

Some notes on the realizations of the direct object in the old language

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Article info

History:

Received May 22, 2017

Accepted June 25, 2017

Published September 30, 2017

Key words:

direct object

non-determined

specific

non-specific

p(r)e marking

Abstract

In the present article, we aim to analyse some constructions with the direct object realized as a personal or animate noun in the old language in order to emphasize certain syntactic features which have been only partially preserved or even eliminated from the modern language. On the one hand, we point to the construction with a bare direct object, which is recorded quite extensively in the context of wider range of selecting verbs than in the present-day language, on the other, we focus on the *p(r)e*-marking variation in the context of personal nouns with a specific / non-specific reading, as well as on the competition between the direct object generic singular and plural (*pre sărac(ul)* ‘DOM poor.DEF’ *vs pre săraci* ‘DOM poor.M.PL’ / *săracii* ‘poor.M.PL.DEF’).

1. Introduction

The syntactic behaviour of the direct object in the old language (the 16th–18th centuries) does not display significant differences compared to the present-day language. Generally, the main phenomena which show variation, extensively investigated in previous studies, are *p(r)e*-marking and clitic doubling conditions (Guruianu, 2005, p. 91–120; Tigău, 2011; Nicula Paraschiv, 2016, p. 123–143).

The present contribution is not a in-depth analysis of the direct object construction in the old language, it focuses instead on some “special” realizations of the direct object – the contexts with bare nouns and (non-)specific expressions. Our purpose is to emphasize the function of the marker *p(r)e* and determination in the referential (specific) *vs* generic (non-specific) interpretation of the direct object.

The examples cited in the article are excerpted from the corpora used in the “Iorgu Iordan – Al. Rosetti” Institute of Linguistics of the Romanian Academy in the analyses on the syntax of the old language.

2. On some constructions with bare direct object

2.1. In the current language, the nominal direct object in a postverbal position is subject to certain definiteness constraints, correlated with the the feature of number (singular *vs* plural).

In the singular, the direct object with a concrete referent can occur with a definite or indefinite article (1). The occurrences of the bare direct object are restricted to certain contexts lexically determined [*infra*, (3)].

The contexts with an indefinite noun (1a) are ambiguous between an existential and a referential reading (see also Farkas, 2013, p. 200): in the existential interpretation, it is asserted the existence of any book that the speaker may buy; in the referential interpretation, the speaker refers to a specific book (he assigns a specific value to the variable *book*).

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- (1) a. *Cumpăr o carte și revin.*
 buy.IND.PRES.1SG a book and come.back
 ‘I am buying a book and come back’
 b. *Cumpăr cartea.*
 buy.IND.PRES.1SG book.DEF
 ‘I am buying the book’

The possibility for the direct object to be realized as a bare nominal with a concrete referent is limited to certain classes of verbs [see (2a) vs (2b,3)]:

- (2) a. **Cumpăr cartea.*
 buy.IND.PRES.1SG book
 b. *Are casă.*
 have.IND.PRES.3SG house
 ‘(S)he has a house’

The occurrence of the bare direct object¹ is licensed by certain conditions (Copceag, 1964, p. 195–201; Dobrovie-Sorin, 2013, p. 68–70): (i) with the verb *a avea* ‘have’ or other acquisition verbs (3a); (ii) with intensional verbs such as *a căuta* ‘search’, *a angaja* ‘hire’, etc., which subordinate a possible future possession (3b); (iii) with verbs such as *a purta* ‘wear’, *a folosi* ‘use’, etc., which semantically subordinate the possession verb *a avea* ‘have’ (3c); (iv) with “light” verbs such as *a face* ‘do; make’, *a ține* ‘keep; hold’, *a lua* ‘take’, etc. (3d); (v) in idiomatic collocations; see (3e), in which the nominal direct object is supplementarily marked by the marker *pe*.

In many cases, the bare direct object expresses properties.

- (3) a. *Are casă. / Primește pachet în fiecare săptămână.*
 has house receives parcel in every week
 ‘(S)he has a house’ / ‘(S)he receives a parcel every week’
 b. *Caută casă. / Cere chitanță. / Angajăm bucătar. /*
 searches house asks receipt hire.IND.PRES.1PL chef
Aștept telefon.
 wait.IND.PRES.1SG phone
 ‘(S)he is searching for a place to live in’ / ‘(S)he is asking for a receipt’ / ‘We are hiring a chef’ / ‘I am expecting a phone call’
 c. *Port cască. / Folosesc creion, nu stilou.*
 wear.IND.PRES.1SG helmet use.IND.PRES.1SG pencil not pen
 ‘I am wearing a helmet’ / ‘I use a pencil, not a pen’
 d. *Fac curățenie. / Ia loc! / Ținem regim.*
 do.IND.PRES.1SG cleanliness take.IMP.2SG place keep.IND.PRES.1PL diet
 ‘I am cleaning (the house)’ / ‘Have a seat!’ / ‘We are on a diet’
 e. *Cui pe cui se scoate.*
 nail DOM nail CL.REFL.ACC.3SG drive.OUT.IND.PRES.3SG
 ‘One nail drives out another’

The distribution of the bare nominal direct object is less constrained in the plural. Most of the transitive verbs allow direct objects realized as indefinite / definite nouns as well as bare nouns. However, the restriction occurs in the context of psych verbs with an Experiencer subject, which do not admit the construction with a bare noun: (5a) vs (5b).

¹The limited distribution of singular nouns which do not bear the definite article is stands for their interpretation, as some scholars point, not as canonical arguments, but instead as modifiers of the verbal predication (see also Farkas, 2013, p. 68).

- (4) a. *Cumpăr niște cărți / cărțile / cărți.*
buy.IND.PRES.1SG some books books.DEF books
- b. *Desenez niște copaci / copacii / copaci.*
draw.IND.PRES.1SG some trees trees.DEF trees
- c. *Văd niște filme / filmele / filme.*
see.IND.PRES.1SG some movies movies.DEF movies
- (5) a. **Respect doctori.*
respect.IND.PRES.1SG doctors
- vs*
- b. *Respect doctorii. / Îi respect*
respect.IND.PRES.1SG doctors.DEF CL.ACC.3SG respect.IND.PRES.1SG
- pe doctori.*
DOM doctors

2.2. Unlike the present-day language, in **old Romanian**, the constraints of articulation of the direct object are more vacillant (Stan, 2013a, p. 298; see also 2013b, p. 175). The investigation of old texts emphasize the fact that there is a quite extensive pattern with the bare direct object (realized a bare countable noun), and the lexical class of verbs which allow this construction is larger than the one in the present-day language [*a fura* 'steal', *a omori* 'kill', *a săruta* 'kiss', *a tăia* 'cut', *a ucide* 'kill', etc.; see examples (6)–(7)]. In all of these constructions, bare singulars denote non-specific referents.

The construction with a bare direct object, characteristic of legislative texts, is frequent in translated writings (7), but it is found, albeit more rarely, in original fragments as well (6). The feature of non-determination characterizes non-animate nouns (7a–b), animate nouns (6,7c–e), or human nouns (7f–i), with (7b,e,i) or without modifiers (6,7a,c–d,f–h).

- (6) *cela ce fură dobitoc (...) Cine fură găină* (CPrav.1560–2, 4^r, preface)
that who steals animal who steals chicken
- (7) a. *cela ce învață pre altul să margă*
that who teaches DOM another SĂ_{SUBJ} go.SUBJ.3SG
să tae pom (Prav.1646, 42)
SĂ_{SUBJ} cut.SUBJ.3SG tree
- b. *celuia ce-i vor dăruia lucru*
that.DAT who=CL.DAT.3SG AUX.FUT.3PL give.INF thing
de furat (Prav.1646, 80)
DE_{SUP} steal.SUP
- c. *cela ce va fura cal sau bou* (Prav.1646, 40)
that who AUX.FUT.3SG steal.INF horse or ox
- d. *văcariul ce va lua dobitoc*
cowherd.DEF who AUX.FUT.3SG take.AUX.FUT.3SG animal
să-l pască (Prav.1646, 41)
SĂ_{SUBJ}=CL.ACC.M.3SG graze.SUBJ.3SG
- e. *cela ce va omori dulău de turmă* (Prav.1646, 41)
that who AUX.FUT.3SG kill.INF dog of herd
- f. *cela ce va săruta copil cu rîvne* (Prav.1646, 143)
that who AUX.FUT.3SG kiss.INF child with ardour
- g. *Cela ce va răpi călugăriță*
that who AUX.FUT.3SG kidnap.INF nun
de la mănăstire (Prav.1652, 257)
from monastery

- h. *care arhiereu va opri vreun popă dă liturghie*
 any bishop AUX.FUT.3SG stop.INF any priest from liturgy
sau va afurisi mirean (Prav.1652, 90)
 or AUX.FUT.3SG curse.INF layperson
- i. *Oricine va ucide fur zioa sau noaptea* (Prav.1652, 249)
 whoever AUX.FUT.3SG kill.INF thief day.DEF or night.DEF

The constructions with a bare direct object given above in (6)–(7) are in variation with those in which the noun is accompanied by a quantifier (8a–c) or by the indefinite article:

- (8) a. *Dărimînd neştine un copaci va scăpa săcurea*
 put.down.GER anybody a tree AUX.FUT.3SG drop.INF axe.DEF
şi va ucide vreun dobitoc (Prav.1646, 41)
 and AUX.FUT.3SG kill.INF an animal
- b. *care preot va afurisi pe vreun creştin*
 any priest AUX.FUT.3SG curse.INF DOM any Christian
fără de lege (Prav.1652, 91)
 without law
- c. *şi el va aduce niscare dobitoc,*
 and he AUX.FUT.3SG bring.INF any animal
de-l va băga în ţarină (Prav.1646, 60)
 and=CL.ACC.M.3SG AUX.FUT.3SG put.INF in tilled.land
- d. *Cînd va merge neştine să aducă*
 when AUX.FUT.3SG go.INF somebody SĂ_{SUBJ} bring.SUBJ.3SG
nişte dobitoc den cîmp (Prav.1646, 206)
 some animal from field
- e. *Dacă un văcar a ucis sau a*
 if a cowherd AUX.PERF.3SG kill.PPLE or AUX.PERF.3SG
ologit un bou (...) este vinovat (Prav.1646, 206)
 cripple.PPLE an ox is guilty

The bare direct object is also encountered in symmetrical constructions, in which the nouns, linked by a preposition (*drept, pentru* ‘for’), have a non-specific interpretation.

- (9) a. *acesta să dea vită drept vită* (Prav.1646, 60)
 this SĂ_{SUBJ} give.SUBJ.3SG cow for cow
- b. *să dea bou pentru bou şi asin pentru*
 SĂ_{SUBJ} give.SUBJ.3SG ox for ox and donkey for
asin şi oaie pentru oaie (Prav.1646, 206)
 donkey and sheep.SG for sheep.SG

Except for the patterns mentioned above in (3), the modern language does not preserve the configuration with a bare object in the singular, using instead the (bare) generic plural: *a fura găini* ‘to steal chicken.PL’, *a ucide hoţi* ‘to kill thieves’, etc.

3. Realizations of the direct object. *P(r)e* as a marker of the (non-)specific DO

3.1. *P(r)e*-marking of the direct object is a phenomenon correlated to such features as the referent being [+human] or [+animate] alongside its “epistemic” salience (GALR, II, p. 396; Manoliu-Manea, 1993, p. 192–204; Pană Dindelegan, 2013, p. 128–135 and references therein).

For the **present-day language**, there are certain constraints in the use of the *pe* with a direct object either as an obligatory or as an optional marker. Differential object marking is a scalar feature; there is a hierarchy in *pe* selection that accounts for its preferential selection as is placed higher on the following scale: non-personal noun < non-specific personal noun < proper name < universal quantifier < personal quantifier < demonstrative or personal pronoun < a noun that denotes a specific person < kinship name (for the animacy hierarchy, see Manoliu-Manea, 1993, p. 196–200; Pană Dindelegan, 2013, p. 130 and references therein).

The contrast between examples (10) and (11) is relevant with respect to the constructions with direct objects realized as common personal nouns: the presence of the marker *pe* triggers the referential reading, whereas its absence (11a–b) licenses the property reading (“I am searching for anyone who is a teacher”; “she has plenty of acquaintances, among which there are also doctors”).

- (10) a. *Îl caut pe profesor.* ([+specific])
 CL.ACC.M.3SG search.IND.PRES.1SG DOM teacher
 ‘I am looking for the teacher’
vs
 b. *Îi cunoaște pe doctori.* ([+specific])
 CL.ACC.M.3PL know.IND.PRES.3SG DOM doctors
 ‘(S)he knows the doctors’
- (11) a. *Caut profesor.* ([–specific])
 search.IND.PRES.1SG teacher
 ‘I am looking for a teacher’
 b. *Cunoaște doctori.* ([–specific])
 know.IND.PRES.3SG doctors
 ‘(S)he knows doctors’

Romanian also allows for the direct object (with a singular or plural referent) to be expressed by a definite noun directly linked to the verb (without the marker *pe*).

- (12) a. *Caut profesorul.*
 search.IND.PRES.1SG teacher.DEF
 ‘I am looking for the teacher’
 b. *Cunoaște doctorii.*
 know.IND.PRES.3SG doctors.DEF
 ‘(S)he knows the doctors’

Niculescu (1965, p. 86–87) points to a difference in meaning between (10a) *vs* (12a), and (10b) *vs* (12b), respectively, in terms of individualization. The author notices that the use of the marker *pe* has to do with the precise specification of the referent, whereas its absence (in the context of a definite noun) is correlated with weaker epistemic prominence. Thus, in a context like *il caut pe profesor* ‘CL.ACC.M.3SG search.IND.PRES.1SG DOM teacher’, the intended reading is ‘I am looking for a specific teacher, but he is not known to the person to whom I am talking’, whereas in a context like *caut profesorul* ‘search.IND.PRES.1SG teacher.DEF’, the reading is ‘I am looking for a particular teacher, but he is not known to the audience’.

The difference in interpretation between the two configurations is also determined by the semantic-referential category of the nominal direct object. Von Heusinger & Chiriacescu (2013, p. 446) show that, in an example like (13), the difference in interpretation is that between the referential (specific) reading (13b) and the kind (*property*) reading (13a); a contrast like this can only occur in the context of “functional” nouns (*primar* ‘mayor’, *președinte* ‘president’, *criminal* ‘criminal’, etc.). In (13a) the referent is any individual who is a mayor, whereas in (13b) the noun marked by *pe* does not refer to the function of the referent, but to the individual who is in this function.

- (13) a. *La inaugurarea aeroportului Braşov, cetăţenii vor invita primarul.*
 at inauguration.DEF airport.DEF.GEN Braşov citizens.DEF
 AUX.FUT.3PL invite.INF mayor.DEF
- b. *La inaugurarea aeroportului Braşov, cetăţenii îl vor invita pe primar.*
 at inauguration.DEF airport.DEF.GEN Braşov citizens.DEF
 CL.ACC.M.3SG AUX.FUT.3PL invite.INF DOM mayor
 ‘At the inauguration of the Braşov airport, the citizens will invite the mayor’
 (*apud von Heusinger & Chiriacescu, 2013, p. 446*)

In the absence of a modifier of the direct object—(14a) *vs* (14b)—, the co-occurrence of the two means of individualization (*pe*-marking and the determiner) is only allowed in the present-day language in the context of kinship names with unique referents (14c):

- (14) a. **Îl/ii caut pe profesorul / profesorii.*
 CL.ACC.M.3SG/PL search.IND.PRES.1SG DOM teacher.DEF teachers.DEF
- b. *Îl caut pe profesorul de chimie.*
 CL.ACC.M.3SG search.IND.PRES.1SG DOM teacher.DEF of chemistry
 ‘I am looking for the chemistry teacher’
- c. *Îl sun pe tata / pe bunicul.*
 CL.ACC.M.3SG call.IND.PRES.1SG DOM father.DEF DOM grandfather.DEF
 ‘I am calling my father / my grandfather’

Both the *pe*-configuration with a bare noun and that with a definite noun (without the marker *pe*) can contextually have a non-specific reading, denoting any referent that can be included in the corresponding semantic category (“any child that shows symptoms of a certain type”):

- (15) a. *Dacă observaţi aceste simptome, îl luaţi pe copil şi mergeţi cu el la doctor.*
 if notice.IND.PRES.2PL these symptoms CL.ACC.M.3SG take.IND.PRES.2PL
 DOM child and go.IND.PRES.2PL with him to doctor
 ‘If you notice these symptoms, take the child to the doctor’
- b. *Luaţi copilul şi mergeţi cu el la doctor.*
 take.IMP.2PL child.DEF and go.IMP.2PL with him to doctor
 ‘Take the child to the doctor’

3.2. **In the old language** (16th–18th centuries), the phenomenon of *pe*-marking continued to show variations until the mid-17th century (Tigău, 2011, p. 39–65; Stan, 2013b, p. 162–163; Nicula Paraschiv, 2016, p. 129–134) although the semantic and syntactic constraints in the use of the marker *pe* were already established at the beginning of the abovementioned period. In old Daco-Romanian, the use of *pe* as a direct object marker depends on the type of the text—original *vs* translated—, but also on the lexical-semantic features of the nominal. It was shown that, in old original texts, the presence of *pe* as a differential object marker has been quite generalized since the beginning of the period (Guruianu, 2005, p. 95–103), whereas translated texts show significant variations and preferences in using the marker according to the syntactic and semantic features of the referent (Tigău, 2011, p. 40; Nicula Paraschiv, 2016, p. 131–134; Stan, 2013b, p. 161–182).

In the present article, we will make some observations on the constructions with the direct object realized as a [+human] / [+animate] noun in order to point to the variation in the presence/absence of the marker *p(r)e* and the semantic distinctions correlated with these phenomena.

In close relation to the hesitant use of *pre* as a specificity marker, the investigation of some of the old texts reveals the presence of competing constructions, which have only been partially preserved in the present-day language. As specific features, we notice the extensive use of the marker *p(r)e* with the generic (articled or bare)² singular as well as the variation between the generic singular and plural (see the discussion on hesitation between determination and non-determination in prepositional contexts in the old language in [Nedelcu, 2016](#), p. 430–431).

- (i) An extensive type of variation is the one between the configuration [*pe* + bare noun] *vs* [definite noun (not marked by *pe*], which has been preserved in the modern language with very few nouns, such as *om* ‘mankind’.

- (16) a. *Dumnezeu omul pre obrazul lui au*
 God man.DEF after cheek.DEF his AUX.PERF.3SG
făcut (PO.1582, 34)
 make.PPLE
 ‘God made man after his own image’
- b. *Dumnezeu spală din lontru pre om*
 God washes from inside DOM man
de toate păcatele (ŞT.1644, 6)
 of all.F.PL sins.DEF
 ‘God washes all man’s sins from inside’
- c. *Eu feciu pământul și omul pre dîns* (DPar.1683, III/13^r)
 I make.PS.1SG earth.DEF and man.DEF on it
 ‘I have made the earth and created man upon it’
- d. *Sărăcia pre om smerește* (DPar.1683, II/30^v)
 poverty.DEF DOM man humbles
 ‘Poverty humbles man’

In the old language, there are numerous other nouns which participate in this variation, in constructions with a non-specific reading:

- (17) a. *ceia ce ucig pre fur cînd îl*
 those that kill.IND.PRES.3PL DOM thief when CL.ACC.M.3SG
vor prinde furînd (Prav.1646, 104)
 AUX.FUT.3PL catch.INF steal.GER
 ‘those who kill a thief when they catch him stealing’
- b. *nu poate nime să ucigă furul,*
 not can.IND.PRES.3SG nobody SĂ_{SUBJ} kill.SUBJ.3SG thief.DEF
cînd poate să-l leage și
 when can.IND.PRES.3SG SĂ_{SUBJ}=CL.ACC.M.3SG tie.up.SUBJ.3SG and
să-l ducă la giudeț (Prav.1646, 104)
 SĂ_{SUBJ}=CL.ACC.M.3SG bring.SUBJ.3SG to judge
 ‘no one can kill a thief, but they can tie him up and bring him to the judge’
- c. *Cela ce va sudui pre ucenic*
 that who AUX.FUT.3SG insult.INF DOM apprentice
înainte dascalu-său (Prav.1646, 154)
 in.front.of master=his
 ‘he who will insult an apprentice in front of his master’

²See also the observations made by [Niculescu \(1965, p. 64–65\)](#), who considers that patterns with undetermined nouns after prepositions are a feature specific to old stages of Romance languages. This characteristic of Romanian is evidence for its archaic behaviour.

- d. *Dascălul ce-și va bate ucenicul*
 master.DEF who=CL.REFL.DAT.3SG AUX.FUT.3SG beat.INF apprentice.DEF
nu să va certa (Prav.1646, 149)
 not SE.IMPERS AUX.FUT.3SG scold.INF
 ‘A master who will hit his apprentice will not be scolded’
- e. *Drept aceia cu altfel de podoabă va veni*
 for that with another.kind of adornment AUX.FUT.3SG come.INF
când va judeca lumea (AD.1722–5, 101)
 when AUX.FUT.3SG judge.INF people.DEF
 ‘For that he will come dressed in a different way when he is going to judge the people’
- f. *pre dînsul, drept aceia ascultați, iară nu*
 DOM him for that listen.IMP.2PL and not
pre lume (AD.1722–5, 13^v)
 DOM people
 ‘that’s why you should listen to him, not to the people’

The non-specific direct object can also be realized as a *substantivized* adjective / adverb (conversion of an adjective or adverb into a noun), with or without *pe*.

- (18) a. *Ferice de care socoteaște pre mișel și calic.* (DPar.1683, II/22^r)
 happy of which takes.care DOM poor and stingy
 ‘Happy he who takes care of the poor and the stingy’
- b. *Reapedele îmblî<n>zește (...) iară neputinciosul*
 fast.DEF.M.SG tames and helpless.DEF.M.SG
mîngîie (CPrav.1560–2, 1^v)
 comforts
 ‘He tames the nervous and comforts the helpless’

(ii) Unlike the present-day language, in the old language *p(r)e* is also registered in contexts with a non-specific direct object realized as a definite noun in the singular:

- (19) a. *Călugărul ce va fura pre egumenul,*
 monk.DEF who AUX.FUT.3SG steal.INF DOM father.superior.DEF
nu va avea certare (Prav.1646, 74)
 not AUX.FUT.3SG have.INF punishment
 ‘A monk who steals from a Father Superior will not be punished’
- b. *Care vor să pîrască pre arbiereul,*
 whoever want SĂ_{SUBJ} tell.on.SUBJ.3PL DOM archbishop.DEF
trebuie să întreabe să afle ce oameni
 must SĂ_{SUBJ} ask.SUBJ.3PL SĂ_{SUBJ} find.out.SUBJ.3PL what people
sînt și ce viață au (Prav.1652, 82)
 be.IND.PRES.3PL and what life have.IND.PRES.3PL
 ‘He who wants to tell on a bishop must first ask to see what kind of people they are, what life they have’
- c. *Că în chipul lui Dumnădzău*
 because in image.DEF LUI.GEN God
am făcut pre omul (DPar.1683, II/6^v)
 AUX.PERF.1SG make.PPLE DOM man.DEF
 ‘Because I created man in God’s image’

There are also structures with substantivized adjectives (*pre săracul* ‘DOM poor.DEF’ < *pre omul sărac*

‘DOM man.DEF poor’) (20a–b) or with a nominal ellipsis (*cel sărac* ‘CEL.M.SG poor’ < *omul cel sărac* ‘man.DEF CEL.M.SG poor’) (20c–e) with a non-specific reading:

- (20) a. *Cela ce clevetește pre measerul întărită*
 that who slanders DOOM poor.DEF.M.SG angers
pre cela ce l-au făcut
 DOM that who CL.ACC.M.3SG=AUX.PERF.3SG make.PPLE
pre îns (DPar.1683, III/6^r)
 DOM him
 ‘He who slanders the poor angers his own creator’
- b. *Cela ce miluiaște pre săracul*
 that who shows.pity DOM poor.DEF.M.SG
împrumutează lui Dumnezeu (DPar.1683, III/18^r)
 lends LUI.DAT God
 ‘He who shows pity to the poor gives to God’
- c. *Cela ce nu pune nevoia să socotească*
 that who not puts difficulty SĂ_{SUBJ} take.care.SUBJ.3SG
pre cel bolnav (Prav.1646, 100)
 DOM CEL sick
 ‘He who does not find it hard to take care of the sick’
- d. *săndirepteadze pre cel drept ce bine*
 SĂ_{SUBJ}=guide.SUBJ.3SG DOM CEL righteous who well
slujește a mult (DPar.1683, III/44^r)
 serves to many
 ‘to guide the righteous who serve many people righteously’
- e. *Ceia ce fac drept pre cel*
 those who make.IND.PRES.3PL righteous DOM CEL
strîmb (DPar.1683, II/17^r)
 wrong
 ‘Those who show the right way to those who are wrong’

In non-specific structures, nouns (or substantivized adjectives) in the singular (20) are in variation with nouns/substantivized adjectives in the plural (21):

- (21) a. *Că-i va trînti Domnul*
 because=CL.ACC.M.3PL AUX.FUT.3SG put.down.INF Lord.DEF
pre necurații (DPar.1683, IV/56^r)
 DOM filthy.DEF.PL
 ‘because God will put the filthy down’
- b. *Și va aduna pre cei*
 and AUX.FUT.3SG pick.up.INF DOM CEL.M.PL
sfărîmaț (DPar.1683, III/29^r)
 suffering.M.PL
 ‘And he will pick up the suffering’
- c. *venit-au să mintuiască pre cei*
 come.PPLE=AUX.PERF.3SG SĂ_{SUBJ} save.SUBJ.3SG DOM CEL.M.PL
robiț și pre cei rătați (AD.1722–5, 103^v)
 enslave.PPLE.M.PL and DOM CEL.M.PL lost.M.PL
 ‘he came to save the enslaved and the lost’

(iii) In the old language texts, *p(r)e* is also registered in the context of a definite [+human] / [+animate]

noun with a specific reading, referring to a particular individual (22a–f); Pană Dindelegan (2016, p. 83) accounts for this phenomenon through the unique referent denoted by the noun.

- (22) a. *Așa amu întrebă Hristosu **pre orbulu**_{DEF} (cc².1581, 173)*
 ‘So Christ asked the blind one’
 b. *Atuncea va munci **pre sfătuitoriul**_{DEF} să spue cu adevărat și să-l întreabe, sfătuitu-l-au au învățatu-l-au să facă acea greșală (Prav.1652, 96)*
 ‘Then he will force the adviser to tell the truth whether he advised or taught him to make that mistake’
 c. *Și era atunci sîmbătă într-aceia zi, cînd vendecă Domnul **pre slăbitul**_{DEF} (Ev.1642, 398)*
 ‘And it was on a Saturday when the Lord healed the paralytic’
 d. *Și trimisă **pre corbul**_{DEF} să vadză oare îndărăptat-au apa (DPar.1683, II/32^r)*
 ‘And he released the raven to see whether the water had dried up’
 e. *va ucide **pre bălaurul**_{DEF} în dzua aceaea, pre acel din mare (DPar.1683, II/37^r)*
 ‘And he will kill the dragon from the sea that day’
 f. *Eu, Iisus am trimis **pre ingerul**_{DEF} să mărturisască voao aceastea la Beseareci (BB.1688, XXII, 932)*
 ‘I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches’

(iv) Constructions with a direct object realized as a kinship name are interesting, as they show variation between *p(r)e*-marking (23a–c) and the absence of marking (23d), on the one hand, and between determination and non-determination, on the other (23a); (23b) *vs* (23c), (24a) *vs* (24b).

- (23) a. *Ficiorul înțelept veselește **pre tatăl**_{DEF}, iară ficiorul nebun mîhnește **pre maică**_{INDEF} (DPar.1683, II/30^v)*
 ‘A wise son makes his father happy and a wicked one makes his mother sad’
 b. *Fiiul înțelept veselește **pre tatăl**_{DEF}, iară fiiul fără crieri să strîmbă maică-sa (DPar.1683, III/9^r)*
 ‘A wise son makes his father happy, while a dull son mocks his mother’
 c. *Tată și fecior nu iau **pe bunică**_{INDEF} și **strănepoată**_{INDEF} (Prav.1652, 787)*
 ‘A father and a son are forbidden to marry their grandmother and their grand-granddaughter’
 d. *Legea oprește ca un bărbat să ia **mamă**_{INDEF} și **fată**_{INDEF} (Prav.1652, 786)*
 ‘Law forbids a man to marry his mother and his daughter’
 (24) a. *Și de ce am dezlegat **pe tatăl**_{DEF} și **pe feciorul**_{DEF}, adică le-am dat voie să ia mătușă mică și nepoată? (Prav.1652, 787)*
 ‘And why did I give permission to a father and a son, that is I why did I allow them to marry their aunt and their granddaughter?’
 b. *tată și fecior nu iau **pe mamă**_{INDEF} și **pe fată**_{INDEF} (Prav.1652, 787)*
 ‘a father and a son do not marry a mother and a daughter’

4. Conclusions

The analysis in this article points to certain characteristic features of the direct object in the old language.

- (a) It is important to note the wide variety of constructions with non-determined countable nouns; the class of selecting verbs is richer than in the present-day language and is not confined to the selection of non-animate nouns [compare (7) *vs* (3) above].
 (b) The direct object realized as a personal noun displays wide syntactic variation: it can occur either marked or unmarked by *p(r)e* (*ucide **pre fur** / **furul*** ‘kills DOM thief / thief.DEF’), with the article (***fură pre egumenul*** ‘steals DOM father.superior.DEF’), or bare (*ucide **fur*** ‘kills thief’); kinship names occur

marked or unmarked by *p(r)e*, with or without article, in contrast to the present-day language, where the marker *pe* and the definite determiner obligatorily co-occur (*pe mama* ‘DOM mother.DEF’, *pe tata* ‘DOM father.DEF’, *pe bunica* ‘DOM grandmother.DEF’, etc.).

Among the patterns identified and discussed in this article, some are completely eliminated from the modern language—such is the case with the non-specific direct object realized as an definite noun [see examples in (19) above]—, while others are significantly limited in use [see (17) above].

As a general feature, it is important to note the extensive use of constructions with a non-specific singular noun (or substantivized adjective) marked by *p(r)e* (*cela ce miluiește pre săracul* ‘that who shows pity DOM poor.DEF.M.SG’), which have been replaced by the definite plural in the modern language (*săracii* ‘poor.DEF.M.PL’).

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