Pe-marking and Referential Persistence
in Romanian

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Abstract

The fact that in Romanian a direct object is sometimes morphologically marked by the particle *pe* and sometimes not is a long attested phenomenon. Diverse studies on Differential Object Marking (DOM) explained most occurrences of *pe* as a case marker by means of the features animacy, definiteness, and specificity. The only cases left unexplained are those in which a direct object realized as an unmodified definite or indefinite nominal phrase are optionally marked, whereby the difference in meaning between the two alternative constructions is subtle though significant.

Post-verbal indefinite human direct objects are optionally *pe*-marked. Based on a synchronic study, we will show that besides specificity, discourse prominence also influences the case-marking of indefinite direct objects. Case marked indefinite direct objects show the property of "referential persistence", i.e. a direct object introduced by an indefinite *pe*-marked nominal phrase will be more often taken up in the subsequent discourse than its unmarked counterpart. In conclusion, we will add another feature to the local parameters triggering DOM another feature, namely discourse prominence.

1   Introduction

As in many other languages, direct objects are differentially marked in Romanian. The syntactic position of the direct object realized by means of a nominal phrase is compatible with two forms of expression, namely a non- marked and a marked form. The latter form is morphologically realized by means of the particle *pe*. The former autonomous lexeme *pe* with a directional meaning underwent a process of decategorization becoming a grammatical marker of the direct object (see Mardale 2002 for a synthesis of the discussions on this theme). However, even if *pe* shares some properties of prepositions, it does not have a prepositional meaning.

The decision in favor of one of the two realization forms depends on the characteristics of the entity that is realized as a direct object. Animacy, definiteness, specificity, and topicality are the factors that are considered to be the main triggers of the marked direct object form. DOM-marking starts at the more prominent part of these scales, covering areas of different length (Farkas 1978, Dobrovie-Sorin 1994, von Heusinger & Onea 2008). So, whether a direct object will be obligatorily, optionally or never marked by *pe* depends on the amount of features reunited in the object in cause.

However, even if the factors licensing DOM as well as its development have been amply discussed in the literature so far (Cornilescu 2001, Chiriacescu 2007, Stark& Sora 2008), there still remained certain constructions that could not be accounted for by means of the above mentioned factors. These not elucidated cases involve direct objects realized by means of a post-verbal unmodified definite or indefinite nominal phrase. In such cases, both the marked and the unmarked direct object constructions coexist, whereby the difference in meaning between the two forms is difficult to analyze.

In the present paper we will focus on direct objects realized as indefinite nominal phrases which involve alternations not clearly delimitated/ explained alternations between a *pe*-marked and an unmarked construction. The examples (1) illustrate the above mentioned variation. The common context sentence (A) can be continued either as in (1a) where the indefinite direct object is *pe*-marked, or as in (1b) where the indefinite direct object is not preceded by *pe*:

(1)   A: Ce face Petru? (What does Peter do?)
       a.   Petru îl   vizitează   pe   un   prieten
             Peter CL   visits   PE   a   friend
             'Peter visits a friend.'
       b.   Petru vizitează   un   prieten
             Peter visits   a   friend
             'Peter visits a friend.'

Constructions as the one presented above underline the limitations as well as the insufficiency of the general acknowledged criteria that trigger DOM to account for the controversial cases of *pe*-marking in Romanian. Not considering arbitrariness for such cases of free variation, we believe that a more detailed picture of the principles involved in *pe*-marking arises form an analysis of the particular discourse context where these constructions occur. Consequently, we propose the introduction of an additional discourse- based parameter, to explain more subtle differences such as those within "minimal pairs"- the ones involving indefinite unmodified noun phrases.

It is generally assumed that the form of the DP or the DP-type (proper name, definite NP etc.) reflects different accessibility relations between the expression and the referent introduced earlier in the text. This relation is often generalized in the form of "Accessibility Hierarchies" or "Givenness Hierarchies". In cases like these, the form of the DP "looks backwards". We hypothesize that there are also formal means to determine the activation level of the referent introduced by the expression, i.e. the form of the DP "looks forward" and simultaneously gives some structural information to the discourse. Furthermore, we show that *pe*-marking in Romanian displays the property of "referential persistence" of a referent introduced by a direct object, i.e. the number of occurrences of co-referential expression in the following text. This claim is weaker than to assume that DOM reflects topicality.

In Section 2 we will take a look at the local parameters that license the differential marking of objects in Romanian. In this sense, we will enumerate the contexts in which different type of NPs can be *pe*-marked, focusing on definite and indefinite

expressions. Global parameters such as the lexical semantics of the verb, secondary predication etc. will be excluded from the present analysis. In the last part of this section we will analyze two 'parallel contexts' which introduce an indefinite NP into the context. We notice that differentially marked direct objects receive some preferential treatment in the production and perception of a discourse. In Section 3 we will sketch out the concepts of topic continuity and accessibility, which will represent the staring point for the analysis of the discursive nature of the *pe*-marked indefinite NPs. A special emphasis will be put on the concept of discourse prominence and its subcomponent referential persistence. In Section 4 we will show that p*e*-marked direct objects realized as indefinite NPs are taken up in the subsequent discourse more often than their unmarked counterparts, signalizing a higher degree of activation. Section 5 contains the summary of our findings and the concluding remarks, as well as some open remained questions.

2   Local factors determining DOM

As we have already stated in the introductory part of this paper, animacy, definiteness and specificity are the three main factors that determine the *pe*-marking of a direct object. In the following, we will briefly enumerate the distribution of *pe* as a case marker along these scales, however, at the heart of the discussion will be entities realized as definite or indefinite direct objects in postverbal position. Furthermore, we will also have to generalize over many exceptions because of lack of space. For a detailed picture of this distribution, see Farkas (1978), Gramatica Academiei Române (2005), Chiriacescu (2007), von Heusinger & Onea (2008), Stark & Sora (2008), among others.

The *pe*-marked direct object is usually doubled by a co-indexed unstressed / weak pronoun like in (6a). Accusative clitics are disallowed without *pe*-marked objects in post-verbal position as in the sentence (6b). Whenever the direct object occupies a post-verbal position, the doubling of the clitic generally correlates with the *pe*-marking. So, DOM marked pronouns, proper names and definite NPs are doubled by a clitic while DOM-marked indefinite NPs can occur both with and without a clitic. Nevertheless, the construction in which the direct object is doubled by a clitic is used more often (see Gramatica Academiei Române 2005, Chiriacescu 2007, von Heusinger & Onea 2008).

2.1   Animacy

The table in (2) illustrates the distinction between human and non-human objects in relation to DOM. Animate objects (animals) may only go to the human site if they are highly relevant for humans, otherwise they remain unmarked.
Few non-human direct objects receive *pe*-marking.

(2)   Animacy scale for *pe*-marking in Romanian

human	*> no- human*
most DOs	*ø*

At the present stage of the evolution of the language, *pe*-marking typically targets those direct objects which denote human entities. This prediction points the acceptability of sentences such as that in (3a), and the ungrammaticality of those as the one in (3b):

(3)   a.   Am   văzut -o   pe   femeia   frumoasă
                Aux.   saw   CL   PE   woman   beautiful
                'I saw the beautiful woman.'
        b.   *Am   văzut -o   pe   pisica frumoasă
                Aux.   saw   CL   PE   cat   beautiful
                'I saw the beautiful cat.'

2.2   Personal pronouns and proper names

Personal pronouns referring to animate entities are always marked with *pe* and doubled by a clitic in present-day Romanian:

(4)   El   o   iubeste pe   ea
        He   CL   loves   PE   she
        'He loves her.'

Direct objects realized as reflexive pronouns, the interrogative and relative pronouns *care* and *cine* ("that/ who") referring to animates as well as inanimates, demonstrative pronouns (except *asta* "this".FEM.SG referring to neuter nouns) are also preceded by *pe*. The negative pronoun *nimeni* ("nobody") and the indefinite pronouns are also differentially marked with *pe* when they replace a noun referring to an individual.
Proper names referring to humans or strongly individuated, personified animals are regularly case marked with *pe* when they appear in the direct object position:

(5)   Am   văzut o   pe   Maria/ Lassie
        Aux.   saw   CL   PE   Mary/ Lassie
        'I saw Mary/ Lassie.'

Exceptions from this rule are proper names referring to names of countries or cities, even if these names are used metonymically, denoting the inhabitants of a city.

2.3   Definite nominal phrases

The examples in (6a) and (6b) below intend to exemplify the possible alternations with definite modified NPs, starting from the common context sentence (A), which licenses

the definiteness of the direct object in the subsequent sentences. The direct object *o fată brunetă* ('a brunette girl') introduced by means of an indefinite NP in the context sentence (A) is taken up in the continuation sentences (6a) and (6b) by means of the same definite NP which is modified by the adjective *brunetă* ('brunette'). If no other semantic and/or syntactic restrictions are present in the sentence, definite NPs that are further modified, generally take the case-marker *pe,* as in (6a). Constructions of the other type, in which the modified direct object is not *pe-* marked, like in (6b), tend not to be preferred:

(6)   A: O fată brunetă întâlneşte fata blondă.(A brunette girl meets the
            blonde girl).

a.	Fata	blondă *o*	salută *pe*	*fata*	*brunetă*
	Girl.DEF	blonde CL	salutes PE	girl.DEF	brunette

'The blonde girl salutes the brunette girl.'

b.	Fata	blondă	salută *fata*	*brunetă*
	Girl.DEF	blonde	salutes girl.DEF	brunette

'The blonde girl salutes the brunette girl.'

The *pe*-marked direct object is usually doubled by a co-indexed unstressed / weak pronoun like in (6a). Accusative clitics are disallowed without *pe*-marked objects in post-verbal position as in the sentence (6b). Whenever the direct object occupies a post-verbal position, the doubling of the clitic generally correlates with the *pe*-marking, the referentiality scale and animacy. So, DOM marked pronouns, proper names and definite NPs are doubled by a clitic while DOM-marked indefinite NPs can occur both with and without a clitic. Nevertheless, the construction in which the direct object is doubled by a clitic is used more often (see Gramatica Academiei Române 2005, Chiriacescu 2007, von Heusinger & Onea 2008).

      At sentence level, DOM is disallowed whenever the definite direct object (whether further modified or not) is modified by a possessive Dative that occurs in preverbal position. Furthermore, when a definite unmodified direct object is suffixed by the definite article in the absence of further modifiers, the *pe*-marking is also blocked. However, to keep the story simple, we will neither explain nor enumerate the blocking effects and the exceptions found within the class of definite unmodified NPs. It suffices to emphasize at this point that, in the case of direct objects realized by means of a definite nominal phrase, Romanian language users can generally choose between two constructions, like the ones in (7a) and (7b) below:

(7)   A: O fată întâlneşte un prieten (A girl meets a friend).

a.	Prietenul	o	salută	pe	fată
	Friend.DEF	CL	salutes	PE	girl

'The friend salutes the girl.'

b.	Prietenul	salută	fata
	Friend.DEF	salutes	girl.DEF

'The friend salutes the girl.'

Both (7a) and (7b) are grammatical and have the same propositional content. Depending on the context, speakers tend to prefer one construction over the other.

Such cases which were only marginally discussed in the literature so far are amply analyzed in our next article (von Heusinger & Chiriacescu, to appear).

2.4   Indefinite nominal phrases

In the case of post-verbal, indefinite human direct objects, pe-marking is optional; however, the parameters that might influence the DOM-marking are not quite clear, this being a typical instance of "fluid" constraints (see de Malchukov & de Hoop 2007, de Swart 2007). In what follows, we test different types of specificity: scopal specificity with intensional and extensional operators and epistemic specificity in transparent contexts.

Scopal specificity, whether with extensional or intentional operators, triggers pe-marking. While the sentence (8a) is ambiguous between a specific reading (or wide scope) and a non-specific (or narrow scope) reading, the non-specific reading in (8b) is ruled out due to the presence of pe (Dobrovie-Sorin 1994). The variation between wide and narrow scope is maintained for constructions with intentional operators, like in (9):

(8)   Extensional operators (universal quantifiers)
    a.   Toți   bărbații   iubesc   o   femeie
          All   men   love   a   woman
          'All men love a woman.' (specific/ non-specific)
    b.   Toți   bărbații   o   iubesc pe   o   femeie
          All   men   CL   love   PE   a   woman
          'All men love a/ this woman.' (only specific)

(9)   Intensional operators
    a.   Ion   caută   o   secretară
          John   looks for   a   secretary
          'John looks for a secretary.' (specific/ non-specific)
    b.   Ion   o   caută   pe   o   secretară
          John   CL   looks for   PE   a   secretary
          'John looks for a secretary.' (only specific)

The indefinite NP o secretară ('a secretary') in (9a) could refer to a specific as well as a non-specific individual, while the sentence (9b) only allows a specific interpretation of the individual introduced in the sentence by means of a morphologically marked indefinite direct object.

In a "transparent" context, the contrast between (10a) and (10b) may be explained with epistemic specificity. While in (10a) the particular circumstances of the referent for a friend are not important, (10b) has a reading in which the speaker may or wish to communicate more information of the direct object. The situation becomes

even more complex, since we find, though marginally, examples like (10c) with pe, but without clitic doubling.

(10)   Transparent context
        a.   Petru   a   vizitat un   prieten
                Petru   Aux.   visited a   friend
                'Petru visited a friend.'
        b.   Petru   l   -a   vizitat pe   un   prieten
                Petru   CL   Aux.   visited PE   a   friend
                'Petru visited a friend.'
c.   Petru   a   vizitat pe   un   prieten
                Petru   Aux.   visited PE   a   friend
                'Petru visited a friend.'

This very interesting variation hints towards are more complex systems of contrasts (see von Heusinger & Onea 2008 for a detailed analysis). We will concentrate in the following on the variation between (10a) and (10b), which is not sufficiently described by epistemic specificity.

The discourse factor of topicality is also a strong trigger of the differential marking of direct objects. In cases like in (11a) below, the direct object becomes highlighted, playing a special role within the current discourse due to its topicalization and because of the pe-marker. If the sentence is constructed with a topical object, in the absence of the DOM-marker pe, like in (11b), then the object loses its special status:

(11)   Topicality
        a.   Pe   un   băiat   îl   strigau   părinții
                PE   a   boy   CL   called   parents
                'A boy was called by the parents.'
        b.   Un   băiat   strigau   părinții
                A   boy   calls   parents
                'A boy was called by the parents.'

Topicality seems not to be general enough to account for the not elucidated examples like that in (10).

2.5   Summary

The next table (12) comprises the referential contexts in which direct objects are *pe*-marked in Romanian. Besides the type of phrase through which the objects are realized, the table also makes a clear distinction in the domain of indefinite nominal phrases with respect to specificity. So, indefinite non-specific NPs are not differentially marked.

(12)   Referentiality Scale for *pe*-marking in Romanian for human direct objects

pers. pron.	*> propr. noun*	*> def. NP*	*> indef. spec. NP*	*> indefinite non-spec.NP*
obligatory		*obligatory (with exceptions)*	*optional*	*ø*

As we could see so far, besides situations in which the morphologically marked form and the unmarked one are in complementary distribution (as it was the case with pronouns and proper names), excluding one another, there are also cases of free variation which allow both forms. Definite NPs are usually preceded by *pe* but examples in which the *pe*-marked form co-occurs with the unmarked form exist. (For an extensive discussion of these constructions, see von Heusinger & Chiriacescu, to appear).

Unmodified indefinites in direct object position are optionally marked with *pe*. We could see above, that specificity is a factor which 'disambiguates' contexts in which both, the *pe*-marked and the unmarked form, are allowed. So, on the one hand, the absence of the marker before an indefinite human object is compatible with a specific and non-specific interpretation of the NP in question. On the other hand, an indefinite NP object preceded by *pe* is interpreted as referring to a specific entity.

However, animacy, definiteness and specificity cannot thoroughly account for the distribution of *pe* with the free variation found in the domain of unmodified indefinites in contexts like that in (10). Neither topicality, nor other global parameters (like the lexical properties of the governing verb or secondary predications, etc.) are general enough or useful to explain the variation found with indefinites.

In what follows, we will account for the problematic examples involving indefinites by adding a more general parameter on the list of the factors licensing DOM in Romanian. We will use the gradual concept of "topic continuity" introduced by Givon (1981), to show that *pe*- marked indefinites are more prominent in the discourse than their unmarked counterparts.

3   Topic continuity, accessibility, and indefinite reference

Before the seminal work of Givon, the concept of topic was understood in an intuitive way, a sentence was therefore conceived as containing at most one topic. Givon (1981, 1983) was the first to introduce the graded concept of "topic continuity" (the situation in which the same topic extends over several clauses) for the behavior of discourse referents across more than one sentence. This behavior is mirrored by the form of

referential expressions used, as it can be seen in (13). He showed that an entity realized as a zero anaphor is an accessible topic and is most continuous, while an indefinite NP is less accessible and therefore usually discontinuous.

(13)   zero anaphors   indef.NPs

[most continuous/ accessible topic]   [discontinuous/ less accessible topic]

Assuming that more important referents tend to be more anaphorically accessible and cataphorically persistent, Givon (1981, 1983) proposed three measures for referential continuity. The three "measurements of topic continuity" listed by Givon (1983) and repeated by us in (14), correlate with the form and type of reference used:

(14)   Three factors of "topic continuity"
    i.   *Referential Distance / Look back*
    ii.   *Potential Interference/ Ambiguity / Competition*
    iii.   *Persistence/ Look forward*

The first factor, "referential distance" (i) determines how recently an entity has been mentioned, by looking at the sentences on the left of the referent. The second factor that plays a role in the activation of a referent is the so called "potential interference" (ii) which can arise between semantically compatible referents. The third factor "persistence" (iii) measures how long the entity will remain in the discourse after it was introduced for the first time. The way in which an entity is referred to reflects the speaker's intentions about the role this entity will play in the subsequent discourse. These measures determine the activation status of the referent in question. Because the first and the third factor often overlap and the second is not relevant for the present analysis, we will only look at the "persistence" of a referent introduced in the discourse.

3.1   Referential Distance and Accessibility Hierarchies

Accessibility/ giveness/ salience theories offer a procedural analysis of the referring expressions, as marking different degrees of mental accessibility. In this framework, where "accessibility" is regarded as a gradient category rather than a categorical one, as in DRT, a discourse referent can be more or less accessible. The basic idea behind this theory is that referring expressions are actually accessibility markers by giving evidence to the addressee on how to retrieve the appropriate mental representation for an entity. In conclusion, the referential form of the referent mirrors its accessibility status and its prominence in the discourse. There have been many attempts to capture the correlation between the accessibility of an entity and the referential expression through which this entity is realized, for example Prince's (1981) "Familiarity Scale", Ariel's (1988) "Accessibility Hierarchy" or Gundel, Hedland & Zacharski's (1993) "Giveness Hierarchy" which is exemplified in (15).

(15)   Givenness Hierarchy (Gundel, Hedland & Zacharski 1993)

in focus >	activated >	familiar >	uniquely identifiable	> referential >	type identifiable
it	*that, this*	*that* N *this* N	*the* N	indefinite *this* N	*a* N

more accessible ⟵——————————————⟶ less accessible

This approach suggests that the mental accessibility of an entity has a strong impact upon the reference form which will be chosen to refer to it. The examples 16 (a-f) show the relation between the referential form and the mental accessibility of the referent it designates:

(16)   a.   I couldn't sleep last night. **It** kept me awake.
       b.   I couldn't sleep last night. **That** kept me awake.
       c.   I couldn't sleep last night. **That dog** (next door) kept me awake.
       d.   I couldn't sleep last night. **The dog** (next door) kept me awake.
       e.   I couldn't sleep last night. **This dog** (next door) kept me awake.
       f.   I couldn't sleep last night. **A dog** (next door) kept me awake.

The hearer of the (16f) sentence only has to know what a dog looks like to understand the least restrictive construction "a dog". However, the hearer of a sentence like that in (16a) cannot understand the most restrictive form "it" unless s/he has a concrete mental representation of the dog the speaker is talking about. It is the correlation between different mental representations and the referring expression that are important in Gundel's approach.

As it became obvious in (15) above, there are two determiners which can precede a NP in English in a specific indefinite context: the indefinite article *a* and the determiner *this* (the referential and not the deictic *this* determiner). However, these two forms cannot be used interchangeably. Ionin (2006) notes that besides their different scopal behavior (*this*-determiners do not take narrow scope with respect to intensional or modal operators and negations), the two forms also differ with respect to the noteworthiness property. The examples 17(a) and (b) underline the latter difference:

(17)   a.   He put √a/ #this 3$ stamp on the envelope, so he wants to send the
               letter.
       b.   He put √a/ √this 3$ stamp on the envelope and realized only afterwards
               that it was worth 100$.

If the speaker uses *this* over *a* in (17a), s/he conveys additional information about the NP headed by the determiner. Accordingly, the hearer expects that the speaker will talk about the stamp again, perhaps explaining what the noteworthy quality of the stamp is. Because this expectation remains unfulfilled in (17a) in contrast to (17b), the usage of *this* is rendered infelicitous. So, in the so called "transparent context" as in

(17), a noteworthy referent can be preceded by *this* if it will be implicitly or explicitly referred again (c.f. Prince 1981).

We will see in Section 4. that the apparent optionality of the *pe*-marked construction and the unmarked one can be explained (in most contexts) in a similar manner as the variability presented above.

3.2 Discourse prominence and the grammaticalization of the indefinite article

Indefinite expressions do not "look back" or refer to already introduced referents in the same way as definite expression. Therefore, Ariel (1988) does not include indefinite expression into her scale. However, as already stated, Gundel et al. (1993) assume two kinds of indefinite NPs - one specific and one non-specific. Givon (1981) and Wright & Givon (1987) give more types of indefinites in order to explain the development of the indefinite article at different stages. They distinguish between specific and non-specific uses of indefinite expressions, among others. However, they observe that specificity (understood as referentiality) cannot be applied to the contrast between two forms in simple (transparent) sentences in the past tense, as in (18) and (19) (Givon 1981: 36):

(18) ba   hena ish-*xad* etmol   ve-hitxil   le-daber   ve-hu
                                                                     Street Hebrew
      came here man-*one* yesterday   and-started to-talk   and-he
      'A man came in yesterday and started talking and he […].'

(19) ba   hena ish   etmol,   lo   isha   Street Hebrew
      came here man   yesterday,   not   woman
      'A man came in, not a woman!'

Givon (1981: 36) comments on the example (for stage 1 of the indefinite article):

"The presentative formula in (1) [= (18)], with VS syntax, introduces a new referential argument into the discourse in subject position and that argument remains salient, it is 'talked about'. The subject of (2) [= (19)] is *logically* just as referential, but *pragmatically* its exact identity is *incidental* to the communication. Rather its *type membership* or *generic* properties is the gist of the communication. In Street Hebrew 'one' – in its reduced, de-stressed form – is obligatory used in (1) but cannot be used in (2)."

Wright & Givon (1987, 12-13) argue that the pragmatic or discourse concept of "referential importance" must not be confounded with the semantic concept of "referentiality" or the information structural concept of "topic". Rather, they account for it by the following "measurable concepts":

(20)   Parameters for "referential importance" Givon & Wright (1987, 12-13)
      i.   Text frequency: Total number of occurrences in the text.
      ii.   Persistence: number of occurrences in the ten clauses directly
            following the first occurrence in the discourse
      iii.   Thematic importance: as judged by native speakers
      iv.   Semantics status: referential vs. non-referential

The "presentational" use of indefinite expressions is the starting point for the development of an indefinite article in many languages. In the next section we investigate the effects of *pe*-marking in terms of its persistence and text frequency.

4   Referential persistence

In this section we will illustrate the persistence of a *pe*-marked referent by comparing this type of construction with the one in which the referent in direct object position is not preceded by *pe*. The first article in (21) contains a direct object that was introduced by means of *pe* in the discourse, whereas in the second article (22), the same indefinite direct object occurs without *pe*. The two article extracts relate the same shooting event in the same way; the only difference being the form of realization of the two objects.

(21) *pe*-marked DO[1]

[1] Neculai Florea, de 40 de ani, viceprimarul satului Horodniceni, şi-a pus poliţia pe cap după ce l-a împuşcat cu un pistol cu gloanţe de cauciuc **pe un tânăr** din localitate.
[2] Incidentul s-a petrecut în noaptea de 10 spre 11 februarie, la discoteca ce aparţine soţiei viceprimarului Florea şi a fost reclamat la poliţie în cursul după amiezii, la ora 15:40.
[3] La ora respectivă, **Vasile M**., de 24 de ani, din comuna Horodniceni, **pro** s-a adresat postului de poliţie reclamând că **pro** a fost împuşcat în picior de viceprimarul Neculai Florea.
[4] La Horodniceni s-a deplasat în aceeaşi zi o echipă operativă a Serviciului arme, explozivi, substanţe toxice din IPJ Suceava, pentru a elucida cazul.
[5] Din primele verificări efectuate s-a stabilit că în cursul nopţii, la discoteca viceprimarului, pe fondul consumului de alcool, a avut loc o altercaţie, iar Neculai Florea a folosit pistolul cu gloanţe de cauciuc împotriva lui **Vasile M**., pe care **l**-a împuşcat în picior, rănindu-**l**.
[6] Viceprimarul Neculai Florea susţine că a fost nevoit să facă uz de armă, întrucât a fost agresat **de tânărul în cauză**.

[1] The 40-year-old Nicolae Florea, the vice mayor of the Horodniceni village, angered the police after he shot **a young man** from the same village with a gun with plastic bullets.
[2] The incident took place during the night of February 10th in the discotheque whose owner is Florea's wife, while the police were notified in the course of the afternoon at 15:40.
[3] At that time, the 24-year-old **Vasile M**, from the Horodniceni village complained to the police that **he** was shot in the leg by the vice-mayor Neculai Florea.
[4] A team of the IPJ Suceava went to Horodniceni to elucidate the case.

[5] In keeping with the first findings, it was established that, during the night, at the vice mayor's discotheque, an altercation took place due to alcohol consumption and Neculai Florea used his gun with plastic bullets against **Vasile M**, **whom** he shot in the leg, hurting **him**. [6] The vice-mayor Neculai Florea sustains that he had to make use of his gun, as he was aggressed by **the mentioned young man**.

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[1] http://www.obiectivdesuceava.ro/index.php?ids=26841&page=articol

[7] A spus că în cursul nopții de 10 spre 11 februarie, în discoteca administrată de soția lui a izbucnit un scandal între două grupuri rivale de tineri.
[8] "Soția mea m-a chemat și am intervenit ca să liniștesc apele.
[9] Am încercat să stau de vorbă, să-i calmez, dar **băiatul acela** m-a lovit în piept și era cât pe ce să...

[7] He said that in the night on the 10th of February, a scandal broke up between two rival young men groups in the discotheque administered by his wife.
[8]. My wife called me and I came to calm down the situation.
[9] I tried to calm them down by talking to them, however, **that boy** hit me in the chest and **he** almost…

(22) *pe*-unmarked DO[2]

[1] Viceprimarul Neculai Florea, din comuna Horodniceni, este cercetat de poliție după ce în noaptea de sâmbătă spre duminică a împușcat în picior **un tânar** de 24 de ani la discotecă.

[2] Viceprimarul, care este membru PNG, a scos pistolul pentru a interveni într-o încăierare între tineri, care avea loc în discoteca familiei sale.

[3] El este asociat unic, iar soția sa administrator.

[4] Poliția a stabilit că **tânărul împuscat, Vasile Mihai**, pe fondul consumului de alcool, **pro** a fost implicat într-un scandal, iar viceprimarul a intervenit pentru a-**l** stopa.

(no further co-referential expressions)

[1] The vice mayor Neculai Florea from the village Horodniceni is verified by the police after he shot **a 24-year-old young man** in the leg in the night from Saturday to Sunday in a discotheque.
[2] The vice mayor, who is a PNG member, took his gun out in order to intervene in a quarrel which started in his family's discotheque between some young men.
[3] He is a unique associate and his wife the administrator.
[4] The police found out that the **young man, Vasile Mihai**, was shot due to alcohol consuming, that **(he)** was involved in a scandal, and that the vice mayor intervened in order to stop **him.**
(no further co-referential expressions)

Before analyzing the persistence of the direct objects, it is also important to underline the fact that in (21), it is the other man, Neculai Florea, who is the topic of the discourse, and not the *pe*-marked DO. Furthermore, it is also worth noting that the two examples in (21) and (22) do not contrast in their epistemic specificity.

A striking observation with respect to DOM is the fact that the *pe*-marked direct object in (21) displays a higher discourse prominence than the direct object which is not preceded by *pe* in the discourse, because it displays the potential to generate further co-referential expressions. This feature of DOM marked indefinite direct objects is underlined on the one hand by the fact that the referent of this object is taken up in the next nine sentences 8 times, while the referent of the not *pe*-marked direct object in (22) was mentioned again in the next eleven sentences only 3 times. The structures of the above given examples are summarized in the following table (23):

(23)

	(21) indef. NP. [+pe]	(22) indef. NP [-pe]
Sentence 1	Ø	ø
Sentence 2	PN, pro, pro	ø
Sentence 3	ø	ø
Sentence 4	ø	(def.NP+Adj.+PN), pro,CL
Sentence 5	PN, pers.pron, PN	ø
Sentence 6	def. NP	ø
Sentence 7	ø	ø
Sentence 8	ø	ø
Sentence 9	def. NP	ø

On the other hand, the discourse prominence of the *pe*-marked direct object is evidenced by the first anaphoric item. In article (21), the newly introduced referent *un tânăr* ('a young man') is taken up in the following discourse by a proper name. However, a proper name can be opted for only in cases in which the presupposition licensed by the proper name can be accommodated within the context. This does not hold for the second article (22), in which the referent of the not *pe*-marked direct object is mentioned again by means of the definite NP *tânărul împuşcat* ('the young man that was shot').

The next table in (24) is a modified version of the table presented under (12). Besides the distribution of *pe*-marking along the Referentiality scale, the table also contains the factor referential persistence:

(24)   Referentiality Scale for *pe*-marking in Romanian for human direct objects

Ref Scale Disc Prom	*pers. pron.*	*> PN*	*> def. NP*	*> indef NP*		*> non-arg NP*
				spec.	*non-spec*	
topic	+	+	+	+	+	n.a.
ref persistence	+	+	+	+	n.a.	n.a.
non-prominence	+	+	+ (±)	-	-	–

Indefinite specific objects which are important for the upcoming discourse are characterized through a high persistence and will therefore be marked by *pe*. Accordingly, indefinite specific objects which are not that relevant for the discourse in question will not be taken up too often in the subsequent discourse. The lack of prominence of such objects is formally expressed by the absence of *pe*.

5   Conclusion and open questions

As we have showed in this paper, *pe*-marking expresses different functions, while one of them is to indicate a higher activation in terms of referential persistence of the direct

object marked in this way. To assume that the direct object preceded by *pe* is more activated is a weaker claim than to assume that DOM-marking expresses topicality.

It is still open to debate whether the referential persistence can also be found in relation to definite NPs and also if this feature is a property that only holds for synchronic Romanian data, or if it also applies to diachronic texts.

Several problems of the empirical base of the hypothesis still remain unresolved. One of these problems might be the fact that other parameters (as for example different verb classes still exist (see von Heusinger 2008 for Spanish) that could interact with *pe*-marking. Another major problem is the fact that we could find only a limited number of instances of *pe*-marking with indefinite direct objects under "controlled conditions" as in the examples (21) and (22) above.

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