

THE TYPOLOGY OF VERBS IN MODERN ROMANIAN GRAMMARS

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Abstract

The verb is, as we well know, one of the most complex parts of speech in the morphological system of any natural language. In the following pages, we aim to examine the typology of verbs in modern Romanian grammars and to highlight the classification criteria used in their analysis.

In principle, the main verbal categories are determined based on morphological (regular and irregular verbs, predicative and auxiliary), syntactic (transitive, intransitive, copulative) and semantic (action, state, modal) features. Contemporary grammars emphasize the interaction between these criteria, providing an integrated perspective on the verb.

The study emphasizes the complexity of verb classification in Romanian and the need for a flexible approach, which should reflect both their formal structure and their role in the utterance.

Key words

Verb, verbal typology, classification criteria, verbal categories.

1.1. Verb definitions

Classifications of the verb can be traced back to Antiquity, made by Aristotle, the Greek grammarian Dionysios Thrax, and the Latin grammarian Remmius Palaemon. This prominent part of speech is present in all the traditional classifications where its importance is acknowledged. It is typically defined in contrast to the nominal class (nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and numerals).

In *Gramatica limbii române*, vol. I from 1966, the verb is defined as “the flexible part of speech that is conjugated and expresses actions or states”.¹ Later, in 1976, Dumitru Irimia stated that:

¹ GA₁, 1966, p. 202: “*partea de vorbire flexibilă care se conjugă și care exprimă acțiuni sau stări*” – original Romanian version.

“the verb is defined both in itself (through its specific features) and in opposition (determined precisely by its distinctive features) to other lexico-grammatical units of the language, primarily the noun, at the lexical (to a lesser extent), morphological and syntactic levels.”²

The same grammarian considers that:

“The verb primarily expresses actions, followed by states, phenomena, existence, all perceived and conveyed dynamically, as a process”³

Ion Coteanu, in his treatise, *Gramatica de bază a limbii române*, 1982, defines verbs as words “that indicate that something is happening, occurring or that someone is performing an action in the sentence”.⁴

The verb is characterized:

“by a sufficiently rich notional content, by virtue of which it can possess an adequate lexical meaning and well-defined syntactic functions”.⁵

In GALR₁ the verb is characterized from morphological, syntactic-semantic and pragmatic perspectives.

GALR₁ authors place the verb within “the lexico-grammatical class with an extremely rich inventory”.⁶

GBLR authors reiterate the opinion of the above-mentioned authors, classifying the verb in the same “unified, rich and open lexico-grammatical class (which is continually enriched with new units)”.⁷

² Irimia, 1976, p. 7: “verbul se definește în sine (prin trăsăturile sale specifice) sau și prin opoziție (condiționată tocmai de notele sale specifice) cu celelalte unități lexico-gramaticale ale limbii, cu substantivul, în primul rând, la nivel lexical (mai puțin), morfologic și sintactic” – original Romanian version.

³ *Ibidem.* : “Verbul exprimă, înainte de toate, acțiuni, apoi stări, fenomene, existența, toate văzute și comunicate dinamic, sub formă de proces.” – original Romanian version.

⁴ Coteanu, 1982, p. 158 : “care arată că în propoziție se întâmplă, se petrece ceva sau că cineva face o acțiune” – original Romanian version.

⁵ *Ibidem.* : “printr-un conținut noțional suficient, în virtutea căruia poate dispune de un sens lexical suficient și de funcții sintactice determinate” – original Romanian version.

⁶ GALR₁, 2005, p. 323 : *clasa lexico-gramaticală cu un inventar extrem de bogat*” – original Romanian version.

⁷ GBLR, 2016, p. 232 : “clasă lexico-gramaticală unitară, bogată și deschisă (care se îmbogățește permanent cu noi unități).” – original Romanian version.

In GALR₁, from a morphological point of view, the verb is:

*“a flexible part of speech, distinguished by a special type of inflection known as conjugation, which consists in changing the form of the verb according to the categories of mood, tense, person, number, voice, each category being expressed through its own set of oppositions and specific forms of realization/expression.”*⁸

The same authors propose a definition based on the syntactic-semantic criterion:

*“it possesses the ability to attract actants, components closely linked to the internal semantics of the verb, to which it assigns specific semantic roles and formal constraints”.*⁹

This part of speech is the core that ensures the semantic-syntactic structure of the sentence.

From a semantic point of view the verb:

*“expresses actions, events and states fixed in time and depicted in aspect”, being “the class that carries prediction to the highest degree”*¹⁰ *among the other parts of speech.*

From a pragmatic perspective it is:

*“the component of the sentence endowed with a set of grammatical categories, and a high deictic potential (tense, mood and person), categories capable of transforming a syntactic structure into an utterance”.*¹¹

⁸ GALR₁, 2005, p. 323: “o parte de vorbire flexibilă, distingându-se printr-un tip special de flexiune numit conjugare și care constă în schimbarea formei verbului în funcție de categoriile de mod, timp, persoană, număr, diateză, fiecare categorie manifestându-se printr-un număr propriu de opoziții și prin forme specifice de realizare/manifestare” – original Romanian version.

⁹ Ibidem.: “el are calitatea de a atrage actanții, componente strâns legate de semantica internă a verbului, cărora acesta le atribuie funcții semantice și restricții de formă.” – original Romanian version.

¹⁰ Ibidem.: “exprimă acțiuni, evenimente și stări, fixate temporal și înfățișate aspectual”; “clasa purtătoare în cel mai înalt grad a predicției”. – original Romanian version.

¹¹ Ibidem.: “componentul propoziției înzestrat cu un ansamblu de categorii gramaticale, cu înalt potențial deictic (timp, mod și persoană), categorii capabile să transforme o organizare sintactică într-un fapt de enunțare.” – original Romanian version.

In the same paper, it is stated that the verb is the core of the verbal group, and from a semantic point of view:

“the verb designates actions, events or states, fixed in time and depicted in aspect”.¹²

It is characterized by rich inflection, known as conjugation (a standard verbal item represented by its infinitive form has approximately 100 inflected forms. For example: *a ști* (to know), *știu* (I know), *știam* (I knew), *am știut* (I have known/ I knew), *știussem* (I had known), *voi ști* (I will know), etc.).

From a pragmatic perspective the verb, through its morphemes of tense, mood, person, and number, establishes a connection to reality, transforming a verbal group into an utterance (*a citi un roman/Citește un roman*) (to read a novel/ He/ She reads a novel).

Among the definitions previously collected and stated, the most commonly used is the one from *Gramatica limbii române* (1968), according to which the verb is:

“a flexible part of speech that is conjugated and expresses actions or states”.¹³

Due to the simplicity of this definition, the verb can be associated with actions or states, making it more easily identifiable in utterances.

1.2. Verb typology. Classification criteria

1.2.1. Syntactic-semantic classification

In GBLR the syntactic-semantic classification takes as its starting point the actantial relations of the verb as the central element; the former being mandatory, determined by the conceptual-semantic content of the verb. These non-circumstantial relations involve the position of the subject and direct, indirect, secondary and prepositional objects, and are typically realized through nominal phrases in adverbial roles:

“In isolated cases, for a smaller class of verbs, the syntactic-semantic classification also takes the adverbial element into account. There are verbs that are necessarily

¹² *Ibidem.*: “verbul denumește acțiuni, evenimente sau stări fixate temporal și înfățișate aspectual.” – original Romanian version.

¹³ GA₁, 1966, p. 202: “parte de vorbire flexibilă care se conjugă și care exprimă acțiuni sau stări” – original Romanian version.

modified, as an inherent semantic-syntactic feature, by an adverbial of manner, quantity, place, direction, or time: a se comporta (to behave) necessarily requires an adverbial of manner, a cântări (to weigh), one of quantity, a locui (to live), and a ajunge (to reach), one of place. For this category of verbs, adverbials are part of their underlying structure, contributing to their syntactic-semantic definition.”¹⁴

This classification criterion sometimes includes, in addition to actantial relations, adverbial and predicative relations.

1.2.1.1. Syntactic classification based on the number of mandatory modifiers

GBLR considers that the syntactic classification of verbs:

*“is based on the relation of the verb with its objects, and it concerns the occurrence of verbs only within primary, basic structures, not in reorganized ones”.*¹⁵

According to this criterion *Gramatica Academiei* (GA₁) states that, regardless of the syntactic position they occupy, the following verb classes can be observed:

- zero-valent verbs, characterized by the ability to form a complete utterance in the absence of any actantial determiner, including the nominal actantial subject.

Examples: *a ninge* (to snow), *a ploua* (to rain), *a gerui* (to frost), *a se întuneca* (to get dark), *a se lumina* (to clear up).

¹⁴ GALR₁, 2005, pp. 333-334: “*Izolată, pentru o clasă mai puțin numeroasă de verbe, clasificarea sintactico-semantică are în vedere și circumstanțialul. Sunt verbe care cer, în mod necesar, ca particularitate semantico-sintactică inerentă, determinarea printr-un circumstanțial de mod, cantitativ, de loc, de direcție, de timp: a se comporta cere obligatoriu un circumstanțial de mod, a cântări cere unul cantitativ, a locui, a ajunge, unul de loc. Pentru această categorie de verbe, circumstanțialele intră în schema lor matricială, contribuind la definirea lor sintactico-semantică* – original Romanian version.

¹⁵ GBLR, 2016, p. 276: “*se bazează pe relația dintre verb și complementele sale și privește apariția verbelor numai în structurile primare, de bază, nu și în cele reorganizate*– original Romanian version.

- monovalent verbs, which form a complete utterance by taking a single mandatory object, a single nominal actant, regardless of its form or thematic role.

Examples: *Adrian fuge/înoată/plânge/suferă/se vindecă.* (Adrian runs/swims/cries/ suffers/heals.)

- bivalent verbs, which combine with two obligatory actantial positions, with different semantic values and forms of actants. This class is very numerous and includes a wide range of syntactic patterns.

Examples: *Stelian mănâncă/vinde/cumpără/aruncă o înghețată.* (Stelian eats/sells /buys/throws an ice cream.)

Îi arde/pasă/pare rău de școală. (He cares / minds / feels bad about school.)

Te enervează/sâcăie/miră tâmpenia lui. (His nonsense annoys/bothers/ surprises you.)

- trivalent verbs, characterized by their ability to combine with three obligatory actantial modifiers, each assigned a different thematic role and occupying different syntactic positions.

Examples: *Mama mă sfătuiește/întreabă/anunță ceva.* (Mother advises me on/asks/informs me about something.)

Darius îmi spune/oferă/dă ceva. (Darius tells/offers/gives me something.)

The classification presented in GA₁ is unstable, as numerous verbs shift from one class to another; some transitions are explainable through the syntactic features of the Romanian, while others result from semantic-stylistic deviations. Thus, there are verbal constructions in which certain roles remain vacant, either due to the possibility of omitting the subject and object (compare *Ileana scrie/spune ceva.* = Ileana writes/says something and *Ileana scrie/spune.* = Ileana writes / says.), or due to the suppression of certain actants, most often the indirect object (IO) in constructions such as *Constantin (ne) mărturisește.* (Constantin confesses (to us)).

According to GALR₁ the above-mentioned criterion is, in fact, “*more of an attempt*”¹⁶. It is noted here that the inflection of Romanian verbs is more complex than previously presented, particularly when considering stem

¹⁶ GALR I, 2005, p. 555 : “*mai mult o încercare*” – original Romanian version.

variation. Alternations are primarily conditioned by phonological factors. Consonantal alternations occur at the juncture between the stem and the inflectional ending. Vocalic ones, on the other hand, take place in the middle part of the stem and are mainly influenced by stress, with stressed syllables favoring the occurrence of alternations, and by the phonological quality of the vowel in the following syllable. Apart from this phonological conditioning, alternations are also subject to morphological marking.

If we consider the participation or non-participation of verbs in alternation phenomena, they can be divided into:

➤ verbs with an invariable stem, most neologistic verbs and some older ones such as: *a ara* (to plough), *a (se) bucura* (to rejoice), *a fulgera* (to lightning), *a fura* (to steal), *a încheia* (to finish);

➤ verbs with two allomorphs of the stem morpheme: *astâmpăr/astâmperi, să astâmpere* (to calm down), *ajut/ajuți* (to help);

➤ verbs with three allomorphs of the stem morpheme: *scapăr/scaperi/scăpărăm* (to spark), *ies/iasă/ieși* (to get out);

➤ verbs with four allomorphs of the stem: *cad/cădem/cazi/căzut* (to fall), *port/poartă/purtăm/porți* (to wear);

➤ verbs with five allomorphs of the stem: *rog/roagă/rogi/rugăm/roage* (to ask/pray);

➤ verbs with six allomorphs of the stem: *torc/torci/toarce/toarcă/torș/toarșe* (to spin).

Due to the fact that, under the same phonological and morphological conditions, some verbs are subject to the alternation rules and others are not, this phenomenon emphasizes its irregularity.

1.2.1.2. The productivity of conjugations

The class of verbs ending in *-a* in the infinitive, corresponding to the first and second conjugations, is the most productive accounting for 42.61% of all Romanian verbs listed in DEX.

The class of verbs ending in *-i* in the infinitive, corresponding to the fourth, fifth and sixth conjugations, although quite numerous in Old Romanian, has become stagnant adding only 219 neologistic verbs. Most of them end in *-ui*: *a atribui* (to attribute), *a retribui* (to remunerate), *a substitui* (to substitute).

The class of verbs ending in *-î* in the infinitive, which corresponds to the third and fourth conjugations, is the smallest one comprising only 31 verbs, none of which are neologisms. More than half of these are of popular usage or are considered regional words.

The class of verbs ending in *-e* in the infinitive, corresponding to the ninth, tenth and eleventh conjugations, is numerically small and has limited productivity. The 117 verbs from the old vocabulary have been supplemented with 143 neologistic verbs.

The class of verbs ending in *-ea* in the infinitive, representing the eighth conjugation, is very small in number and unproductive, including only 20 verbs.

According to DCR² and DOOM²-based analyses of journalistic and scientific texts, the conclusions drawn above are confirmed. Recent occurrences ending in *-iza*: *a sataniza* (to satanize), *a manageriza* (to manage), *a spațializa* (to space) and very recent loans: *a ejecta* (to eject), *a reitera* (to reiterate), *a antama* (to engage/ to arrange in advance), *a lista* (to list), etc. reinforce the class in *-a*.

Inflectional patterns in *-i* remain productive, either due to the formation of verbs from nouns using the lexico-grammatical suffix *-i*: *a bișnițări* (to scalp), *a cărămizi* (to lay bricks), or to the use of verbal suffix *-ui*: *a bipui* (i.e. to send a short signal), *a țepui* (to scam), *a șmenui* (to swindle), etc.

1.2.2. The inflectional classification of the verb

The problematics of verb inflection is a highly debated topic not only in GA₁ and GALR₁ but also in GBLR, where the authors adopt a more practical perspective.

In GBLR, “*an initial classification in conjugation is based on the infinitive suffix.*”¹⁷

Thus, according to GBLR, “*by separating the verbs that have the infinitive suffix -î from those with the suffix -i*”¹⁸ we identify five types of conjugation:

¹⁷ GBLR, 2016, p. 269: “*o primă clasificare în conjugări se face pe baza sufixului de infinitiv.*” – original Romanian version.

¹⁸ GBLR, 2016, p. 269: “*separând verbele care au sufixul de infinitiv -î de cele cu sufixul de infinitiv -i*” – original Romanian version.

- (1) verbs with the infinitive suffix *-a* (*a lucra, a mânca*) (to work, to eat);
- (2) verbs with the infinitive suffix *-ea* (*a vedea, a plăcea*) (to see, to like);
- (3) verbs with the infinitive suffix *-e* (*a râde, a merge*) (to laugh, to walk);
- (4) verbs with the infinitive suffix *-i* (*a iubi, a minți*) (to love, to lie);
- (5) verbs with the infinitive suffix *-î* (*a vâri*) (to shove).

Unlike GALR₁ and GBLR, traditional grammar identifies four types of conjugation, based on the infinitive suffix. Thus, the first conjugation is characterized by the suffix *-a*, the second by *-ea*, the third by *-e*, and the fourth includes verbs that have the infinitive suffix *-i* or *-î*.

According to GBLR, “*the inflectional classification of verbs is based on all relevant inflectional morphemes within the verbal paradigm and, implicitly, on the homonymies they generate*”.¹⁹

In the same work, the following is stated:

“*a verb form is fragmented into units/segments with lexical and grammatical meaning (suffix and desinence): lucr-ez-i (you work), apel-ă-m (we call), scri-a-m (I/we was/were writing), văz-u-se-m (I had seen), prin-se-se-ră-m (we had caught), etc*”.²⁰

1.2.3. Verbs with irregular inflection

According to GALR₁:

“*any verb form and any paradigm that deviate to a greater or lesser extent from the current and repeatable inflectional patterns are considered irregular. Irregular forms represent isolated instances, present in the inflection of a single verb or a very small number of verbs*”.²¹

¹⁹ GBLR, 2016, p. 268: “*clasificarea flexionară a verbelor se face în funcție de toate flectivele relevante din paradigma verbală și, implicit, de omonimiile pe care acestea le stabilesc*.” – original Romanian version.

²⁰ GBLR, 2016, p. 268: “*o formă verbală se segmentează în unități / segmente cu semnificație lexicală și gramaticală (sufixul și desinența): lucr-ez-i, apel-ă-m, scri-a-m, văz-u-se-m, prin-se-se-ră-m etc*.” – original Romanian version.

²¹ GALR₁, 2005, p. 562: “*este considerată neregulată orice formă verbală și orice paradigmă care se îndepărtează într-un grad mai mare sau mai mic de schemele curente și repetabile de flexiune. Formele neregulate constituie fapte izolate, prezente în flexiunea unui singur verb sau a unui număr foarte mic de verbe* – original Romanian version.

The types of irregularity are varied, as it may involve only the variation of the stem, of the inflectional morphemes, the unusual character and an unexpected distribution of homonyms or, simultaneously, multiple aspects of those mentioned before.

The degrees of irregularity may be minimal, affecting a single inflectional morpheme or a single stem variation, or major, affecting both the stem and the inflectional morphemes.

The reasons behind these irregularities are diverse, the etymological one being predominant (for example, the occurrence of alternations, given the fact that verbs from the old vocabulary follow phonological alternation rules, while neologistic verbs do not always respect these rules), complemented by phonological evolutions (for example, the variation of the stem between the singular and plural of verbs such as *mănânc* (I eat) – *mâncăm* (we eat)).

The free literary inflectional variation, accepted by DOOM³ which implies the acceptance of parallel inflectional forms for certain areas of the paradigm, also represents a source of inflectional irregularities.

We will list below a few of the irregular verbs in terms of their stem:

a mânca (to eat): *mănânc, mănânc-, mânca-*;

a usca (to dry): *usuc, usuc-, usc-*;

a da (to give): *da-, d-, dăd-, dea-*;

a bea (to drink): *bea-, be-, b-, bă-*;

a vrea (to want): *vrea-, vre, vr-, vor-*;

a avea (to have): *a-, ar, av, aib-*;

a fi (to be): *sunt, eșt-, est, e, er-, f-, fi-, fos-*.

Besides the verbs *a mânca* (to eat) and *a usca* (to dry), the other verbs whose stem is irregular exhibit irregularities in inflectional forms and/or homonymy.

1.2.4. Defective verbs

In GALR₁ defective verbs are those that are characterized by incomplete conjugation, as they cannot be used for certain values within the paradigm. The causes of this phenomenon are diverse, one of them being the age of the verbs. Thus, there are neologisms which have still kept their entire paradigm (for example: *a exige*=to demand, *a accede*=to access, *a*

diverge=to diverge, *a desfide*=to defy) and archaic verbs, very rarely used (for example: *a la* = *a spăla* (to wash), *a păsa* = *a merge* (to walk)). Other causes may include the homonymy of certain verb forms and the semantics of the verb, which may not be compatible with the semantics of certain grammatical categories (for example, verbs that do not admit imperative forms or only admit the negative imperative form, such as *a vrea*=to want, *a putea*=to be able to, *a aparține*=to belong).

1.2.5. Unipersonal verbs

Unipersonal/impersonal verbs represent a class of verbs characterized by incomplete person inflection, occurring only in the third person. They contrast with the class of personal verbs (those with complete person inflection). The following subclasses fall into this category:

- verbs that do not allow the subject role: *a ninge* (to snow), *a ploua* (to rain), *a i se urî de* (to have enough of), *a-i arde de* (to feel like);
- verbs that may allow the subject role, but it must have the [+Animate, -Human], feature, such as: *a mieuna* (to mew), *a măcăi* (to quack), or [-Animate] feature, such as: *a apune* (to set), *a consta* (to realize), *a derapa* (to skid);
- verbs that allow a prepositional phrase as subject (subject phrase) or realized through non-personal verb forms: *Se întâmplă să/că* (It happens that), *Trebuie să* (It is necessary to), *Te interesează să* (It interests you to), etc.

There are certain verbs that are impersonal in any context in which they are used, except when they contribute to the construction of artistic devices: *a mieuna* (to mew), *a se cuveni* (to be adequate), *a se întâmpla* (to happen), etc. Others, such as *a spune* (to tell), *a scrie* (to write), *a ști* (to know), are usually personal (*spun-spui-spune*, *scriu-scrii-scrie*, *știi-știi-știe*), but they become impersonal only when they belong to impersonal constructions (*Se spun multe despre el.*=A lot is said about him, *S-a scris despre incident.* =The accident has been written about., *Se știu destule.*=Quite a bit is known.)

1.2.6. Classification from the perspective of belonging to the vocabulary system

Dumitru Irimia, provides a classification of Romanian verbs based on the logical-semantic criterion: “*from a semantic perspective, verbs are classified into the following categories*”²²

a. perception verbs: *a vedea* (to see), *a auzi* (to hear), *a pipăi* (to feel), etc.

b. saying verbs: *a zice* (to say), *a spune* (to tell), *a afirma* (to state), *a răspunde* (to answer);

c. factitive verbs: *a fierbe* (to boil), *a cuminți*, *a aprinde* (to light up);

d. motion verbs: *a intra* (to enter), *a ieși* (to get out), *a fugi* (to run), *a înota* (to swim);

e. modal verbs: *a putea* (can), *a trebui* (must), *a-i veni* (to feel like).

A broader perspective on verbal semantic structure may lead to the identification of two major categories of verbs: subjective and objective.

Subjective verbs are considered those whose actions remain “*enclosed within the sphere of their agent*”²³. This category includes:

- verbs that express an action which cannot be transferred to an “object” external to the agent: *a exista* (to exist), *a fi* (to be), *a trăi* (to live), etc.;

- verbs that express manifestations of a person's psycho-subjective activity: *a râde* (to laugh), *a plânge* (to cry), *a suspina* (to sob);

- verbs that express manifestations of physiological activity, especially human: *a strănuta* (to relocate), *a dormi* (to sleep), *a încărungi* (to turn gray);

- onomatopoeic verbs: *a măcăi* (to quack), *a găgai* (to honk), *a cotcodăci* (to clunk).

The author considers *objective* those verbs whose action “*extends beyond the sphere of the agent*” („*depășește sfera autorului ei*”) being “*directed towards an external object*” (“*orientându-se spre un obiect exterior*”). Objective verbs include factitive verbs (*a deplasa*= to move), as well as verbs of perception (*a auzi*=to hear, *a privi*=to look).

This classification is considered to be relative by the author himself since, alongside strictly subjective or strictly objective verbs, there is also a category of verbs that are both subjective and objective. For example, the verb *a coace* (to ripen/to bake) is usually subjective: *Merele se coc în august*.

²² Dumitru Irimia, 1976, p. 17: “*sub aspect semantic, verbele sunt clasificate în următoarele categorii* – original Romanian version.

²³ *Ibidem.*: “*închise în sfera autorului lor*” – original Romanian version.

(Apples ripen in August.); but when used with factitive meaning, it becomes objective: *S-au copt niște vinete pentru salată*. (Some eggplants were baked for the salad.).

1.2.7. Classification based on the etymological criterion

The same author provides, in the volume mentioned before, a somewhat original classification, arguing that verbs can be divided into abstract and concrete.

Verbs are considered concrete when their meaning can be “represented at a sensory level”²⁴, such as: *a aluneca* (to slip), *a înota* (to swim), *a săpa* (to dig), *a scrie* (to write), *a parfuma* (to perfume), etc.

The abstract category includes verbs whose meaning “cannot be represented at a sensory level”²⁵, such as: *a cerceta* (to investigate/ to research), *a avea* (to have), *a fi* (to be), *a vrea* (to want), *a putea* (to be able to), *a reprezenta* (to represent), *a începe* (to start).

If in traditional grammars, the classification of verbs is based on etymological criteria was simplified, in modern grammars, the etymological classification is more nuanced.

1.2.8. Aspectual verbs

According to GALR₁ aspectual verbs are “lexical units whose semantic configuration includes one of the features [Inchoative], [Durative] or [Terminative]”²⁶. These three features are “related to the perspective from which a process can be conceived as a whole dividable into three stages: beginning, middle and end”²⁷. These verbs have full inflection and are capable of formally expressing oppositions and values of mood, tense, person, and number, as well as voice, but only in contexts involving temporal nouns.

Verbs such as *a începe* (to start), *a continua* (to continue), *a conțeni* (to cease), *a înceta* (to stop), *a termina* (to finish), and *a sfârși* (to

²⁴ Ibidem.: “reprezentabil în planul senzorial” – original Romanian version.

²⁵ Ibidem.: “nu este reprezentabil în planul senzorial” – original Romanian version.

²⁶ GALR₁, 2005, p. 457: “unități lexice a căror configurație semantică conține una dintre trăsăturile [Incoativ], [Continuativ] sau [Terminativ]. ” – original Romanian version.

²⁷ Ibidem.: “legate de perspectiva prin care un proces poate fi gândit ca întreg segmentabil în trei etape: început, mijloc, sfârșit” – original Romanian version.

end) are considered true aspectual verbs. In certain contexts, some polysemous verbs may also function as aspectual verbs, such as:

- *a se porni pe* (to start) – *S-a pornit pe dansat*. (He/ She started dancing.)
- *a se pune pe* (to set about) – *S-a pus pe scris*. (He/ She set about writing.)
- *a urma* (to follow) – *Mama și-a urmat destinul*. (My mother followed her destiny.)
- *a se opri din* (to stop) – *S-a oprit din alergat*. (He/ She stopped running.)
- *a ajunge la* (to come to) – *A ajuns să-mi dea dreptate*. (He/ She came to admit I was right.)
- *se apucă de* (to begin) – *S-a apucat de învățat*. (He/ She began studying.)
- *a se da la / în* (to start (talking)) – *Se dă în vorba despre ea*. (He/ She starts talking about her.)

If the aspectual feature integrated into the lexico-semantic is taken into account, aspectual verbs can be grouped as follows:

- ❖ inchoative verbs – those that are specific to the initial stage of the process: *a se apuca* (to begin), *a se da* (to start), *a începe* (to start), *a se lua* (to get down to), *a porni* (to start), *a prinde* (to catch);
- ❖ durative verbs – those that refer to the middle stage: *a continua* (to continue), *a urma* (to follow);
- ❖ terminative verbs- those that refer to the final stage of the process: *a ajunge* (to reach), *a conțeni* (to cease), *a se opri* (to stop), *a se lăsa* (to give up), *a (se) termina* (to finish), *a înceta* (to stop).

1.2.9. Other classifications

The linguist Ion Coteanu classifies verbs “according to their meaning”²⁸ in the following categories:

- verbs that describe a state of being: *a afla* (to find oneself), *a exista* (to exist), *a rămâne* (to remain), *a sta* (to stay);
- motion verbs: *a ieși* (to get out), *a intra* (to enter), *a opri* (to stop), *a zbura* (to fly), *a trece* (to pass), *a merge* (to walk);

²⁸ Coteanu, 1982, pp. 158-160: “după înțelesul lor” – original Romanian version.

- saying verbs (*declarandi* verbs): *a afirma* (to affirm), *a discuta* (to discuss), *a nega* (to deny), *a striga* (to shout), *a zice* (to say), *a șopti* (to whisper), *a vorbi* (to talk);

- verbs that express feelings, sensory actions, acts of will or affection: *a amăgi* (to deceive), *a ironiza* (to mock), *a uita* (to forget), *a ofensa* (to offend), *a uimi* (to amaze), *a porunci* (to order), *a hotărî* (to decide), *a minți* (to lie).

The same author also classifies verbs according to “the way the action unfolds”²⁹.

- durative – indicate that the action extends over a longer period of time and unfolds without interruptions or repetitions: *a repeta* (to repeat), *a gândi* (to think), *a umbla* (to walk), *a liniști* (to calm), *a petrece* (to spend), *a răbda* (to endure), *a lucra* (to work);

- momentary – the action expressed by these verbs lasts for a short or very short period of time: *a adormi* (to fall asleep), *a pocni* (to pop), *a sări* (to jump), *a decola* (to take off), *a ațipi* (to doze off);

- iterative – the action is repeated once or several times: *a bascula* (to tilt, to unload), *a dădăci* (to baby-sit), *a reapărea* (to reappear), *a şușoti* (to whisper), *a lătra* (to bark), *a forfecă* (to clip);

- eventive – indicate that, during the course of the action, the subject becomes what the verb denotes: *a albi* (to whiten), *a îngreuna* (to weigh down), *a înnegri* (to darken), *a ofili* (to wither), *a unifica* (to unify), *a înverzi* (to turn green), *a înfrumuseța* (to beautify), *a simplifica* (to simplify);

- dynamic – the subject actively participates in the action and is very interested in it: *a se bucura* (to rejoice), *a căina* (to pity);

- causative or factitive – express the idea that the subject is the cause of the action, which is performed by someone else: *a se tunde* (to get one’s hair cut), *a coase* (to sew), *a construi* (to build).

Conclusions

The analysis of the verb in modern Romanian grammars highlights the complex nature of this grammatical class and its central role in the structure of the sentence. Its classification is not limited to a single criterion, but

²⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 160-162: “felul de desfășurare al acțiunii” – original Romanian version.

involves a multidimensional approach: morphological, syntactic and semantic.

The integration of these perspectives reflects an updated view on language, one that is adapted to the diversity of forms and functions that verbs fulfill in communication.

Therefore, understanding the typology of the verb requires not only the knowledge of formal features, but also an awareness of the role verbs play in the dynamics of the utterance, which calls for a flexible and context-sensitive approach to the study of grammar.

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