SOME ISSUES REGARDING THE SUBJECT – PREDICATE RELATIONSHIP

CÂTEVA ASPECTE PRIVIND RAPORTUL DINTRE SUBIECT ŞI PREDICAT

(*Rezumat*)

Problema predicatului şi a subiectului a fost una constantă şi de cea mai mare importanţă în istoria lingvisticii. De aceea bibliografia referitoare la ea este impresionantă iar punctele de vedere sunt, uneori, de o divergenţă (aparent) ireconciliabilă. Aprecierea este valabilă şi pentru lingvistica românească, unde lucrările de sinteză sau cele punctuale, prin multitudinea lor, formează un prim obstacol major la realizarea unei abordări cuprinzătoare a statutului acestei esenţiale entităţi gramaticale în limba română.

Problema relaţiei dintre predicat şi subiect a preocupat în mod deosebit, lingviştii români şi nu numai. Există un consens în ceea ce priveşte relaţia/raportul subiect-predicat, cu atât mai mult cu cât orientările sunt logiciste, structuralizate sau funcţionale. Cu excepţia direcţiei formaliste, se poate constata la celelate două orientări un numitor comun: acceptarea ideii că la baza predicaţiei stă o construcţie logică, o judecată. În lucrarea de faţă ne propunem o sinteză a principalelor orientări din lingvistica românească. În general, s-au conturat patru opinii şi anume: relaţia de coordonare, relaţia de independenţă, cea de inerenţă/ interdependenţă şi cea de subordonare. Relaţia de coordonare este exclusă principial întrucât acest raport nu poate lega termenii fundamentali ai propoziţiei. De asemenea am lăsat la o parte raportul de independenţă, care nu se justifică în ceea ce priveşte relaţia dintre subiect şi predicat, ca părţi principale de propoziţie.

Ne-am orientat deci, în principal, pe raportul de inerenţă/ interdependenţă şi pe raportul de subordonare. Am avut în vedere, în special, la primul dintre aceste raporturi, atât orientările logiciste, cât şi pe cele semantico- structurale. În cazul relaţiei de subordonare, am urmărit două aspecte: a) al preeminenţei predicatului în raport cu subiectul; b) al preeminenţei subiectului în raport cu predicatul.

Analiza în detaliu a acestor orientări ne-a determinat să ajungem la concluzia că soluţia acceptabilă, având în vedere şi perspectiva didactică, este aceea a raportului

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de interdependenţă, considerând totodată că denumirea cea mai potrivită ar fi cea de inerenţă sau de echivalenţă.

Key-words: predicate, interdependence, inherence, equivalence.
Cuvinte-cheie: predicat, interdependenţă, inerenţă, echivalenţă.

The present paper focuses on a fundamental and omnipresent issue in the grammar of Indo-European languages. While bringing to attention the opinions and solutions proposed by Romanian linguists, we shall make a number of specifications, our aim being to present our own points of view in this regard.

The bibliography in the field makes reference to the four types of relationships: of *coordination*, *independence*, *subordination* and *inherence/interdependence*.

We shall not focus on the relation of coordination since, in this case, the grammatical relationship between the two parts of the sentence takes the form of agreement; therefore, coordination is excluded because it is based on junction or juxtaposition (Draşoveanu, 1958: 175–183). In the same article, Draşoveanu rejects the idea of an *independence* between the two main parts of the sentence: "Even if the sentence and, implicitely, the judgement (consisting of two fundamental terms), separates on the level of thought and language the object from its feature (movement), respectively, the logical and grammatical subject from the logical and grammatical predicate, it unites them at the same time, the linguistic expression of this union being the agreement of the predicate with the subject, an agreement which excludes grammatical independence, in the same way as an independence of a feature is excluded in the outside world"[1] (1958: 178).

The opinions expressed by various authors regarding the relationship of subordination between subject and predicate are contradictory. On the one hand are the theses admitting the preeminence of the predicate in relation with the subject; on the other hand, they assert a subordination of the predicate to the subject.

A preeminence of the predicate in relation with the subject is supported by **Al. Graur** in ***Părţile principale ale propoziţiei***[2] (1962); the author argues that there are cases when the subject is missing, and yet the utterance is meaningful, e.g. *plouă, tună, sună la intrare*[3]. Graur emphasizes that "[…] a sentence cannot exist without a predicate, since a noun or a pronoun that is

[1] Our own translation. All translations of quotations are our own.
[2] = *The Main Parts of the Sentence*;
[3] = (it) *is raining*; = (it) *is thundering*; = *(it) *is ringing at the door*;

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not accompanied by a word that saying something about it does not form a sentence, so that it is not a subject". Utterances, such as *boală lungă*, *moarte sigură*[4], "are sentences without a verb, but not without a predicate" (Graur 1962: 48).

Refering to logical empirical interpretations, Graur points out that grammarians do not operate with notions, but use words instead: "In grammar, subject is a name […] in the nominative case, while predicate is a predicative verb or a name accompanied by a copulative verb, the role of the predicate being to show what the subject is doing" (1962: 49).

The fact that, with the subject-predicate agreement, the subject holds first place, is not surprising: by definition, a sentence "says something about the subject". This points to the fact that "the subject is the starting point of the sentence". And yet, the focus in the sentence falls on "the situation reached, [rather than on the starting point]: the subject being a given, the main part of the sentence is that which shows what happens". Consequently, "a gradation can be established between the two main parts, because the predicate is more important than the subject" (1962: 51-52).

Barbu B. Berceanu's *Sistemul gramatical al limbii române*[5] (1971) represents the logical empirical approach to Romanian grammar. In Berceanu's view, grammatical categories "reflect thought (the logical categories) and reality (the categories used in various fields to refer to reality)" (Berceanu 1971: 15). The subject's subordination to the predicate is clearly presented in the final chapter. Thus, "the predicate alone is specific for the sentence, while the subject, which can be missing (*plouă, bate la poartă*[6]), appears – formally, at least – as a kind of advantaged object (by the predicate's agreement with it etc.), followed – in favouring rank – by the objects/modifiers in the dative and accusative […], and then by the adverbial modifiers" (1971: 252–253).

Gabriela Pană Dindelegan (1976/1989[7]) supports and arguments the idea of *the subject's subordination to the predicate* within their relation of interdependence, in the sense that "any occurrence of the constituent subject «calls for» the compulsory presence, whithin the same basic structure, of a predicate constituent" (Pană Dindelegan 1976: 83).

Pană Dindelegan also considers that, along with the subject, the predicate represents a *functional* constituent of the verbal group. With regard to this function, it is defined *by relation*, targetting simultaneously a *relation of domination* and one of *neighbourhood*. "Each function enters a twofold

[4] = *lLong illness, certain death;*

[5] = *The Grammatical System of the Romanian Language*;

[6] = (it) *rains*, *(someone) *is knocking at the door*;

[7] The references are for the first edition.

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domination relationship – as «dominated» term and as «dominant» term –, as well several neighbourhood relations" (1976: 76). From this perspective, the predicate is dominant within the **predicative Phrase (PredPh)**. The specification refers to the fact that "in Romanian, there are no basic structures formed of a predicate alone. Basic structures are by necessity **bi-** or **pluri-member**. Constructions of the type: *Tună, Plouă, Fulgeră, Ninge, Burniţează, Geruieşte*[8], which seem to contradict this assertion, are, from the perspective of transformational grammar bi-member in their deep structure, where an undefined subject also occurs. The absence of the subject is merely a «surface» phenomenon […] (1976: 76-77).

The predicate is, therefore, the only functional constituent of the *predicative phrase* whose presence is compulsory. The distinction: verb phrase (**VPh**) – predicative phrase (**PredPh**) corresponds to the distinction *categorial/functional*. VPh is a categorial notion, while PredPh is a functional one, related to the "predicative" function and organized around a verb in a personal mood. According to Pană Dindelegan, the VPh includes "all the determiners of the verb, irrespective of the nature of their relationship or of their degree of cohesion with the verb, while the PredPh includes only *compulsory* determiners, i.e. the determiners closely linked to the verb" (1976: 50). They are:

- the determiners linked to the verbs by a relation of **case rection** (see above); in this situation are the subject, the direct object, the indirect object, the secondary object;
- the determiners linked to the verbs by prepositional rection, the verb imposing upon them a prepositional construction with a certain obligatory preposition, e.g. *abuzează de noi, apelează la voi, se bazează pe voi, constă în ceva*[9] etc.;
- non-elidable determinants, i.e. those whose elimination affects the syntactic and semantic integrity of the utterance, e.g. in *El devine profesor* or *El procedează corect*[10], the determiners *profesor* and *corect* cannot be elided: **el devine* and **el procedează* are non-wellformed utterances.

Thus, the PredPh contains a verb in a personal mood and determiners: subject, direct object, secondary object, indirect object, prepositional object, attributive, adverbial modifier; depending on the semantic-syntactic context, this last category can be either elidable or non-elidable.

[8] = *(it) *is thundering*, (it) *is raining*, *(it) *is lightning* (= flashes of lightning), (it) *is snowing*, (it) *is drizzling*, *(it) *is frosting*;

[9] = **abuses (of) us*, *turns to you*, *counts on you*, *consists in something*;

[10] = *He becomes a teacher*, respectively, *He behaves correctly*;

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Linguists at the University of Cluj came up with a number of objections regarding the subject's dependence on the predicate – objections synthetized by G.G.Neamţu in his work *Predicatul în limba română, o reconsiderare a predicatului nominal*[11] (1986). Mention must be made of the fact that these linguists – most of them structuralists – support the idea of the subject's subordination to the predicate and take as their premise the fact that the verb-predicate is the "structural core" of the sentence.

Neamţu argues that this status of the predicate can be discussed "on two levels that do not overlap" (1986: 19). On the communicative level, the predicate is indeed the predicative core of the sentence. "On this level," the author admits, "the predicate is undeniably the only main part of the sentence, outranking in importance all other parts of the sentence". But this does not happen on the structural level, where "there are different criteria for establishing the (structural) «core» and the determinants" of the "subject + predicate" group (1986: 20).

Linguists from Cluj (especially Draşoveanu and Neamţu, but also other linguists from the same academic environment) also support the oposite view, i.e. that of the **predicate's dependence on the subject**.

Draşoveanu builds up his theory regarding the pre-eminence of the subject in relation with the predicate in several articles sythetized in *Predicatul. Definiţie. Clasificare – Desinenţial şi Intonaţional*[12] and included in the volume *Teze şi antiteze în sintaxa limbii române*[13] (1997: 195-208).

The author sets out from the idea that the term *personal* in the syntagm "personal moods" covers up the reality of two distinct grammatical categories – *mood* and *person* – which are distinct both by content and in inflectional structure. The fact that these inflections are contained in the structure of the same finite verb "does not affect the spheres of the respective grammatical categories, and so much the less does one inflection (*pers.*) stand for the other (*mood*)" (1997: 195-196).

On the other hand, it becomes obvious that personal verbs are also predicative, while impersonal ones are non-predicative. The author formulates the alternative: "are the respective moods *personal* because they are *predicative*, or are they *predicative* because they are *personal*?" (1997: 196). The answer is to the point: "they are *predicative* because they are *personal.*" Thus, the essence of predicativity is *person*, not *mood.* Therefore, for defining the predicate the notion of *person* is basic.

[11] = *The Predicate in the Romanian Language: a reconsideration of the nominal predicate*

[12] = *The Predicate. Definition. Classification – Inflectional and Intonational*

[13] = *Theses and Antitheses in the Syntax of the Romanian Language*

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Person and number are cummulated within the same *inflection*; but, after surveying certain syntagms, Draşoveanu reaches the conclusion that *person has preeminence over number* (no.).

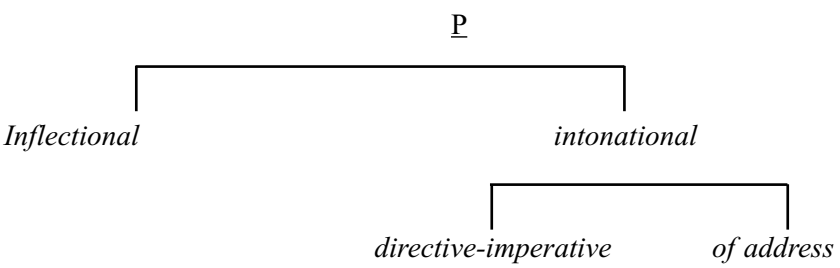
Under the circumstance, a first definition of the verbal predicate – the author rejecting the existence of a nominal predicate (nP) – would be "the verb which selects an S/ (in N) by *agreement* in *pers.* and *no.* with it" (1997: 197). [S/ = noun, denoting any part of speech with nominal value, pronoun etc.].

In Draşoveanu's opinion, "there is no so-called *nP*. There are talks; the conclusion: there are no copulative verbs, all verbs, including asemantic *a fi* (= to be), are predicative; all Ps expressed by a verb are verbal; just like *Eps*[14], *nP*s are extra-predicative, being extra-personal." (1997: 200).

Neither are there "bi-member nominal sentences", of the type: *vorba multă, sărăcia omului*[15]; what we have here is an asemantic *a fi* (= to be), i.e. an elided *P*. The sentence is therefore verbal". The two structures are outside the sphere of the predicate. Its sphere covers only the *verb, interjection* and *noun*, since "they share a common, unique and *defining*, feature of predicativity, *2nd pers.* [i.e. a 2nd degree feature, specific for the verb, as opposed to *1st pers.*, which is specific for the S/], considered in its *content*; the whole P is therefore *personal* […]"(1997: 200).

The *criterion* for the classification of the predicate is not the *2nd pers*. content, which pertains to the level of the predication, but rather, its *expression* which, in the case of the verb, embraces a inflectional form, so that the predicate will be referred to as *inflectional* (equivalent to the verbal predicate in "traditional" grammars). The interjection and the noun "fall under the sphere" of *intonation* (*Int*) and "will represent the *intonational P*" (1997: 200).

Draşoveanu (1997: 205) proposes the following classification for the predicate:



[14] = Supplementary predicative element;
[15] = *Much talk, man's poverty*.

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Thus, the definition is modified: "P is a bearer of *2nd person*; by its expression, it can be (a) a *inflectional P* and (b) an *intonational P*; the relationship between P and S is accomplished: (a) by person *agreement*, and (b), by person *concord*" (1997: 204).

Draşoveanu also analyzes other theses regarding the subject-predicate relationship. One of them postulates the idea of an *interdependence* between the subject and the predicate: S ↔P. This thesis is based on the idea that, "just like the S imposes *pers.* and *no.* upon the P, in the same way the P imposes the N case upon the S" (1997: 205). This argument, however, contains a flaw, namely that of not making difference between two distinct syntactic phenomena: *imposition* (regime) and *selectional restriction*. In this sense, Draşoveanu argues that "it is true, the S *imposes pers*. and *no*. upon the *P*; the *P* only selects an *S/* when (selectional restriction) the latter is in the N case". On the other case, in syntax *dependence* means *subordination*, which would trigger an impossible situation: "each of the two terms, the *S* and the *P*, would be subordinated to the other member" (1997: 206).

Draşoveanu rejects the older thesis according to which the subject is subordinated to the predicate, bringing up as argument "the content of agreement – inherence." In this sense, "words that express features, the adjective and the finite verb (the latter two as features in progress) are made to agree with, and only with, words that express the *notions*. But they can pertain exclusively to the *S/*; being intrinsic (inherent) to notions, the features – whether asserted or not – pertain to the content of the notion and thus are subordinated to it as part is to a whole […]" (1997: 207-208). Compared to the subject – notion, the predicate, which denotes "features in progress, […] remains […], on the syntactic level also, subordinated to the S and, as subordinate (dependent), the *P* is merely a determinant of the S, just like the attribute" (1997: 208).

After surveying Draşoveanu's thesis, G.G. Neamţu (1986) highlights the following ideas:

- A defining element for Draşoveanu's overall conception is the establishment of the nature of a syntactic relationship. This can only be accomplished "by grammatical means", i.e. with the help of morphemes and connectives, according to which the relations, in their whole, break up into compartments "exclusively and without surpluses". These grammatical means are of no more than two types: *coordination* and *subordination*.
- Inclusion of *verbal agreement* (in person and number) of a verb in a personal mood, together with the subject, among *means of subordination*, triggers the idea that the predicate is **formally subordinated to the subject**" (Neamţu, 1986: 22).

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- The predicate's subordinate status cannot be refuted by calling upon impersonal verbal sentences of the type *plouă, tună, fulgeră, se înserează*[16] etc., because in this case the mark of subordination exists: there is a person and number inflection, even when "the partner in the relationship (the subject)" cannot be expressed. In reality, what we are dealing here with "a *zero subject*, not a zero relationship", so that the verbal sentence is, in fact, bi-member in this case, too" (1986: 22-23).

A survey of the syntactic behaviour of interjections and of predicates urges Neamţu to accept the former – by equivalence with the verb – as personal verbal predicates, but denies the status of predicate to adverbs, which are *apersonal*. Nevertheless, they can stand for sentences and, as such, they can be referred to as *propositional adverbs* (1986: 32).

There are two types of approaches to the subject – predicate relationship: a logical empirical one and the semantic-structural one.

G. Ivănescu is a supporter of the logical empirical approach to grammar. His ideas are summarized in two papers entitled generically *Gramatica şi logica*[17]: *I. Structura gândirii ca factor primar al structurii morfologice a limbii*[18] (1963) and, *II. Structura gândirii ca factor primar al structurii sintactice a limbii*[19] (1964).

Ivănescu considers subject and the predicate of a judgement to be notions which also have a certain content. He refers here to the noun subject and, obviously, to the pronoun that stands for the noun. While the noun denotes the "substance", the adjective and the numeral espress something "substantial", concrete. Nor does the verb fulfill the condition of "substantiality": it expresses "an entity's existence, posession, state or action, or the process of a substance". From a logical perspective, the adjective, the numeral (cardinal and ordinal) and the verb do not pertain to a notion's content "as constitutive elements, and they do not represent the notion itself […]. They express features of a notion's content" (1963: 264).

An undeniable argument in favour of regarding the subject and predicate as "the only fundamental parts" of the sentence lies in the identical definition of the two entities by grammar and logic. In this sense, Ivănescu argues that "the subject is the entity about which something is said, i.e. about which something is asserted or denied, while the predicate is what is said about the

[16] = (it) *is raining*; (it) *is thundering*, *(it) *is lightning,* *(it) *is darkening* (= it is getting dark);

[17] = *Grammar and Logic;*

[18] = *The Structure of Thought as Primary Factor for the Morphological Structure of a Language*;

[19] = *The Structure of Thought as Primary Factor for the Syntactic Structure of a Language*;

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subject, i.e. what is said or denied about it" (1964: 195). Consequently, the author reaches the following solution: "In order to take into consideration the fact that the subject is also expressed in the sentence, we shall say that the subject represents what is old in the sentence, while the predicate is what is new in it" (1964: 194, FN 2). In essence, Ivănescu views the subject – predicate relationship not as one of subordination of the predicate to the subject, but rather, as one of "inherence".

The term *inherence* was introduced in the Romanian linguistics by Iorgu Iordan, in *Limba română contemporană*[20] (1956). In discussing the subject – predicate relationship, Iordan asserts: "The logical relationship between the subject and the predicate is one of «inherence» (or of *congruence*, *connection*, *integration*», *inclusion*), expressed linguistically as […] agreement (in number, person, gender and case). This relationship of congruence resembles that between the noun and its attribute (which is also referred to as one of inherence) […] (1956: 533).

Undoubtedly, one of the most influential works in Romanian linguistics regarding the approach to "predication" is Valeria Guţu Romalo's *Sintaxa limbii române. Probleme şi interpretări*[21] (1973), which suggests the term *interdependence* or *bilateral dependence* for the subject – predicate relationship (1973: 38).

Guţu Romalo is careful to point out that her survey does not aim to "describe present-day Romanian syntax within, and with the methodology, of a certain theory. Its objective is to *confront* the concepts of classical «traditional» grammar with the procedures of structural linguistics and syntax". Her presentation of Romanian syntax is analytical in character, so that it follows both classical and structural (taxonomic) grammar; but from time to time it resorts to procedures "*suggested* by generative transformational grammar" (1973: 5).

In accordance with this perspective, the slot for the syntactic *predicate* requires by definition "a *verb in a personal mood*", which entails that "any personal verbal form represents a *predicate* and can fullfil no other syntactic position" (1973: 124). Consequently, "a personal verbal form can stand at the core of an autonomous utterance" (1973: 125), and the "subject + predicate" group is typically viewed as the *nucleus* of the sentence.

Expression by verb in a personal mood excludes from the slot of predicate-clause all impersonal moods (with the exception of the infinitive functioning as imperative) and all names (noun, adjective and pronoun). Nor can this slot be filled by a subordinate sentence.

[20] = *The Present-Day Romanian Language*;

[21] = *The Syntax of the Romanian Language. Issues and interpretations*;

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Another characteristic of the slot for the syntactic *predicate*, the author points out, is its ***non-repeatablity***: "one and the same fundamental structure admits only one predicate" (1873: 132). It is this feature which sets the slot of the syntactic "predicate" apart from all other syntactic positions.

On the other hand, Guţu Romalo argues, "in the great majority of situations the predicate participates in a relation of interdpendence […]" (1973: 125-126). Basically, this kind of relationship is typical for the two basic syntactic slots, the subject and the predicate. In this sense, Guţu Romalo considers that the syntactic slot of subject is, by definition, filled by a *name* (noun or pronoun) *in the nominative*, "*which imposes agreement upon the verb it interacts with in a relation of interdependence*" (1973: 109).

An interesting and original point of view is suggested by Marina Rădulescu in *Relaţia sintactică dintre subiect şi predicat*[22] (1980).

Rădulescu argues that the "main flaw of the theory that the subject and the predicate are in a relationship of interdependence, viewed as mutual subordination […], is that both the subject and the predicate are considered to be *main parts of the sentence*, with the argument that they are "the minimal requirement for the existence of a sentence". This means that so-called «mono-member verbal» sentences […] of the type: *Plouă, Ninge, A fulgerat*[23] […], which consist exclusively of a predicate [...], are altogether ignored" (1980: 13). It is emphasized in this context that there are "no sentences based exclusively on a subject [...], because the so-called «mono-member nominal» sentences of the type: *Toamnă!* [or *Ajutor!, Foc!, Bine!, Straşnic!*[24]] are, in fact, sentences with a predication […]" accomplished by means of intonation. Thus, from this perspective, "only the predicate can be regarded as main part of the sentence" (1980: 13-14).

The author provides "a definition of the syntactic relationship between the subject and the predicate suitable for the traditional-descriptive model", but also includes the criterion of *omissible* terms in the relationship, or the criterion of *zero-substitution* and of *formal restrictions*, the last one aimed at delimiting the subject – predicate relationship from that of predicate – direct object. 30 typical utterances are analysed from this perspective. As a result, three types of interdependence are identified:

- A *relationship of subjective interdependence*, between the subject (subject clause) and predicate (main clause), a relationship characterized

[22] = *The Syntactic Relationship between the Subject and the Predicate*;

[23] = (It) *is raining*, (It) *is snowing*, *(It) *was lightning* (= There was a flash of lightning).

[24] = *Autumn* [or *Help!, Fire!, Good!, Excellent!*]

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"by a non-omissible nature of the two terms and by mutual formal restrictions";

- A *relationship of predicative interdependence*, between the name-predicate and the copulative verb that make up the nominal predicate (or the main clause), characterized by "the non-ommissible nature of the two terms and by the fact that it occurs only if in the utterance there is another relation of interdependence, namely a subject – predicate relationship;
- A *relationship of object/modifier interdependence*, between the predicate (main clase) and its compulsory objects/modifiers or object/modifying clauses.

Rădulescu identifies the following syntactic relationships: *interdependence*, which can be subjective, of object/modifier or predicative; *unilateral dependence* (= *subordination*) and *complex dependence* (1980: 26).

The author emphasizes (1980: 25, FN 43) that, essentially, this viewpoint combines the classifications proposed by Guţu Romalo (1973) and Pană Dindelegan (1976: 25, FN 43).

A detailed survey of the notion of inherence and of the linguistic facts it implies is produced by Corneliu Dimitriu in *Tratat de gramatică a Limbii Române, Sintaxa*[25] (2002), where he opts for the syntagm *syntactic relationship of inherence* instead of the traditionally accepted *interdependence*. He adopts this term, he argues, because in the case of the subject and the predicate "the relationship is not of «*reciprocal*» *dependence* («one upon the other»), as it happens in the case of *interdependence*, but rather of implication, as in the case of *inherence*, in the sense that, with *bi-member* sentences [in whose structure – as prototypical sentences – there is a both a «subject» and a «predicate»]; in the speaker's mind the subject is perceived together with the predicate and vice-versa, the predicate is perceived together with its subject [...]" (2002: 1147).

In 2008, after the publication of the grammar of the Romanian Academy (*Gramatica Academiei Limbii Române/GALR*[26], 2005/2008), Dumitru Irimia publishes a third edition of his *Gramatica limbii române*[27], where he argues for accepting the idea of *interdependence* in for the subject – predicate relationship. Between the first and the third editions, the author's view regarding the predicate and predication has undergone some changes. There is, however, a constant feature, i.e. the primordial role of the grammatical category of *time* in the configuration of the predicate. Emphasizing the fact

[25] = *Treatise on the Grammar of the Romanian Language. Syntax*;

[26] *GARL*, Vol. I: *Cuvântul* (= The Word), Vol. II: *Enunţul* (= The Utterance);

[27] = *Grammar of the Romanian Language*;

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that "the relationship of *inderdependence* bears a determining role in the organization of verbal and verbal-nominal utterances", which relationship is based on the verb, Irimia highlights the essential fact that "in Romanian, as in other inflexional languages, the *verb* is the only lexical-grammatical category that can develop temporal meanings in an *abstract* way (o.e.[28]), i.e. through specific grammatical categories" (2008: 426).

Through "predication", an intersection is accomplished between the two levels of communication – the subjective level (the protagonists and the time of the linguistic act) and the objective level (the message of the grammatical act); "the relationship is one of *interdependence* (o.e.)", generating the two main syntactic functions in the structure of the utterance: the *predicate*, i.e. the verbal/verbal-nominal lexicalization of the predication, and the *subject*, i.e. the nominal/pronominal etc. lexicalization of the "object" of the predication. (2008: 427).

In GALR, a predicative trichotomy is proposed, namely a *semantic predicate*, a *syntactic predicate*, and an *enunciative/assertive/informative predicate*; only the last of these categories corresponds to the predicate of traditional grammars.

Since the solution proposed by GALR and by Ion Coteanu's *Gramatica de Bază a Limbii Române* (2008) is widely known, we shall merely emphasize here the fact that that the *subject* represents a "function depending on […]". As such, in its relationship with the verb, it is "a *substitution class* (i.e. of syntactic equivalences that can be substituted for one another within the same verbal context), a class whose prototypical term is the nominal (noun, pronoun, pronominal numeral) in the *nominative* and, as specific syntagmatic relation, an *interdependence relationship* with the verb and an agreement imposed by the subject upon the verb-predicate" (GALR II: 313).

In the light of the survey above, our option goes towards the approach that views the subject – predicate relationship as one of interdependence. In terms of terminology, we opt for that if *inherence* or *equivalence.* It is a *didactic* approach, which focuses on a logical approach, justified by the fact that in all "exact" sciences thinking is viewed as starting out from "something", which in grammar is called subject; this something is in direct interdependence with "something else", defined as predicate.

[28] Our emphasis.

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