

Article

Romanian DOM and Loss of Analyzability

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Abstract

This paper revisits the diachronic changes to Romanian DOM by focusing on the emergence of the DOM particle *pe*: the prenominal preposition *pe* is shown to undergo loss of analyzability when (i) the adjacent noun phrase is the direct object of the verb; and (ii) *pe*-DP falls under a certain pragmatic treatment. In other contexts, *pe* continues as a preposition. Loss of analyzability entails modification of the feature bundle associated with *pe*, as well as chunking and sensitivity of *pe*-noun phrases to discourse related priming factors. Briefly, the chunk consisting of two segments (i.e., prepositional phrase and nominal phrase: PP > DP) is gradually reduced to one segment (i.e., DP). This transition is context dependent; that is, it intensifies when the DPs receive a reading that involves discourse salience and animacy. The loss of analyzability regarding the properties of *pe* and the structural consequences it implied provide the basis for assessing the advent of animacy and definiteness/specificity as priming factors for DOM in Modern Romanian.

Keywords: old Romanian; differential object marking; DOM particle; DOM and discourse

1. Introduction

Differential marking is a cross-linguistic mechanism to mark constituents for various purposes ((de)emphasis, grammaticality, thematic enhancing etc.) by using various means, such as dedicated particles, Case alternations, clitic doubling and so on (Aissen, 2003, a.o.). The option for and the pairing of purpose and means vary from language to language and also at the level of inter- and intra-language. In this paper, the discussion of differential marking focuses on the direct objects in Old and Modern Romanian.

Differential marking of direct objects (DOM) is an outstanding property of Romanian grammar that has maintained its robustness since Old Romanian (i.e., 16th–18th centuries) up to Modern Romanian (19th–21st centuries). However, the extent to which DOM occurs, its context of use and its morpho-syntactic properties have changed considerably over time. The main clue for a DOM treatment of the direct object comes from the presence of *pe* in prenominal position, which remains constant across stages of Romanian (free phonetic variation between *pre* and *pe* in Old Romanian, and only *pe* in Modern Romanian).

In Modern Romanian, DOM is realized with *pe* and shows sensitivity to animacy and definiteness/specificity. Moreover, its application depends on the type of nominal category: it is obligatory with tonic pronouns and proper names, as in (1a), but optional with some animate common nouns, as in (1b), and excluded with inanimate nouns, as in (1c).



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- (1) a. *(L)-am chemat *(pe) el/ *(pe) Dan.
 CL.ACC.M.3SG-have1 called DOM him/ DOM Dan
 ‘I called him/Dan.’
- b. Am chemat studentul.// L-am chemat pe student.
 have.1 called student.the CL.ACC.M.3SG-have.1 called DOM student
 ‘I called the student.’
- c. Am chemat taxiul.// *L-am chemat pe taxi.
 have.1 called taxi.the CL.ACC.N.3SG-have.1 called DOM taxi
 Intended. ‘I called the taxi.’

The Old Romanian picture is however more complex. Notably, in 16th century texts, three DOM strategies can be found: (i) clitic doubling (CD) of the noun, as in (2a); (ii) the insertion of *pre* in front of the noun, as in (2b); (iii) a combination of clitic doubling and *pre*, as in (2c).

- (2) a. și nouă-l_k dezlegă [visul nostru]_k (PO 264)
 and to.us-CL.ACC.M.3SG explained dream.DEF.N.SG our.N.SG
 ‘and he explained to us our dream’
- b. încă cu o bătaie voiu lovi [pre Faraon] și [pre Eghipet] (PO 480)
 also with an attack will.1SG hit PRE-Pharaoh and PRE-Egypt
 ‘I will hit the Pharaoh and Egypt with another attack’
- c. ducă-l_k [pre acesta]_k domnu-său înaintea domnedzeilor
 take.IMP.2SG-CL.ACC.M.3SG PRE-this.one master-his before gods.the.GEN
 ‘let his master take this one before the gods’ (PO 545)

The CD strategy in (2a) was already unproductive in the 16th century and practically disappeared in the 17th century (Pană Dindelegan, 2016). On the other hand, the strategy in (2b) became very productive, with extension to the combination in (2c) (Hill & Mardale, 2021). In the 21st century, only the DOM option in (2c) is productive (Tigău, 2020). Since prenominal *pre* appears in both (2b) and (2c), our paper will focus on this element, given that the diachronic changes it underwent provide information on the emergence and evolution of DOM in Romanian.

The challenge for assessing data as in (2b, c) comes from the observation put forth in this paper that *pre* may not have had a DOM effect at all times. More precisely, as shown in (3), *pre* may or may not occur with either animate or inanimate nouns in direct object position (see also van Eeden, 1985, p. 381).

- (3) a. de nu veți ierta [pre vrăjmașii voștri] (ITZ 2r/13)
 if not will.2PL forgive PRE enemies.the your
 ‘if you will not forgive your enemies’
- b. Iubiți [vrăjmașii voștri]. (ITZ 3r/18)
 love.IMP.2PL enemies.the your
 ‘love your enemies’
- c. Cinstiți [pre lemnul] de la care lemn se face ajutoriul. (ITZ 37v/5)
 honor.IMP.2PL PRE cross.the from which cross REFL makes help.the
 ‘honor the cross from which aid comes out’
- d. Veniți să băgăm [lemnul] în pâinea Lui (ITZ 30v/5)
 come.IMP.2PL SBJV insert cross.the in bread.the his
 ‘come to insert the cross in his bread’
- e. Și Hanaan rodi [pre Sidon], născutullui dentâiu (PO 39)
 and Hanaan begot PRE Sidon born.the his first
 ‘and Hanaan begot Sidon, his first born’

- f. Și Arcfasat rodi [Salah]; și Salah rodi [Eber] (PO 39)
 and Arcfasat begot Salah and Salah begot Eber
 ‘and Arcfasat begot Salah, and Salah begot Eber’

In the Romanian of the 21st century, the alternation between +/–DOM, as in (3), is restricted to some quantifiers and common nouns with human reference, as DOM became obligatory with all pronouns and human names. That is, part of what was an optional process in the 16th century became obligatory in the 21st century Romanian grammar.

Notably, the theories of DOM identify animacy and/or definiteness/specificity as the underlying factors common to all DOM strategies, cross-linguistically (de Hoop & Malchukov, 2007; Malchukov & de Swart, 2008, a.o.). From this point of view, the examples in (3) are problematic: *pre* with inanimates, as in (3c), may signal that this is not a DOM construction, while lack of *pre* with definite/specific nouns, as in (3b, f), signals that definiteness/specificity does not count for DOM in Old Romanian. In fact, the diachronic impact of animacy and definiteness/specificity on the incidence of DOM in Romanian has not received much attention so far. This paper will show that animacy gains importance for the emergence of DOM readings during the process by which the prepositional analysis of *pre* becomes gradually superfluous when the noun is in direct object position; that is, direct objects with animate nouns are the first to display DOM as the *pe*-noun phrase is analyzed as a DP instead of a PP.

Definiteness/specificity becomes a relevant factor for DOM at a later diachronic stage, according to the data presented in this paper. For example, in 17th century texts, names of persons, inherently animate, display *pre* for DOM almost systematically, whereas animate nouns with specific reading do so sporadically, e.g., ‘saint’ without *pre* in (4a) but with *pre* in (4b).

- (4) a. cu glas groznic, dzise să bată [svântul] preste gură (Var 74v)
 with voice loud said SBJV beat.3 saint.the over mouth
 ‘he said with a loud voice to slap the saint over his mouth’
 b. dzise slujitorilor să ia [pre svântul] in sulite (Var 73r)
 told servants.the.DAT SBJV take.3 PRE saint.the in spears
 ‘he told the servants to lift the saint in spears’

The diachronic trajectory established in this paper when it comes to animacy, in relation to *pre*-direct objects, is as follows: (in)animate (16th c.) → animates (17th/18th c.) → humans (19th c.). That is, direct objects containing animate nouns show a gradually increasing tendency to be introduced by *pre*, indicating that animacy becomes a trigger for DOM. However, for the same noun class, definiteness/specificity does not qualify as a systematic trigger for DOM in Old Romanian, although it does so in Modern Romanian, in certain contexts (e.g., with complex noun phrases).

The new perspective proposed in this paper on data as in (2) to (4) throws doubt on the systematic use of *pre* as a DOM particle in the 16th century texts, or in the archaic language register of some religious texts of the following century. Briefly, the proposal is that as long as *pre* qualified as a functional preposition, it only served as an accusative case marker for direct objects. The DOM property of *pre* emerges when it becomes an element of the nominal phrase (DP) instead of projecting a separate prepositional phrase (PP), that is, when the case assigning property of the preposition is lost (as *pre* ceases to function as a lexical preposition).¹ Animacy as a priming factor for *pre* marking arises concurrently with this morpho-syntactic change.

Technically, the analysis proposed in this paper relates the diachronic changes of DOM to the loss of analyzability arising from changes in the feature composition of the syntactic elements involved in DOM, especially regarding the properties of *pre*. The instability of

the featural composition resulted in synchronic variations in the treatment of DOM in Old Romanian, and this variability was channeled through a gradient process towards a conventionalized, more stable system for DOM in Modern Romanian.

2. Background

2.1. Theoretical Framework

The emergence of DOM in Romanian will be assessed in terms of animacy and definiteness/specificity scales. It is well established, at least empirically, that languages tend to have privileged categories which must be differentially marked, such as personal pronouns or proper names. The status and organization of such categories indicate a correlation with features such as specificity, definiteness, animacy or topicality. Extensive research since Silverstein (1976) or Aissen (2003) among others, has identified typologically common hierarchies such as the ones in Table 1 below, taken from Dalrymple and Nikolaeva (2011). Generally, the higher an object is on the scale, the higher the differential marking probability (Silverstein, 1976; Lambrecht, 1994; Lazard, 2001; Aissen, 2003; Næss, 2004; Dalrymple & Nikolaeva, 2011, a.o.). The scales predict, for example, that a language displaying DOM with names of persons necessarily displays DOM with strong personal pronouns as well. In addition, discourse factors have also been detected as triggers for DOM cross-linguistically, especially where various types of topic interpretation are concerned (Dalrymple & Nikolaeva, 2011; Iemmolo, 2010; Leoneti, 2008, a.o.).

Table 1. Scales for differential object marking.

a. <i>Animacy/person</i> : 1/2 pronoun > 3 pronoun > proper name > human > animate > inanimate
b. <i>Specificity/definiteness</i> : pronoun > name > definite > specific indefinite > non-specific
c. <i>Topic accessibility scale</i> : active > accessible > unused > brand-new anchored > brand– new unanchored

DOM in Modern Romanian displays sensitivity to animacy and definiteness/specificity, but this was not always the case. The paper discusses the stages through which Romanian ended up complying with the scales in Table 1, and the role topicality played in this process.

The analysis proposed in this paper relies on the conceptual contrast between *reanalysis* and *loss of analyzability*, such as developed and applied in Bybee (2003, 2010); Torres Cacoullous (2015); Delicado Cantero and Amaral (2024) among others: while *reanalysis* involves a sudden change in the categorial status of an item during the process of language acquisition (a learner acquires grammar G2 instead of G1; e.g., Roberts & Roussou, 2003), *loss of analyzability* involves a gradual process arising from the learner's usage of the language, with repetitions and changes in the chunking of the lexical material. A typical example comes from the change from *going to* to *gonna* in English: reanalysis would entail that a learner reanalyzed [*goingto*] upward in the clause hierarchy from being merged as the verb *go to* being merged as a compound modal or auxiliary. On the other hand, *loss of analyzability* entails that the composite morphemes in *going to* lose their association with *go*, *to* or *-ing* (Bybee, 2003) in certain contexts of use, while being preserved in other contexts.

Loss of analyzability is a gradual process that involves priming factors. A crucial concept in psycholinguistics (psychology more generally), priming is related to how exposure to one stimulus may unconsciously influence or modulate the response to a subsequent (related) stimulus (Weingarten et al.). As Bock and Griffin (2000, p. 17) put it in a classical definition, "the unintentional and pragmatically unmotivated tendency to repeat the general syntactic pattern of an utterance" is at the core of priming. Important streams of work in diachronic linguistics have emphasized the non-trivial role of persistence in the creation, development, and expansion of new structures.

From this perspective, it appears that the changes to the DOM system in Romanian, such as attested between the 16th to the 21st centuries, have been, so far, discussed only in terms of reanalysis (Mardale, 2015; Hill & Mardale, 2021; Tigău, 2011, a. o.). Approaching the same material by considering the diachronic changes of Romanian DOM as loss of analyzability may strengthen the explanatory power of the attested variation at least with regard to two aspects: (i) It predicts that the same learner may concurrently use *pe* as a preposition and as a DOM particle (i.e., instead of a complete parametric switch from a grammar with *pe* as a preposition to a grammar with *pe* only as a DOM particle); (ii) It allows for the gradual and independent introduction of animacy and definiteness as criteria for DOM in this language under context dependent conditions, with non-trivial variations from one text to another. The latter changes occur under priming factors related to discourse manipulations.

2.2. Corpus and Methodology

The discussion developed in the present paper relies on the data gathered from 16th century religious translated texts and 17th century texts which were either translated or written directly in Romanian. The texts we have consulted are discussed in detail in Section 5 and the full list is provided in the References section. Out of this corpus, six texts were searched for tokens of DOM: two translations from the 16th century (PO and EV), and four texts from the 17th century. The latter include two short Chronicles (CM and Ur) and two religious texts for comparison (BB and Var). In addition, we consulted a text from the 19th century (IC) and official grammars of Modern Romanian for the 20th and the 21st centuries.

Philologists debate the reliability of the 16th century translated texts for assessing the development of DOM in Romanian. For example, Densusianu (1900/1997) considers that the translators sacrificed the Romanian grammar in order to respect the syntax of the original. The reason why DOM was rare in 16th century translations is that the language of the original did not have it. On the other hand, Pușcariu (1921–1922) argues that the use of *pre*-DP direct objects was emergent and unstable in the 15th–16th centuries, which explains why it appears sporadically and even with inanimate nouns (which were unmarked in the language of the original text). Current historical linguistic studies implicitly adopt Pușcariu's path, while exercising caution in the selection of texts (Pană Dindelegan, 2016; Stan, 2013). For this paper, the text selection follows the recommendations from such studies.

The methodology adopted in this paper relies mainly on considering the contexts in which the same noun phrase does or does not fall under DOM, as a way of measuring the rate of increase in DOM application. While statistic measurements of such variations are already available in the literature (e.g., von Heusinger & Onea, 2008; Avram & Zafiu, 2017; Tigău, 2020; Hill & Mardale, 2021), the contextual conditioning for such variation has been less discussed.

In this paper, the loss of analyzability will be determined by means of syntactic tests establishing categorial unithood. For example, given a certain syntactic context (e.g., direct object position), what is the transition from the analysis of *pre*-nouns as consisting of two phrases (i.e., PP > DP) to their analysis as one phrase (i.e., DP). In other words, we establish the gradual change in the chunking and recategorization of the DOM-ed constituent. The priming condition for the analysis of *pre* as a nominal marker for DOM instead of a preposition is shown to be animacy and discourse manipulation; e.g., whether the speaker intends to make the direct object salient or not.

Technically, the loss of analyzability will be determined in this paper by adopting a feature-based approach to syntactic derivation (Chomsky, 2008, et seq.). More precisely, each syntactic node maps certain formal features which determine the syntactic status of a lexical item. For example, relevant to DOM is the type of features realized under the

node in which *pre* merges. When merged as P, *pre* may have substantive features or only functional features, and in both instances, it also has a [case] feature (i.e., accusative) to impart to the noun phrase. However, when merged as D (i.e., new chunking), *pre* loses the [case] feature, and the noun phrase has to receive the accusative case differently (i.e., from the functional structure of the verb, not from *pre*). Along these lines, loss of analyzability is reinterpreted as a gradual and context-dependent loss, modification or variation with respect to the featural composition of the syntactic nodes.

3. PE-DP Internal Structure

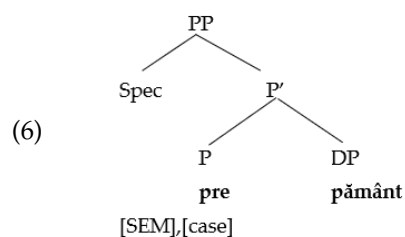
The particle *pre* is fundamental for the implementation of DOM in Romanian. Hence, this section considers the concurrent use of *pre* as a fully fledged preposition and as a functional preposition for nouns and pronouns (henceforth, DPs) in direct object position. Briefly, the proposal is that up to the 17th century, *pre* projected a prepositional phrase (PP) structure in both syntactic positions although its feature composition was reduced when it introduced complements. Crucially, the data of religious 16th century texts are inconclusive when it comes to establishing whether *pre* preceding direct objects had the function of a case marker or of a DOM particle in the religious translations dated for that century.

3.1. From Lexical to Functional P

As a substantive preposition, *pre* has location, temporal, aboutness semantics, and selects DPs to which it assigns accusative case, as in (5). These properties of *pre* are well preserved up to the 21st century, although slight changes in the semantic features have occurred (Mardale, 2015); compare Old Romanian (5a) with Modern Romanian (5b).

- (5) a. toți pomii în câmp, cariî mainte nu era **pre pământ** (PO 15)
 all trees.the in field which.the before not were on earth
 ‘all the trees of the field that previously have not existed on earth’
- b. toți pomii din câmp, care mai înainte nu erau **pe pământ**
 all trees.the in field which more before not were on earth
 ‘all the trees of the field that previously have not existed on earth’

In constructions as in (5), the PP-*pre* is an adjunct (i.e., the theta-role it lexicalizes is not obligatory in the theta-grid of the verb) versus selected (i.e., obligatory). The features associated with *pre* are a substantive semantic feature [SEM] (e.g., location), and a formal [case] feature, which support the syntactic configuration in (6).



At unattested times and for debatable reasons, PP-*pre* emerged as a direct object. Philological studies (see Sala, 2001 for an overview) relate the use of *pre* with direct objects to the gradual loss of inflectional nominative and accusative case marking in the transition from Latin to Romanian. More precisely, since changes of word order from SVO to VSO happened concurrently with the loss of inflectional endings in nouns, prenominal *pre* provided indications w.r.t. which post-verbal noun is the subject or the object in a sequence as in (7): who is the agent, the ‘man’ or the ‘lion’? This rationale led to hypothesis (7’).

- (7) Prinde omul un leu
 catches man.the a lion
 ‘The man catches a lion.’ Or
 ‘A lion catches the man.’

(7') **Hypothesis:** *pre* is an accusative case assigner to nominal direct objects.

Hypothesis (7') has been disputed on the basis of solid evidence; for example, strong pronouns have preserved the accusative case inflection up to the present (e.g., *eu* ‘I.NOM’ vs. *mine* ‘I.ACC’) and yet they display *pre* in direct object position (Mardale, 2015, a.o.). Instead, other explanations have been entertained, such as a reanalysis of the PP-*pre* with aboutness meaning from an adjunct to a selected position, in contexts with certain verbs (Onea & Mardale, 2020); see (8). This proposal led to hypothesis (8').

- (8) a. se-au tocmit [pre megiași] (DRH, 1671)
 REFL.3-have.3 haggled about neighbours
 ‘They haggled over their neighbours’
- b. amu tocmit [pre Mușat postelnic] și
 have.1 hired PRE Mușat chamberlain and
 [pre Negoe] pântru 4 rumâni vii și pântru
 PRE Negoe for 4 serfs alive.M.PL and for
 6 delniți, fârî rumân (DÎ, 1622)
 6 plots.of.land without serf
 ‘I hired Musat the chamberlain and Negoe in exchange for 4 living serfs and for 6 plots of land, without serfs’

(8') **Hypothesis:** *pre* introduces a pragmatic role in the theta-grid of the verb.

Onea and Mardale (2020) point out that *pre*-DP in (8a) conveys the topic of the negotiation in relation to the reflexive verb *tocmi* ‘haggle’. In (8b), the *pre*-DP is reanalyzed as the direct object of the same verb, coinciding with a change in meaning from haggling to hiring, which also involves a degree of negotiation.

The main difference between the two hypotheses consists in the type of features associated with *pre*: For the hypothesis in (7'), *pre* changes from a lexical to a functional preposition, i.e., it loses [SEM] and preserves [case]. For the hypothesis in (8'), *pre*-DP changes the merging position on the clausal spine without inferring any modification to the internal structure (i.e., *pre* is still [SEM], [case], having an aboutness feature). So, the justification for positional change lies with the verb, which modified its theta-grid: it became transitive in (8b) (it is reflexive in (8a)) by adding an obligatory aboutness theta-role (an E-topic in Onea & Mardale, 2020). Thus, DOM is triggered as the verb's E-topic gets checked against the [SEM] of *pre*. Considering that topicality is a contributor to the application of DOM, as signaled in Table 1, the reanalysis of PP *pre*-DP as a DOM construction conforms to the cross-linguistic patterns.

Nevertheless, from the perspective of the economy principle, hypothesis (7') is more economical than hypothesis (8'), and also easier to support with the data. Although the proposed explanation for using *pre* as a differentiator between subjects and objects as in (7') can be indeed dismissed, it is however obvious that *pre* was used as a replacement for accusative endings at some stage. Ledgeway (2012) points out a generalized tendency of Romance languages to use *ad* or *per* as case markers for accusative during the transition from Latin to Romance, irrespective of the SVO or VSO orders. Romanian seems to be no exception, and considering that this is a conservative language, with a slow pace of change, it would not be surprising to find left-overs of that process even in 16th century texts. The next section presents evidence in this respect.

3.2. The Case Marker Pre

An explicit definition of *pre* as a case marker for direct objects is found in Eustatievici’s grammar (1757). Eustatievici Braşoveanul was a school teacher who had received a religious education (his father was a priest) and had worked with religious translations using versions that must have predated the copied versions preserved up to the present. In other words, he was familiar with a more archaic grammar of Romanian than the one reflected in the spoken language of the 18th century. He was teaching these texts in religious schools, so the prescriptive grammar he wrote to serve him as a textbook must have catered to the archaic register of the religious texts, where direct objects with *pre*-DP did not conform to DOM.

Briefly, Eustatievici explicitly defines *pre* in these contexts as a case marker for accusative, in the same way the ending *-lui* inflects the noun for genitive (thus, creating the form *lucrului* below). His case marking paradigm is reproduced in (9).

(9)	N. acest lucru;	lucrul acesta.	N.a acestuia	lucru;	-ului	-sta.
	this thing	thing.the this	GEN this.the.GEN	thing	-the.GEN	-this
	D. acestui	lucru; -ului	-sta. P. pre	acest lucru;	-ul -sta.	
	this.DAT	thing -the.DAT	this ACC	this thing	the this	
	C. o, lucru,	o, lucrule	L. de la acest	lucru;	-ul -sta. (E {34},<42/30v>)	
	oh thing.VOC	oh thing.the.VOC	of at this	things	the this	

‘Nom. this thing; Gen. of this thing; Dat. to this thing; Acc. this thing; Voc. oh thing! Loc. from this thing’

Accordingly, the language of his grammar uses *pre* systematically with direct objects irrespective of their semantic classification, as in (10) (see also Hill & Mardale, 2021).

(10)	a.	cel ce după sine dobândeşte	pre	căderea	pricinuitoare	
		that which after itself obtains	ACC	fall.the	causal	
		‘the one that, after itself, obtains the Case inflection’ (E {48}<66/42v>)				
	b.	schimbând	pre	vremea	cea trecută (E {69}<98/58v>)	
		changing	ACC	time.the	the past	
		‘changing the past tense’				
	c.	primind	pre	părticelile	sale (E {69}<99/59r>)	
		receiving	ACC	particles.the	its	
		‘receiving its particles’				
	d.	carele	rânduieşte	pre	fieştecare	parte a cuvântului
		which.the	organizes	ACC	each	part GEN word.the.GEN
		‘which organizes each part of the word’ (E {90}<134/76v>)				

Vestiges of this function of *pre* appear in religious texts such as VCR-Voronet Codex (1563–1583), ITZ (1642) and BB (1648), where the direct objects it introduces may or may not comply with DOM (see also Stan, 2013). More precisely, the noun in *pre*-DP could be +/– definite and/or +/– animate, in a way that matches Eustatievici’s rule. Furthermore, the syntactic behavior of these *pre*-DP constructs indicates a PP structure that is typical of case assigning prepositions. The difference from Eustatievici’s prescriptive grammar is that, in the above mentioned texts, direct object DPs also follow the verb directly, without a *pre* connector. Illustrations from these texts are provided and discussed below.

3.3. Tests for the PP Structure

The suggestion arising from the data in (9) and (10) is that *pre* maintains a prepositional status, but its semantic input is lost, whereas the case properties are preserved. In other words, the internal structure was still as in (6), only the [SEM] feature of P is lost. Evidence for this structure comes from two types of data:

- (i) PP-*pre* as direct object to nominals

It is an established generalization that nouns and adjectives cannot assign case to the nouns in their DP objects, so the noun either comes inflected for case or is preceded by a functional preposition that assigns it case (Kayne, 1994, a.o.); hence, the contrast seen in Modern Romanian between (11a) with genitive case or (11b) with the preposition *de* versus the ungrammatical (11c) with none of the above.

- (11) a. iubitoarea [animalelor]
lover.DEF.F.SG animals.DEF.M.PL.GEN
'the lover of animals'
- b. iubitoarea [de animale]
lover.DEF.F.SG of animals
'the lover of animals'
- c. *iubitoarea animale
lover.DEF.F.SG animals

In the 17th century texts, all the options in (11) can be found. In addition, the options in (12a, 12b, 12c) also occur, where *pre* has the same function as *de* in (11b).

- (12) a. aceasta pasăre iaste iubitoare foarte [pre soțul său.] (van Eeden, 1985, p. 383;
this bird is loving very PRE spouse.the her VCR 421/29-30)
'this bird is very enamored of her spouse'
- b. de iaste neștine cinstitoriu [pre Dumnedzău] (van Eeden, 1985, p. 383; VCR 121/25-6)
if is someone respectful PRE God
'if someone is respectful of God'
- c. Dumnezeu iaste cunoscătoriu de inimi. (van Eeden, 1985; ITZ 22y/4-5)
God is knowledgeable of hearts
'God is an expert of hearts'

The alternation between *de* and *pre* as functional prepositions in these contexts is excluded in Modern Romanian, where only *de* is grammatical. This means that the analysis of *de* has not changed in these contexts, whereas the analysis of *pre* did, in a way that makes it unable nowadays to assign the accusative case to selected nouns.

(ii) Modifiers to PP-*pre*

In principle, the structure in (6) must allow for phrasal elements to merge in Spec, PP, which can be seen with *cam* 'almost' in the PP adjunct in (13), in Modern Romanian.

- (13) Stă [cam pe marginea patului.]
sits almost PE edge. DEF.F.SG bed.DEF.N.SG.GEN
's/he sits almost on the edge of the bed'

This possibility is attested in Old Romanian (versus Modern Romanian) with *pre*-DP in object position, as in (14), where *singur* is interpreted as an intensifier of the pronoun introduced by *pre*.

- (14) să iubești pe vecinul tău ca [singur pre tine]. (ITZ 54v/1)
SBJV love.2SG PE neighbour. DEF.M.SG your as self PRE you
'love your neighbour as you yourself'

The data in (12–14) provide evidence that the merge of *pre*-DP in a complement instead of an adjunct position involves loss of analyzability insofar as no semantic features are associated with *pre* introducing a direct object DP. However, the [case] feature is preserved, which is sufficient to allow for *pre* to project a PP with the structure in (6). There is no evidence that in such contexts *pre* would have DOM effects.

4. Chunking for DOM

The discussion of the data so far pointed out that, in Old Romanian, *pre* could introduce DPs either as adjuncts or as complements, but its features differed according to the syntactic position: loss of analyzability happens only in the complement position, which converts the lexical preposition to a functional one. This change was paired with the loss of declension for accusative case during the romanization process, in the transition from inflectional to analytical case systems.

However, the analytical case system in Romanian is relevant only to adjuncts and partially to indirect objects, insofar as the preposition became obligatory for case assignment to DPs in such syntactic contexts; so PP-*pre* has been well preserved as an adjunct. When it comes to direct objects, verbs assign structural case to them, dispensing with functional prepositions. Accordingly, loss of analyzability for *pre* (i.e., loss of [case]) with direct object DPs must be expected once structural case is stabilized: the functionally redundant *pre* is then either dropped or recycled for other use, since it is dissociated from both [SEM] and [case].

The 16th century religious/translated texts reveal significant inter- and intra- speaker variation in the use of *pre*-DPs in direct object position. Importantly, at this diachronic stage, *pre*-DP alternates with the occurrence of the same DP by itself as a direct object, which signals the stabilization of structural case assignment by verbs. However, the alternation in the use of the direct object with or without *pre* seems to be aleatory, as no systematic priming factors for the use of *pre* in this syntactic context can be identified. This contrasts with the situation of the 17th century texts, where the use of *pre* as a differential object marker is obvious and more predictable according to the discourse background and animacy.

In light of these observations, it is difficult to assess whether in the 16th century texts or in the religious texts with archaic register (e.g., BB) *pre* was still used as a case marker (i.e., as a functional preposition), as found in the examples of the previous section, or only as a DOM particle. Possibly, both uses concurred to some extent, which explains the unsystematic use of this element with direct objects. Consider the contrasts in the minimal pairs in (15).

- (15) a. Văzu-o [ea] Isus, strigă și zise ei (BB 454)
 saw.3SG-CL.ACC.F.SG her Jesus called.3SG and said.3SG her.DAT
 ‘Jesus saw her, called and said to her’
- b. Văzu [pre ea] Isus, strigă și zise ei (BB 458)
 saw. 3SG PRE. her Jesus called.3SG and said.3SG her.DAT
 ‘Jesus saw her, called and said to her’
- c. Și văzură [pre el] ucenicii împlând pre mare (BB 293)
 and saw.3PL PRE he apprentices walking on sea
 ‘and the apprentices saw him walking on the sea’
- d. Și văzură [el] ucenicii pre mare împlând (BB 290)
 and saw.3PL he apprentices on sea walking
 ‘and the apprentices saw him walking on the sea’
- e. că leagea amu den tocmeală slugă are [pre frica] (EV 16)
 that law.the now from judgment servant has PRE fear.the
 ‘that now the law the fear has as a servant in the judgment’
- g. potoli Hristos [spământarea și frica] ce avea apostolii, (EV 137)
 calmed.3SG Christ scare.the and fear.the that had apostles.the
 ‘Christ calmed the scare and the fear that the apostles had’

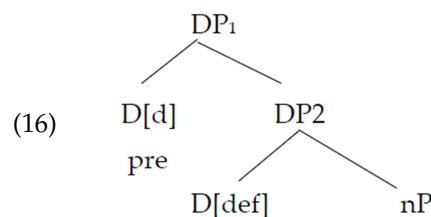
In (15), the use of +/−*pre* occurs in identical pragmatic and syntactic contexts, for animate and inanimate nouns. The strong tendency is, however, to find *pre* with strong

pronouns and names of persons rather than with other nominal classes. For example, in EV, the verb forms *avea* ‘have’ and *avut* ‘had’ appear with 32 direct objects: two out of five animate nouns are preceded by *pre*, compared to two out of 25 inanimate nouns. So, one may conclude that animacy began to count for the option for *pre*, signaling the emergence of DOM.

Along these lines, the emergence of DOM through the *pre* marking of direct objects, as attested from 17th to the 21st centuries, has to be understood as resulting from the change in the formal features associated with *pre* under two conditions:

- (i) The stabilization of structural case assignment. This led to the loss of analyzability of *pre* as a preposition in selected contexts, i.e., the general loss of [SEM],[case].
- (ii) The combination of animacy and discourse manipulation (see the discussion in Section 5). *Pre* is dissociated from the [case] feature and associated with a discourse feature [d] that conferred salience to the direct object (e.g., through topic or focus treatment). Animate nouns were more likely to qualify for a salient reading due to their high degree of referentiality.²

Loss of analyzability along these lines had an impact on the internal structure of the *pre*-DP construct. That is, *pre* ceases to project a PP as in (6), and is merged, instead, in the DP field. In other words, the PP > DP structure is chunked to DP only, although *pre* is still present. As shown in (16), *pre* merges at the high left periphery of the DP where discourse features have been shown to be mapped, independently of DOM (Giusti, 2005, a.o.).



According to the discussion so far, [d] in (16) is a formal feature that maps both animacy and salience, and whose exact interpretation arises from a combination of the noun semantics, the syntactic position and the pragmatic context. The structural change from (6) to (16) means that DP₁ in (16) must receive structural accusative case from the verb (not from a preposition).

The tests for chunking and reduction of a PP as in (6) to a DP as in (16) rely on Modern Romanian data, to show the most recent results of the diachronic change. More precisely, the tests in (17) to (19) indicate that *pre* ceases to function, at some point, as a case assigning preposition for direct objects, although it is preserved as prenominal.

- (i) Complements to nouns and adjectives

Examples as in (12) became ungrammatical in Modern Romanian: *pe* can no longer introduce direct objects to nouns and adjectives. Only *de* serves this purpose, as shown in (17).

(17)	iubitoare	de copii	versus	*iubitoare	pe copii	versus	iubește	pe copii	(Modern Romanian)
	lover.F.SG.	of children		lover.F.SG.	PE children		loves	PE children	

In (17), *pe* can precede the DP object of a verb, but not of a noun. This is possible because the direct object does not depend on *pe* to assign it case under selection by a verb (i.e., the verb assigns the structural case to the entire *pe*-DP) but it would do so under selection by a noun. Hence, *pe* ceased to be analyzed as a functional preposition, which indicates the loss of the [case] feature.

- (ii) Optionality of *pe* with CLLD

Prepositions, be they lexical or functional, obligatorily precede the DP when constituent movements to preverbal positions occur. This is expected as long as the DP depends on its case assigner (here, P) to be recognized as a syntactic item. Notably, in Modern Romanian, *pe* is preferred but not obligatory upon the CLLD of the direct object, as in (18).

- (18) a. [**(De)* animale] e mare iubitoare.
of animals is great lover
‘She is a great lover of animals.’
- b. [**Patul*/**(Pe)* pat] nu e nimic.
bed.the/on bed NEG is nothing
‘There is nothing on the bed.’
- c. [*Copiii*/*Pe copii*] nu i-am invitat.³
children.the/DOM children] NEG CL.ACC.3PL-have.1 invited
‘I did not invite the children.’
- d. *Toți*, nu i-am mai chemat la mine.
all.M.PL NEG CL.ACC.3PL-have.1 more called at me
‘All, I haven’t invited them to my place after all.’

The contrast between (18a, 18b) versus (18c/d) is that in (18c, 18d) *pe* is not the source of case for the DP under CLLD, hence its optionality. The DP copy left under the verb ensures the DP’s compliance with the case requirement. On the other hand, CLLD entails *pre*-DP almost systematically in 16th century texts, as detailed in Section 6. The inference is that the status of *pre* as either P or D was ambiguous in the 16th century, but not so in the 21st century.

(iii) Optionality of *pe* in answers

- (19) a. **Pe cine** a invitat?
DOM-P whom has invited
→ *Băieți și fete.* // **Pe** băieți și **pe** fete.
boys and girls DOM-P boys and DOM-P girls
‘Whom did s/he invite?’ → ‘Boys and girls.’
- b. *Unde a pus florile?* → ***(Pe)** o masă.
where has put flowers.the on a table
‘Where did s/he put the flowers?’ → ‘On a table.’

The test in (19) shows that, for Modern Romanian, when *pe* is a preposition introducing the noun as an adjunct, it is obligatory in the short answer, as in (19b). On the other hand, *pe* is optional with the direct object in the short answer in (19a). This signals that *pe* in (19a) does not function as a preposition, or else it would also be obligatory.

Consequently, the formal account is that the presence of *pe* with direct objects in the 21st century is due to a direct merge of this element at the left periphery of the DP (vs. PP), that is, in the derivational space dedicated to the mapping of discourse/conversational features to syntax, as in (16). This configurational change, from (6) to (16), follows from the increased association of *pe* with discourse features when its relevance as a case marker has been gradually lost. The transitional process from preposition to DOM particle (and from PP > DP to DP) involved synchronic inter- and intra-speaker variation such as attested in the texts. The relevance of the discourse feature as a priming factor for the stabilization of *pe*-DOM particle is discussed in the next section.

5. Priming Factors

Sections 3 and 4 showed the starting and the ending status of *pe*, from preposition to DOM particle. This section identifies the factors that contributed to the use of *pe* as a DOM particle, as well as the triggers for DOM in its emerging stages. Briefly, the priming factors for the emergence and the gradual stabilization of DOM in Old Romanian are discourse salience and animacy: while animacy is sufficient for DOM with pronouns and persons' names, it is not so with the other nominal categories. The latter display DOM only in certain discursive contexts that involve a salient reading.

5.1. Tokens

This section lists the tokens of *pe*-DP in the selected texts of the 16th and 17th centuries. The cases of DOM through CD alone, which was illustrated in (2a), will be discussed separately in Section 6. The tokens discussed in this section are relevant to three morpho-syntactic strategies shown by direct objects: unmarked, differentially marked with *pre* and differentially marked by both *pre* and accusative clitic doubling. We have extracted all the direct objects encoded through these strategies in the six texts researched. For the unmarked objects, we took into consideration just the animates, as these classes are precisely the ones which end up acquiring the differential marker in later stages. Furthermore, for all the classes of animate nouns, we only counted the post-verbal direct objects, to ensure accuracy regarding the selection of a DOM-ed DP as opposed to fronted DPs that may display *pre* and/or the clitic for a different reason than DOM.

The results are summarized in Table 2 for a selection of transitive predicates. The selection depended on the presence of these verbs in all six texts. The figures in each column are organized as follows: unmarked direct object as the leftmost figure; *pre* marked direct object in the middle; *pe* marked and clitic doubled direct object rightmost. For example, in PO + EV the predicate *aduce* 'bring' presents 31 unmarked animate direct objects, 40 *pre* marked animate direct objects and 10 animate direct objects that are both *pre* marked and clitic doubled.

Table 2. DOM in 16th and 17th centuries (animate direct objects).

Verbs	PO + Ev	BB	CM	Ur	Var
Aduce 'bring'	31-40-10	4-37-0	5-11-0	1-6-1	7-12-1
Alege 'choose, elect'	2-2-0	4-11-3	3-11-0	2-4-0	2-1-1
Apuca 'snatch, grasp'	0-3-4	0-2-2	1-2-0	0-2-0	0-1-3
Asculța * 'listen to'	2-19-3	0-26-10	0-1-0	0-0-1	4-3-0
Bate 'beat'	6-8-1	0-20-9	0-6-0	0-13-1	0-5-0
Chema 'call'		2-57-13	1-15-0	3-10-1	12-9-6
Da 'give'	48-48-5	8-41-27	2-1-0	1-4-0	4-0-3
Duce 'lead, take'	8-18-5	0-3-6	0-0-0	0-2-0	6-5-7
Goni 'chase'	18-13-2	0-11-11	2-9-3	0-8-2	4-4-3
Îngropa 'bury'	7-7-1	5-19-9		0-1-1	2-4-0
Iubi 'love'	15-15-1	0-24-10	2-4-1	0-1-1	6-10-4
Lăsa 'let'	25-23-4	5-3-1	2-6-1	0-8-0	15-10-4
Lăuda 'praise'	0-4-1	0-3-1	0-1-0	0-1-0	0-27-0
Lovi 'hit'	1-5	1-1-14	0-6-0	0-3-0	0-3-0
Lua 'take'	12-3-1	14-27-20	2-8-1	2-5-0	2-9-0

Table 2. *Cont.*

Verbs	PO + Ev	BB	CM	Ur	Var
Naște * ‘give birth to’	16-17-	14-23-1		0-2-0	7-7-1
Omorî ‘kill’	3-9-4	0-7-14	1-19-3	2-11-0	1-3-2
Pierde ‘loose’, ‘kill’	6-6-0	2-19-0	2-2-0	0-1-1	2-5-2
Prinde ‘catch’	12-3-1	0-6-3	0-6-0	0-14-1	2-4-1
Pune ‘put’	24-16-1	3-2-0	2-4-0	0-12-0	4-6-0
Ridica ‘raise’	4-3-1	0-8-5	1-3-0	0-8-0	1-0-0
Scoate ‘take out, pull’	16-9-1	5-28-42	0-7-1	0-8-0	5-7-3
Trimite ‘send’	3-9-2	4-23-24	5-22-0	2-26-0	33-15-5
Vedea ‘see’	51-28-4	9-37-16	0-3-0	0-4-0	9-15-1
Ucide ‘kill’	2-9-1	0-21-11	1-4-0	1-2-0	0-6-2

* A transitive predicate in Romanian.

The discussion to follow focuses on three important tendencies in the encoding of direct objects diachronically: (i) the increase of *pre*-DP with direct objects; (ii) the *pre*-DP increase correlates with animacy; (iii) across the three stages illustrated in the paper, definiteness and/or specificity is/are not a priming factor for *pre*-DOM in Old Romanian (as opposed to Modern Romanian, where these features are indeed a priming factor).

5.2. Animacy and Salience in the 16th Century DOM

The results of Table 2 are assessed in terms of the scales presented in Table 1. In particular, Table 2 shows a clear divide between the PO + Ev stage (16th century) and the other texts (from 17th century) when it comes to the presence of unmarked animate nouns as direct objects. According to Table 2, in the 16th century texts, various classes of animate direct objects which in subsequent stages of the language need obligatory DOM, are not only possible unmarked, but this strategy is actually quite robust. Thus, strong pronouns, which dominate the animacy scale in Table 1, may appear without DOM in PO + Ev, as further shown in (20a, 20b), and so do the names of persons, as in (20c, 20d). Not only animacy, but also definiteness/specificity is ignored as a DOM factor, as seen in (20d, 20e, 20f), where the definite article (20d), possessive modification (20e) or the use of a demonstrative without the noun (20f) appear without *pre*. Crucially, the incidence of *pe*-DPs with all these categories is aleatory, as shown in (20e) where *pre* is optional with animate direct objects even under coordination.

- (20) a. Slobodzi [e] Domnul Domnezeu afară den raiul dulcetei (PO 21)
 chased.3SG he Lord God out of heaven. the sweetness.the
 ‘God chased him out of the sweet heaven.’
- b. Și mearseră ucenicilor lui, rugară [e] grăind: (Ev 359)
 and went.3PL apprentices.the.DAT his beseeched.3PL he saying
 ‘and they went to his apprentices, they beseeched him saying’
- c. în zi în care făcu Domnedzeu [Adam] (PO 24)
 in day in which made.3SG God Adam
 ‘the day in which God made Adam’
- d. cu acestea să întărâtăm noi [Dumnezeu] spre noi și să
 with these SBJV annoy.1PL we God toward us and SBJV
 mâniem [nezlobivul și în-lung-răbdătorul Domnul] (EV 2)
 enrage.1PL innocent.the and long-patient.DEF.M.SG God
 ‘with these we may get God annoyed with us and we may enrage the unblameable and much patient God’

- e. Aşa luo Avram [m*ui*area sa] Sarai şi [pre Lot], ficiorul frate-său (PO 43)
 thus took.3SG Avram wife.DEF.F.SG his.F.SG Sara and DOM Lot son.the brother-his
 ‘thus Avram took his wife, Sara, and Lot, his brother’s son’
- f. Dusără [a*cesta*], ce era oarecând orb, cătră farisei, (Ev 185)
 took.3PL this.one who was once blind.M.SG toward Jews
 ‘and they took this one, who was once blind, to the Jews’

All the direct objects in (20) require DOM in Modern Romanian, which signals a complete change in the observance of DOM scales since the 16th century. In fact, at the time of PO + Ev, certain transitive predicates allow for a higher number of direct objects without rather than with *pre* marking. Among these predicates are: *vedea* ‘see’ (51 unmarked vs. 28 marked), *scoate* ‘take out, pull’ (16 unmarked vs. 9 marked), *pune* ‘put’ (24 unmarked vs. 16 marked), *prinde* ‘catch’ (12 unmarked vs. 3 marked), *goni* ‘chase’ (18 unmarked vs. 13 marked).

Notably, the language register used in these texts matches the language register of other translations of religious texts of the 16th century (ITZ, CC) and even of BB whose copy dates from the 17th century. This is important insofar as constructions found in these texts, and presented in Sections 4 and 5 above, indicated that *pre* was used with direct objects not necessarily as a DOM marker but also as a case marker for accusative.

In addition to the examples in (12) and (14), there are other indications that the association of *pre* with a [case] feature was still at work in the 16th century: (i) the use of *pre* with inanimate direct objects; and (ii) the preponderance of *pre* with the fronted direct objects; see (21)–(23).

(i) the use of *pre* with inanimate direct objects

- (21) a. Şi când Domnezeu pierdea [pre aceale oraşă] (PO 82-83)
 and when God lose.the PRE that.PL town.PL
 ‘and when God was destroying these towns.’
- b. ce toiagul lu Aron înghiţi [pre toiagele lor].
 and cane.the GEN.M.SG Aron swallow.PST3SG PRE canes.the their
 ‘and Aron’s cane swallowed their canes.’ (PO 439)
- c. Şi găteşte [pre mâncare.] (PO 299)
 and cook.3SG PRE food
- d. nici blăstemă [pre zioa] ceaia ce-au născut (EV 158)
 nor cursed PRE day.the that that-has delivered
 ‘nor did he curse the day in which he was born’
- e. nu-ş [pre niminea] prepunea el, numai [pre păcatele lui] (EV 57)
 not-REFL PRE nobody blamed.3SG he only PRE sins.the his
 ‘he wasn’t blaming anybody, only his sins’

In (21), the presence of *pre* cannot be attributed to DOM because the main priming factor for DOM is animacy, which is lacking with these direct objects. One may object that Table 1 does allow for DOM extension to inanimates, so (21) may signal just such an extension. However, Table 1 also entails that the extension of DOM to inanimates means that all the nominal categories that precede the inanimates on that scale must display obligatory DOM. That is clearly not what we see in the data of the 16th century. Hence, another explanation is in order for the possibility of *pre* with inanimates in (21). According to the discussion of the previous section, the most plausible alternative is to assume that the occurrences in (21) represent the tail-end of the analysis of *pre* as a case marker. This is a likely explanation, considering the conditions for the preservation of these texts: The versions of these texts that made it to the 20th century are the result of repeated copying by various monks, each copyist leaving his mark on the syntax of the text. Thus, it is likely that after the stabilization of the structural case assignment by verbs to their complements, *pre*

has been deleted by copyists whose grammar had lost the analysis of this element as a case marker for direct objects. What we still find in texts could be either slips from previous versions or the reflection of the archaic language register of some copyists (the source texts for the translation do not have these objects marked). Be it as it may, the presence of *pre* as a case marker in religious texts conforms to the prescriptivism promoted at a later date in Eustatavici’s grammar.

(ii) the preponderance of *pre* with the fronted direct objects

Fronted objects undergo CLLD, which can be seen in both Old and Modern Romanian. However, the use of *pe* has changed: The examples in (18), from Modern Romanian, served to confirm the D (versus P) status of *pe* by showing it to be optional when the direct object is fronted above the verb. The optionality indicated that the fronted DP does not depend on *pe* for case. The situation is different in the 16th century texts, where *pre* is almost systematic upon CLLD. For example, in (22), the pronoun *voi* ‘you’ displays *pre* when fronted although its correlate *mine* ‘me’ in post-verbal position does not have *pre*.

- (22) De-au gonit [mine] și [pre voi] vor goni; (EV 522)
 If-have.3PL chased me also PRE you will.3PL chase
 ‘If they chased me, they will also chase you’

The same can be observed for other categories, such as the quantifier ‘all’ in (23a) versus (23b), and common nouns and names (23c, 23d). That is, the fronted phrase displays *pre* irrespective of whether the same phrase in post-verbal position has or does not have *pre*.

- (23) a. [pre tot oarece era în orașu și în câmp] apucară (PO 220)
 PRE all whatever was in town and in field stole.3PL
 ‘whatever was in town and in the field, they looted it all’
 b. prădară [tot oarece era în casele lor] (PO 119)
 stole.3PL all whatever was in houses.the their
 ‘they looted whatever was in their houses’
 c. [pre Isus] cu multă bună-govire și smerenie ruga-l (EV 367)
 PRE Jesus with much good-respect and humility beseeched.3SG-CL.ACC.3M.SG
 ‘as for Jesus, he beseeched him with much respect and humility’
 d. de huliia [fiul lu Dumnezeu, Domnul nostru Isus Hristos] (EV 198)
 so.that insulted.3SG son.the of God Lord.the our Jesus Christ
 ‘so that he insulted the son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ’

The fact that not only animate (23c, 23d) but also inanimate nominal phrases (23a) display *pre* when fronted suggests the following: in PO + EV, structural case assignment by verbs was stabilized for the direct objects in situ (hence, no need for a preposition), but not for the fronted ones (hence, a preposition is needed). That is, the structural case held for the post-verbal nouns but not for their copies when fronting applied. This condition would equally affect animate and inanimate nouns. However, it is also clear that animate nouns were preponderant in this configuration in which they are salient in the discourse and highly relevant to the information structure.

The relevance of animacy and discourse manipulation (i.e., CLLD) for the incidence of *pre* in the 16th century texts cannot be ignored, as these factors mingle with the ambiguity of *pre* as a case marker. In a nutshell, some other feature association is present for *pre*, beside the case requirement, since animacy entails DOM in a context in which these nouns receive a topic or a focus reading. The variation in the distribution of *pre* signals the weakening of the case function of *pre* (i.e., its P status) in the transition to a recategorization of *pre* as a nominal item (i.e., D) that serves as a DOM particle. Examples as in (24) support this transitional analysis.

- (24) Că și mai de nainte tânjiia ucenicii de aceasta,
 for even more of before coveted.3SG apprentices.the of this
 unde vedea [Iacov] și [pre Ioan] cinstindu-i (Ev 94)
 as saw.3PL Jacob and PRE John honoring-CL.3M.PL.ACC
 ‘Even before, the apprentices coveted this, as they saw Jacob and John honoring them’

There is asymmetric coordination in (24), which also appeared in (20e), confirming that the speaker treats a DP and a *pre*-DP in the same way; that is, these two structures qualify as syntactically equivalent, i.e., two DPs, which is the usual requirement for coordination. This brings further confirmation for the structure in (16).

Formally, this amounts to a modification of the features associated with *pre* as follows: [+/-case], [animacy], [d], which change the preposition *pre* into a DOM particle. The change consists in the loss of analyzability of *pre* as a case marker and the gradual replacement of [case] with [animacy] preponderantly in discourse contexts that entail topic interpretation (i.e., upon fronting), which also brings the discourse [d] feature in the syntactic computation of the DP. In 16th century texts, the feature bundle [animacy]/[d] is a stronger priming factor for DOM than [animacy] alone (i.e., more *pre*-DPs upon CLLD than in situ). The merging of *pre* in D versus P reflects this featural change, as the left periphery of DP was shown independently to encode discourse features (Giusti, 2005 for DPs in general; Irimia & Pineda, 2021 for DPs with pronouns under DOM).⁴

5.3. Animacy and Salience in the 17th Century

5.3.1. The Bible

BB was translated in the 17th century, but the use of *pre* with direct objects is different not only from the translations of the previous century but also from what can be seen in the other texts of the same century. The language register is archaic and yet influenced by changes that occurred in the language over a century. We treat this text as an intermediary type of grammar between PO + EV and the texts of the 17th century.

Remarkably, the use of *pre* with nouns and pronouns is almost systematic. Table 2 shows zero occurrences of unmarked animate direct objects with certain verbs (e.g., *asculta* ‘listen’; *goni* ‘chase’; *omorî* ‘murder’; *ucide* ‘kill’) and a reduced number of unmarked occurrences with other verbs. This indicates the stabilization of animacy as a priming factor for DOM at least with two nominal categories, i.e., pronouns and names. Also, *pre* is frequent with common nouns that denote not only humans but also animals, especially those assigned for religious sacrifice, as in (25a, 25b).

- (25) a. Și vei aduce [pre berbeace] tot pre jârtâvnic (BB {Isirea xxix})
 and will.2SG bring DOM ram also to scaffold
 ‘and you will bring the ram also to the scaffold’
 b. Roagă-te dară cătră Domnul și să
 pray-REFL then to God and SBJV
 ia de la noi [pre șarpe] (BB {NumerileCapXXI})
 take.SBJV.3SG from at us DOM snake
 ‘Pray to God and to take away from us the sneak’

When it comes to inanimate common nouns as direct objects, the use of *pre* went down considerably compared to the 16th century, although it still tends to appear with geographic names, as in (26a). Crucially, when the inanimate nouns are resumed by strong pronoun, as in (26b), *pre* is systematic, signalling the generalization of DOM to pronouns, irrespective of their reference.

- (26) a. *Și i-au dat ei Halev [pre Golathmaim cea de sus]*
 and CL.DAT.3SG-has given her.DAT Halev PRE Golathmain that of upper
și [pre Golath cea de jos]. (BB {IisusNaviCapXV})
 and PRE Golath that of lower
 ‘and Halev gave her the upper Golathmain and the lower Golath’
- b. *Și vei face jârtăvnic de tămâiare de leamneneputrede,*
 and will.2SG make scaffold for blessing from wood not.rotten
și-l vei face [pre dânsul] de un cot de lungu (BB {IeșireaCapXXX})
 and-CL.M.SG.ACC will.2SG make DOM it of a elbow of length
 ‘and you will make a scaffold for the blessing from healthy wood, and you will make it one cubit in length’

There is still variation in the treatment of the same common noun when it comes to DOM, be it for humans or animals. Consider the minimal pairs in (27a, 27b) and (27c, 27d), each found in the same paragraph (hence, intra-speaker variation).

- (27) a. *voiu îngropa [pre mortul mieu] acolo (BB {FacereaCapXXIII})*
 will.1SG burry DOM dead.the my there
 ‘I will burry my deceased there’
- b. *și voiu îngropa [mortul mieu] de la mine (BB {FacereaCapXXIII})*
 and will.1SG burry dead.the my of me
 ‘I will burry my deceased at my own expense’
- c. *Și trimise [porumbul] după dânsul (BB {FacereaCapVIII})*
 and sent.3SG dove.DEF.M.SG after him
 ‘and he sent the dove after him’
- d. *iarăș trimise afară [pre porumb] den chivot*
 again sent.3SG outside DOM dove from cage
 ‘and he sent again the dove out of the cage’

These examples indicate that DOM responds to animacy on a systematic basis with pronouns and names of persons, but optionally with the rest of the nominal categories of the animacy scale. There is no evidence for an ambiguous treatment of *pre* as case marker or DOM particle in this text, the DOM function being well established.

Since animacy is not a systematic priming factor for DOM with common nouns, the question is what makes such a noun display *pre* at all. In BB, this can be related to the discourse context:

- Comparatives involving *ca* ‘as’

DOM in these comparative constructions was not systematic in the 16th century texts (see [van Eeden, 1985](#); [Stan, 2013](#)), but becomes so in the 17th century. Compare (28a) from a 16th century text with (28b, 28c) from BB.

- (28) a. *Cinstiți-i ca [niște-ndreptători] (van Eeden, 1985; YTZ 382)*
 honor.IMP.2PL-CL.M.3PL.ACC as some-justices
 ‘honor them as you would some court justices’
- b. *mi-ai loat [featele meale] ca [pre niște roabe] cu sabia*
 CL.DAT1.SG-have.2SG taken girls.the my.PL as DOM some slaves with sword.the
 ‘you took my girls by sword as if some slaves’ (BB {FacereaCapXXXI})
- c. *Și vei farâma [norodul acesta] ca [pre un om] (BB{NumerileCapXIV})*
 and will.2SG break people.the this as DOM one man
 ‘and you will break these people as you would one man’

The direct objects in (28b, 28c) do not display *pre*, whereas their comparative correlates do.

- Salience in post-verbal position

DOM is resorted to when a new piece of information is introduced in the discourse and/or requires the spotlight in the narrative, as in (29a, 29c). The same nouns occur unmarked elsewhere where their reading is neutral (29b, 29d).

- (29) a. văzu [pre un om egiptinean] bătând [pre oarecare
saw.3SG DOM a man Egyptian beating DOM some
ovreaiu], den frații lui (BB {IeșireaCapI})
Jew from brothers.the his
'he saw an Egyptian beating some Jew belonging to his brothers
- b. ochii lui văzu [un om] stând (BB {IisusNaviCapV})
eyes.the his saw.3SG a man seating
'his eyes saw a man seating'
- c. vindecă Dumnezeu [pre Avimeleh], și [pre fămeaia lui],
heal.3SG God DOM Avimelah and DOM wife.the his
și [pre slujnicele lui]; {FacereaCapXX}
and DOM servants.the his
'Good healed Avimeleh, and his wife, and his servants.'
- d. Sculându-te, ia fămeaia ta și ceale doao feate ale
waking-REFL take.IMP.2SG wife.the your and those two daughters of
tale ce ai și ieși afară, {FacereaCapXIX}
yours that have.2SG and go.IMP.2SG out
'When you wake up, take your wife and those two daughters you have and go out'

Salience also entails enhanced referentiality, so DOM is also opted for in contexts with appositions (30a), repetitions (30b), information focus (30c).

- (30) a. au dat Domnul [pre boiarii lui Madiam], [pre Oriv și pre Ziv]
has given God DOM nobles of Madiam DOM Oriv and DOM Ziv
'God gave Madiam's nobles, Oriv and Ziv (BB {JudecătoriiCapVIII})
- b. au luat [pre boiarii] și [pre cei bătrâni ai cetății] (BB {JudecătoriiCapVIII})
have taken DOM nobles.the and DOM those old of fort.the.GEN
'he took the nobles and the old men of the fort'
- c. Și făcu Moisi [șarpe] de aramă, [...] Roagă-te dară
and made Moisi snake of copper pray.IMP.2SG-CL.2SG.ACC thus
cătră Domnul și să ia de la noi [pre șarpe] (BB {NumerileCapXXI})
to God and SBJIV takes from us DOM snake
'Moisi made a snake from copper. Thus pray to God to take the snake from us'

- Salience in preverbal position (CLLD)

Fronting of the direct object for a topic or focus reading was identified as a priming factor for the use of *pre* in 16th century texts. In BB, most of the fronted objects display *pre*, although in their post-verbal position the same objects do not display *pre*. This is the case, for example, for *fata* 'daughter', which has no *pre* in post-verbal position in the entire text, but does so when fronted. Compare (31a) with (31b, 31c). However, instances of fronting without *pre* also occur with some noun phrases in the presence of quantifiers, as in (31d).

- (31) a. [Pre fata mea aceasta] am dat omului acestuia fămeaie
DOM girl.the my this have.1 given man.the.GEN this.DAT woman
'this daughter of mine I gave to this man as wife' {LegeaIICapXXII}
- b. ca să iau [fata fratelui stăpânului mieu],
for SBJV take.1 girl.the brother.the.GEN master.the.DAT my
'so that I take the daughter of my master's brother' {FacereaCapXXIV}
- c. am văzut [fata ta] {FacereaCapXXXIII}
have.1 seen girl.the your.F.SG
'I've seen your daughter'
- d. Și [câte un boiaru den fealiu] veț lua ca să vă
and each one noble from relation will.2PL take so SBJV CL.ACC.2PL
moștenească de tot voao pământul. {NumerileCapXXXIV}
inherit of all to.you land.the
'And you'll take a related noble to inherit your land'

In sum, BB attests to a stage where *pre* introducing direct objects is completely dissociated from [case] but strongly associated with [animacy] for certain nominal classes (i.e., pronouns and names). For these nominal items the discourse features are not relevant, since just animacy is sufficient to prompt the use of *pre*. For other nominal classes, however, [d] in addition to [animacy] is the trigger for the use of *pre*. In other words, DOM through the particle *pre* is well established in BB, but the priming factors are divided between [animacy] and [animacy]/[d].

5.3.2. Chronicles and Varlaam

The chronicles and Varlaam’s texts show a general elimination of *pre* with inanimate direct objects (with minimal exceptions). On the other hand, DOM increases with animate direct objects, as indicated in Table 2. For example, for the Ur text, 17 out of 25 verbs have zero occurrences of unmarked animate direct objects. Basically, in all three texts DOM became obligatory with pronouns and names, and the number of unmarked animate direct objects with other nominal categories is reduced when compared to BB. The verb *trimite* ‘send’ is an exception in Table 2, with a high number of unmarked objects. That is so because in the narratives, the persons sent with a message are indicated through common nouns (e.g., ‘messengers’, ‘envoys’, ‘soldiers’) which continue to allow for optional DOM with any verb, as shown in (32).

- (32) a. au trimis împotriva lui [slujitorii săi] (Ur 109r)
 has sent against him servants.the his
 ‘he sent his servants against him’
- b. au trimis pre sluga sa, pre CrasiŃchii la Liov, (Ur 107v)
 has sent DOM servant.the his DOM Crasitsky to Liov
 ‘he sent his servant Crasitsky to Liov’
- c. umblându pentru domnie, au lăsat [nemŃii] și au trecut la leși (Ur 94v)
 searching for throne has left Germans.the and has crossed to Poles
 ‘in search for a throne, he left the Germans and crossed to the Poles’
- d. să să veselească toți și cinstiră [pre nemŃi],
 SBJV CL.3PL.ACC.REFL enjoy.SBJV.3PL all and honored DOM Germans
 ‘so all of them to enjoy themselves and honored the Germans’ (Ur 101v)

The contexts in which animate common nouns undergo DOM remain the same as in BB: comparative *ca* ‘as’ (33a), and salience for objects in situ (33b, 33c, 33d) or fronted (33e).

- (33) a. toți îl iubii ca [pre un parinte] (Ur 80v)
 all CL.3SG.ACC.M love.IMPF.3SG as DOM a.M.SG parent.M.SG
 al său] GEN.DEF.M.SG his
 ‘they all loved him as they would their parent’ - **comparative**
- b. au avut [doi ficiori], [pre Stefan] și [pe Pătru] (Ur 8v)
 have.AUX.3SG had two sons DOM Steven and DOM Pătru
 ‘he had two sons, Steven and Peter.’ - **apposition**
- c. au tăiat și [pe feciorii lui Arburie] (Ur 66v)
 have.AUX.3SG cut also DOM sons.the GEN.M.SG Arburie
 ‘he also decapitated Arburie’s sons’ - **contrastive focus**
- d. au bătut [pre o samă de oaste turcească] (Ur 116r)
 have.AUX.3SG beaten DOM a.F.SG some of army Turkish.F.SG
 ‘he has beaten part of the Turkish army’ - **information focus**
- e. [pre maica-sa] cu mare cinste o au trimis
 DOM mother-his.F.SG with high honor CL.ACC.F.SF have.AUX.3SG sent
 la domnu său (Ur 42r) - **CLLD**
 to king.the his.M.SG
 ‘the mother, he sent her to this king with great honors’

The importance of salience for DOM can be seen in asymmetric coordination where only one member of the coordination requires the spotlight and falls under DOM, whereas the other member remains unmarked, as in (34).

- (34) au trimis Dispot [nemții săi] și [pre o samă de moldoveni] (Ur 100v)
 have.AUX.3SG sent Despot Germans.the his and DOM a some of Moldavians
 ‘Despot has sent his Germans and a group of Moldavians’

The construction in (34) is similar to the asymmetric coordination seen in PO + Ev (ex. 20e), indicating that a hundred years later DOM still maintains its optionality with common nouns, despite its stabilization with pronouns and names.

However, when it comes to animate common nouns, DOM is excluded with those denoting animals, as in (35a, 35b), unlike what happens in BB. In fact, such nouns do not display *pre* even when they undergo CLLD, as in (35c). There is, thus, a reduction in the animacy range for DOM.

- (35) a. au ucis [acel bour] (Ur 8v)
 have.AUX.3SG killed that.DOM aurochs
 ‘he has killed that aurochs’
 b. au slăbitu [caii turcilor cei gingași] (Ur 26v)
 have.AUX.3SG weakened horses.the Turks.the.GEN those cute
 ‘he weakened the Turks’ cute horses’
 c. și [caii turcilor] au slăbitu, (Ur 31r)
 and horses.the Turk.the.GEN have weakened
 ‘and he weakened the Turks’ horses’

In sum, the Chronicles and Varlaam’s texts of the 17th century attest to the development of DOM under animacy as the main priming factor in a way that limits animacy to humanness (a tendency that is preserved in Modern Romanian). This development conforms to the animacy scale in Table 2 by showing complete stabilization of DOM for the highest nominal categories, and optional DOM for the subsequent categories. For the latter, the option for DOM further involves discourse priming, so that the topic accessibility scale of Table 2 is also relevant to this process. In particular, CLLD (i.e., fronting to topic/focus) was shown to be the earliest context (activation of the topicality scale) in which *pre* became systematic with preverbal direct objects, and which favored an ambiguous analysis of *pre* as case marker and/or DOM particle, with the latter analysis expanding during the century that separated PO-EV from the Chronicles.

One scale of Table 1 that has not been relevant to the discussion so far is the definiteness/specificity. Indeed, this feature was orthogonal to the option for DOM in Old Romanian, as could be noticed in the examples provided so far for constructions with or without DOM. For example, the direct objects in (36), display the definite article and have a specific reading, yet DOM does not apply in any of the three texts.

- (36) a. văzând Israil [feciorii lui Iosif] (BB {FacereaCapXLVIII})
 seeing Israil sons.the GEN.M.SG Joseph
 ‘Israel seeing Joseph’s sons’
 b. Din săraci și de rudă proastă și necărtulari alese Hristos [apostolii săi] (Var 221r)
 from poor and of family bad and unread chose Christ apostles.the his
 ‘Christ chose his apostles from the ranks of the poor, of the low-life families and of the uneducated’
 c. i-au luat dimpreuna si [doamna] si [fiica sa] (Ur 25v)
 CL.DAT.3SG-has taken together and wife.the and daughter.the his
 ‘he has taken his wife and his daughter together’

The insensitivity of DOM to the definiteness/specificity scale decreases towards Modern Romanian at the same time as the sensitivity to the topic accessibility scale also decreases. The context for this change is discussed in the next section.

6. Modern Romanian

This section presents the current results of DOM development in Romanian. The main observation is that DOM ceases to respond to salience but displays sensitivity to specificity and enhanced referentiality. That is, Romanian DOM changes the relevance of scales from topic accessibility to definiteness/specificity, showing loss of analyzability of *pre* as [d]. This change is related to the integration of clitic doubling in the *pre*-DOM construction, a process that was incipient in Old Romanian, as indicated in Table 2, but became predominant in Modern Romanian. The Modern Romanian data rely on current official grammars (GALR, 2008; GBLR, 2010; GR, 2013), current studies on Romanian DOM (Cornilescu, 2000; Mardale, 2009; Irimia, 2020; Tigău, 2020, a.o.) and the authors’ native speaker grammaticality judgments.

6.1. Clitic Doubling

Romance languages developed clitic pronouns out of Latin demonstrative and personal pronouns (Crysmann & Luís, 2024, a.o.), and Romanian makes no exception. Old Romanian displays clitic pronouns as substitutes to noun phrases (37a), as resumptive in constructions with CLLD (37b) and less frequently, as doubling the noun phrases in direct object position (37c).

- (37) a. cu dobândă va să ni-l ceară (BB {PrefațăXXI})
with interest will.3SG SBJV CL.DAT.PL1-CL.ACC.3SG.M ask.SBJV.3SG
‘he’s going to ask it from us with interest’
- b. pre frații lui nu i-au cunoscut (BB {LegeaIICapXXXIII})
DOM brothers.the his NEG CL.ACC.3PL.M -has known
‘he did not recognized his brothers’
- c. să nu le aduceți această Domnului (BB PreotiaXXII)
SBJV NEG CL.ACC.3PL.F bring.2PL these God.the.DAT
‘don’t bring these to God’

Clitic doubling (CD) as in (37c) and above in (2a) is the relevant configuration for the foregoing discussion since it represents a DOM strategy that does not involve a prenominal particle. More precisely, CD serves for DOM in Balkan languages and responds to definiteness/specificity, not to animacy (Hill & Mardale, 2021). The Balkan CD pattern is attested in Old Romanian in 16th century texts and in other religious translations such as BB cited in (37), but was unproductive and has disappeared by the 17th century. Crucially, although CD by itself, as in (37c), went out of use, it began to be integrated into DOM constructions with *pre*, as in (38).

- (38) i-au mântuit [pre ei] Domnul (BB {JudecătoriiCapII})
CL.ACC.3M.PL-has absolved DOM them God.the
‘God has absolved them’

The integration of CD with *pre*-DOM is measured in Table 2, which shows a relatively small number of tokens in the 17th century. However, this option became productive toward Modern Romanian (Hill & Mardale, 2021) to the extent that in the 21st century it became obligatory with pronouns, names and common nouns that undergo DOM.

6.2. Specificity and/or Definiteness as DOM Triggers

Considering the DOM criteria in Table 1, CD and *pre*-DOM contrast w.r.t the scales they conform to; that is, the definiteness/specificity scale for CD versus the animacy scale for *pre*-DOM. The integration of the two strategies entails a change in the priming factors by adding specificity to the animacy. This scale combination is firmly stabilized in the 20th century, as the illustrations below attest by contrasting the grammaticality requirements for DOM constructions in Old and Modern Romanian.

- Demonstratives and possessives

In Modern Romanian, animate nouns preceded by demonstratives or possessives, which are inherently specific, must be marked through both CD and *pe*-DOM in colloquial register or even without CD in a more archaic register (hence, the optionality brackets around clitics).

- (39) Am invitat(-o) [*(pe) această fată]// [*(pe) fata lui].
 have.1 invited.CL.ACC.F.SG DOM this.F.SG girl DOM girl.the his
 Intended: 'I've invited this girl//his daughter.'

DOM was not obligatory in similar contexts in Old Romanian in the absence of CD. Hence, the contrast between (39) and (40).

- (40) a. cine va cinsti [acesta] (Ev 226)
 who will.3SG honour this.M.SG
 'Who will honour this one'
 b. n-au luat om [muiarea lui] la războiu (BB {JudecătoriiCapXXI})
 NEG-AUX.3SG taken man wife.the his to war
 'no man has taken his wife to the war'

The main difference between (39) and (40) is that the former displays CD, with inherent specificity reading, whereas the latter does not. Hence, diachronically, once CD became productive in conjunction with *pe*-DOM, the definiteness/specificity requirement for DOM was generalized.

- Complex noun phrases

Complex noun phrases increase the degree of specificity through the contribution of various modifiers. This was not sufficient to introduce the specificity trigger for DOM in Old Romanian (41a), while the addition of CD to this configuration did so in Modern Romanian (41b).

- (41) a. chiamă înlăuntru [toți vrăjitorii Eghiptului]
 call.3SG inside all magicians.the Egypt.GEN
 'he calls all the magicians of Egypt inside'
 b. îi cheamă înlăuntru [pe toți vrăjitorii Egiptului]
 CL.ACC.M.PL call.3SG inside DOM all magicians.the Egypt.GEN
 'he calls all the magicians of Egypt inside'

- Ellipsis

In Modern Romanian, various nominal ellipsis contexts require DOM regardless of animacy; for example: the elliptical demonstrative (42a); the elliptical genitive (42b); some types of strong quantifiers (42c). DOM here can respond only to specificity, not necessarily to animacy.

- (42) a. Îl vreau [*(pe) acesta].
 CL.ACC.M.SG want.3SG DOM this.M.SG.AUG
 'I want this one.' (animate or inanimate)
 b. Îl vede [*(pe) al tău.]
 CL.ACC.M.SG see.3SG DOM GEN.M.SG your.SG
 'He sees yours.' (animate or inanimate)
 c. Le văd [*(pe) toate.]
 CL.ACC.F.PL see.1 DOM all.F.PL
 'I see them all.' (animate or inanimate)

Similar contexts display no DOM in Old Romanian, as shown in (43), unless the reference was to an animate entity and contextual salience was intended.

- (43) a. au auzit Domnul cum mă urăscu, și
 have.AUX.3PL heard God how CL.1SG.ACC hate.3PL and
 mi-au dat încă și [acesta]
 CL.1SG.DAT- have.AUX.3PL given even also this.M.SG.AUG
 ‘God has heard how they hate me and he gave me also this on top’
 (BB {FacereaCapXXIX})
- b. Să nu răpim [a striinilor], nici [al său] (EV 346)
 SBJV NEG steal.1PL GEN.F.SG strangers.the.GEN nor GEN.M.SG his
 ‘we should not steal what belongs to strangers or to our kin’
- c. eu în locul lui săvârși-voiu [toate], EV 571
 I in place.the his implement-will.1 all.F.PL
 ‘I will implement them all instead of him’

In sum, DOM sensitivity to definiteness/specificity coincides with the presence of CD in the derivation. Hence, CD introduced the definiteness/specificity as a priming factor for DOM, in addition to animacy. An important observation is that the productivity of the CD+*pe*-DOM combination led to grammaticalization in the sense that DOM applied irrespective of the discourse context, as a condition of grammaticality rather than a discursive option. That is, salience became irrelevant for the application of DOM, as this process became compulsory for pronouns, names, common nouns in complex phrases and various modifiers to elided nouns with specific interpretation. Instead of a salient reading, such nominal phrases bring referential content that generally resumes a noun phrase previously introduced in the discourse (serving for discourse continuity in terms of Chiriacescu & von Heusinger, 2010, instead of discourse saliency).

Table 2 indicates that the combination of CD and *pre*-DOM is attested since the first preserved texts (i.e., PO and EV here), but its incidence was generally low over the entire period of Old Romanian. There are slightly more tokens of CD+*pre*-DOM in PO and EV than in the texts of the 17th century. This could be expected considering that PO and EV also attest more use of CD alone compared to the other texts. So there was ambiguity in the DOM options at the same time as the *pre*-DOM option was also emerging out of the loss of *pre* as a case assigner to selected noun phrases. However, once *pre*-DOM has stabilized in the 17th century, the CD+*pre*-DOM combination became unproductive, and was resuscitated later (i.e., starting in the 19th century; Hill & Mardale, 2021). In sum, considering the discourse effects identified for DOM in the 16th and the 17th centuries, *pre*-DOM emerged as a contrastive option to the unproductive CD: *pre*-DOM was foregrounding whereas CD was backgrounding the direct object (by resuming the referentiality of preceding items previously introduced in the discourse). The revival of CD in conjunction with *pre*-DOM must have occurred when the salient force of *pre* began to wear out.

6.3. Formalization

Clitics come in the derivation with inherent features preserved from the Latin etymon. More precisely, the Romanian clitics arise from the Latin pronominal series of *ille*, whose semantic feature composition is identified in Ledgeway (2012) as [+definite, -particularize, +given]. Accordingly, Romanian clitics systematically introduce definiteness and givenness, in addition to the formal features they respond to (i.e., object agreement) and irrespective of the syntactic function they fulfil (i.e., substitutes, resumptives, doubling). Hence, their interpretive effect is backgrounding and familiarity, and no formal discourse feature is needed in syntax for such a reading to arise.

This contrasts with the formal (vs inherent) [animacy] and [d] features of *pre* which, after the stabilization of DOM in the 17th century, catered to salient readings. As long as the association between [d] and *pre* was prevailing in the speakers’ grammar, there was no much room for a switch to DOM with CD. However, the main priming factor for *pre*-

DOM was animacy, whereas [d] was secondary, being relevant only to the lower nominal categories of the animacy scale. As the productivity of *pre*-DOM increased and spread to more discourse contexts, the readings became ambiguous between saliency and neutral, and the association between [d] and *pre* weakened, that is, [d] became underspecified.

For example, the text in (44) taken from a 19th century narrative displays two instances of DOM. While the first DOM occurrence can be justified insofar as it situates the constituent in the spotlight, and hence, the salient interpretation, the second DOM occurrence has no discourse justification, as the constituent would receive a similar interpretation if the unmarked counterpart was used in that particular paragraph.

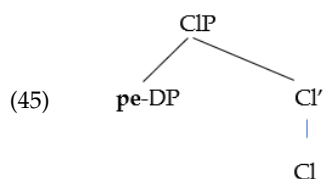
(44) să	fi văzut	[pe neobositul	părinte]	cum	umbla	
SBJV	be seen	DOM relentless.the	priest	as	walked.IMPF.3SG	
prin	sat	din casă în casă,		împreună		cu bădița Vasile a Ilioaiei,
through	village	from house to house		together		with uncle Vasile of Ilioaia
dascălul		bisericii,	un holtei zdravăn, frumos	și		voinic,
usher.the		church.GEN	a bachelor healthy handsome	and		sturdy
și sfătuia		[pe oameni] să-și	dea	copiii		la învățătură.
and advised		DOM people SBJV-CL.REFL.3PL	send.SBJV.3SG children.the			to school
‘you should have seen our relentless priest going through the village from house to house, together with the church usher, Uncle Vasile of Ilioaia (mother’s name), who was a healthy, handsome and sturdy bachelor, and advised the people to send their children to school.’						

(IC I)

Generally, a remarkable change appearing in IC’s narrative is that some nominal classes which displayed optional DOM in 17th century texts have obligatory DOM here; e.g., nouns denoting family relations (‘mother’, ‘father’, ‘daughter’, ‘aunt’) and quantifiers with or without the modified noun (‘each’, ‘all’, ‘many’). This extension is seen irrespective of the discourse context, which points to the dissociation of [d] from *pre*, as the salient value of [d] becomes diluted and ambiguous.

The incidence of CD is still low relative to the *pe*-DOM alone in this text (i.e., 33 *pe*-DOM vs. 11 CD+*pe*-DOM), but much higher compared to the CD + DOM in the 17th century texts in Table 2. Within the CD + DOM group, there are 5 quantifiers, 4 common nouns, 1 personal pronoun and 1 possessive ellipsis. This distribution suggests that CD affected first the nominal categories that are lower on the animacy scale and also low in referential content. The clitic contributes specificity to these categories by relating them to nouns previously introduced in the discourse.

From a syntactic perspective, the conjunction of CD and *pe*-DOM entails the configuration in (45).



In (45), *pe* remains associated with animacy but its underspecified [d] feature obtains its value from the local Spec-head configuration with the clitic; hence, *pe* becomes dependent on the definiteness/specificity of the clitic. Since CIP merges in the clause derivation in response to the object agreement feature of the TAM heads, the clitic undergoes movement and surfaces higher than *pe*-DP in the linear order (i.e., CD = Cl > *pe*-DP).

In sum, in Modern Romanian, the feature composition of *pe* in DOM constructions underwent a slight but consequential change insofar as discourse salience ceased to be a priming factor for DOM and the [d] feature became weak (underspecified) and/or completely dissociated from *pe*. The gap was filled by CD, which introduced a new priming factor for DOM, that is, definiteness/specificity.

7. Conclusions

The data presented in this paper indicate that, diachronically, *pre* has been associated with and dissociated from a series of formal features when it preceded a selected DP. More precisely, in this syntactic context, the 16th century texts provide evidence for the an ambiguous status of *pre* as case marker or incipient DOM marker catering to animacy. This is the stage in which the [case] feature is dissociated from *pre* as the [animacy] feature gradually replaces it. In 17th (and 18th) century texts, the analysis of *pre* as DOM particle is stabilized, the feature bundle associated with it is [animacy] and [d], and the priming factors can be identified as animacy and various types of discourse salience. In the background of this development of DOM persists a CD possibility, at an unproductive level. This option surfaces in the 19th century when the [d] feature of *pe* is worn out, and DOM extends as compulsory to more nominal categories than in the previous century. CD is revived in conjunction with *pe* and triggers a change in the priming factors for DOM, by introducing definiteness/specificity in addition to animacy, as the [d] feature is gradually dissociated from *pe*.⁵

The loss of analyzability approach allowed us to capture the gradual change in the feature composition of *pre* as a DOM particle, since the texts display intra- and inter-speaker variations that indicate concurrent different analyses of this element during centuries. The context of use provided important clues for the path of DOM development, e.g., it indicated a predominant option for *pre*-DP under CLLD/topic reading in the emerging stage, followed by the pairing of *pre*-DP with the placement of the object in the spotlight even in post-verbal positions. From this perspective, the preservation of the feature composition of *pe* with adjunct DPs but not with the selected ones becomes predictable as the two syntactic environments cater to different contexts of use.

Corpus

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- CM Dragomir, Otilia (ed). 2006. *Constantin Cantacuzino, Istoria Țării Românești*. București: Editura Academiei Române.
- DÎ Chivu, Gheorghe et al. (eds). 1979. *Documente și însemnări românești din secolul al XVI-lea*. București: Editura Academiei Române.
- DRH Pascu, Ștefan et al. (eds). 2003. *Documenta Romaniae Historica*. (17th-19th c.). București: Editura Academiei Române.
- E Ursu, Nicolae A (ed). 1969. *D. Eustatievici Brașoveanul. Gramatica rumânească (1757)*. București: Editura Științifică.
- EV Pușcariu, Sextil & Procopovici, Alexie (eds). 1914. *Carte cu învățătură (1581)*. București: Atelierele Grafice Socec & Co.
- IC Creangă, Ion.1892 [2010]. *Amintiri din copilărie*. București: Editura Gramar.
- ITZ Eeden, van W. (ed). 1985. *Învățătură preste toate zilele (1642)*. Amsterdam: Rodopi
- PO Pamfil, Viorica (ed). 1968. *Palia de la Orăștie (1581–1582)*. București: Editura Academiei Române.
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Notes

- ¹ Note that the accusative case morphology remains in place as the entire DP receives accusative case from the functional structure of the verb.
- ² Discourse *salience* is the degree of emphasis, prominence, or attention given to a particular piece of information or idea within a communication (Dalrymple & Nikolaeva, 2011, a.o.) and so it includes the topic accessibility scale of Table 1.
- ³ Some speakers can only accept the unmarked form in (18c, 18d) with a hanging topic interpretation while others accept it as an aboutness topic.
- ⁴ In the literature, a *scale reversal* in relation to Table 1 was also noticed and quantified: the emergence of DOM appears to have favored names before pronouns, and within the pronoun class, 3rd person before 1st and 2nd, contradicting the scale hierarchies in Table 1. The scales were however re-established once DOM became productive (Avram & Zafiu, 2017; von Heusinger & Onea, 2008). For a formal explanation of scales reversal in Romanian and Catalan see Irimia and Pineda (2021).
- ⁵ An interesting approach, reserved for further research, would compare the diachrony of DOM with the stages of L1 acquisition of this construction, such as discussed in Avram et al. (2024a, 2024b), to verify to what degree ontology reflects phylogeny at least w.r.t. this particular case study.

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