EXTERNAL POSSESSORS, WEAK DEFINITES AND ACCUSATIVE ASSIGNMENT IN ROMANIAN

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1. MAIN CLAIM AND OUTLINE

In previous research (Cornilescu 2018), we argued that definite DPs in external possessor constructions are examples of *weak definites* and get a *property reading*, instead of the *referential reading* of *strong definites*. In this paper, we first detail the difference between weak and strong definites by closely examining definite possessed direct objects (DO) in the Possessive dative constructions (PDC), where the possessor dative is an *external possessor*. The *main claim* of the paper is that, given their semantics, weak definites and strong definites check case in different ways and get interpreted in different positions. Weak definite DOs are case-assigned inside the lexical VP and get inherent case; this case-assignment strategy is a form of semantic incorporation. In contrast, strong definites, which are referential, exit the lexical VP and move to a structural case position. Assignment of reference to individual variables thus takes place in the propositional domain (i.e. the functional domain), not the lexical domain (i.e. the lexical VP). The outline of the paper is the following: In Section 2 we present evidence that definite DOs in the PDC are weak definites and conclude that, even with extensional verbs, definite DOs may be either strong (referential) or weak (properties). In Section 3–4, we present a syntactic interpretation of the contrast between strong and weak definites, trying to correlate their semantics with their syntax. The analysis can, in principle, be extended to all weak vs. strong determiners.

2. WEAK DEFINITES IN EXTERNAL POSSESSOR CONSTRUCTIONS

2.1 *Aim of the section* The purpose of this section is to give an example of weak definites, by closely examining the definite DOs in the PDC in order to prove

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that they pass all the tests proposed in the literature (e.g. Aguilar-Guevara 2014; Carlson, 2003) for *weak definiteness*, so that they must be considered as such. In the examples, we have systematically illustrated each weak-definite property for both inalienable possession, and alienable possession. We have done this, since, as known, an important characteristic of the Romanian PDC is that it is possible for both types of possession, contrasting with its Romance counterparts, where the PDC is restricted to a form of inalienable possession which conforms to Rooryck (2018)'s "body as location" generalization. For lack of space, the discussion in this paper is restricted to DOs which are *not differentially marked*.

2.2. *Properties of weak definites* In the rest of Section 2, we are simply running through the diagnostics for weak definiteness, summed up in Aguilar-Guevara (2014), to show that they aptly characterize definite DOs in the PDCs.

a. Non-unique reference The most striking property of weak definite descriptions is non-unique reference. This property establishes a sharp contrast with strong definite descriptions, for which, on Russell's classical account, the referent is endowed with existence and uniqueness (rephrased as "maximality" in Farkaş & de Swart, 2003, among many). Non-uniqueness of reference (sometimes) makes possible a(n) apparent indefinite paraphrase (1a). The non-uniqueness of the referent property comes out forcefully with plural possessors (as in (1b), but does not require plural possessors (as in (1a)). Examples in (1) illustrate inalienable possession of body-parts, those in (2) show alienable possessed objects.

(1) a. *Ion şi-a rupt degetul/ un deget.*
Ion himself.dat.cl-has broken finger.**the**/**a** finger
'Ion broke his/a finger.'

b. *Mulţi dintre ei îşi pierduseră capul la vederea preşedintelui.*
many of them themselves.dat.cl. had-lost head.the at sight.the president.the.gen
'Many of them had lost their head at the sight of the president.'

(2) *Toţi concurenţii îşi reciteau lucrarea/lucrările.*
all candidates themselves.dat.cl were re-reading paper/papers.
'All candidates were re-reading their exams/exams.'

Notice in particular the interpretation of the plural (i.e. *papers*), in (2). The example may mean either that each candidate was re-reading his one paper, or that each candidate was reading his several papers. So the plural weak definite does not refer to the members of a unique group either.

b. Sloppy identity under VP ellipsis is another diagnostic test for weak definites. Under VP-ellipsis in the PDC, the strict identity reading, which requires identity of the referent of the body-part or of any other possessum is clearly out. Only the sloppy identity reading is felicitous ((3) and (4)), in which case each predicate is associated with a different possessed object. In contrast, with a strong definite object (5), both readings are possible. i.e. in example (5), Ion and Petru may have read the same novel or different ones.

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(3) *Ioana şi-a rupt rochia şi Maria la fel.*
Ioan herself.dat.cl.-has torn dress.the and Maria likewise
'Joan tore her dress and Mary did too.'

(4) *Li s-au pierdut economiile la bancă, şi nouă la fel.*
them.dat.cl refl.acc.3rd.Pl.cl. have lost savings.the at bank, and us.dat.cl likewise.
'Their savings have been lost in the bank and ours, too.'

(5) *Ion a trebuit sa citească romanul indicat, şi Petru la fel.*
Ion has had Subj read.subj.3rd Sg novel.the indicated and Peter, likewise.
'Ion had to read the assigned novel, and Peter too.'

As the examples show, the sloppy identity reading under ellipsis is related to the non-uniqueness of the referent property and is equally characteristic.

c. Narrow scope interpretation A weak definite always takes narrower scope than other quantificational operators in the same sentence (or rather its scope is inert). Readings are not *de re*, since there is no *res*, no discourse referent is introduced by the possessum phrase. Here are examples:

(6) a. *Fiecare rănit şi-a pansat rănile*.
every wounded-man himself.dat.cl has bandaged wounds.the
'Every wounded man dressed his wounds.'

b. *Toţi îşi lăsaseră maşina în garajul acela.*
all themselves.dat.cl.-had-left car.the in garage.the that
'All of them had left their car(s) in that garage.'

In every case, the interpretation of the possessed object is distributive over the quantified subject, which has wide scope. Thus, in (6a), each soldier dressed his own wounds. In (6b) every person left his own car in the garage, and there is no reading that speaks of a unique car possessed by many people. In contrast, the definite DP in (7) may be given a strong interpretation, designating a specific, unique individual:

(7) Amândoi doctorii au consultat atent bolnavul.
both doctors.the have examined carefully patient.the
'Both doctors carefully examined the patient.'

d. *Discourse referential defectiveness.* This important semantic property says that **weak** definites often do not make a discourse referent available for anaphora, since the possessum does not directly introduce a discourse referent. Referential defectiveness is apparent especially when subsequent discourse refers to a specific object, so the DP has an *object level reading*. Referential defectiveness is manifest in two ways. The possessed object noun phrase is not a good antecedent either for a

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subsequent anaphoric definite description, or for a pronoun. When the discourse continues to makes reference to the property reading, a weak definite can antecede a pronoun or even a definite description. For instance, the PDC in (8a) introduces the weak definite *singura cămaşa pentru a doua zi* 'the only shirt for the next day', involved in a stereotypical activity of shirt-washing. This weak definite can felicitously be referred to by a singular accusative clitic *-o* 'it', in the following sentence, since shirt-ironing in the second sentence is also a typical activity and the singular can still be used; expectedly, a plural clitic *le-* 'them', can also occur, given the entailed plurality of shirts introduced by the property reading of the weak definite antecedent (8b'). If a context-specific object is described in the second sentence, the weak definite is not a proper antecedent for a subsequent definite description in the singular anymore (9b). Rather a plural description with a strong reading is felicitous (9c). Secondly, the possessum is not readily replaceable by a null or overt pronoun (personal or demonstrative), either, as apparent in (10b). In contrast, strong definites always make discourse referents available for subsequent anaphoric descriptions or for pronouns (11).

(8) a. *Seara şi-au spălat toţi singura cămaşa pentru a doua zi.*
evening.the themselves.dat.cl have washed all unique.the shirt for the second day
'In the evening all of them washed their only shirt for the next day.'

b. *Dimineaţa şi-au călcat-**o**.*
morning.the themselves.dat.cl. have ironed-it.acc. cl.
'In the morning they ironed it.'

b' *Dimineaţa şi-**le** au călcat.*
morning.the themselves.dat.cl. they.acc.cl have ironed.
'In the morning they ironed them.'

(9) a. *Delegaţii şi-au întors capul spre uşă.*
delegates.the themselves.dat.cl have turned head.the toward door.
'The delegates turned their head(s) to the door.'

b. ***Faţa** (?lor) exprima curiozitate.*
face.the (their) expressed curiosity
'Their face expressed curiosity.'

c. *Feţele lor exprimau curiozitatea.*
faces.the their expressed curiosity
'Their faces expressed curiosity.'

(10) a. *Delegaţii si-au ridicat mâna pentru a vota*.
delegates.themselves.dat.cl have raised hand.the for to vote.
'The delegates raised their hands in order to vote.'

b. ???*pro* era asprită de muncă grea. /***Aceasta/ea** era asprită de muncă grea.
pro was calloused from work/ this/it was calloused from hard work.
'It was calloused from hard work./This/it had become calloused from hard work.'

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(11) a. *Urmau să repare casa.*
'They were to repair the house.'
***Acoperişul** curgea*
roof.the leaked.
'The roof leaked.'

b. *Studenţii protestatari au aruncat cărţile.*
'The protesting students threw the books away.'
*Apoi **le**-au ars.* *// **Acestea** au fost apoi arse.*
then they.Acc.cl-have burnt. / these have been then burnt
'Then they burnt **them**.' //Then these (books) were burnt.

Discourse defectiveness is a particularly clear indication that weak definites do not have object level reading, but property reading, forming complex predicates with the verb. Complex predicates show different degrees of semantic specialization and tend to become idiomatic phrases.

e. *Typical morpho-syntactic properties* In addition to their interpretative properties, weak definites also have typical morpho-syntactic properties. According to Krapova & Cinque (2008), the best known morpho-syntactic property of external possessors in Italian, French and Spanish is restricted number morphology. The two authors claim (2008: 69) that "unique inalienable body parts, like 'head', 'stomach', 'nose' (and other extended inalienably possessed nouns like'mother', 'home'), etc. are obligatorily singular, whether they have a singular or plural possessor." (Krapova & Cinque 2008: 69). Number restrictions are also apparent with a restricted subclass of possessed body parts in Romanian, as testified by (12).

(12) a. *Doctorul le-a examinat gâtul/ *gâturile.*
doctor.the them.dat.cl has examined throat.the/ throats.the
'The doctor examined their throat(s).'

b. *Cei doi turişti îşi fracturaseră coloana/*coloanele.*
the two tourists themselves.dat.cl had-broken spine.the.sg/ spine.the.pl
'The two tourists had broken their spine(s).

However, especially outside of the domain of inalienable possession, in the wide variety of possessor dative constructions, Romanian shows no number limitations on the possessed object, as acknowledged in Romanian grammars (see Gramatica Academiei 2005).

2.3. A general result regarding the interpretations of definite DOs It was commonly assumed that with extensional verbs the reading of a definite DO is always *referential*, since the object position of extensional verbs is transparent. The analysis above shows however that this characterization is only appropriate for *strong definite DOs*. Weak definite DOs do not have referential readings, but property or kind readings. This difference was brought to light by pairs of type (13), already discussed above. Weak definites naturally also occur outside the domain of external possessor construction, as shown by the pair in (14). Sentence

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(14a) is an episodic sentence and entails the existence of a specific referent of the DO, a train that Ion saw entering the station. The definite DO is strong. Sentence (14b) describes an instance of a stereotypical event (taking the train). The DO is a weak definite, forming a complex predicate with the verb.

(13) a. *Fiecare elev a rezolvat **problema**.*
every pupil has solved problem.the
'Every student solved the problem'
b. *Fiecare elev **şi**-a rezolvat **problema**.*
Every pupil himself.dat.cl has solved problem.the
'Every pupil solved his problem.'

(14) a. *Ion a văzut trenul intrând în gară.*
Ion has seen train.the entering in station
'Ion has seen the train entering the station.'
b *Ion a luat trenul până la Bucuresti.*
Ion has taken train.the up to Bucureşti
'Ion has taken the train to Bucharest.'

In the next sections we propose a syntactic interpretation of the contrast between weak and strong definites, which would do justice to their semantic interpretation.

3. ON THE ANALYSIS OF WEAK DEFINITES

In this section we review some important proposals on how to represent the difference between referential readings and property/kind readings in syntax.

3.1 *Interpretation and DP size:NP or DPs*

Given the possibility of representing nominals (sometimes the same ones!) either as NPs or as DPs, a tempting idea has been to correlate DP size with the possible readings of each kind of nominal. A classical example of this approach is *Chierchia's Nominal Mapping Parameter* (1988), which proposed to distinguish languages where NPs could be both predicates and arguments (e.g. English) from languages where NPs were only predicates (e.g. French), and only DPs can be arguments. In contrast, Longobardi (1994) equates the DP/NP divide with the argument/predicate dichotomy. In his analysis only DPs fill argument positions. So, when they appear in argument positions, even bare nouns should be represented as DPs with a phonologically null head. In Longobardi's view, the locus of reference is the D head. Other analysts of Romance follow Carlson (1977) and Chierchia (1988) representing bare nominals as being smaller than DPs (e.g. NPs, NumPs, QPs), and as being devoid of referential readings, even when they fill argument positions. Thus, in an important study on Spanish and Romanian, Dobrovie-Sorin e.a (2006), analyse bare singulars and bare plurals as having

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distinct syntactic categories: they are NPs and NumPs respectively. This difference correlates with a different syntactic distributon and a different semantic composition. It is argued that bare singulars *undergo syntactic pseudo-incorporation*, in the sense that they must remain in the VP throughout syntax; semantically they are modifiers, i.e. predicates or *intensional properties* in Chierchia's terms. Bare plurals, may, but need not, be pseudo incorporated, i.e. they do not have to stay in the VP. Moreover, they denote *extensional properties*, sets of individuals (due to the referential properties of Number). As shown by the authors, there are criteria that differentiate between NPs/NumPs and DPs.

3.2. Do definites incorporate?

As already apparent, in the literature, there is a tight connection between the property/predicate reading of nominals and syntactic and/or semantic incorporation.

Initially incorporation was restricted to bare singulars and bare plurals, which were assumed to denote only properties (Chierchia, 1988) or kinds Carlson, 1977), and it was inspired by languages where incorporation is visible in the syntax (such as Chamorro, Maori, discussed by Chung and Ladusow (2004) or West Greenlandic as analyzed by Van Geenhoven, (1998)). The semantic effect of incorporation is the modifier interpretation of the direct object and the formation of complex predicates.

Incorporation was further extended to *weak indefinites,* a well –known example being Carlson's (2003) analysis. Weak indefinites may be viewed as adjectives and therefore, they are NumPs or QPs, thus, crucially not DPs, and they may incorporate. Importantly, stress is laid on semantic incorporation, establishing a correlation between Diesing's Mapping Hypothesis (1991) and incorporation. Incorporated indefinites are heimian restricted variables (predicates) and, unless bound otherwise, they undergo existential closure. Thus, as late as 2003, indefiniteness of the nominal incorporee (NP/NumP/QP) was a defining property of incorporation; since both bare NPs and weak indefinites, which had been shown to incorporate, are [-definite]. Other important studies, like Farkas&De Swart (2003), additionally stress the need to keep syntactic incorporation distinct from semantic incorporation. Farkas&De Swart thus argue that semantic incorporation is a process which is likely to affect all languages that have bare plurals since Number is the main window to reference in all languages, while syntactic incorporation need not be available universally.

Taking a step forward, Carlson (2006) stresses that bare singulars and weak definites function in the same way, since both express a "typical activity", i.e. an "activity that is recognized sufficiently often to be considered 'nameworthy' or habitual, permanent, chronic". Consequently, in his view, both bare singular and weak definites represent instances of semantic incorporation. Therefore, in Carlson's opinion, definites may incorporate, too. With Carlson's view, the discussion has come full circle, i.e., *all types of nominals* may be semantically

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incorporated when they are interpreted as modifiers, i.e. as components of complex predicates.

3.*3. Semantic incorporation and VP-kinds*

The thesis that certain types of objects are semantically incorporated was strengthened by Carlson's and other people's research on *kinds* of events (VPs). Since the ontology contains not only individuals, but also events, it is expected that just as for individuals, one may distinguish between objects and kinds for events too**.** Event kinds are also VPs, and have prototypical readings. It is easy to see that event kinds involving transitive verb-phrases may include any type of nominal objects.

(15)	a.	bare singular	*a purta haină* ('to wear a coat')
	b.	bare plural	*a face purici* (lit. to make fleas, 'to breed')
	c.	singular indefinite	a avea o problemă ('have a problem')
	d.	singular (weak) definite	a ridica mâna ('raise the hand', 'vote')
	e.	singular possessed definite	a-şi rupe piciorul ('break one's leg')

In all of (15) the object does not get a referential reading or, at least, it does not have a referential reading at the level of the VP. In all of these the V+N structure represents an event kind. Following the same lime of thought Schwarz (2009) bluntly claims that *weak definite are definites appearing in verb phrases that denote kinds of events, where multiplicity of object's reference follows from the multiplicity of events.* More generally, *lexical Vs that head* event-kind-denoting VPs behave as if they had a selectional features that requires them to combine with (particular) NPs. From a more general semantic perspective, Carlson's theory of event-kinds argues that referential readings arise in what he calls *propositional semantics*, at a level of syntax where there is sufficient functional structure to develop events into propositions; the latter are further evaluated as true or false, when the contextual coordinates of the situation have been specified (i.e. a domain of discourse, a set of worlds, times, etc). Strong definites can express their existence and uniqueness claim only with respect to some domain of discourse. Events (lexical VPs) and propositions deal with different semantic properties of language, and it is the proposition which is the domain of reference. Before concluding this section, let us stress again that in his discussion Carlson refers to semantic incorporation.

4. A POSSIBLE ANALYSIS OF WEAK DEFINITE

4.1 Prerequisite for a good analysis – a good syntax-semantics fit

We will adopt Carlson's theory (2003, 2006) that referential readings arise in what he calls propositional semantics, while property readings arise inside the event-kind semantics. Roughly, this division corresponds to the syntactic division

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between the lexical event-denoting VP and the functional IP/CP level, where there is sufficient functional structure to develop events into propositions. While the lexical level is associated with event kinds, operating with individual concept variables (or perhaps θ-variables as in Farkas&De Swart 2003), the functional level builds propositions and eventually introduces individual variables and quantifiers that take values on a particular domain of discourse. Importantly, in this conception, argumenthood and argument saturation belongs to the domain of the propositional layer.

Syntax should properly feed interpretation, indicating whether a particular DO should be semantically incorporated or should receive a referential reading.

To solve this problem, Cecchetto and Donati (2015) propose that nominals merge as NPs, while the determiner merges later as an adjunct and there is relabelling, a solution that is reminiscent of the introduction of quantifiers in Montague Grammar. Such an analysis successfully solves the interpretative problem at the cost of destroying what has been slowly learned about the internal syntax of nominals since Abney's (1987) dissertation, thus disregarding the idea of Ds as heads of the nominal phrase.

What has been said so far also suggests that nominals (though not all of them) get to be interpreted twice: once as contributors to the event-kind/ to the event description (a non-referential reading) and then, sometimes not always, a referential reading of the same nominal is required to express a proposition, evaluated for truth. In the next subsection we address the problem of how to syntactically handle the difference between weak and strong definites (in Romanian), so as to do justice to the semantics, while preserving a more or less standard syntax.

4.2 Some relevant syntactic facts

In the particular case of Romanian it can be argued that it would be inappropriate to represent the difference between weak/strong definites as a difference between NP-definites, which denote properties and syntactically incorporate and DP-definites which have referential, object-level interpretations, since, demonstrably, there is no *syntactic incorporation of the DO in Romanian.* Romanian does not show evidence of syntactic incorporation even in the case of bare singulars, though, unlike bare plurals, bare singulars have sometimes been argued to incorporate in Romanian (see above).

As known, the hall-mark of syntactic incorporation (in addition to the noun's morphology in some languages) is *adjacency to the verb*, at LF (Baker, 1988, Chung and Ladusow, 2004) or at least at PF (Levine 2013). Romanian bare singulars are *not subject to adjacency*; they may target periphery positions, undergoing long distance movement, just like bare plurals and DPs, as is shown in (16). Likewise, bare plurals appear in all syntactic positions, including that of preverbal subject, as in (17) (see Tănase-Dogaru (2009) for details on the distribution of Romanian bare nominals).

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(16) *Palton se zice că (palton) nu se poartă (palton) de loc.*
overcoat SE.refl.acc.cl says that (overcoat) not SE.refl.acc.cl wears (overcoat) at all.
'Overcoats are said not to be in fashion at all.'

(17) *Romane nu se mai cumpără.*
novels not SE.refl.acc.cl any more buy
'People no longer buy novels.'

These data indicate that even bare nominals *do not syntactically incorporate in Romanian*. The conclusion can naturally be extended to nominals that have more structure, such as weak definites.

The Definiteness Parameter Romanian is a language positively marked for the Definiteness Parameter (Nicolae (2013)). This means that the Romanian nominal stem is marked as N[*u* ± definite]. The definite article is suffixed to the noun in case the N is [*u*+definite], so that the null determiner must be interpreted as indefinite. The definite feature of the N is uninterpretable and must be checked inside the NP/DP cycle to prevent the derivation from crashing. The [*u*+definite] feature can only be valued if a D head containing an [*i* +definite] feature is present. It is not clear how one could project the weak definite as an NP adding the Determiner at a later stage, as proposed in Cecchetto and Donati (2015). Hence, weak definite had better be analyzed as DPs.

4.3. *Proposal* Both weak and strong definites are DPs. The two readings of definite DPs obtain in different positions and correspond to different strategies of case-checking.

When the VP denotes a VP-kind, the DO must be semantically incorporated, i.e. the lexical NP in the DO and the lexical V form a complex predicate. The V may be assumed to have a selectional __NP feature. Semantic incorporation is a form of checking inherent case.

As for the referential reading, let us assume that, in addition to the [*i*+definite] feature, the D head also contains an [*i*+Q(uantificational)] feature, which signals the quantificational reading of the strong definite. In the line of Montague Grammar, we may assume that the definite DP denotes a set of properties of an individual (i.e., ignoring intension, the type of a DP is <et, t> (Heim & Kratzer 1995: 142). The interpretation of a quantifier requires the formation of quantifier variable structure, which may be created by moving the DP to a structural case position.

Implementation We adopt a uniform analysis for definite DOs (strong and weak) projecting them as DPs. As shown above, the presence of the D-head is forced by the Definiteness Parameter.

We propose that the difference between the property reading and the referential reading is configurational and that the two required configurations are created derivationally and correspond two different strategies of accusative case assignment.

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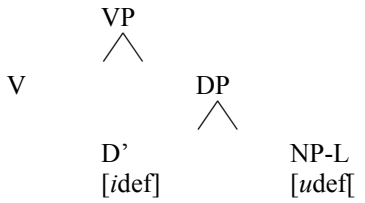
The property reading Consider the standard configuration of a definite DO, as in (i).

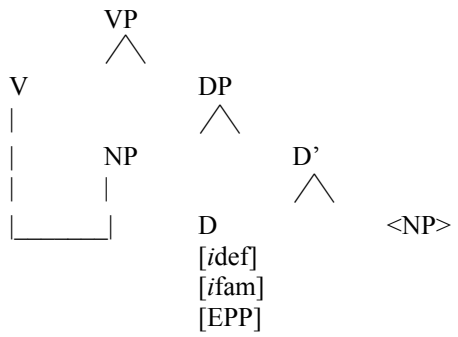
(18)



In this configuration the noun can check its definiteness by Agree with D, as required by the definiteness parameter. However, the NP is not accessible to the lexical V, since it is the complement of D. Recall now that from a semantic perspective, two features have been proposed to describe the "meaning" of the definite article. One is the quantificational feature [*i*+Q] of 'maximality'; the other one is a pragmatic feature, 'familiarity' proposed in Heim (1982). In Heim's interpretation, definite DPs have no quantificational force of their own, a definite description, like 'the cat' is simply a restricted variable (λx. cat(x)), i.e. a predicate, and the predicative part of the DP is the NP. It is further shown in Farkas&De Swart (2007), that both properties are required in order to parametrize cross-linguistic variation in the use of the definite article. It is profitable to use both features as syntactic triggers as well.

Suppose now that, sometimes (if not always) D also carries the feature of familiarity, a strong (EPP) feature. Such a feature will trigger movement of the NP to the Specifier of D, as in (19):

(19)



The NP is now in a position where it can be accessed by the lexical V, which has become a local governor. Moreover, the NP is adjacent to V, i.e. it is in a configuration which permits semantic incorporation of the NP into the V. Finally, in this Agree configuration the NP can also be case-marked, since by assumption lexical verbs can assign inherent accusative to their NP (i.e. lexical) complements. It is hopefully clear that in the configuration in (19), which allows the semantic

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incorporation of the NP and thus, the formation of a complex predicate, the weak definite DP gets a *property interpretation*. The original point of the analysis is that the weak definite is syntactically a DP, but it is interpreted by NP-incorporation, yielding the property-reading. The configuration which allows interpretation by semantic-incorporation is created derivationally. While the configuration is LF-relevant, at PF the NP *should be read in its merge position* to allow for the D+NP order visible in languages like English, where D is a free standing morpheme, not a suffix. The DP in (19) is syntactically free to move to other positions after checking inherent case (see examples (16) and (17).

While coached in terms of "familiarity" and "event-kinds", this discussion may sound unfamiliar, it is easy to see that what is being checked in the Agree configuration in (19) is the s-selection feature of the verb, say [__[*u* αfam $_{NP}$] (instead of simply [___NP]. The feature (α fam) is gradable and evaluates the degree of semantic closeness between the V and the NP, ordering NPs from lexically selected ones in idioms, to prototypical ones and to merely compatible ones. Thus, unsurprisingly s-selection properties play a part in syntax too. In examples like (20), the definite objects simply expresses a property and have no quantificational feature, but they differ regarding their conceptual compatibility with the verb. The object in (20a) is lexically selected in an idiom which is opaque for most speakers, the weak definite in (20b) is part of a stereotypical event-kind, as described by Carlson above, the object in (20c) is compatible with the verb, but not predictable from the semantics of the verb, so (αfam) has a low value.

(20) a. a freca menta (lit. to rub mint.the fig. not to do anything)
b. a lua trenul. (to take the train)
c. a citi buzele. (to read lips)

The configuration in (19) is also likely to be useful in the compositional interpretation of idioms. As matter of fact, the analysis of idioms and idiom formation converges with the analysis of event-kinds since both focus on the V+NP structure.

Bruening (2010), who studied verbal idioms involving *give*- verbs, shows that verb-phrase idioms are *based on s-selection* and inside verb-phrase idioms (i.e. V+DO), selection is always for the noun heading the nominal phrase (V+N), while modifiers and determiners may vary. Adjectival modifiers are optional constituents so it is not unexpected that idiom-formation may disregard them. Determiners, however, raise a problem since they are obligatory constituents. Importantly, in idiom formation (indefinite) determiners are analyzed as predicative adjectives, i.e. at the point where the idiom is formed, the D position is empty, except for [*i*±definite] specification, which is an obligatory syntactic feature. If quantifiers occupy a lower than-D position, they too may be treated as optional modifiers of

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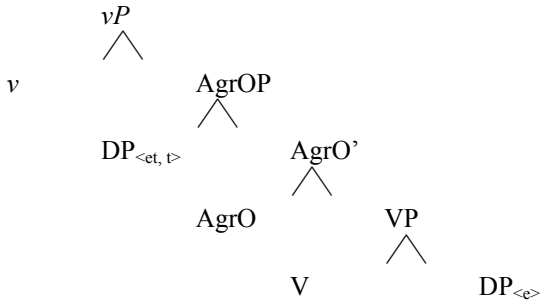
the head noun, so the head N is the only s- selected constituent. Such a proposal for analyzing (indefinite) quantifiers has been fully developed in Zamparelli (1995). The fact that quantifiers are treated as optional and variable is also apparent in Romanian idioms. For instance, the verb *face*, 'make, do' selects the N *bani* 'money', in the idiom *a face banii* (lit. make money, i.e. be worth). A wide range of quantificational adjective smay then enter the idiom, as apparent below.

(21) a. *a (nu) face banii* (to do money-the, 'to be worth the money (paid)'
b. a face toți banii (to do all money-the ' to be worth every penny')
c. a nu face mulți bani (not to do much money ' not to be worth much money')
d. a nu face doi bani (not do twopence, 'not to be worth twopence)

In sum, idiom formation also suggested an initial (non-referential), VP-kind combination which occurs inside the VP, while the referential contribution of Determiners is computed at a later stage, if at all. For the present analysis, what counts is that VP-idiom formation, which is a form of event-kind formation, is based on s-selection. Therefore, the analysis in (19) appears as a necessary step in the analysis of idioms.

The individual (referential reading). In the individual reading the article is interpreted as a strong quantifier. Therefore the quantificational maximality feature [i+Q] of the D-head is active. As is well known, the interpretation of quantifiers requires the formation of a quantifier-variable configuration, which is the effect of movement to a higher position. Movement is also forced by a type mismatch. The verb should combine with an <e>-type object, while a quantifier phrase is of type <et, t>. It follows that a strong (quantificationl) definite DP must move out of its merge position to resolve the type mismatch and create the quantifier-variable configuration. To do this, it is enough for the strong definite to move to a structural case-position, say AgrOP, as in (22) below.

(22)



Thus, as in Carlson's theory, strong definites are quantifiers whose maximality (existence and uniqueness of the referent) can be understood only with respect to some contextually given quantificational domain. Syntactically this amounts to movement out of the lexical domain for interaction with a functional projection

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(AgrOP), which signals (a step in) the construction of a proposition out of an eventuality. Quantificational objects are interpreted in positions of structural case.

It is now possible to formally distinguish between the two interpretations of the same definite DO in pairs like (23a) with a property reading, and (23b) with a referential reading.

(23) a. *A închis ochii ieri*
'He closed his eyes yesterday (fig. He died).
b. *A închis ochii să se apere de soare.*
'He closed his eyes to protect himself from the sun.

In principle, strong definites may be evaluated twice, and check both inherent case (inside the lexical VP) and structural case, in AgrOP on top of the lexical VP. To what extent the lexical step is always necessary is an important problem that requires a great deal of further examination. We leave this for further research.

5. CONCLUSIONS

1. The definite article in external possession constructions is a weak definite regarding some of the central identifying tests, such as: non-uniqueness, sloppy identity, narrow scope, number restrictions, etc.

2. Definite DP objects have strong and weak readings even with extensional verbs. Weak definites are interpreted as properties (or sets), strong definites refer to unique individuals. The syntax of strong and weak definites is homogeneous. They always merge as c-selected DPs.

3. The property reading obtains when the quantificationl feature of the definite is not active. As a result only the NP (a predicate) is semantically interpreted. This requires NP movement to a position where the NP is accessible to the lexical V, which semantically incorporates the NP, forming a complex predicate. Incorporation is a form of inherent case assignment, and amounts to checking the s-selection feature of the verb. Strong definites are quantificational; they leave the lexical (event) domain and are interpreted in the propositional domain. They check structural case. Strong definite may have to be evaluated twice, inside the event domain, for defining the event-kind, and then inside the propositional domain.

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POSESORII EXTERNI, DEFINITELE SLABE ŞI ATRIBUIREA CAZULUI ACUZATIV ÎN LIMBA ROMÂNĂ

Rezumat

În lucrarea de față am pornit de la un fapt semantic: grupurile nominale definite au două citiri principale, citirea referențială bine cunoscută (definitele tari) şi citirea de proprietate (definitele slabe). În prima parte, ilustrăm definitele slabe şi lectura de proprietate, descriind obiectele directe definite în construcția de dativ posesiv verbal, unde posesorul este extern grupului obiect posedat. În partea a doua, discutăm sintaxa şi interpretarea definitelor tari şi slabe, aratând că cele doua citiri se obțin în poziții diferite si presupun strategii specifice de verificare a cazului acuzativ.

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