

Some Notes on Pronominal Clitics in Romanian and Slovenian

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Purpose

This article discusses some of the similarities and differences between Romanian and Slovenian regarding their inventory, distribution, and use of clitics in various syntactic contexts and the syntactic and semantic interpretation of the most productive patterns by examining their structure, the order of clitics in their specific groups (clitic clusters), and the different ways of encoding similar meanings in both languages in syntactic structures. It briefly defines the notion of clitic, focusing on pronominal clitics, concisely analyzes the clitic inventory specific to each of the languages, which belong to different families (Romance and Slavic), and syntactically and semantically interprets the patterns in which pronominal clitics occur, especially the verbal group.

Pronominal clitics

As a result of grammaticalization (Zwicky 1977, 1983: 502–513; Hopper 1991: 80–82; Mel'čuk 1993 I: 225–233), clitics represent a class of grammatical forms present in many languages, characterized by common phonetic, morphological, syntactic, and semantic features, with the capacity to simultaneously express specific traits of both autonomous words and forms lacking autonomy. There are many differences in each language's inventory and distribution of clitics. The differences between languages regarding the functioning of clitics represent a typological parameter.

The changes words undergo when developing into autonomous auxiliary forms or clitics become interesting when studying the dynamics of language, with language use often recording intermediate undefined stages, changes of syntactic, morphological, and lexical status, and differences in the argument structure (Grimshaw 1990: 82) of each language.

At the phonetic level, clitics distinguish themselves from “full” words by losing stress (Renzi&Salvi 2001: 537), which results in the loss of the ability to form

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a syllable, the loss of autonomy, and, therefore, the need to group with a support word.

In the semantic aspect, clitics present various stages of undefinedness or bleaching, showing the transition from autonomous words to forms lacking autonomy. The vague sense of the clitic may be an intermediate stage, confirming the partial loss of the semantic link with the referent and the integration into a phrase in which it is loaded with additional lexical and stylistic information.

The most changes occur at the morphosyntactic level and they consist of the reduction of inflection to contextually specialized forms, the restriction of clitics' distribution possibilities, restrictions regarding their placement, change in the combinatory possibilities of the "host" word (Gross 1991: 8) visible in the capacity to absorb features assigned to the support word (e.g., case, thematic role) to include itself in remote coreferential chains and meet the subcategorizing positions of the verb (Grimshaw 1991: 90–92), and in the inflectional amalgamation of the group formed of the autonomous word and the clitic.

Pronominal clitics in Romanian and Slovenian. Occurrence, common patterns, differences

In both Romanian and Slovenian, pronominal clitics represent lexicogrammatical sub-classes that are rich and interesting for syntactic, semantic, and stylistic study.

In modern syntactic works on Romanian (Dobrovie-Sorin 1994: 65–72, 1998: 400; Cornilescu 1996: 364; Manoliu Manea 1975, 1988, 1990, 1993, 1996; Pană Dindelegan 1992, 1998, 2003; Stan 1986, 1987, 1990; Zafiu 1996, 2002), as well as those on Slovenian (Bolta 1985, 1986, 1988; Herity 2000; Golden & Sheppard 2000; Rivero 2000, 2002, 2003, 2004; Rivero & Sheppard 2001, 2003, 2008; Golden 2003; Comrie & Corbett 2006; Grahek 2002, 2006; Tomšič 1939; Toporišič 1965, 1974, 1982, 1991, 2000; Marušič & Žaucer 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010) the characteristics of clitics under the two languages are analyzed, seldom from a comparative perspective (Rivero 2002, 2004; Golden 2003; Franks 1995; Franks & Holloway King 2000, Grahek 2007; Tasmowski & Kallulli 2008) or with reference to Romanian (Benacchio & Renzi 1987; Niculescu & Renzi 1991; Rivero 2002, 2004; Rivero & Diaconescu 2006, 2007; Marušič & Žaucer 2008).

A first observation comments on the inventory and distribution differences in the two languages. For Romanian, the specific occurrences are verbs, or, more rarely, nouns with pronominal clitics in the dative and verbs with pronominal clitics obligatorily in the accusative, personal verbs for which the reflexive is expressed through the dative and accusative, the possessive dative, the neuter dative, the ethical dative, and the neuter accusative. Slovenian possesses a rich set of pronominal clitics, which includes the genitive, dative, and accusative with various forms for person, number, and gender. The richness of the inventory of pronominal forms is boosted by the existence of the dual, alongside the singular and plural (Slovenian is one of the Slavic languages that retains the old Slavonic dual).

Based on the clitic's capacity to occupy a function (syntactic position), pronominal clitics may be syntactic or non-syntactic.

Syntactic clitics

Syntactic clitics occupy a position of subcategorization (Pană Dindelegan 1968: 234–243, 1972: 397–433; Golden 2003: 26), doubling or replacing the functions of the direct or indirect object. In Romanian, doubling is a generalized phenomenon for the dative and accusative. In Slovenian, doubling is only possible for the full pronouns, whereas for the genitive, dative, and accusative they only appear regionally in some dialects from the Littoral, where the clitics also include [Possessor] in addition to [Beneficiary] and [Experiencer] (Marušič & Žaucer 2008).

A special feature of Romanian in the Romance context is the co-occurrence of the clitic and the object. In other Romance languages, and in Slovenian, the clitic finds itself in complementary distribution with the direct or indirect object (Niculescu & Renzi 1991: 140; Kallulli & Tasmowski 2008: 143).

Clitics in indirect object position

The dative is a complex case both semantically and syntactically due to the restrictions imposed by the verb on its determinants (Jordan 1939: 55; Leclère 1976: 76; Herslund 1988: 21; Moore & Perlmutter 2000: 37) and the variety of actantial structures, semantic roles, and stylistic restrictions caused by its appearance.

Dative doubling, on the other hand, is present in other Balkan languages as well and in some Slovenian Littoral dialects. For Romanian the doubling of the nominal dative through clitics is standard and generalized, but for Slovenian doubling is a regional linguistic phenomenon that is particularly present in the spoken language and is often associated with possessive values.

Current literature on the two languages analyzed indicates that the inventory comprises the lexical values of the dative, the combinatorial possibilities of the verbs that receive such an argument, and the doubling/replacement possibilities of the indirect object in the dative (Guțu Romalo 1973; Herity 2000; Grahek 2007; Marušič & Žaucer 2005; 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010).

The verbs that are considered dative are those that imply a change of objects between two human beings and that update a tri-actantial structure in which the subject and the indirect object are characterized by the [+human] trait, whereas the direct object is characterized by the [–human] trait. In this syntactic pattern of the benefactive verbs, the three codified semantic roles as verb actants are [Agent], [Beneficiary], and [Patient].

- (1) *Îi dau cartea lui. / Dam mu knjigo.* ‘I give the book to him.’

The two languages have a very productive pattern, but this is also very regulated for stative verbs, also known as state predications (Chaffe 1970: 127; Manea 2004: 232), in which the direct object, and implicitly the clitic that occupies this syntactic position or which doubles it, are Experiencers.

One can distinguish two syntactic patterns in which the dative is constructed as an [Experiencer]. The first is the pattern with a clitic next to the impersonal group made up of the verb ‘to be’ + a noun in the nominative, interpreted as a phrase or a free combination (Pană Dindelegan 1992: 60), in which the clitic is constructed as

locative, or the interior premises of the sensation (the locative of the [Experiencer] cf. Manoliu Manea 1993:72)

These patterns contain constructions such as:

- (2) *Mi-e greață. / Slabo mi je.* ‘I am sick.’
Mi-e necaz. / Žal mi je. ‘I am sorry.’
Mi-e bine. / Dobro mi je. ‘I am fine.’

One should note the different placement of the constituents in the two languages. Romanian puts the clitic in first place as a pragmatic way of emphasizing the [Experiencer], but Slovenian prefers placing the noun or adverb first, with the clitic placed between the noun/adverb and the verb.

In Romanian, the syntactic pattern for state predications is the same, codifying the clitic in the Experiencer’s role, and the nominative or the adverb in the nominative position. Slovenian does not have a unified syntactic pattern, and for some constructions it prefers phrases made up of the verb ‘to be’ + participle, where the appearance of the clitic is not possible:

- (3) *Mi-e foame. / Lačen sem.* ‘I am hungry.’
Mi-e sete (de) / Žejen sem. ‘I am thirsty.’

Another difference is seen in an expression of the same meaning, but not through a pronoun in the dative (as in the previous examples), but through the pronoun in the accusative:

- (4) *Mi-e frică de moarte / Strah me je smrti.* ‘I am scared to death.’
Mi-e teamă (de câni) / Strah me je (psov). ‘I am afraid of dogs.’
Mi-e rușine de colegi. / Sram me je kolegov. ‘I am ashamed of my colleagues.’

In Romanian there is a series of linguistic phrases made up of verb ‘to be’ and a noun/adverb, and their interpretation is different from one linguistic model to the next: the nominal predicates (Jordan 1956: 558), verbal predicates (Dimitrescu 1958: 111), and verb + subject (Pană Dindelegan 1992: 57–59).

These structures have environmental predications corresponding to both languages:

- (5) *E cald. / Toplo je.* ‘It’s hot.’
Mi-e cald. / Toplo mi je. ‘I’m hot.’
E frig. / Hladno je. ‘It’s cold.’
Mi-e frig. / Hladno mi je. / Zebe me. ‘I’m cold.’

The pattern is specific for Romanian through the impersonal nature of the construction and through the reference to the person through the dative. This pattern presents the limitations of morphosyntactic autonomy and a preference for unstressed use (Pană Dindelegan 1992: 60).

Semantically, the verbs pertain to monovalent state predications. Another pattern as productive as the first for clitics in the dative is with impersonal verbs that express psychological comfort or discomfort:

- (6) *Îmi place Vesna. / Îmi place de Vesna. / Vseč mi je Vesna.* ‘I like Vesna.’

For this type of meaning, Slovenian has only the construction with a subject, but Romanian uses two types of structures in parallel: one with a subject and another one in which the subject is demoted from the syntactic hierarchy and replaced with a prepositional structure.

In both languages there is the possibility of the clitic occurring in phrases without a subject:

- (7) *Îmi pasă de tine. / Mi mar zate.* ‘I care about you.’
Îmi pare rău de această situație. / Žal mi je za to situacijo. ‘I am sorry about this situation.’
Îmi pare bine de cunoștință. / Veseli me, da sem te spoznal. ‘I am happy to meet you.’
Îi arde de glumă. / Ima me, da bi pela. ‘He feels like joking.’

I believe that this special feature represents a Slavic influence on Romanian syntax.

The possessive dative

From a pragmatic point of view, the dative possessive represents the advancement (Gross 1968: 30, Cristea 1974:9; Kayne 1991: 647-686, Cornilescu 1991: 51-70, Pană Dindelegan 1992:129, 2003:91, Šarić 2002:15) Kallulli & Tasmowski 2008: 361), at a theoretical level, of a clitic from a post-verbal position or from another syntactic group to a pre-verbal position.

These moves are confirmed by the language’s history, which registers intermediary stages of passing from post-positioning to pre-positioning. Using the dative with a possessive value placed first speaks for the non-Romance character of the phenomenon and represents a distinguishing feature of Romanian compared to the other Romance languages (Niculescu & Renzi 1991: 140). On the other hand, the low frequency of clitics with possessive value in Slovenian as compared to other South Slavic languages (Serbian, Bulgarian, Macedonian, Albanian) leads to the hypothesis that, from a typological point of view, Slovenian is closer to the West Slavic languages (Polish, Czech).

The phenomenon is specific to both languages and functions in both language registers, and is one of the pragmatic ways to emphasize part of the phrase considered quite prominent from a discursive point of view (Pană Dindelegan 1990: 31–38). First, there are advances from a nominal group that has the function of a subject:

- (8) *I-au venit rudele în vizită. / Sorodniki so mu/ji prišli na obisk.* ‘His/her relatives came to visit.’

Mi-a murit nevasta. / Umrla mi je žena. 'My wife died.'

In Slovenian, two special syntactic-semantic features are apparent upon first analysis. In some dialect areas (Littoral dialects), the dative clitic can be doubled in an affirmative context by the dative, and in a negative context by the genitive, having the semantic values of both [Beneficiary] and [Possessor]:

- (9) *Lui nu îi funcționează calculatorul. / Njemu mu računalnik ne dela. 'His computer does not work.'*
Peter și-a cumpărat o nouă mașină. / Peter si je kupil nov avto. 'Peter bought himself a new car.'

Second, there are advances from a nominal group that has the function of a direct object (doubling of the possessive dative, either through genitive forms or through possessive adjective forms, or through clitics):

- (10) *Și-a reparat calculatorul. / Popravit/a si je računalnik. 'He/she fixed his/her computer.'*

In this context, the two languages do not present the same frequency of the pattern. In Romanian it is often the advancement of the clitic for many structures, whereas in Slovenian it competes with structures with a possessive adjective:

- (11) *Și-a spus părerea. / Povedal/a je svoje mnenje. 'He stated his opinion.'*

As opposed to other languages in which movement takes place only for nominals that show alienable possession, Romanian has a wider class of determinants that advance in pre-verbal position and a wide class of "host" verbs, also affecting non-alienable possession:

- (12) *Mi-am zdrobit piciorul. Zlomil/a sem si nogo. 'I crushed my leg.'*
Mi-am rupt mâna. Zlomil/a sem si rook. 'I broke my arm.'

In differentiating the possessive value from the semantic role [Beneficiary], an important role is also played by the stressed or unstressed character of the noun that the clitic enters into a remote coreferential link with because the unstressed form implies a double reading of the clitic (Șerbănescu 2000:139), whereas the stressed form requires the selection of its possessive meaning:

- (13) *Mi-am ales tovarăș de viață. / Izbral/a sem si življenjskega sopotnika. 'I chose myself a life partner.' [Beneficiary]*
Și-a luat calul și-a plecat. / Vzel/a je svojega konja in se pobral/a. 'He took his horse and left.' [Possessive]

The possessive dative is the result of various factors affecting the two languages. For Romanian it is the result of placement, the advancement of a

possessive or genitive, irrespective of the clitic's person, whereas for Slovenian the possessive clitic is a morpheme of the reflexive verb.

Personal syntactic clitics in direct object position

The personal and reflexive clitics occupy a prototypical valence of the transitive verb, specific for affected objects, doubling only in Romanian for this syntactic function.

The accusative clitic has also become a syntactic means for removing ambiguity and recognizing this syntactic position in relation to the secondary object (Pană Dindelegan 1992: 156).

In Romanian, the clitic doubling of the direct object, which is compulsory and directed by numerous semantic, morphological, syntactic, and pragmatic factors, increases the number of constructions with accusative clitics. This analysis bears in mind the variety of syntactic patterns specific for the action verbs that receive the doubled direct object obtained through the semantic role [Patient].

(14) *Ion mă lovește cu mingea. / Ion me je zadel z žogo.* 'Ion hits me with the ball.'

(15) *Ea mă ajunge. / Dohiteva me.* 'She is catching up with me.'

The actantial structure of the verb is different for the two languages and depends on the verb's semantics. Verbs such as *a ajuta / pomagati* 'to help' or *a fura / (u)krasti* 'to steal' are constructed with a dative clitic in Slovenian:

(16) *El mă ajută. / On mi pomaga. / Pomaga mi.* 'He is helping me.'

(17) *Mă fură somnul. / Krade mi spanec.* 'I'm getting sleepy.'

For Romanian, clitic doubling is a general phenomenon for the accusative, often encountered in the standard language. In Slovenian, however, it is a regional phenomenon.

Much more frequent, and also simultaneously retaining the possessive value, are syntactic structures with accusative clitics next to stative verbs of suffering (Manoliu Manea 1993: 82-83) where they occupy the semantic role [Experiencer] in the accusative:

(18) *Mă doare gâtul. / Boli me grlo.* 'My neck hurts / I have a sore throat.'

Mă doare mâna. / Boli me roka. 'My arm hurts.'

Mă doare inima. / Boli me srce. 'My heart aches.'

Mă doare sufletul. / Boli me duša. 'My soul aches.'

Mă doare piciorul. / Boli me noga. 'My foot hurts.'

Mă doare burta. / Boli me trebuh. 'My stomach hurts.'

Both languages have similar possibilities of structuring the arguments, but changing the words' placement determines the supplementary pragmatic marking of the locative or goal as a subject:

(19) *Gâtul mă doare, nu piciorul. / Grlo me boli, ne noga.* ‘It’s my neck that hurts, not my foot.’

Mă intersează propunerea. / Zanima me predlog. ‘I am interested in the proposal.’

The reflexive clitics

Perhaps the reflexive clitics are the most interesting for the comparative study of the two languages due to the multitude of syntactic structures and of the semantic values they express.

These substitute for the object on which the action of the verb is exercised directly or indirectly and are coreferential with the verb’s subject (Vasilii 1969: 370; Jordan & Robu 1978: 416–417; Manoliu Manea 1993:47-51, Renzi & Salvi 2001 I: 597; Grahek 2006: 245–350).

The only syntactic clitics are the forms that can be replaced by nominals or pronouns in the same case with the reflexive clitic, the forms of dative and accusative clitics that occupy the indirect object function, and the direct object function, respectively: objective pronominal verbs (Graur 1938: 42–49; Stati 1972: 128), also known as reciprocal verbs (Graur 1969: 18; Heim&Lasnik&May 1991: 63-101, Milaş 1993: 171–178; Pană Dindelegan 1999 (1976): 97–100; Grahek 2006:128-132).

Syntactic reflexive clitics in the dative

Reflexive clitics in the dative can appear with two semantic values common for the two languages. The first value is that of [Beneficiary], alongside trivalent verbs such as:

(20) *Mi-am gătit prânzul. / Skuhala sem si kosilo.* ‘I cooked my lunch.’

Patterns with a reciprocal value are identical in structure and meaning:

(21) *Copiii și-au spus povești. / Otroci so si pripovedovali zgodbe.* ‘The children told each other stories.’

When the subject is multiple or collective, the phrase becomes ambiguous, allowing for a double reading (reflexive or reciprocal).

Syntactic reflexive clitics in the accusative

The forms of the reflexive pronoun in the accusative, such as *se*, indicating ‘to do something for oneself’, appearing in both languages, are very frequent and express many semantic values. These are named differently in the grammars of the two languages (as dynamic reflexives, middles, and reciprocal reflexives), and they appear with the autonomous value of a direct object in reciprocal structures:

(22) *Peter și Ana se urăsc. / Peter in Ana se sovražita.* ‘Peter and Ana hate each other.’

Vecinii se urăsc. / Sosedje se sovražijo. ‘The neighbors hate each other.’

Non-syntactic reflexive clitics in the accusative

Non-syntactic reflexive clitics in the accusative are very frequent in both languages and have a wide variety of forms that vary from one construction to another, between the pro-form status, when they are included in clitic chains, and that of non-pronominal verbal formants, when they do not enter clitic chains (e.g., compulsory reflexive, passive reflexive, impersonal reflexive).

These are named differently in recent works in applied syntax and semantics, and they appear in many relatively similar syntactic and semantic structures in both languages, differentiating themselves as a whole in the following major types of constructions: intrinsic or inherent reflexives, reciprocal reflexives, impersonal and passive impersonal reflexives, and causatives.

In terms of transitivity, verbs with intrinsic or inherent clitics (Renzi & Salvi 2001: 601) are considered intransitive, whereas pragmatically they can mark the subject's participation in the verb's action.

The class of non-syntactic clitics (or clitics inherent to the verb) can express extremely varied meanings, with relatively corresponding verbs in both languages: *a se furișă / skriti se* 'to sneak', *a se frământa / sekirati se* 'to be bothered', *a se jeli / smiliti se* 'to whine', *a se mira / občudovati se* 'to be surprised', and *a se repezi / zmigati se, podvizati se* 'to hurry'. These include: dynamic reflexive verbs expressing mental states:

(23) *Oamenii se tem să fie în pădure. / Ljudje se bojijo biti v gozdu.* 'People are afraid to be in the woods.'

Petre se rușinează. / Peter se sramuje. 'Peter is ashamed.'

impersonal verbs without an object that can rise to subject function:

(24) *Numai o dată se trăiește. / Samo enkrat se živi.* 'One experiences this only once in a lifetime.'

Nu se moare așa de ușor. / Tako lahko se ne umre. 'One does not die so easily.'

Se călătorește bine cu trenul. / Potuje se dobro z vlakom. 'One can travel well by train.'

impersonal verbs that express moments of the day and meteorological aspects:

(25) *se luminează / svetli se, dani se* 'Day is breaking.'

se înserează / večeri se 'The night is coming.'

se înnoptează / noți se 'It's getting dark.'

se înseninează / jasni se 'It's clearing up.'

se înnovează / oblači se 'It's getting cloudy.'

se înnegurează / črni se 'It's getting dark.'

se întunecă / temni se, mrači se 'It's getting dark.'

middle reflexives (Ackema & Schoorlemmer 1994, 1995; Grahek 2002, 2006):

- (26) *Natura se degradează. / Narava se degradira.* ‘Nature is being degraded.’
Casa se construiește. / Hiša se gradi. ‘The house is being built.’
Cărțile se citesc. / Knige se berejo. ‘The books are being read.’
Cartea se tipărește. / Kniga se tiska ‘The book is being printed.’
Cuiburile se construiesc. / Gnezda se gradijo. ‘The nests are being built.’
Otava se cosește în august. / Otava se kosi v augustu. ‘Second-crop hay is mowed in August.’
Vaporul se scufundă. / Ladja se potaplja. ‘The ship is sinking.’

and anti-causative verbs with an impersonal form that resulted from passing in the back of the phrase and then erasing the passive:

- (27) *S-a băut mult vin. / Popilo se je veliko vina.* ‘Much wine was drunk.’
Despre asta s-a scris mult. / O tem se je veliko pisalo. ‘A lot has been written about this.’

A special feature of passive structures is the use of the verb *a da / dati* ‘to give’ in impersonal structures with the value of a modal:

- (28) *Totul se poate învăța. / Vse se da naučiti.* ‘Anything can be learned.’

The complexity of verb + clitic patterns is especially visible in syntactic groups that express possession using a simultaneous dative with the semantic value of [Beneficiary], and at the same time the verb has reflexive, passive, and causative-factitive functions:

- (29) *Lui Janez i s-au rupt ochelarii. / Janezu so se zlomila očala.* ‘Janez’s glasses were broken.’

In Slovenian, mechanisms to express states using a pronoun in the accusative and a noun in the dative are very frequent. Romanian, in this sense, is the only Romance language in which the same meaning is expressed using the reflexive in the accusative and the subject in the nominative:

- (30) *Janez se simte dormind. / Janezu se spi.* ‘Janez is sleepy.’
Lui Petru îi vine să râdă. / Petru se smeji. ‘Peter feels like laughing.’

Non-syntactic clitics with neuter value

The dative of the personal pronoun with an ethical value is used in both languages with a different stylistic value compared to other non-syntactic clitics. This is done in the popular linguistic register in order to mark the participation of the speaker in the action and to capture the interlocutor’s interest. At a semantic level, it adds the idea of emotional involvement. This construction is attested in both Romanian and Slovenian (Pană Dindelegan 2003:94, Zafiu 1996:197, Korošec 1977:

60, Toporišič 1974: 243, Sarič 2002: 11) and is present in poetic or affective structures:

(31) *Unde ești căsuța mea liniștită, fericirea mea adevărată? / Kje tihi si mi dom ti sreča moja prava?* ‘Where are you, my quiet home, my true happiness?’

In Romanian the ethical dative is expressed only through forms of the personal pronouns of the first or second person, but in Slovenian it is expressed through the reflexive pronoun in the dative *si* ‘to oneself’. When this appears next to transitive verbs such as *ogledati* ‘to watch’, *misliti* ‘to think’, and *zahoteti* ‘to wish’ it adds the semantic trait of the speaker’s intention:

(32) *Nu pot să mă gândesc că este adevărat. / Ne morem si misliti, da je res.* ‘I cannot imagine this is real.’
Unde mi-ești? / Kje si mi ti? ‘Where are you?’

Conclusions

In both languages there are two large classes of clitics that are functionally different: syntactic clitics, which are used with under-categorizing verbs and have a thematic role, and non-syntactic clitics, whose syntactic function and thematic role are “absorbed” by the verb.

The fixed placement of clitics, directed by a pattern of arguments and initial thematic roles, allows the observation of a hierarchy of arguments in the verbal group. These are actualized by syntactic clitics even in the absence of full words, whereas non-syntactic clitics lose casual information.

The clitic system is asymmetrical with regard to function: syntactic clitics appear as elements of predication and as a means to emphasize and differentiate certain syntactic functions; non-syntactic clitics have a pragmatic function to create focus, through the function of a morpheme, in some parts of discourse, and the stylistic role of moving the group verb + clitic into the spoken and popular register.

Romanian and Slovenian preserve productive impersonal patterns with dative and accusative clitics constructed as an [Experiencer] as well as a similar inventory of patterns with the reflexive *se*, expressing ‘to do something for oneself’. Only Romanian has specific classes of clitics such as the neuter dative and the neuter accusative. In addition, the classes of clitics in the possessive dative and ethical dative are differently distributed in the two languages.

The central verbs of the group verb + clitic are polysemantic predication operators with a great degree of ambiguity, amplified by the appearance of the clitic.

The presence of some syntactic and semantic patterns leads to the hypothesis that there has been a strong Slavic influence on Romanian, noticeable not only at the lexical and word-formational level, but also at the level of syntactic patterns that are not present in other Romance languages. From the typological perspective, Romanian shares more traits with the Balkan languages, whereas Slovenian, which preserves many Slavic syntactic patterns, is closer to the West Slavic languages (Czech and Polish).

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Abstract

There are a lot of papers about Slavic influence on Romanian language. The majority are focused on the lexical dimensions of this issue, sometimes on word formation. The hidden parts of language like syntax and phrases were in a way neglected. This article aims to reveal some common syntactic patterns for Romanian and Slovenian, underlining similarities and differences, especially in the verbal complex.

The approach takes into consideration the new theories in syntax and semantics and the structures are interpreted in a contrastive analysis.