Romanian DOM-marker is not a case assigner

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1. Introduction

- according to Kayne's generalization (1991) (cf. Jaeggli 1982), a (Romance) language that has DOM would necessarily have CI-doubling (e.g., Spanish):

(i) *Lo vimos *(a) Juan.
   him.CL=saw.1PL DOM=Juan
   ‘We saw Juan’

- in such constructions, the clitic absorbs the Case from the verb, so a preposition is needed to assign Case to the noun in DO position => hence the latter’s status as Case assigner

- this is indeed the case of Modern Romanian, but as a default rule, which has exceptions (sometimes DOM occurs without CI-doubling (iia)), and the generalization is valid only in synchrony (Dobrovie-Sorin 1994, Hill & Tasmowski 2008, Tigu 2010) (iib):

(ii) a. N-am văzut pe nimeni.
   not=have.1 seen DOM=nobody
   ‘I/we saw nobody’

b. L-am văzut pe Ion / pe el.
   him.CL=have.1 seen DOM=Ion / DOM=him
   ‘I / We saw Ion / him’

- crucially, the rule does not apply to all the Romanian dialects (Hill 2013), and most importantly, it is inadequate for Old Romanian, where CI-doubling and DOM may occur independently (Hill & Tasmowski 2008, Antonov & Mardale 2014, Mardale 2015)

2. Goal of the presentation

- the aim of this presentation is to provide a critical examination of the Case assigner hypothesis for the Romanian DOM-marker (prj< Lat. per), and we will propose a different line of investigation in terms of Topic marker

more precisely, we show that pe is not an Accusative Case marker (contra Kayne’s generalization, also Manoliu-Manea 1989; Dobrovie-Sorin 1994; Mardale 2007, 2009b; Cornes&cu & Dobrovie-Sorin 2008), rather, in Old Romanian, it is a (most often contrasting) Topic marker (cf. also Nikolaeva 2001; Iemmolo 2010; Dalrymple & Nikolaeva 2011; Iimmolo & Klumpp 2014; Hill 2013, 2015; Antonov & Mardale 2014; Kiss 2015) that emerged from the lexical (locative) preposition pe, and which has further developed into a DOM marker (in Modern Romanian)

- the line of analysis adopted in this paper continues previous work on (the diachrony of) DOM in Romanian (von Heusinger & Onea 2008; Mardale 2009a; Stark 2011; Hill 2013; Antonov & Mardale 2014; Mardale 2015)

3. Some notes on DOM in Romanian

3.1. Old Romanian

- in OR (especially in the first (original) Romanian texts, 16th – early 17th c.), DOM was a non-systematic phenomenon, indicating the early stages as a new parametric setting which became fixed rather recently (according to Pușcaru 1905, 1926; Rosetti 1973, 1978), and whose dating cannot be exactly determined (Drăguț 1941; Dimitrescu 1960)

- the contexts in which DOM occurs are – with the exception of (personal) pronouns – not at all fixed, i.e. that there is a great variety of uses. It appears that, comparing to MR, DOM in OR may occur in contexts where it is not expected and, vice-versa, it may be absent in contexts where it is expected:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1: OCCURRENCE CONTEXTS OF DOM IN OLD ROMANIAN (THE FIRST ORIGINAL ROMANIAN TEXTS, 16th – EARLY 17TH CENTURY)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[+ obligatory]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERSONAL PRONOUN [+ HUMAN]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[optional]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(DEMONSTRATIVE / POSSESSIVE…) PRONOUNS [+/- animate]; PROPER PRONOUNS [+ animate]; PROPER NOUNS [- animate]; RELATIONAL NOUNS [+ HUMAN]; (STRONG) DEFINITE SPECIFIC DPs [+ HUMAN]; INDEFINITE SPECIFIC DPs [+ HUMAN]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[excluded]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEGATIVE PRONOUNS [- animate]; [+/- DEFINITE SPECIFIC [- animate] DPs; NON-SPECIFIC [+/- animate] DPs;bare NPs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2. Modern Romanian

- MR contrasts with OR insofar as DOM has become a systematic phenomenon, in the sense that it underwent grammaticalization, having – apart from some small areas of variation – well-defined occurrence contexts (being obligatory, optional and excluded).

**Table 2: Types of nominals and DOM requirements in Modern Romanian**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Obligatory</th>
<th>Optional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NEGATIVE PRONOUN [- ANIMATE]; PROPER NOUNS [- ANIMATE]; (INDEFINITE SPECIFIC [- ANIMATE]; NON-SPECIFIC [+/- ANIMATE] DPs; BARE Ns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- a comparison between Table 1 and Table 2: apart from the two extremes of the hierarchy (represented by personal pronouns and expressions with inanimate referent and/or non-specific reading), all the other contexts form, in the OR texts, a heterogeneous and fluctuating area:

  -- findings (Mardale 2015): unexpected marking (e.g., toponyms) and lack of marking (e.g., with the negative pronoun nimeni ‘nobody’, certain proper human names or still with DPs containing certain relational Ns)

  -- such findings should not surprise us since in the OR period the phenomenon was still incipient and fluctuating. In other words, the grammaticalization process (and hence the reanalysis of pe) did not undergo up to its last stage, and the categories that we see today as marked obligatorily (proper human Ns, relational Ns, definite DPs with human specific referent) were only partly affected by pe extension

- consequently, we agree on the fluctuating character of DOM in Romanian, from the oldest texts up to today. This long term fluctuation indicates that the process does not concern a grammatical need (i.e., the selected DP was successfully checked in the presence or in the absence of pre) but a discourse need, which allows for a wide range of intra- and inter-language variations

- this process accelerates in time, so that – according to a recent study (see von Heusinger & Otea 2008, who analyzed the phenomenon throughout several centuries in different translations of the Bible) – it is only in the 19th century that the contexts for DOM seem to have stabilized and therefore the reanalysis process reached its last stage

3.3. Generalization

- DOM seems to be excluded in contexts where the DO is non-referential, namely it has a property denotation (in terms of Bleanu 2004, 2005; Dobrovic-Sorin alii 2005; Cornescau & Dobrovic-Sorin 2008; Mardale 2007, 2009b), associated with the syntax of a non-argument position (of pseudo-incorporation; Massam 2001; Dayal 2003)

- therefore, as also claimed on different occasions (see Mardale 2007, 2009b, 2010, 2015), we believe that the only generalization that can be made with regard to DOM is a negative one:

  (iii) DOM is excluded for DOs having a property reading, that is DOs that are (semantically) non-referential and (morphosyntactically) non-argumental (possibly resulting in structures with pseudo-incorporation).

4. Data: two categorizations for pe

- Romanian pe (cf. its old pre and regional pâ, pi, pîră, pri forms) has two types of uses (Pană Dindeleogan 1997; Gruianu 2005; Mardale 2007, 2009a, b, 2013, 2015; Antonov & Mardale 2014):

  (i) as a lexical P expressing concrete meanings of a great variety (especially place and time, as shown in (1) to (8); a gradual passage can be noticed towards more abstract meanings, part of which are not present (or less frequent) in MR (e.g., examples (5) – (6)).

**ON / AT**

(1) a. De la Adam până au născut Hristos 5500, from at Adam until has-born Christ 5500
    iară până au pus Hristos pe cruce 5533 again until have-put Christ on cross 5533
    ‘From Adam until Christ has been born in 5500, and again, until they put Christ on the cross, in 5533.’ (1587)

b. ca să nu piară această păianjină și moșii domnievoastră
    that subl not disappear this country and properties the your
    și ale noastră pre ceastă vreme și iute și rea
    and of our in this time and bitter and bad
    ‘lest this country and your and our properties should disappear in these bitter and bad times’ (1599)

**ACROSS / THROUGH**

(2) a. Deci m-[a]-nu căutat ca și purtat pre munți
    so me-has-looked she and carried across mountains
    și am fost slabă și nepuțunică și nimini
    and have-been weak and powerless and nobody
    de rudele meale nu m-a grijit
    of relatives the my not me-has-taken care
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‘So she looked after me and carried me across the mountains and I was weak and unwell, and none of my relatives took care of me’ (1591).

b. Noi ce-am putut amâna fecit și isprava we what-have-could have-done and result the ți-am tremes în tot clip pre lurgachi. you-have-sent in every way through lurgachi ‘We did what we could and we sent you the result by all means through lurgachi’ (1593).

ALONG (3) Și se-ai dus în sus pre Dunăre... că au văzut and REFLEX-have-gone in up along Danube because have-seen cu ochii lui că au trecut creata corobit ce with eyes the his that have-pașed those ships that știi și dominia-ta pre Dunăre în sus. know:REFLEX.2SG also highness the=your along Danube in up ‘And they went up along the Danube... since he saw with his own eyes that those ships you also know have gone up along the Danube.’ (1521)

IN EXCHANGE FOR (4a). cum să se știe ce-am cheltuit pre iazul de la how SUBJ REFLEX-known.3SG what-have-spent for pond the of at moară de la Băbeani în zilele lui Alexandru vodă mill of at Băbeani in days the of Alexandru prince ‘so to be known what we spent in exchange for the pond from the mill of Băbeani in the days of Prince Alexandru’ (1573). b. Și se știe cumpărat am cumpărat aceștia rumânii, SUBJ REFLEX-known.3SG how when have-bought these Romanians ciștii suntu in ceasări carte scris, noi am dat p[ref]e ei that are in this letter written M.PL we have-given for them tot galbeni, also golden. M.PL ‘Let it be known that, when we bought these Slaves, as many as recorded in this letter, we paid for them in gold coins too.’ (1600)

BY / ACCORDING TO (5a). În ce cean veri sosî totu-z va fi pre voie in what time will.2SG-arrive all-you.DAT will.3SG=be by wish și vom merege și noi cu papa and will.1PL=go also us with pasha the ‘At whatever time you arrive, everything will be according to your wish, and we shall also go alongside the pasha’ (1593).

b. noi am câtuță și am judecat pre dire și pre lege we have=looked and have=judged by justice and by law ‘we sought and judged according to the justice and to the law’ (1616)

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CONCERNING/WITH REGARD TO (6a). Și eu, Roșca, am făcut [i]rate cu Balotă pe moșie and I Roșca have.1SG=been brother with Balota about land ‘And I, Roșca, was Balota’s associate with respect to the estate’ (1563).

b. cuma m-am înfrățit cu Drăghici și cu Giurgi how REFLEX-have=married with Drăghic and with Giurgi pre toate moşile și pre țgani și pre tot about all lands the and about Gypsies and about all ce am avut. what have.1SG=had ‘as I associated with Drăghic and Giurgi with regard to all the estates and Slaves and all I possessed.’ (1591)

c. cu mare jaluță s-au jeluit pre Niculachi with big grievance REFLEX-have.3SG=complained about Niculachi stolnicul și pre toți feciorii Boului vistiariulnicul seneschal the and about all sons the Bou the GEN treasurer the ‘with a great grievance [he] complained about Niculachi the seneschal and about all treasurer Bou’s sons’ (1624)

WITH THE AIM OF (rare) (7) Și eu, Ștefan diiacul, am scris și pre mai mare and I Ștefan scribe the have.1SG=written and for more big credințe ne-am pus și peceția ca să se știe hope our=have.1PL=put also seals the that SUBJ REFLEX-known.3SG ‘And I, Stefan the scribe, wrote and we, with the aim to higher hope, apposed our seals, so as to be known.’ (1570)

BY THE NAME OF (frequent) (8a). Deci eu, Crăciun, m-au ajunsu vrea de [n]evoie so I Crăciun me=has.3SG=arrived time of necessity pentru că am furat un cal al Bălosului oți for that have.1SG=stolen a horse of Bălosu the GEN from Ivănăști, pe name Stan. by name Stan ‘So I, Crăciun, am in time of trouble because I stole a horse from Bălos of Ivănăști, by the name of Stan.’ (1563)

b. Deci am un frate de tată pre name Dumitru and so have.PRES.1SG a brother of father by name Dumitru and las să-i dea Dragna o țigancă pre name Șchiia, let SUBJ=him.DAT give Dragna a Gypsy. F by name Șchiia iară altele rude ale meale, minim să n-aibă nici un lucr, and other relatives of mine nobody SUBJ not=have.3SG not a thing că nu m-au cătât. because not me=have=looked.3PL ‘So I have a brother on my father’s side whose name is Dumitru and I let Dragna give him a Gypsy woman by the name of Șchiia, and, as for the other relatives of mine, nobody
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should get anything, because they have not looked after me.’ (1591)

- in all these examples, pe heads a PP that is systematically an adjunct

(ii) as a desemantized marker of the direct object, as in (9), pe has grammatical, semantic and pragmatic properties that are different from the preposition pe

MARKER

a. 

(9) a. 
Pentru acea, ce preot să va afla [la] besearea din Gâlați, for=that what priest REFL will.3SG=be at church.the
să pomenească și pre Radu carele o au dat șî pre părinții la[i] și să pomenească în sfânta 
SUBJ mention.3SG also DOM Radu who.the it=has=given
and DOM parents.the his and SUBJ mention.3SG in holy.the
liturghie și pre acești [...] Toma č(d), Dobra č(d), Radu. mass also DOM these Toma Dobra Radu
‘Therefore, any priest that shall be at the church of Gâlați shall also mention Radu, who offered it, and his parents, and he shall mention during the holy mass these people as well: Toma č(d), Dobra č(d), Radu.’ (1570)

b. 

Deci pârcălașul ne=a<=a> strâ=a=s pe toț (...) și so govemer.the us=has=gathered DOM all and 
ne-au întrebat pe toț cum știm cu sufletele us=has-asked DOM all how know.PRES.1PL. with souls.the
nostre, arăt-ao Tătărași hotar de cea ce parte de vale? our had-have Tătărași.the border of that part of valley
‘So the governor gathered us all and asked us all if we can swear on our souls whether the Tătărași had a border on that side of the valley.’ (1595)

c. 

și află aiasta scrisoare a mea simăriț și find.SUBJ.3SG this letter of mine good.health
pre domenevastră. DOM you
‘And may this letter of mine find you in good health.’ (1600)

- in contexts as in (9), pe does not head a PP, but a phrase whose categorial status is the same with its complement, more precisely a DP, the entire structure functioning as an argument (DO)

5. Theoretical background and challenges

- there are three most influential accounts on the origin of DOM in Romanian

5.1. The functionalist account

- pe is an analytical device for disambiguating the direct object from the subject (Pușcaru (1922); Onu (1959); Niculescu (1959, 1965); Guțu Romalo (1973); Pană Dindelegan (1976, 1997, 1999); Sala (1999); Guruiam (2005))

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- pe is a. Mama adoră copilul.
b. Copilul adoră mama. c. Adoră mama copilul.
d. Adoră mama copilul.

(10a) Mama adoră copilul.
mother.the adores.PRES.3SG child.the
(10b) Copilul adoră mama.
child.the adores.PRES.3SG mother.the
(10c) Adoră mama copilul.
mother.the adores.PRES.3SG child.the
(10d) Adoră mama copilul.

Either ‘The mother adores the baby.’ or ‘The baby adores the mother.’

(iii) Hoțul urmărește / atacă polițistul.
the thief.the follows / attacks policeman.the
Either ‘The thief follows / attacks the policeman.’ or ‘The policeman follows / attacks the thief.’

(11) omulu la bate Domnului
man.the him=beats God.the
Either ‘The man, God punishes him.’ or ‘The man punishes God.’ (Pușcariu, apud Drăganu 1943: 74)

5.2. The semantic-lexicalist approach

- his approach capitalizes on the fact that pe occurs in most cases with DOs referring to people (therefore, a human animate referent). Hence, the proposal is that pe is a morpho-lexical means of expressing the so-called personal gender1 in Romanian. This analysis is developed in Spitzer (1928); Racoviță (1940); Graur (1945); Pană Dindelegan (1997), a.o.

5.3. The generative approach: Kayne’s generalization

- according to Kayne’s generalization (Kayne 1975, 1991), DOM and clitic doubling condition each other, so a language that has DOM would necessarily have clitic doubling (at least in Romance). The clitic is supposed to absorb the Case from V, so a P is needed to assign Case to the noun in DO position. Hence the latter’s status as Case assigner

- this is indeed the case of Modern Romanian, but as a default rule which has exceptions (i.e., sometimes DOM occurs without clitic doubling), and the description is valid only in synchrony (see Tasmowski de Ryck 1987; Manoliu-Manea 1989; Dobrovie-Sorin 1994; Uriagereka 1995; Hill & Tasmowski 2008; Leonetti 2008; Țigău 2010, 2014). Crucially, the rule does not apply to all the Romanian dialects (Hill 2013), and most importantly, it is inadequate for Old Romanian, where clitic doubling and DOM occur independently (Hill & Tasmowski 2008)

1 The class of words that share the property of referring exclusively to human animate referents, having (morphological and lexical) specific means of identification (pe for some direct objects, the compound preposition de către “by” for some Agent adjuncts, vocative endings, etc.)
5.4. Challenges

- none of the three hypotheses above manages to account for the data complexity, and the counterarguments that may be brought are significant:

  -- first, it is known that pe as DO marker was first attested with DOs expressed as personal (stressed) pronouns (Dimitrescu 1966; Diaconescu 1970; von Heusinger & Orea 2008; Mardale 2009a; Stark 2011; Antonov & Mardale 2014), which have distinct Case morphology to differentiate between subject and object (e.g. Nominative: eu, tu, el/ea... vs. Accusative: mine, tine, sine/el/ea...), and so, they could not show the above mentioned functional ambiguity:

    (13)a. Şi iară dăm ocaţia cuvintă ca să poată
    and again give.PRES.1PL land rightful that SUBJ can.3SG
    hrâni pre sine şi oamenii lui. feed.NINF DOM him and people.the his
    ‘And we give again the rightful land so that it can feed him and his people.’ (1593)

    (13)b. Dece me purtat pîră mini 9 luna, ca on tilhar den judeţ
    but me-carried DOM me 9 month like a criminal from court
    den judeţ... domneta facut a câsta leghe, trămen pîră noi judeţul
    to court you made this law sent DOM us judge.the
domnetale, 9 luna, tote ne judecate-ne cu deriştu
    your 9 month all us judged-us with law
    cantiliară domnetale. chancellery.the your
    ‘but he dragged me in the 9th month, from court, like a criminal [...], you made
    this law, you sent us to your court, in the 9th month, your chancellery also judged us
    according to this law...’ (1594)

In contexts as in (13), there is no room for structural ambiguity or absence of Case marking.

  -- second, pe may occur with a DO having a non-human referent, and it is even inanimate. This is an argument against the morpho-lexical hypothesis:

    (14)a. şi de acolo au tremis pre Mustafa aga al său şi
    and from there have-sent DOM Mustafa aga of his and
    DOM flag.the of Tighine la Sceatin şi au lovît
    that Tighine to Sceatin and they hit
    pre Sceatin, 8 septembrie, de au prădat Sceatinul.
    DOM Sceatin 8 September that have.3PL=hit
    ‘and from there he sent his Mustafa aga and the flag of Tighine to Sceatin and they hit
    Sceatin, on September 8, and they looted Sceatin.’ (1593)

    (14)b. că înţeleagemu şi vedem cu cum se-au milostivit
    that understand.PRES.1PL and see.PRES.1PL how REFL=have.3PL=graced
    de-au scosu pre teara Moldovei
    that have.3PL=released DOM country.the Moldova.GEN

  -- finally, the DO marked by pe may not be doubled by a pronominal clitic, as shown in (15). On the other hand, the reversed situation has also been identified, where the DO is expressed without pe-marking, but it may show clitic doubling (cf. (12) above):

    (15)a. Derer-acea rugăm pre domniauostră se puteţi face
    for-that pray.PRES.1PL DOM you SUBJ can.2PL dod.INF
    ca se ne tocmin, hînitor...
    that SUBJ refl-agree.1PL nicely
    ‘Therefore we ask you to do so that we can nicely agree...’ (1592)

    (15)b. Rogu-mă mărriei sale să crezi pre omul nostru,
    pray.1SG=REFL highness.DAT your SUBJ believe.2SG DOM man.the our
    for-Gilgorie postechinal, de ce va grăi.
    DOM Gilgorie house.manager.the about what will.3SG=say
    ‘I ask your highness to believe our man, Gilgorie the house manager, for what he has
    to say.’ (1598)

  - therefore, the data in (13) to (15) indicate that the previous analyses of DOM do not provide an adequate coverage for the data, and especially for the Old Romanian data. The latter suggest the need for a different approach, in which the triggers are independent of Case requirements and in which pe is not assigned an [animate] feature in the lexicon (which would increase the semantic features of pe and thus clash with the proof of its desemanticization).

6. A different proposal

- the key for understanding DOM in Romanian lies in the understanding of the origin and status of pe, which ensures DOM...
- in a nutshell, a gradual attrition is proposed for pe, in (21), by which its concrec semantics becomes abstract, then the abstract meaning is reanalyzed as a topicalization property under discourse triggers; the last step is the complete desemantization, by which the topic marker pe becomes a grammatical tool for marking the syntactic argumental position.

6.1. What counts for the analysis of Romanian pe

- the Romanian data indicate that the following aspects of DOM should be considered in this language:

(i) the category and the interpretation of the DO marked by pe;

(ii) the context where the DO marked by pe occurs (with displacement or not);

(iii) the type (that is, the valency frame) of the verb that may allow for a DO marked by pe.

- points (i) and (ii): the only category that shows a systematic and compulsory marking, ever since the first attestations, is the (personal) pronoun (Dimitrescu 1960; von Heusinger & Onea 2008; Mardale 2008, 2009a; Stark 2011; Antonov & Mardale 2014)

-- at the denotation level, this type of object is associated obligatorily with a referential reading (Farkas & von Heusinger 2003), more precisely as individual (specific) or generalized quantifier (Cornilescu 2000; Dobrovic-Sorin 1997, 2002; Cornilescu & Dobrovic-Sorin 2008; Mardale 2007, 2009b; Tițanu 2010, 2014), compatible reading – and even imposed – by pe (see the analysis as denotation filter in Cornilescu 2000) (16)

-- at the pragmatic-semantic level, it has been shown (Farkas 2002; Hii & Tasnoki 2008; Hill 2013, 2015; Antonov & Mardale 2014) that the same objects are interpreted as (familiar and most often contrastive) Topics, especially when in a dislocation context (17)

(16a). Și, pe tindu-se pre ea, lăuda-se că iaste neguțator and WOOGER=REFL DOM her BRAG.IMPER.3SG=REFL that is trader mare și cu avație mulă și de casă mare de la big and with wealth much and of house big from at Rângaua și să făceu Rângaua and REFL=MAKE.IMPER.3SG that is of the law the Greek ‘And, while wooing her, he was bragging that he was a great trader with a lot of wealth, and from a big house in Rângaua and he pretended to be of Greek origin.’ (1593)

b. și au scris și pre noi la pomenic la svânta mănăstire. and has-written also DOM us at diphtom at holy the monastery ‘and he also wrote our names in the diphtom at the holy monastery.’ (1600)

c. că m-au dăruit și el pre mine cu o sută but me=has-offered also he DOM me with a hundred de galbeni.
PRE-DP

(19a) a. Dereg-atea  

pre

ruğăm  

for=that  

homeni=voastră  

PRAY.PRES.1PL  

highness=the=your

se puieste face ca se ne tocmenim binigur...

SUBJ can.2PL do that SUBJ REF=agree.1PL good

of these give.PRES.1PL news and PRAY.PRES.1PL

pre domniile voastre. Și se fiți sănătos, cu toții oamenii voștri, într-ani mulți și buni, amint,

DOM highnesses=the=your and SUBJ be.2PL good.health with all people.the your for=years many.M and good.M.PL amen.

‘Therefore we ask you to act so that we can nicely agree… This is what we let you know and ask your highnesses. And we wish you to be in good health, together with your people, and may you live a long good life. Amen.’ (1592)

b. Eșu, împăratul, rog pre domneta

I king.the PRAY.PRES.1SG DOM highness.your

să nu ia loc într-acel loc mulți credincioși

SUBJ not leave.2SG in=that place many.M believers

‘I, the king, ask you not to leave many believers in that place.’ (1600)

- as noticed in the above examples with the verb a (se) rugă ‘ask for’, its DO was expressed in Old Romanian⁵; in free variation, either with Dative Case morphology (as in (18)), or as a pe-DP (as in (19)), with structural Case, both situations having one and the same semantic interpretation, namely the Recipient / Beneficiary theta role

- yet, this theta role is prototypically spelled out as a DP with animate human (and specific) referent, which makes it one of the roles placed in the higher part of the thematic hierarchy, next to the Agent (see Silverstein 1976)

- pragmatically, the theta roles in the higher part of the thematic hierarchy are frequently associated with Topic (a.o., Ponsard 1995; Iemnolo 2010; Dalrymple & Nicolaeva 2011; Iemnolo & Klumpp 2014; Kiss 2015)

- if we also take into account the examples of the type illustrated under (6) above, added by the examples under (20) below, where the preposition pe expresses a meaning close to that of Topic, i.e. ABOUT / CONCERNING / AS FOR, we get a picture where the agentivity of the DP combined with the pe-marking in syntax yields a Topic reading

(20a) Eu Barbul  

pre

Rășnice  

scris-am  

a cuiva / pe cineva ‘to notify someone’, a ajută cuiva / pe cineva ‘to help someone’.

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to say.’ (1598)

b. șe occurring as

as

for=that

PRAY.PRES.1PL

homeni=voastră

PRAY.PRES.1PL

DECL.

pre

domniile voastre.

‘Therefore we ask you to act so that we can nicely agree… This is what we let you know and ask your highnesses. And we wish you to be in good health, together with your people, and may you live a long good life. Amen.’ (1592)

b. Eșu, împăratul, rog pre domneta

I king.the PRAY.PRES.1SG DOM highness.your

să nu ia loc într-acel loc mulți credincioși

SUBJ not leave.2SG in=that place many.M believers

‘I, the king, ask you not to leave many believers in that place.’ (1600)

- as noticed in the above examples with the verb a (se) rugă ‘ask for’, its DO was expressed in Old Romanian⁵; in free variation, either with Dative Case morphology (as in (18)), or as a pe-DP (as in (19)), with structural Case, both situations having one and the same semantic interpretation, namely the Recipient / Beneficiary theta role

- yet, this theta role is prototypically spelled out as a DP with animate human (and specific) referent, which makes it one of the roles placed in the higher part of the thematic hierarchy, next to the Agent (see Silverstein 1976)

- pragmatically, the theta roles in the higher part of the thematic hierarchy are frequently associated with Topic (a.o., Ponsard 1995; Iemnolo 2010; Dalrymple & Nicolaeva 2011; Iemnolo & Klumpp 2014; Kiss 2015)

- if we also take into account the examples of the type illustrated under (6) above, added by the examples under (20) below, where the preposition pe expresses a meaning close to that of Topic, i.e. ABOUT / CONCERNING / AS FOR, we get a picture where the agentivity of the DP combined with the pe-marking in syntax yields a Topic reading

(20a) Eu Barbul  

pre

Rășnice  

scris-am  

a cuiva / pe cineva ‘to notify someone’, a ajută cuiva / pe cineva ‘to help someone’.

5  Modern Romanian no longer allows for the possibility to express the object using the morphological Dative, having developed a preference for the structural Case. There are however some verbs that still allow for this double construction possibility: a anunța cuiva / pe cineva ‘to notify someone’, a ajuta cuiva / pe cineva ‘to help someone’.

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7. Conclusions

- this presentation provided a critical examination of the Case assigner hypothesis for the Romanian DOM-marker, by focusing on its application in the first original Romanian texts (16th – early 17th centuries)

- the immediate purpose was to get a better understanding of at least two aspects: (i) the reanalysis of pe and (ii) the initial contexts in which DOM arises

  -- with regard to the evolution of pe, we have shown that it is neither a Case marker (nor a disambiguation marker between S and DO, nor a marker of the so-called personal gender), as currently assumed. Rather, it is a marker of the topicalized DO

  -- we showed that pe has two types of uses – as a lexical P (with numerous concrete senses, more locative and temporal) and as a marker of the topicalized DO –, the second deriving from the first following a grammaticalization process that was favored by several factors: (i) the initial occurrence with personal pronouns (easily interpretable as Topic); (ii) the parallel use as lexical P with abstract meaning ABOUT / CONCERNING; (iii) the use with Vs with a double subcategorization frame Dative – Accusative and (iv) the occurrence in contexts with (especially left) dislocation

- this line of analysis led to the proposal in (21), where the grammaticalization of pe starts from a full-fledged P with concrete locative meaning, to a P with abstract meaning, and further to a discourse Topic marker, which is then stripped of any discourse features and serves only as a grammatical marker for the DO (the genuine DOM):

  -- according to this schema, the (OR) data indicate that the grammaticalization of pe is an ongoing process, i.e., not finished, in the sense that it had undergone only a part of the stages proposed in (21), up to that of Topic-marker, without getting to the last one, namely DOM-marker
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Larger and similar parts of this presentation are on the way to appear as an article in Hill, Virginia (ed.) 2015. Formal Approaches to DPs in Old Romanian. 200-246. Brill: Leiden.