

# Endophoric definiteness: An analysis based on Romanian data

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**Abstract.** Definiteness as a grammatical or pragmatic category is usually explained via the act of reference. In this spirit, a definite noun phrase is said to ensure that the hearer can identify the entity to which the NP refers, thus establishing a successful act of communication. The well-known typology of definiteness types developed by Hawkins (1978) relies on this assumption. However, such an explanation fails to clarify all the definite noun phrases in discourse.

This paper argues that the information provided in the complex nominal constituent can yield a definite interpretation of the nominal regardless of the hearer's ability to identify the real-life referent to which the noun refers. Such types of definite noun phrases are subsumed in this article under the term "endophoric definiteness". I will discuss two subtypes of endophoric definiteness. First, the relational definiteness, based on the notion of reference-point constructions will be discussed. Then I will turn to modificational definiteness where the use of modifiers contribute to the definite interpretation of the nominal. The article focuses on how the endophoric definiteness types function and what strategies can be used to mark them formally. To illustrate this point, I use the qualitative analysis of Romanian data. It shows that a language may have different grammatical patterns for the two subtypes of endophoric definiteness. This formal distinction in linguistic expression shows that relational and modificational definiteness types must be taken into account as contributing, in distinct ways, to the category of definiteness.

**Keywords:** definiteness, article, reference point, cognitive grammar, Romanian

## 1 Introduction

Definiteness as a grammatical or pragmatic category is usually explained via the act of reference. Many different grammatical frameworks assume that a successful act of reference yields a referential phrase, which represents an unambiguous relationship between the speech units (usually noun phrases) and an extra-linguistic (“real-world”) entity (Hawkins 1978; Haspelmath 1999). Consequently, a definite noun phrase is said to ensure that the hearer can identify the entity to which the NP refers, thus establishing a successful act of communication.

However, recent work in the field of language philosophy and cognitive linguistics has shown that the relationship between language and the real objective world is far more complex. Any given discourse might have many virtual entities, which are *ad hoc* creations, without affecting the hearer’s ability to understand the text (cf. Langacker 2008, 459). Hence, the claim that the nature of definiteness can be explained solely via the relationship between language and the objective world is problematic because this relationship is neither direct nor can it be explained in objective terms (Cruse 2004, 318; Jackendoff 1983; 2003, 267–375; Rijkhoff 2002, 22).

In this article, I argue that the information provided in the nominal constituent can yield a definite interpretation of the nominal regardless of the hearer’s ability to identify the real-life referent to which the noun refers. Such types of definite noun phrases are subsumed here under the term “endophoric definiteness”. I will argue that alongside exophoric definiteness, proper to situations where the noun phrase is definite due to some external information, different strategies within the complex nominal constituent can yield a definite noun phrase as well. To explain these strategies, I will introduce the terms “relational definiteness” and “modification definiteness”. To illustrate my proposal, I will use Romanian data since Romanian (unlike English) has different grammatical strategies to express instances of relational and modification definiteness and is particularly useful to prove that the above-mentioned endophoric types of definiteness reflect, from a typological perspective, an important distinction between two different strategies of endophoric definiteness.

## 2 Theoretical background

The major turning point in research on definiteness and its typology was the work of J. A. Hawkins (1978). He enriched existing research with pragmatic criteria and gave a systematic overview of situations that can enable a definite interpretation of a noun phrase. Hawkins singles out four such situations (or types), namely deictic, anaphoric, situational uses and the use of indirect anaphora<sup>1</sup>. For Hawkins, these are situations that

<sup>1</sup> For Hawkins, these four definiteness types represent environments that lead to the definite interpretation of a noun phrase. The referent can be identified because it is in a near proximity of the speaker (deictic definiteness), it was mentioned before (anaphoric definiteness), it can

lead to a unique (or inclusive) identifiability of the referents. However, this typology has a few shortcomings. First, research based on corpora has shown that Hawkins' types of definiteness cannot explain all instances of the use of definite descriptions (Fraurud 1990). Furthermore, according to Hawkins' typology, a noun phrase can be presented as definite only due to some external spatial (in the case of deictic definiteness), linguistic (anaphoric definiteness), or general (situational definiteness and indirect anaphora) knowledge. Consequently, it fails to explain many "first-mention definites" (ibid.) occurring in texts. As Fraurud showed, the speaker often introduces a referent into discourse and present it immediately as definite and hence identifiable. Finally, many instances of definiteness are left out as this typology does not account for the use of proper nouns, the referentiality status of virtual referents, and the use of definite descriptions whose referents are not uniquely identifiable.<sup>2</sup>

Cognitive Grammar addresses at least some of the issues mentioned above<sup>3</sup>. Cognitive linguistics introduces the notion of grounding to explain the identifiability of referents. The speaker and the hearer share the apprehension of the *ground* and the *current discourse space*. The ground usually "consists of the speech event, the speaker and hearer, their interaction, and the immediate circumstances (notably the time and place of speech)" (Langacker 2001, 144). The current discourse space is a mental space that comprises those elements and relations construed and is shared between the speaker and the hearer as the basis of their communication (ibid.). S. J. Bakker defines definiteness as the unequivocal relation between a discourse referent and a cognitive ground (2009). The hearer can identify the referent because the speaker presents it as having a one-to-one relationship with some available cognitive structure, i.e. the ground in the current discourse space. This approach solves at least one major issue with Hawkins' theory. In Bakker's theory, there are no logical constraints for a noun phrase to be definite. Bakker's notion of definiteness easily incorporates virtual and first-mention referents into the systematic view of definite descriptions. Such a view, which is cognitive in spirit and is aligned with groundbreaking works by Langacker (1993; 2000; 2001; 2007; 2008, 2009) and Epstein (2002), enables a similar treatment for referents that have a real-world equivalent ("actual referents") and for those that are merely discourse referents (or virtual referents, brought up for the needs of communication). Furthermore, it can explain the definiteness of reified verbs (*identification*, for example), as well as of proper and abstract nouns by using the same theoretical model.

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be identified due to encyclopedic knowledge (situational definiteness) or previously mentioned referents can make another referent uniquely identifiable (indirect anaphora).

<sup>2</sup> Many of those problems are not raised in generative grammar; the rich Romanian research tradition (among the most recent studies see Pană Dindelegan 2013 and Dobrovie-Sorin & Giurgea 2013 among others) on the subject follows that framework or are written in the generative spirit.

<sup>3</sup> Besides research in cognitive grammar, a study by Lyons investigates various issues of definiteness within a different theoretical framework (see Lyons 1999).

In the present paper, I will use Bakker's concept of unequivocal anchoring and the theoretical framework developed by other cognitive linguists to explain the use of the definite article in endophorically definite noun phrases. Moreover, using Romanian data, I will show that the distinction of relational and modificational types of endophoric definiteness is not only important from the semantic perspective but can also be reflected in the speaker's choice of linguistic expression. After analyzing different linguistic strategies of Romanian to code relational and modificational definiteness, I will propose that these two types of definiteness are an integral part of the typological description of the grammatical category of definiteness.

### 3 Definiteness marking in Romanian

Before the analysis of Romanian data, I will briefly present the Romanian system of definiteness marking. Romanian has definite, so-called demonstrative and indefinite articles. The definite article in Romanian is an enclitic that agrees with the noun in gender and number. Moreover, the postpositional definite article is the *locus* of case marking of the Romanian noun phrase:

- |        |                                                                      |                                  |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| (1) a. | <i>băiat</i> / <i>băiat-<b>ul</b></i> <sup>4</sup> /                 | <i>băiat-<b>ului</b></i> (M. SG) |
|        | boy / boy-DEF.NOM/ACC/                                               | boy-DEF.GEN/DAT                  |
| b.     | <i>băieți</i> / <i>băieți-<b>i</b></i> /                             | <i>băieți-<b>lor</b></i> (M. PL) |
|        | boys / boys-DEF.NOM/ACC/                                             | boys-DEF.GEN/DAT                 |
| c.     | <i>fată</i> / <i>fat-<b>a</b></i> / <i>fat-<b>ei</b></i> (F. SG)     |                                  |
|        | girl / girl-DEF.NOM/ACC/                                             | girl-DEF.GEN/DAT                 |
| d.     | <i>fete</i> / <i>fete-<b>le</b></i> / <i>fete-<b>lor</b></i> (F. PL) |                                  |
|        | girls / girls-DEF.NOM/ACC/                                           | girls-DEF.GEN/DAT                |
| e.     | <i>vin</i> / <i>vin-<b>ul</b></i> / <i>vin-<b>ului</b></i> (N. SG)   |                                  |
|        | wine / wine-DEF.NOM/ACC/                                             | wine-DEF.GEN/DAT                 |
| f.     | <i>vinuri</i> / <i>vinuri-<b>le</b></i> /                            | <i>vinuri-<b>lor</b></i> (N. SG) |
|        | wines / wines-DEF.NOM/ACC/                                           | wines-DEF.GEN/DAT                |

In the case when the definite article cannot be attached to the first element of the NP, the so-called demonstrative article is used. Such situation arises if the first element of the nominal is a number or a superlative:

<sup>4</sup> Hyphens are an integral part of Romanian orthography; hence all the hyphens made for the purpose of glossing are bold.

- (2) a. *Cei trei mușetari*  
 DEM.ART.PL three musketeers  
 ‘The three musketeers’
- b. *Cel mai frumos om din lume*  
 DEM.ART.SG.M most beautiful man from world  
 ‘The most beautiful man in the world’

According to G. Pana Dindelegan (2013, 309), the demonstrative article is also used when the postpositional attribute of a noun indicates a quality by which the referent of the nominal can be identified:

- (3) *Băiat-ul cel mare*  
 boy-DEF DEM.ART.SG.M big  
 ‘The big boy’

*Al* has traditionally been grouped with the definite article and was called the genitival article. In Romanian *al* is used obligatory with the dependent genitive when it is separated from the head noun, but it not grammatical when the dependent genitive follows the head noun:

- (4) a. *Adevăr-ul fundamental al lumi-i*  
 Truth-DEF fundamental AL world-DEF.GEN  
 ‘The fundamental truth of the world’
- b. *Adevăr-ul (\*al) lumi-i*  
 truth-DEF (\*AL) world-DEF.GEN  
 ‘The truth of the world’

According to Pana Dindelegan, this functional element is used when the nominal does not meet the adjacency constraint, i.e. when the definite genitive does not follow the definite head noun immediately (2013, 267). Since it refers to the head noun and agrees with it, *al* could be treated as a pronoun but I choose to follow Pana Dindelegan and call it the functional element *al*. In modern Romanian, *al* is usually used with anaphoric reference while both anaphoric and cataphoric uses are attested diachronically (ibid.).

Romanian has also a grammaticalized indefinite article. However, only the singular forms are obligatory in the discourse, the plural indefinite articles has somewhat similar distribution as *some* in English and is mainly used with the specific referents:

- (5) a. *băiat* / *un*                      *băiat* / *unui*                      *băiat* (M. SG)  
 boy / INDEF.NOM/ACC    boy / INDEF.GEN/DAT    boy
- b. *băieți* / *niște*                      *băieți* / *unor*                      *băieți* (M. PL)  
 boys / INDEF.NOM/ACC    boys / INDEF.GEN/DAT    boys
- c. *fată* / *o*                              *fată* / *unei*                      *fată* (F. SG)  
 girl / INDEF.NOM/ACC    girl / INDEF.GEN/DAT    girl
- d. *fete* / *niște*                      *fete* / *unor*                      *fete* (F. PL)  
 girls / INDEF.NOM/ACC    girls / INDEF.GEN/DAT    girls
- e. *loc* / *un*                              *loc* / *unui*                      *loc* (N. SG)  
 place / INDEF.NOM/ACC    place / INDEF.GEN/DAT    place
- f. *loc* / *niște*                      *locuri* / *unor*                      *locuri* (N. SG)  
 places / INDEF.NOM/ACC    places / INDEF.GEN/DAT    places

From the definiteness-marking point of view, the Romanian prepositional phrase has a particularly interesting pattern. When a preposition is followed by a sole noun, the use of the definite article is not grammatical. However, if the speaker needs to specify the indefinite reference, the indefinite article can be used:

- (6) a. *Pe masă*  
 on (the) table
- b. *Pe o masă*  
 on INDEF table

Nevertheless, if such a noun has a modifier, the usual rules apply:

- (7) a. *Pe o masă neagră*  
 on INDEF table black  
 ‘On a black table’
- b. *Pe mas-a neagră*  
 on table-DEF black  
 ‘On the black table’

#### 4 Relational definiteness and its marking

The Relational type of definiteness is implicit in Langacker's idea that the speaker often uses an already grounded instance as a reference point to make a successful referring expression (Langacker 1993; 1995; 2000). This reference point model allows the speaker to introduce a new referent into discourse and present it at once as identifiable due to the existing unequivocal relation with another referent:

- (8) *Femei-le minunate din viața mea* <...> DIF 112  
 women-DEF exceptional from life-DEF my <...>  
 'The exceptional women of my life <...>'

The nominal *femeile minunate* is a first-mention definite. The inclusive set of its referents were not introduced before and the complex nominal alone makes one-to-one reference to the real-life referents impossible. However, the phrase *viața mea* acts as a reference point (already grounded by the possessive pronoun, see below) and hence establishes the ground for the trajector *femeile minunate* in the current discourse space. Such an unequivocal relation between the trajector and its ground licenses the definite interpretation of the nominal *femeile minunate* and justifies the use of the definite article that marks the fact that all possible referents of this description are indeed relatable to the overtly presented cognitive ground<sup>5</sup>.

Languages can have many different grammatical strategies to establish a reference-point construction. As Romanian has a case system, the reference point can be marked with the genitive<sup>6</sup>:

- (9) *Odată, pe vremea liceului, umblam*  
 once on time-DEF lyceum-DEF.GEN was walking-1.SG  
*pe boulevard* <...> DIF 110  
 on Boulevard <...>  
 'Once, in college years, I was walking along the Boulevard <...>'

*Liceul* serves as a valid reference point for the nominal *vremea*, because our knowledge of the world warrants the assumption that every person at least within a certain social class goes to college for a certain period of their life. Hence *liceul* is a grounded entity

<sup>5</sup> The notion of reference itself is problematic within linguistic theory. We accept here the hypothesis that nominals do not refer to the extralinguistic world directly, but rather to the mental representations of objects in the extralinguistic world (Rijkhoff 2002, 22). Such an approach solves the issue of truth conditions and allows us to treat "virtual" and "real" referents equally (Langacker 2000, 270–271).

<sup>6</sup> For further theoretical consideration regarding the role of genitives in definiteness marking see also (Willemse 2007).

(the hearer once again can unequivocally relate it with the figure of the speaker even without identifying the actual real-life college), and it serves as the ground for the nominal *vremea*. As in the previous example, unequivocal relation between the landmark (*liceului*) and the trajector (*vremea*) licenses the definite interpretation of the latter and, consequently, the use of the definite article. The reference point indicated by the genitive case need not always be a definite description itself. However, it must be a grounded entity, and thus have a definite, indefinite or generic reference<sup>7</sup>:

- (10) *Pe<sup>8</sup> cea de-a doua am întâlnit-o prin 1939, la bord-ul unui vas de croazieră <...>. DIF 9*  
 DEM.ART second have met.her in 1939, on board-DEF  
 INDEF.GEN ship of cruise <...>

‘As for the second [woman], I have met her aboard a cruise ship in 1939’

- (11) <...> *din Declarați-a drepturi-lor om-ului. DIF 133*  
 <...> of Declaration-DEF rights-DEF.GEN man-DEF.GEN  
 <...> ‘of the Declaration of Human Rights.’

The examples (10) and (11) illustrate the use of indefinite and generic referents as reference points. Even though the noun *vas* is construed as indefinite by the speaker, thus presented as unidentifiable to the hearer, it is nevertheless a grounded nominal with specific reference. Consequently, it serves as the reference point for the nominal *bordul* triggering its definite interpretation and the use of the definite article. Generics can serve as reference points as well. Even though the nominal *omului* has a generic reference, as a grounded instance it serves as a cognitive ground for the nominal *drepturilor*.

In Romanian, the notion of reference point can also contribute to the explanation of the semantics of the functional element *al*. The syntactic position of *al* next to the reference-point construction ensures that there are no ambiguities between the grounded element and its reference point when it does not meet the adjacency constraint (cf. Dindelegan 2013, 267).

- (12) <...> *răspândeau până în mahalale-le <...> sunet-ul jazz-banduri-lor sau al tarafuri-lor autohtone. DIF 135*  
 <...> spread till in suburbs-DEF <...> sound-DEF  
 jazz-bands-DEF.GEN OR AL.M.SG folk bands-DEF.GEN local  
 ‘the sound of jazz or local folk bands propagated till the suburbs’

<sup>7</sup> The use of ungrounded nominal in genitive case would be problematic as the article (or other determiner) is the locus of case marking in Romanian. The presence of a determiner automatically yields a referential interpretation.

<sup>8</sup> *Pe* in this case is a marker of an animate direct object.



The second reference point for the nominal *sunetul* does not follow it immediately, but the use of *al* makes it possible to establish a continuous constituent comprising the grounded nominal (to which *al* refers anaphorically) and its reference point construction. In this case, the principle of clarity seems to have been preferred over the principle of economy, and the agreement<sup>9</sup> of *al* with its governing nominal has been generalized in modern Romanian (cf. Dindelegan 2013, 266).

However, the speaker (at least in many cases) has a certain freedom in the construal of the utterance; the head noun of a nominal containing a genitival attribute may be presented as indefinite. In this case the use of the indefinite article informs the hearer that the unequivocal relationship between the ground and the trajector cannot be established:

- (13) <...> *într-o aventură complexă și epuizantă*  
 <...> to INDEF adventure complex and exhausting
- a minți-i. DIF 112*  
 AL.F.SG mind-DEF.GEN
- ‘<...> to a complex and exhausting adventure of the mind.’

Another strategy is the use of a prepositional phrase with a grounded nominal in the position of an attribute of a nominal which it grounds. While the prepositional phrase itself profiles a relationship, its landmark, if referential, can serve as a reference-point construction (cf. Langacker 2000, 83–85).

- (14) <...> *palmieri-i măturând leneș cer-ul din <...>*  
 <...> palms-DEF sweeping lazily sky-DEF from <...>
- San Francisco <...>. DIF 10*  
 San Francisco <...>
- ‘<...> the palm trees lazily sweeping the sky of <...> San Francisco’

Example (10) is similar to the genitival reference-point constructions from the semantic point of view. The definite reading (and, consequently, the use of the definite article) of the nominal *cerul* is possible because its referent has an unequivocal relation with the grounded noun *San Francisco*<sup>10</sup>. Many prepositions can establish such relations. However, there is a conceptual difference between a reference point construed with a

<sup>9</sup> It agrees in number and gender with the displaced head noun and not with the genitive which it precedes. See the examples (12) and (13): *sunetul* (masculine singular) <...> *al tarafurilor*, but *aventură* (feminine singular) <...> *a minții*.

<sup>10</sup> Proper nouns are usually considered inherently definite due to their semantic structure (see Lyons 1999, 193–198 and Langacker 1991; Radden and Dirven 2007, 100; Langacker 2008, 316–318 for a cognitive perspective).

prepositional phrase and one provided by a genitival construction. Genitival constructions designates the relationship in which the nominal marked with genitive is the landmark and serves as the reference point for a trajector marked by the head noun. Prepositional constructions (with such prepositions as *sub* ‘under’, *pe* ‘on’, *în* ‘in’, *din* ‘from’, etc.) profile an additional spatial relation between the head noun and its reference point.

In Romanian, the reference point can also be established by the use of possessive pronouns. As the discourse is built around the speaker and hearer, they can serve to anchor new referents and trigger their definite interpretation:

- (15) *In înțelepciune-a minți-i tale <...> DIF 13*  
 in wisdom-DEF mind-DEF.GEN your <...>  
 ‘In the wisdom of your mind’

The nominal *minții* is grounded and definite since its referent can be unequivocally related to the hearer. The grounded nominal *minții tale*, can now serve as the reference point for the nominal *înțelepciunea*.

As with other reference-point constructions, the hearer need not unambiguously identify the referent of the nominal. The link between the intended referent and the speaker (or the hearer) is sufficient to yield a definite interpretation:

- (16) *Unchi-ul meu dinspre mama <...> DIF 144*  
 uncle-DEF my from mother <...>  
 ‘My uncle on mother’s side <...>’

This example contains the first mention of the referent “uncle” in the text and the hearer cannot relate the definite description to a real-life person. However, the use of a possessive pronoun makes the definite interpretation possible and the use of the definite article felicitous. While the use of first- or second-person possessive pronouns usually establishes an extralinguistic reference point (which is either the speaker or the hearer), the use of a third person possessive refers anaphorically to another referent in the same discourse:

- (17) <...> *într-un vagon de metrou am întâlnit-o <...>*  
 <...> in-INDEF carriage of subway have met.her <...>  
*cea mai frumoasă femeie din lume. Sigur că poate*  
 DEM.ART most beautiful woman of world of course that maybe  
*splendoare-a ei <...> DIF 9*  
 beauty-DEF her <...>

‘<...> I met her in a carriage of a subway train <...> the most beautiful woman in the world. Of course, maybe her beauty <...>’

Apart from internal possession, some languages, modern Romanian among them, has a possibility of establishing a reference point for a nominal by means of an external possessor<sup>11</sup>:

- (18) <...> *un filament translucid care-mi perfora*  
 <...> INDEF filament translucid that me-DAT perforated  
*țeast-a* <...> DIF 19  
 skull-DEF <...>  
 ‘<...> a translucid filament that perforated my skull’

The external possessor in the example functions identically as the internal possessor in the previous examples. The nominal *țeastă* is grounded due to its relation to the speaker (marked by the dative case of the personal pronoun *mi*) and thus interpreted as definite.

Theoretically, the use of a possessive pronoun does not have to present the referent of a nominal as identifiable<sup>12</sup> and, consequently, definite. However, most possessive noun phrases in any language are definite (Haspelmath 1999). The reference-point model gives a plausible explanation for this phenomenon. As possessive pronouns (or external possessors) inherently establish an unequivocal relation between the head noun and a possible cognitive ground, such a nominal meets the sufficient conditions to be interpreted as definite. Due to the very small number of indefinite possessives (no more than 6% per Haspelmath) which the speaker may choose to present as such, languages tend to regularize the use of articles with possessives. Romanian, in this case, has a harmonic strategy (compulsory use of the definite article) while other languages, like English or Swedish, have chosen the economical one.

Reference-point constructions can be more complex, and the whole nominal constituent does not necessarily need to be composed with only one reference point. To successfully relate a new referent to the ground, the speaker can construct a chain of several reference points:

- (19) [*Stilul*] *E engramat acolo, în ingineri-a vertebre-lor*  
 [Style] is memorized there in engineering-DEF vertebrae-DEF-GEN  
*din coloan-a ta vertebrală* <...>. DIF 13  
 of column-DEF your spinal  
 ‘[Style] is an engram there, in the engineering of the vertebrae of your spinal column’

<sup>11</sup> The use of an external possessor is of proto-Indo-European origin in most modern Indo-European languages (Vennemann 2001, 359). However, it has not survived in all of them (most notably in modern English) and thus the use of an external possessor to establish a reference point is not universal among modern Indo-European languages.

<sup>12</sup> For this reason, some languages, for example Italian, allows the use of indefinite determiners with possessives.

The last nominal of the phrase *coloana ta vertebrală* is grounded (and construed as definite) due to the relation of the referent *coloana* with the body of the hearer (used as the reference point in the discourse and marked by the possessive pronoun). Then, the whole phrase is used as the reference point for the nominal *vertebrelor* which itself provides the reference point for the head noun of the phrase *inginieria*, thus licensing the definite reading.

## 5 Modificational definiteness and its marking

Modificational definiteness is the second of endophoric definiteness types. As with relational definiteness, the noun phrase itself contains the information that the hearer requires for successful identification of a discourse referent. However, compared to relational definiteness, it uses a crucially different strategy of relating the intended referent to a cognitive ground. While relational definiteness uses reference-point constructions as the landmark for the trajector profiled by the head nominal, in the case of modificational definiteness, a possible set of referents is limited in such way that the resulting subset can be related (anchored) to a cognitive ground (cf. Bakker 2009)<sup>13</sup>. It must be noted, however, that since modifiers do not establish the ground for the nominal (as the reference point does), some cognitive ground must be available for the successful identification of the referent. Therefore, the information provided by the modifier that triggers modificational definiteness (reference-specifying modifier) might work with some additional strategy to establish an unequivocal relationship between the referent and the ground. In this article, I will outline the main strategies of modificational definiteness and their use in Romanian.

First, not all modifiers can trigger modificational definiteness. Apart from purely epithetic adjectives, other modifiers of a nominal can have two different functions within a noun phrase<sup>14</sup>. When a qualifying modifier is used within a noun phrase, it creates a subset of referents, i.e. a set of instances of the type that can be possibly referred to with the noun. Hence, qualifying modifiers always involve subcategorization. On the other hand, a modifier can create a subtype that can stand as a type description itself (a *short story*, for example). Subcategorization implies the existence of a set of referents, and consequently, the noun phrase with a qualifying modifier yields a grounded description that has a determiner in languages with overt definiteness marking. However, a noun phrase with a modifier that establishes a new subtype does not carry such semantic implication and can function syntactically as a bare noun. Any modifier in Romanian can be used to create a new subtype:

<sup>13</sup> Many among the possible strategies used to create a subset relatable to the cognitive ground are perceived as relationships in cognitive grammar (Langacker 2002, 74–77; 2008).

<sup>14</sup> See Radden and Dirven (2007) for a detailed classification of modifiers.

- (20) <...> *aceste flashuri de frumusețe pură* <...> DIF 9  
 <...> these flashes of beauty pure <...>  
 ‘<...> these flashes of pure beauty <...>’

The dependent noun *frumusețe* of the classifying prepositional phrase in the example above is a virtual referent. Thus, it does not evoke any (identifiable or unidentifiable) set of referents. Therefore, the modifier *pură* does not trigger the definite reading (or indefinite) of the noun phrase as it is used to create a new subtype (rather than a subset) that can function as a type description. The syntactic behavior of the noun phrase *frumusețe pură* confirms this analysis. In Romanian, a determiner is usually used with a noun in prepositional phrases when such noun has a modifier. However, the noun phrase *frumusețe pură* acts a bare noun (type description) because it does not evoke a set of referents. In any case, subcategorization is not present in this phrase and a subset that can be marked as definite is not created. Romanian often uses prepositional phrases with the preposition *de* to create new subtypes as in the example above. As *frumusețe pură* functions as a type description, its schematic meaning (without including a referent) is assigned to the head noun<sup>15</sup>.

Romanian has several strategies to create a subset that can be presented to the hearer as definite. A simple strategy to create a subset is the use of an attributive modifier. If such a reference-specifying modifier is after the noun, Romanian uses the demonstrative article before the adjective:

- (21) <...> *trebuia să-l aduc*  
 <...> needed-3.SG that him bring-1.SG/3.PL  
  
*pe cale-a cea bună* <...> DIF 84  
 on road-DEF DEM.ART good <...>  
 ‘<...> he had to be brought to the right path <...>’

*Bună* functions as a reference-specifying modifier with the nominal *calea*. The use of *bună* implies subcategorization and defines a specific subset. The uniqueness of the referent of the noun phrase *calea cea bună* is the result of a quantificational operation implied by the modifier *bună*. It is implied that there are at least two ways available in the scene and the referent of the good one is singled out. This referent can now be successfully related to the cognitive ground, which in the case of modificational definiteness is not overtly expressed. While not all adjectives in a text function as reference-specifying modifiers,

<sup>15</sup> In the original text, the use of the demonstrative *aceste* is sanctioned by anaphoric definiteness (cf. Hawkins’ types of definiteness in the introduction), as the noun phrase is co-referential with a referent that has already been introduced in the text.

the use of superlatives or adjectives that assign an inherently unique property usually trigger a definite description in Romanian:

- (22) <...> *mi se pare că am să mor în clip-a următoare* <...> DIF 8  
 <...> me-DAT seems that will die in moment-DEF next  
 ‘<...> it seems to me that I will die the next moment <...>’

Lyons (1999, 246–247) argues that such a usage merely creates a “definiteness effect” as the referent of the phrase *în clipa următoare* cannot be identified. However, even though the referent of this phrase is mentioned for the first time, the use of a reference-specifying modifier makes such a newly created discourse referent relatable to a cognitive ground (in this case the time of the situation). As we assume that definiteness is the hearer’s ability to identify such a relation, nominals with reference-specifying modifiers do not need to be treated differently from other definites.

Finally, a relative clause can be used to create a subset which is presented as definite in discourse:

- (23) <...> *alge-le prelungi care sunt trase-n sus și-n jos de curenți și se-ndoaie, se subție și se-ngroașă* <...> DIF 10  
 <...> seaweed-DEF extended that are pulled up and down by  
 tides and bend stretch and thicken <...>  
 ‘<...> the long strands of seaweed that are pulled up and down by the tides and bend, stretch and thicken <...>’

The relative clause in the example above creates a subset of all possible referents of the nominal *algele prelungi*. As with regular modifiers, the creation of such a subset can be a sufficient condition for presenting the inclusive set of referents as definite, and the use of the definite article is felicitous.

The analysis of the above examples shows that the use of a reference-specifying modifier can be a sufficient condition for a definite interpretation. While I have embraced the view that the essence of definite descriptions is the relationship between their referents and a cognitive ground, I have showed that reference-specifying modifiers can play a crucial role for the identification of a referent.

## 6 Differences between the two subtypes of endophoric definiteness

The examples analyzed above show that Romanian has a clear grammatical pattern to express two types of endophoric definiteness. From a cognitive point of view, there is a clear distinction between the conceptualization of the information that yields the

definite interpretation of the two endophoric definiteness types. In the case of relational definiteness, the dependent noun phrase is always grounded and establishes the ground for the trajector profiled by the head noun. Our analysis of Romanian examples shows that Romanian can use either the genitive case or a prepositional phrase with a preposition other than *de* to mark such cases. In the case of modificational definiteness, however, the information that is the basis of the definite interpretation is conceptualized as a relationship. Usually, it profiles a relationship that has only one participant (see Langacker 2009, 8) as in the example (24):

- (24) <...>mi se pare că am să mor în clip-a următoare <...> DIF 8  
 <...> me-DAT seems that will die in moment-DEF next  
 ‘<...> it seems to me that I will die the next moment <...>’

If the information within the nominal that triggers modificational definiteness is expressed by another part of speech than an adjective, Romanian constantly uses the preposition *de* in such cases. This grammatical pattern is seen if we compare the grammatical behavior of a classifying noun with a grounded noun:

- (25) a. <...> unul <...> se-mbarcă în haine de femeie <...> DIF 126  
 <...> one-DEF <...> dresses in clothes DE women <...>  
 ‘<...> one <...> dresses in women’s clothes <...>’
- b. <...> în WC-ul femei-lor spați-ul  
 <...> in toilet-DEF women-DEF.GEN space-DEF  
 nu e diferit <...> DIF 128  
 not is different <...>  
 ‘<...> in the women’s toilet, the space is not different <...>’

In the example (25) a. the noun *femeie* is not grounded, and functions as a type description. It does not establish the ground for the referent profiled by the head noun and serves merely as a classifier. Hence, it is used with the preposition *de*. In this example, the function of the constituent *de femeie* is identical to that of an adjective. On the other hand, (25) b. is an example of the same noun with generic reference. Since it is grounded and refers to the maximal extension of instances of the type, the use of the genitive case is felicitous and the nominal *femeilor* serving as the reference point triggers relational definiteness. Within a nominal, Romanian does not allow a dependent grounded noun to be used in prepositional phrases with *de*, which leads to the use of constructions like in example (19)<sup>16</sup>:

<sup>16</sup> It must be noted that the incompatibility of the preposition *de* with a grounded noun in the example above is not a purely syntactic requirement since the preposition *de* can be used with grounded instances when it has a lexical meaning: *vai de viața mea!* ‘go away **from** my life!’.

- (26) *Femei-le minunate din (\*de) viața-a mea* <...> DIF 112  
 Women-DEF exceptional from life-DEF my <...>  
 ‘The exceptional women of my life <...>’

Since the nominal *viața* is a grounded instance due to the relationship with the speaker, overtly indicated by the possessive *mea*, the use of the preposition *de* is not grammatical. In such cases, Romanian uses the preposition *din* ‘from’ instead.

However, even though usually prepositional phrases with the preposition *de* act as classifiers when they have a noun as their dependent constituent, they can consistently function as reference-specifying modifiers when their relationship-profiling dependent constituent is an adverb or an infinitive:

- (27) *D. era întinsă în pat-ul de deasupra.* DIF 16  
 D. was stretched in bed-DEF DE above  
 ‘D. was lying in the upper bed.’

- (28) <...> *totuși minte-a ta refuză idee-a*  
 <...> all mind-DEF your refuses idea-DEF  
*de a intra acolo,* <...> DIF 7  
 DE to enter there <...>  
 <...> ‘all your mind refuses the idea to enter there <...>’

Finally, a dependent constituent having a grounded noun can trigger modificational definiteness if that grounded noun itself is a part of another prepositional phrase that profiles a relationship:

- (29) [*Stil*] *E engramat acolo* <...> *în spot-ul de lumină de*  
 [Style] Is engraved there <...> in spot-DEF of light of  
*pe pupil-a ta catifelată* DIF 13  
 on pupil-DEF your smooth  
 ‘[Style] is an engram there <...> in the spot of light on your smooth pupil’

As the nominal *pupila ta catifelată* is a grounded instance, it could serve either as a reference point (in such case it would be used in the genitive) or as the base of a profiled relationship as in the example above. As the constituent *pe pupila ta catifelată* in cognitive terms profiles a relationship, not a thing, it can be used in the prepositional phrase with the preposition *de*. The comparison of such examples shows that Romanian uses genitives or prepositions other than *de* to connect the grounded noun that profiles



a thing to its head. Such examples, since they have grounded instances that yield the definite reading of the nominal, are cases of relational definiteness. On the other hand, to express modificational definiteness, Romanian uses adjectives, dependent clauses or preposition *de* and thus have a clear grammatical pattern to make the difference between relational and modificational types of definiteness not only from the semantic but also from the syntactic point of view.

## 7 Conclusions

The analysis of relational and modificational types of definiteness and their marking in Romanian shows that the cognitive notion of a relation between discourse referents and an available cognitive ground can provide a plausible explanation of the use of some first-mention definites in discourse. On the one hand, relational definiteness is used to relate a new referent overtly to another grounded instance, thus establishing a cognitive relation between referents in discourse space. Modificational definiteness, on the other hand, does not provide a cognitive ground for the referent to be related to, however, a modifier can serve as a reference-specifying modifier that helps to anchor its head noun.

The Romanian data are of particular interest because this language has different grammatical patterns for the two types of definiteness. In the case of relational definiteness, the dependent constituent is marked either by the genitive case or by a prepositional phrase that cannot have the preposition *de* as its head. In contrast, in case of modificational definiteness, the dependent element (leaving the relative clause aside) can be either a simple modifier or a prepositional phrase with the preposition *de*. This formal distinction in linguistic expression shows that two types of endophoric definiteness (relational and modificational) must be taken into account as contributing, in distinct ways, to the category of definiteness.

## Abbreviations

ACC	accusative
DAT	dative
DEF	definite article
DEM.ART	demonstrative article
F	feminine gender
GEN	genitive
INDEF	indefinite article
M	masculine gender
N	neuter gender
NOM	nominative
PL	plural
SG	singular

## Data source

DIF Mircea Cărtărescu, *De ce iubim femeile* [Why we love women]. București: Humanitas, 2005.

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Submitted September 17 2018

Accepted December 28 2018