



Universitatea
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HABILITATION THESIS

SUMMARY

Title: Predictability in Language Processing

Domain: Philology

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The present habilitation thesis is a reflection upon my scientific and professional achievements after the completion of my doctoral work at the University of Stuttgart, Germany, in July 2011. After synthesizing the results obtained so far, I will then turn to presenting my career evolution and development plans for the next five to seven years.

The thesis is structured in three chapters. The first chapter is centered around my contribution to different themes and research directions, the second chapter describes my academic formation and professional experience, detailing on the research and didactic activities I conducted, to then outline my career goals and plans. The last chapter contains a selective list of bibliographic resources cited throughout the thesis.

My academic journey and research endeavors have been affiliated with three prestigious (inter)national institutions of higher education. Firstly, I was engaged at the Department of German Linguistics at the University of Stuttgart, Germany, from 2007 to 2012. Subsequently, I became a part of the Department of German Language and Literature I (“Institut für Deutsche Sprache und Literatur I”) at the University of Cologne, Germany, from 2012 to 2015. Lastly, I joined the Department of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics at the Transilvania University of Braşov, Romania. During my tenure in Germany, I not only taught linguistics classes at the Bachelor’s (B.A.), Master’s (M.A.), and doctoral levels but also pursued my research in general and comparative linguistics. Given the international working environment I was part of, and the research projects I joined as a principal investigator or as a research member, I investigated different phenomena in various German, Romance and Turkic languages, mainly focusing on semantic and discourse-pragmatic aspects of differential object marking, clitic doubling, specificity, referentiality and referential resolution. At the Transilvania University of Braşov, I continue to advance both my research and teaching endeavors in the domain of linguistics.

The half-year period I dedicated to being a visiting scholar at the Department of Linguistics, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, USA, in 2011 significantly influenced my academic growth. This experience allowed me to engage closely with esteemed researchers in the field and their interdisciplinary, innovative teams. It was during this period that I embraced more experimental methodologies in my own research endeavors.

This thesis is structured in three chapters. The first chapter is dedicated to my scientific results and is further divided in three sections, as follows:

Section 1 focuses on my contribution concerning the distribution of Differential Object Marking (DOM). The first part of this section outlines several syntactic and semantic factors influencing DOM in contemporary Romanian. The main part of this section is dedicated to the diachronic development of DOM from 1800 to 2000. In essence, the insights presented in this

section call for the integration of the discourse-pragmatic contribution of DOM into any comprehensive account of this phenomenon in Romanian.

Section 2 comprises the results of a series of investigations on different aspects of discourse prominence. After introducing the basic concepts on prominence or accessibility and some important open issues on these topics in the first subsection, I then review the most researched prominence-lending factors. The centerpieces of this discussion will be three factors I particularly focused on in some of my recent work, namely: the animacy of referents, different thematic roles, the implicit causality of interpersonal verbs and the way in which they impact the unfolding discourse in terms of referential management. Most research has focused on the discourse history of an anaphoric expression to determine the degree of accessibility of a referent by investigating the factors that contribute to the choice of a particular reference form, while I underline that referents may be associated with forward-looking properties as well, such as their discourse structuring potential. In the last part of this section, I review the Dual Processing Model, which I developed together with two colleagues at the University of Cologne to account for the discourse behavior of definite and indefinite noun phrases.

Section 3 focuses on my longstanding commitment to interdisciplinary teaching and learning in higher education. I present the main insights from an innovative blended-learning introductory course I redesigned and implemented at the University of Cologne, from 2012 to 2015. Throughout this project, I applied concepts and skills acquired within my higher education teaching certificate obtained from the University of Cologne.

Chapter 2 is a review of my career evolution and an outlook to my development plans for the next five to seven years and is divided into two sections.

Section 1 reviews the milestones of my academic formation and professional experience, summarizing the most important achievements. This section furthermore highlights the teaching and supervising activities I have conducted at the Universities of Stuttgart, Köln and Braşov. Other activities that contributed to my professional experience (e.g., reviews of publications, projects) are mentioned in this section as well.

Section 2 is dedicated to my career development plans, which include my teaching and research projects and plans for the next years.

The **last chapter** contains the bibliography used in this thesis.