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**THE CONTROVERSIAL STATUS OF NONFINITE VERB  
FORMS AT AN INTERPREPOSITIONAL LEVEL**

**ABSTRACT**

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## **THE CONTROVERSIAL STATUS OF NONFINITE VERB FORMS AT AN INTERPREPOSITIONAL LEVEL**

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In the global linguistic context, the evolution of languages is remarkable in terms of their grammatical structures. The influence of the mother tongue in addition to the foreign languages' impact enhanced their constant development. Thus, more and more interpretations regarding different forms dominated the linguistic debates. The historical reality also contributed to these perpetual changes. Starting from these premises and from the specialised studies, our paper aims to diachronically and synchronically approach the non-finite verb forms at an interprepositional level, focusing on the status of contractions and reductions. Given the space limits, the thesis does not include all the opinions stated by researchers, but it attempts to offer an overall perspective towards the phenomenon, as well as suggestive examples, different from the ones highlighted in the previous studies. These examples outline the recurrence of contractions and reductions in Romanian and the fact that they can still be debated. Besides these, our thesis promotes a different interpretation concerning the non-finite verb forms, that of semipredicativity.

Regarding the structure of the paper, it is divided into six chapters. Before analysing each non-finite verb form, in the first chapter, we focused on defining the operational elements: syntax, the syntactic function and the syntactic value. Furthermore, we approached the predicativity in a distinct subchapter, emphasizing if we can associate it with the non-finite verb forms.

In the second chapter, we approached the contractions and the reductions, presenting the opinions of different scholars. For instance, Iorgu Jordan speaks about contractions in one of his first papers, stating that the main difference between a sentence and a phrase consists of introducing the predicates (phenomenon known as expansion). Moreover, Heyman Tikin anticipates the grammatical phenomenon of contractions, promoting the term "dependent sentences". In his opinion, the contractions represent "replacements of dependent sentences."

GLR approaches as well the phenomenon of contractions, outlining the connection between the subordinate clauses and the parts of a clause. What is more, Sorin Stati promotes the idea of syntactic synonymy, highlighting different contexts in which it can be identified. Even if he does not use the terminology of contractions, his arguments can be linked to it.

According to Mioara Avram, contractions point out the linguistic diversity which allows us to convey the same message in a different manner. However, she does not offer a syntactic interpretation of the structures that can be identified after the process of contraction.

D. D Draşoveanu is interested in distinguishing between contractions and reductions. The researcher outlines the main changes that can be identified in the case of these structures, emphasizing the possibility of changing the finite verb form into a non-finite one, but also the disappearance of the relational element (conjunction, relative pronoun etc.).

The distinction between contractions and reductions is also promoted by G.G. Neamţu. Hence, he claims that the contraction of a subordinate sentence consists of the transformation of a finite verb form into a non-finite verb form and of the relational element's removal.

On the other hand, Dumitru Irimia uses the term absolute verb forms to refer to the non-finite verb forms and outlines the cases when they can be placed in the category of "developed constituents."

GALR 2008 promotes a different perspective, outlining the existence of distinct syntactic groups, which are created according to the morphological value of the group center. The paper refers to contractions and reductions only before analysing every type of circumstantial. Therefore, the authors mention the existence of some non-propositional achievements, which are formed through the contraction or reduction of the propositional ones. The examples point out a different approach of the phenomenon.

The problem of these complex structures is approached by IonuţPomian as well, who introduces the term of *grammatical construction*. This idea is also promoted by GBLR 2010 in another form.

Gabriela Adam promotes the same principles of the researchers from Cluj-Napoca and makes a clear distinction between contractions and reductions. Consequently, she defines the contraction as a syntactic process that involves the transformation of the verb (predicate) from a finite to a non-finite verbal form and the removal of the relational element. Regarding the second process, according to her, the reduction is the final stage of a gerund contraction, obtained by

removing the verbal components from a contracted nominal predicate or from a contracted passive verbal predicate (...). The reduction (...) represents, therefore, a form of abbreviation, which goes through an intermediate stage of contraction.

The next four chapters offer a comprehensive analysis of the derivatives of the controversial issues brought into discussion, the non-finite verb forms being analysed in extenso both synchronically and diachronically.

Consequently, the third chapter is devoted entirely to gerund and gerund contractions. This non-finite verb form has been used since the 17<sup>th</sup> century to convey, in translation, as accurately as possible, the meaning that the phrase has in Latin. The aim is to present the morphological and syntactic status of this type of structures in order to obtain the premises that would allow the approach of contractions. According to the direction promoted by D. D. Draşoveanu, the principles of contraction are applied and the subordinates that can validate this grammatical process are established, starting from suggestive examples. At the same time, this chapter focuses on revealing the manner in which the subordinate sentences can contract through a gerund and their new status. The syntactic transformations of each subordinate clause are highlighted one by one, emphasizing the consequences. Thus, starting from the certainty that not in all the contexts the subject can be identified, the gerund is considered a semipredicative verbal form, generating a semipredicate. All the constructions that have it as a center become semipredicative and the sentences have a finite character.

The fourth chapter approaches the infinitive and the infinitive contractions. After highlighting its features and the way in which it has become part of the Romanian language, the special type cases are presented. Thus, although it is not a personal verbal form, the infinitive has predicative characteristics. In order to strengthen them, we started from the etymological premises, drawing a parallel with the French language, where the phrase also includes the infinitive subordinates. In addition, the infinitive contractions are different from the infinitive relatives, considering the terminology promoted by researchers from the francophone space, that of infinitive sentence. By using the same analysis strategies, the transformations that they involve are outlined.

The fifth chapter of the thesis approaches the contracted supine forms, analysing them according to the previous strategies, while the sixth chapter debates the participial reduced relative clauses. In the process of analysing them from a morphological and syntactic point of

view we used D.D. Draşoveanu's perspective, the first researcher who distinguishes between contractions and reductions. Consequently, the supine can be also placed into the category of semipredicative verb forms, with the syntactic function of verbal semipredicate. The aspects regarding the prepositions specific to the supine were not detailed, because the purpose was to demonstrate its verbal features, not the nominal ones. The examples brought to discussion highlight the fact that the phenomenon of contraction is occasional in the case of this verbal form, but not absent.

The sixth chapter of the paper focuses on the participle reductions. The predicativity of these complex structures is supported by the subject-predicate relationship and by restrictions in terms of case and prepositions, aspects also pointed out by Ionuţ Pomian. The correlation with the absolute ablative from Latin is one of the arguments that the linguist outlines. This is the equivalent of reduction (in the passive form) and of contraction (in the active form). Due to the fact that before obtaining a reduction there is an intermediate stage of contraction, we decided to promote a new terminology for the participle reductions, that of semipredicative verb form of second order. The number of examples drawn from the texts of Ioan Slavici and Dan Lungu is significant for the study of reductions. These allow both highlighting the phenomenon of reductions and the fact that the participles can be an EPS or an adjective. From an overall perspective, there is a weak boundary between these three syntactic positions.

These verb forms, the supine and the participle, are different from the infinitive and the gerund, because the dominating tendency is not the verbal one, but the noun and the adjectival one. However, the Latin origin and the established analogical relations represent a strong argument for the appearance of supine contractions and participial reductions / abbreviations.

The perspective presented by D. D. Draşoveanu is used in the analysis of their morphological nature, on the one hand, and of their syntactic one, on the other hand. What is more, his opinion is taken into consideration when it comes to the subordinate clauses that can be reduced as well, as the researcher is the first one who approaches the whole phenomenon, distinguishing between contractions and reductions.

The space assigned to these non-finite verb forms highlights very clearly the fact that the supine and the participle are different from the infinitive and the gerund, because the dominant feature is not the verbal one, but the noun and the adjectival one. However, the Latin origin and

the established analogical relations represent a strong argument for the existence of supine contractions and of participial reductions / abbreviations.

The five appendices play a very important role as well, because they consist of a wide selection of examples from the works of two writers from different eras, Ioan Slavici and Dan Lungu. The aim is to emphasize the recurrence of these non-finite verb forms in literary texts despite the evolution of the Romanian literary language.

The thesis represents, therefore, the result of an intensive research of a considerable material, offering a presentation of the nonfinite verb forms and insisting on their semipredicativity. Taking into account both the traditional and the modern terminology, we analysed the morphological and syntactic status of the infinitive, gerund, supine or participle, following their evolution in Romanian and their status at the intrapositional and interpropositional level.

The purpose of our thesis was, thus, to demonstrate the predicative nature of these verb forms. The examples represent a major aspect of the paper, in terms of originality, as they created the premises of the debate, enabling the formulation of arguments and the polemic with the previous directions, which sometimes offered diametrically opposite explanations.

In conclusion, by presenting the controversial status of non-finite verb forms in Romanian and by promoting this direction of semipredicativity in the numerous examples from two novels studied during high school, the paper represents a starting point for future studies with regard to the status of contractions and reductions, in the context of synchronizing Romanian grammar with the European one.

## CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>I. NON-FINITE VERBAL FORMS VS SYNTAX .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1. Syntax – a grammar component .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2. Syntactic function .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>3. Predication- context, approaches and reorganization .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>3.1. Non-finite verbal forms vs non-finite verbal modes .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>3.2. The prefixoid „semi” .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>3.3. The predicativity .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>II. CONTEXTUALIZATION – POINTS OF VIEW.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>2.1. IorguIordan .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>2.2. Heyman Tiktin.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>2.3. GLR .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>2.4. Sorin Stati .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>2.5. Mioara Avram .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>2.6. Ion Coteanu .....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>2.7. D. D. Draşoveanu .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>2.8. G. G. Neamţu .....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>2.9. Dumitru Irimia .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>2.10. GALR 2008 .....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>2.11. IonuţPomian .....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>2.12. GBLR 2010 .....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>III. GERUND CONTRACTIONS.....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>3.1. The gerund- short diachronic presentation.....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>3.2. The gerund contraction. Definition, examples and morphological status .....</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>3.3. The contraction of circumstantial subordinates .....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>3.3.1. Temporal circumstantial subordinate.....</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>3.3.2 Causal circumstantial subordinate.....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>3.3.3. Final circumstantial subordinate.....</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>3.3.4. Consecutive circumstantial subordinate.....</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>3.3.5. Conditional circumstantial subordinate.....</b>	<b>69</b>

3.3.6. Concessional circumstantial subordinate.....	71
3.3.7. Cumulative circumstantial subordinate.....	72
3.3.8 Exceptive circumstantial subordinate.....	73
3.4. The contraction of non-circumstantials .....	75
3.4.1. Subjective subordinate.....	76
3.4.2. Attributive subordinate.....	76
3.4.3. Direct object subordinate.....	78
3.4.4. Prepositional object subordinate.....	79
3.5. Contraction of coordinates .....	79
3.5.1. Copulative contraction .....	80
3.5.2. Adversative contraction .....	81
3.6. Conclusions .....	82
IV. INFINITIVAL CONTRACTIONS .....	85
4.1. Definition, examples and morphological status .....	85
4.1.1. The long infinitive with substantial value .....	88
4.1.2. The long infinitive with verbal value .....	89
4.2. Infinitive constructions .....	98
4.2.1. The infinitive in complex constructions .....	99
4.3. The contraction of circumstantials .....	104
4.3.1. Causal circumstantial .....	105
4.3.2. Concessional circumstantial .....	106
4.3.3. Conditional circumstantial .....	107
4.3.4. Consecutive circumstantial .....	107
4.3.5. Temporal circumstantial .....	108
4.3.6. Modal circumstantial .....	109
4.3.7. Final circumstantial .....	110
4.3.8. Exceptive circumstantial.....	110
4.3.9. Relational circumstantial.....	111
4.4. The contraction of non-circumstantials.....	112
4.4.1. Subjective subordinate.....	112
4.4.2. Direct object subordinate.....	113



4.5. Relative infinitive constructions.....	114
4.6. The infinitive subordinate in French vs the infinitive construction in Romanian language.....	124
4.6.1. The status of the infinitive mode in French.....	124
4.6.1.1. The status of the infinitive in the simple phrase.....	124
4.6.1.2. The status of the infinitive in the complex phrase.....	126
4.6.2. The Infinitive Construction vs The Infinitive Sentence.....	133
V. SUPINE CONTRACTION .....	140
5.1. The supine .....	140
5.1.1. Supine in accusative .....	141
5.1.2. Supine in ablative .....	141
5.1.3. Supine in dative .....	142
5.2. Morphological structure of the supine.....	143
5.2.1. Nominal characteristics of the supine. Syntactical status at intrapositional level (1) .....	145
5.2.2. Verbal characteristics of the supine. Morphological status at intrapositional level (2) .....	145
5.2.3. Supine with adverbial value.....	149
5.3. Supine contraction. Definition, examples and morphological status.....	150
5.3.1. Non-circumstantial subordinates.....	151
5.3.1.1. Subjective subordinate.....	151
VI. PARTICIPLE REDUCTIONS .....	153
6.1. Participle - general aspects.....	153
6.2. Reduction. Definition, examples and morphological status.....	163
6.2.1. Reduction of circumstantial subordinates.....	166
6.2.1.1 Causal circumstantial .....	166
6.2.1.2. Concessional circumstantial .....	168
6.2.1.3. Conditional circumstantial .....	170
6.2.1.4. Temporal conditional.....	170
6.3.1 Reduction of non-circumstantials.....	172
6.3.1.1. Attributive subordinate.....	172

<b>CONCLUSIONS .....</b>	<b>175</b>
<b>ANNEXES .....</b>	<b>181</b>
<b>ABBREVIATIONS.....</b>	<b>199</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>200</b>