

**SOME ASPECTS RELATING TO THE VERB GROUP IN THE
ROMANIAN AVANT-GARDE POETRY**

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Abstract: *The verb group is part of the surface structure of the literary text. In the Romanian avant-garde it does not observe the grammatical language norms. The most frequent procedures are the change of the voice and of the intransitivity of the verb, the consequence, on the depth structure of the text, being the semantic incoherence. The new constructions are rich in poetic suggestion, most of them being figures of speech.*

Key words: *Avant-garde language structure, inflection changes, semantic incompatibility.*

The poetry of the Romanian avant-garde literature, from 1924 to 1947 is homogeneous as to language means of expression. Dividing the Avant-garde literary movement into three waves¹, the first wave (1924-1927) centred on a constructive Dadaism with futurist and expressionist elements and on Integralism with cubist and Simultaneist influences, the second wave (1928-1935) characterized by the presence of dadaist, integralist and constructivist elements and those of an incipient surrealism, and the third wave (1936-1947) marked by an intensive surrealist activity, emphasizes a specific manner of rendering the poetic expression at all text levels, dominant in one of the respective waves.

At the surface structure, the division of the literary text is made up of sentences grouped in nominal groups having a noun as a centre and of verb groups whose centre is a verb. The verb which is the centre of the verb group may be predicative or non-predicative and is accompanied by its typical determiners². These determiners connect with the verb by case connection, prepositional connection or attraction³. The analysis of the verb group concerns the part played by the verb in the cohesion of the sentence and in the semantic coherence of the context and context.

¹ The main literary works which present this aspect are Pop I. *Avangardismul poetic românesc.*, 1969, p. 54-55; Pop I. *Avangarda în literatura română*, 1990, p.216; Manolescu N., *Istoria critică a literaturii române, 5 secole de literatură* 2008, p.823; Cernat P., *Avangarda românească și complexul periferiei, Primul val*, 2007, p. 412;

² Pană-Dindelegan, Gabriela, *Sintaxa limbii române. I. Sintaxa grupului verbal*, 1999, p. 37;

³ ibidem, p. 39-40;

The changing of the verbal inflection means disobedience of the grammatical norms with respect to the characteristics of intransitive, impersonal and passive¹. The verbs which are impersonal (subjectless) in Romanian receive a subject and those which are intransitive are subject to passive or reflexive transformations. The category of the impersonal verbs is characterised by monosemantism, the inner semantic feature [+impersonal] having the restriction to combine with any subject in the nominative case. (eg. *Tună*), and the restriction of selection, the semantic field of the respective subject being limited to the feature [-animated] (eg. *Se crede că...*)². The impersonal value is requested by the semantic features of [+impersonal] and [-definite] which leads to the indefinite characteristic of the agent of the verb action or of the object.

For the process of reflexive transformation, the subject must contain the semantic feature [+personal] and be identical referentially to the direct or indirect object. The verbs subject to this transformation are intransitive and semantically incompatible to one of the two compulsory conditions for a verb to become reflexive, i.e. the reflexive and the non-reflexive³. The passive transformation aims to the verbs which do not contain the compulsory semantic feature which marks the opposition active/passive.

All the constructions resulted at the end of these transformations are impossible, illogical, have grammatical forms which do not observe the norms of the literary language in use, and present incompatibility between the semantic fields of the elements which are part of the verb group. Unlike the other groups in a clause, the verb group is characterised by a greater degree of cohesion⁴, one of the marks which increases the dependence of the determiners on the verb being transitivity. These modifications of the verbal inflection prove the freedom in the construction of the text in the Avant-garde poetry and lead to an obscure significance, to lack of syntactic cohesion and of semantic coherence.

In the Avant-garde poems there are examples of intransitive verbs used as transitive which generate a false cohesion by a false transitivity, only the form of expression giving an apparent cohesion, the semantic coherence being altered or totally destroyed. Using the intransitive verbs as transitive and subjecting them to processes which make them passive, reflexive or accepting a nominal subject represents a characteristic of the Avant-garde language.

The poems of the first wave of the Avant-garde offer many examples to illustrate this characteristic: *deschide-te la pagina 316* (St. R. – *Maison d'orez*); *prin sânge circulă-mi ca un Ford* (St. R. – *Hardmuth No 2*); *mă vânturi precum*

¹ ibidem, p. 77;

² ibidem, p. 106;

³ ibidem, p. 95;

⁴ ibidem, p. 44;

spicul (I.V. – 4, *Colomba*); și *linia dintre arbori ne-ntunecă* (I.V. – 1, *Colomba*); *muzica te defilează* (St. R. – *Dansul d'été*); *vântul o depravează* (St. R. – *Crucifixul umbrelor*); *noapte vântuie* (Ion V. – *Lamento*); *liră sterlină-te*; *citroën-mă*; *consumă-mă cât pe o stofă în careuri o molie bleu*; *poartă-mă pălărie de paie* (St. R. – *Maison d'orez*); *tu convorbești cu mobila ta* (St. R. – *Rondul II de noapte*); *eu masaj tu masaj noi voi ei voi masaj* (St. R. – *Ficat alb*); *te-auresc* (I.V. – 4, *Colomba*); *vântul se privește în oglinda vitrinelor albe* (M.C. – *Scrisoare deschisă*); *pentagonul ereșilor înserează în infuzia de ceai* (St. R. – *Relief*);

Analysing some of the above examples from the point of view of the semantic compatibility, the false transitivity is better highlighted.

In *muzica te defilează* (St. R. – *Dansul d'été*) the incompatibility is between the agent *muzica* semantically described as [- animated] [- human] and the intransitive verb *defilează*, with the semantic features [+human] [+animated]; the personal pronoun which is the direct object *te* is in semantic incompatibility with the verb because of the intransitivity of the latter.

In *lămpile te-auresc* (I.V. – 4, *Colomba*) the incompatibility is between the agent *lămpile* with the semantic features [- animated][- human] and the transitive verb *auresc* which requires an agent characterised by [+human][+animated]. Also, the patient represented by the personal pronoun *te* [+ human][+ animated] is in semantic incompatibility with the verb which combines with a patient characterised by the features [-animated] [-human].

The poems of the first wave offer examples which demonstrate the unlimited imagination, ingenuity of the Avant-garde poets, such as *sterlină-te*, *citroën-mă* (St. R. – *Maison d'orez*). The first example, *sterlină-te*, is an adjective and is part of *liră sterlină*, a noun subject to a process specific to the verb, the reflexive transformation. In the second example, the proper noun *Citroën*, is used as a common noun, being written with small letters, and becomes a transitive verb accompanied by a personal pronoun functioning as a direct object *mă*. The noun can be conjugated as a verb and takes the characteristics of the respective part of speech: *eu masaj tu masaj noi voi ei voi masaj* (St. R. – *Ficat alb*).

The examples from the second wave of the Avant-garde poetry are suggestive: *nuferii se înlăturau pe pereți* (St. R. – *Discurs pentru un crepuscul*); *brațele noastre nu mai sângeră păduri sălbatice*; *sufletele ni se sărută* (I.V. – 1, *Ulise*); *te tragi pe tine din tine însuși*; *îți dai târcoale*; *câte mistere îți surâzi în oglindă* (I.V. – 2, *Ulise*); *prețul pâinii se va urca cu zece centime* (I.V. – 3, *Ulise*); *oglinzi garaje de automobile covoare / oltenești vă știu spuma lâna / norilor când iarna vă încuie vă doare* (I.V. – 8, *Ulise*); *unde mergi mă modelezi mă sapi în catifeaua atmosferei* (I.V. – 11, *Ulise*); *catifeaua aerului te mângâie te împarte*; *o stea tremură vântului catarge* (I.V. – 18, *Ulise*); *brațele osândiților te flutură* (I.V. – II, *Brățara nopților*); *gândul te adună, te arde, te întunecă* (St. R. – *În decolteul*

verii); șoselele timpului se așteaptă la răspântii (S.P. – *Respirație, Cuvântul talisman*); cetățile s-au dărâmat între ele cu obuze (G.B. – *Tăcerea dezlănțuită*); îmi latră inima flămândă ca un câine (G.B. – *Lunecări*); și pleoapele s-au mimetizat în cartofi (S.P. – *Evenimente fără stele, Călătorie cu funicularul*); Se tescuie lumina să îngenunche sub zi (St. R. – *Reverență, Poeme în aer liber*)

The analysis of some of the above examples shows the false transitivity and the changing in the meaning of the words. In *brațele noastre nu mai sângează păduri sălbatice* (I.V. – *1, Ulise*), the incompatibility is between the intransitive verb *nu (mai) sângează* and its direct object *păduri (sălbatice)* which does not observe the semantic restriction of the verb [+ blood] [+ animated].

The example *gândul te adună, te arde, te întunecă* (St. R. – *În decolteul verii*) is marked by the total semantic incompatibility between the agent *gândul* with the features [+ abstract] [- animated] and the verb (*te*) *adună* [+ concrete] [+ animated] accompanied by a direct object *te* [+ person] [+ animated], *arde* [+ concrete] [+ high temperature] [+ flames], and partial semantic incompatibility between the respective agent and the verb *te întunecă* [- light] used metaphorically with the semantic features [- equanimity] [+ sadness]. The verb is incompatible with the agent *gândul* semantically characterised by [+ emotional force] [+ psychic state].

The third wave offers a few examples which illustrate the changing in the verb inflection: *pentru că femeia nu plouă / și nici eu nu plou* (G.N. – *IV, Vasco da Gama*); *Umerii mei au clipit / o orgie de pleoape* (G.N. – *Luna în ureche, Oglinda oarbă*); *zilele își devorează amiaza* (V.T. – *Norii gâtului, Butelia de Leyda*). In the example *pentru că femeia nu plouă / și nici eu nu plou* (G.N. – *IV, Vasco da Gama*) the impersonal, intransitive verb *a ploua* takes a subject although it is an empty subject word, rendering an impossible, abstract image through the connection of the verb semantic features [+ rain drops] [- animated] [- human] with the semantic features of the agent, the common noun *femeia* and the personal pronoun *eu* [+ animated] [+ human].

The example *zilele își devorează amiaza* (V.T. – *Norii gâtului, Butelia de Leyda*) built on the incompatibility between the agent *zilele* [- animated] and the reflexive verb *a-și devora* [+ animated] [+ concrete] and the incompatibility between the verb and the direct object *amiaza* [+ abstract] [- animated], offers an apocalyptic image generated by the illocutionary force of the verb *a-și devora*, a verb expressing violence and with tragic consequences in the real world. Besides these constructions, there are a few examples in which the modification marks the phrases. The modification means replacing the element which has a greater semantic value and its consequence is the loss of the semantic and morphological unity. Therefore, the poetic discourse becomes obscure and the significance is not

fully decoded by the receiver. The most frequent substitutions¹ aim to the element with nominal value (noun and adjective) as in the examples of the second wave of the Avant-garde poetry *îți faci loc cu umerii ca să crești* (I.V. – 5, *Ulise*) and *principesa a murit de parfum* (S.P. – *Cristal*, *Cuvântul talisman*).

The verb group in the Avant-garde poetry is characterised by modifications concerning the transitivity and the voice and by substitutions of nominal elements in phrases. Because of these modifications the process of decoding the significance is partially or totally altered in the poems.

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ABREVIERI

Aurel Baranga - A.B.; Geo Bogza - G.B.; Mihail Cosma (Claude Sernet) - M.C.; Virgil Gheorghiu - V.G.; Dan Faur – D.F.; Gellu Naum – G.N.; Constantin Nisipeanu – C.N.; Sașa Pană – S.P.; Paul Păun - P.P.; Stephan Roll –St. R.; Virgil Teodorescu - V.T.; Ion Vinea – Ion V.; Ilarie Voronca - I.V.; Aurel Zaremba – A.Z.