
PATTERNS FOR DIFFERENTIAL OBJECT MARKING IN THE HISTORY OF ROMANIAN

VIRGINIA HILL¹
University of New Brunswick

ALEXANDRU MARDALE²
*INaLCO, Paris & Laboratoire SeDyL
UMR8202 CNRS*

This paper starts from the observation that, diachronically, the differential marking of direct objects in Romanian went through different stages, each of which attests to a different syntactic mechanism; i.e. from no marking to a stage with marking through either clitic doubling (CD) or differential particles (DOM) and further to a stage where the marking triggers both CD and DOM. The proposal is that these changes arise from the interaction between a major parametric shift at the clause structure level and an idiosyncratic change within the nominal phrase. That is, CD is an epiphenomenon of a major shift that concerns the location of discourse agreement features (i.e. transfer from C to T); whereas the transition from DOM to CD+DOM is facilitated by the concurrent bleaching and reanalysis of the DOM particle within the nominal phrase.

1 INTRODUCTION

Differential object marking is an operation by which a grammar displays discriminating morphosyntax for the DP objects that have certain semantic features, such as animacy, specificity, definiteness, referentiality and/or yield some type of topic reading (Aissen 2003; Bossong 1991; Comrie 1979, 1989; Iemmolo 2010 a.o.).¹ This process may affect both direct and indirect objects and may involve, cross-linguistically, various morphosyntactic mechanisms.

Two object marking mechanisms are relevant for Romanian: (i) clitic doubling (CD), typical for Balkan languages; and (ii) object marking through a particle (DOM), typical for Romance languages. These two mechanisms

¹ DP abbreviates Determiner Phrase, which, in generative grammar, labels phrases headed by nouns or pronouns.

cooccur and collude in Romanian, in a way that is still unclear. Although semantic studies sort out the interpretive effects of this cooccurrence and collusion (e.g. Cornilescu 2001; von Heusinger & Onea 2009; von Heusinger & Chiriacescu 2011; Avram & Zafiu 2017), we still do not know why and how these mechanisms emerged and developed in the language. So far, the syntax of clitics and the use of the object marking particle receive separate accounts in formal studies, even where Romanian is concerned (e.g. the chapters in Kalluli & Tasmowski 2008). This paper points out that object clitics and the object marking particle can alternately or jointly trigger the same effect (i.e. some form of topic reading for a specific noun in object position) and proposes a unified account for these two operations.

CD is a mechanism by which a postverbal DP object agrees in φ -features with a clitic personal pronoun attached to the verb (proclitics or enclitics). Balkan languages use CD for marking direct and indirect objects that are specific and/or definite (Mišeska-Tomić 2006). On the other hand, object marking in Romance languages is triggered mostly by animacy, and involves a dedicated prenominal particle, such as *a* in Spanish (see, among others, Leonetti 2004, Iemmolo 2010, Fábregas 2013).² We shall refer to the marking mechanism through the particle as *Differential Object Marking* (DOM), by following von Heusinger & Kaiser (2007), under the understanding that CD and DOM are equivalent insofar as they are both used for the same purpose.

In this context, Modern Romanian (MR) follows the Balkan pattern with respect to the marking of indirect objects, by displaying CD, as in (1). In (1), the indirect object is the strong pronoun *ție* ‘you’ in dative form, which is doubled by the clitic *ți-* ‘you’, also in dative form, procliticized on the verb.

- (1) *Ți-am dat ție cartea.*
 you.DAT=have.1= given you.DAT book.the
 ‘I gave you the book.’

When it comes to direct objects, MR displays both CD and DOM (Maiden 2016: 124 and references within), by mixing the Balkan and the Romance patterns. Consider the example in (2a): the strong pronoun *tine* ‘you’ in accusative form is introduced by a DOM particle *pe* while also undergoing CD by means of the proclitic *te-* ‘you’, also with accusative morphology.

² This is not saying that CD is not possible in the presence of DOM in Romance, but only that differential object marking does not obligatorily entail CD in these languages, as it does in MR.

- (2) a. *Te-am strigat pe tine;*
 you.ACC=have.1= called DOM you.ACC
 'I called you.'
- b. **Am strigat pe tine.* // **Te-am strigat*
 have.1=called DOM you.ACC you.ACC=have.1= called
 **tinej.* // **Am strigat tine.*
 you.ACC have.1= called you.ACC

Contrasting with (2a), where CD and DOM cooccur, the ungrammatical clauses in (2b) show not only that object marking is obligatory with this nominal class (i.e. personal pronouns), but also that neither CD nor DOM may fulfill the marking task separately.

The puzzling fact is that all the ungrammatical variants in (2b) for MR can be found in Old Romanian (OR), as shown in (3).³ The examples come from the same text, so the options are a matter of intra-language variation. The contrast between (2) and (3) is at the core of our analysis.

- (3) a. *rugăm tine ca drag părintele nostru*
 implore.1PL you as beloved parent.the our
 'we implore you, as our beloved parent' (PO {9})
NO MARK
- b. *te cunosc tine*
 you.ACC= know.1SG you
 'I know you' (PO {9})
CD
- c. *cel puternic va blogoslovi pre tine*
 the powerful will.3SG= bless DOM you
 'the powerful one will bless you' (PO {175})
DOM
- d. *te voiu aduce pre tine de acolo*
 you.ACC= will.1SG= bring DOM you from there
 'I will bring you from there' (PO {162})
CD+DOM

The lack of object marking in (3a) shows traces of an older stage, identified as Stage 1 in Table 1, when differential object marking did not apply in

³ *Old Romanian* (OR) is the label for the language of texts dating from the 16th to the end of the 18th century. The label *Early Modern Romanian* was also introduced in the literature (by Alboiu, Hill & Sitaridou 2015) for the same collection of texts.

the emerging Romanian grammar of Stage 1, as pointed out in [Onu \(1959\)](#), following similar predictions argued for in [Pușcariu \(1921–22: 565 et subq\)](#). The variation in (3b, c, d) indicates an unstable marking system that experiments with both CD and DOM, separately, as well as jointly. Only the latter option is preserved in MR. The rough diachronic axis of this development is summarized in [Table 1](#). This table grasps only the major changes, but we should keep in mind that the shifts were gradual and overlapping (e.g. for the gradual development of DOM in OR see [Rosetti 1986: 492](#)).

Table 1: Diachronic development of direct object marking in Romanian.

Type of marking	Stage 1 = preattested grammar	Stage 2 = OR	Stage 3 = MR
no marking	✓	✓	-
CD	-	✓	-
DOM	-	✓	(traces)
CD+DOM	-	✓	✓

At a descriptive level, [Table 1](#) indicates drastic changes in the syntax of object marking that cannot be ignored when an account for the concurrent CD+DOM in MR is needed, in addition to understanding why MR preserves the Balkan typology for one type of objects (i.e. indirect) but apparently not for the other (i.e. direct).

Considering this background, the guiding hypotheses for our analysis are:

- Following current studies ([von Heusinger & Chiriacescu 2011](#); [Hill 2013](#); [Mardale 2015](#) a.o.), DOM in Romanian involves a form of localized topic reading on the DP object. That is, the use of DOM alone entails a salient reading, and the use of CD or CD+DOM involves a familiar topic reading. Hence, it is important to identify the source of salience or familiar topic in the relevant syntactic configuration.
- CD must be considered in the context of an emergent and spreading clitic pronoun system in the language. The stabilization of this system is reflected through the concurrent development of CD and Clitic Left Dislocation (CLLD), and it triggers major parametric shifts.
- The collusion of CD and DOM for direct object marking is the result of the interaction between the stabilization of the clitic system and the way these clitics, which are all object clitics, affect the discourse readings of DP objects they cooccur with.

Along these lines, and within a generative grammar framework, we argue that:

- (i) CD became successful during a parametric shift that ensured the spread and stabilization of clitic pronouns in the language. Hence, CD is an epiphenomenon of a major change that had other effects as well (e.g. it generalizes CLLD and eliminates Topicalization).
- (ii) DOM and CD alternate or share the feature checking task within the internal derivation of the marked DP. Thus, object marking is not only a matter of clausal syntax (e.g. introducing a feature on v as in López 2012), but it also involves the structure of the DP that makes it visible to the extra feature of v . The internal structure of the marked DP has received very little attention in the literature.

This paper is organized as follows: We describe and quantify the relevant data for OR in Section 2 and for MR in Section 3. In Section 4, we present the theoretical framework for our analysis, whereas Section 5 provides tests and results within the given framework. Section 6 concludes the paper.

2 DATA

This section expands on the four direct object marking options shown in (3), in addition to the marking of indirect objects. In the first five sub-sections, we provide examples for each object marking option in OR texts. In 2.6 we present the frequency tables for these options. The main observation coming out of the data is that CD+DOM, which is the diachronically successful option for marking direct objects, spreads concurrently with CLLD, the latter replacing the constituent fronting through Topicalization. Each concept is defined in the corresponding sub-section.

The data for OR come from the texts listed below. The following criteria determined the choice of texts: (i) different language sources for the translated texts; and (ii) texts written directly in Romanian for comparison on the relevant timeline. Accordingly, the collection comprises:

- *Palia de la Orăștie* (PO) = a 16th century text translated from a Hungarian original; 63,899 words.
- *Coresi's Evangelic Mass* (CEV) = a 16th century text translated from a Church Slavonic original; 177,552 words.
- *Documents and notes* (DÎ) = the only 16th century text (a collection of documents) written directly in Romanian; 26,360 words.

- Ureche’s chronicle (UR) = a 17th century text written directly in Romanian; 53,830 words.
- Neculce’s chronicle (NEC) = an 18th century text written directly in Romanian; 127,327 words.

The examples provided so far in this paper are sourced from the same corpus. We kept the length of the surveyed texts comparable, around 60,000 words, except for DÎ, where the entire document comprises only 26,362 words.

2.1 Indirect objects

In the texts of 16th-17th centuries, indirect objects are optionally marked, irrespective of whether they consist of nouns or strong pronouns. The marking mechanism is CD, which is an operation by which a DP object in situ is doubled by a clitic pronoun with which it agrees in case, gender and number, as shown in (1) and further in (4).

- (4) a. *ce să-ți dau ție?*
 what SBJV-you.DAT= give.1SG you.DAT
 ‘what should I give you?’ (PO {102} 31)
- b. *să-i fie dumnealui moșia*
 SBJV-him.DAT= be.SBJV.3 him.DAT land.the
 ‘the land must belong to this gentleman’ (DÎ XIII, 1596)

In Romanian, morphology is the key for the absence of DOM with inflected indirect objects, since these items display a dative case affix, which can be prenominal or postnominal. To maintain the thematic role associated with the dative (e.g. beneficiary, goal), this inflected form cannot be embedded under a preposition or particle (e.g. embedding a dative noun under the particle *a* makes it a possessive/genitive).

The CD marking of indirect objects is optional. For example, the pronouns doubled in (4) occur without CD in (5), in the same texts.

- (5) a. *nu va da ție plodurele sale*
 not will.3SG= give you.DAT fruit.the its
 ‘it will not give you its fruit’ (PO {23})

- b. *Aceasta moșia vândut-am noi de bunăvoia noastră*
 this estate.the sold=have.1 we of good.will our
dumnealui
 him.DAT
 ‘We willingly sold this estate to him’ (DÎ XIII, 1596)

Specificity is the trigger for the marking, and the result is a familiar topic reading. This is in line with similar phenomena in other Balkan languages, where the CD of indirect objects is also triggered by specificity and definiteness (Mišeska-Tomić 2006), rather than animacy.

As an alternative to the dative indirect object, there is also an uninflected indirect object related to the clause by the case-assigning preposition *la* ‘to’, as in (6).

- (6) a. *Zise șarpele la muiare*
 said.3SG serpent.the to woman
 ‘the serpent said to the woman’ (PO {18})
- b. *spun la noi tot ce fac ei*
 tell.3PL to us all what do.3PL they
 ‘they tell us everything they do’ (DÎ XXXII, 1600)

We found no CD for the [*la*-indirect object] option in our sample of texts (i.e. no CD+DOM option for indirect objects), so we shall not refer to these constructions in the remainder of this paper.⁴

The overview of CD with indirect objects is instructive considering that CD is also involved in the marking of direct objects (i.e. CD+DOM collusion) in a way that is not replicated in other Romance languages. From this perspective, the productivity of CD with indirect objects provides more clues about this option as an object marking strategy, so learners of Romanian have more evidence about this operation compared to the learners of other Romance languages.

⁴ MR seems to develop CD+DOM in this context, as in (i), with *la* instead of *pe*, but the data are insufficient for tests. It is not clear to what extent *la* is an accusative case marker or/and a DOM particle in these constructions.

- (i) *Le-a dat mere la copii*
 to.them=has= given apples to children
 ‘S/he gave apples to the children.’

2.2 CD with direct objects

The marking of direct objects through CD is a Balkan Sprachbund property (Joseph & Philippaki-Warburton 1987; Anagnostopoulou 1994; Mišeska-Tomić 2006), and is productive in Balkan Romance languages spoken at the south of the Danube.⁵ The marking is triggered by specificity, not by animacy (Mišeska-Tomić 2006). Examples are provided for Aromanian in (7) and for Megleno-Romanian in (8).

- (7) a. *L_k-am vidzută Petri_k*
 him.ACC=have.1= seen Peter
 ‘I saw Peter.’ Aromanian
 (from Mišeska-Tomić 2006: 84)
- b. *S-duse acolo lj-u_k deade cartea_k.*
 REFL=went there to.him=it= gave letter.the
 ‘He went there and gave him the letter’ Aromanian
 (from Anovska 2008: 145)
- (8) a. *lă_k loa buciumul_k lă_k turi shi zisi*
 it.ACC= took.3SG log.the it= threw and said.3SG
 ‘he took the log, threw it, and said ...’ Megleno-Romanian
 (from Friedman 2008: 55)
- b. *jel nu lă_k vréa țela fițșór_k*
 he not him.ACC= want.3SG that child
 ‘He does not want that child.’ Megleno-Romanian
 (from Caragiu-Marioțeanu 1975: 277)

Since OR displays the Balkan CD with indirect objects, the expectation would be that the same option applies to direct objects. Indeed, the texts attest this possibility, as shown in (9).

- (9) a. *m-au tremis mine părintele*
 me.ACC=has= sent me priest.the
 ‘The priest sent me.’ (CEV {140})
- b. *te cunosc tine*
 you.ACC= know.1SG you
 ‘I know you.’ (PO {292})

⁵ CD is productive in Aromanian and Megleno-Romanian but rarely occurs in Istroromanian (Mišeska-Tomić 2006).

However, the puzzling fact is that, by itself, CD with direct objects is actually rare in the OR texts (Croitor 2014, 2016), and when it applies, it involves strong pronouns rather than nouns, as shown in (9). Therefore, statistically, marking through CD alone is not a viable option for direct objects in OR, as further confirmed by our measurements in Tables 3 and 5.

One may speculate that CD with direct objects was not a property of Romanian but was a failed attempt to borrow this construction from Balkan Slavic, considering that writers/translators could have been bilingual. This is, however, unlikely, since CD with direct objects occurs not only in translated texts but also in original documents (see Table 2) (Dimitrescu 1960, Diaconescu 1970). It is more plausible that CD with direct objects was a property of OR that became unproductive at the time of the attested writings, so we see only the end-tail of this mechanism before it is lost. The fact that this option is productive in other Romanian languages signals that CD was stronger at the time when these varieties split or became disconnected from the Romanian spoken at the north of the Danube (i.e. centuries before the first attested writings).⁶

The option prospered at the south of the Danube because Aromanian and Megleno-Romanian are in language contact with Greek and/or Macedonian, which exhibit CD with direct objects too. On the other hand, OR was not in language contact with Greek or Balkan Slavic, so a competing pattern could emerge and develop there. CD became, thus, restricted to indirect objects in Romanian.⁷

2.3 DOM

The main option for the marking of direct objects in OR is through DOM, where the particle is *pre*. We shall refer to this particle as DOM-*pe*, which is the form it takes in MR. This covers all the archaic and regional varieties of this particle in OR (e.g. *pre*, *pă*, *pi* and so on). Crucially, the marking is optional in similar environments, as shown in (10) for pronouns, and in (11) for nouns. Furthermore, optionality with DOM appears in the same sentence, as shown in (12). Therefore, there is significant intra-language variation in

⁶ There are competing theories with respect to the origin of Aromanian and Megleno-Romanian: some (e.g. Capidan 1925) consider that Romanian was spoken in an extensive area south of the Danube before the Slavic invasions, and what we see today are pockets of the Romanian population at locations where the Slavs did not settle. Others (see references in Atanasov 2002) consider that these Romanian varieties reflect a nomadic activity, whereby groups have moved south across the Danube at different times before and around the 10th century. This latter approach is supported by morphophonological similarities with OR and MR.

⁷ By *language contact* we mean bilingualism, which, unlike lexical borrowings, may affect the syntax.

this respect (as noted in Densusianu 1901/1997: 694–696; Rosetti 1986: 492, Dimitrescu 1960, Diaconescu 1970, Ciobanu 2011, SOR 2016).

- (10) a. *ascultați mine*
listen.IMP.2PL me
'listen to me' (PO {73})
- b. *au ascultat pre mine*
have.3PL= listened DOM me
'they listened to me' (PO {119})
- (11) a. *și aceste locuri, când o am vândut, am*
and these lands when it=have.1= sold have.1=
întrebat pre tot frații miei și pre toate
asked DOM all brothers.the my and DOM all
rudete mele și pre tot meglișii din
relatives.the my and DOM all neighbors.the from
sat.
village
'And for these lands, when I sold them, I consulted all my
brothers and all my relatives and all the neighbors from the
village.' (DÎ VI, 1579–80)
- b. *Însă cândă amă vrut să vândză, amă întrebat*
but when have.1= wanted SBJV sell.1SG have.1= asked
nepoții mii și ruda mae ș-au dzis
nephews.the my and relatives.the my and-have.3= said
să o vândzu
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.' (DÎ LXVI 1586)
- (12) *Poftit-au iară Derjec, foarte cu plecare, svințitul*
invited=has again Derjec much with humility blessed.the
împărătescul scaun și luminatul arhidux Hernestu de
royal.the throne and illustrious archduke Hernest of
Austriia și pre alți slăviț și măriți domni.
Austria and.also DOM other reknown and venerated lords.
'Derjec invited again, with much humility, the representative of the
blessed royal throne and the illustrious archduke Hernest of Austria,
as well as other reknown and venerated lords.' (DÎ XC 1593)

What triggers DOM? As argued in Hill & Tasmowski (2008), DOM has discourse-pragmatic effects in OR insofar as it foregrounds the direct object – it makes it more salient in the discourse.⁸ Here, we can observe interpretive contrasts in the above examples: the option for DOM in (11a) versus (11b) follows from the context in which the list of relatives who agreed to the sale reported in (11a) is the salient piece of information; whereas in (11b) the agreement is the active item in the discourse, not the listing of those who agreed with the sale, so DOM does not apply. A similar reading discrimination arises in (12), where DOM applies to the second DP because only this DP is introduced by a foregrounding *și*, signaled in the translation by ‘as well as’ or ‘also’. Saliency involves some type of non-familiar topic reading on the marked DP.

Notably, saliency under DOM does not interfere with the mapping of discourse features with wide scope (i.e. sentence topic/focus in terms of Reinhart 1981; Frascarelli & Hinterhölzl 2007; Vermeulen 2009).⁹ Thus, a DP under DOM (i.e. which has a topic feature realized internally) can, as a whole, be fronted to topic/focus positions at the left periphery of the clause, as shown in (13a), or can cooccur with other fronted constituents, as in (13b).¹⁰

- (13) a. *de icea pre ei răsfiră prespre tot pământul*
 from here DOM them spread.3SG over all earth.the
 ‘from here, he spread them all over the earth’ (PO {41} 9)
- b. *iară smereniia den cădeare scoate pre el*
 and humbleness.the from all saves DOM him
 ‘and the humbleness saves him from falling’ (CEV {4})

In (13a), the DOM-ed DP is fronted for an aboutness-topic reading; in (13b), DOM in situ co-occurs with the DP subject fronted to a contrastive topic position. This cooccurrence indicates that the discourse feature that

⁸ According to Chafe 1994 and Lambrecht 1994, during the processing of the discourse, some parts are likely to be more active in the participant’s memory than others. This activated information has been termed as being *salient* to the listener or the speaker.

⁹ The types of sentence topic/focus are not relevant for our analysis, since saliency concerns the DP, not the CP structure. However, for clarity, when we need to refer to types of sentence topic, we adopt the distinctions in Frascarelli & Hinterhölzl (2007), namely, *aboutness* TopP, *contrastive* TopP and *familiar* TopP, in addition to *contrastive* FocusP.

¹⁰ Clause is a configuration headed by one verb. Sentence is a configuration containing at least two clauses. Here we use clause and sentence interchangeably because constituents can be fronted for discourse purposes either to the left periphery of an embedded clause or to the left periphery of the matrix clause. In both situations, the discourse features are in a CP field, and only this location matters.

triggers DOM is contained within the marked DP and is, thus, invisible to syntactic processing of features that concern verb inflection and sentence typing (i.e. there is no feature competition). This point will be discussed in Section 5. For the time being, the point is that the discourse feature involved with DOM concerns the internal properties of the DP and does not interfere with the sentence topic/focus; that is, a DOM salient DP can also be fronted (on a par with a non-marked DP) and obtain a sentence topic or focus reading.

The fact that DOM responds primarily to discourse triggers (i.e. rather than to the semantic properties of the noun) explains why inanimate nouns may also occur under DOM in OR, as shown in (14) (see [Densusianu 1901/1997](#): 693 for additional examples; [SOR 2016](#): 133).

- (14) a. *Că leagea amu den tocmeală slugă are pre*
 as law.the now from negotiation servant has DOM
frică, iară frica den tocmeală, judecătoriu are
 fear while fear.the from negotiation judge has
leagea
 law.the
 ‘as the law now has as its servant the fear in negotiations, while
 the fear in negotiations has the law as its judge’ (CEV {16})
- b. *nu-ș pre niminea prepunea el, numai pre*
 not-REFL.DAT DOM nobody suspected he only DOM
păcatele lui
 sins.the his
 ‘he did not suspect anybody else, only his sins’ (CEV {57})
- c. *Domnul bătu pre faraon și pre casa lui.*
 God.the hit.3SG DOM Pharaon and DOM house.the his
 ‘God hit Pharaon and his house.’ (PO {45})

Inanimate nouns are excluded from CD+DOM in MR, where animacy becomes more important for object marking, while saliency is lost.¹¹

¹¹ There are exceptions to this rule in MR as well, as in (i) (see also [Pană Dindelegan 1997/2003](#), [Avram & Zafiu 2017](#)). Here, the unusual nominalization of a coordinating conjunction triggers the extra marking for specificity.

(i) *Pune-l pe “și” în paranteze*
 put=it.ACC DOM and in brackets
 ‘Put the “and” in brackets.’

- b. *pre acești boiari i-au băgat în temniță*
 DOM these lords them.ACC=have.3PL thrown in jail
 ‘these lords they thrown in jail’ (DÎ XVIII 1599)

CLLD applies automatically upon object fronting, irrespective of whether the target position is of the topic or of the contrastive focus type; the latter is shown in (18).

- (18) a. *carii pre ei cu slujbă grea să-i*
 who.the DOM them with task heavy SBJV=them.ACC
dosădească
 punish-SBJV.3
 ‘who should punish them with a heavy task’ (PO {181} 11)
- b. *Au vei și pre mine să mă omori cum*
 or will.2SG also DOM me SBJV me.ACC= kill as
omorâși și cel Eghiptean ieri?
 killed.2SG also that Egyptian yesterday
 ‘Do you want to kill me too in the same way you also killed that Egyptian yesterday?’ (PO {183} 14)

The application of CLLD along these lines became the norm in MR. However, this was not the norm in OR. That is, OR also displays fronting through Topicalization, as shown in (19) for indirect objects, and in (20) for direct objects.

- (19) *și lui Iacov deade muiare.*
 and the.DAT Jacob gave.3SG woman
 ‘and he gave a wife to Jacob’ (PO {100})
- (20) a. *mine vor omori și tine vor ținea*
 me will.3PL= kill and you will.3PL= hold
 ‘me, they’ll kill, and you, they’ll hold’ (CEV {44})
- b. *Iară tu și pre mine rogi*
 but you and DOM me beseech.2SG
 ‘but you also beseech me’ (CEV {363})
- c. *Aceasta moșia vândut-am noi*
 this estate.the sold=have.1 we
 ‘This estate, we sold.’ (DÎ XIII 1595–96)

Topicalization is an operation by which a DP object is fronted to a topic/focus position at the left periphery of the clause/sentence without involving the merging of a clitic pronoun. Instead, this movement creates an operator-variable chain with quantificational properties, contrasting with the clitic chain of the CLLD, which has no quantificational features (Rizzi 2004). The switch from Topicalization to CLLD is an important change in the grammar as it entails shifts in the clause structure. More precisely, fronting by Topicalization creates a quantificational chain, whereas fronting through CLLD does not. Thus, CLLD allows for the cooccurrence of constituent fronting to Topic/Focus and *wh*-movement, as in MR (see examples throughout the paper), whereas Topicalization would ban such cooccurrence, as in English, since both operations create quantificational chains, which results in violations of the operator-variable binding (e.g. *John I know ~~John~~* versus **Who John ~~who~~ knows ~~John~~?*).

2.6 Frequencies

The texts listed at the beginning of Section 2 were searched for indirect and direct objects, of any type. Then we selected DPs that qualify for object marking (i.e. animate and/or specific), and for this group we measured:

- (i) the frequency of marking DP objects through CD, DOM or CD+DOM versus the use of DP counterparts with no marking; the latter are counted on the NO MARK rows.
- (ii) the distribution of clitic pronouns according to the operations they undergo: (a) when they occur under clitic doubling, as indicated on the CD and CD+DOM row; (b) when they occur as resumptive, as indicated on the CLLD row.
- (iii) the frequency of Topicalization, since this operation competes with CLLD.

Table 2 presents the diachronic statistics for indirect objects, from the 16th to the end of the 18th centuries. Table 3 presents the statistics for direct objects, for the same timeline. We made a distinction between pronouns and nouns since the former are more likely to undergo marking than the latter (Mardale 2015, Croitor 2016, Avram & Zafiu 2017). Each column shows the number of tokens followed by the percentage.¹²

¹² For calculations, we counted all the relevant nouns and pronouns in indirect or direct object position, although we split them in two columns in our tables. For example, adding all the percentages in the columns “pron” and “nouns” under PO in Table 2 amounts to 100% nominal items in indirect object position.

Table 2: Indirect object marking in the 16th–18th centuries

	16 th						17 th		18 th	
	PO		CEV		DÎ		Ureche		Neculce	
	pron	nouns	pron	nouns	pron	nouns	pron	nouns	pron	nouns
NO	475	486	668	482	55	220	18	130	8	164
MARK	40.8%	41.7%	43.5%	31.4%	16.8%	67.3%	8.7%	63.1%	3.5%	71.9%
CD	28	3	79	8	13	17	16	6	18	12
	2.4%	0.3%	5.2%	0.5%	4.0%	5.2%	7.8%	2.9%	8.0%	5.3%
Topical-ization	88	64	124	114	7	10	10	5	3	0
	7.5%	5.5%	8.1%	7.4%	2.1%	3.1%	4.9%	2.4%	1.3%	0.0%
CLLD	8	13	30	31	4	1	11	10	6	17
	0.7%	1.1%	2.0%	2.0%	1.2%	0.3%	5.3%	4.9%	2.6%	7.5%

Table 2 indicates that indirect objects are optionally marked across these centuries, be it for pronouns or for nouns. A slight increase in CD takes place in the 17th–18th centuries, for pronouns. At the same time, we can see a shift from Topicalization to CLLD as a fronting option: CLLD is rarely attested in the 16th century (0-1.25), the Topicalization being more frequent (2–8%);¹³ contrastively, CLLD occurs more often than Topicalization in the 17th and the 18th centuries (5–7.5%).

Direct objects, nouns or pronouns, are optionally marked, for the same form in the same context, as shown for the examples (8)-(11) in the previous section. Thus, we see a significant score on the ‘no mark’ row, which drastically decreases from the 16th towards the 18th century, especially where pronouns are concerned. The Romanian 16th century text DÎ indicates that the marking of direct objects is already advanced at that time in the spoken language (see also Ciobanu 2011), while the more archaic register of the religious translations demonstrates an older state of this process (see also Dimitrescu 1960, Diaconescu 1970), with a higher number of non-marked items.¹⁴

When it comes to the preferred marking mechanism for direct objects, DOM prevails across the board, followed by CD+DOM, at considerably lower rates, while CD is disappearing from the language. On the other hand, CLLD is gaining ground, reaching the highest scores in the 17th–18th century, whereas Topicalization is almost eliminated from the language by the 18th century.

¹³ The scores in SOR (2016: 157, Table 2.10), based on all the translations by Coresi (16th century) also show that CLLD lags behind Topicalization (i.e. CLLD 41% vs. Topicalization 59%).

¹⁴ See Rosetti (1986: 493) for remarking that translations use a more archaic language register than the original texts.

Table 3: Direct object marking in the 16th–18th centuries

	16 th						17 th		18 th	
	PO		CEV		Dî		Ureche		Neculce	
	pron	nouns	pron	nouns	pron	nouns	pron	nouns	pron	nouns
NO	123	146	222	120	3	16	5	30	1	17
MARK	12.8%	15.2%	23.5%	12.7%	2.7%	14.5%	0.9%	5.3%	0.1%	2.1%
CD	24	2	18	2	1	0	6	2	2	1
	2.5%	0.2%	1.9%	0.2%	0.9%	0.0%	1.0%	0.3%	0.2%	0.1%
DOM	214	245	271	90	17	56	22	342	43	526
	22.3%	25.5%	28.6%	9.5%	15.4%	50.9%	3.8%	60.0%	5.2%	63.9%
CD+	69	2	43	2	4	1	18	15	43	38
DOM	7.2%	0.2%	4.5%	0.2%	3.6%	0.9%	3.2%	2.6%	5.2%	4.6%
Topical-	51	33	66	40	3	0	16	7	17	2
ization	5.3%	3.4%	6.9%	4.2%	2.7%	0.0%	2.8%	1.2%	2.0%	0.2%
CLLD	21	29	53	19	5	4	55	52	47	86
	2.2%	3.0%	5.6%	2.0%	4.5%	3.6%	9.7%	9.1%	5.7%	10.4%

Briefly, the diachronic development coming out of the data shows that:

- There was a well-established clitic pronoun system in the language that allowed for the expansion of operations such as CD and CLLD.
- There was a shift from having non-marked DP objects to marking some of them; the marking option was unpredictable on the basis of semantics alone (i.e. the same animate noun, with the same morphosyntactic form, may or may not undergo CD or DOM or CD+DOM). For predictability, we have to take into consideration the discourse effects.
- The option for the marking mechanism also fluctuated: it could be DOM (the prevalent operation), but also CD+DOM (on the increase) or CD (disappearing with direct objects but productive with indirect objects).
- Although the semantic features that trigger the application of differential object marking may vary (i.e. specificity and/or animacy), the discourse effects are systematic and predictable according to the marking mechanism: salient readings with DOM, familiar topic reading with CD or CD+DOM. In this sense, the intended discourse effect for a DP object overrides its specificity/animacy semantics as a requirement for marking (e.g. inanimates may also qualify if salience is what counts).

- Concurrently, CLLD competes with Topicalization as an option for constituent fronting to discourse positions with wide/sentence scope.

The diachronic perspective will be completed in the next section by looking at similar operations in the texts of the 19th–21st centuries.

3 MODERN ROMANIAN

This section provides a brief survey of the outcomes for object marking in MR. It is shown that object marking spreads for both indirect and direct objects. The marking mechanism is stabilized to CD+DOM for direct objects, the other options gradually disappearing. The spread of object marking along these lines concurs with the spread of CLLD and the disappearance of Topicalization for constituent fronting to discourse positions with wide scope.

The frequency tables for MR are based on the texts listed below. The following criteria determined the choice of texts: (i) diachrony: i.e. a text for each remaining century; (ii) orality: i.e. a text that adopts a colloquial language register. Accordingly, the collection comprises:

- For the 19th century: Ion Creangă – *Amintiri din copilărie* (1881) (AC)
- For the 20th century: Mateiu Caragiale – *Craii de Curtea-Veche* (1929) (CCV)
- For the 21st century: Florin Iaru – *Sânii verzi* (2017) (SV)

The spread of object marking is consistent across the board in MR (i.e. no evidence of inter- or intra-language variation in concurrent texts), so one surveyed text per century is sufficient to illustrate the rate of change.

3.1 Indirect objects

Indirect objects preserve the dative Case inflection in MR and their marking continues to involve CD (GR 2013). The trigger for CD is still specificity; thus, as shown in (21), the marked object may be inanimate and indefinite as long as it is specific.

- (21) *I-a pus pompon unei poșete din această colecție.*
 it.DAT=has= put bow a.DAT purse from this collection
 ‘S/he put a bow on a purse from this collection.’

Table 4: Indirect object marking in the 19th-21st centuries

Operation	AC – 19 th century		CCV – 20 th century		SV – 21 st century	
	pron	nouns	pron	nouns	pron	nouns
NO MARK	12 12.2%	47 48.0%	3 3.2%	27 28.7%	8 29.6%	6 28.6%
CD	6 6.1%	15 15.3%	17 18.1%	21 22.3%	7 14.6%	10 20.8%
Topicalization	1 1.0%	2 2.0%	1 1.1%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
CLLD	7 7.1%	8 8.2%	10 10.6%	15 15.9%	12 25%	5 10.4%

The marking of specific indirect objects is still optional for pronouns and nouns, except for personal pronouns, where it became obligatory, as shown in (22).

- (22) *Mi-a dat-o mie.* *VERSUS* **A dat-o mie.*
 me.DAT=has= given=it.ACC me.DAT has given=it.ACC
mie.
 me.DAT
 ‘S/he gave it to me’

Although optionality prevails, the rate of CD increased across the board with indirect objects. Concurrently, CLLD increased as well, eliminating Topicalization for fronting to sentence Topic positions. These changes are captured in Table 4 on the basis of the listed texts.

Considering the CD rates of the 18th century text in Table 2 in comparison to the CD rates of the 21st century text in Table 4, it appears that the CD option tripled and quadrupled for indirect objects, while still remaining optional. According to our sample, the CLLD option also progressed and eliminated the Topicalization option.

3.2 Direct objects

In MR, most pronouns in direct object position are obligatorily marked, irrespective of their referential content or (in)animacy (Dobrovie-Sorin 1994, Mardale 2010, GR = Pană Dindelegan 2013). This contrasts with OR, where strong pronouns were optionally marked – see the example 10 and also the discussion in Mardale (2009), Croitor (2014), Croitor (2016) and Avram & Zafiu (2017). Hence, being obligatorily marked, strong pronouns cannot

have an emphatic reading in MR unless they are placed under sentence focus. When it comes to nouns in direct object position, animacy overrides other possible triggers in MR. Thus, the marked noun cannot be inanimate, as was the case in OR (see examples in (14) above). Within the class of animate nouns, object marking is obligatory with proper nouns. For common nouns, it depends on the morphological marking for definiteness, that is, whether the definite article is present or not (Farkas & von Heusinger 2003; Dobrovie-Sorin 2007; Mardale 2008; Tigău 2010; Onea & Hole 2017; Onea & Mardale Forthcoming): a complex DP (i.e. a noun with a modifier of any type) has to be marked, as in (23a). A simple DP (i.e. with a lexical noun but no modifiers) can appear without marking, as in (23b), and can allow for an out-of-the-blue reading (with weak specificity) when it has the article. If the reference for the DP is previously introduced in the discourse, as in (23c), then DOM must apply, and the definite article is excluded; exclusion of DOM in this context rules out the sentence, as in (23d).¹⁵

- (23) a. *L-am* *invitat* *pe* *studentul* *tău.* //
 him.ACC=have.1= invited DOM student.the your //
 **Am* *invitat* *studentul* *tău.*
 have.1= invited student.the your
 'I invited your student.'
- b. *Am* *invitat* *studentul* // *(*L-am* *invitat*
 have.1= invited student.the him.ACC=have.1= invited
 (**pe*) *studentul*
 DOM student.the
 'I invited the student.'
- c. *L-am* *invitat* *pe* *student.*
 him.ACC=have.1= invited DOM student
 'I invited the student.'
- d. **Am* *invitat* *student.*
 have.1= invited student

15 The complementary distribution in (23b, c) applies to most prepositions in Romanian, e.g. (i), so one may think it also applies to *pe* because this item has a prepositional origin. However, there is an important contrast: the alternation in (23b, c) has consequences for the discourse reading, whereas the alternation with real prepositions in (i) does not.

(i) *Trec* *seara* *pe* *la* *ea.* // *Trec* *spre* *seară/deseară* *pe*
 drop.1SG evening.the to at her. drop.1SG by evening/in.evening to
la *ea.*
 at her
 'I'll drop by at her place in the evening.'

Table 5: Direct object marking in the 19th–21st centuries

Operation	AC – 19 th century		CCV – 20 th century		SV – 21 st century	
	pron	nouns	pron	nouns	pron	nouns
NO MARK	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
CD	0 0.0%	1 1.2%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
DOM	10 12.0%	45 54.2%	12 9.8%	32 26.2%	6 5.8%	3 2.9%
CD+DOM	4 4.8%	6 7.2%	26 21.3%	35 28.7%	25 24.3%	50 48.5%
Topicalization	6 7.2%	1 1.2%	3 2.5%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
CLLD	3 3.6%	7 8.4%	8 6.6%	6 4.9%	12 25.0%	5 10.4%

Consequently, one may say that direct object marking of animate nouns remains optional in MR (Irimia 2018). However, it is predictable, according to the definiteness morphosyntax, while morphosyntax did not count for optionality in OR (i.e. a complex DP similar to the one in (23a) may or may not be marked in OR, but it is obligatorily marked in MR; SOR 2016, GR 2013). Changes were significant in the direct object marking mechanisms, as shown in Table 5. Notably, the CD+DOM option is generalized in MR, whereas the DOM option, which predominates in OR texts, is drastically reduced.

Table 5 shows that in MR CLLD is stabilized as the fronting mechanism, while Topicalization is eliminated, which is consistent with the trend noticed for indirect objects as well. For direct objects of the relevant semantic and morphosyntactic class, differential marking involves CD+DOM by default, whereas DOM is significantly decreased, while CD is eliminated. In standard MR, DOM alone applies mainly to bare quantifiers ('nobody, somebody') and *wh*-phrases, as shown in (24a); hence, its application is fairly predictable. However, there is a tendency for CD+DOM uniformization with these phrases as well, which can be seen since OR, as in (23b), and continues in MR, even in non-D-linked contexts, as shown in (23c), from the mass media register.

- (24) a. *Pe cine (*l)-ai chemat?*
 DOM who him.ACC=have.2SG= called
 'Whom did you call?' (MR – standard)

- b. *tremeate-l pre cine ti-e voia*
 send.2SG=him.ACC DOM who to.you=is will.the
 ‘Send whoever you want.’ (OR – PO {154})
- c. *Pe cine l-a propus ca ministru?*
 DOM who him.ACC=have.3SG= proposed as Minister
 ‘Whom did he propose as a Minister?’ (MR – colloquial)
<https://tinyurl.com/DOM-MR-media>

Table 5 does not capture the shift in the interpretation involved in these changes; however, the interpretation goes hand in hand with the changes in the marking mechanism. That is, the remaining DOM configurations still preserve the DP internal salience reading, whereas the CD+DOM configurations replaced it with a familiar topic reading (see also von Heusinger & Onea 2009). Crucially, the shift in the marking mechanism for direct objects entails a shift in the discourse effects of this marking.

3.3 Summary

At the end of the diachronic axis, MR displays the following properties for object marking:

- The clitic pronoun system became well-established, which explains why CD and CLLD expanded and eliminated non-clitic options.
- In MR, the default options for the differential object marking mechanisms are reduced to two (i.e. CD for indirect objects and CD+DOM for direct objects) and they both exploit the use of clitic pronouns.
- There are no significant changes for CD with indirect objects, whereas direct objects display major shifts in the marking mechanisms. The loss of CD for the latter is related to the main trigger for differential marking with direct objects in OR, which was a salience reading. DOM can obtain that, whereas CD cannot. Hence, the collusion of CD and DOM must be considered from the perspective of discourse features and their mapping within the relevant DP structure: why did the salience effect disappear?
- Quantitatively, the propensity for differential object marking became much higher for indirect objects and obligatory for direct objects when it comes to classes of animate nouns with a certain morphosyntactic structure.

A visual summary of the diachronic changes to differential object marking in Romanian is provided in Figure 1 for indirect objects and Figure 2 for direct objects.

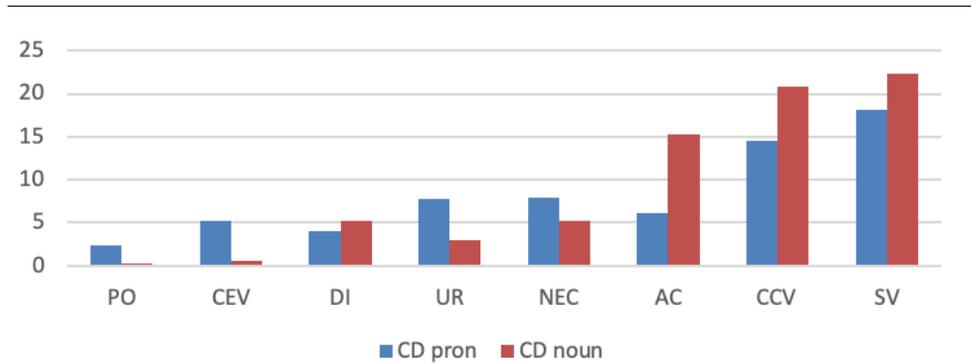


Figure 1 Clitic doubling with indirect objects

CD with indirect object begins with the pronoun paradigm and extends to nouns. The spreading is steady, diachronically, for both pronouns and nouns, notwithstanding some idiolectal variations in the surveyed texts.

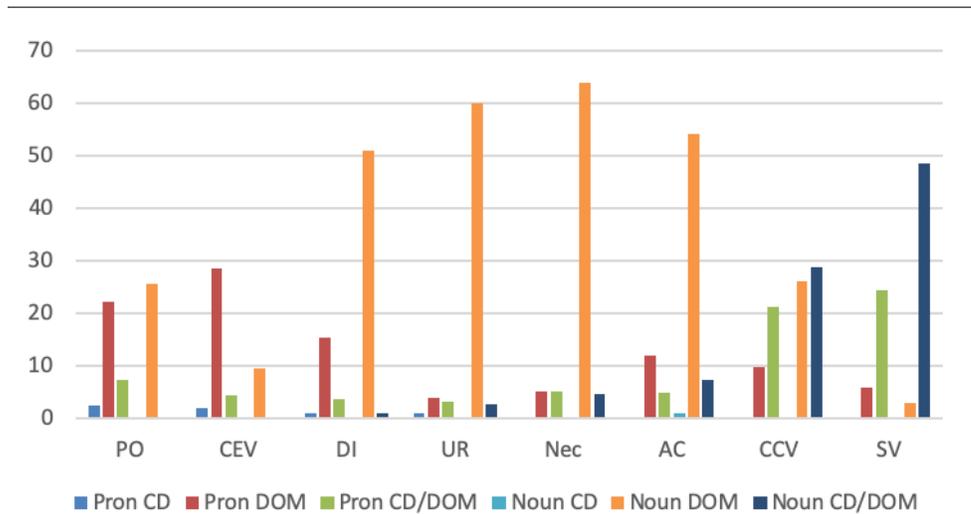


Figure 2 Direct objects: marking mechanisms

This chart indicates that CD with direct objects disappears in the 19th–21st centuries for both pronouns and nouns. DOM is the default marking mechanism for nouns in the 16th–18th centuries but drastically declines in the 19th–21st centuries, being replaced with CD+DOM. Pronouns, rather

than nouns, undergo CD+DOM in the 16th–18th centuries, but the balance is restored in the 19th–21st centuries.

The conclusion arising from the data presentation is that clitic pronouns play a crucial role in the development of a differential object marking system, in a way that affects the discourse interpretation of the marked DP objects. That is, changes in the differential object marking mechanisms, which involve the presence of clitic pronouns, entail changes in the interpretation of the marked DP.

4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

For this paper, we adopt proposals made in current generative grammar with regard to the structure of nominal phrases and the mapping of discourse features. This section provides a brief overview of these proposals.

4.1 *DP-internal structure*

Since DOM applies to nominal categories, we must focus on the structure of DPs. In this respect, several studies (in cartography and beyond) argue that the DP and the CP have a similar internal organization, involving a discourse domain at their left periphery (Aboh 2004; Aboh, Corver, Dyakonova & van Koppen 2009; Giusti 2006; Haegeman 2004; Szabolcsi 1994; Wiltschko 2014). The general configuration we adopt is shown in (25a) and comes from Giusti (2012). The particular implementation of this configuration for DOM is shown in (25b).

- (25) a. KP > DP > NP
 b. KP > [DP₁ > DP₂] > NP

In (25a), K is associated with Case (which is part of the φ feature set, including Number) and with discourse features (i.e. topic or focus as the δ set discussed in Section 4.4 below). The inflectional domain is the DP, and the lexical domain is the NP. More recent studies (i.e. Bernstein, Ordóñez & Roca 2018) further split the DP in two layers, as in (25b). D₁ is associated with a [person] feature, which yields a particularized reading for the KP. D₂ is associated with definiteness, 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 D₁ are in complementary distribution.

Henceforth, in light of the Romanian data, we shall refer to any DOM-ed noun or strong pronoun as a KP, since K can capture the pervasive and

localized discourse effects, whereas the DP field is structured as in (25b), where the presence of *pe* may suppress the definite article.

4.2 CP-internal structure

Parallel to (25), the clausal domain is organized on three levels, as in (26a), with a CP left periphery, a TP inflectional domain and a *v*P lexical domain. Each domain can be further articulated; for example, CP contains projections that map topic and focus features, as in (26b), in a hierarchy established since Rizzi (1997).

- (26) a. CP > TP > *v*P
 b. CP = ForceP > TopP > FocP > FinP

C is the phase edge to which sentence typing as well as φ -features are mapped (Chomsky 2008; Rizzi 2004). Subject to cross-linguistic variation, the φ -feature set can be transferred to the verb inflectional domain (i.e. to T).

4.3 Clitics and discourse features

Romanian data on differential object marking indicate a relation between the use of clitics (i.e. in CD) and discourse effects, the latter involving a DP limited familiar topic readings for marked objects. We adopt Delfitto's (2002) theoretical proposal that captures the relation between clitics and topic readings.

Delfitto (2002) convincingly argues that, in Romance languages, clitic pronouns are not verb arguments but they only spell out the object agreement features on T. Their presence signals CLLD, by which the KP related to the clitic moves to Spec,TopP, at the hierarchical level of TopP in (26b), which is part of the CP. This is further shown in (27): the noun that bears topic features merges in the structure as a Clitic Phrase that embeds DP. In response to the discourse agreement probe in Top, the clitic moves to T, while the DP moves to Spec, TopP.

- (27) [_{TopP} DP [_{TP} T Cl [_{vP} V [_{CIP} Cl [_{DP} ...]]]]]
-

For Delfitto, if the DP is non-lexical, all we see is the clitic, as in (28a), so CLLD is *hidden*, and the reading on the null DP is that of familiar topic. If the DP is lexical, then CLLD is *overt*, as in (28b) – which is the configuration labelled CLLD in our Tables. In this case, the reading of the moved DP is

that of aboutness topic. CD or CD+DOM, as in (28c), is not included in this system.

- (28) a. *Le-am chemat.*
 them.ACC=have.1= called
 'I called them.' hidden CLLD
- b. *Pe fete le-am chemat.*
 DOM girls them.ACC=have.1= called
 'The girls, I called them.' overt CLLD
- c. *Le-am chemat pe fete.*
 them.ACC=have.1= called DOM girls
 'I called the girls.' CD+DOM

When it comes to the data presented in this paper, [Delfitto's](#) analysis is directly relevant to the development of CLLD in competition with Topicalization. That is, it explains why the stabilization of hidden CLLD (pervasive in the OR data) is followed by the spread and stabilization of the overt CLLD (measured in our tables).

However, [Delfitto's](#) analysis does not account for CD configurations, beyond the prediction that clitics are discourse agreement items with CD as well (versus verb arguments). We expand on this point in two respects: (i) We point out that the stabilization of hidden CLLD has, as side effect, not only the spread of overt CLLD but also of CD; that is, overt CLLD and CD rates increase simultaneously, according to our Tables. (ii) We consider that CD mirrors CLLD insofar as the latter arises from discourse triggers at the clausal level (i.e. discourse features on C), whereas the former arises from discourse triggers at the level of the nominal phrase (i.e. discourse features on K).

4.4 Parametric variation

[Delfitto's](#) analysis can now be applied to the discourse agreement typology proposed in [Miyagawa \(2017\)](#), which also takes the mapping of sentence topic/focus feature sets into account. Hence, the typology is relevant to the shift from Topicalization to CLLD in Romanian.

Miyagawa is concerned with the status of discourse features from a Minimalist perspective. More precisely, Cartography distributes the features of C on separate projections as in (26b): sentence typing on Force; discourse features on Top/Foc; φ -features, as well as semantic modality, on Fin ([Rizzi 1997, 2004](#)). However, in the Minimalist approach, which works only with

(26a), the status of discourse features is unclear. According to [Chomsky \(2008\)](#), φ -features are associated with C and may or may not be transferred to T, depending on the particular grammar. What happens with the discourse features? [Miyagawa \(2010, 2017\)](#) argues that discourse features behave on a par with φ -features insofar as they encode Agreement of a relational type, namely, the relation between topic-comment and/or focus-presupposition. Thus, (29) shows two sets of Agreement features mapped to C.

(29) AGR at C for

- (i) subject-predicate relation (φ -features cluster)
- (ii) topic/focus – comment/presupposition relation (δ -features cluster)

From this perspective, δ -features can be transferred from C to T on a par with φ -features. The subsequent possible cross-linguistic variations are captured in (30).

(30) Crosslinguistic typology for C-to-T feature transfer ([Miyagawa 2017](#))

- Category I: $C\varphi, T\delta$ Japanese
- Category II: $C\delta, T\varphi$ English
- Category III: $C, T\varphi/\delta$ Spanish
- Category IV: $C\varphi/\delta, T$ Dinka

In light of [Delfitto's](#) analysis, the system outlined in (29) and (30) needs further refinement. In particular, Delfitto distinguishes the topic probe from topic agreement: the former triggers KP movement, whereas the latter involves the presence of an agreeing clitic on T. In other words, it is not the topic feature that is transferred from C to T, but only its agreement feature (reflecting the relation between the KP topic and the proposition). This is important for Romance languages, where Topic and Focus constituents generally target the CP field and may involve CLLD, whereas the resumptive clitics arising from CLLD are systematically at T. OR and MR are no exception.¹⁶

¹⁶ Since [Miyagawa \(2010\)](#) does not differentiate the topic probe from the topic AGR, [Jiménez-Fernández & Miyagawa \(2014\)](#) argue that the topic feature is transferred to T in Spanish, so the relevant KPs move to Spec, TP in this language, instead of Spec, TopP in the CP domain. This allows them to obtain the desired result, namely, identifying CLLD as a reflection of δ at T, which situates Spanish in the typological Category III in (30). However, [Rizzi \(2004\)](#) argues that Topic/Focus is systematically in the CP field, at least in Romance languages, and tests on these positions in Spanish, such as proposed in [Demonte & Fernández-Soriano \(2004\)](#)

Keeping this difference in mind, it follows that the object clitics we see with CLLD spell out the set of δ -features in (30). Therefore, a typological question arises for OR: to which typological category does this grammar belong, when it comes to CLLD? However, this typology does not extend to KPs beyond the generalization that K must have the same properties as C with respect to phase-edge heads. That is, K is also associated with a double feature set (i.e. φ and δ) which may or may not be transferred to D.

5 ANALYSIS OF ROMANIAN DATA

In Section 5.1, we draw a distinction between the licensing of the marked object at the clause level versus the operations that ensure marking within the internal structure of a KP. At clause level, we point out the parametric shift by which Romanian transitions from Category II to Category III in (30), which ensures the expansion and stabilization of the clitic system. At the level of the nominal structure, we point out that the expanding clitic system is put to use for rescuing configurations where a concurrent and gradual bleaching of DOM-*pe* takes place.

5.1 Licensing marked KP objects

Current studies on the syntax of DOM focus on the properties that are responsible for allowing marked objects to merge with V. In this respect, López (2012) argues that a direct object under DOM cannot receive Case from V (no incorporation is possible) but has to move to a position within *v*P, where Case is assigned by *v*. The tests proposed in support of this analysis concern (mostly but not exclusively) restrictions on anaphoric binding, which, for Spanish, yield grammaticality only when the DOM-ed direct object is higher than the indirect object, which is evidence for the direct object moving within the *v*P to a higher position than the one for indirect objects.

López's tests for Spanish yield opposite grammatical judgments in Romanian (as noted in Hill 2017), indicating that no movement is necessary in Romanian for the KPs counterpart to be licensed. In addition, there is no evidence that *pe* plays any role for the Case-marking of objects in Romanian, especially when we take into account the possibility of indirect object

clearly show the topic constituents in the CP domain in this language as well (e.g. the relevant constituents occur between *que ... que* in recomplementation constructions) although the resumptive clitics are at T. More to the point of this paper, OR and MR systematically display topic and focus constituents in the CP domain (e.g. topics may precede fronted wh-phrases; Motapanyane 1995 a.o.), while clitics are systematically at T.

marking, where Case is morphologically ensured.¹⁷ However, this does not exclude the possibility of an extra feature on little *v* when marked objects merge in the clause structure. In fact, [Irimia \(2018\)](#) argues that [López's \(2012\)](#) analysis can be extended to MR with the proviso that the extra feature is [person] (instead of [Case]), and feature checking may occur through long-distance Agree instead of movement.

In light of the data presented in this paper, neither analysis can capture the variety of triggers for object marking and for the related topic reading. For example, assuming [person] in *v* as a trigger does not tell us anything about the salience and familiar readings of the marked object, and it does not explain why CD and DOM may substitute each other.

Considering this background, we do not attempt to improve on the above analyses but rather opt for a change of perspective: instead of trying to identify the probing feature of *v*, we focus on the internal structure of the marked KP. The point is that we should first identify the internal feature of K/D under marking, as this feature makes the KP visible to the probe on *v*, of whichever type that is. In future research, we can try to identify the probe on *v* by considering the nature of its KP goal. According to the data presented, the goal (i.e. the marked KP) contains a feature set that can be checked and spelled out either by a clitic (under CD marking) or by a dedicated particle (DOM-*pe*) or both. It is, then, necessary to reach an analysis where the clitic and *pe* can alternately check the same feature set, or can share the feature checking task. This is what we endeavour to do in the following sub-sections.

5.2 Clitics and δ -typology

In OR, clitics are routinely used with verbs, indicating that the clitic system is strong in the grammar. In [Delfitto's \(2002\)](#) terminology, hidden CLLD is well-established in this grammar by the 16th century. On the other hand, the use of clitics for overt CLLD and CD is not systematic, as indicated in [Tables 2 and 3](#). More precisely, Topicalization is still competing with CLLD up to the 18th century, whereas CD is optional and used for under 10% of the cases that qualify for differential object marking across the board (indirect and direct objects).

Topicalization involves a type of grammar where the δ -features remain at C. Given that OR has the φ -features transferred to T (i.e. there is morphological subject-verb agreement and T related pro-drop), it means that, according to the typology in [\(30\)](#), OR is a system in transition, from Category

¹⁷ Case does not seem to be the motivating feature in Spanish either, according to [Ormazabal & Romero \(2018\)](#).

II (with δ at C) to Category III (with δ at T, in the guise of clitics), and this is reflected in the expansion and stabilization of the clitic system. In MR, Topicalization is eliminated, as the δ -feature is transferred to T on a systematic basis and CLLD becomes the norm for argument fronting to topic/focus positions. The emergence and productivity of CD is an epiphenomenon of this parametric shift, insofar as the clitics spread from the C/T domain to the KP domain, where they are used for differential object marking. This spreading is relatively fast, since CD quadruples with indirect objects from OR towards MR, and becomes the norm with direct objects in conjunction with DOM.

5.3 CD and discourse readings

The use of CD for differential object marking (for indirect and direct objects alike) is a Balkan Sprachbund property that correlates with specificity in the relevant noun and with a familiar topic reading (Mišeska-Tomić 2006). The concurrence of specificity and the topic reading is to be expected since topic constituents are incompatible with non-specific readings (Cinque 1990). Following Delfitto's analysis, the KP in situ cannot receive an aboutness reading, since it does not move to Spec,TopP. What we see, instead, is a familiar topic reading that needs to be explained: how is this obtained if the KP does not undergo CLLD (i.e. it is independent of the sentence Topic trigger)? Furthermore, CD alone is present in OR and MR when indirect objects are concerned. However, for direct objects, this option is not viable in OR and has completely disappeared from MR. The question is why that should be the case.

An important clue for answering these questions is that the OR texts display CD on an optional basis when the direct object is a strong pronoun, as in (31). The strong pronoun *iale* 'them' has a familiar topic reading with CD in (31a), but an emphatic reading in (31b), where CD does not apply.

- (31) a. *și le puse iale în patru corninure a ei*
 and them.ACC= put.3SG them in four corners of it
 'and he put them in four corners of it' (PO {305} 13)
- b. *și blagoslovi iale zicând*
 and blessed.3SG them saying
 'and he blessed them saying ...' (PO {14} 22)

In OR and MR, strong pronouns have an inherent emphatic reading, and are used only when some kind of foregrounding is intended. Otherwise, only the clitic counterpart is used (hidden CLLD). Hill & Tasmowski 2008 point

out that CD occurs in translations when the writer looks for an equivalent to a non-clitic pronoun in direct object position, which, in the source language (be it Church Slavonic or Hungarian), unlike Romanian, has a neutral reading. In order to preserve the neutral/familiar reading of the original, the translator resorts to CD.

This observation indicates that, in OR, CD is specialized for backgrounding the direct objects that qualify as specific. This inference is supported by the lack of examples with nouns under CD, since nouns do not have inherent emphatic readings, even when they are specific.

Crucially, the backgrounding effect is related to a familiar topic reading. However, this reading does not have sentence scope but it is limited to the marked KP, as illustrated in (32). In other words, the trigger for this reading is not in TopP (in the left periphery of the clause), but somewhere in the KP. That is, in (32), the strong pronoun *tine* under CD and with a familiar topic reading can cooccur with a PP that has a familiar topic reading in the left periphery of the same clause. Lack of competition for the familiar topic reading between *tine* ‘you’ and *cu aceeaia* ‘with that’ indicates that they do not obtain this reading by checking the same probing feature, but that there are two sources of familiar topics.

- (32) *și dzise Domnul: fața mea va merge, [cu*
 and said.3SG Lord.the face.the my will.3SG= go with
aceaia] te voi purta tine.
 that you.ACC= will.1SG= take you
 ‘And the Lord said: my image will go, with that I will take you.’
 (PO {292/14})

In (32), ‘with that’ resumes a DP introduced in the previous clause and which becomes a familiar piece of information for the following clause. At the same time, the strong pronoun ‘you’ is de-emphasized through CD, having also a familiar reading, but this reading does not take scope over the proposition and does not compete with ‘with that’ (e.g. the effect is not that of [*tine*] *te voi purta* ‘you, I will take’). Accordingly, we propose that the familiar reading of the pronoun is obtained within KP, instead of TopP (the sentential position in the left periphery). More precisely, through direct merge in K, the clitic checks and values a [topic] feature associated with this head (i.e. the left periphery of the nominal phrase) instead of [topic] at C (i.e. left periphery of clauses). This is shown in (33).

- (33) [_{KP} K-clitic [_{DP} ...]]

Several studies show that clitics are internal to XP arguments, even if they surface on T (e.g. Applicative Phrases in [Diaconescu & Rivero 2007](#)). If K has a [topic] feature, the clitic either checks this feature locally, and thus CD arises and the KP becomes invisible to C probes, or the feature is probed from C and CLLD applies. At all times, the clitic moves to T, either to spell out δ -agreement at C (in the case of CLLD) or at K (in the case of CD). The reason why the clitic moves to T even when the [topic] feature is checked at K has to do with the licensing of the marked DP under verb selection. What happens to the differentially marked KP within the *v*P is not relevant to our present analysis (i.e. we are focused on the internal structure of such KPs, not on their position within *v*P). We can only point out that [Onea & Mardale Forthcoming](#) argue that the information-structural notion of topic associated with differential object marking in Romanian can be represented in the grammar as a semantic/thematic role (E-TOPIC) that comes with the verb, as a formal feature. This feature is checked on *v*, and triggers a secondary licensing for the marked DP (as in [Irimia 2018](#)). The clitic moves to *v* (and higher with the verb) for this reason.¹⁸

The main point arising from (33) is that CD applies when K carries a [topic] feature, whose presence depends on the semantic properties of the nominal item (i.e. animacy, specificity, referentiality). In the attested OR, the class of nominal items eligible for CD is narrowed down to those that come with inherent emphasis, which amounts to strong personal pronouns. This is an idiosyncratic specialization in the context of the *Balkan Sprachbund*. Note, however, that (33) remains productive with indirect objects, where there is no competing option for object marking.

5.4 *DOM-pe*

Table 3 shows that the highest incidence of differential marking for direct objects in OR involves *DOM-pe* alone. In formal studies, *DOM-pe* is considered to be a preposition that selects the differentially marked KP for Case reasons ([Dobrovie-Sorin 1994](#); [López 2012](#) a.o.). However, current diachronic studies demonstrate that, even in the earliest OR texts, the preposition *pe* has been bleached for its use as a DOM particle. It has lost its Case properties, and it

¹⁸ This analysis suggests that clitic movement is all the configuration needs to license the marked KP. Hence, the prediction would be that López's (2012) analysis can be maintained for Romanian by adopting a micro-variation perspective: DOM-ed KPs do not move to the *v*P area in Romanian because the clitic can take care of feature checking; however, they move in Spanish because the marking does not involve bona fide CD (i.e. the clitic is not always available, and when it is, it may not be checking δ at K). Further investigation is required to verify this hypothesis.

spells out a pragmatic feature, rather than a morphosyntactic one (Antonov & Mardale 2014; Mardale 2015; Croitor 2016; Onea & Mardale Forthcoming).

More precisely, diachronic studies point out that DOM-*pe* emerged with strong personal pronouns that are morphologically Case-marked, as in (34).

- (34) *scriu și mărtoreseascu însimi prea minea cu aest*
 write.1SG and confess.1SG myself DOM me.ACC with this
zapis al meï cum am vândut eu ...
 document of mine that have.1= sold I
 'I write and I myself confess through this document that I sold ...'
 (DÎ 1591, LXXX)

In (34), Case could not be a trigger for *pe* insertion, since the pronoun has morphological accusative marking. Even if one tries to argue that the verb lost its Case-marking ability when selecting strong personal pronouns, the presence of morphological case marking alone can rescue such a configuration, and *pe* would still not be necessary.

A more fruitful approach is to focus on the foregrounding effect the *pe*-marking has on the direct object KP. This reading can be defined as *salience*, insofar as it activates an argument phrase in the mind of the discourse participants (Chafe 1994), and enhances its identity and agentivity. Consequently, it is unsurprising that animate nouns qualify for the salience reading easier than the non-animate ones (i.e. agentivity is easier associated with animacy), although inanimates are not excluded, giving an appropriate pragmatic context.

The above observations amount to an analysis where the preposition *pe*, which had an unstable semantic definition in OR (Mardale 2015; Onea & Mardale Forthcoming), has been reanalysed in two directions: (i) as a preposition with a more specialized semantics (i.e. mainly location in MR); and (ii) as a DOM particle, bleached of its lexical properties. Formally, it means that there are two mappings for *pe*, that is, as a P-head when it is a preposition, but as a functional head within KP when it serves for DOM. This is confirmed by the following two tests, involving constituent coordination and floating quantifiers.

Constituent coordination at KP level is illustrated in (35). In (35a), *pre* is a preposition, and the PP is adjoined to the clause structure (as opposed to it being selected by the verb). In (35b), *pre* is a DOM particle in the coordinated direct object KPs. In (35c), the coordinated direct object KPs do not display DOM.

- (35) a. *era mâniiat pre [slugile sale și mine]*
 was furious with servants.the his and me
 ‘he was furious against his servants and me’ (PO {140})
- b. *și-i învață să facă cum se cade,*
 and-them.ACC= taught.3SG SUBJ do how REFL befits
[și pre ei și pre noi]
 and DOM them and DOM us
 ‘and he taught them and us how to do what is befitting’
 (CEV {90})
- c. *acmu văzură-mă, și urără [și mine, și*
 now saw.3PL=me.ACC and hated.3PL and me and
părintele mieu]
 father.the my
 ‘now they saw me and hated me and my father as well’
 (CEV {522})

In (35a), *pre* is higher than the two KPs, hence it is a P-head that selects a Coordination Phrase containing two KPs. The same is not possible when *pre* is a DOM particle, as in (35b): here, *pre* has to be repeated with each KP or else no DOM applies at all, as shown in (35c). Hence, DOM-*pe* is inside the KP in (35b), it is not super-ordinated to KP, so its merge position is lower than P, as shown in (36). The arrow indicates the diachronic change, from *pe* as fully-fledged preposition to a DOM particle merged in KP.

- (36) P *pe* → K_δ *pe* = DOM

The floating quantifier test in (37) supports the configuration in (36). This is an example from MR in which the *pe*-phrase receives an information focus intonation. Both verbs in (37a,b) select the *pe*-phrase, which maps the theme theta-role in (37a), but maps an obligatory location theta-role in (37b), which is why the PP is selected (i.e. as a sister to V, not adjoined to *v*P or higher). In (37a), the KP can move across the floating quantifier to another argument position (A-position), which is unsurprising with KP arguments (Sportiche 1988). The same movement is not possible in (37b), although the PP is an argument.

- (37) a. *A invitat fetele, pe toate <fetele>.*
 has=invited girls.the DOM all girls.the
 ‘He invited all the girls.’

- b. *A *pus cărți mesele, pe toate <mesele>*.
 has= put books tables.the on all tables.the
 Intended: ‘He put books on all the tables.’

The reason for the ungrammaticality of (37b) is the island effect related to PPs: the KP cannot move through Spec,PP, which is a non-argumental position (A'-position) in order to land in an A-position. Since this type of movement is allowed in (37a), it means that there is no Spec,PP, hence no P in that configuration, indicating that *pe* belongs to KP.

One may object that (37a) should be analyzed as an instance of verb ellipsis or sluicing. However, such an analysis cannot amount to an information focus reading of the *pe*-phrase in this context. Information focus involves right dislocation (Neeleman & Titov 2009) and a certain intonation, which is not compatible with deletion strategies at the *v*P or TP levels.¹⁹

Briefly, DOM-*pe* ceases to be a preposition, and is reanalyzed downward as a pragmatic/discourse marker in K. In this respect, *pe* competes with the clitic with respect to merging as the K-head, as shown in (38): both items check the same discourse feature, but value it differently.²⁰

- (38) [_{KP} K-*pe* [_{DP} ...]]

In the discussion of the data, it has been mentioned that CD and DOM-*pe* have opposite discourse effects (i.e. backgrounding vs. foregrounding), and this observation supports the competition between (33) and (38). In both (33) and (38), KP is a phase, so its internal elements are not visible to C probes. This explains why the topic readings in (33) and (38) take scope only over KP and do not interfere with the treatment of the KP as a whole, under sentence Topic/Focus features, as was pointed out for (19) and (20).²¹

5.5 CD + DOM

The collusion of CD and DOM is attested since the earliest texts, although in its emergent state. Table 3 shows an average of 5% occurrences up to the 18th century, and it concerns the pronouns rather than the nouns. Table 5

19 According to Kayne (1991), all movement is leftward, so there is no ‘right dislocation’. Word orders as in (36a) follow from the movement of elements out of *v*P and KP, respectively, leaving the KP *in situ*, but in the last position of the clause in linear order, which is the position associated with information focus.

20 Note that López (2012) also locates Sp. *a* and Rom. *pe* in K, although he does not justify this location.

21 A narrow scope topic reading over the *v*P is also excluded since the KP may remain *in situ* (vs. moving to the *v*P discourse edge), or may surface in right dislocated positions.

shows a dramatic increase of this option, up to 50%, and it concerns the nouns rather than the pronouns. For convenience, we illustrate the CD+DOM configuration again below:

- (39) *iar frate-meu Marten m-au dăruitu pre*
 and brother=my Marten me.ACC=has= offered DOM
mene cu 2 boi i cu 4 oi i 2 stupi.
me with 2 oxen and with 4 sheep and 2 hives
 ‘and my brother Marten gave me 2 oxen and 4 sheep and 2
 hives.’ (DÎ 1628)

The CD+DOM frequencies raise two questions: (i) How did the collusion happen? and (ii) Why is there not only an increase in the preference for CD+DOM but also a shift from pronouns to nouns in the marking frequency?

Starting with the collusion question, we pointed out that the interpretive effect of CD+DOM is a familiar reading, which is a property of CD, not of DOM. This indicates that DOM-*pe*, although present, no longer carries any salience feature. Formally, this means that *pe* has been reanalyzed as the spellout of a feature other than topic/salience, while the discourse feature of K is checked by the clitic.

Accordingly, we suggest that *pe* has been reanalyzed further downwards in the hierarchy, from K to D. In this respect, we follow the analysis in [Bernstein et al. 2018](#), where D is split between a D₁-head with a [person]/particularized feature, and a D₂-head with definiteness features, with no regard to particularization. There is no doubt that all the differentially marked objects in OR/MR have a particularized reading ([Stan 2013](#), [GR 2013](#), [SOR 2016](#)), and that this reading is related to a marked [person] feature. So far, we did not address the particularization effect of differential marking, as the objective was to understand the source of the discourse reading. Now, we can reconsider (33) and (38) from this perspective, and acknowledge that either the clitic or *pe* has a particularizing effect in addition to the foregrounding or backgrounding reading. Hence, we can assume that the [person] feature is also on K. That is, the configuration of a KP that undergoes either CD or DOM can be represented as in (40).

- (40) [_{KP} K_{[TOPIC][PERSON]} [_{DP} D_[DEFINITE] ...]]

In (40), either the clitic or *pe* can check the two features of K through direct merge.

What happens when the clitic and *pe* cooccur? Following the analysis that [Bernstein et al. \(2018\)](#) propose for Spanish, we suggest that the OR K splits, so that each feature is associated with a functional head, as in (41).

- (41) [_{KP} K-clitic_[TOPIC] [_{DP} D₁- *pe*_[PERSON] [_{DP} D_[DEFINITE] [_{NP} ...]]]]

The split of K triggers two different lexical items to check the same features that could be checked as a set in (40). Since only the clitic merges in K, the reading can only be that of familiar topic. On the other hand, since *pe* has specialized for [person], CD without *pe* is not possible. According to Bernstein et al. (2018), Spanish objects under DOM consist of nominal items that project only to DP₁, having the DOM particle *a* in D₁, but no KP layer.²²

The analysis in (41) finds support in the type of nominals affected by this mechanism, as well as in the reading variations. To begin with, CD+DOM begins with strong personal pronouns that need de-emphasizing (i.e. familiar topic reading) and that also come with an inherent particularized reading. The spread of CD+DOM to nouns is slow in OR and it starts with proper nouns (von Heusinger & Onea 2009). The texts demonstrate the concurrent use of DOM and CD+DOM as intra-language variation for direct object nouns, which means that the speaker has two analyses for *pe* (i.e. one for [topic/salience] and one for [person/particularize]). Therefore, the status of *pe* is unstable in OR, and the candidates for CD+DOM are those with unambiguous particularized readings. For example, in DÎ, the occurrence of CD+DOM with a nominal phrase, shown in (42), contains a proper noun. Note, however, that the second occurrence of the same phrase falls under DOM, not under CD+DOM, which illustrates the instability of *pe* analysis with the same speaker.

- (42) *pântru că I-am miluit pre fiu miu*
 for that him.ACC=have.1SG=offered DOM **son.the my**
Bunea cu aceaste moșâi și vie ci sânt mai
Bunea with these lands and vineyard that are more
sus scrise... căce am miluit pre fiu
 above written.F.PL because have.1SG=offered DOM **son.the**
miu Bunea de a mea bunăvoo, ca să-i
my Bunea of GEN my will that SUBJ=him.DAT
fie lui moșâe și feciorilor lui.
 be.3SG him.DAT estate and sons.the.DAT his
 ‘because I mercifully endowed my son Bunea with these estates
 and vineyard as described above ... since I mercifully endowed
 my son Bunea, of my free will, so that this be his and his sons’
 estate.’

²² According to the analysis in Bernstein et al. (2018), the prediction would be that clitic pronouns in Spanish do not respond to the discourse features of K but only to the discourse features of C. Hence, even if the cooccurrence of CD and DOM may be seen in Spanish as well, it is unsystematic and arises from a different configuration.

The context for (42) indicates that the sentence containing the CD+DOM occurrence has an information focus item, consisting of the PP that specifies what the son receives. Hence, the son's name is not the central piece of information and remains in the background. With the second occurrence of the son's name, the identity of the inheritor is important, and DOM alone (vs. CD+DOM) applies in this context for salience. Under this analysis, the incompatibility of inanimates with CD+DOM follows from the properties of *pe*: when *pe* brings salience to the KP, this feature overrides animacy, as in (43). However, when *pe* ceases to be associated with topic/salience, as in (42), inanimates do not qualify for DOM.

- (43) *cu această carte a domnii mele să ție*
 with this letter of highness.GEN my SBJV hold.3SG
sfânta mănăstire grădina de la satul Popșa
 holy.the monastery garden.the from at village.the Popșa
cu viia și cu casele și cu tot ...
 with vineyard.the and with houses.the and with all
pentru că o am dat domnia mea și
 because that it.ACC=have.1SG=given highness.the my and
am miluit pre Sfânta Mănăstire
 have.1SG=offered DOM holy.the monastery
 'with this letter of my highness, the holy monastery can hold
 the garden of Popșa village together with the vineyard and the
 households and whatever else, because I my highness gave it
 and gave charity to the holy monastery' (1629)

For the marking of inanimates, as in (43), we could not find any matching examples with CD+DOM in OR, which reinforces the observation that inanimates undergo DOM only when salience overrides other semantic triggers. The clitic cannot ensure this condition, which is why CD+DOM is incompatible with inanimate nouns.

Considering this analysis, we can now revisit the alternation between definite articles and CD+DOM mentioned in Section 3 for MR. We provide a new example in (44).

- (44) a. *Detestă politicienii. // *Îi detestă pe*
 hates politicians.the them.ACC= hates DOM
politicienii.
 politicians.the
 'He hates the politicians.'

- b. *Îi detestă pe politicieni.* // **Detestă politicieni.*
 them.ACC= hates DOM politicians hates politicians
 ‘He hates the politicians.’

In (44a), the direct object displays a definite article, which rules out CD+DOM. The reading of the direct object is generic. In (44b), the direct object lacks the definite article and falls under CD+DOM. The reading of the direct object is either generic or specific, the latter entailing that the subject matter was previously introduced in the discourse. On the basis of similar contrasts, von Heusinger & Chiriacescu (2011) define CD+DOM occurrences as in (44b) as satisfying the criteria of secondary topics in terms of Dalrymple & Nikolaeva (2011). We refer the reader to the above studies for information on this semantic line of argumentation.²³ What matters for our analysis is that such studies support the idea we advance here, namely that the option for CD+DOM is not free, but follows from interpretive constraints reflected through different syntactic configurations.

In summary, the CD mechanism for the differential marking of direct objects has not been lost from the language, but has been recycled in conjunction with the competing marking strategy, which was DOM. The recycling was facilitated by the progressive spread of clitic operations in the language (i.e. CLLD), and the further bleaching of *pe*, which lost its discourse saliency feature. The reanalysis of *pe* as a D (vs. K) element entails the presence of a substitute spellout for the topic feature of K. Clitics were the immediate candidates, since they already spelled out K in concurrent marked DP indirect objects.

6 CONCLUSIONS

This paper adopted a diachronic perspective for understanding the attested changes in the differential object marking mechanism in Romanian. First, the paper provides frequency tables indicating that variation and change took place in the marking of direct objects, but not in the marking of indirect objects, the latter displaying a consistent CD pattern. For direct objects, we showed that the marking mechanisms change from CD to DOM to CD+DOM, and the possibility of skipping object marking gradually decreases with the relevant classes of nouns/pronouns. The same tables indicated that the spread of the CD+DOM option goes hand in hand with the expansion of

²³ von Heusinger & Chiriacescu (2011) argue that *pe*-marked definite direct objects qualify for secondary topics because they are (i) referentially more persistent than their unmarked counterparts, and (ii) they show a systematic preference to become topics two or three sentences after being introduced in the discourse.

CLLD, the latter eliminating Topicalization as a means of constituent fronting to sentence discourse positions.

In the second part, this paper adopted a syntactic framework to account for these changes. This approach complements the discussion of previous studies that look at the contrast between DOM and CD+DOM only from a semantic perspective.

The contribution of our syntactic approach to the previous discussions is the following:

- The CD option was not readily available for object marking before the clitic pronoun system became stabilized in the language. More precisely, the transfer of the δ -feature (spelled out by clitics) from C to T, with intermediary stages visible in OR texts, had to be accomplished before CD could successfully compete with DOM. The parametric shift is indicated by the stabilization of CLLD in the grammar.
- DOM was the predominant option for direct object marking in OR because it was independent of the clitic pronoun system, so it was not subject to the fluctuations in the clitic system.
- CD+DOM emerged due to two concurrent changes: (i) the clitic system expanded and became stabilized; and (ii) the DOM particle became bleached and lost its discourse feature.
- CD remains productive with indirect objects because there was no competing marking option. However, if a marking particle version arises (as seems to be the case with *la* 'to' in MR – see examples in (6) for the use of this preposition in OR), then the prediction would be that the construction would be reanalyzed analogous to the direct object structure (i.e. collusion of CD and DOM, as in (41)).

This analysis pointed out that the marked KP objects have a discourse feature on the phase edge head K that is visible to a probe in little *v*. Unmarked KPs do not have a discourse field activated on their K head. Hence, what counts for the type of KP licensing within *v*P/VP is not related to their complexity but to the featural makeup of K.

ABBREVIATIONS IN GLOSSES

ACC = accusative case; CL = clitic; DAT = dative case; DOM = differential object marker; PL = plural; REFL = reflexive pronoun; SG = singular; SBJV = subjunctive

TEXTS

- AC Creangă, Ion. 1881. *Amintiri din copilărie*. Convorbiri literare 10.
- CCV Caragiale, Mateiu. 1929. *Craii de Curtea-Veche*. București: Editura Cartea Românească.
- CEV Pușcariu, Sextil & Procopovici, Alexie. 1914. *Carte cu învățătură (1581)*. București: Atelierele Grafice Socec & Co.
- DÎ Chivu, Gheorghe et al. 1979. *Documente și însemnări românești din secolul al XVI-lea*. București: Editura Academiei.
- NEC Iordan, Iorgu. 1955. *Ion Neculce, Letopisețul Țării Moldovei*. București: Editura de Stat.
- PO Pamfil, Viorica. 1968. *Palia de la Orăștie 1581–1582*. București: Editura Academiei.
- SV Iaru, Florin. 2017. *Sânii verzi*. București: Editura Polirom.
- UR Panaitescu, Petre P. (ed.). 1958. *Grigore Ureche, Letopisețul Țării Moldovei*. București: Editura de Stat.

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Virginia Hill
 University of New Brunswick
 PO Box 5050
 Saint John, NB
 E2L 4L5
 Canada
mota@unb.ca

Alexandru Mardale
 INaLCO & SeDyL UMR 8202 CNRS
 65, Rue des Grands Moulins
 75013
 Paris
 France
alexandru.mardale@inalco.fr