respondents to the sentences in (17) were overwhelming, in the sense that all the respondents – with the exception of a small number of native speakers who gave these sentences a score of +1 – judged them to be categorically resultative.

(17) a. Oamenii au construit casa */?pătrată / pătrată, nu.
people-the have build-PERF house-the square-SG.F square-SG.F not
rotundă
round-SG.F
'People built the house */?square/square, not round.'

b. Radu a vopsit gardul */?roşu / roşu, nu albastru.
Radu has paint-PERF fence-the red-S.M red-SG.M not blue-SG.M
'Radu painted the fence */?red/red, not blue.'

c. Elena a croit fusta */?strâmtă / strâmtă, nu potrivită.
Elena has tailor-PERF skirt-the tight-SG.F tight-SG.F not suitable-SG.F
'Elena tailored the skirt */?tight/tight, not suitable.'

As opposed to an unmodified AP (which, according to some native speakers, in these cases can have either a purely descriptive or an ambiguous descriptive–resultative

[11] I would like to thank Larisa Avram, from the University of Bucharest, for suggesting these examples to me.

BDD-A9894 © 2013 Universitatea din București
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:56:24 UTC)

interpretation), a morphologically complex AP (an AP and its direct antonym pair) derives a result interpretation. The explanation seems to be simple in this case: members of an antonymous pair of adjectives provide complementary/polar perspectives on the projection of an object onto the scale. This means that adjectives that are not endpoints on a scale are accepted with a result meaning if they are contrasted with their direct antonym pair. However, we should definitely make a distinction between the sentences in (17) and the ones in (18):

(18) a. Oamenii au construit casa pătrată, nu pe cea
people-the have build-PERF house-the square-SG.F not PE the one-SG.F
rotundă.
round-SG.F
'People built the square house, not the round one.'

b. Radu a vopsit gardul roşu, nu pe cel albastru.
Radu has paint-PERF fence-the red-SG.M not PE the one-SG.M blue-SG.M
'Radu painted the red fence, not the blue one.'

c. Elena a croit fusta strâmtă, nu pe cea potrivită.
Elena has tailor-PERF skirt-the tight-SG.F not PE the one-SG.F suitable-SG.F
'Elena tailored the tight skirt, not the suitable one.'

These latter sentences have an unambiguous descriptive interpretation. In syntactic terms, in these cases *cel* 'the one-SG.M' and *cea* 'the one-SG.F' force the projection of a small clause structure analyzed as a Pr head lexicalized by BE; cf. Bowers (1993, 1997 and 2001).

Summarizing our study and the data provided in section 4, we state the following.

On the one hand, AP predicates do not accept all degree modifiers, because resultative predicates are subject to a boundedness requirement. This means that even those adjectives that denote unbounded scales in non-resultative environments permit only bounded scale modifiers when occurring in a result construction. This is the case of the degree modifier *foarte* 'very'; cf. our discussion in subsection 4.2.

On the other hand, as far as comparatives are concerned, we note that there is mere gradual change on the part of the internal argument, without the attainment of a specific, well-defined, maximal end state. To put it differently, comparative adjectives do not make reference to an endpoint of a scale. In this respect, they pose problems for the coextensive homomorphic analysis, which crucially relies on an endpoint-preserving homomorphism and rules out result APs that do not supply final states.[12] They also pose problems for Vanden Wyngaerd's (2001) restriction which states that resultative predicates denote a bounded scale. What is more important for us here is that even if we characterize the internal argument as undergoing change, empirically it does not seem true that the change must necessarily entail the attainment of a precise final state. There seems to be a similar situation with most of the DegPs discussed in subsection 4.2.

[12] Whether AP predicates with comparative morphology are telic or atelic is still the topic of heated debates, cf. Vanden Wyngaerd (2001), Folli and Harley (2004), Goldberg and Jackendoff (2004) and others.

BDD-A9894 © 2013 Universitatea din Bucureşti
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:56:24 UTC)

5. Consequences of the approach

Let us turn back to Folli and Ramchand's (2005) account and let us discuss some consequences of our approach. Folli and Ramchand (2005) argue in favour of an analogy between dynamic, morphologically complex prepositions (decomposed into PathP and PlaceP) found in change-of-location resultatives and dynamic, morphologically complex adjectives found in change-of-state resultatives. They briefly mention that in the latter case "a telic interpretation could be achieved at the level of outer aspect" (2005: 102). We would like to further elaborate on this statement.

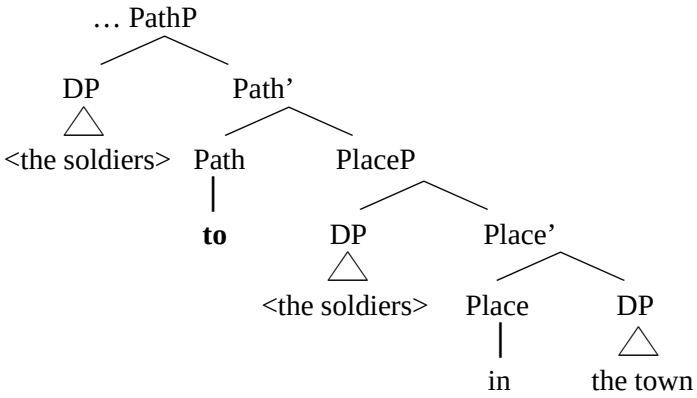
Let us discuss change-of-location resultatives first. We know that contrary to English (19), Romanian cannot combine a manner-of-motion verb (which expresses an activity but does not have reference to a path) with a morphologically simple PP in order to describe a directed motion with a final location, as only a pure location interpretation is available for such a combination. Therefore, in order to get the directed motion interpretation of the English sentences from (19), Romanian combines an unergative manner-of-motion verb with a PP headed by the PathP *până* 'as far as/until/up to', as in (20) below:

(19) The soldiers marched into the town.

(20) Soldații au mărşăluit *în oraş / până în oraş.
soldiers-the have march-PERF in town as far as/until/up to in town
'The soldiers marched *in town/as far as/until/up to in the town.'

The English *into* is a morphologically complex PP where *-to* measures out the path involved in the event of motion and *in-* indicates the endpoint of motion. The word-order *in-to* is achieved by the incorporation of the PlaceP *in-* into the PathP *-to*, as depicted below:

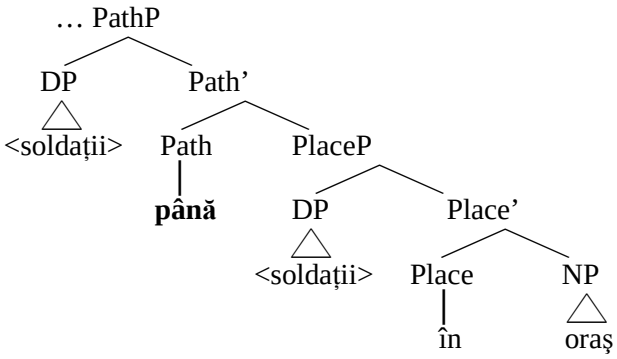
(21)



Similarly, in Romanian the preposition *până* 'as far as/until/up to' identifies Path and measures out the distance involved in the event of the verb and *în* 'in' indicates the final location of the event, as sketched below:

BDD-A9894 © 2013 Universitatea din București
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:56:24 UTC)

(22)

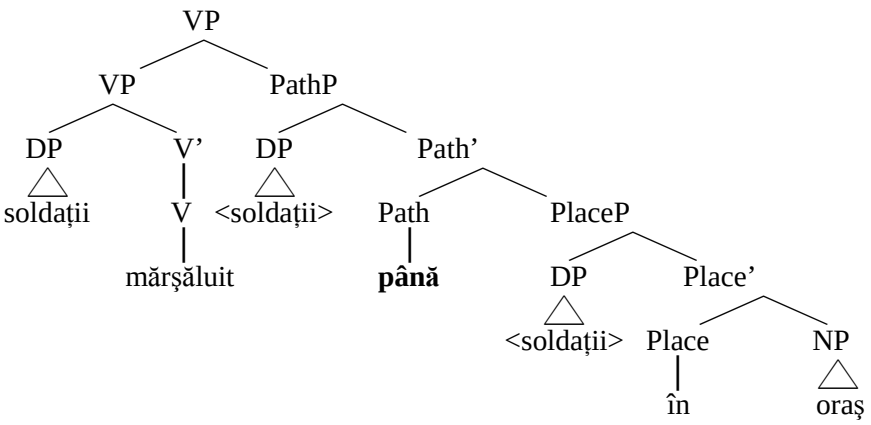


At first sight, it very well could be that the Romanian directed-motion sentence in (20) corresponds to the English motion structure in (19). The Romanian sentence has several of the features of the English motion construction. The most important of these is that they are both built on morphologically complex prepositions decomposable into Path and Place.

But the essential difference between the two sentences is that whereas in English PPs headed by *to/into* are complements, in Romanian PPs headed by *până* ‘as far as/until/up to’ are adjuncts and theoretically they are attachable to any verb. But as the resulting structures have sentence-final adjuncts, they are not the true resultatives which are almost completely absent in this language. To put it differently, if *until*-resultatives are adjuncts, they should not be, they cannot be and in fact they are not integrated into the class of true resultatives. The change-of-state resultatives and the directed motion resultatives that are relevant here are not the ones merging verbs with phrases occupying an adjunct position, but the ones merging verbs with phrases in a syntactic sisterhood relationship with the verb.[13]

That PPs headed by *până* ‘as far as/until/up to’ are adjuncts attached to the higher VP and not complements attached to the intermediate V’ projection is depicted below:

(23)



[13] Further details on the adjunct status of *until*-markers are available in Aske (1989), Folli and Ramchand (2005), Shim and den Dikken (2007), and many others.

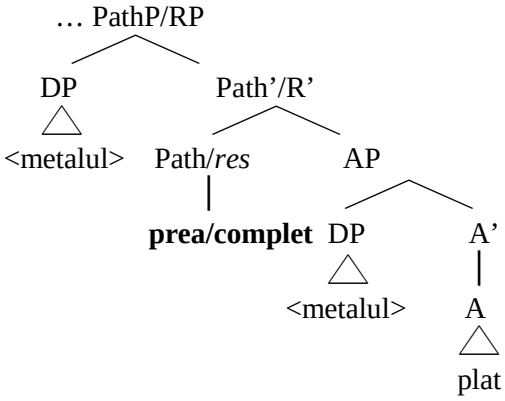
BDD-A9894 © 2013 Universitatea din București
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:56:24 UTC)

As shown above, PPs headed by *până* 'as far as/until/up to' attach outside the first-phase syntax. This means that such a motion construction is not a counterexample to the generalization that canonical Goal of Motion constructions are not licensed in Romanian and more generally in Romance languages, cf. Talmy (1985, 1991, 2000).

Turning to change-of-state resultatives, via Lakoff and Johnson's (1999) Location Event-Structure metaphor (i.e. "states are locations"), we find a similar PathP and a similar (abstract) PlaceP in the decomposition of the AP predicate. The small clause of the sentence from (24) is represented in (25):

(24) Ion a ciocănit metalul prea / complet plat.
John has hammer-PERF metal-the too completely flat-SG.M
'John hammered the metal too/completely flat.'

(25)



DegPs like *prea* 'too' or *complet* 'completely' identify (abstract) Path and provide the scale of the construction, and the AP predicate indicates the final state (i.e. the abstract end location) of the action of the verb.

Looking at things from this perspective, we are led to conclude that as there is a correlation between PathPs in change-of-location resultatives and morphologically (and syntactically) complex APs in change-of-state structures, none of our examples discussed in section 4 are counterexamples to Talmy's (1985, 1991 and 2000) generalization about Romance languages (including Romanian) as verb-framed languages.[14] Indeed, the sentences given in that section have a result interpretation precisely because of the presence of the comparative morphology, the inserted DegP, or the polarization of the AP predicate. Similarly to morphologically simple PP predicates which cannot give rise to

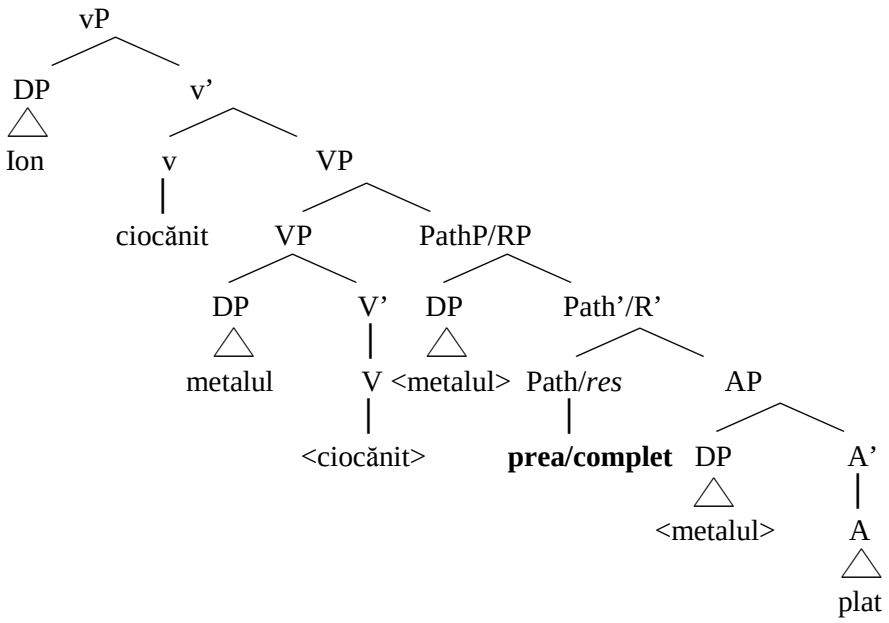
[14] Noticing that languages employ different strategies to express Goal of Motion, Talmy (1985, 1991 and 2000) proposes a descriptive typological distinction between different languages/language groups. He claims that cross-linguistically there are two basic conflation patterns for the expression of motion events. On the one hand, there are the so-called "satellite-framed" languages (most Indo-European languages, except for Romance) which incorporate Motion and Manner on the verb root, with Path being expressed by the satellite/predicate. On the other hand, there are the so-called "verb-framed" languages (Romance languages, except for Latin) which typically conflate Motion and Path on the verb root, with Manner being expressed by the satellite/predicate. It is important to note that we do not assert the Talmian generalization exclusively on our analysis and our examples. We assume its status as that of an axiom: its relative truth is taken for granted here and it merely serves as our starting point for drawing our conclusion about the syntactic status of the sentence-final predicate.

BDD-A9894 © 2013 Universitatea din București
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:56:24 UTC)

telic, directed motion interpretations if they are not preceded by overt PathPs; AP predicates cannot derive change-of-state interpretations unless they are modified enough to overtly or covertly express the idea of transition from the lack of a state to the acquisition of a state, from ¬*s* to *s*.[15] Hence, if PPs headed by the PathP *până* 'as far as/until/up to' are adjuncts, we conclude that in these latter constructions the predicates are adjuncts and not complements, a fact briefly hinted at by Folli and Ramchand (2005).

Schematically, sentence (24) would be represented as in (26) below:

(26)



Similarly to morphologically complex PPs headed by *până* 'as far as/until/up to', APs headed by DegPs like *prea* 'too', *complet* 'completely', etc. attach outside the first-phase syntax.

We conclude our discussion by saying that in spite of the existence of *until*-constructions, it is true that there are no canonical change-of-state and change-of-location resultatives in this Romance language.

6. Conclusions

In this paper we have discussed the scalar structure of Romanian APs from the perspective of result constructions. We have briefly focused on the syntactic structure of

[15] There are very few exceptions to this generalization. A small subclass of manner-of-motion verbs like *a fugi* 'run', *a aluneca* 'slide', *a zbura* 'fly', *a sări* 'jump', *a se strecura* 'sneak', *a năvăli* 'rush/invade', etc. and some inherently directed motion verbs like *a intra* 'enter', *a ieşi* 'exit', *a ajunge* 'arrive', *a pleca* 'leave', *a se duce* 'go', *a veni* 'come', *a se întoarce* 'come back', etc. can derive telic, directed motion constructions with morphologically simple PPs.

BDD-A9894 © 2013 Universitatea din Bucureşti
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:56:24 UTC)

these predicate constructions. Based on the existence of an abstract Path argument, we have claimed that the syntactic structure of resultatives is the result small clause proposed in Ramchand (2008). We have shown that a purely attributive/descriptive or an ambiguous depictive–resultative construction acquires a more emphatic result interpretation (i) if the AP is modified by the comparative morpheme *mai … decât* 'more/-er … than', (ii) if it is preceded by DegPs like *aproape* 'almost', *parțial* 'partially', *jumătate* 'half', *prea* 'too', *complet* 'completely', *cam* 'rather', *destul de* 'quite', *(in)suficient de* '(in)sufficiently', *ce* 'how', *cât de* 'how', etc. or (iii) if it is contrasted with its direct antonym pair.

The most important conclusion the paper has established is that none of these Romanian resultatives are counterexample to Talmy's (1985, 1991 and 2000) generalization about the verb-framed character of Romanian. This means that the newly built resultatives are possible under a result interpretation only because the sentence-final predicates are modified. Therefore, they must be adjuncts and not complements.

References

Aske, J. 1989. Path predicates in English and Spanish: A closer look. In K. Hall, M. Meacham and R. Shapiro (eds.), *Proceedings of the Fifteenth Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society*, 1-14. Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Linguistics Society.

Beavers, J. 2004. Scalar complexity and the structure of events. Paper presented at the Workshop on Event Structures in Linguistic Form and Interpretation, March 18th, University of Leipzig.

Bowers, J. 1993. The syntax of predication. *Linguistic Inquiry* 24: 591-656.

Bowers, J. 1997. A binary analysis of resultatives. In R. C. Blight and M. J. Moosally (eds.), *Proceedings of the 1997 Texas Linguistics Society Conference*, 43-58. Austin, TX: The University of Texas at Austin.

Bowers, J. 2001. Predication. In M. Baltin and C. Collins (eds.), *The Handbook of Contemporary Syntactic Theory*, 299-333. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Carrier, J., Randall, J. 1992. The argument structure and the syntactic structure of resultatives. *Linguistic Inquiry* 23: 173-234.

Farkas, I. Á. 2011. The Path argument of resultative constructions. *Bucharest Working Papers in Linguistics* XIII (1): 85-101.

Folli, R., Harley, H. 2004. Waltzing Matilda around and around: On the licensing of directed-motion resultatives. Ms., University of Cambridge and University of Arizona.

Folli, R., Ramchand, G. 2005. Prepositions and results in Italian and English. An analysis from event decomposition. In H. Verkuyl, H. de Swart and A. van Hout (eds.), *Perspectives on Aspect*, 81-105. Dordrecht: Springer.

Goldberg, A. 1991. It can't go down the chimney up: Paths and the English resultative. In L. A. Sutton, C. Johnson and R. Shields (eds.), *Proceedings of the Seventeenth Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society*, 368-378. Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Linguistics Society.

Goldberg, A., Jackendoff, R. 2004. The English resultative as a family of constructions. *Language* 80: 532-568.

Gramatica limbii române. 2005. Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române.

Hay, J., Kennedy, C., Levin, B. 1999. Scalar structure underlies telicity in degree achievements. In T. Matthews and D. Strolovitch (eds.), *Proceedings of Semantics and Linguistic Theory IX*, 127-144. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Kennedy, C. 2006. Semantics of comparatives. In K. Brown (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Language & Linguistics*, second edition, 690-694. Oxford: Elsevier.

Kennedy, C., McNally, L. 1999. From event structure to scale structure: Degree modification in deverbal adjectives. In T. Matthews and D. Strolovitch (eds.), *Proceedings of Semantics and Linguistic Theory IX*, 163-180. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Kennedy, C., McNally, L. 2005. Scale structure, degree modification, and the semantics of gradable predicates. *Language* 81: 345-381.

BDD-A9894 © 2013 Universitatea din București
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:56:24 UTC)

Lakoff, G., Johnson, M. 1999. *Philosophy in the Flesh. The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought*. New York: Basic Books.

Napoli, D. J. 1992. Secondary resultative predicates in Italian. *Journal of Linguistics* 28: 53-90.

Ramchand, G. 2008. *Verb Meaning and the Lexicon. A First-Phase Syntax*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Simpson, J. 1983. Resultatives. In L. Levin, M. Rappaport and A. Zaenen (eds.), *Papers in Lexical-Functional Grammar*, 143-157. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Linguistics Club.

Shim, J. Y., den Dikken, M. 2007. The tense of resultatives: The case of Korean. In A. Schardl, M. Walkow and M. Abdurrahman (eds.), *Proceedings of the Thirty-eighth Annual Meeting of the North East Linguistic Society*, vol. II, 337-350. Amherst, MA: GLSA Publications.

Talmy, L. 1985. Lexicalization patterns: Semantic structure in lexical forms. In T. Shopen (ed.), *Language Typology and Syntactic Description*, vol. III, *Grammatical Categories and the Lexicon*, 57-149. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Talmy, L. 1991. Path to realization: A typology of event conflation. In L. A. Sutton, C. Johnson and R. Shields (eds.), *Proceedings of the Seventeenth Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society*, 480-519. Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Linguistics Society.

Talmy, L. 2000. *Toward a Cognitive Semantics*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. Vol. II.

Tenny, C. 1994. *Aspectual Roles and the Syntax-Semantics Interface*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Vanden Wyngaerd, G. 2001. Measuring events. *Language* 77: 61-90.

Wechsler, S. 2001. An analysis of English resultatives under the Event-Argument Homomorphism Model of telicity. *Proceedings of the 3rd Workshop on Text Structure*, 1-15. Austin, TX: University of Texas Linguistics Department.

Wechsler, S. 2005a. Resultatives under the 'Event-Argument Homomorphism' Model of telicity. In N. Erteschik-Shir and T. Rapoport (eds.), *The Syntax of Aspect: Deriving Thematic and Aspectual Interpretation*, 255-273. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wechsler, S. 2005b. Weighing in on scales: A reply to Goldberg and Jackendoff. *Language* 81: 465-473.

BDD-A9894 © 2013 Universitatea din București
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 04:56:24 UTC)