DOUBLE SUBORDINATED ADVERBIALS IN ROMANIAN

Mihaela GĂITĂNARU*

***Abstract**: The present paper represents a description of the adverbials involved in a ternary structure, being placed in a double subordinated position. This requires the impossibility of correlative deletion in the regent clause.*

***Keywords**: correlative, ternary, argument.*

1. Considering the objects and the adverbials which are involved in a ternary relation, a special attention should be paid to those that require the necessary presence of an element in the regent structure: the adverbial of opposition, the adverbial of exception and the adverbial of addition.

These adverbials, to which the adverbial of association with a weaker dependency should be added, have a special position that makes them different from the other adverbials.

First, they respect the general characteristic of adverbials, according to which they are optional[1], and the element they correlate to is obligatory: "The correlative adverbials are optional adjuncts of the syntactic structure of the regent verb, which amplify the global semantic level of the sentence. When the correlative adjunct is missing, the sentence has syntactic, semantic and structural autonomy" (Irimia, 2008: 526).

Unlike the other adverbials, these are said not to allow the adverbial substitution: "The adverbials involved in ternary structures (the adverbial of addition, the adverbial of association, the adverbial of exception and the adverbial of opposition) do not allow the adverb substitution" (GALR, II, 2008: 490).

Another general feature of the adverbials is that they are represented by a correlative structure such as *acolo...unde* (*there...where*); *atunci... când* (*then…when*); *aşa... cum* (*so…how*). The first element in the structure dominates the substitution group at the clause level, while the second represents the connectors' category and is relevant at the complex sentence level.

Although some grammar studies described these adverbials as *Correlative adverbial* (Irimia, 2004: 460; 2008: 525), the problem of the correlative structure which characterizes each of them has been approached, in an approximating manner, only by GALR.

2. In the semantic perspective, the adverbial of opposition expresses the element which was expected to be actualized in an opposition, still it was not accomplished: *În loc de pere a mâncat mere; În loc de pere n-a mâncat mere, ci struguri.*

The definitions that have been formulated are pretty vague: "a component of the sentence that expresses which is contrary" (GALR, II, 2008: 609); "it indicates the object or the action which oppose to the meaning expressed by the subject, the object (…) or the predicate of that sentence." (Constantinescu-Dobridor, 2001: 393); "it

* University of Pitești, temporaoptima@yahoo.com

[1] In certain contexts, when required by the meaning of certain verbs, the adverbial can not be deleted: *It costs much; It weights ten kilos; he/she lives here…*

BDD-A5966 © 2013 Universitatea din Pitești
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:43:49 UTC)

indicates (…) who or what opposes (…) to the syntactic function of that part of the sentence to which it refers." (Dimitriu, 2002: 1467).

According to these definitions, the syntactic position has been explained by the process of syntactic reorganization of two sentences separated by the opposition affirmative-negative: "The basic structures are simple sentences (*Vorbeşte el în locul meu.‹ Vorbeşte el., Nu vorbesc eu.*) or non-finite verbal groups (*A greşit vorbind el în locul meu ‹ vorbind el, nevorbind eu*.)" (GALR, II, 2008: 610).

However, the type of basic syntactic structure which represents the starting point in syntactic reorganization is not this. The deep structure *Vorbeşte el. Nu vorbesc eu* normally becomes *Vorbeşte el, nu eu*, according to the principle of economy in language.

The second part should have a strong modal meaning, in order for the transition to the surface structure to have an adverbial of opposition as a result: *Vorbeşte el. Trebuia să vorbesc eu.›Vorbeşte el în locul meu.*

So, the adverbial of opposition expresses the certainty of a negation, a type of denying the deontic modality.

It has been associated to the relation of adversative coordination with respect to its semantics. However, it should be said that the adversative coordination relation has several values, ranging from difference to definite opposition. In a sentence such as *Eu citesc, iar el scrie*, the actions are different, but they tolerate each other. But in another sentence such as *Eu vreau să dorm, dar el ţipă*, the actions are incompatible. Such oppositions are very frequently expressed by the connectors *ci, or: Nu vreau banii, ci cartea; Aşteptam să-mi mulţumească, or el a plecat trântind uşa.*

Compared to these, the adverbial of opposition involves the modal dimension: something different from what was expected happens.

As it has already been said, the adverbial of opposition, like any adverbial, is characterized by a correlative structure. This was described in its occurrence as a false conditional clause, introduced by the conjunction *dacă*, not within the actual adverbial clause of opposition: "The idea of opposition is often highlighted by means of correlatives *apoi, dimpotrivă, în schimb, însă* in the regent clause" (GLR, II, 1963: 333).

They are described in a similar way in recent grammar studies, but the conjunction *însă* is excluded: "The correlatives of the adverbial of opposition are the adverbs *dimpotrivă, în schimb*, (colloquial) *apoi*. These are used in false conditional clauses and have the role to eliminate ambiguity, while emphasizing the oppositional semantic relation" (GALR, II, 2008: 613; cf. şi ELIR, 2001: 398).

These observations are very important for defining this syntactic position as an adverbial.

Considering the correlative adverbs, the prototypical correlative structure can be established: *dimpotrivă..., în loc să*. This form is actualized in sentences with a strong emphatic meaning: *Dimpotrivă, în loc să plece ea, a plecat el; Dimpotrivă, în locul meu s-a dus George; În schimb, umbla prin muzee, în loc să citească.*

However, in many sentences the use of correlative, which repeats the oppositional meaning, is pleonastic, while with other adverbial clauses where the relation between the adverb and the sentence introduced by the connectors is almost appositional, this situation does not occur: *Acolo te-ai dus, unde ai fost trimis.*

BDD-A5966 © 2013 Universitatea din Piteşti
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:43:49 UTC)

It can be noticed that the second feature of adverbials (substitution for an adverb) occurs with the adverbial of opposition, too: *Dimpotrivă (în locul meu) s-a dus unul dintre colegi; În schimb (în loc să vorbească) mi-a închis telefonul.*

This means that these adverbs have the syntactic function of an adverbial of opposition. The substitution group that characterizes it must include also the adverb, in other structures different from the prepositional phrases (*În loc de astăzi, a hotărât să plece mâine).*

The substitution group of the adverbial of opposition, dominated by the adverb *dimpotrivă*, consists of: nouns (*În loc de casă şi-a cumpărat maşină*); pronouns (*În locul lui a venit ea*); numerals (*În loc de trei, am primit patru*); adjectives (*Îmi plac cireşele: în loc de roşii am cumpărat negre; În locul meu vor cumpăra alţii*); adverbs (*Aşteptam o fată. Dimpotrivă, a venit un băiat; În loc de mâine plec azi*) and verbs in the infinitive and participle (*Se juca în loc de a învăţa; În loc de învins a ajuns învingător*).

The set of connectors at the simple sentence level and at the complex sentence level is very limited. At the simple sentence level the prepositional phrases with the accusative (*în loc de*) and genitive (*în locul*) are used. The prepositional phrase *pe post de* is noticed to be used as a neologism: *Folosea foarfeca pe post de cuţit; Bea bere pe post de apă* (Chircu, 2012: 67).

At the complex sentence level, the connectors that are involved are: *în loc de* (for the relative adverbial clause of opposition: *Ai venit tu, în loc de cine era aşteptat*); *în loc să* (for the conjunctional adverbial clause of opposition: *În loc să cânte a început să râdă*).

The false adverbial clauses of opposition do not belong to the ternary structures: "The adverbial clauses of opposition with unspecific connectors are actualized in binary syntactic structures" (GALR, II, 2008: 613).

3. The adverbial of exception refers to the element which is excepted (excluded) from a group.

It has been defined as an adverbial in several ways: "Semantically, the adverbial of exception expresses the separation, the isolation of an object or an adverbial clause from the rest of the components of a given structure, relating to the action of the predicate verb" (Irimia, 2008: 530); "it expresses the restraint of a semantic predication, indicating what is excluded from the predicative relation" (GBLR, 2010: 590).

In fact, the exception represents placing an element on an extreme side in relation to the whole or the empty set. According to this, it gets two semantic values: *Toţi minus unu/câţiva; Nimeni plus unul/câţiva.*

The first group includes the meanings of a whole at the level of collective nouns, pronouns and adverbs: *N-avea avere, în afară de câteva acareturi; Veniseră toţi în afară de ei doi; A putut înţelege oricine, în afară de George; Oriunde mă duc, în afară de Sahara...*

The forms of negation are rather diversified: *Nu accept altceva decât flori; Nimeni să nu vină în afară de Maria; Nu mai vorbesc nicăieri decât aici; Nu mai beau niciodată bere decât acum; N-a fost nimeni altcineva decât fratele tău; Nu vreau nimic altceva de la ei decât punctualitate...*

With the adverbial of exception also, a correlative was searched for: "The correlative of the adverbial of exception is the adverb *mai*. This may occur only in the negative constructions." (GALR, II, 2008: 626; cf. şi ELIR, 2001: 206).

BDD-A5966 © 2013 Universitatea din Pitești
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:43:49 UTC)

But it can be noticed that *mai* is a semi-adverb and it cannot be part of a correlative structure of an adverbial type.

The (semi-)adverb *aproape* functions in a different way: *Au venit (aproape) toţi, în afară de tine; N-a venit (aproape) nimeni în afară de ei doi...*

It can be replaced by an adverbial of exception: *Aproape n-a venit nimeni -.Cu excepţia lui n-a venit nimeni; Cu excepţia cui ştiu eu, n-a venit nimeni; Aproape toţi au venit – Cu excepţia ta toţi au venit...*

The issue is whether such an adverb may be considered to have the function of an adverbial of exception. Semantically, it expresses the quantitative relation between the group and the excluded elements, this way: if we consider a group of 50 persons, we can say neither *Au venit toţi, în afară de 45*, nor *N-a venit nimeni în afară de 45*.

The adverb *aproape* expresses the very minimal character of the exception.

The substitution group of the adverbial of exception is mainly represented by the prepositional groups including nouns (*În afara băiatului n-a mai lipsit nimeni; N-am dat nimănui decât lui Andrei*); pronouns (*Toţi au fost de acord în afară de tine*); numerals (*Toată grupa a fost acolo, în afară de cei doi*); rarely adjectives (*Cumpăr tot felul de prosoape, în afară de negre; În afara mea toţi s-au pronunţat*); adverbs (*N-am citit cartea aceasta niciodată, decât acum*); verbs (*N-am făcut nimic în afară de a anunţa pe toată lumea*)...

Besides the adverb *decât*, also the adverbs *mai puţin, minus*... and the gerund of the restrictive verbs have a restrictive value: *Adormiseră toţi, mai puţin George; Fuseseră impresionaţi toţi, minus fratele meu; Exceptând-o pe sora mea veniseră toţi...*

As it may be noticed, the connectors at the simple sentence level are just a few: *în afara, în afară de, decât.*The structure *cu excepţia* (*Nimeni n-a venit la expoziţie, cu excepţia mătuşii tale*) can be analyzed as a noun in the accusative, followed by an attribute expressed by a noun in the genitive (cf. şi GALR, II, 2008: 624).

At the complex sentence level, the adverbial clause of exception is both conjunctional (*în afară că, decât că, decât să, decât: În afară că se află la Ploieşti nu mai ştiu nimic; N-a făcut nimic decât a adormit la volan; N-ai altceva de făcut decât să transmiţi informaţia; Nu mă deranjează nimic decât că a întârziat*); and relative, usually introduced by the same connectors, followed by relative pronouns and relative adverbs: *decât cine, decât unde, decât cui; în afară de cine...* (*Nu vreau să aflu altceva decât cine a lăsat lumina aprinsă; Nu mă duc nicăieri, decât unde vreau eu; Nu te interesează nimeni, în afară de cine vrea să cumpere cartea...*).

4. The adverbial of addition designates a component of the sentence to which an argument or an adverbial is added.

Actually, there is a polarization of the association expresses by the correlative copulative coordination: *Nu numai tu ai venit, ci şi el › În afară de tine a venit şi el.*

The relation between the two structures has been noticed: "The relation of copulative coordination, achieved by *nu numai (că)... dar şi (sau ci şi)*, is closer to the relation of addition subordination" (GLR, II, 1963: 336; cf. şi GALR, II, 2008: 664).

The transition of this relation to a subordinated position has been accomplished just by involving in a ternary relation, which is required by the element in the regent that is not deletable: *Nu numai tu ai venit*, but **În afară de tine a venit*.

Apparently, when the addition refers to the predicate (this engages the whole regent clause), as the presence of the regent clause is obligatory, the ternary relation turns into a binary one and the test of deletion is no longer possible: *În afară că dansează mai şi cântă*.

BDD-A5966 © 2013 Universitatea din Pitești
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:43:49 UTC)

However, this does not happen in the relative subordinated clauses: *Pe lângă ce mi-ai adus tu, a mai adus şi el ceva – *Pe lângă ce mi-ai adus tu, a mai adus...*

The prototypical correlative structure is *mai şi... pe lângă că* (cf. ELIR, 2001: 152).

The substitution group includes the same elements as with the previous adverbials: nouns (*În afară de calităţi avea şi defecte; Dincolo de talent, era şi harnic; Pe lângă mere a cumpărat şi pere; În afara aplauzelor a primit şi flori; Mănânc şi altceva decât fructe*); pronouns (*În afara lui s-au mai anunţat şi alţii; pe lângă aceasta mai trebuie să aduci ceva; Dincolo de orice, munca înseamnă satisfacţie*); numerals (*În afară de al doilea a apărut şi el*); verbs (*Ce mai ştii să faci în afară de a citi; În afară de cosit mai am şi de săpat*); adverbs (*În afară de astăzi mai trec şi mâine*); adjectives (*Pe lângă harnică mai este şi cuminte; În afara ta au mai venit trei*)...

The adverbial of addition is a frequent syntactic position, not only in the formal language, but also in informal, spoken Romanian. This may be proved by the large variety of connectors.

At the simple sentence level, there occur: *în afară de, în afara, pe lângă, decât, dincolo de, peste...*

The use of *decât* presupposes affirmative structures (*Vreau şi altceva decât bani*). In negative structures, it expresses the exception: *Nu vreau nimic altceva decât flori*.

At the complex sentence level, the adverbial clause of addition is introduced by: *după ce că, pe lângă că, în afară că,* (informal) *plus că, lasă că: După ce că nu a fost prezent mai şi vorbeşte; Pe lângă că învaţă foarte bine mai şi lucrează; ...; Am muncit foarte mult, plus că sunt şi nedormit; Lasă că el făcuse totul, dar se mai şi implica în continuare.*

The last type of construction in the previous list is even closer to the correlative copulative coordination, as it has the same correlative element: *dar şi*. As a matter of fact, the structures with an adverbial of addition may turn into coordinated structures and vice versa, without changing the meaning (cf. GLR, II, 1963: 336).

5 The adverbial of association has a special position in the present description. In GALR it is considered to belong to a ternary structure, involving both the verb and the element to which the association is done. However, it is not a correlative adverbial in Irimia's opinion, an adverbial which requires the necessary presence of the other element.

This fact has been pointed out: "Some of them, such as the adverbial of opposition, the adverbial of addition and the adverbial of exception, are constituents that cannot be deleted, as the sentence becomes ungrammatical by their deletion; compare *În loc de cărţi preferă filmele* with **În loc de cărţi preferă*..." (GALR, II, 2008: 488).

In fact, as it may be noticed, these adverbials are deletable, but their correlative in the regent clause cannot be deleted: *Preferă filmele*; but **În loc de cărţi preferă*.

D. Irimia includes it in the correlative adverbials, but this characteristic is not evident in the description and it is not emergent from the academic description either (GALR, II, 2008: 541-543).

So, it should be excluded from this category.

References

Chircu, A., "Între predicativul suplimentar şi circumstanţialul opoziţional. Observaţii asupra locuţiunii prepoziţionale *pe post de*", în vol. *Limba română. Direcţii actuale în cercetarea lingvistică*, Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti, Bucureşti, 2012

BDD-A5966 © 2013 Universitatea din Pitești
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:43:49 UTC)

Constantinescu-Dobridor, Gh., *Gramatica limbii române*, Editura Didactică şi Pedagogică, Bucureşti, 2001
Dimitriu, C., *Tratat de gramatică a limbii române, II, Sintaxa*, Institutul European, Iaşi, 2002

ELIR – Sala, M., (Coordonator) *Enciclopedia limbii române*, Editura Univers Enciclopedic, Bucureşti, 2001
GALR,II - Guţu Romalo, V., (Coordonator), *Gramatica limbii române, II, Enunţul*, Editura Academiei, Bucureşti, 2008
GBLR- Pană Dindelegan, G., (Coordonator) *Gramatica de bază a limbii române*, Editura Univers Enciclopedic Gold, Bucureşti, 2010
GLR,I – Graur, Al.,Avram, M. Vasiliu L., (Coordonatori), *Gramatica limbii române, II*, Bucureşti, Editura Academiei, 1963
Irimia, D., *Gramatica limbii române*, Editura Polirom, Iaşi, 2004
Irimia, D., *Gramatica limbii române*, Editura Polirom, Iaşi, 2008.

BDD-A5966 © 2013 Universitatea din Pitești
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:43:49 UTC)