ON BINOMINAL QUALITATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS IN OLD ROMANIAN

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Abstract: The paper identifies and analyzes major types of binominal qualitative constructions in Old Romanian. The corpus presented in the paper registers three types of double-definite binominals and two types of single-definite binominals. This paper has a two-fold aim: one is to provide clarifications on these constructions at a descriptive level; the other one is to provide support in favor of the "Double-DP / Single-DP hypothesis" (see Tănase-Dogaru 2012a, b, 2013a).

Keywords: binominal qualitatives, Old Romanian, double-definite binominals, single-definite qualitatives

1. Introduction

From a descriptive point of view, the examples featured in our corpus fall into two major categories: double-definites and single-definites, as illustrated in (1). Double definite constructions feature a double valuation of definiteness (Cornilescu and Nicolae 2015: 129). Unlike single definite construction or simple definite construction, where definiteness is expressed only once, in the case of double definite constructions, definiteness in expressed twice (Nicolae 2013: 309). Double definite constructions are illustrated in (1):

(1) a. băiatul cel mare (Nicolae 2013:309)
boy-DEF CEL big
'The big boy'

b. Eroul acesta (Cornilescu and Nicolae 2015: 129)
hero-DEF this-DEF
'This hero'

To this types of double-definite constructions, Tănase-Dogaru (2012a, b, 2013) added a type of binominal qualitative constructions, or N *of a(n)* N constructions, as they are known in the literature (2):

(2) prostul ăla de frate- tău
stupid-DEF that of brother-DEF-your
'that stupid of brother of yours'

Double-definite binominals featured in our Old Romanian corpus appear in three patterns: DEF N1 + PRON, DEF N1 + Proper Name, DEF N1 + DEF N2. Single-definite binominals surface in two patterns: DEF N1 + Bare Noun, DEM N2 + Bare Noun.

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(3) double-definites

(i) DEF N1 + PRON

păcătosul de el (Coresi, *Cazania II*, p. 448)
sinner-DEF of him
'the sinful man that he is'

(ii) DEF N1 + PN

păgânul de Maxentie (Antim Ivireanul, *Didahii*, p. 114)
heathen-DEF of Maxentie
'that heathen of a Maxentie'

(iii) DEF N1 + DEF N2

hitlenul de ghevolul (*Codicele Todorescu*, p. 229)
sly-DEF of devil-DEF
'that sly devil'

(4) single-definites

(i) DEF N1 + BN

amărîtulŭ de omŭ (Coresi, *Cazania II*, p. 27)
wretched-DEF of man
'the wretched of a man'

(ii) DEM N2 + BN

ceastă săracă de ţeară (DÎR – 1599, p. 112)
this poor of country
'this poor country'

What we call single-definite qualitatives have been the focus of much research in the 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 N1of N2 constructions (Zamparelli 1996), N/A de N constructions (Español-Echevarría 1998). The single-definite qualitative construction exists in many other languages such as Dutch, Spanish and French, among others:

(5) a. ce bijoux d'église romane (French) (Doetjes and Rooryck 2003: 278)
'this jewel of a Roman church'

b. een boom van een kerel (Dutch) (Foolen 2004:76, quoted in Vişan 2013: 207)
'a tree of a man'

c. el bueno de Ignacio (Spanish) (Suner 1990: 427, quoted in Vişan 2013: 207)
'the chicken of Juan'

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d. some chit of a girl (English) (Agatha Christie, *Five Little Pigs*, p. 18[1])
e. a high-fashion spook-house of a movie (English) (Roger Ebert, *The Neon Demon*[2])

Despite the attention granted in the literature to various types of single definite binominal qualitative constructions, there is also a second type of binominal qualitative, where definiteness is marked twice. Tănase-Dogaru (2012a, b, 2013) operated a distinction between single DP-qualitatives (3) and double-DP qualitatives (see 6), backed up by a number of syntactic tests, which are summarized in section 2.1. It is the aim of the present paper to show that the distinction operated for Modern Romanian between Double-DP qualitatives and Single-DP qualitatives (SDPQs) is supported by Old Romanian data.

The paper is organized as follows: section 2 summarizes the main findings of research related to binominal qualitatives; section 3 presents our Old Romanian corpus and the syntactic analysis of the data; section 4 represents the conclusions.

2. Binominal qualitatives in Modern Romance

2.1 Patterns

Modern Romanian features the following types of qualitative patterns (see Español-Echevarría 1996 for Spanish):

(6) (in)definiteness patterns

(i) DEF-DEF
otrava de nevastă- sa (Ileana Vulpescu, *Pe apa sâmbetei*, p. 387)
poison-DEF of wife-DEF-his
'that poison of a wife of his'

(ii) INDEF-INDEF
o scârbă de om (Vişan 2013: 207)
a jerk of man
'a jerk of a man'

(iii) DEM-PN
acest imbecil de X
this imbecile of X
'this imbecile of a(n) X'

(iv) DEM – INDEF

[1] Http://www.manybooks4u.net/book2/Five_Little_Pigs/index_2.html.
[2] Http://www.rogerebert.com/cannes/cannes-2016-graduation-the-neon-demon.

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acest mbecil de doctor
this imbecile of doctor
'this imbecile of a doctor'

(v) DEF – PRON
prostul de el
fool-DEF of him
'that fool'

For Spanish and other Romance languages there is an apparent ban against strong pronouns and typically focused DPS (Bartra and Villalba 2006, Villalba and Bartra-Kaufmann 2010)[3].

(7) *Hablé con el idiota de el.
talked with the idiot of him
'I talked with that idiot'

In Romanian (Old and Modern), binominal qualitative do allow strong pronouns (8). This serves to prove 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 (see Tănase-Dogaru 2012 a).

(8) Proasta de mine nu şi- a dat / mi- am dat
ool-DEF of me not herself has given / myself have given
seama că …
account that
'I'm such a fool that I haven't realized that…'

The next section discusses the distinction between Double-definite and Single-definite qualitatives and summarizes the syntactic tests proposed to differentiate between the two types of qualitative constructions.

2.2 DDPQs and SDPQs

Tănase-Dogaru (2012a,b, 2013) makes a distinction between Double-DP qualitative constructions (9) and Single-DP qualitative constructions (10):

(9) o minunăţie de om (Vişan 2013: 218)
a wonder of man
'a wonder of a man'

(10) a. prostul ăla de frate-tău
stupid-DEF that of brother-your
'that stupid of brother of yours'

[3] These linguists take this as evidence in favor of a predicate raising analysis by suggesting that the inverted predicate is interpreted as focus with respect to the topic DP.

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b. scârbiți de ciumele de voi[4]
sickened of pest-PL.DEF of you.PL
'sickened by the pests of you'

The distinction between Double-DP and Single-DP qualitative constructions is supported by the following data. First, N2 in DDPQs (10) denotes an individual, i.e. it has an <e>-type denotation, while N2 in SDPQs (9) denotes a predicate, i.e. it has an <e, t>-type denotation. Secondly, exclusively prenominal adjectives feature in DDPQs but are impossible in SDPQs (11-12):

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

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

Thirdly, SDPQs are part of the main assertion; they fall in the scope of main verb negation (13a), while the "double-DP" qualitative is an independent comment of the speaker (14b):

(13) a. N- am vorbit cu un prost de doctor.
not have talked with a stupid of doctor
'I haven't talked to any stupid doctor.'
b. N- am văzut-o pe frumusețea de soră-ta la petrecere.
not have seen her PE beauty-DEF of sister-DEF-your at party
'I haven't seen your beauty of a sister at the party'

(14) a. N- am vorbit cu vreun / niciun prost de doctor.
not-have 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
not-have seen her PE any beauty of sister.DEF-your
la petrecere.

[4] http://www.romaniatv.net/consiliera-unui-deputat-psd-catre-protestatari-scarbiti-de-ciumele-de-voi-v-as-teleporta-pe-toti-in-india_338999.html

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at party
'I haven't seen your beauty of a sister at the party'.

Fourth, with DDPQs, there is agreement in definiteness. If the lower term is a definite DP, the higher one must also be definite (15 a, 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 (16 a, b).

(15) a. prostul de doctorul ăla
stupid-DEF of doctor-DEF that
'the stupid of that doctor'
b. *un prost de doctorul ăla
a stupid of doctor-DEF that
'that stupid of a doctor'

(16) a. un prost de doctor
a stupid of doctor
'a stupid of a doctor'
b. prostul de doctor (anaphoric)
stupid-DEF of doctor
'that stupid of a doctor'

Schematically, the structures for DDPQs and SDPQs is given in (17):

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

This section has shown that there is sufficient evidence to operate a distinction between single definite qualitative constructions and double definite qualitative constructions. DDPQs may feature exclusively prenominal adjectives, have an e-type denotation for N2 and agree in definiteness.

Section 3 investigates the Old Romanian corpus with a view to showing that this analysis is supported by linguistic data from older stages of Romanian.

3. Old Romanian data

3.1 Corpus

A first observation related to the corpus is that both DDPQs and SDPQs are scarce in Old Romanian texts. A second observation is that they exclusively feature in original texts (to the exclusion of translations).

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3.1.1 Double-definites (DDPQs)

This section illustrates double-definite qualitative constructions in Old Romanian. As shown, there are three paterns for double-definite qualitative: DEF + PRON, DEF + Proper Name and DEF + DEF.

(18) DEF + PRON

a. O, **ticălosul de eu**, că m- am împuns
oh wicked-DEF of I, that myself have thrust
în umilenie! (Dosoftei, *Parimiile preste an*, p. 339)
in humility
'Oh, despicable me, for having indulged in humility!'

b. Iară eu, **amărâtul de mine**, ca un neascultătoriu stau
and I, poor-DEF of me, like a disobedient stand
înaintea ta gol şi ruşinat (*Evanghelie învăţătoare*, p. 28)
in front your naked and ashamed
'And I, poor me, like a disobedient man, stand in front of you, naked and ashamed'

c. şi mă satură, **flămândul de mine**, de dulce şi
and me feed, hungry-DEF of me, of sweet and
de bogată masa ta! (*Evanghelie învăţătoare*, p. 28)
rich meal-DEF yours
'And let the starving me have enough of your sweet and rich meal'

d. **păcătosul de el** (Coresi, *Cazania II*, p. 448)
sinner-DEF of him
'the sinful man that he is'

e. Nu aşa, **ticăloşii de noi**, nu aşa, că Dumnezeu nu
not thus, wicked-DEF of us, not thus, that God not
să înşală! (Antim Ivireanul, *Didahii*, p. 39)
himself cheat
'Not like that, the wicked people that we are, for God does not make mistakes!'

f. **prădatele** de ele (ele = **ţări**) (*Anonimul Brâncovenesc*, p. 280)
pillaged-DEF.PL of them (countries)
'those pillaged countries'

Most instances found in our corpus involve a strong pronoun N2, although the literature on binominals predicts the absence of strong pronoun N2s because, in a predicate raising framework, the inverted predicate is interpreted as focus with respect to the topic DP (see Bartra & Villalba (2006), Villalba & Bartra-Kaufmann (2010)). However, in the present framework, binominal qualitative constructions are analyzed as base-generated with the N1 de N2 order (see Tănase-Dogaru 2012a,b, 2013 and the analysis there).

Most N1s are pronominal adjectives (roughly meaning *poor*), which implies the presence of an empty head noun and suggests that the preposition is case-related (apud

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Cornilescu 2010). The role of *de* is, therefore, that of assigning case to the second nominal in the structure.

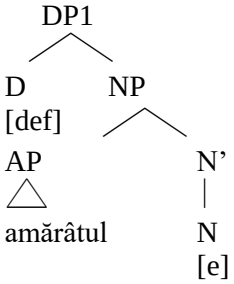
(19) a. bietul de tine (Modern Romanian)
poor-DEF of you.ACC
'poor you'
b. *bietul tine / tu
poor-DEF you.ACC / you.NOM
c. *bietul de tu
poor-DEF of you.NOM

In (19a), 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 (19b) and (19c). In (19b), 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. Example (19c) shows that a nominative pronoun cannot appear with the preposition *de*.

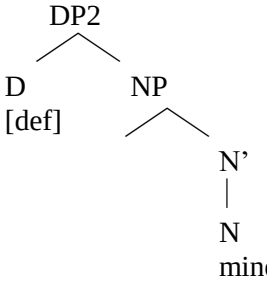
Surprisingly, our corpus registers one such N1+N2.Nom construction (see 17a); however, the rest of the examples involve N2.Acc.

Irrelevant details aside, the structure of DP1 would look like that in (20a), while the structure of DP2 would look like (20b):

(20) a.



b.



(21) DEF + PN
a. Depărtă-se departe tânărul fecior, ca şi

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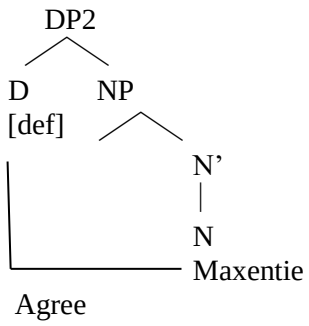
left himself far away young-DEF lad as too
bogatul de Lazăr (*Evanghelie învăţătoare*, p. 22)
rich-DEF of Lazăr
'The young lad had gone away, and so did that rich Lazăr'

b. atâta de tare s-au luptat cu **păgânul de Maxentie** (Antim Ivireanul, *Didahii*, p. 114)
so of hard REFL.3PL-have fought with heathen.DEF of Maxentie
'They fought very hard against Maxentie, the heathen'

c. că are frică mare și Băsărab de **acel lotru de Mahamet-beg** (*Scrisoarea lui Neacşu* - 1521, în DÎR, p. 95)
that has fear great and Băsărab of that thief of Mahamet-bey
'for Băsărab himself is very afraid of that thief of a Mahamet-bey

The second largest number of instances in our corpus involves a proper name N2. Since Proper names are inherently definite (see Longobardi 1994, Borer 2005 a.o.), the structure of DP2 is the one in (22).

(22)



The data in (22 a, b) are surprising: usually, the epithet-like N1 has negative connotations and often equals an insult (see Milner 1978 a.o.). Several linguists have insisted on the fact that only scalar nouns are felicitous as N1 in binominals (Matushansky 2002, Vişan 2013 a.o.). Although N1 in (22 b) is not a scalar noun, it may be seen as acquiring epithet-like features in a religious context

(23) DEF + DEF
izbăveşte de **hitlenul de ghevolul** (*Codicele Todorescu*, p. 229)
redeem of sly-DEF of devil.DEF
'redeem us from that sly devil'

The example in (23) is the only example recorded in our corpus where both N1 and N2 are inflected with the definite article.

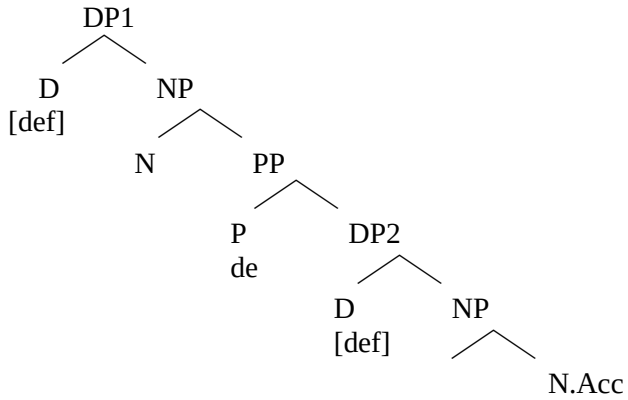
Modern Romanian excludes such examples; however, in when N1 bears a definite determiner, the unmodified N2 seems to be indefinite because the preposition *de* "incorporates" the definite article (24a). The article surfaces when N2 is modified (24b):

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

The structure of a Double-definite is shown in (25):

(25)



This section has investigated three patterns of Double-definite qualitative binominals in Old Romanian. The next section looks at Single-definite qualitative binominals.

3.1.2 Single-definites (SDPQs)

The present section looks at Single-definite qualitatives in Old Romanian and shows that there are two patterns that structure Single-definites: DEF + bare noun and DEM + Bare noun.

(26) DEF + BN
Jăluiaşte amu **amărîtulŭ de omŭ** (Coresi, *Cazania II*, p. 27)
grieves now poor-DEF of man
'the poor man is now aggrieved'

This pattern is less well represented in our Old Romanian corpus but it is typical of Modern Romanian and other Romance languages.

(27) DEM + BN
a. neştiind **turbaţii aceia de oameni** [...] cum că Dimitrie
not-knowing rabid-PL.DEF those of people how that Dimitrie
nu era corabie deşartă (Antim Ivireanul, *Didahii*, p. 181)

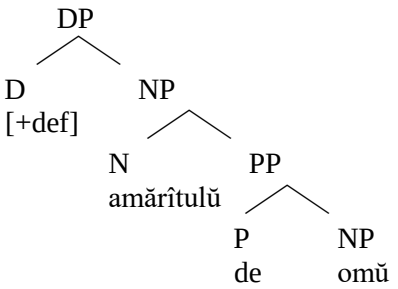
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not was ship empty
'Those rabid people did not know that Dimitrie was not an empty ship'

b. ci să se milostivească pre noi şi pre **ceastă săracă**
but SĂ himself take pity on us and on this poor
de ţeară oricum va putea (DÎR – 1599, p. 112)
of country anyhow will be able
'He should have mercy on us and on this poor country in any way he can do it'

The syntactic structure of single-definites consists of a single DP which dominates a split-NP structure (28):

(28)



Our corpus registers one construction of the type BN-DEF:

(29) O, **mişei de noi**, cumu ne ruşinăm noi 1000 de bărbaţi,
oh rascals of us, how ourselves shame we 1000 of men,
ceia ce eram în cetate, de o fată ne ruşinăm
those that were in city of a girl ourselves shame
noi acum! (*Codex Sturdzanus*)
we now
'Oh, we, the rascals, all 1000 of us who were in the city, how we are shamed now by a girl!'

Although definiteness agreement would predict that if the lower term is definite, the higher must also be definite, in (29) the lower term is definite but the higher is indefinite.

Section 3.1.2 concludes the discussion of the Old Romanian corpus featuring binominal qualitative constructions. Section 4 presents the major conclusions.

4. Conclusions

The paper has presented a corpus of Double-definite and Single-definite binominal qualitative constructions in Old Romanian. In so doing it has shown that the Double-Definite (DDPQ) versus Single-Definite (SDPQ) distinction in Modern Romanian binominal qualitative constructions is supported by Old Romanian data.

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Four patterns of Double-Definites have been identified and discussed: DEF + PRON, DEF + PN, DEF + DEF. Similarly, two types of Single-Definites have been identified: DEF + BN, DEM + BN. Further research aims at identifying more instances of the DEF + DEF patterns as well as more instances of the DEF + BN pattern (prevalent in Modern Romanian, but scarce in Old Romanian).

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