A FEW NOTES ON THE 'NEED' FIELD IN ROMANIAN

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Abstract: Isachenko (1974) proposed that in Russian, the absence of a (transitive) verb 'need' of the English type (cf *I need a book*) correlates with the absence of possessive 'have'. Following Isachenko's insight, Kayne (2007) further proposed that the English verb *need* is derived by incorporation of the noun *need* into *have.* This paper discusses the behavior of Romanian *a trebui*, which, unlike English *need*, is not transitive, although Romanian is otherwise a 'have' language, much like English. It will be argued that despite the differences between Romanian *a trebui* and English *need,* a modification of Kayne's (2007) incorporation proposal is also tenable for Romanian. It will be further shown that *a trebui* can also express deontic obligation and an analysis will be presented whereby deontic *a trebui* originates in an existential configuration. This analysis can arguably also account for three other types of related constructions expressing deontic modality in Romanian.

Key terms: possession, modality, incorporation, existential constructions

1. Introduction

In a typological investigation of 'have' and 'be' languages, Isachenko (1974) proposed that in Russian, a typical 'be' language, the absence of the (modal) verb 'need' correlates with the absence of the verb 'have' to express possession. That is, Russian lacks the counterpart of the English examples in (1) with a nominative subject, because the language also lacks the equivalent of (2):

(1) I need a book.
(2) I have a book.

This has been taken by Kayne (2007) to suggest (in the spirit of Hale and Keyser 1993) that the English verb *need* is actually derived by incorporation of the noun *need* into *have.*

The fact that a language lacks a (modal) verb 'need' because it lacks 'have' in possessive constructions should not, however, be taken to mean that if a language does exhibit 'have' it will necessarily exhibit the exact equivalent of 'need' in (1) above. This can be clearly seen in Romanian, a language which has the verb *avea* 'have' in possessive constructions (3):

(3) Eu am o carte.
I have a book
'I have a book.'

However, Romanian lacks the exact counterpart of (1). The closest equivalent of English *need* in Romanian is the verb *a trebui* 'to need, to be necessary', which has the property that, unlike English *need,* it takes a dative possessor/experiencer and a nominative DP which can only be 3rd person:

(4) Îmi trebuie o carte.
me.DAT needs a book
'I need a book.'

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(5) Mi- au trebuit două cărți.
me.DAT have.3rd PL needed two books
'I needed two books.'
(6) * Îmi vei trebui tu.
me.DAT will need you
'I need you.'
(7) *Le- am trebuit eu.
them.DAT have needed I
'They needed me.'[1]

In what follows it will be argued that despite the differences mentioned above between Romanian *a trebui* and English *need,* a modification of Kayne's (2007) proposal that *need* is derived by incorporation is also tenable for Romanian (section 2). In section 3 it will be shown that *a trebui* can also express deontic obligation and an analysis will be presented whereby deontic *a trebui* originates in an existential configuration. The analysis can arguably also account for three other types of related constructions expressing deontic modality in Romanian.

2. Necessity and *BE*

By having the noun *need* incorporate into *HAVE* to yield the verb *need*, what Kayne (2007) is saying is that at the core of (1) above lies a possessive structure. It is however widely assumed now (cf. Benveniste 1966, Szabolcsi 1983, Freeze 1992, Kayne 1993), that a possessive construction is actually derived from an existential configuration, as in (8) below, taken from Kayne (1993):

(8) … BE [$_{DP}$ Spec D/P$_e$ ° [DP$_{poss}$ [Agr° QP/NP]]]

Languages differ in the way in which the oblique case on the possessor is being licensed. In those languages in which SpecDP is not a position where oblique case can be assigned, the possessor is forced to move further up for case reasons. This movement is only possible if D/P (or K(ase)) incorporates into *BE*, because SpecDP is an A' position, and movement of the possessor to an A position would otherwise be illicit. The incorporation of D/P into *BE* yields the verb *have,* and the possessor surfaces with nominative case.

In other languages, SpecDP is an oblique case licensing position; further movement of the possessor is not required, incorporation into *BE* does not take place and the possessor surfaces with dative case.

I suggest that the second option above exemplifies the case of Romanian. More specifically, I propose that the underlying structure of (4) is like in (9), with a root **trebui* incorporating into *FI* 'be' (I leave aside the issue of where the root originates)[2]:

(9) … <u>FI + *trebui</u> [$_{DP}$ Spec D/P$_e$ ° [DP$_{poss}$ [Agr° QP/NP]]][3]
trebuie

[1] The behavior of *trebuie* in this construction recalls to a certain extent the behavior of certain quirky subject verbs in Icelandic and Spanish, which also exhibit person restrictions with the nominative theme. A closer investigation of this restriction with *trebuie* in Romanian goes beyond the scope of this paper.

[2] English *need* would then be derived by incorporation into BE of both D/P (Kase) and of the nominal/root *be*.

[3] Italian *bisognare* can also be used (when non modal) like Romanian *trebuie* with an oblique possessor (Andrea Cattaneo, personal communication):
(i) Mi bisogna una macchina.
The derivation in (9) could arguably account for the Italian case as well.

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Note, however, that if (9) is true, then the assumption is that SpecDP *is* a position in which oblique case on the possessor can be assigned in Romanian; it is then not clear why (3), re-written as (10) exhibiting "possessive" *avea* 'have' and a nominative subject should exist:

(10) Eu am o carte.
I have a book
'I have a book.'

Furthermore, (9) would not account for the existence of another way of expressing (non-modal) necessity in Romanian. Example (11) below, which is reminiscent of similar constructions in French and Italian, exhibits a nominative "possessor", the verb *a avea* and the noun *nevoie* 'need':

(11) Eu am nevoie de o carte.[4]
I have need of a book
'I need a book.'

A similar contrast is noted in the conclusion of Săvescu (2008) between sentences like (10), and (12) below, in which the dative argument is also analyzed as a Possessor originating in a configuration like the one in (8):

(12) Mi- e foame.
me.DAT is hunger
'I am hungry.'

Why should the same language have both (4) and (12) on the one hand, and (10) and (11) on the other?

Clearly, the notion of "possession" in (10) and (12) is of a different nature: one does not "possess" hunger in the same way in which one "possesses" a book, for instance. Similarly, while in (10) the book is already in my possession, the "possessor" in (4) does not yet own the book. What (4) merely says is that the I *am* merely *in need of* a book, or, rather, *there is a need for a book that I experience,* in the same way in which *I experience hunger* in (12*)*.

If the oblique argument is not a possessor but, rather, an experiencer, it could be the case that it originates in a different position than where the possessor in (10) does; the former would be a position in which dative case *can* be assigned, while the latter is not. This would explain why we have dative case and *fi* ('be) in (4) and (12) and nominative case and *avea* in (10). What still remains unexplained is why (11) should exist at all, given that (11) is actually identical in meaning with (4). While I do not have a worked out proposal, I tentatively suggest that the contrast between (11) and (4) may be tied to the fact that while (11) can take a (subjunctive) CP complement (13) , (4) cannot (14):

[4] Romanian also has the noun *trebuință,* which is almost synonymous with *nevoie,* but less widely used in (i) below:
(i) Am trebuinta de o carte.
'I need a book'
Throughout this paper I am assuming that the verb *a trebui* and the noun *trebuință* are derived from the same root *trebui.

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(13) Am nevoie ca tu să pleci imediat.
have.1st SG need that you SĂ leave immediately
'I need that you leave immediately.'
(14) *Îmi trebuie ca tu să pleci imediat.
me.DAT needs that you SĂ leave immediately
'I need that you leave immediately.'

This in turn may suggest that (11) is actually, like (15), with *de* being a prepositional complementizer (in the spirit of Kayne 1999) which introduces an infinitival clause with an unpronounced verb *AVEA* 'have'[5]:

(15) Eu am nevoie de *AVEA* o carte.

3. Modal necessity

The verb *trebuie* can also be used in Romanian to describe deontic obligation (necessity):

(16) Trebuie ca Ion să plece imediat.
it-is-necessary that Ion SĂ leave immediately
'Ion has to go/Ion needs to go right now.'

When used as a deontic modal, *trebuie* shares some characteristics with Italian *bisognare* (cf. Benincà and Poletto 1994), in that it can only be inflected for the third person singular and it can only take a CP complement. While in Italian the CP can be a subjunctive or an infinitival clause (17), the complement of *trebuie* in Romanian is either a supine or a subjunctive clause[6] (18):

(17) a. Bisogna partire subito.
it-is-necessary to leave immediately
b. Bisogna che Maria parta subito.
it-is-necessary that Maria leave-SUBJ immediately
(18) a. Trebuie plecat imediat.
it-is-necessary leave-SUP immediately
b. Trebuie ca Ion să plece imediat.
it-is-necessary that Ion SĂ leave-3rd SG SUBJ immediately

Unlike *bisognare*, however, which can only be used in the present, imperfect and future indicative, Romanian *trebuie* can be used in both perfective and imperfective tenses:

(19) a. Trebuie să plecăm[7].
it is necessary SĂ leave

[5] This conclusion is also independently arrived at by Cattaneo (2007) in connection to Italian sentences of the type: *Ho bisogno di una macchina* 'I need a car.'
[6] The impossibility of an infinitival clause after *trebuie* is probably due to the fact that present day Romanian has lost the use of the infinitive to a great extent, replacing it with either the subjunctive or the supine.
[7] The sentences in (18) differ from (17a) in that the complementizer *ca* is missing. In my/standard Romanian, this complementizer only appears in a subjunctive clause when the subject is overtly expressed and it precedes the verb; some dialects, however, allow *ca* irrespectively of whether the subject is expressed or not, and irrespective of whether the subject is preverbal or postverbal.

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b. Va trebui să plecăm.
it will be necessary SĂ leave
c. A trebuit să plecăm.
was necessary SĂ leave
d. Trebuind să plecăm, ….
being necessary SĂ leave

One characteristic that *trebuie* and *bisognare* share is that they do not make a subject position available. Benincà and Poletto (1994) note that when *bisognare* seems to be taking subjects, they are actually interpreted as topics or foci, being, in fact, arguments of the embedded clause.

(20) Mario bisogna che parta.
'As for Mario, it is necessary that he leaves.'

Similarly, in (21) below, the "apparent" subject of *trebuie* is a topic:

(21) Ion trebuie să plece.
'As for Ion, it is necessary that he leaves.'

Another (indirect) argument in favor of the fact that *John* is not an argument of *trebuie,* but that it originates in the embedded clause, has to do with the fact that *John* in (21) does not have to be the bearer of the obligation (though he could), that is, *John* does not control the subject of the subjunctive clause. For instance, in a scenario in which John is at the party and he is embarrassing the host because he is completely drunk and can hardly move, the host could be saying (21) when addressing John's wife; in this scenario, the wife is responsible for taking John home. In other words, what (21) would be saying is that *there is an obligation that John should leave the party, and his wife is the bearer of this obligation.*

The same line of reasoning is adopted by Bhat (1998) in his discussion of the English modal *have to* construction. Bhat argues that the underlying representation of (22) below is like in (23)[8]:

(22) John has to eat an apple.
(23) There is an obligation (John to eat an apple).

Bhat's analysis of (22) involves an underlying existential construction, inspired by Kayne's (1993) analysis of possessive and auxiliary *have*. He furthermore proposes that modality comes from a separate node, ModP, which is covert in English, and which is merged above the infinitival clause, like in (24) below:

(24) $John_i$… $\underline{BE + D/P_j}$ $[_{DP}$ t'_i t_j $[_{ModP}$ Mod $[_{VP}$ to $[_{VP}$ t_i eat an apple]]]]
has

I adopt from Bhat (1998) the idea that deontic modality of the type exemplified in (21) is also encoded in a separate note ModP, but I depart from him in that I take ModP to be directly selected by existential *FI* 'be'. I furthermore suggest that in (21) ModP is filled by a modal root **trebui*, which further incorporates into *FI* yielding *trebuie* (see also note 9 below).

[8] Cf. example (13) in Bhat (1998).

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4. Extensions

Related to (21) are two more periphrastic modal constructions in Romanian, both of which involve *BE* and an adjective (25) or a noun (26) followed by a subjunctive complement:

(25) Este necesar să plece Ion.
is necessary SĂ leave Ion
'It is necessary that Ion leave.'
(26) Este nevoie să plece Ion.
is need SĂ plece Ion
'It is necessary that Ion leave.'

I propose that both (21), exhibiting the verb *trebuie* and (25) and (26) receive the same underlying representation, with the verb *FI* selecting a Mod^0 head. Unlike in English, where Mod^0 is silent in the modal *have to* construction, in Romanian Mod^0 can be filled by the modal adjective *necesar*, the noun *nevoie* or a modal root (**trebui*), which undergoes incorporation into *BE*, like in the (simplified) representation below:

(27) a. FI $[_{ModP}$ necesar $[_{CP}$ să plece Ion]]
b. FI $[_{ModP}$ nevoie $[_{CP}$ să plece Ion]]
c. FI + *trebui$_i$ $[_{ModP}$ t_i $[_{CP}$ să plece Ion]][9]
trebuie

Unlike in (24), the representation in (27) does not have a subject position available for the matrix: *Ion* receives nominative case within the finite subjunctive, and if *Ion* undergoes raising, it ends up in a topic position, like in (21), or like in the marginal (28) below (with *Ion* to the left of *a fi necesar* and *a fi nevoie):*

(28) a. ?Ion este necesar să plece.
'As to Ion, it is necessary that he leave.'
b. ?Ion e nevoie sa plece .
'As to Ion it is necessary that he leave.'

The representation in (27) thus offers a unified analysis of three types of constructions involving deontic necessity/obligation in Romanian, which have different surface structure realizations. The intuition has been that at the core of any deontic obligation lies an existential construction.

[9] By having the root **trebui* incorporate into *fi* in (27c), we treat the verb *trebui* uniformly both in the modal, and in the non-modal construction, which is a desirable result (much like in Kayne's (2007) proposal for the verb *need* in English, modulo the fact that Kayne (2007) has modal *need* incorporate into auxiliary-like possessive *have)*. However, in (27c), I have assumed that Mod is filled by the root, which taken literally could mean that **trebui* is a "modal" root. But this would make the parallelism with (9) weaker, because it is unlikely that two roots, which are spelled out the same and undergo the same type of incorporation (into *fi)* are of different types, given that no deontic modality is apparent in (9) (the same kind of problem arises, I believe, for Kayne's proposal as well, although Kayne 2007 does not explicitly "unpack" modality). One way to circumvent this issue would be to say that **trebui* in (27c) originates lower, and it adjoins to Mod, then the complex head Mod + **trebui* incorporates into *fi*.

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I furthermore suggest that the same intuition could perhaps help us account for the existence of yet another construction in Romanian, which involves the verb *fi* and a supine clause:

(29) E de spălat geamuri.
is of wash-SUP windows
'It is necessary that windows be washed.'

The sentence in (29) needs to be kept distinct from (30) below, in which the verb *fi* agrees with the object of the infinitive:

(30) Sunt de spălat geamuri.
are of wash-SUP windows
'There are windows to be washed.'

Moreover, in (30), but not in (29), the object of the supine can undergo raising to the matrix clause:

(31) (Geamuri$_i$) sunt (geamuri$_i$) de spălat t$_i$.[10]
(32) *(Geamuri$_i$) e (geamuri$_i$) de spălat t$_i$.

While (30) is interesting in itself, I will not attempt to analyze it here. I focus instead on (29), which clearly and unambiguously encodes deontic modality but has no surface realization of it. I propose that the same underlying representation that has been suggested for (21), (22) and (24) lies at the core of (29) as well, the only difference being that Mod^0 is silent in this case. In other words, I suggest that (29) is like (33) below, with a silent *NECESAR*:

(33) Este NECESAR de spălat geamuri.[11]

5. Concluding remarks

The analysis provided in this paper for four types of constructions denoting obligation or necessity in Romanian, which differ in their surface realization, was based on the intuition (shared by Bhat 1998) that at the core of deontic modality lies an existential structure.

We have also seen that the Romanian verb *a trebui,* expressing obligation, is also used to express the equivalent of English *need* in *John needs a book.* Following Kayne's (2007) suggestion that English (modal or non-modal) *need* is derived through incorporation of the

[10] Example (29) is probably similar to the French *Ce devoir est à faire.*
[11] The equivalent of (31) with overt *necesar* is impossible in Romanian:
(i) *Este necesar de spălat geamuri.
Overt *necesar* is however possible if followed by a subjunctive complement:
(ii) Este necesar să fie spălate geamurile.
Is necessary SĂ be washed pl windows-PL
But silent *NECESAR* is not:
(iii) *Este să fie spălate geamurile.
At the moment I do not have an account for these facts; I can only tentatively suggest that a promising line of investigation is a closer look at the behavior of supine clauses. This may also offer a better understanding of the contrast between (29) and (30).

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nominal *need* into *have*, I have suggested that *trebui* is instead the result of the incorporation of a root **trebui* into the verb *fi* 'be'. Assuming that Kayne (1993) was correct in proposing that *have* is derived through the incorporation of a functional element (D/P, or probably K(ase)) into *BE,* the analysis provided here can also capture the fact that Romanian has dative case on the experiencer/possessor, whereas English has nominative case.

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