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PhD in Philology

Academic Grammar (Tertiary Level) vs. School Grammar (Secondary Level) – Between Tradition and Modernity

– Morphological and Syntactic Considerations on Nouns –

-ABSTRACT-

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Since studying the Romanian language in school is an important and formative endeavour, finding new ways to improve the theoretical and practical material made available to pupils/future students should be both a concern and a priority for any teacher of Romanian language and literature. Firstly, that would facilitate the actual understanding of the subject matter and, secondly, it would raise awareness of the importance and application in everyday life of the information that this discipline conveys, especially as regards the logical order of ideas and thoughts for proper and coherent communication.

After 1990, the study of the Romanian language in lower and upper secondary schools has witnessed many changes, with curricula and textbooks being developed on a principle of shifting away from *theoretical academism* towards the *functional practice of language*. Although the teaching and learning of the Romanian language aimed at meeting the demands of real life to a greater extent by improving pupils' and students' verbal communication, the reality of recent years – as it transpires from both national test results and pupils' and students' oral and written expression – indicates a clear failure which, in our opinion, may also be due to the deficient theoretical and practical approach to the Romanian language in textbooks and teaching aids, to the discontinuation of the in-depth study of morphology and syntax in high schools, and therefore to a substantial gap – from lower secondary level to tertiary level – in the study of Romanian morphology and syntax. Nevertheless, the greatest disservice to the Romanian language comes from the small number of morphology and syntax exercises included in high-stakes evaluation tests and their insignificant scores. This system allows a pupil lacking the basic morphosyntactic knowledge to pass and even get a high score at those exams.

Another shortcoming is the fact that textbooks and curricula avoid or insufficiently tackle a series of grammar issues, some of which are considered too difficult (for example, the syntactic function of *floating predicate*), while others are only briefly touched upon because of their *controversial* status (such as the *semi-independent pronoun*), which often creates confusion. Textbooks and teaching aids fail to provide answers to most questions and they consequently address only a certain type of texts/exercises/tests. We think this approach is wrong since pupils that age can already grasp logical arguments, as proven by their ability to understand, for instance, mathematics, physics or chemistry problems and exercises with a high degree of difficulty.

These are the main reasons why we have decided to focus this doctoral thesis on the noun and the way it is tackled in *school grammar* vs. *university grammar*, between tradition and modernity. Hence, we have presented the theoretical and practical content pertaining to nouns as taught in schools and universities, on the one hand, and how we think this content should be improved and upgraded, on the other hand.

Thus, in the theoretical section of this thesis, we have dwelt on authors' opinions and their underlying arguments so as to draw an overall picture of the topic at hand.

The first fifty-nine pages of the thesis introduce the argument and the corpus on which the comparative analysis has been based, along with the terminological clarification which has crystallised the theoretical direction of the thesis.

The comparative analysis is organised into two parts.

The first part addresses the theoretical approach to noun morphology and syntax in schools and universities. To this end, we have included theoretical considerations from the GLR (the Romanian Grammar), the latest academic treatises – the GALR and the GBLR – and other papers that we have considered relevant, from specialised literature, and textbooks.

The second part of the thesis explores the typology of syntactic relations in the Romanian grammar, as taught in schools and universities.

Hence, the terminological clarification focuses on the basic unit to be analysed, namely the ***clause***, intended both as a communicative unit and as a syntactic unit.

Given that, in any language, there are two unit organisation options – a paradigmatic one aimed at selection and a syntagmatic one ordering elements in a certain sequence, a section has been devoted to the ***relationships*** established between basic functional units – constituents of the clause – and to syntactic relations concerning grammatical connections between two terms, so as to prepare the ground for the discussion in the subchapter devoted to the ***syntagm*** (a group made up of two terms and their relationship), which represents the relational unit of syntax, the only unit, which is both minimal and maximal.

Further on in the thesis, we have classified syntactic relations according to Romanian specialised literature, screening authors' opinions on the matter. In the following chapters, we have specifically referred to coordination and its means, as well as to subordination and variants considered by some authors.

In the following subchapter, we have looked into other types of syntactic relations, namely the predicate-subject relationship, the appositive *relationship*, and the parenthetical *relationship*.

For each thesis unit, we have presented conclusions and suggested a different theoretical and practical textbook approach to Romanian noun morphology and syntax, as follows:

1. Textbooks do not clearly define grammar and its components, leaving it to teachers' discretion whether to formulate them or not and, where defining them is considered useful, it is not done in a consistent manner (by the teachers of Romanian language and literature in general). This is actually understandable considering that, as already mentioned, we lack an official grammar. *By inertia*[1], Academy Grammars represented the *official grammar* used for the theoretical and practical content of textbooks but, for the reasons we have presented and defended, this is obviously no longer the case.

Hence, given the current situation, our suggestion is to set an official grammar of the Romanian language. As presented in this paper, school grammar content is not compatible with the latest academic treatises – which are inhomogeneous and occassionally contradictory in both content and terminology, while sometimes being insufficiently adapted to the very specificity of the Romanian language. Thus, (for the time being and in their current form) they lack didactic applicability for non-tertiary education. Therefore, a decision must be made as to which content should be considered by textbook writers, by teachers who have the freedom to select the content they teach, and by pupils, students or anyone else interested in studying the grammar of present-day Romanian.

2. We think that literature and grammar need to be actually separated in textbooks. Interesting enough, all textbooks are entitled *Romanian Language Textbook*. We don't see the purpose or the logic behind the exclusion of the word *literature*. We believe that rigorous content presentation and term precision are merely two of the essentials needed to achieve learning objectives in general and at this stage in particular, when the successful encounter with the Romanian language and literature depends greatly on *facilitators* such as the textbook which, whether we admit it or not, plays an essential role through its attractiveness and usefulness.

Therefore, separating Romanian literature and language contents would bring content order, which would facilitate the use of the textbook as a working tool. This combination of

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[1]We refer here to the reality of textbooks. We underline the fact that, from a theoretical and practical perspective, these are strongly anchored in the 1963 Academy Grammar.

literature, communication, phonetics, language, and other contents seems chaotic and makes the textbook a cumbersome working tool, which is difficult to study and follow. Given all these, we think that combining elements of literature – in the broad sense of the word – with those of language (phonetics, vocabulary, morphology and syntax) in textbooks is a setback and separating them into two distinct units, literature and grammar, either in the same textbook or in different textbooks, would help assimilate and consolidate knowledge specific to each subfield.

3. We believe that an appropriate definition of grammar for teaching purposes could be:

Grammar is a set of rules regarding the way in which words change their form (morphology) and how they are put together in clauses and sentences (syntax).

In this paper, we have looked at *morphology* as the grammar branch which studies parts of speech on the paradigmatic axis, a direction set by Ferdinand de Saussure[2] and followed by A. Martinet[3] and L. Hjelmslev[4], among others. We have mentioned that we do not agree with the morphosyntactic approach of the latest academic treatises since, in our view, the interweaving of morphology and syntax, the fact that many morphological phenomena can only be explained through syntax and vice versa, does not deprive them of their individuality and does not provide sufficient argument for looking at them other than as the two great pillars of grammar, according to what we consider a viable vision, namely that grammar is a discipline separate from semantics, pragmatics, etc., with a normal degree of interdependence between them.

In this paper, we have looked at language as a system whose components work based on interrelations. By *syntax* we mean the part of grammar which studies the way words are put together into clauses and clauses into sentences, moving from form toward content, with language elements being studied on the syntagmatic axis[5].

4. When referring to the syntax of new grammars, we used the term functional syntax.

5. Theoretically, this paper relates to the traditional and structural approach to syntax, adhering to the theory of neotraditional syntax developed by the Cluj Syntax School[6], according

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[2]Ferdinand de Saussure, *Curs de lingvistică generală,* published by Charles Bally et Albert Sechehaye, Iași, Editura Polirom, 1998, pp. 135-136.

[3]See André Martinet, *Èlements de linguistique générale*, 3ᵉ ed., Paris, Armand Colin, 1963.

[4] See Louis Hjelmslev, *Preliminarii la o teorie a limbii* (translation from English by D. Copceag), București, Centrul de Cercetări Fonetice și Dialectale 1967, p. 33 et seq.

[5] According to Ferdinand de Saussure, syntax studies language elements on the syntagmatic axis (see Ferdinand de Saussure, *Curs de lingvistică generală,* published by Charles Bally et Albert Sechehaye, Editura Polirom, Iași, 1998, pp. 135-136.).

[6] The founder of this school, D. D. Drașoveanu, does not reject the modern and analytical approach to syntax, but he integrates it into the neotraditional relational syntax.

to which "grammar refers to grammatical structure"[7], "grammar is made up of morphology and syntax"[8], and "even when they are developed and defined separately (morphology aiming at inflection and syntax pertaining to combinations, relations), the connection between the two needs to be additionally stated, beyond definitions; this connection, where morphology serves syntax (morphology – the means, syntax – the purpose, the destination), leads to a hierarchisation of its terms: inflection ("morphological level") situated beneath combinations, relations between words, etc. ("syntactic level"), according to the usual scale: phonetics, lexicology, morphology, syntax"[9].

6. Comparing the way in which **the noun is defined** in the GLR, the GALR, and the GBLR, which are all relevant treatises developed under the aegis of the Romanian Academy and considered Romanian language grammars, we can't help but notice great differences between them as regards concepts, terminology and theoretical content, in general. Under new grammars, the definition of the noun has a modern touch, yet it is not innovative like the 1963 grammar was compared to the one from 1954.

The new definitions share a few elements with traditional grammar, but what these definitions lack is the very school applicability, the possibility of being used as references by curriculum and textbook authors. The theoretical material employed to define the noun at school level continues to be based on the GLR as new grammars fail to replace it with an updated grammar reflecting the specificity of the Romanian language.

We believe that the theoretical sections of textbooks regarding noun definition and classification are shallowly drafted, meagre, and lacking essential information. Leaving existing errors aside, the conceptual apparatus is inadequate and incomplete, well below pupils' level of understanding as in 7th grade they are capable of exploring the mysteries of physics, chemistry, and mathematics. Trying to simplify things for an easier understanding, we think that pupils are actually deprived of information that could help them understand better, properly shape their language, and grasp the logic of grammar.

Given that the textbook definition of the noun must be *improved*, we would like to point out the items that we believe would need to be included:

      a.   A lexicogrammatical class, flexible in number and case.

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[7] D. D. Draşăveanu, *Teze şi antiteze în sintaxa limbii române*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Clusium, 1997, p. 26.
[8] *Idem.*
[9] *Ibidem*, p. 25.

b. Declension is a specific feature of this class.

c. Gender is a fixed grammatical category of nouns.

d. It names concrete and abstract items of the surrounding and virtual worlds.

Thus, the noun could be defined as follows: *the noun is a flexible lexicogrammatical class with grammatical categories of gender, number and case, which declines (by number and case), and semantically names concrete and abstract items of the surrounding and virtual worlds*.

Obviously, not all the information we find in specialised literature could be integrated into textbooks as that is not its purpose, being targeted at students of philology and experts in the field. Still, we cannot help but mention that there is a huge discrepancy between that information and the content of textbooks, which represents the morphological knowledge that school offers to pupils and that some will use to embark on the road to philology. Reconfiguring textbooks, rethinking theory and practice, and introducing the study of morphology and syntax in high schools are our solutions to the problem.

7. As far as **noun classification** is concerned, we think it should be based on form (simple nouns, compound nouns, and noun phrases), meaning (common and proper nouns), and inflection (invariable, variable with one form, and variable with two forms). We also believe that it would be useful to mention collective, defective, and epicene nouns. That way, a grammatically relevant typology would be included, information would be systematised based on clear criteria, and relevant exceptions could be formulated.

Once again, we plea for clarity of information, transparency of criteria and precision of terms because we believe that these should be the characteristics of the official grammar of the Romanian language that could set it apart from all the other pieces of specialised literature.

As far as theoretical aspects are concerned, we think that the conceptual apparatus that we find in textbooks, in the chapter devoted to the noun, is deficient, incomplete and even chaotically addressed.

Out statements are based on the following arguments:

❖ The definition of the noun is identical for the 6th and 7th grades, yet different for the 5th grade although, in our opinion, the notion of *objects in the broad sense*, which is found in the 5th grade noun definition, has a higher degree of difficulty than the enumeration of *beings, things, natural phenomena, features, actions, feelings* to which upper grade definitions are limited.

❖ We believe that the definition of the noun is incomplete, lacking essential information such as: it is a flexible part of speech; specific grammatical categories are not specified; also, *declension* is not mentioned. These items are not included in other sections or upper grades either, which we find inadmissible since grammar is studied only until the 8th grade.

❖ We think that the supporting texts used as a starting point for pupils to discover new information or remember (!) previous information are irrelevant.

❖ Considering the logical hypothesis that theoretical information should have continuity from one textbook to another and the degree of difficulty should increase progressively, we find that the authors did not take this logical course of action into account, at least not in a systematic and organised manner. Hence, if we compare the 6th grade *REMEMBER!* section with the theoretical information from the 5th grade textbook, we find that the information "Nouns are simple or compound."[10] is new since, in the lower grade, nouns were classified only as common and proper, without any mention of the fact that they can also be simple or compound.

❖ By the start of the 7th grade, pupils have found out that Romanian nouns can be common, proper, simple, compound, collective, and defective. Regarding the noun, the novelty of the 7th grade (which is also the last grade for studying morphology!) is the introduction of the notion *motional suffixes*, which are only briefly mentioned (without any reference to *motion* and the typology of mobile nouns), along with information about epicene nouns (without the use and introduction of this term) and noun phrases.

Regarding the latter, their definition creates confusion, again. The statement that, in a sentence, the noun phrase acts like a noun may also be understood as if, during the morphosyntactic analysis, the phrase features all grammatical elements specific to its synonymic noun, which is not true for it is a known fact that phrases do not usually have a case. For example, if the phrase *băgare de seamă* [*being on the watch*] would conventionally be considered in the case of the first term, the solution would be grammatically incorrect because the second term is in the accusative. Therefore, just like

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[10] Alexandru Crişan, Sofia Dobra, Florentina Sâmihăian, *Limba română. Manual pentru clasa a VI-a*, Editura Humanitas Educaţional, Bucureşti, 2012, p. 89.

adjective phrases lack a case, noun phrases, too, don't have a case, but only analysable components.

In addition, the statement that noun phrases are normally used in oral language is an unverified and irrelevant piece of information and it even comes with a negative connotation as it assigns them to a less rigorous language than the written one.

❖ We have found that textbooks contain incomplete, partially correct, ambiguous, and even incorrect information. In this regard, we point out another example given in the 6th grade textbook for the *food* category of nouns defective in the singular. The noun *icre* [roe] is not defective in the singular considering that DOOM$_2$ reads the following: **icră** *(i-cră) s.f., g.-d. art. icrei; pl. icre*[11].

In conclusion, we believe that the theoretical sections of textbooks regarding noun definition and classification are shallowly drafted, meagre, and lacking essential information. Leaving existing errors aside, the conceptual apparatus is inadequate and incomplete, well below pupils' level of understanding as in 7th grade they are capable of exploring the mysteries of physics, chemistry, and mathematics. Trying to simplify things for an easier understanding, we think that pupils are actually deprived of information that could help them understand better, properly shape their language, and grasp the logic of grammar.

Obviously, not all the information we find in specialised literature could be integrated into textbooks as that is not its purpose, being targeted at students of philology and experts in the field. Still, we cannot help but mention that there is a huge discrepancy between that information and the content of textbooks, which represents the morphological knowledge that school offers to pupils and that some will use to embark on the road to philology. Reconfiguring textbooks, rethinking theory and practice, and introducing the study of morphology and syntax in high schools are our solutions to the problem.

8. As our analysis shows, academic treatises and specialised literature have converging opinions about the three **gender** classes: feminine, masculine, and neuter.

Regarding the third gender, the neuter, whilst authors' opinions are not entirely consistent, all of them highlight its heterogeneous and hybrid nature. Starting from G.G. Neamțu's statement that the Romanian neuter gender enjoys a special status "which can be

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[11]*Dicționarul ortografic, ortoepic și morfologic al limbii române,* DOOM$_2$, Editura Univers Enciclopedic, București 2007, p. 371.

interpreted as a «non-specific» one compared to the other two, the masculine and the feminine, or, on the contrary, as something «specific» to this gender, namely neither fully masculine nor fully feminine"[12], and based on all the arguments of the cited authors, we believe that, though the existence of a third gender in Romanian is indisputable, its name is faulty because it generates confusion which also affects the content. It gives a false impression that, on the one hand, Romanian is the only Romance language that has kept the Latin neuter (the differences between the Latin neuter and the Romanian neuter have been largely debated in specialised literature), and that, on the other hand, the Romanian neuter could be an adaptation of the Slavic one (in Slavic languages, the neuter is not a hybrid form, but it has its own well-individualised system). Consequently, considering all the semantic and desinential peculiarities of the Romanian neuter, which we have detailed in this section, as well as its position between the masculine and the feminine without entirely identifying with either of them, we believe that *mixed gender* would be a preferable name to *neuter gender* and would better highlight the distinct nature of nouns falling under this gender class.

Another observation concerns the existence of a forth gender, the *personal gender* or *sub-gender*, which we consider neither necessary nor relevant when describing nouns because, as Mioara Avram said, the features specific to names of persons or personified animals are neither exclusive nor general.

As regards the classification of nouns by *archigender* and *common gender*, these are (sub)divisions which are not based on clear unequivocal criteria, as it transpires from the fact that, on the one hand, they are still controversial (for example, the diagnostic contexts proposed for the *archigender* create a great deal of confusion) and, on the other hand, they lack practical applicability (conventionally or not, dictionaries mention nouns belonging to the *masculine-neuter archigender* or to the *feminine-neuter archigender* as neuter nouns because they are inanimate).

As the whole material shows, specialised literature features some common points regarding certain gender aspects (such as the sub-classification of nouns as epicene and mobile, in diagnostic contexts, *animate* vs. *inanimate*, and other). Thus, we believe that the suggestion of making theoretical and practical changes to this category in textbooks, at least by adding less

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[12] G. G. Neamțu, "Observații privind statutul morfologic al neutrului în limba română" in *Studii și articole gramaticale*, Editura Napoca Nova, Cluj-Napoca, 2014, p. 443.

controversial aspects, is even more founded. Since the conceptual apparatus is too poor and the category is deficiently presented, we believe it is necessary to have a theoretical presentation of the gender that includes basic notions (natural gender, the opposition between *animate* and *inanimate,* etc.) and a presentation of diagnostic contexts that can be used to determine the gender of a noun.

We think that lower secondary school *Romanian language textbooks* developed by Alexandru Crişan, Sofia Dobra, Florentina Sâmihăian under the aegis of Humanitas Educaţional Publishing tackle noun gender in a deficient, incomplete and insufficient manner. These statements are based on the following arguments:

➢ We believe that including the gender in the same section as the number is inadequate. Each grammatical category should be assigned an individual section.

➢ Gender-related exercises are disproportionately fewer than those devoted to the number.

➢ It is absolutely necessary to include a brief theoretical presentation of the gender with basic notions (natural gender, animate, inanimate, etc.) and of diagnostic contexts that can be used to determine the gender of a noun.

➢ The *motional suffix* notion (whose purpose we don't see in the way it is presented in the textbooks!) should have been introduced along with a presentation of both mobile nouns and the process called *motion*.

➢ There is no reason for not including the notion of *epicene nouns*.

➢ We find it necessary to include at least a brief general presentation of Romanian gender-specific endings.

➢ In the light of new grammars and the changes brought by DOOM, exercises should also be aimed at the gender of neological nouns.

➢ As far as the gender of proper nouns is concerned, we think that both theoretical aspects and a solution as to whether this grammatical category needs to be specified when analysing this type of nouns should be presented.

The teachers of Romanian language and literature are certainly not limited to these notions; we are strictly referring here to the content of textbooks, which we believe should provide an accurate and comprehensive benchmark for all users.

9. As it comes out of all the considerations presented here, the **number** is a defining grammatical category of nouns. Although number opposition is mainly reflected desinentially

and number desinences are concordant with gender ones, the fundamental difference between the two grammatical categories comes from the relational nature of the category, which is based on the concept of quantity for the number while being fixed, deictic and non-relational for the gender.

We think that presenting number desinences after the gender of nouns is a logical, organised and systematised thing to do which allows, on the one hand, for entering differences in masculine, feminine and neuter nouns and, on the other hand, for theorising invariable nouns, nouns with double forms, defective nouns, and collective nouns.

We appreciate the innovative nature and even the didactic applicability of the individualisation based on the introduction of the concept *archinumber* (Dumitru Irimia) for *singularia tantum* and *pluralia tantum* nouns since, when they are not formed as a plural opposing the singular, these nouns influence the morphological status of *nişte* [*some*], which is no longer a number morpheme, but an indefinite adjective (*nişte zahăr [some sugar], nişte icre [some roe],* etc.).

Among authored works, we find that Mioara Avram's presentation of the grammatical category of the number is exhaustive and didactically applicable. We consider the theorisations of the Cluj School, represented by D. D. Draşoveanu and G.G. Neamţu, innovative and syntactically relevant since the $number_1$-$number_2$ distinction has effects particularly on a relational level given that $categories_2$ are all regarded as relational and, in $categories_1$, $gender_1$, $number_1$, $person_1$ and $time_1$ are considered non-relational, based on whether that inflection expresses a relational meaning or not. Thus, the number of nouns ($number_1$) is a grammatical category; the grammatical opposition is singular vs. plural; in nouns, it is an inflectional and non-relational category.

Among academic treatises, we find the GALR approach to be relevant due to its comprehensive information since the grammatical category of the number is presented with all its rules and exceptions. We have made comments regarding neological nouns, mentioning the confusion that their name may generate as well as the inconsistent criteria used for their selection.

As regards the textbook approach, we find the information related to this grammatical class to be deficient and insufficiently structured upon logical criteria.

In conclusion, based on all the information from the specialised literature that we have cited, we believe that, in any approach and all the more so in textbooks, a relevant presentation of the number should comprise information about the *singular-plural* opposition; about the formal differentiation of the singular from the plural via desinences and phonetic alternations; about invariable nouns; about defective nouns; and, last but not least, about the peculiarities of the plural of compound nouns and *loanwords*, according to current rules.

10. The authors' approach and the latest academic treatises clearly show that **determination** is a category that has given rise to many more controversies than any other grammatical category of the noun.

In our view, this is not due to reluctance towards the new, but to the inconsistency which characterises this would-be grammatical category. Its underlying and member-selection criteria are semantic, too vague and overly abstract, hence the too many exceptions and too few rules.

If determination with definite and indefinite articles seems acceptable as it is based on less disputable rules and has less flexible members, the expansion of this category by recruiting members from other parts of speech is entirely debatable and turns determination into an element that is foreign to the specificity of the Romanian language.

As already mentioned, a great number of nouns don't feature the oppositions specific to the content of determination (invariable proper nouns; common nouns identifying a category, a species, etc. and in whose case the enclitic definite article indicates generalisation, not individualisation; and more) and this content is not expressed via a unitary system of marks, which leads to the conclusion that Romanian nouns lack the grammatical category of determination.

As for the concept of *determination*, intended as a grammatical category of the noun, it has not been integrated into textbooks. Therefore, we have decided to focus on the article for this is the main element addressed in the specialised literature discussions about determination and about the article as a determination morpheme.

All textbooks present the article in a *sort of* a separate chapter from the other elements, thus we can conclude that the authors regarded it as part of a noun-specific grammatical category. Its uncertain status and approach transpire from the fact that, firstly, it is tackled in a separate chapter from the gender and the number of nouns, which are presented in a subchapter, yet right after those, and, secondly, its formal presentation is similar to that of the case. In

addition, there is no definition of the article, thus no reference to its explicit status: article or morpheme of a forth category of the noun. Hence, extrinsic indications create some ambiguity, along with the whole theoretical approach to the article, which follows the GLR presentation in broad, inexplicit terms.

In conclusion, in our view, determination is a 'category' that is semantic rather than semi-grammaticalised and its members have either an uncertain status (definite and indefinite articles) or a disputable one (adjective modifiers). As regards the didactic applicability of this theory from the latest academic treatises, namely the introduction of determination as a grammatical category, we think it is not feasible mainly because of its many exceptions and too few rules, which makes determination a pointless grammatical complication.

11. We have presented the grammatical category of the **case** looking at the way it is reflected in the GLR, in other pieces of specialised literature and in the latest academic treatises and we have identified similarities, differences, modern elements, and innovative features. Most of all, we have selected information in support of the statement that the theoretical school material should be re-evaluated and that, regarding Romanian grammar in general, there is an obvious need to establish *an official grammar* to which we can resort when exam topics contain information that may be interpreted in multiple ways. This *need* is urgent if we want a change, if we want pupils to be able to run grammatical analyses, as well as discourse analyses that can later result in stylistic analyses and relevant literary commentaries.

We believe that what we have presented clearly shows that the latest academic treatises don't provide answers to controversial situations because they are themselves a set of controversies and unrealistic situations due to the many aspects that are foreign to the specificity of this language. We believe that Romanian did not need, for instance, a sixth case without form and substance or a predicative complement since only philologists may learn about the floating predicate given that it is preferred not to address it in school and to wrongly define any case of floating predicate for "it is not in the curriculum"; or stating that the locative dative is outdated, which is actually contradictory because the authors declare that these treatises are anchored in the spoken language and a simple walk in the park would be enough to notice the above-average frequency of *stai locului acum! [stand still now!]*.

The analysis of the textbook approach to the grammatical category of the case shows that the 5th grade textbook contains a detailed theoretical presentation of cases, the 6th grade textbook

resumes the definition and typology of cases, whereas the 7th grade textbook only refers to the Romanian case typology.

Therefore, all our observations will refer to the 5th grade textbook where, starting from the definition (the form a noun takes to express its syntactic function in a clause), the five cases are detailed in pairs: nominative (preposition) and accusative; dative and genitive; (possessive article) and vocative.

I. The **nominative** case is defined in relation to the syntactic functions of subject or subject complement.

Exercises briefly go through the prepositions specific to the **accusative** case, which is also presented in relation to its syntactic functions: it has the syntactic function of a complement or an adjective and it is preceded by prepositions; the noun in the accusative may lack a preposition when it holds the syntactic function of a complement and it answers to the question *what?*.

In terms of expression, it is specified that nouns have the same form in the nominative and the accusative.

Questions provide the means to identify both the complement (*pe cine?, ce?[whom?, what?]*; *pentru cine?*, *pentru ce?*, *de la cine?*, *de la ce?* etc. [*for whom?*, *for what?*, *from whom?*, *from what?*, etc.]; *când?*, *de când? [when?, since when?]*; *cum? [how?])* and the adjective (*care?*, *ce fel de?[which?, what kind of?]*).

In our opinion, the approach to the nominative and accusative cases is faulty, incomplete and even incorrect and we state this considering the following:

a. There isn't a definition of each case.

b. No focus is placed on the nominative as a non-prepositional case.

c. Despite having already been introduced, the concept of desinence is not employed; instead, it is specified that nouns have the same form in the nominative and the accusative. This lack is identified in all textbooks as they do not have a terminological unit and do not use concepts in a systematic and organised manner, which makes it difficult to acquire and consolidate them.

d. Presenting the syntactic functions of adjective and complement only based on specific questions should be avoided. The general rule for identifying these syntactic functions must be to consider the relationship with the relevant regents. Thus, for the function of adjective, the regent

is a noun and, for the function of complement, it is a verb, an adverb, an adjective, an interjection. We believe this is the only way to lay the basis for a proper grammatical analysis aiming at the logical split of a clause into syntagms, which is also the first step towards a discourse and text analysis.

II. The **dative** case is characterised by the syntactic function of complement, answering to the question *cui? [whom?]*. This is particularised with aspects regarding the presence of the proclitic definite article *lui* in masculine or feminine nouns that are names of persons and end in a consonant or are of foreign origin.

The **genitive** case holds the syntactic function of adjective, answering to the questions *al, a, ai, ale cui? (whose?)*. The adjective expressed by a noun is called an *attributive noun*.

As regards the expression of nouns in the dative, it is mentioned that nouns that are feminine names of persons ending in *–a* will end in *–ei* in the dative, and nouns that are feminine names of persons ending in *–ca, -ga* will end in *–ăi* in the dative; nouns have the same form in the dative and the genitive; feminine nouns have the same form for D-G, singular, non-articulated or with an indefinite article as in N-A, plural, non-articulated or with an indefinite article.

Our observations regarding the presentation of the dative and genitive cases are as follows:

a. Each case needs to be defined.

b. Considering that the prepositions specific to the accusative case are presented, we think there is no reason for not presenting those specific to the dative and genitive cases, too.

c. Once again, the concept of desinence is not employed.

d. The syntactic functions of adjective and complement are presented only in relation to specific questions; this draws an erroneous functional picture of the two cases that can be relatively easy to confuse if the regent – the very term to which the question is addressed – is ignored.

e. We do not understand the authors' decision to use the concept of *adjective* for the adjective in the accusative and that of *attributive noun* for the genitive.

The theoretical presentation of the cases sends out the following wrong messages:

- Syntactic functions are identified with the help of questions *asked into thin air*, which is fully reflected in the school practice.

- Only the accusative has specific prepositions.

- The direct object only answers to the question *what?*.

- The *attributive noun* only occurs in the genitive and the one in the accusative is only an *adjective.*

- Only nouns in the vocative have specific desinences and the concept of desinence is avoided when it comes to the other cases.

III. Vocative is the case used to express a call or to draw someone's attention. Nouns in the vocative have no syntactic function. They have a specific form, constructed using the desinences –*e*, -*o*; they may either share the same form with nouns in the nominative or take a form with the help of the definite article and are marked by specific intonation. The noun in the vocative, with or without a determiner, is separated by commas from the other clause constituents and occasionally followed by an exclamation mark.

The vocative case is the most coherently presented. A tripartite vision is provided, which includes semantic, desinential and syntactic characteristics of the case. We have a comment though concerning the statement that the vocative may constitute a non-analysable clause on its own. Let's take '- *Alexandre*!' as an example. Firstly, the statement is debatable if we think of the following questions: a. Does a non-analysable clause mean that its constituent lexeme cannot be analysed? b. Is the clause '- *Alexandre, vino!* [*Alexander, come*!]' non-analysable? If yes, why? If no, why not? Secondly, how is this statement relevant to the description of the vocative case?

Regarding the decision to limit the theoretical study of this grammatical category only to the 5th grade, we find it unjustifiable and unfounded.

In conclusion, based on our observations, we believe that the textbook approach to cases is incomplete, incoherent and sometimes even wrong. Moreover, the presentation is not consistent, with no minimum pattern set (or followed) for the theoretical presentation of each case. The conceptual apparatus is also faulty and incomplete and there is no apparent responsibility for respecting the property of terms.

Consequently, following the model provided by the authors we have acknowledged in the previous conclusions, the case could be presented as follows[13]:

- There are only five cases in Romanian.
- They reflect relationships between nouns, between nouns and the other parts of speech, between adjectives, numerals, articles, pronouns and the other words in a clause.
- The case is formed using specific desinences – which are fewer than those for gender and number – and phonetic alternations. We think that their presentation in the GALR is the most up-to-date since it takes the current rule into account.
- *Nominative* is the case where the noun is expressed as a name and, as such, it may be the subject of the clause or of a verb in an impersonal mood, part of a predicative complement, and in an apposition next to another noun (with the mention that the apposition may also be in another case).
- *Accusative* is the case of the noun as a direct object or with other functions expressed with the help of a specific preposition.
- The direct object may be accompanied by a preposition or not. We believe that, on the one hand, it is preferable to use *pe* [*on*] as it makes the sentence clearer and, on the other hand, the only acceptable syntactic solution is that of a direct object for a noun accompanied by the preposition *la* [*to*] in sentences like: *A băut la apă, de s-a săturat [He drank so much water that he quenched his thirst]*.
- When not accompanied by a preposition, the noun in the accusative may also hold the following syntactic functions: cognate object, apposition to another noun in the accusative, adverbial of time, attributive noun in the accusative (*accusative of time*), subject complement and floating predicate; when accompanied by a preposition, the noun in the accusative may be an indirect object, agent, or adverbial.
- *Genitive* is the case used to express a relationship of possession, belonging, attribution between two nouns. In the genitive, the specific element of articulated masculine and neuter nouns is the definite article, namely *–lui* for the singular (which is attached to the common noun, but stands before proper nouns) and *–lor* for the plural.

[13]This material is based on Ion Coteanu's approach, which is similar to Mioara Avram's but it contains more examples whose applicability we appreciate. Moreover, the theoretical material also reflects the views of the Cluj School.

- In the genitive, articulated common feminine nouns take the definite article *–i* for the singular and *–lor* for the plural.
- The main syntactic function of the noun in the genitive is that of an adjective, with several different values: subjective genitive, author's genitive, objective genitive, appositive genitive, genitive indicating belonging/membership. In addition, the picture of syntactic functions may be completed by the subject complement and adverbials.
- *Dative* is the case of the indirect object since it is most often formed with the help of prepositions. This case shows toward whom or what the verb's action is directed. Masculine, neuter and feminine nouns have the same forms in the dative and the genitive, and the distinction is made based on the regent as the genitive requires an articulated noun and the dative needs a verb.
- Dative typology comprises: *the so-called dative with the preposition 'la' [to], relatedness dative, and locative dative*.
- As for the status of the lexemes *aidoma, asemenea [like]*, they are adverbs and regents for datives, not genitive-specific prepositions.
- *Vocative* is the case of calling, of invocation. It does not connect syntactically to the other words in a clause. Vocative has its own desinences which coexist with nominative ones. Syntactically speaking, in phrases like *Bade Ioane, vino! [Old John, come!]*, *Ioane* obviously has the function of an attributive noun in the vocative.

12. We have presented the **syntactic functions of the noun** looking at how they are addressed in the GLR, other pieces of specialised literature, and the latest academic treatises.

We think that what we have detailed clearly shows that the latest academic treatises cannot be used as theoretical material for the theoretical and practical teaching of the noun in school.

Broadly, we think that syntactic functions are adequately presented in textbooks, with some reservations:

a. The apposition and the attributive appositional noun are mentioned in textbooks as synonymous notions, which is not true.

The attributive appositional noun /non-separated apposition /false apposition /determinative apposition are different names for the same grammatical reality. Thus, determinative appositions are actually adjectives and are usually expressed by proper or

assimilable nouns (*râul* **Mureş [Mureş** *River]*, *strada* **Coşbuc** [**Coşbuc** *Street*], etc.), they are not separated by punctuation marks and have one possible case option – the nominative. Therefore, syntactically speaking, determinative appositions are actually adjectives and are called attributive nouns in the nominative.[14]

Explanatory appositions are meant to explain the antecedent term and in writing they are always separated by commas or other equivalent marks. This cuts off any syntactic relation and, as proved by D. D. Draşoveanu, with no relation, there can be no syntactic function.

Hence, explanatory appositions have two case construction possibilities: the nominative, irrespective of the antecedent's case (*Vasile,* **colegul** *meu, este fruntaş.* [*Vasile, my* **colleague***, is top of his class.]* /*Echipa lui Vasile,* **colegul** *meu, a câştigat.* [*My* **colleague** *Vasile's team has won.]*); the antecedent's case (Pe *Vasile, pe* **colegul** *meu, l-am văzut.* [*I saw Vasile, my* **colleague***.]* /*Echipa lui Vasile, a* **colegului** *meu, a câştigat.* [*My colleague Vasile's team has won.]*).

Consequently, the examples included in the textbooks (*Prietenul meu,* **Dan***, îl citeşte.* [*My friend,* **Dan***, reads it.]/ Prietenul meu,* **Dan***, se joacă.* [*My friend,* **Dan***, is playing.]*) and the theory – "The attributive appositional noun is the adjective expressed by a noun in the nominative, irrespective of the determined term. Apposition explains the determined term. Apposition is separated from the rest of the sentence by commas or dashes. It is not separated by commas when the determined term needs to be identified."[15] – should be reconsidered since these very statements make a distinction between separated apposition and non-separated apposition, which have different grammatical realities in the spoken and written discourse, therefore it is only logical that they behave differently, syntactically speaking.

b. As regards the labelling of *din cauza, din pricina* [*because of, due to*] as prepositional phrases specific to the genitive, we consider it to be wrong. In these phrases, *cauza* and *pricina* are nouns, but their structural similarity (identity) and/or correspondence in meaning with some genitive-specific prepositions or prepositional phrases make their distinction difficult[16]. In the absence of a consistent criterion, G.G. Neamţu sets out two selection options, specifying that it is

[14]See G. G. Neamţu, *Teoria şi practica analizei gramaticale, Distincţii şi ... distincţii (cu trei seturi de grile rezolvate şi comentate),* Ediţia a IV-a, Editura Paralela 45, Piteşti, 2014, pp. 316-320.

[15]Alexandru Crişan, Sofia Dobra, Florentina Sâmihăian, *Limba română. Manual pentru clasa a V-a,* Editura Humanitas Educaţional. Bucureşti, 2007, p. 93.

[16] See G. G. Neamţu, *Teoria şi practica analizei gramaticale, Distincţii şi ... distincţii (cu trei seturi de grile rezolvate şi comentate),* Ediţia a IV-a, Editura Paralela 45, Piteşti, 2014, pp. 146-148.

impossible to draw a clear line between them for they evolve towards abstractisation and grammaticalisation, many of them being labelled as *quasi-phrases* under the GALR. Since the notion of *quasi-phrase* is vague and far too general, we agree with G.G. Neamțu's distinction between prepositional phrases with the genitive and "fake prepositional phrases with the genitive" and we will consider that this group must be interpreted as *preposition + noun*, not as a prepositional phrase:

- if the noun in the group can be determined by an adjective pronoun, especially a demonstrative one;
- if the genitive can be pre-positioned to the noun in the *preposition + noun* combination.

Consequently, the statements that the adverbial of cause is expressed by a noun in the genitive with the phrases *din cauza*, *din pricina* (*Din cauza lenei, am fost pedepsit.* [*Because of idleness, I got punished.*]) and the adverbial of purpose is expressed by a noun in the genitive with the phrases *în scopul [with the aim of]*, *cu scopul [for the purpose of]*, *în vederea [with a view to]* (*Cu scopul documentării, am mers la un muzeu. [For the purpose of documentation, I went to the museum.]*) are debatable.

c. In our view, the decision to leave the floating predicate out of curricula and textbooks is unfounded.

As to the inventory of syntactic functions (conducted in accordance with D.D. Drașoveanu's case order), it should look as presented below. Thus, in regard to the noun, we are interested in the syntactic functions that we may come across in the following cases: $NOMINATIVE_1$; $ACCUSATIVE_1$, $ACCUSATIVE_3$; $GENITIVE_1$, $GENITIVE_3$; $DATIVE_1$, $DATIVE_3$; $VOCATIVE_1$.

$NOMINATIVE_1$

- Subject – **Fetiţa** aleargă. [The **girl** is running.]
- Subject complement - Elena este **profesoară. N_1''** [Elena is a **teacher.**]
- Apposition (parenthetical appositive expression) – Băiatul, **concurentul** meu, a venit în vizită la mama sa în Jibou. [The boy, my **adversary**, came to visit his mother in Jibou.]
- Attributive noun in the nominative – Profesorul **Popescu** a venit la noi. [Professor **Popescu** came to us.]

- ➢ Floating predicate: Popescu a venit **profesor** în satul meu. **N₁''** [Popescu came to my village as a **teacher**.]

ACCUSATIVE₁

- ➢ Direct object – L-am învăţat **pe elev gramatică**. [I taught **the student grammar**].
- ➢ Direct object in an exceptive construction – Nu bea decât **lapte. [He only drinks milk.]**
- ➢ Direct object in the following construction – A mâncat la **mere** toata ziua. [He ate **apples** all day long.]
- ➢ Attributive noun in the accusative – Statul **zile** întregi la calculator strică ochii. [Sitting in front of the computer for **days** is damaging to the eyes.]
- ➢ Adverbial of time – Ne-a sunat toată **noaptea**. [He rang us all **night** long.]
- ➢ Floating predicate – L-am ales **preşedinte**. [We elected him **president**.] /Te consider **prietenul** meu. [I consider you my **friend**.] /A avut-o **profesoară** de română la liceu. [He had her as a **teacher** of Romanian in high school.]
- ➢ Apposition – L-am vazut pe Mircea, **pe prietenul** meu din Bucium. [I saw Mircea, my **friend** from Bucium.]

ACCUSATIVE₃

- ➢ Indirect object – S-a gândit **la profesoara lui.** [He thought **about his teacher**.]
- ➢ Attributive prepositional noun – Casele **de lemn** sunt călduroase. [Houses **of wood** are warm.]
- ➢ Apposition (parenthetical appositive expression) – A vorbit cu Mircea, **cu prietenul** său cel mai bun. [He talked to Mircea, **to** his best **friend**.]
- ➢ Subject complement - El este **ca fratele** meu. [He is **like a brother** to me.]
- ➢ Adverbial of place – Vine **de la şcoală**. [He comes **from school**.]
- ➢ Adverbial of time – A sosit **la ora** stabilită. [He arrived **at the time** agreed.]
- ➢ Adverbial of manner – Ea cântă **ca o privighetoare**. [She sings **like a nightingale**.]
- ➢ Adverbial of cause – A obosit **de** atâta **efort**. [He got tired **from** all that **effort**.]
- ➢ Adverbial of purpose – Ea luptă **pentru adevăr**. [She fights **for the truth**.]
- ➢ Adverbial of instrument – El scrie **cu pixul.** [He writes **with the pen**.]
- ➢ Adverbial of relation – E bun **la matematică**. [He is good **at math**.]

- Conditional adverbial – **În caz de avarie**, să fiţi pregătiţi. [**In case of breakdown**, be prepared.]
- Adverbial of concession – **Cu** toată **insistenţa**, noi am plecat. [Despite all the **insistence**, we left.]
- Oppositional adverbial – **În loc de lapte**, s-a servit ceai. [Tea was served **instead of milk**.]
- Cumulative adverbial – **În afară de Mircea**, a venit şi Dorina. [Dorina came, **apart from Mircea**.]
- Adverbial of exception – Au venit toţi **în afară de Ionescu**. [Everyone came **except for Ionescu**.]
- Floating predicate – El umblă **cu capul** bandajat. [He walks **with his head** bandaged.]

GENITIVE₁

- Attributive noun in the genitive – Cartea **copiilor** e pe masă. [The **children's** book is on the table.]
- Apposition – <u>**only under lower secondary school code**</u> – Cartea lui Ion, **a prietenului** meu, este nouă. [My **friend** Ion's book is new.]
- Subject complement - <u>**only under lower secondary school code**</u> – Avioanele sunt **ale armatei**. [The aircrafts belong to the army.]

GENITIVE₃

- Attributive prepositional noun – Parcarea **înaintea clădirii** l-a costat o amendă. [He got a ticket for parking **in front of the building**.]
- Subject complement - Ei sunt **contra risipei. [**They are **against waste.]**
- Indirect object – Voi luptaţi **împotriva indiferenţei**. [You fight **against indifference**.]
- Adverbial of place – Cîinele s-a culcat **înaintea uşii**. [The dog lay down **in front of the door**.]
- Adverbial of time – Am ajuns **înaintea orei** de sport. [I got there **before gym class**.]
- Adverbial of manner – Va fi răsplătit **pe măsura eforturilor**. [He will be rewarded **according to his efforts**.]
- Adverbial of purpose – A venit **în vederea rezolvării** problemelor. [He came **with a view to solving** the problems.]

➢ Adverbial of exception – Au venit toţi **în afara lui Mircea**. [Everyone came **except for Mircea.**]

➢ Adverbial of instrument – **Prin intermediul prietenilor** şi-a rezolvat problemele. [He solved his problems **with the help of friend**s.]

➢ Adverbial of relation – Nu-mi fac probleme **în privinţa competenţei** lui. [I don't worry **about his competence**.]

➢ Adverbial of concession – **Împotriva insistenţelor** mele, a plecat. [**Despite my insisting**, he left.]

➢ Oppositional adverbial – **În locul maşinii** a primit o bicicletă. [He received a bicycle **in lieu of the car**.]

➢ Cumulative adverbial – **În afara Mariei**, au venit şi alte fete. [Other girls came **apart from Maria**.]

DATIVE₁

➢ Indirect object – Îi scriu **baiatului** o scrisoare. / I-am dat **fetei** un cadou. [I am writing a letter **to the boy**./I gave a gift **to the girl**.]

➢ Adverbial of place – Stai **locului!** / Aşterne-te **drumului**! [Stand still! /Set off!]

➢ Attributive noun in the dative – Nepot **tatălui** meu / Darea de premii **copiilor.** [A nephew to my Dad /Prize-giving to children.]

➢ Apposition (parenthetical appositive expression) – I-am dat lui Ion**, colegului meu,** o pizza**.** [I gave John, **my colleague**, a pizza.]

➢ Subject complement – Reuşita la examen este **graţie profesorului**. [The exam success is **due to the teacher**.]

DATIVE₃

➢ Subject complement – Lucrările sunt **conform planului.** [Works are **according to plan**.]

➢ Attributive noun – Succesul **graţie perseverenţei** este de admirat. [Success **due to perseverance** is something to be admired.]

➢ Adverbial of manner – A procedat **conform instrucţiunilor**. [He acted **according to instructions**.]

➢ Adverbial of concession – **Contrar aşteptărilor**, el n-a venit. [**Contrary to expectations**, he didn't come.]

- Adverbial of instrument – A ajuns acolo **datorită perseverenţei**. [He got there **thanks to his perseverance**.]

VOCATIVE₁

- No syntactic function - **Ioane,** hai aici! [**John**, come here!]
- Vocative attributive noun – Bade **Ioane**, mai hai pe la noi! [Old **John**, come by again!]
- Apposition (parenthetical appositive expression) – Ioane, **vecine**, unde pleci asa grăbit? [**Neighbour** John, where are you going in such a hurry?]

13. In our view, the typology of syntactic relations only has two components: **coordination** and **subordination**. The former can be defined as the relationship between two clauses of the same type – either main or subordinate clauses, whereas the latter can be defined as the relationship between a subordinate clause and its regent clause. In the subject-predicate relationship, the predicate is subordinate to the subject. The subject-verb agreement means that the predicate agrees in number and person with the subject noun in the nominative. Under the agreement, the subject imposes a certain number and person on the predicate and the agreement thus becomes the means for the predicate's subordination to the subject. It is the predicate that agrees with the subject and it is thus subordinate to the subject, not the other way around.

14. The **means** for achieving syntactic relations are as follows: **inflection** – it occurs in a clause and it refers to the form the word takes in the speech to express a syntactic position; **junction** – it occurs in a clause and a sentence and it refers to the joining of clause constituents or of clauses via linking words; **juxtaposition** – it occurs in a clause and a sentence and it consists of placing clause constituents of the same type or clauses side by side, being usually separated by commas in writing.

15. The fact that textbooks present the three types of syntactic relations only in the chapters devoted to sentence syntax gives a false impression that these notions are only related to sentence syntax. The conclusion is based on the fact that only in these contexts are the terms *regent* and *subordinate* used, as in regent and subordinate clauses, and they avoided when it comes to clause syntax.

As to the classification of coordinating conjunctions, we contest the existence of conclusive conjunctions (based on the aforementioned arguments), we support their replacement with coordination by juxtaposition and we highlight the grammatical futility of the valences of *şi [and]* as an adversative conjunction and of *iar [and]* as a copulative conjunction.

As far as the predicate-subject relationship is concerned, it poses the following problems:

- The wording "the interdependent relationship between the subject and the predicate is established **through the simultaneous and mandatory presence of the two constituents in the same context**" is at least regrettable for the following reasons: firstly, in the Romanian language, the subject is not mandatory; secondly, in Romanian, the subject may be included and implied; thirdly, what is the explanation for impersonal verb phrases, meteorological verbs, etc.?

- In the subject-predicate relationship, the predicate is subordinate to the subject[17]. The subject-verb agreement means that the predicate agrees in number and person with the subject noun in the nominative$_1$. The subject imposes a certain number and person on the predicate and the agreement thus becomes the means for the predicate's subordination to the subject. It is the predicate that agrees with the subject and it is thus subordinate to the subject, not the other way around[18]. In the predicative syntagm (subject + predicate), the agreement, as a special regimen, is unidirectional. In regard to the nominative$_1$ of the subject, this is not imposed by the predicate verb, but it is a condition to be met by the predicate's regent, namely the subject[19]. The subject does not contract the predicate lexeme, but it is updated by the latter, therefore the subject is not a syntactic function[20].

- Given that the means for accomplishing a grammatical relation decisively determines that relation and that the agreement plays that role for the subject and the predicate, it means that the predicate is subordinate to the subject[21].

16. In conclusions, we have mentioned that this paper looks into a subject that we consider to be topical and which has never been tackled by a doctoral thesis: a comparison between the current status of academic grammar and that of school grammar, placing them between tradition and modernity, and focusing on the most important part of speech in the nominal category: the noun. The comparison is limited to this part of speech for objective reasons, as extending the

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[17] G.G. Neamţu, *Predicatul în limba română. O reconsiderare a predicatului nominal*, Bucureşti, 1986, p. 22 and D.D. Draşoveanu, *Despre natura raportului dintre subiect şi predicat*, Cluj-Napoca, 1958, p. 181.
[18] G.G. Neamţu, *Predicatul în limba română. O reconsiderare a predicatului nominal*, Bucureşti, 1986, p. 22.
[19] *Ibidem,* p. 18.
[20] D.D. Draşoveanu, *Teze şi antiteze în sintaxa limbii române*, Cluj-Napoca, 1997, p.76.
[21] Conclusion drawn by Ştefan Hazy in *Predicativitatea: Determinare contextuală analitică*, Cluj-Napoca, 1977, Chapter II, *Relaţia dintre subiect şi predicat*, p.16-22.

research to all flexible and inflexible parts of speech would be impractical and such an objective would go beyond the scope of a single doctoral thesis.

The novelty of the topic we propose comes mainly from the fact that diagnostic research is conducted on the current status of academic grammar and school grammar, pointing out the gap between the two. Hence, we are interested in the reasons why certain grammatical issues are not incorporated into school grammar and in the inapplicability – in our view – of new grammars, as currently designed, at the non-tertiary education level.

The paper has **three main goals**. As far as the first goal is concerned, this doctoral thesis has been drafted as a plea for rehabilitating the status of the Romanian grammar – weakened by the too little importance it receives, given the limited study of this discipline at the lower secondary level and the inappropriate manner in which the theoretical and practical content is organised and presented in textbooks, which – whilst elective – remain a reference for both the teacher and the pupil. All these shortcomings are fully reflected in unsatisfactory academic results. These may also be due to school graduates' language, which is too often lexically limited and lacking a logical organisation of statements. At discourse level, one of the roles of grammar – of morphology and syntax – is to organise thinking so that the speech and its structures are clear, logical, systematised, and organised.

The second goal is to prove the need to establish an **official grammar** of the Romanian language given that, at the moment, with their current form and content, the latest academic treatises, which according to grammatical practice should replace the old grammar – the GLR, are too distant from the specificity of the Romanian language and cannot provide bibliographical references for the study of grammar in lower and upper secondary schools. Why is this a problem? Because, as we have mentioned, textbooks are elective, the curriculum offers general notions, and teachers are free to pick the content. Thus, this democracy fostered by the national curriculum has led to inconsistent teaching and conflicting solutions and has even kept pupils away from studying this subject matter, which many consider to be a long set of exceptions and ambiguous situations.

The third goal is to draw attention to the fact that discontinuing the study of grammar in high school is not only unjustifiable, but it also has many drawbacks for pupils. On the one hand, studying grammar only in lower secondary school leads to a lack of continuity and to wasting the content and notions that are taught instead of valuing them in literary analyses. On the other

hand, good knowledge of the morphology and syntax of a language in general, and of the Romanian language in particular, reflects in a person's oral and written communication, in their logical and coherent discourse. Thus, high school students' essays would definitely get a boost if grammar continued to be studied and consolidated at this non-tertiary level.

17. Conclusions systematise a possible non-tertiary school approach to the aspects we have addressed in this paper.

18. We find it necessary to **effectively separate literature from grammar in textbooks**. Separating Romanian literature and language contents would bring content order, which would facilitate the use of the textbook as a working tool. This combination of literature, communication, phonetics, language, and other contents gives the impression of non-systematisation and makes the textbook a cumbersome working tool, which is difficult to study and follow. Given all these, we think that combining elements of literature – in the broad sense of the word – with those of language (phonetics, vocabulary, morphology and syntax) in textbooks is a setback and separating them into two distinct units, literature and grammar, either in the same textbook or in different textbooks, would help assimilate and consolidate knowledge specific to each subfield.

19. The bibliography of this paper comprises 175 titles.

20. The abbreviations and logos used are presented in an organised manner in dedicated sections.

The proposition we have advanced in this doctoral thesis is based on our belief that finding new ways to improve the theoretical and practical material made available to pupils/future students in order to facilitate the actual understanding of the subject matter, to raise awareness of the importance and application in everyday life of the information that it conveys, as well as to ensure a logical order of ideas for proper and coherent communication should be both a concern and a priority for any teacher of Romanian language and literature. With this scientific paper, we would like to contribute towards rehabilitating the status of the Romanian language in schools. Hence, we have made some propositions which we consider reliable, based on our non-tertiary teaching experience, and which are aimed at a change in the theoretical and practical approach to this discipline. We plea for a grammar characterised by clarity of information, transparency of criteria and precision of terms since we believe that these should be the features of the **official grammar of the Romanian language** that could set it apart from all

the other pieces of specialised literature, to accomplish its undisputable roles and to serve the interests of the Romanian language.

Key words: noun, official grammar, academic grammar, school grammar, noun morphosyntax, textbooks, gender, number, case, syntactic functions.