

## Differential Object Marking in Romanian. Diachronic development and language contact

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This presentation focuses on differential object marking (DOM) in Romanian and the extent to which the diachronic development of this operation is influenced by language contact. We address two problems: (i) the DOM mechanism is diachronically unstable; (ii) historical linguistic studies speculate that the instability arises mostly in translations from Church Slavonic, under language contact, whereas original Romanian texts show a stable DOM system.

For point (i), two object marking mechanisms are relevant: (a) clitic doubling (CD), typical for Balkan languages; and (b) object marking through the particle *p(r)e* (DOM-p), typical for Romance languages. OR shows intra-language variation in DOM options: DOM is absent (1a); it occurs as either CD (1b) or DOM-p (1c) or as concurrent CD/DOM-p (1d). Only the option in (1d) is preserved in Modern Romanian.

- (1) a. *rugăm tine ca drag părintele nostru* (PO {9})  
implore.1PL you as beloved parent.the us  
'we implore you, as our beloved parent'
- b. *te cunosc tine* (PO {292})  
CL.ACC know.1SG you
- c. *cel puternic va blagoslovi pre tine* (PO {175})  
the powerful will bless DOM you  
'the powerful one will bless you'
- d. *te voiu aduce pre tine de acolo* (PO 162})  
CL.AC will.1SG bring DOM you from there  
'I will bring you from there'

For point (ii), the literature claims that original texts display a significantly higher incidence of DOM and a stabilized option, whereas the translations show not only unstable DOM options, but also syntactic calquing of *na*+noun phrases from Church Slavonic (Stan 2014 a.o.).

In this paper we verify statistically these claims, and cast the results in a formal analysis. Statistically, we compare DOM options in seven OR texts from 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century (original and translations). We find that the previous literature does not distinguish between DOM-p and the CD/DOM-p collusion, which show equally high variation in original texts and in translations. According to our results, there is no systematic variation between language registers, but there is significant idiolectal variation, from one text to another, be it original or translated. In the same vein, the results do not support calquing from Church Slavonic where DOM is concerned.

Formally, we argue that DOM instability arises from mixed parametric settings typical for Romanian, where Balkan and Romance patterns are negotiated within the grammar. The collusion of CD (Balkan) and DOM-p (Romance) is unsurprising in the context of major parametric shifts in the language, displaying similar typological mix.

Hill, Virginia & Alexandru Mardale (2021), *The Diachrony of Differential Object Marking in Romanian*. [Oxford Studies in Diachronic and Historical Linguistics](#), OUP.