



Definiteness and Demonstratives in Romanian and Istro-Romanian

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In this paper, I compare two Balkan languages of the Romance family: Romanian and Istro-Romanian, a dialect of Romanian spoken in Croatia. I briefly tackle in the introduction the difficulties of working on a severely endangered language (UNESCO Atlas of World's Languages in Danger, 2009, available at www.unesco.org) that has no monolingual native speakers and which has been neglected so far by all comparative studies of Balkan languages.

The syntactic phenomena under discussion concern the definite article, pseudo-articles and noun modification. The starting empirical observation that in Istro-Romanian the noun has (generally) lost its ability to move over the adjectives, probably due to the influence of Croatian. In both languages the definite article is enclitic. The data differs when the noun is modified by an adjective: Istro-Romanian tends to drop the article on preposed adjectives, while in Romanian article-dropping is not allowed. By also looking at the pseudo-article *cel* in Romanian, which seems to be a last resort operation in order to check the ϕ features and to satisfy the EPP feature of D (Giusti (2002) – 'The Functional Structure of Noun Phrases. A Bare Phrase Structure Approach.' In G. Cinque (ed.) *Functional Structure in DP and IP. The Cartography of Syntactic Structures, vol I*, 54-90. New York: Oxford University Press), and *čel* in Istro-Romanian, respectively, and their interaction with the enclitic definite article, I show that Definiteness is realized differently in the two languages, and I provide an analysis in terms of feature checking in the DP. I consider two further pieces of evidence in favour of the analysis, which come from noun modification by a demonstrative adjective and the definite article cliticization in these expressions, and from the existence of polydefinite constructions in both languages.

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