

The grammaticalization of the future expressions in Romanian A diachronic and synchronic analysis

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This study investigates the diachronic evolution and the synchronic distribution of the three analytic expressions of futurity in Romanian, as supported by historical texts and analyses (Rosetti 1978, Dumitrescu 1978) and a written corpus of Modern Romanian (3 million words). The analysis employs the grammaticalization framework to trace their evolution from Latin to the modern language and proposes a synchronic distribution in the epistemic-deontic continuum. It will be shown that the diachronic analysis comes to complement the synchronic use of the future forms (in (1) below). Diachronically, they undergo grammaticalization through desemanticization and erosion and synchronically, they are constrained by sociolinguistic and semantic factors. There are two levels of layering proposed: 1) the sociolinguistic distinction of the two ‘desire futures’ stemming from identical auxiliary lexeme, 2) the semantic division of ‘desire’ versus ‘obligation future’ divergent in both diachronic development and synchronic use.

		3SG	3PL
(1)	Future 1: <i>a avea</i> ‘have’ + present subjunctive:	<i>are sa cante</i> ‘will sing’	<i>au sa cante</i>
	Future 2: <i>a vrea</i> ‘want’ + short infinitive:	<i>va canta</i> ‘will sing’	<i>vor canta</i>
	Future 3: <i>o</i> ‘want’ + present subjunctive:	<i>o sa cante</i> ‘will sing’	<i>o sa cante</i>

These analytic constructions are linked to word order, i.e. the Latin preposed auxiliary construction ‘*habeo/volo*+infinitive’, distinguished from other Romance synthetic forms reflexes of ‘infinitive+*habeo*’ (Fleischman 1982). The Romanian analytic forms undergo grammaticalization processes, namely desemanticization by which *a vrea* ‘want’, *a avea* ‘have’ acquire a grammatical auxiliary function through the ‘bleaching’ of the original lexical meaning (Klausenburger 2000, Heine 1993, for other Romance languages). Futures 2 & 3 exhibit phonological erosion: the lexical form *vrea* (3SG) ‘wants’ undergoes consonantal reduction and diphthong simplification to result in the Future 2 auxiliary *va*, and in turn reduces to the Future 3 invariable auxiliary *o* (Dumitrescu 1978). The Future 1 auxiliary *a avea* ‘have’ doesn’t exhibit erosion, a process that “starts later than the shift from lexical to grammatical (Heine 1993: 58), thus showing a higher degree of grammaticalization for Future 2 & 3 with respect to Future 1.

Synchronically, the forms are sociolinguistically constrained, with Future 2 and 3 respectively used in formal and informal contexts (Kind 1986, Monachesi 2005). Semantically, our corpus reveals that the Future 2 & 3 ‘desire futures’, derived from the desire verb *a vrea* ‘want’, are differentiated from the Future 1 ‘obligation future’ derived from *a avea* ‘have’: a high number of tokens of inanimate/impersonal expressions with the ‘desire futures’, including prediction references with respect to weather; high frequency of ‘obligation future’ with animate subjects, and a low frequency for inanimate/impersonal expressions. The ‘desire future’ is also attested as a presumptive form expressing “suspicion and uncertainty” (Mallinson 1986: 134), as in ‘*Va fi sosind curand*’ (‘He will be arriving soon’) which cannot take the ‘obligation’ auxiliary. These distinctions conform to Bybee et al.’s (1994) model in which ‘desire futures’ have an epistemic interpretation of prediction and probability, semantically distinguished from ‘obligation futures’ which have a deontic reading of determination, thus retain-

ing in large measure the original obligative modality of the Latin *habeo* + infinitive (Fleischman 1982).

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