Differential Object Marking in the First Original Romanian Texts

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This paper focuses on the application of Differential Object Marking (DOM) in Old Romanian such as reflected in DÎ, which is a 16th–17th century collection of documents written directly in Romanian. The investigation is twofold: (i) I identify the contexts that led to the reanalysis of the lexical preposition pe as a DOM element; (ii) I compare the type of DOM-ed DPs in Old Romanian with those of Modern Romanian. The proposal is that pe underwent grammaticalization up to the stage of a Topic marker within DP in Old Romanian, but went further to be a grammatical DOM marker in Modern Romanian. An analysis of the distribution of pe-DP in Old Romanian leads to amendments to the current theoretical generalizations on DOM: we find that DOM is excluded for direct objects having a property reading (type <e,t>).

1 Introduction

Empirically, this article aims to describe how Differential Object Marking (term coined in Bossong 1985) applies in the first original (i.e., not translated) Romanian documents, dated from the 16th century and assembled under the title Documente și însemnări românești (DÎ) [Romanian documents and notes]. Basically, I show that pe is not an Accusative Case marker, as most often claimed under Kayne’s generalization (e.g., Manoliu-Manea 1989; Dobrovie-Sorin 1994; Mardale 2007, 2009b; Cornilescu & Dobrovie-Sorin 2008); rather—keeping in line with recent studies on DOM (e.g., Nikolaeva 2001; Iemmolo 2010; Dalrymple & Nikolaeva 2011; Immolo & Klumpp 2014 for languages other than Romanian; and Hill 2013; Antonov & Mardale 2014, for

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Romanian)—I will show that, in Old Romanian, *pe* is a (most often contrastive) Topic marker that emerged from the lexical (locative) preposition *pe*, and which has further developed into a DOM marker.

Theoretically, the line of analysis adopted in this paper continues previous work on the diachrony of DOM in Romanian, such as developed in von Heusinger & Onea (2008), Mardale (2009a), Stark (2011), Hill (2013), Antonov & Mardale (2014). The main argument is that the contexts in which DOM occurs are—with one fragile exception (the case of (personal) pronouns)—not at all fixed, in the sense that there is a great variety both for the 16th century Romanian, and for Modern Romanian. More precisely, if we take into account the hierarchy of parameters responsible for the occurrence of the phenomenon (Comrie 1975; Bossong 1985, 1998; Aissen 2003; Laca 2002, 2006; von Heusinger & Kaiser 2005; Leonetti 2008), it appears that DOM may occur in the first Romanian texts in contexts where it is not expected and, vice-versa, it may be absent in contexts where it is expected. Essentially, the only generalization that can be made (valid mostly in diachrony, but also in synchrony) is that DOM is excluded in contexts where the direct object is non-referential, namely it has a property denotation (in terms of Bleam 2004, 2005; Dobrovie-Sorin et alii 2005; Cornilescu & Dobrovie-Sorin 2008; Mardale 2007, 2009b), associated with the syntax of a non-argument position (of pseudo-incorporation; Massam 2001; Dayal 2003). In terms of language change, this generalization is associated with the fact that DOM in the first (original) Romanian texts was a non-systematic phenomenon, indicating the early stages as a new parametric setting which became fixed rather recently (according to Pușcariu 1905, 1926; Rosetti 1973, 1978), and whose dating cannot be exactly determined (Drăganu 1943; Dimitrescu 1960).

In this study, clitic doubling, a phenomenon tightly related to DOM in Modern Romanian, will be put aside, since—for the period investigated here—it is not very frequent and shows a high degree of heterogeneity, making it thus hard to capture (and therefore, to analyze).

2 Data: Two Categorizations for *pe*

It is well known that since its first occurrences, Romanian *pe* (originating from Latin *per* and having its old form *pre* or the regional forms *pă, pi, piră, pri*) had at least two types of uses (see also Pană Dindelegan 1997; Guriuianu 2005; Mardale 2007, 2009a, b, 2013; Antonov & Mardale 2014): as a lexical preposition and as a marker for DOM. This section illustrates these two types of *pe* in DÎ.