ON THE INTERPRETATION OF DIFFERENTIALLY MARKED VS. UNMARKED DIRECT OBJECTS IN ROMANIAN – WITH AN EMPHASIS ON ROMANCE AND GERMANIC LANGUAGES

ALINA MIHAELA TIGĂU
Universitatea din Bucureşti

1. Delimiting our object of study

We consider the Differential Object Marking parameter (DOM) in terms of the consequences it has on the interpretation of those direct object DPs to which it applies. DOM represents a mechanism by means of which those direct objects that are considered prominent[1] are singled out. It must be said that DOM is traditionally considered to consist in PE-marking. We have, however, tentatively included CD and CLLD as strategies of DOM since, as we will see, these mechanisms may also be said to mark prominence (more specifically *specificity*). Thus, we viewed DOM as an umbrella term including three marking strategies for direct objects: PE marking, CD and CLLD.

If we consider the notion of *prominence* in the way in which it has been related to DOM, we have to mention ***The Ambiguity Thesis*** (supported by linguists such as Moravcsik (1978), Croft (1988), Bossong (1985), or Aissen (2003)) and ***The Transitivity Thesis*** also known as the indexing or the coding approach (and which is supported by Hopper & Thompson (1980) or Naess (2004, 2007) a.o.) The Ambiguity Thesis focuses on the properties of (D)irect (O)bjectss compared to those of the subjects. It basically proposes that languages which do not formally distinguish between the subject and the direct object develop extra markers for objects if they are too similar to typical subjects.

The Transitivity Thesis assumes that a DO is overtly marked if it is a 'good' argument in a transitive sentence which represents a 'salient event'. This approach comes in different versions: Naess (2004), who assumes that *affectedness* is the relevant notion for marking a referent more susceptible for marking would be one of them.

Another version pertains to Dalrymple & Nikolaeva (2011) – who take information structure as the underlying factor and assume that topicality is the relevant parameter which controls DOM. We must also mention the fact that we limited our research to indefinite direct objects i.e., DPs headed by 'weak'[2] determiners 'un/o (a)', 'mulţi (many)', 'câţiva/câteva (some)', and numerals such as 'doi (two)'.

[1] Marked direct objects are prominent if they are marked for [+ animacy] and [+ definiteness] (Aissen (2003))

[2] Following Milsark (1974).

BDD-V906 © 2012 Editura Universității din București
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 23:54:01 UTC)

Finally, we compared the behavior and interpretation of both unmarked and PE marked + CD-ed direct objects in Romanian (a DOM language) with their counterparts in non-DOM languages (German, Dutch, English and Hungarian[1]). One of the differences that we captured at the level of interpretation and that these DPs acquire with respect to the phenomenon of *scope* led us to propose a parametrization between non-DOM and DOM languages at the level of the direct object.

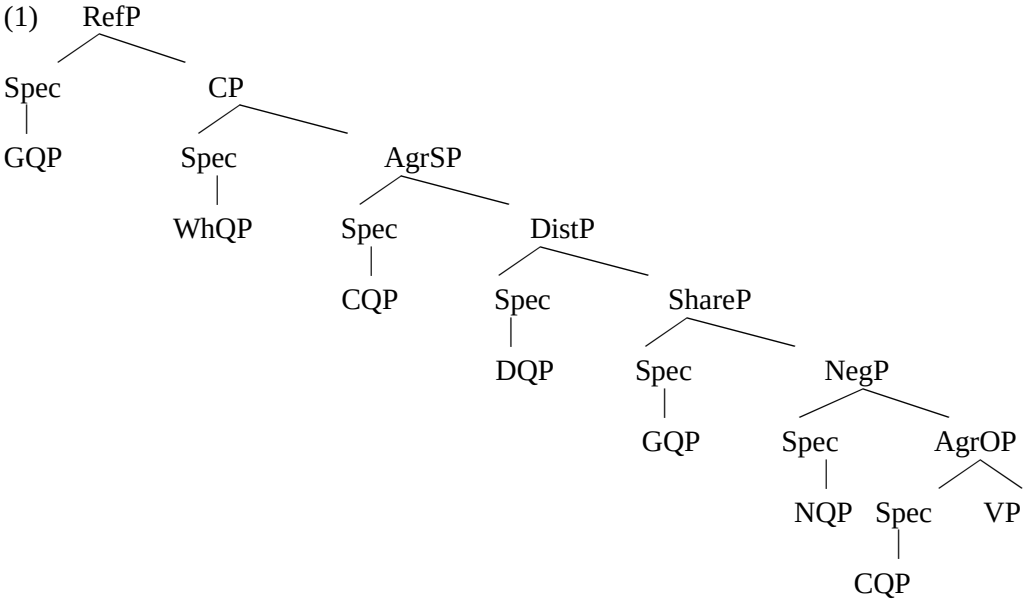
2. Scope Data

2.1. *Beghelli & Stowell (1996)*

As known from Beghelli & Stowell (1996), different quantifiers scope differently, function of their lexical nature. Thus, indefinite DPs headed by 'un/o (a)', 'mulţi (many)', 'câţiva/câteva (some)', and numerals such as 'doi (two)' are shown to have both a capacity for wide scope and for narrow scope. This is why Beghelli & Stowell (1996)[2] assign these DPs (which they label 'Group Quantifier Phrases') two positions: a high RefP position situated above CP (where they are interpreted with the widest scope) and a lower position, ShareP where they may acquire narrow scope.

On the other hand, Distributive-Universal QPs headed by 'every', 'each' occupy the specifier of the Distributive-Universal category DistP.

(1)



When a DQP and a GQP co-occur in the same sentence, two readings may obtain: if the GQP occupies SpecShareP it will acquire a narrow scope interpretation because this position is in the scope of the DQP occupying SpecDistP. On the other hand, if the GQP fills

[1] The data also hold for Hungarian, a fact which points that the parametric difference between DOM vs. non-DOM languages does not necessarily correspond to the dichotomy Romance vs. Germanic langauges.

[2] The interpretation that Beghelli & Stowell (1996) propose is a strictly syntactic configurational one: a GQP fills either the RefP position and hence acquire wide scope, or the ShareP position and acquire a narrow scope.

BDD-V906 © 2012 Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 23:54:01 UTC)

SpecRefP, it will outscope the DQP in the SpecDistP. This is, indeed, what happens in example (2) below where the indefinite ‘a book’ is ambiguous between a wide scope and a narrow scope interpretation:

(2) Every student in this class read a book on linguistics.

Example (2) above may either read as ‘every student is such that he/she read a (possibly) different book on linguistics’ or as ‘every student is such that he/she read the same book on linguistics’. The former reading corresponds to a narrow scope interpretation of the indefinite ‘a book’ which occupies SpecShareP (which is lower than and under the scope of SpecDistP), whereas the second reading corresponds to the wide scope interpretation of the same indefinite which now fills SpecRefP, outscoping the subject QP ‘every student’ in SpecDistP.

The analysis proposed by Beghelli & Stowell (1996) could handle Romanian unmarked direct objects (which are not PE marked and CD-ed) which behave in a similar way to the English ones:

(3) *Toţi studenţii* de la engleză au citit *o carte* de lingvistică.
All student.the from English have read a book of linguistics.
‘All the students learning English have read a book on linguistics.’

The indefinite ‘o carte’ may either acquire a narrow scope reading according to which ‘every student read a (possibly) different book on linguistics’, or a wide scope interpretation according to which ‘there is a certain book on linguistics such that all the students read.’

2.2. *Configuration Overrides Lexical Factors*

Languages such as German, Hungarian, Dutch, or (to a lesser extent) English possess a way to override these lexical factors captured by Beghelli & Stowell (1996) and to disambiguate between the two possible readings that indefinite DPs may acquire. More precisely, in these languages, the scope of an indefinite direct object DPs is largely determined by word order and movement: out of two potential scoping DPs, the leftmost one outscopes the other. This is apparent in the examples below:

(4) a. *Sok* ember *mindenkit* felhívott.
many man everyone.ACC up-called
‘Many men phone everyone’
b. *Mindenkit sok* ember felhívott.
everyone.ACC many man up-called
‘Many men phone everyone’
Hungarian (cf. Szabolcsi (1996))

As pointed out by Szabolcsi (1996), in example (4a) the leftmost quantifier ‘sok’ takes scope over the other quantifier in the sentence ‘mindenkit’. If the order of the two QPs is reversed scope relations are also reversed as (4b) shows.

(5) M*indestens ein Student* hat *jeden Roman* gelesen. ***German*** (Krifka (1998))
At.least one student has every novel read
‘At least one student read every novel.’

BDD-V906 © 2012 Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 23:54:01 UTC)

The leftmost DP ‘mindestens ein Student’ takes scope over the QP ‘jeden Roman’ in example (5) below borrowed from Krifka (1998)

(6) *Een kabouter* heft *iedere appel* opgegeten.
‘A dwarf has eaten each apple’ ***Dutch*** (cf. Philip (2005))

The indefinite ‘een kabouter’ takes scope over the QP ‘iedere appel’ as it is situated to the left of the universal QP**.**

2.3. ***Non-configurational Scope in Romanian***

Unlike the ‘configurational’ languages depicted above, Romanian does not rely on word order to differentiate between the wide scope and the narrow scope readings of indefinite DPs. Thus, even if we move an indefinite DP out of VP and to the left of another operator we will still obtain both a narrow scope interpretation and a wide scope one for this DP. Example (7) illustrates this:

(7) a. Două cărţi de lingvistică a citit fiecare student al acestei facultăţi.
two books of linguistics has read every student of this faculty.
‘Every student of this faculty read two books on linguistics.’
b. Acestea sunt ‘Barriers’ şi ‘The Minimalist Program’.
These are ‘Barriers’ and ‘The Minimalist Program’.
c. Nu se ştie, însă care.
not refl. knows however which
‘One does not know which books on linguistics they read.’

The indefinite ‘două cărţi’ may acquire a narrow scope reading according to which ‘each student read a (possibly) different set of (two) books’ (this reading is actualized by example (7c)) as well as a wide scope one which reads as ‘there is a set of two books such that every student has read’ (this reading is forced on (7a) by (7b)).

Therefore, movement of the indefinite DP to the left of the universal-distributive QP, does not trigger the wide scope reading of this DP. The indefinite DP remains ambiguous between a wide scope reading and a narrow scope one in all the possible word orders: SVO, VSO, VOS, OVS, OSV, and SOV. This is in line with the lexical factors accounted for by Beghelli & Stowell (1996).

Nevertheless, we noticed a difference in behavior between unmarked direct objects (which go by the findings of Beghelli & Stowell (1996)) on the one hand and PE marked + CD-ed direct objects on the other: marked DPs seem to favor a wide scope reading irrespective of the position they occupy in the sentence. Moreover, marked *inanimate* indefinites behave differently from their *animate* counterparts in that the former only acquire a wide scope reading unlike the latter where the narrow scope reading remains an option (even though the preferred one is the wide scope interpretation).

Let us first consider the case of inanimate marked indefinites.

BDD-V906 © 2012 Editura Universității din București
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 23:54:01 UTC)

2.3.1. *Inanimate marked indefinite direct objects*[1]

Inanimate indefinite direct objects may only be marked when left dislocated: in this case they are resumed by clitic. PE never marks inanimate indefinites nor are these DPs clitic doubled when occurring to the right of the verb. The clitic left dislocated inanimate indefinite differs in interpretation from its unmarked counterpart.

(8) a. *Două piese* de-ale lui Shakespeare a citit fiecare student
two plays by Shakespeare has read every student
pentru cursul de literatură.
for course.the of literature
'Every student read two plays of Shakespeare for the literature course.'

b. *Două piese* de-ale lui Shakespeare *le-* a citit fiecare student
two plays by Shakespeare them.cl has read every student
pentru cursul de literatură.
for course.the of literature
'Every student read the same two plays by Shakespeare for the literature course.'

The unmarked indefinite object 'două piese' in example (8a) is ambiguous between a narrow scope reading according to which 'each student read two (possibly) different plays by Shakespeare' and a wide scope reading according to which 'all the students read the same two plays by Shakespeare for the literature course'. On the other hand, the same indefinite only acquires a wide scope reading if it is resumed by the clitic pronoun: example (8b) can only refer to two specific plays by Shakespeare which all the students read. The clitic pronoun actualizes only the wide scope interpretation of the inanimate indefinite. These data are reinforced by the test of the distributive 'cât/ câte' which only allows a narrow scope reading (cf. Farkas (2002 c))

(9) a. Mulţi studenţi au vorbit cu *un profesor.*
many students have talked with a teacher.
'Many students talked to a teacher'

b. Mulţi studenţi au vorbit cu câte *un profesor.*
many students have talked with CÂTE a teacher.
'Many students talked to a teacher each'

In example (9a), the indefinite object 'un profesor' is ambiguous between a narrow scope reading and a wide scope one relative to the universal 'fiecare student'. On the other hand, 'câte un profesor' requires a co-varying interpretation i.e., the indefinite varies with the universal QP (it has narrow scope).

Going back to example (8) let us see what happens if we add the distributive 'câte' to the indefinite DP:

(10) a. C*âte două piese* de Shakespeare a citit fiecare student
CÂTE two plays by Shakespeare has read every student

[1] Inanimate indefinite direct objects may only be marked when left dislocated: in this case they are resumed by clitic. PE never marks inanimate indefinites nor are these DPs clitic doubled when occurring to the right of the verb.

BDD-V906 © 2012 Editura Universității din București
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 23:54:01 UTC)

pentru cursul de literatură.
for course.the of literature
'Every student read two plays of Shakespeare for the literature course.'

b. **Câte două piese* de Shakespeare *le-* a citit fiecare student
CÂTE two plays by Shakespeare them.cl has read every student
pentru cursul de literatură.
for course.the of literature
'Every student read the same two plays by Shakespeare for the literature course.'

The distributive actualizes the narrow scope reading on the indefinite in sentences (10a) and (10b). The result is grammatical only in the case of (10a) wherein the direct object 'câte două piese' can only acquire a narrow scope reading according to which 'every student read two (possibly) different plays by Shakespeare' – the indefinite co-varies with the universal QP 'fiecare student'. Example (10b) on the other hand is ungrammatical. This is due to the fact that the left dislocated DP 'câte două piese' has wide scope and cannot acquire a narrow scope reading which is forced upon it by the distributive 'câte' hence the ungrammaticality of the sentence.

Thus, ***inanimate*** indefinites acquire an unambiguous wide scope reading when they are left dislocated and resumed by the clitic. Unlike configurational languages which resort to movement and word order in order to ensure the wide scope interpretation of an indefinite object, Romanian relies on the internal properties of these DPs for the same end: clitic left dislocated inanimate direct objects only acquire a wide scope interpretation.

2.3.2. *Animate marked indefinite direct objects*

Animate direct objects which are PE marked and clitic doubled seem to behave in a similar way to their inanimate counterparts. Consider the examples below where these DPs acquire a wide scope reading:

(11) a. *Pe un zmeu, l-* a înfruntat *fiecare dintre cei trei copii* ai
PE an ogre him.cl. has faced each of the three sons of
împăratului, dar numai mezinul a reuşit să-l învingă.[1]
emperor.the but only the youngest has managed SĂ him.cl defeat.
'Each of the three sons of the emperor faced an ogre but only the youngest one managed to defeat him.'

b. *Pe câţiva moguli* români *îi* vânează *toate femeile*.[2]
PE some moguls Romanian them.cl hunt all women.
'All women are hunting for some Romanian moguls.'

[1] 90.7% of the respondents argued that the clitic doubled and PE marked indefinite 'pe un zmeu' may only acquire a wide scope reading according to which all the king's sons fought against the same ogre. Only 4.7% of the respondents claimed that the indefinite object may acquire a narrow scope interpretation only and 2.3% accepted both readings for the DP in question.

[2] Most of the respondents agreed on the wide scope interpretation of the clitic doubled and PE marked indefinite 'pe câţiva moguli' and only 9.3% favoured a narrow scope interpretation for the object DP. Finally, 7.0% of the respondents accepted both a wide scope reading and a narrow scope one.

BDD-V906 © 2012 Editura Universității din București
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 23:54:01 UTC)

Nevertheless, PE marking+CD does not necessarily ensure a wide scope reading on the animate indefinite. Consider (12) where the indefinite DP strongly favors a narrow scope reading even if it has been PE marked and clitic doubled.

(12) a. *Pe un copil* care nu înţelege în clasă *îl* ajută *orice părinte*
PE a child who not understands in class him.cl help any parent
grijuliu.[1]
attentive
'A thoughtful parent will always help a child when he does not understand the lesson taught in the classroom'

b. *Orice părinte* grijuliu *îl* ajută p*e un copil* care nu înţelege
any parent attentive him.cl help PE a child who not understands
în clasă.
in class.
'A thoughtful parent will always help a child when he does not understand the lesson taught in the classroom'

The indefinite example (12a) reads as: every parent helps a different child (their own). The same reading obtains if we reverse the word order between the subject QP and the object DP as in (12b). The indefinite in example (13) below favors a wide scope reading but the narrow scope interpretation remains available as pointed out by our respondents:

(13) Când se va ridica cortina *o* vor putea admira *toţi spectatorii pe o*
When refl. will raise curtain.the her.cl. will can admire all spectators PE a
celebră *interpretă* a muzicii româneşti.[2]
famous singer of Romanian music.
'When the curtains go up, all the spectators will admire a famous Romanian singer.'

Most of our respondents agreed that the indefinite 'pe o interpretă' acquires a wide scope reading in example (13) above even if the DP appears to the left of the subject QP 'toţi spectatorii '. However, some of them stated that a narrow scope reading on the indefinite is also available.

Thus, PE marked + CD-ed [+ animate] direct objects favour a wide scope reading irrespective of the position they occupy in the sentence. The narrow scope reading remains, however, available. The fact that PE marked and CD-ed indefinite objects do not always acquire a wide scope reading (although they favor such as reading) prompted us to inquire into the exact contribution of this marking mechanism (i.e., PE marking+CD).

By analyzing all the possible word orders containing PE marked +CD-ed animate direct objects, we discovered that the semantic import of DOM revolves around the notion of ***specificity*** rather than triggering a wide scope reading on the DPs it marks: more precisely,

[1] Most of the speakers i.e., 74.4% agreed that the clitic doubled and PE marked indefinite 'pe un elev' may only acquire a narrow scope reading. However, 9.3% of the respondents pointed to a wide scope interpretation for the same DP, while 7.0% accepted both readings.

[2] Most of the respondents (93.0%) argued that the clitic doubled and PE marked indefinite 'pe o celebră interpretă' may only acquire a wide scope reading according to which there is one famous singer such that all spectators will admire. 4.7% of the respondents accepted both a wide scope reading and a narrow scope one on the indefinite object.

BDD-V906 © 2012 Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 23:54:01 UTC)

marked direct objects are specific in the sense of Enç (1991) i.e., they function as covert partitives, or they are *epistemically specific* in the sense of Farkas (1995).

In order to make sure that PE marking + CD is not a scope marking mechanism, we also considered structures where there is no operator such that the clitic doubled and PE marked indefinite could interfere with.

Specificity in the presence of another operator:

The examples in (14) illustrate the '***covert partitivity'*** interpretation on marked direct objects:

(14) a. La serbarea din vara asta *fiecare profesor i-* a lăudat
at festivity from summer this every teacher them.cl has praised
pe mulţi elevi.
PE many pupils.
'At this summer's festivity every teacher praised many pupils.'

b. La serbarea din vara asta *fiecare profesor* a lăudat *mulţi elevi*.
at festivity from summer this every teacher has praised many pupils.

Thus, example (14a) is a suitable continuation for the context in (15) below, whereas (14b) is not:

(15) When the school year ends every summer our school principal gives prizes to the most diligent pupils who obtained the best marks. This year fifty pupils received such prizes.

Example (14a) states that the pupils that were congratulated by their teachers necessarily belong to the range of fifty pupils mentioned in the context (15) as opposed to (14b). The same holds for (16) below: in the case of variant (16a) we may speak of an existent range of acquaintances (which vary function of the minister in question) out of which each minister helped a subset quantified as 'many'. The presence of a range is no longer felt in (16b).

(16) a. *Fiecare candidat* la alegeri *i-* a favorizat *pe mulţi*
every candidate at elections them.cl. has favoured PE many
cunoscuţi atunci când a ajuns ministru.
acquaintances when has become minister.
'Every candidate in the elections favoured many acquaintances when they became ministers.'

b. *Fiecare candidat* la alegeri a favorizat *mulţi cunoscuţi* atunci
every candidate at elections has favoured many acquaintances
când a ajuns ministru.
when has become minister.
'Every candidate in the elections favoured many acquaintances when they became ministers.'

Specificity in the absence of another operator

Marked indefinites remain specific in the absence of another operator. Consider example (19) below where the direct object is epistemically specific: the subject 'Mihai' knows who the children he has helped are.

BDD-V906 © 2012 Editura Universității din București
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 23:54:01 UTC)

(17) Mihai *i-* a ajutat la teme *pe câţiva* *copii* care
Mihai them.cl has helped at homework PE some children who
nu înţeleseseră lecţia în clasă.
not had understood lesson.the in class.
'Mihai helped some children who had not understood the lesson in class with their homework'.

Notice also that marked DPs retain their specific interpretation irrespective of the position in the sentence. Thus, in example (18a) above, the indefinite 'pe mulţi cunoscuţi' is specific even if it occupied a VP internal position.

We have thus differentiated between those cases where the PE marked +CD-ed indefinite appears in the presence of an operator (such as the universal QP 'every') and cases where it was the only element with a scoping potential in the sentence (example (19)). In both types of cases, the indefinite retained its specificity ('covert partitivity' or '***epistemic specificity'***). In the former type of situations, the indefinite could also become scopally specific (in that it could acquire a wide scope reading relative to the subject QP) and it seemed to actually favour such an interpretation; nevertheless the narrow scope interpretation remained an option in most cases and the indefinite DP could co-vary with the subject QP and be specific in the same time.

3. The Anaphoric Nature of CD and CLLD[1]

The *specificity* reading is in line with the anaphoric nature of CD & CLLD discussed for Catalan by Lopez (2009) and which also holds for Romanian data.Consider example (18) below where the anaphor represents a subset of the antecedent i.e., the tables are included in the bigger set of furniture.

(18) Context: What did you do with the furniture?
Les taules les hi vaig porar al matí però les cadires les
The tables them.cl cl.Loc Past.I bring in-the morning but the chairs, them.cl
hi vaig portar al vespre.
cl.loc past.I leave in-the evening
'The tables I brought in the morning, but the chairs I brought in the evening.'

The same can be maintained about example 19 where the dislocated DP 'les potes' is part of the whole 'table' (the part/whole relationship):

(19) Context: What shall we do with the table? It is too big!
Doncs mira, *les potes, les* doblegues aixis.
Well look the legs them.cl fold thusly
La taula, la pots desmuntar.
The table it.cl can.you dismount
'Look, you can fold the legs like this. You can take the board off.'
(cf. Lopez (2009))

[1] See Lopez (2009) for Catalan.

BDD-V906 © 2012 Editura Universității din București
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 23:54:01 UTC)

Romanian marked DPs behave similarly. Thus, the clitic doubled/ resumed object DP in the two constructions below refers to a discourse antecedent which may be explicitly provided by the context or not. In the latter case the antecedent is presupposed. Consider 20 below:

(20) a. *Pe băiatul acesta îl* cunosc: am fost colegi de şcoală.
PE boy.the this him.cl know.I: have.we been colleagues of school.
'I know this boy: we were colleagues in the same school.'
b. *Pe ceilalţi*, însă, nu *i-* am văzut niciodată.
PE others, however, not them.cl have.I seen never.
'I have never seen the others though.'

Example (20a) could be felicitously continued by (20b) which implies that the boy in question belongs to a group of other people with whom I get acquainted. Furthermore, the CLLD-ed DP 'pe ceilalţi' is also anaphoric and should be understood as part of a bigger set (composed of the people I do not know and of the boy whom I have recognized).

Left dislocated DPs may function as supersets for their antecedents:

(21) Context: Who will repair the chairs?
Mobila nu *o* vom mai repara, este prea veche.
Furniture not it.cl will.we more repair is too old.
'As for the furniture, we will no longer repair it because it is too old.'

(22) Context: There are some students in our class who need to receive some marks
Profesorul *i-* a ascultat *pe trei studenţi* astăzi.
Teacher.the them.cl has listened PE three students today.
'The teacher examined three of the students today'

In example (22), the set comprised of the three students is understood as a subset of the whole group of students in the class.

4. Conclusion

Marked direct objects in CD or CLLD structures are understood as anaphoric, being related to an antecedent which may be either explicitly expressed or presupposed. The anaphoric characteristic of CD and CLLD is in line with the covert partitive reading that we identified for PE marked and clitic doubled (or resumed) direct objects. The presence of the clitic pronoun which acts as a restrictor[1] on the discourse domain of the DP it doubles/resumes ensures the existence of this antecedent. (even if the antecedent is not overtly expressed, the clitic triggers the presupposition of its existence).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Avram, Larisa., Martine Coene, 2009, "Null objects and accusative clitics in Romanian", *Bucharest Working Papers in Linguistics*, XI, 1, p. 233-252.

[1] The clitic pronoun acts as a restrictor on the domain variable of its DP double along the lines of von Fintel (1994) (cf. Tigău (to appear)).

BDD-V906 © 2012 Editura Universității din București
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 23:54:01 UTC)

Beghelli, Filippo, Tim Stowell, 1996, “Distributivity and Negation: The Syntax of Each and Every”, in: A. Szabolcsi (ed.), *Ways of Scope Taking*, Dordrecht, Kluwer, 71-107.
Cornilescu, Alexandra, 2006, “On Clitic Doubling and Parasitic Gaps in Romanian”, *Revue roumaine de linguistique*, LI, 1, p. 23-42.
Cornilescu, Alexandra, 2002, “At the Romanian Left Periphery”, *Bucharest Working Papers in Linguistics*, 4, p. 88-106.
Cornilescu, Alexandra, 2001, “On the Interpretation of the Prepositional Accusative in Romanian”, *Bucharest Working Papers in Linguistics*, 3, 1-15.
Cornilescu, Alexandra, 2000, “Notes on the Interpretation of the Prepositional Accusative in Romanian”, *Bucharest Working Papers in Linguistics*, 2, 1, p. 91-106.
Cornilescu, Alexandra & Dobrovie-Sorin, Carmen, 2008, “Clitic Doubling, complex heads and interarboreal operations”, in: Dalina Kallulli and Liliane Tasmowski (eds.), *Clitic Doubling in the Balkan Languages*. Amsterdam, John Benjamins, p. 289-319.
Dobrovie-Sorin, Carmen, 1994, *The Syntax of Romanian*, in *Studies in Generative Grammar*, 40, Berlin, Mouton.
Farkas, Donka, 2002a, “Specificity Distinctions”, *Journal of* Semantics, 19, p. 213-243.
Farkas, Donka, 2002b, “Varieties of Indefinites”, in B. Jackson (ed.), *Proceedings of SALT* XII, Ithaca, CLC Publications, p. 58-83.
Farkas, Donka, 2002c, “Extreme Non-Specificity”, in: C. Beyssade et al., (eds.), *RomanceLanguages and Linguistic Theory 2000*, Amsterdam, John Benjamins, p. 127-151.
Farkas, Donka, 2001, “Specificity Distinctions”, in: K. von Heusinger, K. Schwabe (eds.), *ZAS Papers in Linguistics*, Leipzig: ZAS, 85-101.
Farkas, Donka, 1997a, Towards a Semantic Typology of Noun Phrases. Paper presented at Colloque de syntaxe et sémantique de Paris, Université Paris 7.
Farkas, Donka, 1997b, “Evaluation Indices and Scope”, in: Szabolcsi, A. (ed.). *Ways of Scope Taking*, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, p. 183-215.
von Fintel, Kai, 1994, Restriction on-Quantifier Domains. PhD Dissertation, University of Massachusetts at Amherst.
Krifka, Manfred, 1998, “Scope inversion under the rise-fall contour in German”, *Linguistic Inquiry*, 29, 1, p. 75-112.
Lopez, Luis, 2009, *A Derivational Syntax for Information Structure*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
Milsark, Gary, 1974, *Existential Sentences in English*. PhD Dissertation, MIT, Cambridge, MA, MITWPL.
Philip, W, 2005, “Pragmatic control of specificity and scope: Evidence from Dutch L1A”, *Proceedings of Sinn und Bedeutung*, 9, p. 271-286.
Szabolcsi, Anna, 1996, “Strategies for scope taking”, in: A. Szabolcsi (ed.), *Ways of scope Taking*, Dordrecht, Kluwer, p. 29-71.
Tigău, Alina, 2010, *Syntax and Interpretation of the Direct Object in Romance and Germanic Languages with an Emphasis on Romanian, German, Dutch and English*, Bucureşti, Editura Universităţii Bucureşti.
Tigău, Alina, 2009, “The Order of Constituents within the Romanian Sentence with a focus on the movement of the direct object in the VOS order”, in: Rodica Zafiu (ed.): *Grammaticalization and Pragmaticalization in Romanian*. Bucureşti: Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti.
Tigău, Alina. to appear. “The Semantic Import of the clitic in CD Structures”, *Analele Universităţii Spiru Haret.*
Uriagereka, Juan, 1995, “Aspects of the Syntax of Clitic Placement in Western Romance”, *Linguistic Inquiry*, 26, 1, p. 79-123.

BDD-V906 © 2012 Editura Universității din București
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 23:54:01 UTC)

ON THE INTERPRETATION OF DIFFERENTIALLY MARKED VS. UNMARKED DIRECT OBJECTS IN ROMANIAN
– WITH AN EMPHASIS ON ROMANCE AND GERMANIC LANGUAGES –

(*Abstract*)

The paper is a study of comparative grammar which presents from a complex perspective the syntax and the semantics of the Direct Object (DO) in Romance languages (such as Spanish, Romanian – to which most of the paper is devoted) and in Germanic languages (from among which the author selects German and Dutch as the most representative to the expense of English, on account of its rigid word ordering). The Romance and the Germanic languages under study put forth an interesting contrast with respect to the syntax and the interpretation of the direct object. However, the *typological* contrast is not a *genetic* one. The DO in Turkish, for instance, has certain properties which are very much similar to its counterpart in Romanian (languages of type B), whereas the DO in Hungarian behaves along the same lines as its counterpart in the Germanic languages (languages of type A).

The theoretical axis of the paper is represented by the minimalist syntax, the study itself putting forth a parametric dimension separating the languages of type A (e.g. German, Hungarian) from those of type B (Romance languages, Turkish). The structural difference between these two groups of languages amounts to the fact that the latter differentially mark their direct objects while the former do not. The Differential Object Marking mechanism has important consequences both from a syntactic point of view and from an interpretive one.

We study the way in which the two groups of languages express *binding relations* and *relative scope relations.* Thus, the topic of the paper concerns *the interface between Logical Form (LF) and the Intentional-Conceptual Component* which has the role to construct an interpretation of the LF put forth by the syntax.

The differential marking of the direct object (DOM) is undertaken by means of various mechanisms which differ from language to language. In the case of Romanian, the DOM is generally looked upon as a marking mechanism of a prominent direct object in the accusative case by means of the preposition PE. The paper advances the idea that in the case of Romanian, DOM is a complex phenomenon encompassing three syntactic properties bearing on distinctive interpretive effects: a) PE marking, b) post-verbal clitic doubling c) pre-verbal clitic doubling (Clitic Left Dislocation).

As opposed to Romanian, English, Dutch, German and Hungarian do not present the phenomena of marking by means of the prepositional accusative, Clitic doubling or Clitic Left Dislocation. As mentioned above, the paper focuses on the way in which the two groups of languages express *binding relations* and *scope interaction.* Non-DOM languages rely on *the c-command configuration* in resolving both binding relations and scope relations: the quantifier which has wide scope c-commands the narrow scoping quantifier; similarly, the antecedent must always c-command the element containing the bound pronoun. As a consequence, a natural way of assigning wide scope to a quantifier in languages such as German consists in moving it to the left. The movement of the DO to the left of the subject, enables the former to bind the latter and to have wide scope over it. In DOM languages, the c-command configuration is not decisive: the direct object may bind the subject (or a part of it) without c-commanding it in the same time; likewise, a quantifier may take scope over another without c-commanding it.

Thus, the paper draws a parametric difference between *configurational languages* (wherein binding and quantificational differences are closely linked to the c-command configurations and are sensitive to leftward movement) and *non-configurational languages*, where the same semantic properties can be derived from the internal structure of the direct object (the chain put forth by the direct object).

BDD-V906 © 2012 Editura Universității din București
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 23:54:01 UTC)