ROMANIAN DOUBLE-DEFINITES: DOUBLE-DP QUALITATIVES

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Abstract: The paper proposes that there are two types of binominal qualitative constructions in Romanian: single-DP qualitatives and double-DP qualitatives (henceforth SDPQs and DDPQs). The constructions falling in the first category will be analyzed as single projections while the second type of qualitatives will be shown to display the behavior of dual projections (van Riemsdijk 1998). As single projections, SDPQs consist of a DP-embedded split NP; on the other hand, DDPQs consist of two full DPs.

Keywords: double-DP qualitative, single-DP qualitative, double-definites, P-features

1. The data

This paper[1] is concerned with the study of the type of constructions found in (1) and (2)[2]. The constructions in (2) have not been given separate attention in the literature, although they constitute a distinct category of qualitative constructions. The paper will attempt to account for the different characteristics of this separate category of qualitative constructions, which I will dub "DDPQs", in parallel with an analysis of the constructions in (1), which I will refer to as "SDPQs"[3].

(1) a. o mămăligă de om
a polenta of man
'a languid man'

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[2] The constructions in (i) have been the focus of much research in the recent literature and have been referred to as "qualitative" (Milner 1978, Hulk and Tellier 2000), predicate inversion structures (Corver 1998, den Dikken 1998, 2006), binominal NPs (Aarts 1998), pivotal N1*of* N2 constructions (Zamparelli 1996), N/A *de* N constructions (Español-Echevarría 1998).

[3] The single-DP qualitative construction exists in many other languages such as Dutch, Spanish and French, among others:

(i) a. cet imbécile de garçon (French, Hulk and Tellier 2000)
'this imbecile of boy'
b. deze idioot van een kerel (Dutch, Vişan 2003)
'this idiot of a guy'
c. la gallina de Juan (Spanish, Casillas Martinez 2001)
'the chicken of Juan'
d. that barge of a woman (English, Den Dikken 2006)

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b. un cal de femeie
a horse of woman
'a horsy woman'
c. o zgâtie de fată
a naughty of girl
'a naughty girl'

(2) a. Am vorbit cu prostul ăla de frate -tău.
have.1SG talked with stupid-the that of brother-your
'I have talked to that stupid of brother of yours.'
b. bietul de tine
poor-the of you
'poor you'
c. sărmanul de copilul ăla de la țară
pitiable-the of child-the that from countryside
'that poor child from the coutryside'

In what follows, I will investigate a range of syntactic and semantic differences between DDPQs and SDPQs, differences which motivate the distinction operated between the two types of qualitative constructions.

2. Types of binominal qualitatives: Double-DPs and single-DPs

2.1 Qualitatives and "pseudoqualitatives"

A close look at (pseudo)partitives in relation to qualitatives reveals an important aspect, which helps in marking the distinction between SDPQs and DDPQs as single vs. dual projections.

It seems that the distinction between partitives and pseudopartitives (3a, b) is mirrored in the distinction between DDPQs and SDPQs (4a, b), which can thus be referred to, for the sake of preserving the parallelism, as qualitatives and pseudoqualitatives.

(3) a. o sticlă din vinul acesta roşu
a bottle from wine-the this red
'a bottle of this red wine'
b. o sticlă de vin(*ul) roşu
a bottle of wine(*the) red
'a bottle of red wine'

(4) a. deşteptul ăsta de ministrul educației
smart-the this of minister-the education-the-GEN
'this smartass of minister of education'
b. deşteptul de ministru(*l)
smart-the of minister(*the)
'the smartass of a minister'

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As made evident by the examples above, N2 in partitives and DDPQs (3a, 4a) denotes an individual, i.e. <e>-type denotation, while N2 in pseudopartitives and SDPQs ("pseudoqualitatives") (3b, 4b) denotes a predicate, i. e <e, t>-type denotation.

The behavior of DDPQs seems to be regulated by Ladusaw's (1982) constraint (5); N2 in DDPQs always denotes an individual. On the other hand, N2 in SDPQs and pseudopartitives always denotes a property / predicate.

(5) The second nominal in the partitive structure denotes an individual.

This could explain the ban on nonspecific DPs (6a), indefinite generics DPs (6b) and downward entailing quantifiers (6c) (for a different analysis, see Villalba and Bartra-Kaufmann 2010):

(6) a. *N-am vorbit cu idiotul de orice professor.
not-have.1SG talked with idiot-the of any professor
b. *E important să vorbești cu un idiot de un professor.
is important SĂ talk-2SG with an idiot of a professor
c. *N-am vorbit cu idioții de puțini profesori.
not-have.1SG talked with idiots-the of few professors

Therefore the second nominal in DDPQs is always of type <e>, which is to be expected under an analysis in terms of double-DP constructions. Therefore, the elements I have managed to gather so far that converge toward a syntactic structure for DDPQs/SDPQs are given schematically in (7a-b):

(7) a. [DP1] de [DP2]
b. [DP [NP1 de NP2]]

In what follows, I will show that the SDPQ/DDPQ distinction is supported by a number of differences in syntactic behavior and semantic interpretation. DDPQs qualitatives will be shown to feature exclusively prenominal adjectives in the structure, to be presuppositional and to display definiteness agreement.

2.2 DDPQs and prenominal adjectives

One difference between the two types of qualitatives is the presence of exclusively prenominal adjectives, which feature in the "double-DP" qualitatives, but are impossible in "single-DP" qualitatives (8-9):

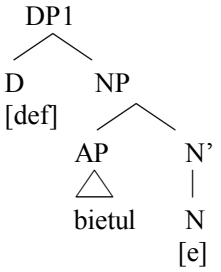
(8) a. bietul de tine
poor-the of you
'poor you'
b. *un biet de doctor
a poor of doctor
'the poor doctor'

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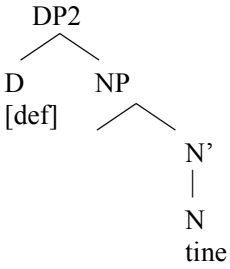
(9) a. sărmanul de copilul ăla de la țară
pitiable-the of child-the that from countryside
'that poor child from the coutryside'
b. *un sărman de copil
a pitiable-the of child
'poor child'

The fact that these adjectives are exclusively prenominal and cannot be predicative may be taken to imply the presence of an empty head noun[4]; the same fact suggests that the preposition is case-related (Cornilescu 2010). Therefore, the structure of DP1 would look like that in (10a), while the structure of DP2 would look like (10b) (irrelevant details aside):

(10) a.



b.



[4] Silent nouns are nouns which, although lacking a phonetic matrix, are active in syntax, and the presence of which can therefore explain syntactic oddities in various languages. All silent nouns are semi-lexical, i.e. they exhibit both lexical and functional features. The most prominent representatives of this category are NUMBER, AMOUNT (Kayne 2002), KIND / TYPE (Leu 2004) and TOKEN(S) (van Riemsdijk 2005). Since exclusively prenominal adjectives never become nouns (1), they cannot appear independently in DDPQs: they probably modify TOKEN in the same manner as they modify overt nouns (2). The presence of the silent noun in DDPQs justifies the presence of *de* – its role is that of assigning case to N2. *De* may also be separating semi-lexical TOKEN from the lexical domain (see Tănase-Dogaru 2009, Tănase-Dogaru and Dumitrescu forthcoming).

(i) a. *A venit bietul (ăla).
have.3SG come poor-the (that)
b. *A venit un biet.
have.3SG come a poor
(ii) a. A venit bietul TOKEN de frate -tău.
have.3SG come poor-the TOKEN of brother-your
'Your poor brother has come.'
b. A venit bietul băiat.
have.3SG come poor-the boy
'The poor boy has come.'

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To briefly conclude the section, the presence of exclusively prenominal adjectives in what we called "DDPQs" is a clear indication of two determiner projections, the first nesting N1 and the second – N2.

2.3 DDPQs and presuppositionality

Other differences in syntax and interpretation between "single-DP" and "double-DP" qualitatives relate to the presence vs. absence of scope ambiguities. The "single-DP" qualitative is part of the main assertion and it falls in the scope of main verb negation (11a), while the "double-DP" qualitative is an independent comment of the speaker (11b).

(11) a. N-am vorbit cu un prost de doctor.
not-have.1SG talked with a stupid of doctor
'I haven't talked to any stupid of a doctor.'

b. N-am văzut-o pe frumusețea de soră -ta la petrecere.
not-have.1SG seen -her PE beauty-the of sister-your at party
'I haven't seen your beauty of a sister at the party'

(12) a. N-am vorbit cu vreun / niciun prost de doctor.
not-have.1SG talked with any / no stupid of doctor
'I haven't talked to any stupid of a doctor.'

b. *N-am văzut- o pe vreo / nicio frumusețe de soră - ta la petrecere.
not-have.1SG seen -her PE any beauty of sister-your at party
'I haven't seen your beauty of a sister at the party'.

When comparing (11a) and (12a) one can easily notice that they have the same interpretation, i.e. within the scope of negation. On the other hand, (11b) is presuppositional in that the double-DP qualitative presupposes the existence of the referent, which in turn explains why (12b) is ungrammatical. This comes as no surprise under an analysis of DDPQs as double-definite constructions featuring two full DPs.

2.4 DDPQs and definiteness agreement

With "double-DP" qualitatives, there is agreement in definiteness. If the lower term is a definite DP, the higher one must also be definite (13a, b). With SDPQs there is no agreement in definiteness, i.e. if the lower term is not definite, the higher is either definite or indefinite, function of its position in the discourse (14 a, b).

(13) a. prostul de doctorul ăla
stupid-the of doctor-the that
'the stupid of that doctor'

b. *un prost de doctorul ăla
a stupid of doctor-the that
'that stupid of a doctor'

(14) a. un prost de doctor
a stupid of doctor
'a stupid of a doctor'

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b. prostul de doctor (anaphoric)
stupid-the of doctor
'that stupid of a doctor'

Part of the literature on Romance qualitatives makes the strong claim that no overt determiner (Vişan 2003) is allowed on N2 in Romance languages. A notable exception is Spanish, which displays the following types of qualitatives (15), classified according to the determiners occurring with each of the nominals (Español-Echevarría 1996):

(15) a. DEF-DEF: el imbécil del doctor / the imbecile of-the doctor
b. INDEF-INDEF: un imbécil de doctor / an imbecile of doctor
c. DEM-PN: ese imbécil de Juan / that imbecile of Juan
d. DEM-INDEF: ese imbécil de doctor / that imbecile of doctor

A close investigation of Romanian data allows us to claim that the same patterns are found in this Romance language and that, therefore, the claim that no determiner is allowed on N2 is too strong (contra Vişan 2006).

(16) a. DEF-DEF: imbecilul de doctorul Ionescu / imbecile-the of doctor-the Ionescu
b. INDEF-INDEF: un imbecil de doctor / an imbecile of doctor
c. DEM-PN: acest imbecil de Ion / this imbecile of Ion
d. DEM – INDEF: acest imbecil de doctor / this imbecile of doctor

It seems that only when N1 is indefinite can one ascertain that the type of qualitative construction is truly a Single-DP qualitative. When N1 bears a definite determiner, the unmodified N2 seems to be indefinite because the preposition *de* incorporates the definite article (17a). The article surfaces when N2 is modified (17b):

(17) a. *idiotul de prietenul
idiot-the of friend-the
b. idiotul de prietenul meu care stă în Ferentari
idiot-the of friend-the mine who stays in Ferentari
'that idiot of a friend of mine who lives in Ferentari'

In conclusion, DDPQs are characterized by definiteness agreement. This constitutes further evidence that this type of qualitative construction is amenable to an analysis in terms of double-definite constructions featuring two full DPs. Recall from section 2.1 that the syntactic structure of DDPQs features two DPs, while the syntax of SDPQs is that of single projections, closely mirroring the syntax of pseudopartitives (see Tănase-Dogaru 2007, 2009). The one piece of the puzzle that has still not fallen into place is the role and place of *de*. It has already been hinted that *de* may be present in the structure for case-reasons, i.e. it assigns structural Acc to the second nominal. The role of the next section is to shed some light on this matter.

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2.5 The role of *de*

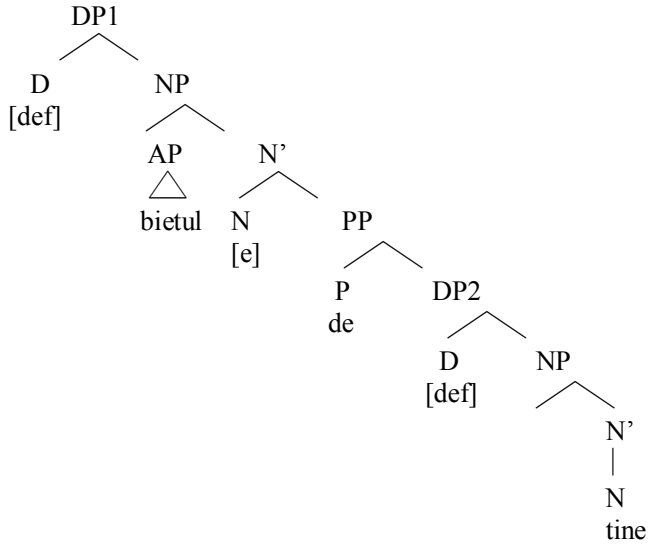
It has already been hinted that the preposition surfaces in the structure of qualitatives for reasons having to do with case-assignment. Indeed, the role of *de* is that of assigning accusative case to the second nominal in the structure.

(18) a. bietul de tine
poor-the of you.ACC
'poor you'
b. *bietul tine / tu
poor-the you.ACC / you.NOM
c. *bietul de tu
poor-the of you.NOM

In (18a), the preposition *de* assigns case to the pronoun *tine* 'you.ACC'. The fact that case-assignment does take place is reinforced by the ungrammaticality of (18b) and (18c). In (18b), the missing preposition leaves the pronoun caseless, a fact proven by the impossibility of both an accusative and a nominative pronoun in the position of the second nominal. Finally, (18c) shows that a nominative pronoun cannot appear with the preposition *de*.

Putting together the pieces of the puzzle that have gathered so far, the syntactic structure for a DDPQ like (18a) would look like (19):

(19)



This section has shown that *de* surfaces in the structure of qualitative constructions for reasons that have to do with case assignment.

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3. More on the syntactic structure

3.1 Against predicate raising

The syntactic structure of qualitatives has been the subject of much debate in the literature. Research has imported the analysis of predicate raising or predicate inversion from the domain of copular constructions into the domain of qualitatives (and quite a vast array of other "*de*-constructions", assumed to enter a relation of "family resemblance") and pseudopartitive constructions. However, as we hope it has become clear from the arguments presented in the preceding sections, analyzing both pseudopartitives and qualitative binominals along the lines of the "predicate raising'"hypothesis is on the wrong track.

One very important counterargument to the predicate raising hypothesis concerns the mechanism that forces the predicate to raise from its non-canonical position. Several accounts have been proposed in the literature (most notably, movement driven by an emotive operator in Matushansky 2002, an empty head in need of licensing in den Dikken 2006), but none is satisfactory since none complies with general economy requirements. In the framework adopted here, the DP is a phase (Svenonius 2004, Cornilescu 2007). Phases have peripheries (Chomksy 2009), i.e. projections which check P-features. Adopting a split D hypothesis (Aboh 2004, Laenzlinger 2005) the *d**-periphery is the space between a lower agreement Determiner, and a higher deixis Determiner. Periphery projections are all modal and quantificational.

A second major counterargument to the predicate raising approach concerns the present classification of qualitatives as Single-D qualitatives and DDPQs. DDPQs feature two DPs and, by virtue of the "DPs-as-arguments" logic, neither can be a predicate.

A third counterargument concerns the presence of *de* – analyzed by predicate raising framework as a nominal copula – with cardinals in Romanian (20), which cannot be analyzed as predicates:

(20) douăzeci de studenți
twenty *de* students

Two major arguments have been used in the literature to argue against predicate inversion (see Matushansky 2002, van Riemsdijk 2005):
(i) extraction out of N2 is possible, which would be unexpected if N2 is the subject of a predication:

(21) a. Despre ce lingvist e aceasta minune de carte?
about what linguist is this wonder of book
'Which linguist is this wonder of a book about?'
b. *Despre ce lingvist e cartea o minune?
about what linguist is book-the a wonder

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(ii) N1 is iterable, which is unexpected if it is a predicate (Matushansky 2002, van Riemsdijk 2005):

(22) Nemernicul de constipat de profesor
rascal-the of constipated of professor
'the rascal of a stuck-up of a professor'

3.2 Information structure and "emotiveness"

It has long been noticed that qualitative constructions always entail an emotive element, i.e. they express positive or negative evaluation with respect to the speaker's attitude. While researchers have linked "emotiveness" to degree operators and scalarity, I'd like to suggest that the semantic peculiarities of qualitatives derive from their being periphery constructions that check P-features like [+c(ontrast)] or [+(a)naphoric] (see López 2009, Cornilescu and Nicolae 2011) in an *outer* D. Since phases are quantificational domains, notions like "scalarity" or "degree operators" applied to qualitative constructions find a much more economical explanation.

Matushansky (2002), Bartra and Villalba (2006 a, b), Español-Echevarría (1996, 1998), Villalba and Bartra-Kaufmann (2010) have all discussed the "affective" characteristics of the qualitative construction. If we compare the structures in (23a) and (23b), while the subject-predicate canonical order in (23b) encodes old information + new information, in the qualitative construction in (23a), it is precisely the other way round. Matushansky 2002, Bartra-Kaufmann and Villalba 2010 take this inverted structure to be the chief source of the affective/emotional reading associated to the construction.

(23) a. Ticălosul de dentist = new information – old information
scoundrel-the of dentist
'that scoundrel of a dentist'
b. Dentistul e un ticălos = old information – new information
dentist-the is a scoundrel
'the dentist is a scoundrel'

Den Dikken and Singhapreecha (2004) claim that in qualitative constructions, the so-called subject receives a focus interpretation, while the inverted predicate is interpreted as topic. Thus, the information structure in qualitatives conforms to the standard pattern found in predicate raising structures. They extend the information packaging in (24b) to binominal structures like those in (25).

(24) a. John_{old} is my best $\text{friend}_{\text{new}}$
b. My best $\text{friend}_{\text{old}}$ is John_{new}
(25) a. un drôle de type
b. une pizza de chaude

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Bartra and Villalba (2006), Villalba and Bartra-Kaufmann (2010) argue against this claim by suggesting that in Spanish the inverted predicate is interpreted as focus with respect to the topic DP (26), which they take to provide an explanation for the ban against typically focused DPs and strong pronouns in qualitatives (27a, b).

(26) el idiota$_{focus}$ de su hijo$_{background}$
the idiot of his son

(27) a. *Hablé con el idiota de él
talked-1SG with the idiot of him
b. *No hablaste con el idiota de que alcalde?
not talked-2SG with the idiot of what mayor

However, in Romanian, DDPQs do allow strong pronouns and *wh*-in situ elements (28).

(28) a. Proasta de mine[5] nu şi- a dat / mi- am fool-the.FEM of me not REFL.3SG have realized / REFL.1SG have dat seama că…
realized that
'I'm such a fool that I haven't realized that…'
b. Prostul de el nu şi- a dat seama că…
fool-the.MASC of him not REFL.3SG have realized that…
'He's such a fool that he hasn't realized that…'
c. N-ai vorbit cu idiotul ăla de CARE primar?
not have.2SG talked with idiot-the that of WHICH mayor
'You haven't talked to the idiot of WHICH mayor?'

The example in (28c) may be interpreted either as a real question or as an echo-question, which sets apart Romanian (and other Romance languages) from languages like Dutch and English, where only echo-questions allow *wh*-in situ elements[6]. These facts may suggest that N1 is not a focus, but a contrastive topic, which, unlike contrastive foci, which are not checked in situ, is realized by means of quantificational elements appearing at the left periphery.

Further support for this analysis comes from examples such as (29), where the postnominal demonstrative is a focalization marker (see Manoliu-Manea 1994), the first DP in the structure being a topic.

[5] Charles Reiss and Henk van Riemsdijk (p.c.) have pointed out to me that Swedish has a similar (grammaticalized, because of the impossibility of using it in the first person or in the plural) expression:
(i) a. din dumbom!
your dumbhead!
'you fool!'.
b. din stakkare!
your poor sod
'you poor sod!'

[6] I thank Henk van Riemsdijk (p.c.) for pointing out this difference.

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(29) idiotul$_{TOPIC}$ de profesorul ăsta$_{FOCUS}$ (care m- a picat)
idiot-the of professor-the this (who me has flunked)
'that idiot of a professor who flunked me'

Therefore, the analysis of information structure in this section and of how topic-focus articulation is mapped onto the two "parts" of a qualitative construction has shown that the two nominals in DDPQs can be construed as two full DPs.

Faced with these arguments, I propose that the order N1 of N2 in qualitative constructions is base-generated. DDPQs are, therefore, analyzed as split-DPs linked by a functional element *de*; SDPQs are analyzed as split-NPs.

3.3. More on the syntax of DDPQs and SDPQs

The syntactic analysis of DDPQs relies on the split-D hypothesis (see Ihsane and Puskas 2001, Aboh 2004 a.o.) and claims that DDPQs are double definite constructions or "polydefinites" (see Lekakou and Szendrői 2008) which realize the [+definite] feature twice, i.e. in D_{OUTER} and in D_{INNER}.

DDPQs resemble adjectival article constructions in Romanian (30), which are attributive, d*-periphery constructions (Cornilescu and Nicolae 2011).

(30) a. mărul cel roşu
apple-the cel.DEF.SG red
'the red apple'

b. [DP_{outer} [$_{NP}$ mărul D' D^0_{outer} cel [$_{QP\ AP}$ roşu Q' Q^0 [DP_{inner} t_{NP} D' D^0 [$_{NumP}$ $t_{NP\ N'}$]]]]]

The paper assumes that adjectives merge in different positions in the DP, according to their denotations (Svenonius 2008, Cornilescu 2010). Exclusively prenominal adjective are DP-periphery adjectives and, therefore, cannot appear in the adjectival article construction (31a). The fact that such adjectives feature in DDPQs (31b) indicates the presence of an outer D, which contains the adjective modifying an empty noun.

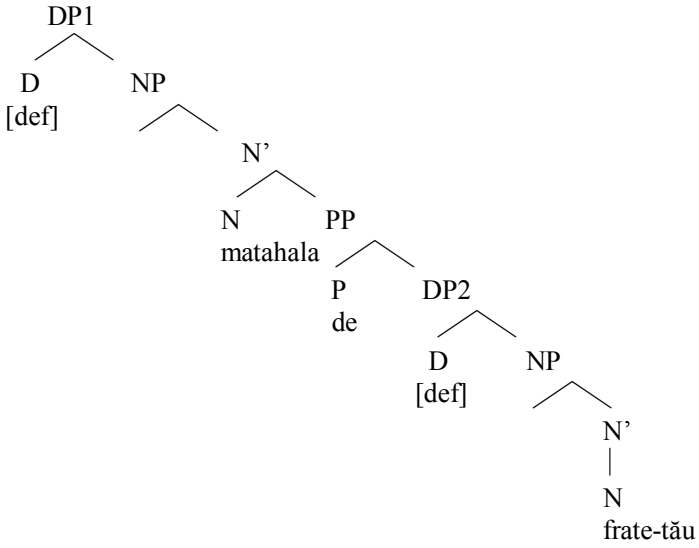
(31) a. *copilul cel biet
child-the cel.DEF.SG poor
'the poor child'

b. bietul de Ion
poor-the of Ion
'poor Ion'

The syntactic structure of DDPQs is repeated in (32):

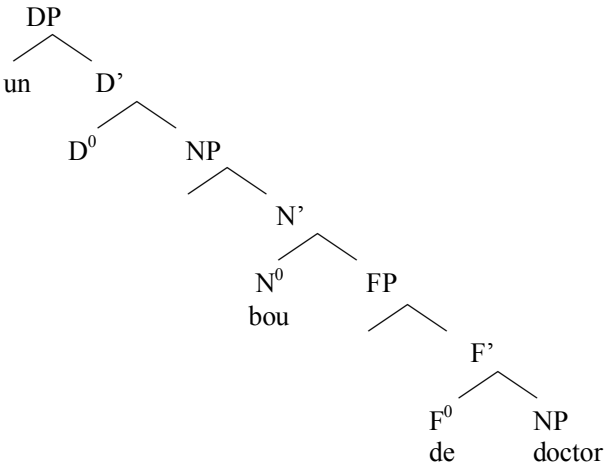
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(32)



The syntactic structure of SDPQs has been argued to consist of a single DP which dominates a split-NP structure (33):

(33)



4. Conclusions

The paper has focused on qualitative binominal constructions in Romanian. Although the literature on qualitative constructions does not acknowledge different types of qualitatives, it has been shown that there are sufficient arguments to operate a distinction between Single-DP qualitative constructions and Double-DP qualitative constructions.

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A major outcome of the investigation is the analysis of Double-DPs in terms of periphery quantificational constructions, checking P-feature in an outer D. A close scrutiny of the syntactic and semantic differences between DDPQs and SDPQs has revealed that the former are presuppositional and feature exclusively prenominal adjectives. This category is also subject to definiteness agreement, which has prompted an analysis in terms of double-definite constructions.

It has been shown that DDPQs conform to the contrastive Topic – Focus information-packaging and that the semantic type of DDPQs is always <e>, i.e. individual, as in the case of partitives.

Another important result of the analysis is the different perspective on the grouping together of qualitatives and pseudopartitives. Generally, the literature has analyzed these constructions either as instantiations of different syntactic structures or as illustrations of predicate inversion resulting in an inverted structure featuring a nominal copula *de*. The similarity between qualitatives and pseudopartitives can be exploited from a different perspective, that of analyzing these *de*-constructions as quantificational, D-periphery constructions.

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