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**THE CLASS OF PRO-FORMS IN THE  
CONTEMPORARY ROMANIAN LANGUAGE**

(SUMMARY)

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## Key words

*lexical-grammatical class, semantic-functional class, pro-form, substitute, anaphora, deixis, prolexeme, antecedent, current reference, virtual reference, referent, lexical meaning, lexematic word, catagorematic word, referential autonomy, cotext, pro-formalization, pro-noun, proadjective, proadverb, pro-utterance, pronumeral, proconjunction, proarticle*

## Summary

Titled *The Class of Pro-Forms in the Contemporary Romanian Language*, this PhD dissertation is a consistent monographic study of the semantic-functional class of pro-forms in Romanian. The place of pro-forms in the Romanian grammar system is not a clear one. The few studies dedicated exclusively to the domain of pro-forms have led to a superficial definition of this class and to contradictory classifications of words considered pro-forms. Moreover, some linguists do not even admit the existence of such a semantic-functional class, arguing that this *pro-form* concept is not a novelty for our grammar, but overlaps with already existing concepts in the language – *substitutive*, respectively *anaphoric*. Given this reality, the existence of a monograph of the pro-forms class is absolutely necessary for the grammar of the Romanian language.

The research is based on the contributions of the academic grammar of the Romanian language and those of consecrated linguists from different university centres (Bucharest, Iasi, Cluj-Napoca, Oradea): Gabriela Pană Dindelegan, Maria Manoliu Manea, Dumitru Nica, Georgeta Ciompec, Dumitru Irimia, C. Dimitriu, Iorgu Iordan, Maria Vulișici Alexandrescu, G.G. Neamțu, Mircea Zdrengea etc. At the same time, recent opinions on the pro-forms of less well-known authors are also taken into consideration. The terms of use send to new grammars, but the traditional approach is also taken into account. In other words, in this dissertation are correlated the two types of visions in the grammar of the Romanian language, as evidence that the interpretation from a semantic-functional perspective is often connected to the grammatical tradition.

The study aims at a comprehensive approach to pro-form opinions with a view to establishing a unitary way of interpreting pro-forms, with regard to their semantic, morpho-syntactic and discursive behaviour. Organized in six chapters, the work directs the analytical approach from general to particular. With regard to the examples that support the characterization of pro-form types, most are *ad hoc* designed and some are taken from the speciality literature; written texts were given attention only by accident, since the functional approach requires the researcher, as object of study, to use the spoken language.

Chapter one, *The class of pro-forms. Required clarifications*, mainly theoretically, begins with a brief presentation of how to organize the lexical units of a language. In other words, the criteria underlying the delimitation of the lexical-grammatical and semantic-functional classes are recorded. It is emphasized that for the configuration of the semantic-functional classes are privileged semantic and functional particularities of the words, which is why in the same semantic-functional class linguistic units representing different parts of speech can be grouped.

In the following pages the definitions of the *pro-form* term, especially from Romanian linguistics, are carefully analyzed. Following this action, it is noticed that this concept does not have a unique direction of interpretation in the grammar of the Romanian language. The observation that the multiple definitions proposed for the linguistic phenomenon analyzed (*the pro-forms*) are the consequence of the terminological overlaps between *pronouns*, *substitute*, *anaphor* and *pro-form*, comes to support the need to study the mentioned concepts.

Consequently, the following pages take into account the evolution of the *substitute*, *anaphor* and *deixis* terms themselves. The concepts with which they operate are analyzed in the form of dichotomies: *substitute – anaphora*; *anaphora – deixis*; *anaphora – pro-form*; *substitute – pro-form*; *pro-form – prolexeme*; *current reference – virtual reference*; *linguistic context – situational context*; *lexematic words – catagorematic words etc.*). This action aims at identifying the similarities, respectively the differences between the related concepts analyzed, and finally, a clear definition of pro-forms in Romanian to be able to be presented.

The chapter continues with the observations made about the meaning of the pro-form word and the proposed terminology to refer to the process of evoking a unit of discourse through different types of pro-forms.

In the end of this chapter, the inventory of the types of pro-forms in the grammar of the Romanian language, a kind of their history, is drawn up. It is worth noting that researchers, in their desire to say everything, often choose one criterion, which leads to wanted consistency and unity, but inevitably imposing a certain limitation. For this reason, in the present paper it is chosen that for the classification of pro-forms, account should be taken of the link between the pro-form and the semantic source and the syntactical positions of the pro-form at the risk of exceptions in the classification of pro-forms.

Starting with the second chapter, five consecutive chapters are assigned to the possible pro-form sub-classes (*pro-noun, proadjective, proadverb, pro-utterance, proarticle, propreposition, proconjunction and pronomeral*), these being presented both synchronically and diachronically. In other words, the types of pro-forms are defined and classified taking into account the dynamics of the language. Following theoretical considerations, in each chapter are analyzed the words likely to be included in the respective subclass of pro-forms, which confirms or, on the contrary, denies the existence of a certain subclass.

The second chapter, *Pro-nouns, the most extensive pro-forms subclass?*, is reserved for the analysis of the sub-class of pro-forms called *pro-nouns*. In literature, it is often noted that pronouns are the most prominent class of pro-forms without clear boundaries between pronouns and pro-forms. As a result of the question marks about the pro-form quality of all pronouns, after a brief presentation of the lexical-grammatical class of the Romanian pronoun, the Romanian linguists' observations regarding the substitution capacity of the pronoun are analyzed.

Thus, pages in a row are allocated to the analysis of all subclasses of pronouns in order to identify those contexts in which the pronouns have lost their substitution capacity and implicitly the pro-form one. By showing that not all pronouns have the defining features of pro-forms, it is demonstrated that it is forced to assert that it is the largest class of pro-forms. In order to avoid terminological confusion, are grouped under the name of *pro-nouns* those pronouns that replace a noun from which they obtain the reference contextually.

By then demonstrating that, like some pronouns, the numerals occupying typical nominal syntactic positions may substitute an explicitly expressed noun on the chain, they are included in the subclass of pro-nouns, thus becoming the most extensive subclass of pro-forms.

*Proadjectives or words of adjectival value?* is the question to be answered in the third chapter. In this respect, the first part of this chapter is intended to interpret substitute adverbs in



nominal contexts. As a result of this analysis, they are either considered to be adverbs with adjectival value (due to the context in which they appear) or are included in the adjective class as invariable forms. Regarding their ability to function as pro-forms, it is noted that they are proadjectives, on the one hand, due to the functional value of the adjective (they occur in adjective's specific syntactic positions – adjectival attribute, predictive name, additional predictive element), and on the other hand, because they obtain their semantic-referential interpretation by referring to a qualifying adjective expressed in the linguistic context.

Following this chapter, it is promoted the idea that pronominal adjectives in Romanian are made up of two groups. The first category of pronominal adjectives is made up of possessive and reflexive forms, adjectives that are also pronouns, and the second category brings together the rest of the forms that have lost their quality of substitute for the name. The promoted opinion on the quality of pro-forms of the second category of pronominal adjectives is as follows: by adjectivisation, the pronominal adjectives (of the second category) do not permanently lose their substitute capacity but only reorient themselves to another type of reference source – the qualifying adjectives.

Here, as well, *what* is regarded in exclamatory contexts and the prepositions with quantitative adjective value (occurring in exclamatory contexts). Regarding their ability to function as proadjectives, those contexts in which the forms in question play a *proadjective role of much* are identified.

At the end of the chapter is also touched upon the problematic of *ready* as proadjective when it has adjectival orbit. It is noted that this form has insufficient features to claim its framing in the subclass of the proadjectives.

Chapter IV, *Proadverbs, a type of substitute adverbs?* deals, as its name implies, with a subclass of special semantic adverbs, the substitute adverbs. It turns out here that although many Romanian linguists call substitute adverbs also proadverbs, not all of them have this quality, given their deictic reading. Analyzing them from a semantic-functional point of view, it is concluded that these forms have a particular behaviour in the system of pro-forms, as they are primarily functional substitutes, acquiring their contextual reference not only from referential adverbs but also from nouns expressing circumstances.

In addition to substitute adverbs, as a special type of proadverb, it is remarkable the relative *ce* quantitative sense. Although *ce* adverbial deviates easily from the pro-forms-specific

behaviour, it is, however, among proverbs, arguing that its quantitative meaning is emphasized by the exclamatory context.

The one but last chapter, *Pro-utterance, the periphery of the class of pro-forms?*, deals first of all with the problems of those forms that make a global substitution, called also pro-phrases. Here it is shown that although the semantic-referential features guarantee their pro-form capacity, they could be considered a marginal subclass of pro-forms only by accepting syntactically the existence of a categorical meaning as stated by Dumitru Nica.

There are a number of adverbs analyzed, some pronouns known in the specialty literature as *neutral* and the structure *ce face?* for the purpose of asserting or denying the role of pro-utterance.

In the last chapter *Proarticle, propreposition, proconjunction and pronomeral – possible classes of pro-forms?* – it is given space to concepts such as *proarticle*, *propreposition*, *proconjunction* and *pronomeral*. The occurrences of these terms are sporadic in the specialty literature, as mentioned in this chapter.

The most important pages are devoted to *al* from the position of a preposition/prepositional phrase with the genitive, a form in which the grammar of the Romanian language is pronoun, or propreposition, or proarticle. After reviewing existing interpretations in the specialty literature, it is concluded that oscillations from one class to another are not related to the awkwardness of the researchers, but to the nature of this word that is interfering with several lexical-grammatical classes. However, without deciding on the morphological status of *al* in the analyzed context, it is accepted that in this case we can speak of a propreposition.

The last paragraphs of the final chapter address the pronomerals. It is emphasized here that the existence of a subclass that replaces the numeral does not contradict the pro-form quality of some of the numerals, since the class of the Romanian numeral encompasses two types of numerals – substitute and non-substitute. Therefore, those forms that substitute numerals explicitly present in the text form the subclass of the pronomerals.

Neither the form *de*, which was said to be acting as a proconjunction when coordinating, is not neglected, even if a fairly limited space is given to its issue. Also, the observations about proarticle occupy only a few rows. These two subclasses, proconjunction and proarticle, are excluded from the classification of pro-form types based on logical arguments.

The personal contribution is presented in the pages dedicated to the conclusions. The most important scientific result of the approach of the chosen subject is the realization of a monograph and systematic work of the class of pro-forms in the contemporary Romanian language, so far the only one of its kind in Romanian linguistics.

The bibliographic list consists of more than 200 titles organized in three sections (*A. Dictionaries, Encyclopaedias, B. Reference Works* and *C. Studies and Articles*) and includes representative publications, especially in the field of grammar and also pragmatics. Works strictly related to the themes of pro-forms are recent. In the construction of the dissertation, some results from the speciality literature are included, taking the necessary to give the work a clearer unity and understanding of the results.