THE ROMANIAN VERBS OF PERCEPTION *VEDEA* AND *AUZI*. BETWEEN DIRECT AND INDIRECT PERCEPTION

IRINA NICULA[1]

Abstract. Verbs of perception display the cross-linguistic ability to enter different syntactic configurations in which they denote either direct or indirect perceptions. In the current article we aim to describe and compare the syntactic structures allowed by two Romanian perception verbs (*vedea* 'see' and *auzi* 'hear') in order to determine their syntactic behaviour and to signal the correspondences between the patterns of complementation they allow and the types of perceptions they denote. We focus on nominal complementation, then we go through finite and non-finite sentential complementation, and, finally, we analyze restructured configurations with secondary predicates realized as non-finite gerund clauses. We show that, to a certain extent, the direct–indirect distinction is predictable from the patterns of complementation, but that there are also ambiguous constructions between the direct and the indirect reading. We emphasize the specific features of Romanian with respect to the lexicalization of direct / indirect perceptions in the investigated structures.

Keywords: verb, direct perception, indirect perception, complementation pattern, complementizer.

1. INTRODUCTION

The class of verbs of perception has received copious attention with respect to the semantics–syntax interface, i.e. to the features of verbs' meaning relevant to their syntactic behaviour. Depending on the lexical class they belong to, verbs of perception show different complementation patterns. Referring to French verbs of perception, Willems (1983: 147) mentions that the verb of visual perception *voir* has the largest combinatorial possibilities (for remarks on the prototypical verb of visual perception, see also Cooper 1974, Labelle 1996, Enghels 2007, Grezka 2009, to name but a few.). We will show that this claim is also valid for Romanian – the verb *vedea* 'see' accepts a wide range of complements, being allowed in syntactic configurations in which apparently similar verbs of non-intentional perception (e.g. *auzi* 'hear', *simți* 'feel'[2]) are not.

In certain syntactic configurations, verbs of perception have the ability to express physical perceptions indirectly; these instances are known in the literature as *indirect perceptions* (for the direct – indirect distinction, see Akmajian 1977, Felser 1999, Enghels 2007 a.o.). Further on, they can also capture meanings other than the physical perceptual

[1] Iorgu Iordan – Al. Rosetti Institute of Linguistics, Bucharest, irina_nicula@yahoo.com.

[2] In the current article, we will not refer to the verb *simți* 'feel'. For a comparative analysis, see Nicula (2012).

RRL, **LVIII**, *3*, p. 313–327, Bucureşti, 2013

BDD-A405 © 2013 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 19:54:53 UTC)

ones. They evolve towards the cognitive semantic field or the communicational one, in which case they denote *cognitive* or *mental representations* (Enghels 2007).

The purpose of the present paper is mainly descriptive: (a) to identify which are the complementation patterns of two Romanian verbs of perception (*vedea* 'see' and *auzi* 'hear'), signalling in what they are alike and in what they are different; (b) to analyze the correspondence between certain patterns of complementation and direct / indirect, physical / cognitive perception, focusing on the specific features of perception verbs in Romanian.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: in the next section we will briefly go through the ontology of stimuli that can be perceived; in section 3 we will discuss the complementation types of the verbs *vedea* 'see' and *auzi* 'hear' by comparison, paying attention to the correlation between the complements they select and the types of perceptions they denote. We will begin with nominal complementation, and then we will go into finite/non-finite complementation and derived structures with secondary predication[3].

Our approach will be oriented typologically, in the sense that we will try to emphasize what is specific to Romanian verbs of perception within Romance.

2. WHICH STIMULI CAN WE PERCEIVE?

In his work on complementation, Dixon (2006) shows that verbs across languages may behave differently with respect to the complements they select. He claims that, typologically, verbs fall into several "semantic types", sharing common elements of meaning and the same syntactic structures.

According to Dixon's typology, verbs of perception are classified as *primary verbs*, i.e. verbs whose arguments can be realized as NPs. Given the fact that at least one of the arguments of perception verbs may be alternatively realized as a CP, *see* and *hear* are tagged as *primary-B verbs*. From an ontological point of view, this means that visual and auditory perception apply not only to entities, but also to processes, facts or eventualities (see Labelle 1996 and the typology of events subordinated to perception, taken over from Rochette 1988).

The syntactic variety of the structures in which verbs of perception are involved correlates with the diversity of stimuli that can be perceived. In the case of visual perception, visual stimuli include: [±concrete] entities, but also point events, durative processes, and states; auditory perception presupposes the existence of [+sonorous] stimuli or processes; the verb *auzi* 'hear' can also take stative verbs as complements, in which case it denotes a cognitive meaning from the semantic field of knowing rather than a physical one.

Depending on the realization of the direct object, verbs of perception can express either *direct* or *indirect* perceptions. This distinction is constantly mentioned in the literature on the semantics and syntax of perception verbs (Guasti 1993, Alm-Arvius 1993, Usoniene 2001, Enghels 2007 a.o.). Usoniene (2001: 165) shows that, for English, the *direct–indirect* distinction was correlated with the selection of the complementizer *that* in the argument clause (Frajzyngier, Jasperson 1991, Dixon, Aikhenvald 2006). Quoting

[3] For reasons of time and space, in the current article, we will not discuss the cases in which perception verbs select indirect interrogatives as argument clauses. For more details in this direction, see Nicula (2012).

BDD-A405 © 2013 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 19:54:53 UTC)

Frajzyngier and Jasperson (1991: 139), Usoniene mentions that in English *that*-subordinate clauses have a special situation, in the sense that they always describe the event subordinated to the matrix predication indirectly. She also claims that the aforementioned distinction is dependent on the nature of perceived entities and on the temporal correspondence between the matrix and the subordinate predication as well.

In the process of direct perception, the Experiencer acquires physical information about the external world by direct observation, through his/her physical senses. Direct perception is always simultaneous with the process expressed in the subordinate clause. In the process of indirect perception, what is perceived is in fact inferred from the physical data to which the observer has access.

3. VERBS OF PERCEPTION AND COMPLEMENTATION

Both verbs of perception *vedea* 'see' and *auzi* 'hear' take subjects realized as [+animate] definite NPs and objects realized as definite NPs, *că /să / dacă*-CPs, gerund non-finite forms, etc. Under certain syntactic conditions, they also enter restructured configurations with secondary predication. Unlike other Romance languages (French, Italian, Spanish), in Romanian the infinitive is possible only with the verb *vedea* meaning 'consider, judge' and in very few contexts. We claim that the two verbs under discussion show similarities, but also differences in their syntactic behaviour.

We will approach nominal complementation in subsection **3.1**, finite complementation in **3.2**, and non-finite complementation in **3.3**. Derived configurations with secondary predication realized as non-finite forms will be tackled in section **3.4**.

3.1. Nominal complementation

In the position of the direct object, **the verb** *vedea* can select either concrete or abstract referents[4]. The two complementation possibilities trigger different semantic interpretations – physical, direct perception, in (1), cognitive, indirect perception, in examples (2)–(3), where the verb captures the meanings 'understand' or 'imagine':

(1) Din bucătărie văd **şcoala**.
'I can see the school building from the kitchen'

(2) Ştii cum văd eu **diferenţa** dintre omul politic şi cel economic? (Petrescu, *Jurnal cu Petre Ţuţea*)
'Do you know how I see the difference between the political man and the economic one?'

[4] Any [+concrete] or [+abstract] entity can occur in the position of the direct object of the verb *vedea*. If the verb expresses a meaning from the perceptual domain, the direct object will have the semantic feature [+real image], given the fact that the perceived entity is placed in the visual field of the Experiencer subject. If the verb expresses a meaning from the imaginary, cognitive domain, the direct object will display the feature [+virtual image], as the subject Experiencer gets a mental image of what he/she perceives.

BDD-A405 © 2013 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 19:54:53 UTC)

(3) Văd şi acum cu aceeaşi bucurie [**totul**: felul cum ne-am învârtit fermecaţi pe străduţele din jur].(Liiceanu, *Jurnalul de la Păltiniş*)
'Even now I imagine everything with the same enthusiasm: how we strolled enchanted on the nearby streets…'

The meanings of the verb *vedea* in the above structures can be represented in terms of semantic features as follows: *vedea*$_1$'perceive by means of physical senses' [+visual], [+concrete], *vedea*$_2$ 'imagine' [+visual], [–concrete]; *vedea*$_3$ 'understand' [–visual], [–concrete].

Compared to the verb *vedea*, **the prototypical verb for auditory perception**, *auzi*, imposes more constraints on its nominal complements: they belong to the semantic class 'sound', as in examples (4)–(5), or they are realized as nouns with concrete reference, as in example (6), in which case the features [+sonorous], [+sound emission] are accessed by metonymy:

(4) Deja se aud **murmure**. (Naum, *Zenobia*)
'Whispers can be heard already'
(5) Mi se părea că le aud **şoaptele**, dar n-a ieşit nici unul să alunge haita. (Naum, *Zenobia*)
'It seemed to me I could hear their whispers, but no one went out to chase away the pack'
(6) Aud **vioara**.
'I can hear the violin' (< 'I can hear somebody playing the violin')

3.2. Finite complements after Romanian verbs of perception

In Romanian, the verbs *vedea* and *auzi* enter configurations with three prototypical complementizers: *că, să,* and *dacă*. The selection of the complementizer is semantico-syntactically governed – it depends on the commitment of the speaker towards the certainty of the subordinate clause and at the same time is associated with mood selection: *să*, for the subjunctive, *că*, for the indicative[5]. *Dacă* 'if; whether' is selected for introducing indirect interrogatives. Nevertheless, there are certain constraints of use with perception verbs (see **3.2.1.3** and **3.2.2.3**).

3.2.1. Vedea *and finite complementation*

The following configurations with the verb *vedea* in the matrix clause are possible in Romanian:

(7) Văd **că** vine ploaia.
see.IND.PRES.1SG that comes rain.DEF
'I can see the rain coming'
(8) Vezi **să** închizi uşa!
see.IMP.2SG $SĂ_{SUBJ}$ close.SUBJ.2SG door.DEF
'Pay attention to close the door!'

[5] See Gabriela Pană Dindelegan (ed.) (2013: 467–468).

BDD-A405 © 2013 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 19:54:53 UTC)

(9) Sun să văd **dacă** sunt acasă.
call.1SG SĂ$_{SUBJ}$ see.SUBJ.1SG if are.PRES.IND.3PL home
'I'm calling to check if they are home'

In the subsections below we will analyze what kinds of perceptions are expressed in each of the above complementation patterns.

3.2.1.1. *Vedea* + *că*-CP

Referring to the context in which the verb *voir* is followed by the complementizer *que*, Labelle (1996: 85) mentions that in French this configuration is available for indirect rather than direct perception. The canonical structure used for expressing direct perception is the one with the infinitive (Labelle 1996: 85, Felser 1999: 227–228). On the other hand, Willems (1983: 148–149) claims that [*voir* + *que* P] pattern can express both direct and indirect perception, as in examples (10) vs. (11), whereas [*voir* + Inf] pattern is available only for direct perceptions:

(10) Je vois [**que** les dames se lèvent de table].
'I can see the ladies standing up from the table'
(11) Je vois [**qu**'il est rentré tard hier soir**].**
'I can infer he came late last evening'
(*apud* Willems 1983: 148-9)

In Romanian, the configurations with the verb *vedea* 'see' followed by a *că*-CP can express: *direct perceptions*, as in example (12); *indirect physical perceptions* – in those contexts in which, on the basis of visual stimuli, one can infer that a certain event has taken place before the matrix one, as in example (13); *cognitive,* mental representations of facts and abstract eventualities, which are always indirect (14). In the last case, the verb *vedea* functions as a verb of cognition.

(12) **Văd** [**că** Andrei vine șchiopătând].
see.PRES.IND.1SG that Andrei comes limp.GER
'I can see Andrei coming along limping'

(13) **Văd** [**că** ați făcut ordine]... așteptați pe cineva?
see.PRES.IND.1SG that have.2SG done order wait.PRES.IND.2PL PE somebody?
(Cimpoeșu, *Simion liftnicul*)
'I can see you tied things up... are you waiting for somebody?'
(14) **Văd** [**că** aveți dreptate].
'I can see you are right'

Each of the above structures generally observes certain constraints:
– instances of direct perception (see (12) above) observe the Simultaneity condition, formulated by Felser (1995: 135) as follows: "the time interval taken up by the event described by a direct perception complement includes the time interval assigned to the matrix event";

BDD-A405 © 2013 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 19:54:53 UTC)

– in instances of indirect physical perceptions (see configuration (13) above), the event predicated by the perception complement usually takes place before the matrix event. Nevertheless, it was shown (see Niculescu 2013: 71–72) that this constraint is not general with indirect perception expression: although the matrix and the subordinate predicates display the same tense, a construction like the one below can denote an indirect perception.

(15) Văd [**că** Mihai **cântă** la vioară]. (*apud* Niculescu 2013: 72)
'I can see that Mihai plays the violin'

In example (15) the speaker does not really see Mihai playing the violin, but can infer from the context that he plays the violin (he sees his name on the participant list in a concerto for violin).
– in cognitive representations expression (see (14) above), subordinate predicates denote states rather than physical observable events.

Under certain syntactic conditions, [*a vedea* + *că*-CP] pattern unambiguously denotes a cognitive, imaginary representation, irrespective of the tense of the subordinate verb. Such is the case when the perception verb is modified by the adverbial *parcă* 'it is like'.

(16) Parcă **văd** că începea să țipe și îmi
as if see.1SG that begin.IMPERF.3SG $SĂ_{SUBJ}$ shout.SUBJ.3SG and CL.DAT.1SG
trântea iar telefonu' (Verdeș, *Muzici și faze*)
slam.IMPERF.3SG again phone.DEF
'It is like I see her beginning to shout and slamming the phone down on me'

3.2.1.2 *Vedea* + *să*-CP

This pattern occurs in imperative contexts in which the verb *vedea* has the agentive meaning 'take care; check'. The effect of using the hortatory subjunctive after the perception verb *vedea* is the attenuation of the meaning 'it is obligatory' of a directive act of speech:

(17) **Vezi** [**să** închizi ușa!]
'Pay attention to close the door!'
(18) **Vezi** [**să** nu lași ușa deschisă]!
'Pay attention not to leave the door open!'

Romanian differs from other Romance languages in expressing this semantic relation with the subjunctive after the verb *vedea*. In Italian, instead of the subjunctive, the infinitive is used, and most frequently in the negative form. The counterparts of examples (19) and (20) are given below:

(19) **Vedi** di chiudere la porta!
'Pay attention to close the door!'
(20) **Vedi** di non lasciare la porta aperta!
'Pay attention not to leave the door open!'

BDD-A405 © 2013 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 19:54:53 UTC)

Other Romance languages do not use the verb *vedea* in this context. In French, this semantic relation is expressed with the collocation *prendre garde*, whereas Spanish uses either the nominal derivative of the verb *cuidar* 'take care' (21) or a syntactic configuration with the interjection ¡*ojo*! 'pay attention', followed by the imperative (22) or the infinitive (23):

(21) ¡**Cuidado** en no dejar$_{INF}$ la puerta abierta!
(22) ¡**Ojo**, no dejes$_{IMP}$ la puerta abierta!
(23) ¡**Ojo** con no dejar$_{INF}$ la puerta abierta!

The syntactic configuration [*a vedea* + *să*-CP] also occurs with the negative form of the verb *vedea*, meaning 'to consider':

(24) Polițiștii nu văd **să** existe vreo legătură între cele două evenimente.
'The policemen cannot see any connection between the two happenings'

The same context is available for the complementizer *că* and the indicative in the argument clause:

(25) Polițiștii nu văd **că** există o legătură între cele două evenimente.
'The policemen cannot see there is a connection between the two happenings'

The syntactic variation between the indicative and the subjunctive is associated with a semantic difference (Siegel 2009: 1863). The selection of the indicative in a negative context is associated with the fact that the subject of the matrix clause believes in the truth of the negated argument clause, whereas the selection of the subjunctive signals uncertainty related to the truth of the argument clause (see also Pană Dindelegan (ed.) 2013: 467–468). Thus, examples (24) and (25) can be paraphrased as below:

(24') 'The policemen think there is no connection between the two happenings, but they are not sure of it'.
(25') 'There is a connection between the two events, but the policemen cannot see it'

3.2.1.3. *Vedea* + *dacă*-CP

The verb *vedea* can take as an argument clause an indirect interrogative introduced by the complementizer *dacă* 'if/whether'. The verb in the subjunctive or present/future indicative expresses a cognitive perception (it conveys the meanings 'find out; think') as in example (26) or a physical perception (*vedea* 'check'; 'ascertain visually'), as in example (27).

(26) O să văd **dacă** vă pot însoți.
'I will see if I can join you'
(27) Vreau să văd **dacă** am stins focul.
'I want to check if I turned off the gas'

BDD-A405 © 2013 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 19:54:53 UTC)

The selection of the complementizer *dacă* 'if; whether' can be explained by the semantic nature of the matrix verb. Ocheşeanu (1961: 154) showed that, in Romanian, indirect interrogatives occur as subordinates of verbs of information or of *dubitandi* verbs, such as the verb *vedea* in the above contexts.

The selection of the complementizer *dacă* 'if; whether' is blocked when the verb *vedea* observes the features [+perfective] [+affirmative]:

(28) *A văzut **dacă** era cineva acasă.
has seen whether was somebody home
vs.
(28') Nu a văzut **dacă** era cineva acasă.
not has seen whether was somebody home
'He did not see if there was somebody home'

3.2.2. Auzi *and finite complementation*

The verb *auzi* 'hear' can take sentential complements introduced by complementizers *că, să, dacă*. In these configurations, the matrix verb is subject to certain polarity [+negative] / [+affirmative] constraints or to morphological (temporal) constraints.

3.2.2.1. *Auzi* + *că*-CP

The verb *auzi* 'hear' can take an argument clause introduced by the complementizer *că*. In this type of constructions, both direct (29) and indirect ("hearsay") perceptions (30) are expressed. In the latter case, a verbal message is related indirectly (< 'I heard people saying...')

(29) ***Aud*** [***că*** *bate la uşă*].
'I can hear somebody knocking at the door'
(30) Domnu' Simion, **am auzit** [**că** dumneata faci minuni, e adevărat]? (Cimpoeşu, *Simion liftnicul*)
'Mr. Simion, I've heard that you make miracles, is it true?'

In examples such as (30), the verb *auzi* no longer designates auditory perception; it rather evolves towards the cognitive domain, denoting a cognitive process, i.e. 'find out'.

3.2.2.2. *Auzi* + *să*-CP

The pattern is possible only if the matrix verb is [+perfective] [+negative]. A configuration with a non-perfective affirmative matrix verb is not grammatical:

(31) Mi se pare o zonă foarte sigură, nu mi-a furat nimeni nimic şi nici **nu am auzit** [**să** se întâmple].
'It seems a very safe area to me, I have never get robbed and I haven't heard of any such story'

The selection of the subjunctive is related to the commitment of the speaker regarding the certainty of the subordinate. Example (31) can be paraphrased as below:

BDD-A405 © 2013 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 19:54:53 UTC)

(32) (…) nu cred că s-a întâmplat, dar nu știu sigur.
'I don't think this happened, but I don't know for sure'

3.2.2.3. *Auzi* + *dacă*-CP

Like the verb *vedea* 'see', *auzi* 'hear' can take an indirect interrogative introduced by the complementizer *dacă* 'if' as an argument clause. This configuration is specialized for denoting physical direct perceptions.

(33) **Nu aud** [**dacă** sună soneria].
'I cannot hear whether the bell rings' ("I cannot perceive the sound of the bell ringing")

The configuration is possible also with the matrix verb in the future, in which case the meaning of the verb is no longer perceptual.

(34) Voi auzi dacă vei pleca din țară.
AUX.FUT.1SG hear.INF if AUX.FUT.2SG leave.INF from country
'I will find out if you leave the country'

3.3. Verbs of perception and non-finite complementation

In Romanian, the verbs of non-intentional perception *vedea* 'see', *auzi* 'hear', *simți* 'feel' take non-finite complements. Unlike other Romance languages, in present-day Romanian, the infinitive is very rare with perception verbs. On the other hand, the gerund (present participle) is found in many contexts. As Niculescu (2013: 66) remarks, the pattern with perception verbs is the canonical structure in which the gerund is selected by a verb.

3.3.1. Vedea *and non-finite complementation*

There are few cases in which the verb *vedea* 'see' takes an *a*-infinitival clause as its complement. In the present day language, the pattern [*vedea* + *a*-INF][6] is limited to two contexts in which the infinitive verb is either the copula/existential verb *a fi* 'be' or the verb *a avea* 'have' (or periphrases that include the verbs *a fi* 'be' or *a avea* 'have')[7]. Most frequently, the infinitive takes a postverbal subject, different from the subject of the matrix verb, which is placed either postverbally (as in example 35) or sentence-initially, raising over the matrix verb (36).

[6] See Sandfeld, Olsen (1936, I: 260). The authors claim that the structures with the infinitive selected by perception verbs or *discover*-verbs were more frequent in the old language, mentioning that only the infinitive *a fi* 'be' occured as the complement of perception verbs. Along the same line, Diaconescu (1977: 163) mentions that the pattern [transitive verb + *a*-inf] was very frequent in the old language in the 16th century, but it is difficult to make an inventory of the transitive verbs that take direct objects realized as *a*-infinitives. The author also remarks that *a*-inf most often occurs as the direct object of *declarandi, dicendi,* ***sentiendi,*** *voluntatis* verbs, but also of modal and aspectual ones, in competition with the subjunctive.

[7] Google motor search revealed the same conclusion. After perception verbs only the infinitive *a avea* 'have' and *a fi* 'be' are used.

BDD-A405 © 2013 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 19:54:53 UTC)

In all these contexts, the verb *vedea* no longer expresses a perceptual meaning. It evolves towards the cognitive domain, capturing the meaning ‘to consider’:

(35) Sunt abia pe la jumătatea cărții, însă **nu văd** [**a fi**
be.1SG hardly around middle.DEF book.DEF but not see.1SG A_{INF} be.INF
[ceva imoral] în ea].
something imoral in it
‘I’ve only got to the middle of the book, but I do not see anything imoral in it’
(36) [*Napoli*]$_S$ ***nu văd*** [***a avea*** *mari jucători*]. (www.fcsteaua.ro)
‘I do not consider Naples has great players’

In the above patterns, the infinitive is competed by the subjunctive, which is much more used in all the registers of the language:

(35’) Sunt abia pe la jumătatea cărții, însă nu văd **să**
be.1SG hardly around middle.DEF book.DEF but not see.1SG $SĂ_{SUBJ}$
fie [ceva imoral]s în ea].
be.SUBJ something imoral in it

The construction with the infinitive is possible only if the matrix verb is [+negative]. Configurations like the one below, with an affirmative matrix verb, are not grammatical.

(37) ***Văd** a fi o soluție la această problemă.
vs.
(38) **Nu văd** a fi o soluție la această problemă.
‘I do not see any solution to this problem’

The verb *vedea* ‘see’ can take a direct object[8] realized as a **gerund clause**, denoting a process that is perceived visually. Usually, these contexts are specialized for expressing direct perceptions of ongoing processes (39–40):

(39) Văd [**căzând** frunzele]
‘I can see the leaves falling’
(40) Văd [**întorcându-se** copiii de la școală]
‘I can see pupils coming back from school’

Unlike the old language (41) (for examples, see Niculescu 2013: 82–83), the current language does not allow stative verbs[9] in this type of structures (42):

[8] We will not go into details with regard to the status / case marking of the subject of the gerund or the place where it is generated. For a detailed discussion, see Niculescu (2013: 66–69, 72). For the position of the subject of the gerund, see Pană Dindelegan (ed.) (2013: 103). The author mentions that subject anteposition makes the construction ambiguous: the DP placed before the gerund form can be interpreted either as the subject of the gerund or as a raised object.

[9] This constraint has to do with the interpretation of stative predicates (for the discussion, see Guasti 1993: 147–148). Stative predicates with *stage-level reading* (Carlson 1977: 125) are admitted in this position in the old language and in current language as well, whereas predicates *with individual-level reading* are not acceptable in the current language, whereas in the 16th-17th centuries they were frequent.

BDD-A405 © 2013 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 19:54:53 UTC)

(41) Iară să văm vedea destui oameni îmbogățindu-se și
and SĂ$_{SUBJ}$ AUX.FUT.1PL see.INF enough persons enrich.GER=CL.REFL.ACC and
și veselindu-se și **sănătoși fiind** (Coresi, CC)
and enjoy.GER=CL.REFL.ACC and healthy be.GER
'And if we see enough people getting richer and more joyful and being healthy'

(42) *Am văzut copiii **fiind sănătoși**.

3.3.2 Auzi *and non-finite complementation*

Unlike the verb *vedea* 'see' (see above, **3.3.1**), the only non-finite complement that *auzi* 'hear' can take in the current language is the gerund.

(43) Aud [**cântând** muzica]
hear.1SG play.GER music.DEF
'I can hear the music playing'

In the 16th-17th centuries, the pattern with the infinitive after the verb *auzi* 'hear' was possible, though rare:

(44) **S-au auzit** în tabăra vrăjmaşilor multe sunete de trâmbițe **a face** gâlceavă (VF)
'In the enemy's camp, many sound of trumpets **were heard making noise**'

3.4. Verbs of perception in restructured configurations

The verbs of perception *vedea* and *auzi* also function as raising verbs: they take an NP subject, an NP direct object and a third constituent, with different realizations, interpreted as a secondary predicate (SP) (for Romanian, see the interpretation in GALR II (2008: 194; 301–306)). The secondary predicate describes a temporary quality or process that refers to the constituent functioning as the direct object of the perception verb:

(45) L-am văzut [[pe Ion] **supărat**].
'I saw that Ion was upset'

(46) L-am auzit [[pe Ion] **cântând** la pian].
'I heard Ion playing the piano'

As shown elsewhere (see Nicula 2012: 142–150), some of the realizations of the secondary predicate are common to all the non-intentional perception verbs, whereas others are specific only to one verb.

In the present article, we will focus on the cases in which the SP is realized as a non-finite clause.

- There are few contexts in which the secondary predicate is realized as an **infinitival non-finite clause**. Only the verb *vedea*, meaning 'consider; judge as', can take an infinitival secondary predicate. In the current language, only the copula verb *fi* 'be' is admitted in this position:

BDD-A405 © 2013 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 19:54:53 UTC)

(47) Eu nu-l văd **a fi** un film care să reziste
I not=CL.ACC.3SG see.1SG A_{INF} be.INF a movie that $SĂ_{SUBJ}$ survive.SUBJ
în memoria tuturor şi peste decenii.
in memory.DEF all.DEF also over decades
'I don't see it as a movie to survive in everybody's memory over time'

On the other hand, **the gerund clause** selected by perception verbs is very productive in the current language and in old language as well[10]. Both the verb *vedea* 'see' and *auzi* 'hear' can take a secondary predicate realized as a non-finite gerund clause.

The configurations with the verb *vedea* can denote both direct (48) and indirect perceptions (49). In the latter case, its meaning changes to 'imagine':

(48) Îl văd [**îndreptându-se** spre noi].
CL.ACC.3SG see.PRES.IND.1SG head.GER=CL.REFL.3SG towards us.ACC
'I see him heading towards us'
(49) Nu-l văd [**venind** să-şi ceară scuze].
'I don't see him coming to apologize'

The raising verb *auzi* 'hear' generally denotes direct perceptions. The gerund form occurring after it is semantically compatible with the domain of audible phenomena, i.e. it is a verb belonging to the class of saying verbs:

(50) Îl aud **ţipând la fratele său / cântând la pian**.
'I can hear him shouting at his brother / playing the piano'

Nevertheless, there are contexts in which the verb *auzi* no longer functions as a truly perception verb. The auditory process is presupposed, but only at an imaginary level, i.e. "imagine someone saying"):

(51) Îl şi aud [**împărtăşindu**-le prietenilor
CL.ACC.3SG as if hear.IND.PRES.1SG share.GER=CL.ACC.3PL friend.DAT
ideea lui grozavă]!
idea.DEF his great
'I can imagine him sharing his great idea with his friends'

In his research on the infinitive clause after perception verbs, Gawełko (2003: 53–67) reaches the following conclusions: (i) Romanian does not use the infinitive after perception verbs; (ii) the verb *vedea* 'see' **prefers the gerund** (33 occurrences) to the **subordinates**

[10] Perception verbs, *discovery*-verbs (*descoperi* 'discover', *găsi* 'find', *surprinde* 'catch') and the verb *lăsa* 'leave' are the only ones that allow secondary predicates realized as gerund clauses: *L-am găsit **plângând*** 'I found him crying', *L-am lăsat **dormind*** 'I left him sleeping', *Am surprins-o **vorbind** în somn* 'I caught her talking in her sleep'. Unlike perception verbs, *discovery*-verbs and the verb *lăsa* 'leave' do not allow the complementizers *că* or *cum*: *L-am văzut **plângând**/**cum** plângea* 'I saw him crying', *L-am văzut **că** plângea* 'I saw that he was crying' vs. *L-am găsit/lăsat **plângând**/*cum/că plângea*.

BDD-A405 © 2013 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 19:54:53 UTC)

introduced by the complementizers *că* or *cum*[11] (9 occurrences); (iii) the verb *auzi* 'hear' **prefers the gerund** (20 occurrences) to the subordinates introduced by the complementizers *că* or *cum* (10 occurrences); (iv) the verb *simți* 'feel' **prefers the configuration with subordinate clauses** (11 occurrences) to the gerund (8 occurences).

Within Romance, Romanian is the only language that, in constructions with perception verbs, allows only the gerund among the non-finite forms (Gawełko 2003: 56–58, Niculescu 2013: 70)[12]. The other Romance languages use both the infinitive and the gerund (52) or the infinitive and the pseudo-relative clause (53–55).

(52) a. Vi a los niños **jugando** (Spanish)
b. Vi **jugar** a los niños
'I saw the children playing'

(53) Ho visto Maria **partire** (Italian*, apud* Guasti 1993: 53)
'I saw Mary leaving'

(54) Vedo Gianni **che canta** (Italian, *apud* Maiden and Robustelli 2007: 390–395)
'I see John singing'

(55) Je le vois **venir** (French)
Je le vois **qui vient**
'I see him coming'

For Italian and French, the configurations with infinitives and pseudo-relative clauses are considered to be the only possibilities of expressing direct perceptions of processes or events (Felser 1999, Guasti (1993: 141–143)), as opposed to those structures in which perception verbs take finite complements (subordinates introduced by *que / che*), which generally express indirect perceptions.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The verbs of perception under scrutiny admit a wide range of complements. The realization of their complements correlates with the meanings they denote and the types of perception they express. We have shown that complementation by a *că*-CP can receive both a direct and an indirect reading. For the verb *vedea,* complementation by a *să*-CP is possible only with the perception verb in the imperative (and its meaning is not strictly perceptual, i.e. 'ascertain visually'), whereas the verb *auzi* followed by a *să*-CP expresses a cognitive meaning, i.e'find out'. Complementizer selection is associated with certain semantic constraints on the perception verb.

[11] Gheorghe (2011) mentions that the gerund clause after perception verbs is semantically equivalent to a "presentative" pseudo-relative introduced by the connector *cum* (literally 'how'). In this type of contexts, *cum* 'how' diminishes its modal meaning in favour of an aspectual one, which enables the equivalence to the gerund: *Îl văd pe Ion* ***venind*** = *Îl văd pe Ion* ***cum vine*** 'I see Ion coming'.

[12] Niculescu (2013: 102) shows that the occurrence of the infinitive after perception verbs has been marginal since the old language. In the investigated corpus, the author found only three contexts of perception verbs followed by infinitives (for the 19th-20th centuries).

BDD-A405 © 2013 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 19:54:53 UTC)

As raising verbs, *vedea* and *auzi* most frequently occur with gerund clauses. This is in fact the canonical structures used for expressing direct perception in Romanian, alongside presentative pseudo-relative clauses (introduced by *cum*) and subordinates introduced by *că*.

SOURCES

Boţulescu, V., [1763] *Vestitele şi slăvitele fapte şi biruinţe ce împotriva turcilor au făcut Gheorghie Castriotul ce să numia Scanderbeg*, critical edition by E. Timotin şi O. Olar (mss).
Coresi, *Carte cu învăţătură.* În S. Puşcariu, Al. Procopovici (ed.). *Diaconul Coresi, Carte cu învăţătură,* Bucureşti: Socec, 1914 (CC).
Cimpoeşu, P., *Simion liftnicul*, Bucureşti, Editura Compania, 2001.
Internet.
Liiceanu, G., *Jurnalul de la Păltiniş*, Bucureşti, Editura Humanitas, 1991.
Naum, G., *Zenobia*, Bucureşti, Editura Humanitas, 2003.
Preda, R., *Jurnal cu Petre Ţuţea*, Bucureşti, Editura Humanitas, 1992.
Verdeş, O., *Muzici şi faze*, Braşov, Aula, 2003.

REFERENCES

Alm-Arvius, C., 1993, *The English Verb See: A Study in Multiple Meaning*, Göteborg, Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis.
Akmajian, A, 1977,"The complement structure of perception verbs in an autonomous syntax framework", in: P. Culicover, Th. Wasow, Ad. Akmajian (eds), *Formal Syntax*, New York, Academic Press, 427−461.
Carlson, G., 1977, *Reference to Kinds in English*, PhD dissertation, Amherst, University of Massachusetts.
Cooper, W., 1974, "Syntactic flexibility among English sensation referents", *Linguistics*, 12, 33–38.
Diaconescu, I., 1977, *Infinitivul în limba română*, Bucureşti, Editura Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică.
Dixon, R. M. W., A. Aikhenvald, 2006, *Complementation*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
Enghels, R., 2007, *Les modalités de perception visuelle et auditive. Différence conceptuelles et répercussions sémantico-syntaxique en espagnol et en français*, Tübingen, Max Niemeyer Verlag.
Felser, C., 1999, *Verbal Complement Clauses. A Minimalist Study of Direct Perception Constructions*, Amsterdam, John Benjamins.
Frajzyngier, Z., R. Jasperson, 1991, "*That*-clauses and other complements", *Lingua*, 83, 133–153.
GALR 2008 – Academia Română, Institutul de Lingvistică "Iorgu Iordan – Al. Rosetti", *Gramatica limbii române*, I: *Cuvântul*, II: *Enunţul*, tiraj nou, revizuit, Bucureşti, Editura Academiei Române (coord.: Valeria Guţu Romalo).
Gawełko, M., 2003, "Sur la proposition infinitive romane introduite par un verbe de perception", *Studii şi cercetări lingvistice*, 1–2, 53–67.
Gheorghe, M., 2011, "Construcţii pseudo-relative în română" (mss.), speech delivered at *Colocviul Internaţional Limba română – abordări tradiţionale şi moderne*, 2nd edition, held by Babeş-Bolyai University, The Faculty of Letters, Cluj.
Grezka, A., 2009, *La polysémie des verbes de perception visuelle*, Paris, L'Harmattan.
Guasti, M. T., 1993, *Causative and perception verbs. A comparative study.* Torino, Rosenberg & Sellier.
Labelle, M., 1996, "Remarques sur les verbes de perception et la sous-catégorisation", *Recherches Linguistiques de Vincennes*, 25, 83–106.
Maiden, M., C. Robustelli, 2007, *A Reference Grammar of Modern Italian*, London, Hodder Arnold.

BDD-A405 © 2013 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 19:54:53 UTC)

Nicula, I., 2012, *Modalităţi de exprimare a percepţiilor fizice. Verbele de percepţie în limba română*, Bucureşti, Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti.
Niculescu, D., 2013, *Particularităţi sintactice ale limbii române din perspectivă tipologică. Gerunziul*, Bucureşti (in press).
Pană Dindelegan, G., 2013 (ed.), *The Grammar of Romanian*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
Ocheşeanu, R., 1961, "Observaţii asupra propoziţiilor interogative indirecte", in: Al. Graur, Jacques Byck (eds), *Studii de Gramatică*, III, 151–169.
Rochette, A., 1988, *Semantic and syntactic aspects of Romance sentential complementation*, PhD dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (available at dspace.mit.edu).
Rizzi, L., 2003, *Comparative Syntax and Language Acquisition*, London, Routledge.
Sandfeld, Kr., H. Olsen, 1936, *Syntaxe Roumaine* I. *Emploi des mots à flexion*, Paris, Librairie E. Droz.
Siegel, L., 2009, "Mood selection in Romance and Balkan", *Lingua*, 119, 1859–1882.
Usoniene, A., 2001, "On Direct/Indirect Perception with Verbs of Seeing and Seeming in English and Lithuanian", *Working Papers*, 48, Lund, Lund University, Departament of Linguistics, 163–181.
Willems, D., 1983, "***Regarde voir***. Les verbes de perception visuelle et la complémentation verbale", in E. Roegiest şi Liliane Tasmowski (éds), *Verbe et phrase dans les langues romanes. Mélanges offerts a Louis Mourin*, Gent, 147–159.

BDD-A405 © 2013 Editura Academiei
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 19:54:53 UTC)