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Action and agency in complex sentences from present-day Romanian

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Starting from Alanen's remark that "actions (exercises of capacities) are found throughout the natural world; and so is agency" (2018, 2), the present paper aims at describing the influence of these two fundamental concepts – action and agency – on the structure of Romanian complex sentences. More precisely, I am interested in providing evidence of a linguistic phenomenon that has received far less attention in the literature, i.e. the semantic restrictions imposed by the matrix verb over the embedded adverbial clause. As concerns the methodology, both qualitative and quantitative analyses will be conducted on an extensive online Romanian corpus (CoRoLa), and will be based on the semantic typologies of the verb included in some of the reference Romanian grammars (GALR 2008, 326; GBLR 2010, 279). One of the most important results of the analysis was the phenomenon of ***agentivity continuum*** *that appears in our language, and it has some very interesting features.*

Key-words: *agency, action, complex sentences, linguistic analysis*

1. Introduction

Often discussed in relation to the concepts of animation, intention, volition, and/or telicity, the term 'agency' or 'agentivity' is quite difficult to define, especially if we take into consideration all the domains and/or the researchers that assume it, starting with Aristotle. For instance, as defined by Veecock (2012), "agentivity is a complex concept often allowing differing degrees of agency and the transfer of agency between actual or potential agents (the doubling of agents, delegated agency, etc.)" (2012, 3). Still, the working definition used in this paper considers 'agentivity' from a semantical-syntactic point of view, according to which this concept should be related to the semantic role of Agent and to the concept of 'control' (Verstiggel & Denhière 1990, 37). In addition, the Agent is defined as the

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thematic role of the argument of an action verb. Writing about actors and actions turns out to be a challenge that entails a complex array of background assumptions and inferences. Furthermore, discussed in terms of their properties, we can even say that "actions reveal agency" (Alanen 2018, 2).

1.1. Objectives of the paper

Starting from Alanen's remark that "actions (exercises of capacities) are found throughout the natural world; and so is agency" (2018, 2), the present paper aims at describing the influence of these two fundamental concepts – 'action' and 'agency' – on the structure of Romanian complex sentences, taking into consideration the dynamic-stative dichotomy. More precisely, I am interested in providing evidence of a linguistic phenomenon that has received far less attention in the Romanian literature, i.e. the semantic restrictions imposed by the matrix verb over the embedded adverbial clause. At the same time, one major objective of the paper is the proper and clear understanding of the distinction between dynamic, agentive, and stative / static verbs.

I also intend to demonstrate that agentivity is an important semantic concept, influencing both simple and complex syntactic structures, and that agentive verbs are not necessarily a subset/type of dynamic or action verbs. Agentivity must not be interpreted only according to certain lexical criteria but must be determined in context, i.e. according to the semantic content of the whole sentence.

I intend to achieve the main goal of my paper by answering the following research questions:

i. What is the nature of the relationship between the thematic role of Agent and different semantic types of verbs in Romanian?
ii. How does the semantic feature of [Agentivity] of the matrix verb influence the structure of complex sentences with adverbial clauses?

1.2. Methodology and corpus

As concerns the methodology, the qualitative and the quantitative analyses will be based on an extensive online Romanian corpus (CoRoLa) and also on the semantic typologies of the verb included in some of the reference Romanian grammars (*Gramatica Limbii Române* 'The Grammar of Romanian' – GALR 2008, 326; *Gramatica de bază a limbii române* 'The Basic Grammar of Romanian' – GBLR 2010, 279). Only three types of propositional adjuncts (temporal, causal, and concessive) are investigated in this paper, as I am convinced that they are

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representative of our language and the differences that I could find in other types of adjuncts would not be significant. It should also be noted that, although the inventory of temporal, causal, and concessive connectors is rich, I have chosen for the present investigation only three prototypical connectors – *când* 'when', *deoarece* 'because' and *deși* 'although' – which helped me to extract and include in a database around 250 complex syntactic structures of each type. Consequently, the micro-corpus that I built based on the large CoRoLa corpus consists of around 750 contexts (CSs), all analyzed manually and carefully investigated. Of course, for an overall perspective on this topic and for more relevant results, an extensive research will be needed, both at the level of simple and complex Romanian structures.

2. Agentivity and agent

The starting point of this paper is represented by two ideas generally accepted by linguists (see Yang 1997, 671). The first one is the idea that agency is an inherent feature of all dynamic or action verbs, and the second is that this semantic feature is incompatible with state and/or perception verbs. In addition, it has also been assumed that agentive verbs are a subset of dynamic verbs, and thus agentive verbs are automatically nonstative verbs. Somehow anticipating the results of the corpus analysis, I would say that for the present-day Romanian, these ideas/premises are unjustified, inaccurate, and that I must bring clear evidence to disprove them.

It should be noted that I will be using here two concepts that need to be carefully defined so as to avoid possible confusions, namely that of 'Agent' = the thematic role that a verb assigns to its arguments having two definitory features: [+Intention] and [+Control], and the concept of 'Agency/Agentivity' = the semantic feature of certain verbs, but also of other lexico-grammatical classes (such as adjectives or nouns). Furthermore, the semantic property [±agentive] adopted here can be traced back to the semantic case roles proposed by Fillmore (1968). "According to Fillmore, cases are semantic roles that arguments take for verbs in deep structures of propositions. Such cases include Agent, Theme (or Patient), Instrument, and Location" (Yang 1997, 672). Of course, the two concepts are interrelated, as it is generally accepted that the semantic feature of agency characterizes verbs that can accept at least one Agent as its argument.

> An agentive participant in a proposition is an animate being which controls the happening denoted by the verb. Likewise, an agentive verb denotes some happening which is controllable by an animate being. In this way, the same

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> concept can be expressed by both a verb and a noun. Since agentivity in its sense implies controllability, agentive verbs are often confused with dynamic verbs. Whereas the most prominent semantic property of agentive verb sense is controllability, that of dynamic verb sense is 'activity' or 'mobility' (Yang 1997, 672).

The concept of Agentivity is usually connected to that of Stativity, and Quirk et al. (1985, 177-209) use this dichotomy to distinguish between stative and dynamic meanings of verbs. In their opinion, stative meanings refer to 'states', with the categories of 'quality', 'state', and 'stance', while dynamic meanings refer to 'events', 'actions', 'processes', or 'activities', and this is why "dynamic verbs are often used synonymously with 'event verbs' or 'action verbs'". In short, for Quirk et al., "agentive verbs are automatically nonstative verbs" (Yang 1997, 673).

However, some researchers brought arguments against this assumption, as we all know that there are some instances in which stative verbs are used agentively. This was, in fact, one of my conclusions after investigating the corpus: there are Romanian stative verbs used agentively as well as dynamic verbs used nonagentively. See, for instance, the verbs *a locui* 'to live' and *a cădea* 'to fall' discussed in the next sections of the paper. Furthermore, my intention was to see if the semantic feature of agentivity from the matrix verb can be/is transferred to the verb in the subordinate clause. The investigation of the corpus revealed that my assumption was true, and I named this phenomenon 'the agentivity continuum'.

As concerns the semantic classifications of the Romanian verbs, the most important grammars ignore the stative-dynamic dichotomy, and use instead other two semantic features: Agentivity and Change. Depending on this criterion, the following three classes of verbs were distinguished: **state verbs**, defined by [-Change; -Agentivity] (*a durea* 'to hurt', *a iubi* 'to love', *a se mira* 'to wonder', *a plăcea* 'to please', *a se teme* 'to fear', *a urî* 'to hate'); **event verbs**, characterized by [+Change, -Agentivity] (*a ajunge* 'to reach', *a cădea* 'to fall', *a îmbătrâni* 'to grow old'); **action verbs**, characterized by [+Change, +Agentivity] (*a alerga* 'to run', *a citi* 'to read', *a înota* 'to swim', *a mânca* 'to eat', *a repara* 'to repair', *a trimite* 'to send', *a vinde* 'to sell') (GALR 2008, 326). If the verb receives an argument with the thematic role of Agent (lexicalized or non-lexicalized in the syntactic configuration of the verb), a component which, within of the predication relation, is characterized by the features [+Human, +Control over the action], the verb is of the **agentive** type (ex: *The student* [+Human] *reads, learns, works, prepares, writes carefully / knowingly / with interest / with care.* [+Control]). On contrary, the absence of the Agent from the semantic configuration of the verb (the

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incompatibility with the Agent, and not with its non-expression/lexicalization, in one context or another,) characterizes **nonagentive verbs**.

3. Agentivity and agents in present-day Romanian

In this section, I advance a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the matrix verbs' semantic content so that I can notice if there are restrictions that they impose on the temporal, causal, or concessive constituents they combine with in present-day Romanian. Starting from the semantic classification of verbs (state, action, and event) advanced by the two reference grammars in Romanian – GALR (2008, 326), GBLR (2010, 279) –, I made a subclassification into six classes of verbs, and, subsequently, an analysis of the matrix verbal centers in the corpus, in my intention to present the distribution of these verbs in the investigated corpus, and then their semantic influences on the three types of adjuncts, including the agentivity continuum phenomenon.

3.1. Quantitative analysis of the corpus. Results

The quantitative analysis of the whole corpus revealed the following results regarding the distribution of the six semantic types of matrix verbs:

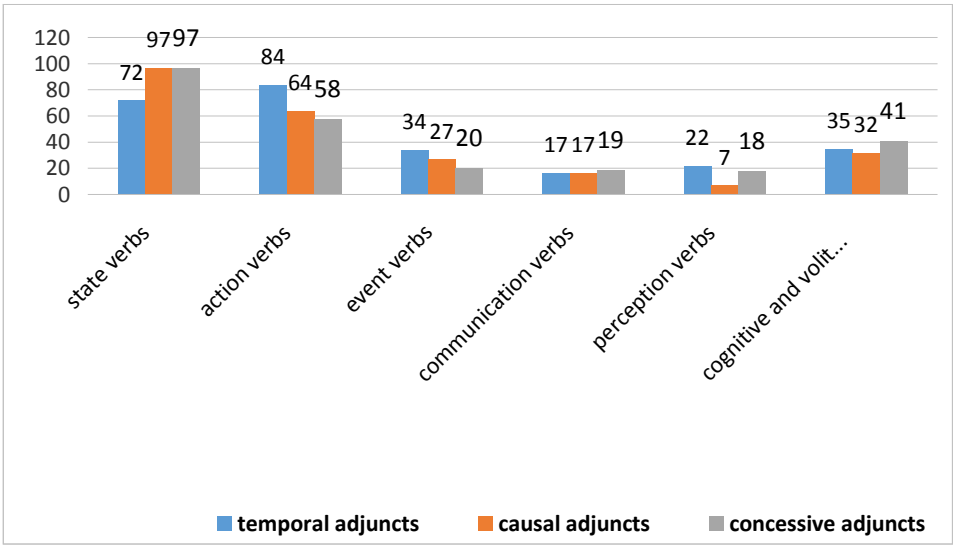


Diagram 1. The distribution of the semantic types of verbs in the investigated corpus

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As results from the diagram 1, theoretically, any semantic type of verb can dominate an adverbial constituent/clause, which is why this aspect was generally ignored in the Romanian studies dedicated to adjuncts or it was briefly noted that there are no restrictions on the semantic features of the verbal center combined with an adjunct (GALR II 2008, 495). However, the statistical analysis based on the selected corpus allows me to make several observations in this regard.

Thus, the diagram comparatively shows the frequency of matrix verbs in CSs with temporal, causal, and concessive adjuncts, and the first thing that stands out is the large number of state and action verbs that appear in all three types of sentences. This aspect is not surprising at all if we consider that adjuncts are those constituents that fix/set, from a semantic point of view, the coordinates (temporal, causal, etc.) of the action described by the matrix clause.

On the one hand, it should be noticed the fact that the highest (and an equal) number of state verbs (97 structures) are registered by the CSs with causal and concessive adjuncts, while CSs with temporal adjuncts have a higher number of action verbs (84 contexts). On the other hand, I registered a very low number of perception verbs on which causal adjuncts depend (only 7 contexts), the explanation being that, in general, perception occurs spontaneously, without being determined by a cause, but rather by a stimulus.

Another quantitative analysis concerned the frequency of the most used verbal forms in the three types of CSs with propositional adjuncts. As results from the three diagrams below, the biggest number of occurrences was recorded for the state verb *a fi* 'to be' (25 occurrences in CSs with temporal adjuncts, 53 in CSs with causal adjuncts, and 43 in CSs with concessive adjuncts), one of the explanations being the multiple morphological and semantic values that this verb might have in a sentence.

(1) *Chiar și în greșeli suntem unici, deși greșelile par a fi la fel.*
'Even in mistakes, we are unique, although mistakes seem to be the same'
(2) *Suntem mândri când le așezăm în camera lor.*
'We are proud when we put them in their room'
(3) *Nu sunt diferențe de culoare, deoarece țesătura este vopsită în mod special.*
'There are no color differences because the fabric is specially dyed'

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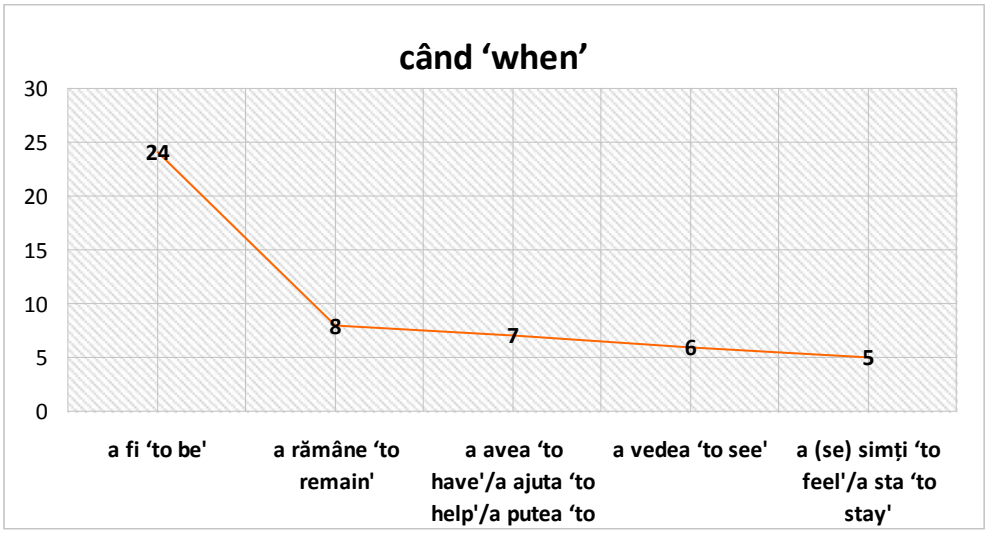


Diagram 2. The frequency of the most used verbal forms in CSs with temporal adjuncts

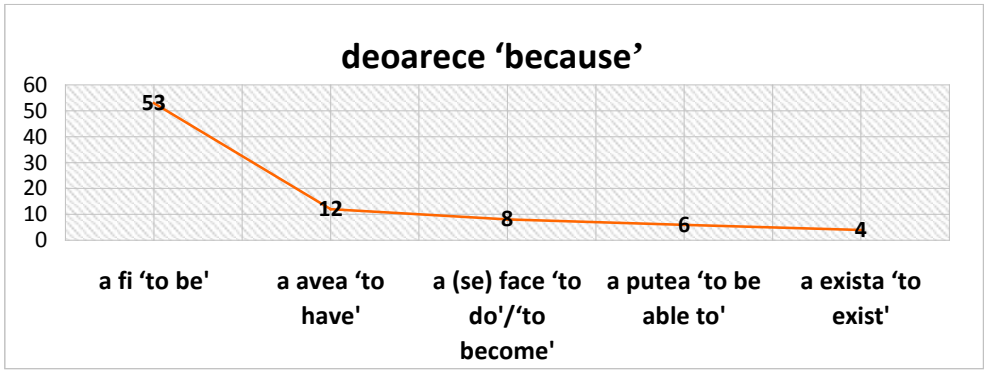


Diagram 3. The frequency of the most used verbal forms in CSs with causal adjuncts

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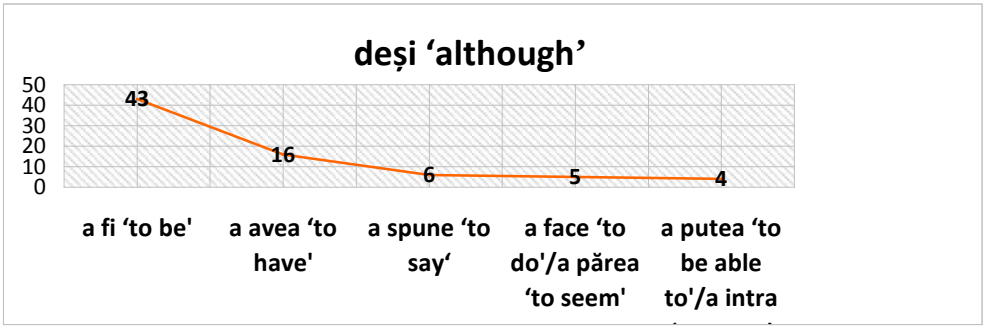


Diagram 4. The frequency of the most used verbal forms in CSs with concessive adjuntcs

3.2. Qualitative analysis of the corpus. Interpretation of the results

As results from the above diagrams, it should be noticed that there is an equilibrium between the three types of adjuncts. For the investigated structures, one may find surprising the large number of occurrences recorded by **state verbs**, generally interpreted as [-Agency, -Change] (they usually do not imply any change and conscious agent), but this is partially explained by the frequent use of these verbs in dating certain events or in specifying the age of certain persons.

(4) *În anul 1934, când autorul scria aceste rânduri, situația se prezenta altfel.*
'In 1934, when the author wrote these lines, the situation was different'
(5) *Îl cunoscusem pe Victor la 18 ani când am încercat să intru la filosofie.*
'I had met Victor when I was 18, and I was trying to enter philosophy'
(6) *Nu împlinisem zece ani când am plecat!*
'I hadn't turned ten when I left'

Besides the verb *a fi* 'to be', with all its morphological and semantic values, this category also includes two classes of verbs:

- *verbs that express non-emotional states*, such as: a *sta* 'to stay', *a rămâne* 'to remain', *a reprezenta* 'to represent', *a corespunde* 'to correspond', *a locui* 'to live', *a exista* 'to exist', *a păstra* 'to keep', *a aștepta* 'to wait', *a trăi* 'to live', *a visa* 'to dream', *a dormi* 'to sleep':

(7) *Trăim un moment emoționat, când Sfântă Taină a Învierii se săvârșește.*
'We live an emotional moment when the Holy Sacrament of the Resurrection is celebrated'
(8) *În continuare s-a prefăcut adormit, deși somnul îi zburase demult.*
'He still pretended to be asleep, although his sleep had long flown away'

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- *verbs that express emotional states*, such as: *a se supăra* 'to get upset', *a zâmbi* 'to smile', *a tresări* 'to wince', *a uimi* 'to amaze', *a se bucura* 'to rejoice', *a se mira* 'to wonder', *a tremura* 'to tremble', *a bufni* 'to snort', *a se îngrijora* 'to worry', *a iubi* 'to love', *a râde* 'to laugh':

(9) *Nici când plouă nu te poți supăra pe el.*
'Not even when it trains can you get mad at him'
(10) *Când plângi de durere, apoi mulțumit tu să fii!*
'When you cry in pain, then you should be pleased'
(11) *Nu mai râdea nimeni de el când era nervos.*
'No one laughed at him when he was angry'

In addition, if we take into consideration the stative-dynamic dichotomy, we notice that most of the verbal classes presented in Diagram 1 are stative, but this does not necessarily mean that all these stative verbs are non-agentive. On contrary, as I have already argued in the previous section of this paper, many of them are used agentively ('agentively used verbs', Yang 1997, 671), and I will also look for possible explanations of this phenomenon.

(12) *Nana locuiește în oraș, deoarece acolo are mai mult timp liber.*
'Nana lives in the city because she has more spare time there'
(13) *Oricum nu am fi putut locui în casele noastre, deoarece o invazie formidabilă de purici a făcut necesară intervenția echipelor de dezinsecție.*
'However, we could not have lived in our homes, because a great invasion of fleas made the intervention of the disinsection teams necessary'
(14) *Mă aștepta cu masa pusă când veneam de la școală.*
'She was waiting for me with the laid table when I came home from school'

The verbs *a locui* 'to live' and *a aștepta* 'to wait' in sentences (12), (13), and (14) are used statively since they describe the uninterrupted 'state' of living/waiting of the referent. Also, the verbs are used agentively since the subject referent has control over the relevant state. However, these verbs cannot be interpreted as dynamic because there is no implication of any activity or event. Of course, these are not the only verbal forms used agentively in certain contexts, and, as I shall continue this analysis, other types of verbs will be exemplified with their agentive usages, i.e. perception or cognitive verbs.

In his detailed analysis, Yang (1997, 675) talks about some morpho-syntactic constraints of agentivity, two of them being appropriate for our language: they occur with frequency adverbials ('quite frequently', 'many times'), and the

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possibility of appearing in imperative constructions. This idea determined me to take a closer look at the verbal mood of the investigated verbal structures. I noticed all types of verbal moods accepted by the reference Romanian grammars, finite and non-finite, especially the indicative, and the gerund, but also the imperative:

(15) *Dar când vrei să intri-n ea,* ***vino*** *repede și-o* ***ia****!*
'But when you want to get into it, come quickly and get it'
(16) ***Permiteți****-mi să mă împărtășesc și eu de această bucurie, deoarece împliniți o frumoasă vârstă, rotundă, cea de 60 de ani!...*
'Allow me to share this joy because you have reached a beautiful, round age, that of 60 years'

Even more interesting seem to be the structures in which the subjunctive mood of the matrix verb takes an imperative contextual value:

(17) ***Să nu verși*** *lacrimi grele, când eu nu voi mai fi!*
'Don't shed heavy tears when I'm gone!'

In conclusion, these examples demonstrate that my assumption was true, that is many state verbs are used agentively in the present-day Romanian. The CSs with temporal adjuncts are even more complex and deserve further investigation. Therefore, regarding the connection between the semantic value of the matrix verb and the temporal relationship of the CS, it was noticed, starting from the suggestion made by Dowty (2003) and argued by Gennari (1999), that state verbs generate a simultaneous reading of the described events from the two clauses. For the present-day Romanian, the simultaneity relation in the case of static verbal centers can be supported only for certain CSs with *când* 'when', the use of a specific preposition bringing precise information on the Source (*de când* 'since') (18) or Target (*până când* 'until'):

(18) *Este bolnavă* ***de când*** *era copil.*
'She's been sick since she was a child'
(19) *Și a început lupta, care a durat zile* ***până când*** *dragonul a fost înfrânt.*
'And the battle began, which lasted for days until the dragon was defeated'

Starting from the idea that state verbs do not have an internal temporal evolution (as do have, for example, action verbs) and from the pragmatic concept of 'the superinterval implication', Gennari (2002, 7) considers that if a certain state is found in an interval *i*, it can be assumed that the respective state started before *i*

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and that it can be extended even after *i*, so that it covers a superinterval that includes *i*. For instance, in the example under (20), the (existence of) darkness noticed at time T_0 can be extended before the event of Victor's remembering, but also after its completion, covering an interval that includes time T_0. A similar thing can be assumed about the departure of the agent (the state of being gone) from the matrix structure of the example under (21), which extends after the event of calling from the subordinate and maybe even further. Therefore, the matrix sentence opens a temporal superinterval that continues even after the completion of the subordinate event.

(20) *Victor își aminti de ei, într-un târziu, când afară era deja întuneric.*
'Victor remembered them at last, when it was already dark outside'
(21) *Poate o să fiu plecat când mă vei chema acolo*
'Maybe I'll be gone when you call me there'

As concerns the distribution and frequency of **action verbs** [+Agentivity, +Change] that control a temporal, causal, or concessive constituent of a CS, I noticed their semantic and syntactic diversity: *a mătura* 'to sweep', *a uda* 'to wet', *a construi* 'to build', *a ucide* 'to kill', *a descuia* 'to unlock', *a aduce* 'to bring', *a se întoarce* 'to spin', *a fuma* 'to smoke', *a fluiera* 'to whistle':

(22) *Nu mai mătura directorul podelele cancelariei cu el când era nervos.*
'The director did not sweep the chancellery floors with him when he was angry'
(23) *Când mari vom crește, vom construi sanctuare imense.*
'When we grow up we will build huge shrines'
(24) *Eu credeam că fumezi când nu ai ce face.*
'I thought you smoked when you had nothing to do'
(25) *Eu când vreau să fluier, fluier.*
'When I want to whistle, I whistle'

According to the diagrams presented above, the action verb with the highest number of occurrences is *a face* 'to do', followed by *a intra* 'to enter':

(26) *Fac avere numai cei necinstiși deoarece munca nu mai este recunoscută.*
'Only the dishonest make a fortune because work is no longer recognized'
(27) *Blaga intra în tăcerea mult dorită, deși, din copilărie și până la moarte a fost bântuit.*
'Blaga entered the much-desired silence, although from childhood and until death he was haunted'

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As stated before, action verbs cover a wide range of connotations, and from a morphosyntactic point of view, there are transitive and intransitive verbs, monovalent or bivalent. Therefore, this class of verbs can be divided into several subclasses (see *The Grammar of Romanian* – GR 2013, 72-73):

- verbs of giving (*a da* 'give', *a dărui* 'offer', *a oferi* 'offer'), with the thematic grid [Agent + Theme + Recipient]:

(28) *Iar, când zorii-s plini de rouă, să ți-l dărui printre șoapte.*
'And, when the dawn is full of dew, let me give it to you in whispers'

- verbs of retrieval (*a fura* 'steal', *a lua* 'take'), with the thematic grid [Agent + Theme + (Source / Possessor)]:

(29) *Duduia le-a furat sume consistente din pensii deoarece haznaua Țării secase.*
'The woman stole big sums from their pensions because the land of the country had dried'

- verbs expressing actions oriented towards the Benefactive (a *repara* 'repair') with the thematic grid [Agent + Theme + (Benefactive)]:

(30) *O să repar însă totul când o să ajung la București.*
'I will fix everything when I get to Bucharest'

There are other verbal forms also associated with the notion of *movement*: *a intra* 'to enter', *a arunca* 'to throw', *a purta* 'to carry', *a pune* 'to put', *a se muta* 'to move', *a trece* 'to pass', *a trage* 'to shoot', *a merge* 'to walk', *a păși* 'to step':

(31) *Voi m-ați purtat pe drumuri de praf prin câmpiile arse deși nu v-am vrut.*
'You carried me on dusty roads through the burning plains, even though I didn't want you to'

(32) *Eram fericit și-mi purtam traista plin de mine, deși eram de-o șchioapă.*
'I was happy and carried my bag full of myself even though I was very little'

(33) *Iar când ni se face dor de drumuri, punem două cafele în mașină și plecăm încotro vedem cu ochii.*
'And when we miss the roads, we put two coffees in the car and go wherever we want'

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Besides these agentive verbs expressing an action controlled by the human Agent, the class of action verbs also includes special forms – *verbs of motion* – used both agentively, and non-agentively, as the person involved in the action does not always have control over it (GR 2013, 78), as in the case of: *ajunge* 'to arrive', *aluneca* 'to slip', *a cădea* 'to fall', *a se apropia* 'to come close', *a se duce* 'to go', *a (se) urca* 'to climb', *a ieşi* 'to go out', *a intra* 'to enter', *a veni* 'to come' (verbs incorporating "directed motion" and / or "lack of subject's control" information – GR 2013, 98).

In fact, things are quite complicated as far as this class is concerned, especially if we consider the semantic feature of Agentivity. This was explained in 1983 by Levin who claimed that "verbs of motion, in particular intransitives, are difficult to be classified as to agentivity or to be included in the (semantic) syntactic classes unaccusative vs. unergative, because their sole argument can be interpreted both as an Agent and as a Patient" (Levin 1983, 33 *apud* GR 2013, 99). So, if we take a look at the following examples, we notice the non-agentively used action verbs which do not necessarily involve an agent:

(34) ***Căzuse*** *dintr-o căruță când caii au prins nălucă și s-a lovit la șira spinării.*
'He had fallen from a cart when the horses caught the lure and he injured his spine'

(35) *Nu mai* ***ajungeam*** *la mal, deoarece barca plutea cu viteză printre valuri.*
'I couldn't reach the shore anymore because the boat was floating fast through the waves'

According to Diagram 1, **cognitive and volitional verbs** [+ Agentivity, - Change] occupy the third position in all three types of CSs investigated, recording higher percentages than perception, communication, or event verbs. A possible explanation would be the fact that the authors of these contexts addressed the conscience of their interlocutors, appealing to their reason and will. Therefore, I identified verbs such as *a crede* 'to believe', *a ști* 'to know', *a vrea* 'to want', *a putea* 'to be able to', *a îndrăzni* 'to dare', *a se gândi* 'to think', *a cunoaște* 'to know', *a recunoaște* 'to recognize', *a afla* 'to find out', *a înțelege* 'to understand', *a-(și) aminti* 'to remember', *a uita* 'to forget', *a promite* 'to promise', *a învăța* 'to learn':

(36) *N-a crezut când i s-a spus că iubirea-i efemeră...*
'He didn't believe it when he was told that love is vanishing'

(37) *Puțini îl văd, știu și cunosc, deși toți îl invocă.*
'Few see, know and understand him, though all invoke him'

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(38) *Eram la schi cu soțul meu și l-am recunoscut, deși iarna îi cad toate frunzele.*
'I was skiing with my husband and I recognized it, although in winter it sheds all its leaves'

The **verbs of events** [-Agency, +Change] are also diversified as forms and meanings, capturing the most important moments of life: birth, marriage, and death, which the subordinate clause locates temporally or justifies (the idea of causality or concession). Therefore, the class includes verbs such as *a naște* 'to give birth', *a se însura* 'to marry', *a muri* 'to die', with its synonyms: *a lua sfârșit* 'to end', *a dispărea* 'to disappear':

(39) *Trebuie să i se fi explicat cu mare limpezime cum stăteau lucrurile înainte ca el să se nască, când în România trăiau câteva sute de turnători.*
'It must have been explained to him very clearly how things were before he was born, when in Romania lived a few hundred foundries'
(40) *Voi, când veți crește mari, să nu vă însurați cu femei care fumează*.
'When you grow up, don't marry women who smoke'
(41) *A doua oară am murit când copacii țipau de durerea ploilor.*
'The second time I died when the trees screamed in the rain'

Interesting are the verbal forms: *a începe* 'to begin', *a se întâmpla* 'to happen', *a împlini* 'to fulfill', *a cuceri* 'to conquer', *a descoperi* 'to discover' which require, from a semantic point of view, the updating of an adverb with the thematic role of Temporal:

(42) *Și aceasta se întâmplă acum, când justiția a dobândit încrederea societății.*
'And this is happening now, when justice has gained the trust of society'
(43) *Nu împlinisem zece ani când am plecat!*
'I hadn't turned ten when I left!'

Communication verbs are characterized by [+Agency, -Change], and include, in general, two subclasses:

- *verbs of saying*, with the thematic grid [Agent + Theme (+ Recipient)], such as: *a spune* 'to tell', *a zice* 'to say', *a grăi* 'to speak', *a răspunde* 'to answer', *a exprima* 'to express', *a explica* 'to explain', *a povesti* 'to narrate', and the *interrogandi* verb *a întreba* 'to ask':

(44) *Profesorului nu-i spunea nimic, deoarece el nu fusese niciodată într-un hotel.*
'He didn't tell the teacher anything, because he had never been to a hotel'

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(45) *Dacă va fi nevoie, îi va spune, deși nu-i era deloc ușor.*
'If necessary, he would tell her, although it was not easy at all'

- *verbs expressing the manner of communication*, with one or two arguments, one of which is assigned the thematic role of Agent and appears in subject position: *a vorbi* 'talk', *a ţipa* 'scream'; *a (se) ruga* 'to pray', *a scrie* 'to write', *a descrie* 'to describe', *a evoca* 'to evoke', *a discuta* 'to discuss', *a înjura* 'to swear':

(46) *Să vorbești când trebuie și ce trebuie.*
'You should talk only when you need to and only about what is necessary'.
(47) *Știa că nu înjura mașina, deși avea toate motivele s-o facă.*
'He knew he wasn't swearing at the car, though he had every reason to'

Regardless of the adjunct type, the smallest percentage was registered by the **perception verbs** [+Agentivity, -Change], which, as expected, do not require temporal placement or causal motivation of the described situation/event. This lexical-grammatical class consists of the verbs which incorporate the common inherent semantic feature [+perception], and the individualizing semantic features [+visual], [+auditory], [+tactile], [+olfactory], corresponding to the organs through which perception is formed. GR (2013) puts forward a classification of these verbs that is very important for my paper, as it takes as a primary criterion the presence or absence of the feature [+intentionality of perception]. So, based, on this classification, I identified in the investigated corpus the following subclasses of perception verbs:

- verbs of non-intentional perception (*a vedea* 'to see', *a auzi* 'to hear', *a simţi* 'to feel'), with an Experiencer subject:

(48) *Nu l-a văzut deoarece dormea ascuns de căldura de afară.*
'She did not see him because he was sleeping hidden by the heat outside'

- verbs of *intentional perception* (*a privi* 'to look/watch', *a se uita* 'to look', *a asculta* 'to listen'):

(49) *Când Lusciana cântă, pădurea ascultă.*
'When Lusciana sings, the forest listens'

- verbs of *evidential perception* (*a arăta* 'to look', *a suna* 'to sound'):

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(50) *Sună foarte frumos aceste versuri, deși nu credem că tăcerile au cum să facă schela să se prăbușească.*
'These lyrics sound very nice, although we don't think that the silent moments could make the scaffolding collapse'

After this detailed presentation of the six semantic classes of verbs identified in the investigated corpus, my intention was to see if the semantic feature of agentivity from the matrix verb can be/is transferred to the verb from the subordinate clause. The investigation of the corpus revealed that this assumption was true, and I named this phenomenon 'the agentivity continuum'. This can be expressed in two ways: sometimes, there is only one agent who does or controls the actions from both matrix and subordinate clauses, and some other times, the agents of the two clauses from the CS are different. In (53), there is an example of agentivity continuum from a dynamic verb in the matrix clause to a static verb in the adjunct clause.

(51) *Sunt zile în care am dureri mari, când vin neodihnită la școală* ***deoarece*** *noaptea stau să îmi îngrijesc bunica.*
'There are days when I'm in pain, when I come tired to school because at night I take care of my grandmother'
(52) *Nici n-aș fi putut s-o fac,* ***deoarece****, mereu nemulțumit, rupeam tot ce scriam.*
'I couldn't have done it anyway, because, always dissatisfied, I tore everything I wrote'
(53) *Îmi era frică să nu o scape în cap la vreunul,* ***deoarece*** *se făcea că o arunca în toate părțile.*
'I was afraid he might drop it on someone's head as he pretended to throw it everywhere'

I noticed that the transfer of the semantic feature is not always from the matrix to the adjunct. Instead, there are interesting contexts in which the adjunct is placed in an initial position, in order to open the communication situation from a temporal point of view, and in this case, the agency seems to be transferred from the subordinate clause to the matrix (even if the agents are different):

(54) *Și când mama ne chema la masă, lăsam cartea ce mi-o cumpărase tata și fugeam direct în brațele ei.*
'And when my mother called us to dinner, I would leave the book my father had bought me and run straight into her arms'

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The agentivity continuum is sometimes available in certain strange contexts even for nonhuman subjects:

(55) *Se ridicară apoi din pat, în grabă,* ***deoarece*** *orologiu mare din sufragerie avusese grijă să măsoare timpul corect, bătând exact ora la care Victor trebuia să plece de acasă.*
'They then got out of bed in a hurry, for a large clock in the living room had taken care to measure the correct time, beating exactly the time when Victor had to leave home'

3. Conclusions

The investigation of the online corpus resulted in a semantic analysis of the matrix verbs used by the Romanian speakers in their complex sentences with temporal, causal, and concessive adjuncts. The analysis revealed that the semantic component is an important factor/element of the relationship between the temporal, causal, or concessive adjunct and the matrix head of the CS. First of all, the results of the quantitative analysis (presented in Diagram 1) showed that, from a semantic point of view, the verbal head imposes some restrictions on the constituent it controls, the action and static verbs being the most frequently used. One important conclusion was the idea that, although, in general, the concept of agentivity in the semantic analyses of verbs related to the static-dynamic dichotomy is associated to the class of dynamic verbs, more appropriate would be to consider agentivity and stativity as separate concepts or semantic features, and neither of them redundant to the other. Furthermore, I proved that in present-day Romanian there are static verbs used agentively, as well as dynamic verbs used non-agentively. In addition, I noticed an interesting phenomenon which I called 'the agentivity continuum', according to which the semantic feature of agentivity can be transferred from the matrix clause to the subordinate clause of a CS, even if the verb of the subordinate does not have an argument with the semantic role of Agent.

In conclusion, I consider that the present paper brings a certain contribution to the existing linguistic literature on the Romanian complex sentences with adjuncts. The innovative character of my paper resides in the original investigated corpus, which was not previously described within the modern morphosyntactic or semantic frameworks.

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