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*ENGLISH MORPHO-SYNTAX. A VIEW FROM ROMANIAN*

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As many language professionals would certainly confess, despite its omnipresence in the media and its status as today's *lingua franca*, teaching English as a foreign language is not always an easy task. If this teaching involves advanced English grammar and syntax, the teacher will likely face a considerable challenge, made even more difficult by the various approaches, schools of thought, and (sometimes confusing) terminologies available in the literature. When the foreign learners to whom English grammar is taught are native speakers of Romanian—a language that belongs to an entirely different family and is, in many ways, an oddity among Romance vernaculars—the challenge ahead can be quite demanding. Yet, it is precisely this challenge that Ileana Oana Macari has been taking on for over fifteen years, gaining the valuable experience and insight that led to the writing and publication of the present book.

Informed by the author's actual teaching practice at university level and starting from the basic premise that the grammar of one's native language can prove to be an extremely beneficial foundation and term of comparison for any learner of a foreign/second language, *English Morpho-syntax. A View from Romanian* is a successful attempt at reconciling and explaining the various theories and terms describing the English language system in the existing literature—e.g. Greenbaum and Quirk's *A Student's Grammar of the English Language* (1990), Lock's *Functional English Grammar* (1996), Huddleston and Pullum's *A Student's Introduction to English Language* (2005), Kies' *Modern English grammar* (2012)—while overimposing the resulting framework over the traditional, official grammar of the Romanian language taught in schools that most learners are already familiar with. Thus, by adopting a consistently and substantially contrastive approach, supported by numerous examples taken from

authentic texts in both languages (from newspapers, websites, novels, etc.), the book follows in the footsteps of other works of this kind—like Christian Mair’s *English Linguistics. An Introduction* (2012)—which have proved their usefulness and efficacy when it comes to both the understanding of the grammatical system of the foreign language studied and the acquisition of metalinguistic knowledge and metalanguage in general.

*English Morpho-syntax. A View from Romanian* adopts a top-down approach, starting from the largest functional units, i.e. clauses and their elements, and ending with the smallest, i.e. word classes and morphemes. Backed by the works of linguists such as Saussure, Newson, Crystal, Close or Kies, the “Introduction” presents and clarifies some basic concepts of linguistics, like the features of language, the fundamental distinction between language as an abstraction or system and language in use or speech, as well as the definitions and scope of the main branches of language study, including the ones tackled in the book, Morphology and Syntax, and their newer combination into Morpho-syntax.

Chapter 2 is devoted to the presentation of linguistic units, defined according to their forms and functions, and then discussed taking into consideration syntactic constituency and its levels. It is here that the main differences and sources of difficulty between the grammatical systems of English and Romanian are already visible and dealt with. For instance, as the author duly notes, whereas English grammars make ample use of the notion of ‘phrase’, this level of analysis is entirely absent from traditional grammatical approaches in Romanian. Other significant differences arise from the basic definitions of various other units in the two languages at hand: ‘sentence’ and ‘frază’, ‘predicate’ and ‘predicat’, etc.

“Clause functional categories and functions” are the topic approached in Chapter 3. Starting from a useful table that establishes the main correspondences between the clause elements recognised in English and the ones used in Romanian grammars (e.g. ‘verbal’/‘predicat’, ‘subject complement’/‘nume predicativ’, ‘adverbial’/‘complement circumstanțial’), the chapter presents the properties (e.g. form, position, agreement, pronouns, voice, etc.), possible realizations, and meanings of each sentence part in both languages, discussing the main areas of similarity and difference between them.

The next chapter goes further down to the level of phrases. Since, as previously shown, traditional Romanian grammars do not use this category in the same way English does—even if the notion of ‘(word) group’ does exist in some approaches—this part of the book focuses more on the English side, highlighting only some important differences as far as Romanian is concerned. One such difference, for instance, is to be noted in the role, functions and properties assigned to prepositions and prepositional phrases.

The fifth and final chapter in the book, “Word classes”, begins with a discussion of the differences between lexical words and function words, followed by a presentation of the main grammatical categories used to analyze words according to their class. ‘Number’, ‘gender’, ‘person’, ‘case’, ‘degree’, ‘definiteness’, ‘tense’, ‘mood’, and ‘voice’ are examined contrastively in both languages. Essential differences and similarities—as well as their implications for Romanian learners—are highlighted in each case. The same approach is used for the rest of this chapter, which continues with explanations and illustrations for each word class.

Although scholarly and mostly theoretical in nature, *English Morpho-syntax. A View from Romanian* manages to remain accessible and easy to follow in its demonstrations. This makes it an ideal resource for teachers and students of English grammar alike, as well as for anyone interested in finding out more about the systems and rules of the two languages at hand.

#### BIONOTE

**Sorina CIOBANU**, PhD, is a lecturer at the English Department, Faculty of Letters, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, where she has been teaching courses of English (Grammar, Pragmatics & Discourse Analysis, Corpus Linguistics), Translation (Specialised Translation, Translation Revision & Criticism) and Intercultural Communication. Author of the book *Translation Patterns at Term Level. A corpus-based analysis in the specialised language of ICT* (2017), she has published articles in several peer-reviewed international journals. She has also been working as a licensed translator and academic journal editor.