Preface

What this book is about

This book is a revised version of my 2013 PhD dissertation (*Types of Ellipsis in Romanian. The Interpretation of Structures containing Ellipsis Sites and the Syntactic Licensing of Ellipsis*), jointly supervised by professors Gabriela Pană Dindelegan (University of Bucharest) and Ian Roberts (University of Cambridge). I defended this dissertation in November 2013 at the University of Bucharest.

The goal of this work is to provide a description and an in-depth analysis of the main configurations in which nominal ellipsis and verbal ellipsis are licensed in Romanian. Chapter I provides a motivation for the choice of nominal and verbal ellipsis as particular objects of inquiry, and for the more general option of studying ellipsis in the doctoral programme. Following previous bibliography, I focus on a particular family of elliptical types, namely elliptical structures which (i) are derived by PF-deletion and (ii) are tied to a particular licensing element; this class includes elliptical phenomena like sluicing, VP-ellipsis and nominal ellipsis. Chapter II discusses at length the differences between these phenomena and other types of surface anaphora (such as gapping and stripping). Chapters III and IV are devoted to the in-depth study of verbal and nominal ellipsis, and chapter V summarizes the results and puts them into a larger perspective.

My 2013 thinking with respect to elliptical phenomena has not modified considerably over time. In the preface to my monograph on word order and parameter change in Romanian (Nicolae 2019) I have argued that in order to properly understand the syntax of a given structure/phenomenon in an older stage of a language and the diachronic dynamics of a given phenomenon, one must first understand the syntax of the respective structure in the contemporary phase of the language (for which syntactic tests/diagnostics, one of the most important tools for the analyst, are available). Similarly, I argued in my dissertation and I continue to believe that, for the proper understanding of how ellipsis works, it is imperative that one starts from first understanding the grammar of the full, non-elided structure. Thus, the analysis of a given elliptical structure is systematically preceded by the analysis of its non-elided counterpart – and more often than not the analysis of the overt structure is lengthier than the analysis of its elliptical counterpart.

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How is this book different from the 2013 dissertation?

This book preserves the structure and content of the 2013 dissertation; there is only one considerable content-related revision, that is, I have removed the part devoted to the syntax of aspectual verbs and to aspectual-complement ellipsis, as it appeared as a more elaborate self-standing paper (Nicolae 2016).

However, I have operated several revisions, some of them superficial, some of them more profound. These revisions have been prompted by several reasons. First of all, the observations from the reports and the questions from the viva brought considerable improvements to the thesis presented in 2013. Secondly, my subsequent work on several topics progressed and gave rise to more accurate analyses and better solutions and explanations (e.g. verb movement, the syntax of modal verbs, the syntax of the adjectival article construction, the diachronic development of the freestanding article *cel*, etc.). Last but not least, the general development of the domain and work of ellipsis in particular prompted the revision of some of my older assumptions and analyses.

Nevertheless, it is important to remember that this book is centred on the licensing and interpretation of ellipsis, hence revisions and updates have been operated only when they made a substantive contribution to the analysis. In any case, all these changes are signalled in footnotes and references to works published after 2013.

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Bucharest, December 2019

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