VOICE IN ISTRO-ROMANIAN.
A CORPUS-BASED ANALYSIS[*]

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I. ISTRO-ROMANIAN AS A HISTORICAL DIALECT OF ROMANIAN

Typologically, it is part of Eastern Romance, alongside Daco-Romanian, Aromanian and Megleno-Romanian, all four forming the historical dialects of Romanian. The name to designate the language spoken by Istro-Romanians differs according to the region; it is usually a word derived from the name of the community or village where they live, thus those of the northern group call it *Zheyanski* [ʒe'j⁽ʷ⁾ɑnski], whereas in the south, they call it *Vlashki* ['vlaʃki] (for current research, see Vrzić & Singler (2016: 51–55)).

The term *Istro-Romanian* (for both the language and the population) has been culturally established, mainly to show its connection to Romanian; traditionally, it has been considered a historical dialect of Romanian (see Pușcariu 1906: 117–120, Kovačec 1984: 550–551). In the sense of this article, the word *language* refers to what Istro-Romanians speak, and has no intention whatsoever of going into the language/dialect dispute.

Istro-Romanian forms two (once large) groups: the northern group – the village of Žejane, and the southern group made of several villages, most prominently Šušnjevica. Istro-Romanians live at the Croatian-Italian border, in a multi-ethnic and multilingual environment and language contact especially with Croatian is widely accepted (for details, see Pușcariu 1906: 117–120, Kovačec 1984: 550–554, Vrzić & Singler 2016: 51). Recent work on the syntax of Istro-Romanian is to be found at Zegrean (2012) and Giusti and Zegrean (2015).

II. VOICE IN ISTRO-ROMANIAN

The same with the other (Eastern) Romance languages and dialects, Istro-Romanian follows the traditional pattern distinguishing between active vs.

passive constructions. The use of reflexive pronouns in reciprocal and impersonal constructions is nearly as frequent as in Daco-Romanian.

The dimensions of voice in the grammatical system of Istro-Romanian do not differ from standard Romanian, in the sense that it is organized as active (default, unmarked, as in (1a)) vs. passive (marked either with tensed BE forms + participle, as in (1b), or with SE, as in (2c)) – for transitive verbs, and active/personal vs. impersonal – for intransitive verbs (for Romanian data, see Pană Dindelegan (2010: 264–268); for historical and dialectal evidence, see Timotin 2000a, Timotin 2000b and Timotin 2002):

(1)   a. *Cum kemâţ   voi?*
            how call.2.PL   you
         "What do you call it?"

                                                             (SF 52)

         b. *Čel'i miseţ zabraneno   -åv   fost   de   lovi.*
            those months forbidden   has   been   DE   hunt
         "Hunting was forbidden those months"

                                                             (SF 300)

         c. *seminţa   s-å   pus   nutru.*
            clot.DEF   SE=has.AUX   put.PPLE   inside
         "The clot was put inside [the milk]"

                                                             (SF 66)

In some active constructions, it is to be noted that, in the absence of a specific intonation, some sentences may become ambiguous, as in:

(2)   *Bovu   ântręba   åsiru.*
        ox.DEF(NOM/ACC)   asks   donkey.DEF(NOM/ACC)
        "The ox is asking the donkey" or "The donkey is asking the ox"
                                                             (Kovačec 580)

The ambiguity is given by the fact that Istro-Romanian does not have a fixed word-order. The order of the constituents by itself does not help identify the exact syntactic position. Moreover, unlike standard Romanian, Istro-Romanian does not have differential object marking, and clitic doubling is rare and optional. It is usually the context that helps identify the syntactic function of each constituent.

II. 1. The *fi* 'be' passive constructions

Given the exclusive oral use of Istro-Romanian and the pragmatic value of the passive voice, the corpus shows only a few, though very diverse, examples of passive constructions with tensed BE + participle. Thus, the example provided above in (1b) is particular to peculiar, to the extent that the form of the adjective does not resemble a typical (Istro-)Romanian participle, and it is included more for semantic and analogic reasons under BE passive constructions. Clearer examples are in what follows:

(3) a. *se   conoşte   cum   ie   a   fost   lucrǻta.*
      SE   know.3.SG   how   she   has   been   worked.F
      "It is known how it [the church] was worked upon"

                                                        (SF 54)

   b. *De   când   ie căşu   facut   remâre   zeru*
      of   when   is cheese.DEF.NOM   make.PPLE
                                        rest.3.SG.PRES   whey.DEF
      "After the cheese is made, whey is what is left"

                                                        (SF 66)

   c. *pârla   doi,   trei   åń   a   fost   zruşita.*
      until.at   two   three   years   has.AUX   been
                                        destroy.PPLE
      "It [the church] was destroyed two or three years ago"

                                                        (SF 92)

   d. *Şi   fost-a   restegnit   za   noi …*
      and   be.PPLE-has.AUX   crucified   for   us
      şi … fost-a   zecopeit …   cum   fost-a

      and   be.PPLE-has.AUX   earthed   as
                                                be.PPLE-has.AUX

      piseit   ăn   Sveta   Pisma
      write.PPLE   in   holy.DEF   book
      "And he was crucified, and he was buried for us, as it was
                                        written in the Bible"
                                                        (LM 6)

II.2. The *veri* 'come' passive constructions
There is no synthetic passive in tensed forms, and the particularity of the southern
varieties of Istro-Romanian is the use of the auxiliary *veri* 'come', under the
influence of Italian:

(4) a. *Vaca   virit-a   uţisę.*
      cow.DEF   come.PPLE-has. AUX   killed.F
      "The cow was killed"

                                                        (Kovačec577)

   b. *ţesći feţor   pena   can-a   fost   nascuţ*
      these boys.NOM   till   when-have.AUX be.PPLE born.PPLE
      iel'   a   virit   hitiţ   ăn   apę.
      they   have.AUX   come   thrown.PPLE.M.PL   in   waters
      "These sons, soon after they were borne, they were thrown in the
                                                        water"
                                                        (SP129)

(5)   *Neca   se   strica   låptele,*
      so.that   SE   break.PRES.3.SG milk.DEF

neca	*vire*	*cåşu*	*?γust*
so.that	comes	cheese.DEF.NOM	clotted

"So that milk ferments and cheese gets clotted"

(SF 66)

However, all these examples show something particular. Although it is claimed that this is an influence from Italian (see, among others, Kovačec (1984: 577)),with which it shares the 'change of state' feature, the distribution of the periphrastic passives with *venire* 'come' in Italian is different from the examples identified for Istro-Romanian. Thus, according to Giacalone Ramat & Sansò (2014: 21–44), at least for standard contemporary Italian, both passive constructions with *essere* 'be' and *venire* 'come' passives can appear with simple tenses, whereas for compound tenses only the *essere* 'be' possibility is available.

The *venire* 'come' passive constructions in Italian are "highly favoured with telic predicates in imperfective contexts" (Giacalone Ramat & Sansò (2014: 21)). From this perspective, examples (4a, b) – where the verb *veri* 'come' is in the compound past – are an innovation in the use of the verb *veri* 'come' for passive periphrases.

Moreover, Dragomirescu & Nicolae 2014 (following Iordan 1950: 278) admit to the fact that, for Romanian, the *veni* 'come' passive constructions are the equivalent of the reflexive passive (added by a weak deontic meaning). This is again not the case for the examples (4a, b) in Istro-Romanian, which cannot be rephrased using SE passives; this can be done, however, in example (5). The values identified by Dragomirescu & Nicolae 2014 for Romanian do not hold in total for Istro-Romanian – not for the examples (4a, b) identified above, but they do hold in (5).

Unfortunately, the Romanian examples do not show instances of *veni* 'come' passive constructions in compound tenses, like Istro-Romanian. Following Dragomirescu & Nicolae 2014 and references therein, in this present paper I believe it not to be an influence from Italian, rather it is similar to dialectal Romanian.

II. 3. The SE passive and impersonal constructions

Far more productive are the passive and impersonal constructions with SE:, for which the corpus provides such examples as coordinated structures with the auxiliary inversion of the second element of the coordination (and never the first one, at least not according to the data found in the corpus), thus not falling under the Wackernagel law (for details, see Giusti and Zegrean 2015); this is not a feature of the passive-reflexives, rather it regards all coordinated compound tenses[1]:

(6)   a. *Mănt″e   s-åu   iåco   fino   jivit   şi   zaslujit s-a*.
              before   SE-has very   fine   lived and won   SE-has

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[1] For a detailed analysis on the use of the compound past in Istro-Romanian, see Geană (2017).

"Before, people used to live very well and earn money"

(SF 119)

b. *Țesåru*   *l-a*   *scutåt*   *si*
emperor.DEF   him.CL.3.PL.F-has.AUX   listen.PPLE   and
avzit-av   *tot*   *ț-av*   *iale*   *gançit.*
hear.PPLE-have.AUX   all   what-have.AUX.3.PL.   they.F   spoken
"The emperor listened to them and heard all they had to say"

(SP 125)

Other examples include repeated structures, with the reflexive dislocation in the second part; since the editor did not use correction/intonation markers, we cannot tell for sure whether this construction with verb-reflexive inversion is a correction or just another option of expressing the same syntactic function:

(7)   *Atunče* *se*   *spredę,*   *spredę*   *se*.
then   SE   weave.3.SG   weave.3.SG   SE
"Then, it [the wool] is woven"

(SF 65)

A lot of instances of SE passives regard verbs denoting activities; this is the most frequent pattern, especially since most of the available texts deal with the general activities of the Istro-Romanian community, which receive explanations in the form of impersonal passives:

(8)   a. *Lâra*   *se*   *fače*   *de*   *oi.*
wool.DEF   SE   make.3.SG   of   sheep.PL
"Wool is made from sheep"

(SF 65)

b. *La*   *voi*   *se*   *cum*   *ziče?*
at   you.PL se   how   says
"What do you call it?"

(SF 72)

c. *Za*   *atâta*   *åń*   *s-å*   *lucråt*   *carbur.*
for   so.many   years   SE-have.AUX   worked   coal.PL
"For so many years, people have worked in the coal industry"

(SF 71)

d. *Iuva-s,*   *che*   *nu*   *se*   *vedu?*
where-be.3.PL   that   not   SE   see.3.PL
"Where are they [the children], because they cannot be seen"

(TC 5)

e. *Nu* *se*   *va*   *şti*   *ŭatu*   *iuva* *ăi.*
not   SE   will   know.INF   another.DEF   where   is
"No one will know where another one is"

(TC 13)

A subclass of activity verbs are those used in cooking terminology (specific to recipes), as in:

(9)   a. *Farina*   <u>*se*</u>   <u>*friję*</u>.
      flour.DEF   SE   fry.3.SG
      "The flour is fried"

                                              (SF 274)

    b. *I-o*   *cadåre speţialna*   *iuva*   <u>*se cuhę*</u>   *rakiia.*
      is-a   bucket   special.FEM   where   SE   boil.3.SG brandy.DEF.NOM
      "It's a special bucket to boil the brandy"

                                              (SF 195)

Just like in standard Romanian, the SE constructions can take a plural subject:
(10)   a. <u>*Učide*</u>   <u>*se*</u>   <u>*rę,*</u>   *ama*   *nu*   *låsu*
      kill.INF   SE   COND   but   not   let.3.SG
      ca   *şi*   *lovacco*   *druştvo*.
      like   and   hunting   association
      "They [the boars] would be killed, but the hunters' association
    does not allow it"

                                                (SF 63)

    b. *Oile*   <u>*se striję,*</u>   *pac*   *vire*   *lâra.*
      sheep.PL.NOM   SE   clip.3.PL.IMPF   then   comes   wool.DEF.NOM
      "Sheep were clipped, then wool is obtained"

                                              (SF 65)

    c. *Lęmne*   *uvâc*   <u>*se*</u>   <u>*vindu*</u>.
      wood.PL   always   SE   sell.3.PL
      "Wood always sells good"

                                                (SF 98)

Moving on to impersonal constructions, they can appear with modals; in (11), the pattern is similar to Daco-Romanian (the same impersonal construction with SE + *poate* 'can'), whereas in (12), the structure possibly follows a presumably Croatian pattern:
(11)   a. <u>*Nu*</u>   <u>*se*</u>   <u>*pote*</u>   *zaučide*   *porcu*   *div'iu.*
      not   SE   can.3.SG   kill.INF   pig.DEF   wild
      "It is forbidden to kill boars"

                                               (SF 303)

    b. *ali*   *mâre*   *nu*   <u>*se*</u>   <u>*pote*</u>
      but   tomorrow   not   SE   can.PS.3.SG
      de   *mânt'e*   *ziče.*
      of   the.day.before.yesterday   say
      "But tomorrow one cannot say/utter the day before yesterday"

                                               (SF 51)

(12)   *ke'*   <u>*se morę*</u>   *totile*   *cu strehul'a*   *penuntu žos omacni.*
      as   SE   must.3.SG all.DEF with shovel.DEF   eart.DEF down give.INF
      "Since all the earth must be taken down with the shovel"

                                              (Kovačec580)

Just like in Daco-Romanian, the se impersonal constructions are allowed with intransitive verbs, as in:

(13)   *Iårna (...)* <u>*se mẹjẹ*</u>   *cu*   *tractoru,*   *pac*   *se*   *tråje*.
        winter.DEF SE walks   with   tractor.DEF   then   SE   pulls.
        "In winter, one takes the tractor, and then it is pulled.

                                                                        (SF 68)

  – or with raised clitics (with the verb *can*):

(14)   *ånța*   <u>*nu*</u>   <u>*se*</u>   <u>*pote*</u>   <u>*stå*</u>   *de*   *frikẹ.*
        here   not   SE   can.3.SG   stay   of   fear
        "One cannot stay here for fear"

                                                                        (SP 122)

Another kind of impersonal use in Istro-Romanian is with verbs that have an empty subject position:

  – either default impersonal verbs:

(15)   a. *mai*   *apoi*   *mi-*<u>*se*</u>   *va*   *zgodi*   *ke*
          more   then   I.DAT.SG-SE   will   happen   that
          va   *si*   *åt*   *mire*
          will   also   another   I.ACC
          "Later on, what will happen is me also being killed by another person"
                                                                        (SP 121)

        b. *Țe*   *s-a*   *țiie*   *ånmişat?*
           what   SE-has.AUX   you.SG.DAT   dream.PPLE
           "What did you dream?"

                                                                        (TC 66)

  – or contextual impersonals:

        c. *Ți-*<u>*se*</u>   *va*   *vedẹ*   *ke-s*   *tel'*   *fråț*
           you.DAT.SG-SE   will   see   that-are.3.PL   your   brothers
           "It will seem to you that they are your brothers"

                                                                        (SP 130)

        d. *Samoć*   *nemislẹ*   *pre*   *țela*   *pul',*   *țiie*
           only   think   of   that   chicken   you.SG.DAT
           <u>*se*</u>   *va*   *scåndu*   <u>*fåțe*</u>
           SE   will   table   make
           "Just think of that chicken, and it will become your meal"

                                                                        (SP 134)

Of course, the reflexives can be used in typical reflexive verbs (i.e., without a passive reading), just like in other Romance (particularly Eastern Romance), with human subject:

(17)   a. *Şi-omiri*   <u>*s-åu*</u>   *cu*   *čå*   <u>*bavit*</u>.
          and-people   SE-have.AUX.3.PL   with   that.F   dealt.PPLE
          "And people dealt with it"

                                                                        (SF 45)

b. *Şi   cum   li   <u>s-åv</u>   muiåra   <u>kemåt?</u>*
   and   how   his.DAT.POS   SE-has.AUX   woman.DEF   called
   "What was his wife's name?"

(SF 48)

c. ?*Ura   <u>se   vire</u>   de   jos,   din   Hârvaţca.*
   one.F   SE   comes   of   down   from   Croatia
   "A woman comes from down, from Croatia"

(SF 49)

The example (17b) shows that the verb *se cl(')ema* 'to be named/called' has an inherent reflexive use, like Italian and unlike standard Romanian. The example in (17c) shows a particular reflexive use of the verb *veri* 'come', unattested for standard Romanian.

Some constructions are similar with sub-standard examples from Romanian:

(18)   a. *Hlapăţu   tåţe   si   <u>se   ărde</u>.*
            hired.man.DEF   shuts.up   and   SE   laughs
            "The hired man keeps his mouth shut and is laughing"

(SP 136)

b. *Căn se   ărde,   schipune   din   gure.*
   when SE   laughs   flowers   from   mouth
   "When she laughs, flowers [get out] of her mouth"

(TC 6)

Compare with:

(18')   *Argatul tace şi se râde.*

It can also be used with the so-called weather verbs:

(19)   *de   rent'e de   nopte   se   ziče   <u>se   nopta</u>.*
          of   before of   night   se   say.3.SG   se   get.dark.INF
          "Before night, it is said that is is getting dark"

(SF 49)

Impersonal constructions with raised clitics are also attested:

(19)   *Ma   <u>nu   se   vrẹse   sculå</u>.*
          but   not   se   wanted   wake.up.INF
          "But he wouldn't wake up"

(SP 142)

II. 4. Expressing *Agent* in passive and impersonal constructions

Due to its mostly oral use, Istro-Romanian shows little to no examples with *de* 'by' phrases to express the agent of a passive construction; also, there are no attested examples as of yet with regard to the use of the passive in non-finite verb forms.

One peculiar use of the reflexive with a possible passive interpretation can be in such examples as:

(20) a. *??io* <u>*m-am*</u> *ănmețåt* <u>*de*</u> <u>*iel'*</u>
I myself.CL-have.AUX.1.SG teach.PPLE? by him
"I was taught by him"

(HS 96)

b. ?? <u>*ănmețåt-s-a*</u> *și ie, ma ne* <u>*de*</u> <u>*țåțe*</u>
teach.PPLE=himself.CL=has.AUX and he but not ?by dad
"He was also taught, but not by dad"

(HS 96)

The question marks are there because the source and the agent are expressed in Istro-Romanian with the preposition *de* (as opposed to *de la* 'from' for source and *de* 'by' for agent in Daco-Romanian). However, especially with this verb (*learn*//*teach*), similar cases with 1st and 2nd person reflexive passives are attested for southern Italian dialects as well.

III. CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of Istro-Romanian syntactic particularities is important because it shows interesting parallels with standard and regional Daco-Romanian, on the one hand, or with the history of Romanian, on the other. The particular structure of Istro-Romanian passives is, expectedly, similar to Daco-Romanian in many concerns. The *fi* 'be' and SE passives are widely attested in both historical dialects, whereas the *veri* 'come' passive periphrastic constructions have a limited distribution both in Istro-Romanian, and in standard/regional Daco-Romanian.

The contact with Slavic languages (Croatian, in particular), which is – as already stated – widely accepted, and the contact with Italian dialects can be indeed seen in syntax as well (more obvious though in the Istro-Romanian vocabulary), but this is yet to be revisited. For example, as seen in subsection *II.2.* above, the *veri* 'come' passives, although stated by most literature to be an influence from Italian (Kovačec (1984: 577), a.o.), have a different distribution both from Italian (with clear examples in (4a, b) – cases in which Italian would not allow for compound tenses), and from Daco-Romanian (the impossibility of impersonal SE rephrasing), the intuition however being that this kind of construction is closer to Western varieties of Daco-Romanian, for which similar periphrases have been attested.

For the contact with Croatian, I have identified verbs that are used reflexively (either inherent, or contextual reflexives, some of them in the so-called SE passive constructions) in different way than Daco-Romanian uses them. For the time being, I have not taken into account the comparison with Aromanian or Megleno-Romanian.

Although the corpus used for the purposes of this article cover more than one hundred years, and in spite of some empirical observations, I did not make any claims on the historical evolution of voice in Istro-Romanian (or any other types of evolution, for that matter). This could however be the subject of future research.

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ABSTRACT

This article deals with the presentation of voice in Istro-Romanian. Voice in Istro-Romanian shows many similarities with standard (and regional) Romanian, mainly due to their Easter Romance status (comparisons with Aromanian or Megleno-Romanian are beyond the scope of this article, but they are a source for future research). Although not bringing methodological or scientific breakthroughs, my contribution based on corpus analysis brings evidence on the vitality of voice as a pragma-syntactic category in Istro-Romanian. The active/passive/impersonal system is both described and exemplified. The contact with Croatian is obvious also in the use of voice, whereas the Italian influence, as per the literature, – in the sense of a specific passive periphrastic construction with *veri*'come' – is reconsidered, as some of the examples provided by the corpus contradict the literature on the use of the 'come' passives in (dialectal) Italian.

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