THE COMPLEX VERBAL PREDICATE IN ROMANIAN LANGUAGE[1]

Abstract: *The study approaches the complex predicate's typology, presenting few opinions about the compound predicate, focusing on the modal and aspectual operators.*
Key words: *compound predicate, complex predicate, operators.*

1.Compound Predicate – short review.

The compound predicate's dilemma dates some good years ago, when the previous *GLR* Academy edition couldn't solve it, having two different positions in what concerns the semi auxiliaries (the first volume admits the modal semi auxiliaries' existence, denying the existence of the aspect ones, while the second volume denies the existence of both). This became a sensitive issue among the linguists, whose efforts for putting an end to it stretched over many decades, proving that there is a real interest in the matter. The acceptance of semi auxiliary verbs brought up a new class in the predicates typology - the compound predicate. *GALR* tried to end the dilemma, in fact, the new edition, which gave up rightly the concept of semi auxiliaries (modal and aspectual), introducing the term operators. Thus, the controversial compound verbal predicate concept disappeared from the landscape of the new *GALR,* opposed by many linguists. The complex verbal predicate term is now used to meet both the old compound predicate, and any kind of complex predicate.

1.1. Some opinions about the compound predicate.

C. Dimitriu considered that the compound predicate *nu presupune două verbe oarecare, ci doar două verbe aparţinând anumitor categorii... în structura acestuia intră un verb semiauxiliar de mod sau de aspect – a putea a trebui, a fi, a avea, a-i veni, a începe, a urma etc. – aflat la oricare mod personal şi predicativ; un verb de bază ... la participiu, supin, infinitiv sau conjunctiv: acest lucru trebuie spus, el are de citit, tânărul începe a gândi, ei continuă să se susţină reciproc etc.* (Dimitriu, 1982:187)

In *Gramatica de bază a limbii române*, Ion Coteanu said that the complex predicates *conţin câte două verbe asociate într-un singur înţeles (apucase să treacă, stătea să se prăbuşească, dă să plece, vrea să danseze, a apucat să adoarmă). Primul verb este folosit numai pentru a ajuta pe al doilea să exprime un înţeles întărit ori slăbit în comparaţie cu ce ar fi arătat dacă ar fi fost singur... pe locul ajutător pot să figureze numai anumite verbe. Pe locul al doilea pot să apară orice verbe, dacă sensul lor se potriveşte cu ce dorim să spunem.* (Coteanu, 1982: 248)

Considering the modal and aspect verbs as belonging to a lexical class with certain grammatical particularities, Mioara Avram defines them as *verbe construite cu alt verb (de obicei la conjunctiv sau infinitiv, unele (şi) cu participiul sau supinul, căruia îi imprimă sensuri modale, ca posiblitatea, necesitatea, dorinţa, imanenţa, irealitatea sau aspectuale, ca începutul, continuarea, sfârşitul unei acţiuni.* (Avram, 1986: 153)

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The structure of Complex Verbal Predicate has, in addition to its semantic component, one or more predicative operators. Its formulaic representation as found in the new *GALR* :
[modal operator$_1$ [aspectual operator$_2$ [copulative operator$_1$ / passive$_1$ [semantic support]]]].

The semantic support can be:

- an adjective / a participle as bearer of the semantic predication, in the vicinity of a copula or a passive operator: *este înțelept, este pedepsit*;
- a non-finite VP, directed by modal or aspectual operators: *poate/ începe/ continuă a învăța* (*GALR*, 2005: 253)

About modal and aspectual verbs, Carolina Popușoi, in *Structuri sintactice ale limbii române cu element predicativ suplimentar,* claims that they belong to some *clase semantice de verbe, așa cum o serie de verbe formează clasa semantică a verbelor de mișcare, altele de percepție (judecată, apreciere etc.). Faptul că astfel de verbe, când sunt urmate de un alt verb (la infinitiv, conjunctiv, supin), se abstractizează, mai mult sau mai puțin, din punct de vedere semantic, nu conduce la gramaticalizarea lor.* (Popușoi, 2002: 249) As Neamțu hylighted, these verbs continue to be lexems, by the possibility of explicitly express their lexico-semantic content and by having synonims. (Neamțu, 1986: 34)

2. The complex predicate's typology

According to *GALR,* follows several criteria:

2.1. The morphological class of the semantic support. According to this criterion, there are three types of complex predicates: with verbal semantic support *se apucă de citit*, with adjectival, nominal, adverbial, prepositional groups or their equivalent forms: *Ion este inteligent, Maria este de gheață, George este de neoprit, Toți sunt împotriva celor doi*, with participial semantic support, in terms of a passive participle: *El este apreciat de prieteni.*

2.2. As far as *the operator's value* is concerned, there are four types of complex predicates.

2.2.1. Complex verbal predicate with passive operator: *Maria este lăudată.*

The passive operator is represented by the verb *a fi* (*Maria este apreciată*.) As a verb, it is as an instrument in the Romanian language, because it can play the role of any operator. In such constructions, the action concerns the subject. The sense is distinguished between a starting point (expressed or not) – by the object of agent - accusative preceded by the preposition *de*, and an ending point, the grammatical subject, in the nominative case (expressed or not, belonging to sentence in which the verb functions as a predicate), arranged spatially and temporally. The object of agent is followed, on the temporal axis, by the subject: *Ion este lăudat de Maria.*

The participle's theme is either variable depending on number and gender, or is invariable the operator is changing its form in order to express the grammatical categories of mood, time, number and person (*sunt apreciat, sunt apreciată, suntem lăudați, suntem apreciate… eşti apreciat, eram apreciată, voi fi apreciată, aş fi apreciată, am fi fost apreciați* etc.), or invariable, in constructions where the agent is unexpressed (often unknown), and the patient is clausal realised by infinitive or supine: *i-a fost dat/ menit/ ursit/ scris să trăiască*/ *a trai/ de trăit* şi asta; *este cunoscut/ ştiut/ presupus că…*

The phrases are characterized by identity in number, person, gender (to the level of the participle's theme) in the relationship between the operator and the

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grammatical subject (which may be expressed or implied), and they are not identical concerning the object of agent: *Eu sunt apreciată de tine*. (Subject: *eu* – first person / operator *sunt* – first person/ participle *apreciată* – the singular (female, third person) / object of Agent: (*de) tine* – second person.)

As a parenthesis, speaking in terms of syntactic synonymy between the two constructions, one passive-reflexive, resulted by passive transformation and another passive construction with the verb *a fi*, resulting from applying the same transformation. Thus, a statement of type: *Cursurile se citesc de către studenți.* is synonymous with a statement such as: *Cursurile sunt citite de către studenți*, or *Mă entuziasmez de orice.* is synonymous with *Sunt entuziasmată de orice.* (Pană Dindelegan, 1974: 269)

2.2.2. Complex verbal predicate with copulative operator, which includes a copulative verb (it does not involve a relation with the actors - object, without this meaning, the verb belongs to the subjective verb-class, because they occur in context in a compulsory manner only in the subject's presence, and it does not have any meaning, because of the relations' absence with the object) + predicative name.

Copulative operators are illustrated by copulative matrix verbs: *a fi, a deveni, a rămâne, a însemna, a se chema, a se face, a ieşi*, but also by the verbs reorganized and recategorised verbs on copulative structure: *a părea* şi *a ajunge*. This class of verbs is limited by the verb's ability to combine with two nouns (pronouns), imposing the nominative case. (Guțu Romalo, 1974: 198) In Romanian, only copulative verbs select two nouns in the nominative in different syntactic positions. When the predicative is expressed by an accusative with preposition, we are dealing, *ab origine*, with a noun in nominative ellipsis: *Podul este de piatră* (= *Podul este **pod** de piatră*) (Brâncuş, 1984: 235)

According to their semantic nature, the copulative operators are divided into two groups:

2.2.2.1. Absolute copulative verbs (*verbal copulae*), or as Dumitru Irimia named them - *syntactical auxiliaries* are lexically meaningless verbs, they are functional categories used as inflectional markers and markers of predicativity, in the absence of another verb (the predicative, often a noun or an adjective, lacks such features). This type of operator is required by the linguistic element that has to play the role of a predicate in a sentence, but is unable to express time, predication's fundamental category, and person, category required to establish the relation subject - predicate. Included here are the verbs: *a fi, a însemna, a reprezenta*, when they are totally meaningless.

Since it does not participate in any way to predication, the copula is semantically redundant and may be omitted, just as it happens in the spoken language, provided the speaker chooses other means to update its message (by means of intonation, pause):

Aşteptarea – o plăcere de nedescris.

2.2.2.2. Lexico-grammatical copulative verbs are unsuitable for predication, by their nature, thus, for a semantic completion, they *require* a nominal component, and *are not required anymore*. The most striking exemple for a semantic completion is the verb *a deveni*, which expresses an idea vaguely, and which, for playing the updating part, needs to have established some exterior limits, and this part is fulfilled by the required component (this could be noun, adjective, numeral), or pronoun:

*Peste trei luni, ea **devine** mamă.*

In this class, next to *a deveni,* are included other verbs, which by semantic conversions become synonimous to it: *a ajunge, a se face, a ieşi*:

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***Ajungând** medic de gardă, viața i s-a schimbat complet.*

***Se făcu** amabilă dintr-o dată, oare de ce?*

Included in the second class of copulative, are also the verbs *a rămâne (*when it looses its fundamental meaning, denoting non-movement), *a părea* (when it is personal, if this condition is not fulfilled, the verb is predicative) etc.:

*A **rămas** păgubaşă, biata de ea.*

*Ea **pare** de pe altă lume.*

Copulative verbs can be organized on the same axis of temporality (as for verbs): the past (*a rămâne*), present (*a fi, a părea, a însemna*), and for the future (*a deveni, a ieşi*): *Ea **rămâne/ este/ pare/ devine/ iese** profesoară.* (Găitănaru,1998: 229)

2.2.3 Complex verbal predicate with aspectual operator: *Maria **începe** a scrie.*, *Maria **termină** de învățat., El **se apucă** de scris.*

The class of aspectual operators is illustrated by two types of verbs: (i) verbs bearing aspectual information: *a începe, a continua, a termina,* and (ii) verbs which contextually gain aspectual reading: *a fi, a avea, a trage*, *a (se) apuca, a se pune, a sta, a se lăsa, a (se) da, a se opri, a prinde, a urma, a conteni, a isprăvi etc.*

In Romanian linguistic literature, aspectual operators are known as semi-auxiliary devices (Rom. „semiauxiliare"). They induce an imerfective reading to the verb they are associated with action of the verb with which it enters in the verb phrase. (Irimia, 1976: 147)

The fact that Romanian language knows only for few verbs the aspect category, was reported by Găitănaru, thus justifying the presence of a large number of active aspectual verbs that semantically, imply the beginning, the continuation, or the end of an action. (Găitănaru, *op. cit.*: 251)

Comparing the aspectual and the modal verbs, Hazy opinates that some verbs *exprimând aspectul intră în componența locuțiunilor verbale, fapt neînregistrat la cele de mod.* (Hazy, 1997: 47)

2.2.4. Complex verbal predicate with modal operator: ***trebuie/ poate/ are/ era** să plece*.

Modal operators are verbs with pure modal meaning: *a putea* and *a trebui*, or verbs that contextually acquire modal meaning: *a avea, a fi, a vrea, a veni.* These operators show the verb's action from different modal perspective: probability, possibility, hypothesis etc.

The verb *a putea* acts least as an instrument in this class. As an operator it can express:

- Eventuality (independent of the speaker's will/possibility or of action's subject): *De pierit, eu **pot** pieri, dar de temut, nu mă tem.*;
- Unreal: ***Puteam** sa mor, daca nu era ea.*;
- Aproximation: *El **putea** sa aibă peste douăzeci de ani, ea cel mult cincisprezece.*;
- Concession: ***Poți** munci cât vei vrea, tot nu vei reuşi să termini la timp.*;
- Or disapproval of the choice made in an operation: ***Puteai** sa te duci dracului cu totul, în circumstanțele date.*

From the morphological point of view, the operator employs the present indicative: ***Poți** să cazi dacă nu eşti atent*., potential-optative: ***Ar putea** să aibă mai bine de patruzeci de ani.*, or imperfect, indicative of potential value: ***Puteam** să-i reproşez orice, ea era mereu senină.*

Some modal values always involve the same time as the operator, so the unreal and disapproval are introduced in complex predicate phrase only by indicative imperfect

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or by the potential perfect of the operator, synonymous with each other and containing in the very semantics of temporal, the possibility of expressing these modal values: ***Putea*** *să cadă şi să-şi rupă picioarele.* (Irimia, 1997: 165-166)

The verb *a trebui*. Of all the verbs belonging to this class it is the most deprived verb of lexical content. It is no longer expressing necessity, its primary purpose in the situation of predicative verb, but, above all, the assumption by introducing a hypothetical modal nuance to the predicate phrase structure to which it belongs:

Negru ***trebuie s****ă fie sufletul tău, după tot ceea ce ai făcut*.

The modal operator *a trebui* points to probability, and the verbal expression is hovering within indefinite point between certainty and uncertainty: *Asta* ***trebuie*** *să fie ea*.

Speaking of the Romanian Subjunctive, Constantin Frâncu considers that the verb *a trebui* when it is next to a subjunctive, it is a necessity verb (*Trebuie să apară.*), and when it is found in the vicinity of an indicative, it becomes a probability verb: *Trebuie că apare. = Probabil că apare.* (Frâncu, 2000: 221)

From the morphological point of view, this operator is the nearest to auxiliaries, and it enters in the complex predicate' structure into the present form, person 3: ***Trebuie*** *să fie pe aici pe undeva.* ***Trebuie*** *să îl găsim.,* and rarely, with imperfect mood form (when the modal meaning of certainty is more pronounced): *De cate ori venea, ştiam că* ***trebuia*** *să ne fi adus ceva*.

Syntactically, the modal operator is different from the predicative verb, by its inability to achieve the positive-negative opposition, a construction as ****Nu trebuie*** *să fie bolnavă.* is possible only if the verb *a trebui* has its value and predicative function, used with its fundamental meaning and its entire inflexional capacity.

The verb *a fi* differs from the predicative verb *a fi* by the lack of semantic autonomy, and by its limited flexionary capacity. Opposed to auxiliary verb *a fi,* as it does not have morphologic autonomy of the phrase to which it belongs, it is different from the copulative verb, by the overall phrase structure that includes it, by its semantic condition and by its role in the semantic expression. As operator, within the predicate phrase, it expresses:

- the unreal: ***Era*** *să plec din cauza ta.*
- Potential: *... Nu* ***era*** *să dai tu atâția bani pe un costum.*

The inflexional capacity of the verb is reduced to one form, the imperfect person 2: ***era*** *să cad*, signs of person and number are given by the main verb, always to the present subjunctive form: *era* ***să plec***, *era* ***să pleci****, era* ***să plecăm*** etc.

The verb *a avea*, is synonymous for the verb *a fi* when expressing the meaning of:

- Unreal: ***Aveam*** *să alunec*.
- Potential: *I l-am adus, ce-****aveam*** *să fac?*

Lacking semantic autonomy, the modal operator *a avea* behaves, in the compound predicate phrase like the verb *a fi*, with the imperfect form. It differs from it by the flexion according to the number and person: *aveam* ***să plec****, aveai* ***să pleci****, avea* ***să plece***.

The main verb is always at present subjunctive mood, also varying according to person and number.

The verb *a vrea* as modal operator, no longer expresses a willful act of the subject, but prints to the syntagm of which it belongs, a shade of unreal: *Sigur,* ***am vrut*** *să pic examenul.* The unreal shade of the syntagm is conditioned by the meaning of the

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main verb, which must express, generally, actions which can not be, under normal circumstances, an object of desire or will of the subject.

As auxiliary, it has imposed itself with the compound perfect form currently being built with a present subjunctive. Both verbs have flexion by number and person: ***am vrut*** *să pic,* ***ai vrut*** *să pici,* ***am vrut*** *să picăm*. It is found frequently in person 1. It does not admit the negative form.

2.3. According to the verbal vs. nonverbal nature of the semantic support one may find:

- non-verbal complex predicates composed of the verbal predicates with copulative operator or with the operator revised as copulative;
- verbal complex predicates, class covering all other complex predicates.

3. Conclusions.

3.1. Based on the selected opinions, I consider that the admittance of compound predicate is only confusing for young learners, as it is adding an unnecessary predicate class.

3.2. The Complex Verbal Predicate's typology followed *GALR,* and according to it, there are three main categories of complex predicates: (i) after *morphological class of the semantic support*., comprising verbs with verbal/adjectival/nominal/adverbial/ prepositional groups or their equivalent forms/participial semantic support, in terms of a passive participle; (ii) after *the operator's value,* there are four types of complex predicates: passive, copulative, aspectual, modal; (iii) after the *verbal vs. nonverbal nature of the semantic support* there are two types: non-verbal complex predicates composed of the verbal predicates with copulative operator (or revised as copulative) and verbal complex predicates.

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