

# THE INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF A DIFFERENTIALLY MARKED DP IN ROMANIAN

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**Abstract:** This paper starts from the observation that clitic doubling and DOM-*pe* may alternate as differential marking mechanisms for direct objects. Our hypothesis is that the clitic and *pe* are able to substitute to each other for the object marking purpose. We propose that the clitic and *pe* compete for merging in the same functional head at the left periphery of nominal phrases in Old Romanian, and eventually co-occur, in different functional heads in the same domain in Modern Romanian. This analysis clarifies the locus of the DOM particle insertion (i.e. in the nominal versus the verbal extended projection), its combinatorial possibilities (e.g. with clitic doubling), and how these syntactic properties correlate with changes in interpretation.

**Keywords:** clitic doubling, differential object marking, Old Romanian, Modern Romanian

## 1. Introduction

The literature on differential object marking (henceforth, DOM) in Romanian is extensive, and it covers both the semantic and the syntactic properties of these constructions. In particular, detailed studies are available for DOM in Modern Romanian (henceforth, MR) with respect to the distribution of the marker *pe* (Niculescu 1959, 1965, Ionescu 2000, Mardale 2009b, Tigău 2010a, 2010b, 2014), the semantic properties it responds to (Cornilescu 2000, 2001, Farkas and von Heusinger 2003, von Heusinger and Onea 2008, Mardale 2008, Chiriacescu and von Heusinger 2010, Avram and Zafiu 2017, Mardale and Onea 2017, Onea and Hole 2017), its syntactic status as a functional element versus a preposition (Pană Dindelegan 1997, 2003, Mardale 2009b, 2013, Irimia 2017, Hill and Mardale 2018), and its gradual grammaticalization from OR to MR (Onu 1959, Mardale 2009a, 2015, 2018, Stark 2011, Hill 2013, Stan 2013, Nicula Paraschiv 2017).

When the literature includes discussions of DOM-*pe* from a cross-linguistic perspective, the comparative paradigms concern other Romance languages, especially Spanish, where DOM-*a* seems to replicate the functions of Rom. DOM-*pe* (Niculescu 1965, Rohlf's 1971, Roegiest 1979, Bossong 1991, 1998, Mardale 2008c, 2009b, 2010, 2013, Stark and Sora 2008, Iemmolo 2010). Less attention has been paid to cross-linguistic paradigms involving Balkan languages (except for Mišeska-Tomić 2006), which is a typological group to which Romanian belongs. Nevertheless, Balkan languages display a strong pattern of differential object marking, but the mechanism they resort to is clitic doubling (henceforth, CD), instead of a DOM particle (Caragiu-Marioțeanu 1975, Mišeska-Tomić 2006, 2008, Friedman 2008, Hill and Tasmowski 2008, Zegrean 2012, Maiden 2016, Hill 2018).

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The point we raise in this paper is that there is no common ground, so far, to unify the syntactic analyses of the Romance pattern with DOM particles and the Balkan pattern with CD. However, a solid understanding of differential object marking in OR/MR requires such a unified analysis, considering that:

(i) Other Romanian dialects display almost exclusively CD for object marking (except for the Ohrid-Struga dialect), as shown in (1) for Aromanian and (2) for Meglenoromanian:

- (1) a. nu **tî** voi **tine**  
not you want.1SG you  
'I don't want you.'  
([https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Limba\\_aramă](https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Limba_aramă))
- b. Ună intrată n casă, **o** bagă **chiatra** sub limbă.  
once entered in house it put stone-the under tongue  
'Once inside the house, she put the stone under her tongue.'  
([https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Limba\\_aramă](https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Limba_aramă))
- (2) a. (**La**) antribó **țela** chirchezu  
him asked-3SG that Circassian  
'He asked that Circassian.'  
([https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Limba\\_meglenoromână](https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Limba_meglenoromână))
- b. Piduc'l'ul **ău** biju **săndzili** ... poja **ău** tăl'ară **piduc'l'ul**  
louse-the it drank-3SG blood-the then it killed-3PL louse-the  
'The louse sucked the blood ... then they killed the louse.'  
([https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Limba\\_meglenoromână](https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Limba_meglenoromână))

(ii) OR texts attest to the use of CD according to the Balkan pattern; see (3):

- (3) **te** cunosc **tine** (*PO* {292})  
you know-1SG you  
'I know you'

(iii) OR/MR display object marking with indirect objects as well, which is a property of Balkan languages, not of Romance languages, and the mechanism involves only CD; see (4) for OR and (5) for MR:

- (4) ce să **-ți** dau **ție?** (*PO* {102} 31)  
what SBJV to.you= give-1SG to.you  
'what should I give you?'
- (5) **Le-** au dat **lor** cărți.  
them=have given to.them books  
'They gave them books.'

(iv) MR recycled the CD in connection with DOM, so the joint CD/DOM mechanism became the default option for the marking of direct objects, and even an obligatory one for certain nominal classes, as in (6):

- (6) a. **Te** voi aduce **pe tine**.  
 you will-1SG bring DOM you  
 'I will bring you.'  
 b. \***Te** voi aduce **tine**.  
 c. \*Voi aduce **tine**.  
 d. \*Voi aduce **pe tine**.

In light of these data, we point out that, in Romanian, CD and DOM can substitute to each other as object marking mechanisms, or share the same task. Hence, we propose that there is a functional head whose features are checked either by the clitic or by DOM-*pe*, in a way that also allows for the further grammaticalization of DOM-*pe* by merging it in a related functional head. The domain in which the clitic and DOM-*pe* merge is that of a nominal phrase.

This paper is organized as follows: Section 2 provides an overview of the theoretical tools used in our analysis, especially where the internal structure of nominal phrases is concerned. By using these theoretical tools, section 3 presents the syntactic tests that establish the status of DOM-*pe*; section 4 looks at CD constructions; and section 5 discusses the CD/DOM constructions. Section 6 concludes the paper.

## 2. Theoretical framework

### 2.1 Clause structure

The clause is a hierarchical structure consisting of three fields, built from bottom up as in (7) (Chomsky 1995 and subsequent work): vP maps the argument structure of the verb; TP is the verb inflectional domain; CP is the domain for clause typing and discourse features.

- (7) CP ← TP ← vP

Cartography provides a more discrete structure, by considering that each feature of each feature set is mapped to a separate functional head (Rizzi 1997, 2004). For the CP level, that yields (8), where the discourse features Top and Foc are represented independently of clause typing, and are optionally present (whereas the features of Force and Fin are obligatory).

- (8) CP = ForceP ← (TopP) ← (FocP) ← FinP

The structures in (7) and (8) are relevant to this paper insofar as object marking involves clitic pronouns, which are located on the T head in Romance (Jaeggli 1986, Rivero 1986, Cornilescu and Dobrovie-Sorin 2008, Hill and Alboiu 2016), and which signal the presence of Top in the CP field. More precisely, Delfitto (2002) argues that clitics spell out topic agreement (versus being verb arguments), between a [topic] feature in the CP domain and the comment/presupposition headed by T. This ends up as Clitic

Left Dislocation (henceforth, CLLD), whereby [topic] probes a DP argument which moves to Spec, TopP and triggers the presence of a resumptive clitic in T to mark the discourse agreement. We use this distinction henceforth by referring to the probe feature as [topic] and to the clitic as [d-Agr] (discourse agreement). Examples for Delfitto's analysis are shown in (9): if the DP is lexical (overt CLLD), the reading is that of aboutness topic; if the DP is non-lexical (hidden CLLD), the reading is that of familiar topic.

- (9) a. Casa<sub>j</sub> am cumpărat-o<sub>j</sub> <casa<sub>j</sub>> ieri. overt CLLD  
 house-the have.1SG bought it house-the yesterday  
 'The house, I bought it yesterday'
- b. Am cumpărat-o<sub>j</sub> ieri. hidden CLLD  
 have.1SG bought it yesterday  
 'I bought it yesterday'

Delfitto (2002) summarily mentions that CD must be a subset of the operations that trigger CLLD. In this paper, we shall see to what extent this prediction holds and how it derives the object marking effect. At this time, we can point out that CD keeps the DP in situ (versus DP movement to Spec,TopP), so the clitic cannot be justified by DP movement or by an agreement relation between sentential topic/focus and comment/presupposition. In other words, this is not a resumptive clitic, but a doubling clitic, whose trigger we must identify.

The TP and vP levels of (7) display split configurations as well. Relevant to this paper is the structure of vP, since several studies argue that a direct object with DOM occupies a different location than a direct object without DOM, in relation to the verb (e.g. López 2012, Irimia 2018, Onea and Mardale forthcoming). In particular, as shown in (10a), the claim in these studies is that a direct object without DOM remains in situ, where it receives Case through incorporation in V, whereas a direct object with DOM cannot incorporate and has to move to a higher level where it receives the Case from v, as in (10b):

- (10) a. [<sub>vP</sub> DP<sub>subject</sub> [<sub>vP</sub> DP<sub>ind.obj</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> V DP<sub>dir-object</sub> ]]]  
 b. [<sub>vP</sub> DP<sub>subject</sub> [<sub>αP</sub> DP<sub>DOM</sub> [<sub>vP</sub> DP<sub>ind.obj</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> V <DP<sub>DOM</sub>> ]]]]

At this point, the authors do not explain how the computation knows whether a DP has or has not a DOM structure. Also, the nature of the probing feature in  $\alpha$  is disputed (e.g. this feature is different in López 2012, Irimia 2018, Ormazabal and Romero 2018).

## 2.2 Nominal phrases

Several studies argue that nominal phrases have an internal structure similar to clauses, organized over three fields, on the pattern in (7) (Szabolcsi 1994, Aboh 2004, Giusti 2006, Haegeman 2004, Aboh et al. 2010, Wiltschko 2014). The general configuration we adopt is shown in (11a) and comes from Giusti (2012). The particular

implementation of this configuration for DOM comes from Bernstein et al. (2018) and is shown in (11b):

- (11) a.  $KP \rightarrow DP \rightarrow NP$   
 b.  $KP \rightarrow [DP_1 \rightarrow DP_2] \rightarrow NP$

In (11a), K is the equivalent of clausal C: it is associated with Case “typing” and carries the  $\phi$ -feature set (including Number) as well as a set of discourse features. The inflectional domain is the DP, and the noun argument domain is the NP. More recent studies (i.e. Bernstein et al. 2018) further split the DP in two layers, as in (11b).  $D_1$  is associated with a [+person] feature, which yields a particularized, individuation reading for the KP.  $D_2$  is associated with definiteness, agreement, possession, and is neutral for particularized readings. This split structure was shown to have relevance for DOM since in some Romance languages (e.g. Catalan), the DOM particle and the article compatible with  $D_1$  are in complementary distribution.

Henceforth, we shall refer to any DOM-ed noun or strong pronoun as a KP, since K can capture the pervasive and localized discourse effects we obtained with DOM. K is the phase edge, hence the only level visible to external probes and able to mediate movement out of the phase (i.e. it is the escape hatch). If V can discriminate between a + and a – DOM-ed noun, this is because the DOM marking takes place at the phase edge, in K, in a way that remains to be determined, so the features mapped to V can see it.

A special mention is in order for clitic pronouns, which are involved with the marked KPs. Following the standard analyses in the minimalist studies, we assume that clitic pronouns merge as heads within nominal structures (e.g. as the head of an Applicative Phrase in Diaconescu and Rivero 2007), from which they move to T. For CLLD, Delfitto (2002) considers that the probed direct object is embedded under a clitic phrase ( $CIP \leftarrow DP$ ). We follow that path, but argue that the clitic merges in K, rather than belonging to a projection separate from the DP.

A final note concerns the syntax of prepositions, since *pe* is often defined as a preposition even when used for DOM (Pană Dindelegan 1997, 2003 a.o.). Prepositions, be they lexical or functional, project to PP and embed a nominal phrase. Under the theory of phases, only the P area is open for transfers to the clause structure. Hence P subsumes the function of K, with consequences for the feature distribution at the left periphery of a DP.

### 3. DOM-*pe*

DOM-*pe* received a lot of attention in both formal and traditional grammar, and we refer the reader to a series of studies that detail the properties of this element (Pușcariu 1922, Niculescu 1965, Cornilescu 2000, Ionescu 2000, von Heusinger and Onea 2008, Mardale 2009b, Tigău 2010, 2010b, Stark 2011, Hill 2013). In this section, we discuss only those properties that clarify the status of *pe* as a nominal element merged within KP.

### 3.1 Preposition or nominal item?

The first clarification concerns the clausal analysis of DOM on the pattern in (9b). In this configuration,  $\alpha$  is associated with a [Case] feature, which is what *pe* is also considered to assign (Tasmowski de Ryck 1987, Manoliu-Manea 1989, Dobrovie-Sorin 1994 – cf. also a similar hypothesis for *a* in Spanish, Kayne 1975, 1991, Uriagereka 1995, Torrego 1998, Rodríguez-Mondoñedo 2007, López 2012). Does *pe* spell out  $\alpha$ ? Configurationally, this is unlikely. Assuming, for the time being, that the marked nominal phrase moves to Spec, $\alpha$ P, the ensuing PF linearization should have *pe* post-nominally, contrary to the fact (e.g. \**Maria pe vs pe Maria*). The most plausible analysis is that the raising nominal phrase has *pe* inside it<sup>1</sup>.

The second clarification concerns the status of the marked object: is it a DP or PP? This question arises from the definition of *pe* as a preposition in DOM constructions (Sala 1999, Pană Dindelegan 1997, 2003, Guruianu 2005), hence its alleged property of being an Accusative Case assigner (Cornilescu and Dobrovie-Sorin 2008: 304). The justification is that DOM-*pe* originates as a lexical preposition (i.e. Lat. *per*) and is still used as such in MR, in other configurations. Although the grammaticalization of DOM-*pe* is undisputable, some studies consider it stopped at the stage of a functional preposition that still preserves its Case assigning ability (Kayne 1975, Cornilescu and Dobrovie-Sorin 2008).

The tests we propose in this respect indicate that marked objects are not PPs but DPs. Consider the passivization test in (12). As Mardale (2008a) notices, when the object has a P-*pe* as in (12a), passivization is impossible, as in (12b). However, passivization yields a grammatical result when the object has a DOM-*pe*, as in (12c, d).

- (12) a. Profesorul contează pe toți colegii.  
 professor-the counts on all colleagues-the  
 ‘The professor counts on all his colleagues’
- b. \*Toți colegii sunt conțați de profesor.  
 all colleagues-the are counted by professor
- c. Profesorul invită pe toți colegii.  
 professor-the invites DOM all colleagues-the  
 ‘The professor invites all his colleagues’
- d. Toți colegii sunt invitați de profesor.  
 all colleagues-the are invited by professor  
 ‘All the colleagues are invited by the professor’

The ungrammaticality of (12b) is theoretically predictable: Generally, a PP is an island for movement (Cinque 1990), unless preposition stranding is possible<sup>2</sup>. The problem is that Romanian does not have preposition stranding, nor has it differential subject marking (i.e. *pe* or other marker cannot surface on subjects). Hence, the grammaticality contrast between (12b) and (12d) indicates that *pe* projects to PP in the former (i.e. *pe* merges in

<sup>1</sup> This is also the assumption in López (2012), who proposes the raising of the *pe*-DP to Spec,  $\alpha$ P.

<sup>2</sup> English has preposition stranding and passivization is allowed from selected PPs (Koopman 2000), e.g. *The students are counted on (by the professor)*.

P) but not in the latter (i.e. *pe* merges somewhere else, where it does not block DP movement).

Another test along the same lines concerns the restrictions on coordination. As shown in (13), coordination is possible between two nominal phrases, one of which is non-marked whereas the other one is under DOM:

- (13) Am invitat [niște studenți] și [pe profesorul de latină.]  
 have.1 invited some students and DOM professor-the of Latin  
 ‘I / we have invited some students and the professor of Latin’

Coordination necessarily involves two phrases that are semantically and syntactically similar (i.e. CP with CP; DP with DP; PP with PP, etc.). The grammaticality of (13) signals that both phrases are of the same type. As *niște elevi* is a DP and the first member of the coordination phrase, it follows that the second member *pe profesorul de latină* is also a DP (versus PP).

These tests indicate that DOM-*pe* is internal to the nominal structure versus a superordinated P. Its exact merge location and function is defined in the next sub-section.

### 3.2 Merge location

The premise is that DOM-*pe* merges in a head, not in a Spec. That is, the origin of DOM-*pe* is the preposition *pe*, merged in P, so the grammaticalization and bleaching process can only reduce its lexical properties, versus increasing its ability towards phrasal projection. Hence, we are looking for a functional head (versus a Spec position) in which DOM-*pe* merges.

Since the tests in (11) and (12) do not justify a PP analysis for DOM-*pe*, we must consider the functional heads internal to a DP as possible merging sites for *pe*. For this purpose, we work with the split DP hierarchy in (10b). In this configuration, either K or D<sub>1</sub> are plausible merging sites, considering the linearization, whereby *pe* precedes the definite article. However, when we factor in the interpretation, K is the best candidate for DOM-*pe* in OR. Here are the arguments: (i) Giving that we are dealing with downward reanalysis, it is more plausible that the recategorization of the functional head occurs before the recategorization of the functional item. That is, it is more plausible that P is first recategorized as K, since both are phase heads to which  $\varphi$ - and d-Agr features are mapped (followed or not followed by their transfer to D), compared to the change of grammatical category for *pe*, from preposition to semi-article. (ii) The interpretation, discussed below, indicates that DOM-*pe* in OR involves discourse features typically associated with K.

More precisely, in (11b), K is equivalent to C, so it brings to the structure not only the  $\varphi$ -features, but also the discourse feature bundle (i.e. [topic] and [d-Agr]). OR texts show that DOM-*pe* is optional, as in (14), but when it occurs, it has discourse effects:

- (14) a. *Și aceste locuri, când o am vândut, am întrebat **pre** și frații mei și **pre** toate rudele mele și **pre** meg[ileșii din sat.*  
 and these places when it=have-1SG sold have-1SG asked DOM  
 all brothers-the my and DOM all relatives-the my and DOM  
 all neighbours from village  
 ‘And these lands, when I sold them, I consulted all my brothers and all my relatives and all my neighbours from the village.’  
 (DI VI 1579-80)
- b. *Însă cândă am vrut să vândă, am întrebat nepoții mii și ruda mea și au dzis să o vândă.*  
 but when have.1SG wanted SBJV sell-1SG have.1SG asked  
 nephews-the my and relative-the my and have.3PL said SBJV  
 it=sell-1SG  
 ‘But when I wanted to sell, I consulted my nephews and my relative and they said that I should sell it.’  
 (DI LXVI 1586)

The option for DOM in (14a) versus (14b) follows from the context in which the list of relatives who agreed to the sale reported in (14a) is the salient piece of information; whereas in (14b) the agreement is the active item in the discourse, not the listing of those who agreed with the sale, so DOM does not apply. Along these lines, any direct object that is in the spotlight of the narrative and it is discourse linked appears under DOM.

Diachronic studies (Hill 2013, 2014, Hill and Mardale 2018) point out that the presence of *pe* triggers a salience reading, so it appears in contexts as in (12), and also with list readings and appositions. Hence, *pe* spells out the discourse feature bundle of K, as in (15):

- (15) [<sub>KP</sub> K-*pe* [<sub>DP</sub>.....]]

Support for the association of discourse effects and DOM-*pe* in OR comes from the fact that inanimate nouns may undergo DOM, as shown in (16a), and that is banned in MR, see (16b):

- (16) a. *să nu urâm **pre** leacure*  
 SBJV not hate-1PL DOM cures  
 ‘let’s not hate the cure’  
 (CTev {130r})
- b. *\*să nu urâm **pe** leac*  
 SBJV not hate-1PL DOM cures

Contrasts as in (16a, b) indicate that the discourse effect of DOM-*pe* in OR is so important that it trumps animacy as a requirement. That is no longer the case in MR. This entails that *pe* is analyzed as a spell-out for K in OR, but not in MR.

Crucially, the discourse reading of DOM is localized: the discourse features of K spelled out as *pe* do not interfere with the discourse features associated with the clausal heads (i.e. C or v). That is, a DOM-ed object with salience reading may or may not undergo movement, as a whole, to clausal discourse positions with wide or narrow scope. If it does, as in (17), the reading is not salience, but aboutness (i.e. overt CLLD to Spec, TopP), as in (17a), or information focus (i.e. adjunction to the vP edge), as in (17b), where the direct object is higher than the subject in situ (in Spec, vP) but lower than T. Note that the clitic in (17) is resumptive, not doubling:

- (17) a.    și **pre acești boiari i-**    au băgat în temniță  
           and DOM these lords them has send in jail  
           these lords, he sent them to jail' (DIR XVIII)
- b.       ca să se                știe cum **ne-** au luat **pre noi** Vladul  
           so that SBJV REFL know how us have taken DOM us Vlad-the  
           mare paharnic  
           great cupbearer  
           'so that it be known that the great cupbearer Vlad took us' (DIR B III)

These examples show that a KP under DOM moves as a whole, hence, it is a phase, and that there is no PP level, since the aboutness topic feature scans for nominal phrases, not for PP.<sup>3</sup>

To conclude this section, the trigger for DOM-*pe* in OR is discourse motivated, entailing some type of foregrounding (e.g. salience, list reading). Reanalysis takes place in this respect, whereby P is reanalyzed as K, while keeping *pe* as its spell-out. There are certain syntactic contexts that facilitated this reanalysis, which we do not discuss here (e.g. verbs with Dative regime changing to Accusative regime; contexts in which the meaning of the preposition *pe* is atypical and/or unstable; see Mardale 2015). The point we make is that DOM-*pe* in OR involves the replacement of PP with KP.

#### 4. CD

Clitics of any type are either heads or phrases, depending on their stage of grammaticalization (van Gelderen 2011). In Romanian, clitic personal pronouns are heads because they adjoin to head elements and do not interfere with XP movement (Alboiu 2002 a.o.). Also, in Romanian as well as in other Romance languages, clitic personal pronouns function as agreement markers at T, signalling the relation between a discourse feature and the comment/presupposition of the predication (Delfitto 2002, Miyagawa 2010, Jiménez-Fernández and Miyagawa 2014). Crucially, both clausal and nominal domains can encode predications (V predicates or/and N predicates; Kayne 1994), and the

<sup>3</sup> Fronted PPs do not receive an aboutness topic reading, but a prominence or stage setting reading (Polletto 2014).



Comparing (17) to (13), it follows that the complementary discourse effect between CD and DOM-*pe* arises from their competition for merge in the same functional head.

The theoretical background we presented in section 2 informs us that, at clausal level, [topic] is at C (in Top), whereas the [d-Agr] feature is at T, spelled out as a clitic. This configuration is typical of Romance languages, but note, however, that both features may stay at C (i.e. C-oriented clitics), an option that occurs in Balkan Slavic (Pancheva 2005). The same variation has to be extended to K: the fact that *pe* and the clitic can alternate for feature checking in K indicates that the [topic] and discourse [d-Agr] features are bundled on K (instead of having [d-Agr] at D), and one lexical item can check this bundle.

Crucially, CD maintains the discourse effect localized within KP, in the same way it was shown for DOM-*pe*. Indeed, although the reading on the CD-ed noun is that of familiar topic, it does not preclude the treatment of the KP as a whole for the purpose of fronting to clausal discourse positions. This is a situation that we also pointed out for DOM-*pe* and conforms to the phase impenetrability condition (Chomsky 2008). We illustrate this in (20) with CD-ed indirect objects, since CD with direct objects is rare in OR and inexistent in MR:

- (20) a.     **Ei**     **îi**           duce deseori flori <**ei**>.  
           her-DAT her.CL.DAT brings often flowers <**her.DAT**>  
           ‘He is often bringing her flowers’
- b.     **Îi**           duce **ei**       deseori flori.  
           her.CL.DAT brings her.DAT often flowers  
           ‘He is often bringing her flowers to her’

Pronouns are obligatorily CD-ed as indirect objects, so we can say that in (18) the marked KP object undergoes CLLD to CP or to vP. The assessment criteria are: (i) the position of the adverb *deseori* at the edge of vP; (ii) the position of the verb in T. Accordingly, in (20b) the strong pronoun appears between T and vP, in a discourse position, which is typically adjoined to vP (Belletti 2008). In (20a), the strong pronoun is clause initial, higher than TP, which indicates TopP in the CP field. The reading changes accordingly and in both configurations it is different from the CD-ed version in situ (i.e. aboutness topic in (20a), information focus in (20b) versus familiar topic if the strong pronouns were left in situ).

This analysis confirms the idea that CD is a sub-case of CLLD insofar as CD uses the clitic to spell out discourse features in the nominal domain, whereas CLLD does the same in the clausal domain. Consequently, CD as an object marking strategy responds to discourse triggers rather than animacy. This characterization captures the main properties of CD in Balkan languages, where object marking (of both indirect and direct objects) entails specificity (which is inherent to [topic] features; Cinque 1990) and a familiar reading, whereas animacy is not relevant (Mišeska-Tomić 2006). Romanian follows this pattern for the marking of indirect objects, as shown in (18), but modifies both the marking strategy and the triggers where the direct objects are concerned. This is discussed in the next section.

## 5. CD/DOM

This section focuses on constructions where CD and DOM-*pe* collude for object marking. This strategy is incipient in OR and becomes the default option in MR (see Hill and Mardale 2018 for statistics). First, we show how the discourse triggered marking strategy can be extended to objects under CD/DOM; then we show how this analysis can further account for the different behavior of DOM-*pe* compared to P-*pe*.

### 5.1 The collusion

So far, we have analyzed the object marking operation as a KP internal process triggered by the activation of the discourse feature of K. The analysis replicates the proposals for the C head in this respect: That is, when C comes with a [topic] feature, it automatically generates a [d-Agr] feature which can be either bundled with [topic] at C or can be transferred to T, as a matter of typology (cross-linguistically different parametric settings, in the spirit of Miyagawa 2010). Along these lines, we argued that, in OR, [topic] and [d-Agr] are bundled on K, where they can be checked and differently valued by either *pe* or the clitic, in complementary distribution.

However, the OR texts also display constructions where CD and DOM-*pe* cooccur, with both nouns and pronouns, as in (21). These constructions become preferred over DOM-*pe* (von Heusinger and Onea 2008, Stark 2011, Avram and Zafiu 2017, Hill and Mardale 2018):

- (21) a. de câte ori **i-** am zdrobit **pre eghipteani**  
of how times them.CL have.1SG crushed DOM Egyptians  
‘how many times I crushed the Egyptians’  
(PO {209}, 2)
- b. am vrut să **o** iau **pre ea** mie muiare  
have.1SG wanted SBJV her.CL take DOM her me.DAT wife  
‘I wanted to take her as my wife’  
(PO {45}, 18)

The line of analysis we propose for (21) is tied to the further semantic bleaching and downward reanalysis of *pe*. It has been argued in the literature (Antonov and Mardale 2014, Mardale 2015, Hill and Mardale 2018) that *pe* is further desemantized towards MR, and that it ceases to trigger the salience reading noticed in OR constructions with DOM alone. This is consistent with an analysis in which *pe* ceased to qualify for checking the bundle of discourse features of K. Consider (22a vs 22b), where object marking seems optional. In fact, the difference between object marking and non-marking coincides with a difference in the specificity reading: the presence of CD/DOM brings up a “more specific” reading, in the sense that the direct object is closely known to both discourse participants due to its D-linked property, which is responsible for the familiar flavour of the topic reading.

- (22) a. Urăsc **mincinoșii**.  
 hate-1SG liars-the  
 ‘I am hating the liars’
- b. Îi urăsc **pe mincinoși**.  
 them.CL hate-1SG DOM liars  
 ‘I am hating the liars’

A familiar reading contradicts the effect of DOM-*pe* (see section 3), and indicates that *pe* lost its ability to check and value the bundle of discourse features at K. Instead, the gap is filled with the clitic pronoun, which is consistent in valuing K for a familiar reading. That is, the CD marking strategy has been recycled in the case of direct objects by combining it with a demoted DOM-*pe*.

Why is DOM-*pe* still present, since CD is sufficient to check K? Following the proposal in Bernstein et al. (2018), we suggest that the D field of marked objects is split, as in (10b). That is, D is associated with a feature bundle that contains [+/-definite] and [+/-person] features (in the spirit of Longobardi 1994). Although this bundle can be checked and valued by one lexical item (e.g. an article), it may also be split, so that each feature becomes associated with a different functional head.

This possibility has been documented for Catalan (which has two types of definite articles co-occurring; Bernstein et al. 2018), and seems to be mandatory in Catalan and Spanish under object marking: the [person] feature is checked and spelled out separately from [definite] in order to enhance a *particularized* reading. This split is justifiable: in non-marked contexts, D has a [+person] valued by first and second person pronouns, but a [-person] value for nouns that are not discourse participants. Under differential object marking, a [+person] value is obligatory, even for nouns that are not discourse participants, hence the requirement to mark this non-default option<sup>6</sup>. The propensity toward animacy for the marked objects follows from the natural affinity of [+person] and humans.

Accordingly, the application of this analysis to Romanian CD/DOM yields the configuration in (23), where *pe* has been reanalyzed downward as D<sub>1</sub>, for particularizing, whereas the clitic checks and spells out the discourse feature of K. At this stage, *pe* merges at the same location as Spanish *a* (i.e. Sp. *a* is in D<sub>1</sub> in Bernstein et al. 2018).

- (23) [<sub>KP</sub> K-clitic [<sub>DP1</sub> D-*pe* [<sub>DP2</sub> D-article....]]]

The configuration in (23) correctly captures two important properties of CD/DOM: (i) the cooccurrence of the clitic and DOM-*pe*, which were attested as competing strategies in OR; (ii) the increase in the requirement for animacy in MR object marking, which was not stringent in OR, where there is no evidence of D<sub>1</sub>.

<sup>6</sup> Several studies (Silverstein 1976, Torrego 1998, Iemmolo 2010, Mardale 2015 a.o.) pointed out that although direct objects map theme/patient thematic roles, under differential object marking they are pushed up the theta-role hierarchy, closer to the agent role. Syntactically, this is encoded through the obligatory [+person] feature.

Along these lines, we can use the split D analysis to account for typological distinctions in object marking, between differential marking triggered by animacy (i.e. split D) or only by discourse features in K (i.e. non-split D). The animacy oriented pattern is the default option in Romance languages, where the DOM particle is obligatory while the co-occurring clitic is optional. On the other hand, the discourse oriented pattern is the default in Balkan languages (i.e. the discourse feature of K is obligatory and it triggers the marking), where CD is pervasive whereas the DOM particle is non-existent, hence the animacy feature is irrelevant.

As usual, MR is situated at a typological intersection: object marking entails both an activated discourse feature in K and a [+person] feature in D<sub>1</sub>. This compromise responds to the typological tension attested in OR, where the Romance pattern (i.e. DOM-*pe* with no clitic) was in competition with the Balkan pattern (i.e. CD with no DOM-*pe*).

## 5.2 Prepositions versus DOM-*pe*

This section addresses an issue that is not essential to the analysis of CD/DOM, but which often arises in the literature (Mardale 2008b, Onea and Hole 2017): namely, why is there an optionality with DOM, as in (24)? Is it the case that DOM-*pe* is still treated as a preposition?

- (24) a. L- am auzit pe student . // \* (L)- am auzit.  
 him have.1SG heard DOM student // him have.1SG heard  
 (\*pe) studentul  
 DOM student-the  
 ‘I heard the student’
- b. Am auzit studentul.  
 have.1SG heard student-the  
 ‘I heard the student’
- c. L-am auzit pe studentul dificil.  
 him-have.1SG heard DOM student-the difficult  
 ‘I heard the difficult student’

More precisely, (24) shows that the use of DOM-*pe* blocks the definite article with unmodified nouns: either CD/DOM (24a) or the article may occur in these contexts (24b), but not both. Modified nouns do not observe this ban (24c).

This behavior of DOM-*pe* seems to replicate the behavior of lexical prepositions, which also display the ban against definite articles, as shown in (25):

- (25) a. Luptă pentru familie. // \*Luptă pentru familia.  
 fight-3SG for family fight-3SG for family-the  
 ‘S/he is fighting for (his /) the family’
- b. Luptă pentru familia reunită.  
 fight-3SG for family-the united  
 ‘S/he is fighting for the united family’

In both sets of examples, the contrast arises between the use of the noun with or without modifiers: unmodified nouns observe the ban, whereas modified nouns do not (cf. also Dobrovie-Sorin 2007). Studies that discuss this similarity consider either that DOM-*pe* is still merged in P or that it preserves this peculiarity by virtue of its prepositional origin. Nevertheless, the tests are clear on nominal versus prepositional status of DOM-*pe*, and etymology or origin is irrelevant for the process of language acquisition. So why do we have this similar behaviour in (24) and (25)?

Analyses of the Romanian DP structure (Giusti 2005, Dobrovie-Sorin and Giurgea 2006, Giurgea 2013 a.o.) justify the postnominal definite article through movement of either the noun or the adjective. For example, considering a phrase like *studentul dificil* ‘the difficult student’, (26a) shows N-to-D, which attaches the article to the noun and keeps the adjective postnominal. This is the default DP structure in MR. However, *dificilul student* ‘the difficult student’ is also possible, as a marked option, in which the AP has a more emphatic reading. This involves the configuration in (26b), where AP moves to Spec, DP and provides the lexical base for the article:

- (26) a. [DP D-**noun**-article [NP AP N-<noun>]]]  
 b. [DP **AP** D-article [NP <AP> N-noun]]]

In light of these data, it appears that for PP structures as in (25), N-to-D is obligatory in the presence of AP in Spec, NP (25b), but not when an AP is absent, i.e. with unmodified nouns, as in (25a). The reading, however, is definite, which means that the [definite] feature of D is checked in some other way that does not involve the merging of the definite article. We propose that Romanian has an idiosyncratic property which allows P to check the [definite] feature of D, by collapsing with D in the absence of KP. That is, there is no KP under P because P takes over the mapping function of K, i.e. P is the phase edge, so P is the head to which  $\phi$  - and d- agreement feature sets are mapped, which makes K redundant<sup>7</sup>. The fact that most prepositions do not display a definite article, e.g. *pentru* in (25), indicates that P and D are not just adjacent, but collapsed, so the definite article is not probed for merging.

This kind of P-D feature checking works as long as the noun introduces no other functional features in the derivation; that is, there are no thematic features or agreement features that justify the merging of modifiers and/or complements. If the latter is the case, then an articulated P ← DP structure is in order, in which [definite] is checked by these elements through free-riding. Note that this property of Romanian P was incrementally established (i.e. the OR texts shows instances where the P/D collapse does not apply) and expanded gradually within the category of prepositions (e.g. *cu* ‘with’ is still not affected by this operation in MR).

Importantly, the justification proposed for the P/D collapse cannot be extended to DOM-*pe*, since the tests indicate that DOM-*pe* is in D, not in P, and the nominal structure involves a KP level, since embedding under a lexical P does not apply. Giving the depth

<sup>7</sup> This proposal is in line with other notable contrasts, e.g. *înainte* vs. *înaintea*, *împotrivă* vs. *împotriva*, which display the fusing of the preposition and a definite article (for the analysis of *a* as a D element see Giurgea 2015). The possibility of such fusion indicates that, in PP, there is no KP level, so P and D are adjacent.

of reanalysis (i.e. *pe* was twice removed from P), the learners would have no clue about the prepositional origin of DOM-*pe*. Hence, considering the configurations in (10a, b), the only explanation is that D remains unsplit and checked by *pe* when [definite] is the only other feature in addition to [+person]. In other words, [definite] is checked through free-riding when *pe* checks [+person], since these two features are inherently related (i.e. by default, particularization entails specificity and definiteness). However, when the noun merges in the derivation with more features that justify the merging of agreeing modifiers, D splits, since *pe* does not qualify to check other relevant features.

According to this theoretical discussion, the fact that simple nouns occur without definite articles under prepositions as well as under DOM-*pe* is coincidental, and has to be related to independent properties of the grammar. More precisely, for economy purposes, unsplit heads are preferred over split heads, and this tendency is observable across the board in the grammar, not only in the nominal domain (see e.g. the alternation of split and unsplit C heads in OR, Hill and Alboiu 2016).

## 6. Conclusions

This paper started from the observation that there are two strategies for differential object marking in Romanian: one that involves only a DOM particle, and one that involves CD. Seeing that these strategies occur in complementary distribution (in OR) or collude for the same purpose (in OR and MR), we pointed out that a uniform account is necessary, by which there is a constant bundle of features that are checked either through CD or the DOM particle, or a combination of these operations. Importantly, the clause related accounts of DOM (i.e. marked DPs move to a projection within vP to receive Case; López 2012) cannot capture these variations, since they focus on the marking through DOM particles but have nothing to say about CD.

The hypothesis developed in this paper concerns the structural domain in which the CD/DOM variation can be captured: before looking at the vP structure, we should first focus on the internal structure of the nominal projection selected by V. What does V see in a marked nominal phrase that forces it to process it differently than a non-marked counterpart? Clearly, this is not a matter of complexity (i.e. unmarked complex DPs are processed in the same way as the less complex unmarked ones), but a matter of the information visible at the phase edge (i.e. KP for nominal phrases) and which is different for marked versus unmarked nominal phrases, irrespective of their level of complexity. Hence, our analysis considered the ways in which the DOM particle and CD may compete or interact within the internal structure of a nominal phrase.

The results of the analysis are as follows:

- (i) The marking of objects in Romanian obligatorily involves an activated bundle of discourse features at K (i.e. [topic] and [d-Agr]), yielding an obligatory discourse effect localized over the KP (i.e. it could be salience or familiar topic).
- (ii) In OR, the discourse feature of K could be checked and valued either through CD or DOM-*pe*, in complementary distribution.
- (iii) Starting in OR and developing into the default option of MR is also the possibility of combining CD and DOM. This arises with the splitting of D over two heads, justified

under the particularized property of D, i.e. [+person] in D even for nouns. This split is intrinsically related to the reanalysis of *pe* from K to D. The increased impact of animacy as a trigger for object marking in Romanian is related to this structural shift.

This analysis has two important advantages. One concerns the way in which marked objects are processed after their merge with V: the discourse feature of K responds to an extra feature mapped to *v* (e.g. an E-topic theta-role feature, as in Onea and Mardale forthcoming), which does not occur with unmarked KPs. A second advantage is typological: Albeit object marking occurs in both Balkan and Romance languages, there is a systematic contrast in their parametric settings, according to whether D remains unsplit (in the Balkan group) or is split, having [+person] in D<sub>1</sub> (in the Romance group). The discourse feature of K entails CD and is orthogonal to animacy, whereas the [+person] feature of K/D<sub>1</sub> occurs with a DOM particle and favors animacy. Romanian illustrates the intersection of these parametric settings, since K with discourse features is constant, but D may or may not be split (see 23).

### Texts

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