The syntactic locus of definiteness in the Balkan languages: from enclitic articles to polydefinite constructions

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1. Background

One of the best known morphosyntactic Balkanisms – identified by Miklosic (1861) and specific to most of the Balkan languages (cf. Mišeska Tomić 2006:27, Table 3) – is the enclitic article/postpositive definite article, which has been analysed as a suffix by Dobrovie Sorin & Giurgea (2006).

2. Proposal

The existence of a suffixal definite article is an element of surface analogy. In a generative framework which views nominal expressions as DPs (Abney 1987 and much ssq. work), by contrasting the DP-internal distribution of the definite article in Romanian and Bulgarian, Nicolae (2019) proposes that <u>definiteness is a property of N in Romanian</u> (i.e. Romanian nouns enter the syntactic derivation with the definiteness feature specified in their matrix – cf. also Cornilescu & Nicolae 2011, Ledgeway 2017) and a <u>property of D in Bulgarian</u> (the article is generated in D and the highest [+N] constituent of the DP hosts it – cf. Koev 2011). This divide correctly derives the patterns of definiteness realization in Romanian and Bulgarian, along with accounting for the existence of several other phenomena – several types of polydefinite constructions (structures in which the definite article shows up more than once in a DP) (1) and the availability of freestanding (/adjectival/demonstrative) articles (2) – in Romanian, but not in Bulgarian.

(1)	săracu <u>l</u>	băiatu <u>l</u>		ăsta	/	meu	(modern Romanian)
	poor.DEF	boy.DEF		this		my	
	'this/my poor boy'						
(2)	mașinile	cele	vechi				(modern Romanian)
	cars.DEF	DEF	old				
	'the old cars'						

3. Objectives of the paper

- (a) <u>A theoretical objective</u>: to show how the empirical phenomena mentioned above (but also other ones) are explained by the theoretical proposal.
- (b) <u>An empirical objective</u>. It is documented that some Romance idioms spoken in the south of the Danube (Arvantovlaxika, cf. Campos 2005) and Albanian (Campos 2009) possess some of the empirical phenomena mentioned above (e.g. cf. polydefiniteness in Arvantovlaxika (3) and freestanding/adjectival articles in Albanian (4)). However, to our knowledge, a comprehensive investigation of the distribution of polydefiniteness and freestanding definite articles has not been carried out to date. This is the main objective of the present paper. Whenever possible, diachronic data will be also provided.
- (3) a. cum aia câsi<u>li</u> vecli<u>li</u> (Arvantovlaxika, Campos 2005) since they-had houses.DEF old.DEF 'since they had the old houses'

- b. pul'i<u>li</u> (atsel'i) ñits<u>li</u> (Arvantovlaxika, Campos 2005) bird.DEF those small.DEF 'the small bird'
- (4) librat e rinj (Albanian, Campos 2009) books DEF new 'the new books'

On the basis of these findings, we revisit the theoretical proposal concerning the locus of definiteness encoding in the architecture of the DP across the Balkan languages, adjusting it to provide a better understanding of one of the most notorious Balkanisms, the enclitic definite article.

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