



Doina Butiurca, Réka Suba (eds.)
Dicționar multilingv de gramatică I
Többnyelvű grammatikai szótár
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Review by

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There is an “impressive diversity of dictionary types” on the dictionary market, a statement found in a recent book on lexicography (Burada–Sinu 2016: 6). From this perspective, it is no surprise that printed dictionaries are still available although some of them make little sense, especially those that are just a simple collection of mono- or bilingual termbases deriving from CAT-tools.

However, this is not the case of *Dicționar multilingv de gramatică I* (Hu. *Többnyelvű grammatikai szótár I*; En. *Multilingual Dictionary of Grammar I*), appeared in 2019 under the guidance of Doina Butiurcă and Réka Suba, published by *Institutul European* in Iași, Romania. The editors are also authors, together with further specialists in various languages: Romanian and French (Doina Butiurcă), Hungarian (Réka Suba), English (Andrea Peterlicean), German (Oxana Chira), and Russian (Inga Druță), all experts in terminology and translation studies, working at various universities in Romania and the Republic of Moldova.

As the “Foreword” announces, the dictionary promises a contrastive-typological perspective of about 200 terms in the field of grammar (A–J), based on authoritative sources representing the latest research in the respective languages: *Gramatica limbii române* (The Grammar of the Romanian Language), coordinated by Valeria Guțu Romalo (2005, 2008), or *Magyar grammatika* (Hungarian Grammar), edited by Borbála Keszler (2000). As such, the entries discussed reflect the latest terminology. For example, the authors discuss *grade de intensitate* ‘degrees of intensity’, but they still mention its oldest version, *grade de comparație* ‘degrees of comparison’ (344–347).

A full entry contains the head term in Romanian, which – in the majority of cases – is followed by its Latin and occasionally its Greek equivalent (e.g. *accent*, p. 25

or *diateză*, p. 282), offering an added value to the dictionary. Then, the equivalents are listed in English, French, German, Hungarian, Romanian, and Russian, which is followed by the three descriptive sections in Romanian, Hungarian, and English, ending in the bibliography section for the specific term.

What makes this dictionary unique is the basic concept of offering the description of a relevant grammatical term in Romanian (a Neo-Latin Romance language) and then its equivalent term and explanation in Hungarian (a Finno-Ugric language), which already contains the contrast (similarity or difference) compared to Romanian. When a particular grammatical category is not present in Romanian or Hungarian, we can find extensive explanation, adaptation, and examples in the other language. Consequently, the outcome is very challenging as some entries have been written in Romanian first and then translated into Hungarian (with the necessary adaptations and parallel structures), while the terms coming from Hungarian were adapted to Romanian. The third large part is the English version based on both the Romanian and the Hungarian descriptions.

The descriptive and functional research includes the case system, inflexion, agglutination, conjugation systems, dependency, and the substitution classes of the determiner. The editors conclude that the expected and found differences between “specific means of expressing logical-grammatical categories do not create interferences at the level of the grammatical systems” of Romanian and Hungarian.

In my view, one of the main strengths of the present dictionary is how skilfully the comparison between Romanian and Hungarian is made, highlighting both similarities and differences in each particular case. While outsiders might think that this is evident, the explanations demonstrate that users of these two languages may not be aware how interesting this approach is. For instance, the case of *abbreviation* shows that Romanian sources differentiate *initialisms* (*CFR*), *abbreviations by reduction & compound* (*Plafar*), and *abbreviation* of scientific terms (*ling.* instead of *lingvistică*), while the Hungarian typology uses *acronyms* (similar to the Romanian *initialisms*), *lexical blends* (cf. *reduction*) as well as *fusions* and *linguistic contaminations*, which is definitely an enriched view of the same linguistic term.

The dictionary also offers a careful subcategorization when needed, exemplified by the headword *accent*. After having presented it as a phenomenon belonging to phonetics, we are indulged with various types such as *affective tone*, *acute accent*, *prominence*, *fixed accent*, *grave accent*, *free accent*, *logical accent*, *mobile accent*, *musical accent*, *oxytone stress*, *paroxytone stress*, *proparoxytone stress*, and *syntactic stress*, all being described from the perspective of Romanian and Hungarian, and effectively summarized in English.

More ambitious terms are also present, in which respect we should mention the *conditional mood*, within which the Romanian conditional and optative of main clauses are described, including temporality (present and perfect), drawing a parallel with the Hungarian conditionality marked by conjugated forms of

present and past. When the lack of a particular grammatical category makes this comparison impossible (e.g. *the subjunctive mood* in English and Romanian), we have a Hungarian explanation for the phenomenon, which is nevertheless explained with equivalent structures in Hungarian (imperative, conditional-hypothetical, and infinitive).

The listed examples show the great care the authors manifested towards making the links between parallel grammatical terms in Romanian and Hungarian and offering equivalent solutions to expressing grammatical categories not present or less visible in the other language. The English translation, stemming from both Romanian and Hungarian, is a masterpiece of this endeavour, trying to melt the bilingual descriptions into a summarizing third one.

The examples also reveal that the authors try to cover terms ranging from phonetics to syntax, including entries from lexicology, morphology, semantics, and orthography as well; thus, it is no wonder that this first volume only contains terms from A to J, probably awaiting for two further volumes. The content clearly shows the difficulty of lexicographers when compiling the dictionary, focusing on the “canonical form of the lemmata, ... meanings of the words and their lexical relationships” (Burada–Sinu 2016: 26), which is further complicated by the multilingual approach, where the equivalent terms replace the definition (cf. Burada–Sinu 2016: 105).

The thoroughness of the authors trying to present the grammatical term in its full use both in Romanian and Hungarian has resulted in combined examples of the *object* (Ro. *complement*, Hu. *határozó*), reaching almost thirty different types of object on more than fifty pages, which is challenging to understand in this mixed version yet mind-opening for those accustomed to thinking in a single-language set of cases. Thus, the bilingual approach describes *complement asemantic* ‘asemantic modifier, and *complement circumstanțial cumulat* ‘adverbial modifier of addition’ from the Romanian perspective, and then we have *fok- és mértékhatározó* ‘modifier of degree/measure’ from the Hungarian perspective.

Other terms are also described so exhaustively that both students and expert linguists will be satisfied with the explanations. A very good example in this respect is *declinare/névszóragozás* ‘declension’ covering ten pages in three languages.

While all the terms are justified in this collection, one might wonder about the selection criteria for the volume. Although the “Foreword” announces that “the work comprises approximately 200 terms in the field of grammar (with the necessary exceptions!)”, we do not consider that the exclamation mark is a sufficient explanation for missing terms such as *categorii gramaticale* ‘grammatical categories’ or *interjecția* ‘interjection’.

Another aspect that might need improvement is related to word processing. The linguistic examples are not always marked clearly, and some of them are in italics, while others are not: *Au ajuns zece și s-au întors* doisprezece. ‘Ten arrived

and twelve returned.’, where *ten* and *twelve* should have been in italics as well (p. 313). In a similar vein, the use of punctuation marks should be improved, including quotation marks, slashes, double slashes, or the presence or lack of spaces before and after them might be unified.

Furthermore, the layout could be more user-friendly, an aspect often overlooked in all types of dictionaries, as it is very difficult to separate subsections and the examples in Romanian, Hungarian, and English in longer descriptions (e.g. *expansiune*). Although it is very convenient that each entry ends with the sources used, by being mentioned only once at the end of the book to avoid repetition, these might save a lot of space to section each article.

The “Index” section actually contains the list of all entries in the Romanian alphabetical order, followed by its Hungarian, English, French, German, and Russian equivalents. Although the page numbers do not always match (e.g. *complement direct* starts on page 187, while the index indicates page 192), it might prove to be a wonderful replacement of the table of contents of all entries. In our view, this section would have been more practical if it had been presented separately, in the alphabetical order of each language, as in its present form it only allows effective search based on Romanian keywords.

To sum up, we tend to think that the dictionary will serve its purpose, namely to become a reference material for students and scholars alike who would like to see “beyond the veil” and investigate how two typologically different languages depict interrelated grammatical terms, both being effective differently in expressing human thoughts. This is why we expect the promising “sequels”, hopefully covering entries to the very last letter in the alphabet, accompanied with a little more improved word processing and layout of sections.

The readers will sense that the present volume is the result of a team of experts, who must have dedicated a lot of time to “level” different language systems, and they should be proud of both the multilingual termbase in seven languages (including Latin or Greek) and the correlation between the Romanian, Hungarian, and English descriptions. It is true that the French, German, and Russian contribution is confined to offering the equivalents for the entries deriving from Romanian and Hungarian, but they will become important whenever a grammatical term is approached in any of the language combinations. Although the writer of the present review cannot judge the quality of these translations, it is known that the scholars behind this project have long years of experience in similar endeavours.

References

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