Short Mapping of the Ways of Expressing the Agreement in the Romanian Language

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Abstract: This communication represents a section/segment of our doctoral thesis titled *Discursive Manifestations of Agreement and Disagreement in the Area of Romanic Languages. Pleading for an Intercultural Paradigm* and its objective are to describe certain mechanisms of building the speech in order to show the complexity and importance of this linguistic phenomenon in communication. The speech is one of the preferred domains to apply pragmatic patterns, its analysis guiding us towards certain logic of the actions. Based on/supported by the language, the speech is under the constraint of both constitutive (structural) rules and efficiency principles. In the process of communication, there are at least two factors involved, one of them is that which initiates the action and the other is the beneficiary of the action previously initiated. They can perceive and issue a plethora of constative and performative sentences/utterances. The speech/ discourse analysis is mainly preoccupied with oral speech, especially with natural conversations' analysis. By natural conversation, we understand any verbal interaction either face-to-face or away from each other (phone, letter, mail, a.s.o.) where situational, contextual, gestural, intonational factors play an important part.
The first part of our endeavor/ step will be dedicated to defining and categorizing *natural conversation* (face-to-face), gestural communication and in the second part of our communication we shall describe and analyze the discourse markers of *agreement* and *disagreement* in the Romanian language, insisting also upon the consistency of the text, as an essential element in constructing, issuing and processing the information.
Keywords: *agreement/disagreement, discourse analysis, discursive markers, discursive coherence.*

1. Introduction

The aim of my doctoral research is to describe the ways of expressing the *agreement* and the *disagreement* within the various Romanic linguistic systems (Romanian, French and Spanish languages). It is a subject whose approach is based on the theories of *Linguistic Pragmatics*, the most recent field of research which has come into researchers' attention, whose object is represented by the language elements' meaning resulted in different communication contexts.

A Pragmatic analysis is, in fact, the complex study of the language in interaction from the viewer's perspective, but also from the point of view of the interpreter (the one who is interested in the message transmitted and analyzing it) and the receiver.

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Because the Romanian language is not provided with a unitary and vast corpus of spoken Romanian, the subject I have chosen to enlarge upon in my doctoral research will be made from selected extracts from the several samples in the specialty literature (see *Bibliography*).

The topic proposed for debate with the title *Short Mapping of the Ways of Expressing the Agreement in the Romanian Language* is, in fact a subchapter of my research *Discursive Manifestations of Agreement and Disagreement in the Area of Romanic Languages. Pleading for an Intercultural Paradigm.*

In the present paper, I have proposed myself to review the main manifestations of the agreement made by verbal and gestural communication.

My communication is structured in four main segments. Its first chapter outlines the theoretical and methodological framework underlining the necessity of this approach as well as its importance.

I will give a large space to the definition and categorization of *natural conversation* (face-to-face) and *gestural communication*, which are, in fact, the prototype around which the basic aspects of the pragmatic organization gravitate.

In the second chapter of my presentation, I will also describe and analyze from a synchronic and diachronic perspective, the main discursive markers of the *agreement/disagreement* in Romanian, respectively, in the Romanic languages (with emphasis on French and Spanish).

In the third part, it will be attempted to sketch some aspects resulting from the analysis of the forms of expression marking the *agreement/disagreement* in a series of parliamentary speeches, ending our communication with several conclusions drawn from each one of the above-presented segments. This first set of conclusions is configured in prerequisites and pertinent research assumptions for our future doctoral thesis.

2. The speech

One of the privileged areas of the application of pragmatic models is the speech. Its analysis is mainly concerned with oral speech. Oral speech is often composed of fragmented sequences which in turn may be and/or incomplete because the speaker is based on information held by the interlocutor. In the oral speech we identify various elements that have the purpose of establishing and maintaining contact between the two interlocutors (e.g. *Look!, Listen!, See!, Isn't it ?, You know what I mean?, Imagine it! Don't you agree? etc.).*

In a *face-to-face* communication, we identify elements (deictic - that reflect the role of the interlocutors: *I, he, she, you, we, they,you*, etc.) as well as the position of the participants in space and time (*e.g. there, then, here, now, etc.*). The release of deictic elements is generally accompanied by indicator gestures. For oral questions syntactic structures that reflect a certain element of discourse are typical. Various areas of linguistics study these prevalent functions of communication, this being the form of primary and fundamental communication practiced in the most diverse communicative situations. Therefore, it responds to a large number of expressive, emotional, informative, persuasive, cognitive requirements.

Each normal individual who possesses audio-oral faculties forms most of his heritage of knowledge and experience through oral communication. Speech analysis is also concerned with the analysis of natural conversations.

By natural conversation, we understand any verbal interaction either face-to-face or away from each other (phone, mail, a.s.o.) where situational, contextual, gestural, intonational factors play an important part.

I can specify that examples of natural conversations include phone conversations, parent-child interactions, teacher-students, interactions in public places (commercial transactions) or private places (family discussions), political debates, press interviews, and so on.

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In order to realize a conversation, it is necessary that all the participants be enhanced in the communicational exchange where not only the sender but also the receiver of the linguistic message must produce signs of the mutual commitment.

The speech analysis sends to a certainlogic of actions. In speech analysis, the logical principles are fundamentally linked to the theory of the language acts.

According to the *General Dictionary of Language Sciences*, the speech is defined as such:

> "In a board sense, the continuous sequence of sentences or phrases, structured and coherent, the term designates generically the most diversified forms of language utilizations written and oral, dialogic and monological… in a narrow sense, the term is in a complementary relationship to the text. This relationship is understood differently: the speech encompasses only the spoken and/or dialogical forms of the language, while the text is the field of written and/or monological forms; the speech is defined as a transfrastic level unity, while the text can be made of a single syntactic-semantic unity, without its compulsory necessity of having a sentence structure; the speech means updating the text, this being conceived as a structure." [Bidu-Vrănceanu *et alii*, 2001]

In Oswald Ducrot's opinion, an analysis of the discourse "decouples the text into syntagmatic elements gathered into equivalent classes, where such a class consists of all the elements that may appear in an identical or similar context." [Todorov, 1972].

Speech analyses use a classical methodology in linguistics of the sentence and they consisted of interesting attempts to apply the principles of linguistic analysis to units larger than the phrase. That's why in this type of analysis there are two conditions that must be accomplished.

On one hand, determination of a joint of discourse categories and units, that is not only related to the natural languages (lexical or syntagmatic categories) but to a discourse syntax (for example, the units: *act, intervention, exchange, transaction, incursion*, from the Genovese pattern of discourse analysis according to Roulet *et al.* 1985, Moeschler, 1985a).

On the other hand, it is necessary to formulate concatenation principles and rules for these categories (chaining rules, compositional principles) that allow the distinction between the well-formed (coherent) discourse sequences and malformed discourse sequences (non- coherent).

The turning point here is the concept of *good sequential training* (coherence) which is the discourse's correspondent for the syntactic concept of *grammaticality*: just as the speaker subject has a linguistic capacity (a competence) that allows him to formulate grammaticality judgments on the phrases, so too - and this is the hypothesis of discourse analysis - the speaker subject is able to give judgment on the proper sequential formation of speeches, so to distinguish a coherent discourse of a non-coherent discourse.

The epistemology of discourse analysis is that of simulation, meaning hypothetical- deductive: the object of discourse analysis is to shape the conversation. The best-represented aspect in discourse analysis was *modeling the dialogue*; this was made throughout the formulation of some *rulesof interpretation and chaining.*

Especially at Labov [1976] the problem of discourse analysis is formulated through three rules that occur in sequencing and interpretation of speeches:

- *rules of production* -which link the actions scheduled by their statements;
- *rules of interpretation*- which relate the statements to the actions they make;
- *rules of chaining*- which link the actions between them.

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The epistemology of discourse analysis is, therefore deductive. The rules of interpretation and chaining formulated are the result of the predictions from the underlying pragmatic theory.

The analyses of the discourse refer to the scientific paradigm of formal linguistics and take over its methodology and epistemology. Discourse analysis does not refer to the textual organization or communicational situation. Its purpose is to identify and interpret the links between the linguistic regularities (connectors, schemes, macrostructures) meanings and ends that stand out through the discourse.

Accepting the discourse as a communicational event anchored in socio-cultural reality leads to the conclusion that every speech will follow a finality that is dependent on the speaker's intention. If we refer to the taxonomy of the speech, we shall find out that the researchers' opinions are also heterogeneous in this case.

According to the *General Dictionary of Language Sciences*, the different types of discourse come under two big categories:

- monological discourse;
- dialogical discourse.

Monological discourse individualizes forms of centered discourse on the emitter/sender, and dialogical discourse refers to the speech adapted to the receiver. Monological discourse is a chain of large-scale statements issued by a speaker who addresses an audience.

Dialogic discourse consists of a sequence of replicas produced alternatively by at least two emitters addressing each other.

According to GALR there are the following types of speech:

- dialogue (supports the language being constrained by constitutive rules and efficiency principles. "It is the prototypical form of the functioning of the language within society.");

- direct speech and indirect speech ("Direct speech and indirect speech represent discursive ways through which a speaker expresses his own discourse, rendering his discourse or another speaker's, formulated in a different moment of communication. Discourse's rendering is realized through reproduction or narration.");

- spoken Romanian language ("the Romanian language is realized as a complex system of linguistic variants that are different from each other seen from the perspective of the functions they perform in the communication process.") [*GALR*, vol. II, 2005].

2.1. Expressing Agreement in the Romanian Language

The agreement was considered by Sorin Stati as a type of argumentative role. It is "a passive, defensive argumentative role – a dialogic role by excellence" that consists in accepting a thesis, a conclusion of the partner, by sharing the assumptions of the enunciation", the agreement being "a cooperative reaction, congruent to an assertion, an invitation, and so on". [Nastase, 2003]

The agreement in an argumentative role is "a relational concept established between the replica – stimulus and the reaction triggered by that". [Nastase, 2003]

This argumentative role consists in accepting a thesis, a conclusion of the partner and that is why it involves dialogue. The receiver's opinion is approved and shared, in other words, his utterance is considered to be true.

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The prophase *Yes*

"Yes" replaces an affirmative sentence, resuming totally or partially the propositional content of its antecedent.

- The antecedent of the prophase can be asserted as such (explained by an assertive statement).

– It is snowing outside.
– Yes, it is very ugly.

- The antecedent is assumed to be an exclamatory statement;

– How else does it snow outside!
– Yes, it is very ugly.

- The antecedent is assumed to be a total interrogation.

– Is it snowing outside?
– Yes, it is very ugly.

The antecedent can be a hypothesis or an assumption asserted or assumed by a total interrogation; in this case, the prophase occurs in a conditional structure:

He may have left. If so, this is a pity. Can there be any solution? If so, what is it?

Total interrogatives where *yes* is an answer or part of an answer occur in the real dialogue (A: A student? B: Yes, at the doctorate.), in its monological miming (Has he really left? Yes, I guess so.) or reproducing it indirectly (He asked me if they had left. I told him *yes*.)

The prophase *yes* can constitute by itself an assertive statement. ('Is she at home?' 'Yes.') or interrogative ('She is at home'. 'Yes?')

The adversative structure 'yes (sure, of course)'

This sequence is specialized for negative antecedents which appear in assertions ('Otilia, you do not love me anymore.' 'Oh, yes! Sure I do, Felix!'), total interrogations ('Have you not seen ants through the house?' 'Oh, yeas, mum, I have seen a lot!'), imperatives ('Do not go now!' 'Oh, yes, I will!')

Adversative **'nay'** argues against the negation while prophase **'yes'** resumes the propositional content in positive form.

Neutral expressions of agreement can be realized through:

- **Interjections**, loud disyllabic sequences whose marking in writing is not completely set. (ah!, huh!, hmm!). Stylistically, these belong to the informal, popular and family register.

- **Repetitions,** (total or partial repetition) with omissions and modifications, with a downward intonation of the question. 'Is it still raining outside?' 'It is.'

Specific are the adverb *so* and, especially, *well* or *good* used as an adverb, the phrase *all right* and – in spoken language – the Anglicism *ok*.

A representative fact is also the use of the verb *to be* in the conjunctive, as a concessive attenuated agreement formula, *either… or* (*let it be*!)

The attenuated expression is realized mostly by employing some specific markers, like *Yep! Yup! Yeah!* of deontic modals of possibility and permissiveness, *perhaps/maybe, probably, seemingly/apparently, eventually.*

The consolidated expression is obtained with modifiers:

- some formulas of epistemic modals can be used: *of course, sure, certainly, obviously, definitely;*

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- some evaluative formulas can be used: *perfect, super, wonderful:*
- some deontic formulas can be used: *necessarily, undoubtedly, by all means.*

There can be obtained also:

- by utilizing the adverb *absolutely;*
- some pragmatic elements that introduce additional ideas: *even, just/exactly, see well!/ see for yourself!, Don't tell me!, You bet!;*
- amplified resume:('It is raining. It is raining hard.');
- the particle 'well' combined with other means (Well, it is raining.).

2.2. Gestural communication

Like any other language, the body language is made of words (a word can have more meanings), sentences and certain punctuation. Every gesture of ours is like a word, and understanding of its meaning can only be realized by analyzing these words in a sentence, along with other words. In other words, the gestures 'arrive grouped in <sentences> and convey incessantly the truth about the feelings and attitudes of the person in question'; and sagacious is that man who can read nonverbal <sentences> and can confront them precisely with verbal <sentences>. [Pease, 1993]

Allan Pease is the one who – in his paper *Body Language. How to Read Others' Thoughts by their Gestures* – underlines the fact that most of the basic gestures of communication are the same in the whole world.

An example of a gesture found everywhere is that of approval. Thus, 'to nod means, almost universally, *yes*, or an approval. It is one of the forms of head inclination and it can be a gifted gesture, used even by deaf and blind people.' [Pease, 1993]

Most of the people when we want to say 'yes', consider it is normal to make ourselves understood by up-and-down head movements, Allan Pease considering this gesture universal in Europe and integrating it in the so-called 'nodding-shaking', 'where the head is making an up-down movement for <yes> and one left-right for <no>'. [Pease, 1993] Other gestures of the agreement are the "ring" or "OK" gestures and the thumb raised.

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Sigle:

CORV = Corpus de română vorbită;
ROVA = Româna vorbită actuală;
IVLRA = Interacţiunea verbală în limba română actuală.

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