

THE NOUN PHRASE IN DOSOFTEI'S WRITINGS. A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE ORIGINAL SLAVONIC TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS IN OLD ROMANIAN

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Abstract

In the present paper, I aim to discuss the noun phrase in Dosoftei's writings by comparing the original Slavonic texts with translations in Old Romanian. I describe the constituents of the noun phrase by adopting the perspective exposed in the Basic Grammar of the Romanian Language, which states that the five syntactic functions specific to the noun phrase are the determiner, the quantifier, the modifier, the possessor, and the complement. By comparing the noun phrases in the original Slavonic texts with translations in Old Romanian, as far as word order is concerned, I demonstrate that, in certain cases, Old Romanian preserves the syntactic patterns found in Slavonic while, in other cases, the translations depart from the original texts and adopt a word order specific to Old Romanian. All in all, the syntactic patterns I discuss reflect the complex possibilities of structuring the noun phrase in Dosoftei's writings, illustrating a diversity of syntactic structures and demonstrating how translations sometimes stay loyal to the original text but in most cases adapt it to the peculiarities of Old Romanian, as far as the place of adjuncts within the noun phrase is concerned.

Keywords: *adjunct, complement, determiner, modifier, Old Romanian, possessor, quantifier, Slavonic*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the present paper, I aim to discuss the noun phrases in Dosoftei's writings, focusing on adjuncts expressed by adjectives and comparing the original Slavonic texts with the translations in Old Romanian. I understand the noun phrase as that part of the sentence which has a noun, a pronoun or a numeral as its head, along with all the constituents subordinated to it, known as adjuncts (e.g., *the brown, furry cat*). I adopt the perspective exposed in the *Basic Grammar of the Romanian Language*, which replaces the traditional syntactic function of the attribute in Romanian grammar (that can be fulfilled by adjectives or by other parts of speech) with other five syntactic positions specific to the noun phrase (the determiner, the quantifier, the modifier, the possessor and the complement). For the analysis of the investigative corpus, I take into account common adjectives, such as *roşu/red* in the noun phrase *un măr roşu/a red apple*, as well as pronominal adjectives, such as *meu/my* in the noun phrase *fratele meu/my brother*, and numerals used as adjectives, such as *doi/two* in the noun phrase *doi copii/two children*, based on their common syntactic feature of agreeing in gender, number and case with the head-noun, although these three types of adjectives display several syntactic and semantic differences. Broadly speaking, common adjectives function as modifiers (the components of the noun phrase either qualifying the head-noun by semantically describing it or limiting the extension of the head-noun, e.g., *o dezbatere interesantă/an interesting debate*), while pronominal adjectives and cardinal numbers used as adjectives might function as determiners (if they have the function of enuncitative integration and of individualising the referent of the head-noun, e.g., *acel băiat/that boy*, *două fete/two girls*), quantifiers (if they quantitatively specify the referent of the head-noun, e.g., *aceste două fete/these two girls*) or possessors (if they express a relationship of possession with the head-noun, e.g., *câinele meu/my dog*) (Pană Dindelegan et al. 2016). In addition, it should be noted that the specific word order in Romanian is head-noun + common adjective, which means that the common adjective follows the head-noun. Cases of common adjectives preceding the head-noun are rare and usually have a stylistic or emphatic effect (Pană Dindelegan et al. 2023). Additionally, on the one hand, an adjective might be subordinated to one or more head-nouns (e.g., *intelligent boys and girls*, where the adjective *intelligent* is subordinated to both nouns), while, on the other hand, two or more adjectives might be subordinated to the same head-noun, e.g., *a beautiful, red rose*, where the adjectives *beautiful* and *red* are both subordinated to

the head-noun *rose* (Guțu Romalo et al. 2008). For the analysis of the investigative corpus, I will discuss noun phrases having only one adjective as an adjunct.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Materials

My corpus will be represented by Dosoftei's main writings, namely *Psaltirea în versuri* (DPV.1673), *Cartea de rugăciuni* (DCR.1673), *Dumnezeiasca liturghie* (DDL.1679), *Psaltirea de-nțăles* (DP.1680), *Parimiile preste an* (DPar.1683) and *Viața și petrecerea svinților* (DVS.1682–6), as well as the original Slavonic texts.

2.2. Methods

I will first adopt a quantitative method, i.e. I conducted a statistical analysis of noun phrases having adjectives as adjuncts. I have already selected the examples from the corpus and then I have observed the frequency of different kinds of adjectives (common adjectives, pronominal adjectives and numbers used as adjectives). Then, I will adopt a comparative method, by comparing and contrasting the noun phrases in the Old Romanian translations with the original Slavonic texts.

3. RESULTS

In figure 1, I have summarized the general statistical analysis of adjectives functioning as adjuncts within noun phrases. Thus, out of a total of 8092 examples, 45,19% (3657 examples) are possessors expressed by possessive pronominal adjectives, 13,80% (1117 examples) – modifiers expressed by common adjectives following the head-noun, used without a demonstrative article, 9,54% (772 examples) – determiners expressed by indefinite pronominal adjectives preceding the head-noun, 9,50% (769 examples) – modifiers expressed by common adjectives preceding the head-noun, used without a demonstrative article, 3,65% (296 examples) – quantifiers expressed by indefinite pronominal adjectives following the head-noun, 3,60% (292 examples) – determiners expressed by possessive pronominal adjectives preceding the head-noun, 3,23% (262 examples) – modifiers expressed by participial adjectives, 3,12% (253 examples) – adjuncts expressed by cardinal numbers (determiners and quantifiers), 2,82% (229 examples) – modifiers expressed by common adjectives used with a demonstrative article, 1,86% (151 examples) – determiners expressed by pronominal demonstrative adjectives preceding the head-noun, 1,40% (114 examples) – modifiers expressed by an adjectival phrase, 1,11% (90 examples) – determiners or modifiers expressed by ordinal numbers, 0,90% (73 examples) – determiners expressed by pronominal demonstrative adjectives following the head-noun, 0,16% (13 examples) – determiners expressed by negative pronominal adjectives, and 0,04% (4 examples) – determiners expressed by pronominal relative adjectives.

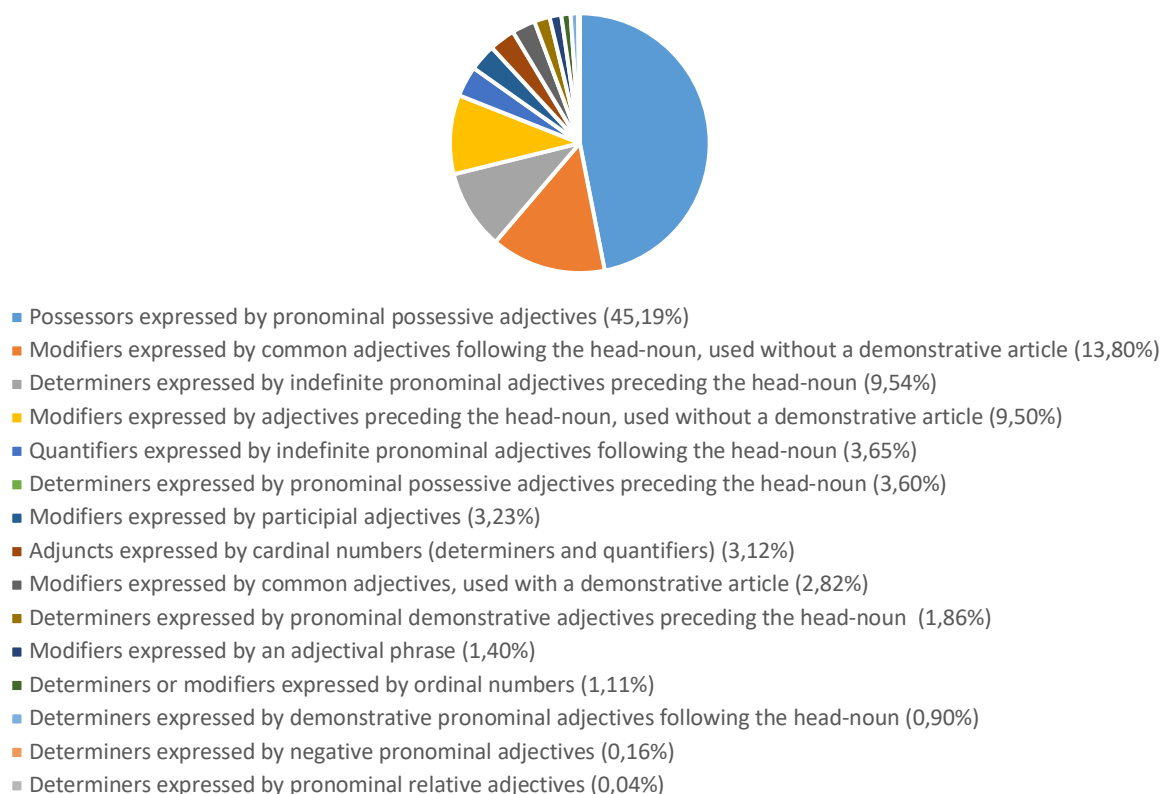


Figure 1. The general statistical analysis of adjuncts expressed by adjectives

In figure 2, I have summarized the statistical analysis of common adjectives used without a demonstrative adjective. Thus, out of a total of 1800 examples, 56,83% (1023 examples) of the adjectives follow the head-noun, while 43,17% (777 examples) of the adjectives precede the head-noun.

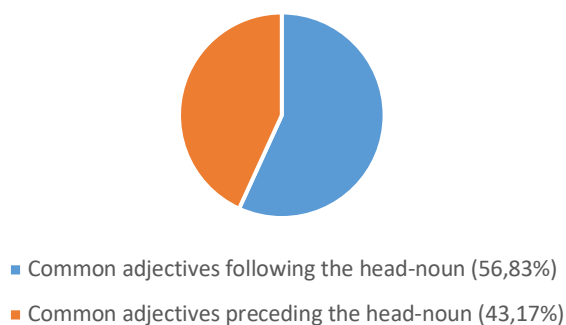


Figure 2. The statistical analysis of common adjectives used without a demonstrative adjective

In figure 3, I have summarized the statistical analysis of the indefinite pronominal adjective *tot* (*toată/toți/toate*)/all, functioning as a quantifier. Thus, out of a total of 765 examples, 87,97% (673 examples) of the indefinite pronominal adjectives precede the head-noun, while 12,03% (92 examples) of the indefinite pronominal adjectives follow the head-noun.

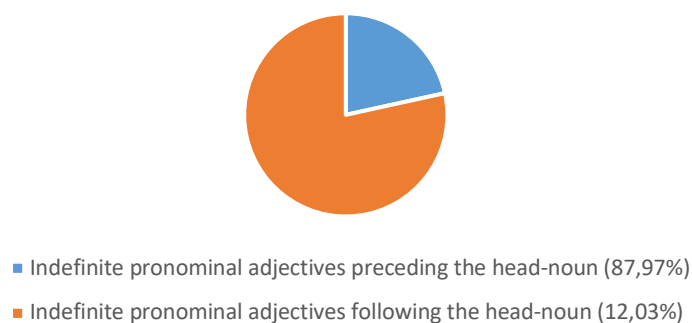


Figure 3. The statistical analysis of adjuncts expressed by the indefinite pronominal adjective *tot* (*toată/toți/toate*)/all

Finally, in figure 4, I have summarized the statistical analysis of adjuncts expressed by possessive pronominal adjectives. Thus, out of a total of 3835 examples, 92,43% (3545 examples) of the possessive pronominal adjectives follow the head-noun, having the syntactic function of possessor, while 7,57% (290 examples) of the possessive pronominal adjectives precede the head-noun, having the syntactic function of determiner.

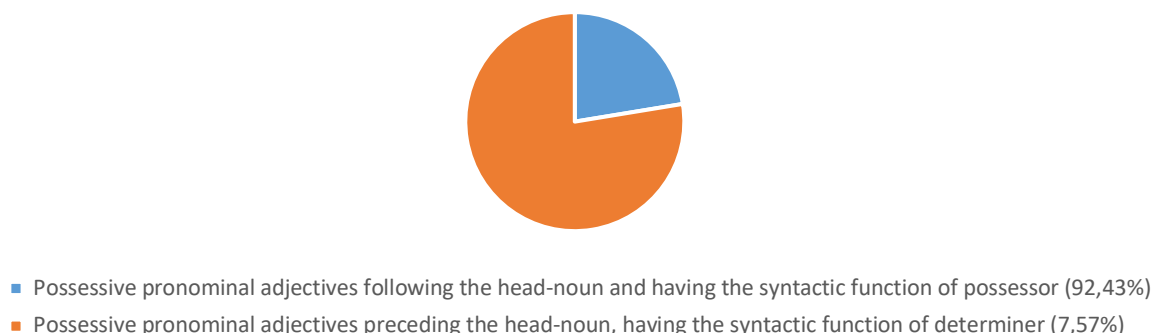


Figure 4. The statistical analysis of possessive pronominal adjectives

4. CONCLUSIONS

The statistical analysis I have done leads to a number of conclusions, as far as the internal structure of noun phrases containing adjectives as adjuncts in Dosoftei's writings is concerned. First, a general analysis of adjuncts expressed by all kinds of adjectives shows that possessors expressed by possessive pronominal adjectives are the most frequent, followed by modifiers expressed by common adjectives following the head-noun (used without a demonstrative article), determiners expressed by indefinite pronominal adjectives preceding the head-noun, modifiers expressed by common adjectives preceding the head-noun (used without a demonstrative article), quantifiers expressed by indefinite pronominal adjectives following the head-noun, determiners expressed by possessive pronominal adjectives preceding the head-noun, modifiers expressed by participial adjectives, adjuncts expressed by cardinal numbers (determiners and quantifiers), modifiers expressed by common adjectives used with a demonstrative article, determiners expressed by pronominal demonstrative adjectives preceding the head-noun, modifiers expressed by an adjectival phrase, determiners expressed by pronominal demonstrative adjectives following the head-noun, determiners expressed by negative pronominal adjectives, determiners or modifiers expressed by ordinal numbers, and, finally, determiners expressed by pronominal relative adjectives, which are the least frequent. Second, common adjectives following the head-noun are more frequent than common adjectives preceding the head-noun. Third, indefinite

pronominal adjectives preceding the head-noun are more frequent than indefinite pronominal adjectives following the head-noun. Fourth, possessive pronominal adjectives following the head-noun are more frequent than possessive pronominal adjectives preceding the head-noun.

On the other hand, by comparing the original Slavonic texts with their Old Romanian translations, as far as word order is concerned, I have observed that, in certain cases, Old Romanian preserves the syntactic patterns found in Slavonic (i.e., adjectives preceding the head-noun in Slavonic also precede the head-noun in Old Romanian, while adjectives following the head-noun in Slavonic also follow the head-noun in Old Romanian), while, in other cases, the translations depart from the original texts and adopt a word order specific to Old Romanian (i.e., adjectives preceding the head-noun in Slavonic follow the head-noun in Old Romanian and adjectives following the head-noun in Slavonic precede the head-noun in Old Romanian).

5. DISCUSSION

For a further study, I would like to investigate to what extent we can talk about a Slavonic influence in Old Romanian syntax, as far as the internal organisation of the noun phrase is concerned. Older studies had claimed that the Slavonic influence on Old Romanian syntax is very strong, but more recent studies have claimed that this influence was overstated during the communist period in Romania. For example, the linguist Adina Dragomirescu demonstrates that certain syntactic features of Old Romanian which were previously supposed to be of Slavonic origin (e.g., the word order of relational adjectives) are in fact to also be found in Latin, in Old Romance dialects and in Southern dialects (Dragomirescu 2015). On the other hand, the same linguist argues that certain syntactic features in Old Romanian reflect the evolution of Slavonic as well as Latin, in particular, as well as the more general evolution of Proto Indo European languages (Dragomirescu 2018).

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