

Remarks on the Case system of Heritage Romanian with French as a majority language

Elena Soare University of Paris 8 / Paris-Lumières & CNRS UMR 7023

elena.soare@univ-paris8.fr

Introduction. This presentation will address the following general question: to what extent grammatical properties of Heritage Languages can be explained by the influence of the dominant grammar? How do we set apart this influence from internal change? The data from Heritage Romanian speakers with French as a dominant language (HR/F) studied here show specific innovation in comparison with Mainland Romanian, by assumption due to the impact of the dominant grammar.

Contrasts in the Case system of French and Romanian. The study of HR/F has to start from the contrastive properties distinguishing the two languages. In particular, French and Romanian contrast in Case marking. Morphological Case is not marked in French, being replaced by prepositions, while Romanian does have morphological Case marking: it distinguishes between two, i.e. direct and oblique Case markers. In addition, Romanian also has a Differential Object Marking (DOM - *pe*). A sample of differences is given in (1)-(3) below.

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|-----|--|--|
| (1) | French | Romanian |
| | N la fille/ G de la fille / D à la fille/ A la fille | N fata / G fetei / D fetei / A pe fata |
| (2) | a. devant le lit | în fata patului |
| | in-front the bed | in front bet-GEN |
| | b. j'aime maman | (o) iubesc pe mama |
| | I-love mom | (her) love.1sg pe mom |
| (3) | la fin de l'histoire | sfârșitul povestii |
| | the end of the story | end-the story-GEN |

In the pronominal system, moreover, in 3rd person reflexives, Romanian does distinguish Dative from Accusative, again unlike French:

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|-----|----|-----------------|---------------------------|
| (4) | a. | Il se lave | se spala |
| | | he se washes | se washes |
| | b. | Il se souvient | își aminteste |
| | | He se remembers | (he/she) se-DAT remembers |

A natural assumption is that HR/F speakers might show a simplified Case system, with omission of DOM, Genitive marking and neutralization of the direct/oblique distinction in the pronominal system. This presentation will show that this is borne out in a small population of young HR/F speakers (12-16) in the Parisian area. It will document strong contrasts between HR/F on the one hand and mainland Romanian and balanced bilinguals on the other hand.

DOM. I only address here the DO marker *pe* with pronouns, obligatory in standard Romanian. In mainland colloquial Romanian, *pe* can be omitted only in front of relative pronouns:

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|-----|---|--|
| (5) | a. cartea pe care am citit-o (standard) | b. cartea care am citit-o (colloquial) |
| | book-the pe which have read-her | book-the which have read-her |

HR/F speakers addressed in this study do omit *pe* in front of the relative pronoun, a property also found out in bilinguals:

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|-----|---|---|
| (6) | broscuta care o pusese într-un borcan (M, 15) | |
| | frog-the which her had.put in-a jar | 'the little frog which he had put in a jar' |

Interestingly however, we find omission of DOM in front of demonstratives, which is completely absent in mainland Romanian and bilinguals:

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|-----|-------------------------------------|---|
| | HR/F | Mainland Romanian and balanced bilinguals |
| (7) | nu stiu sa machiez ceilalti (S, 16) | nu stiu sa machiez pe ceilalti |
| | not know Subj make-up the.others | not know Subj make-up pe the.others |

'I don't know how to make the others up'

Genitive marking. French has prepositional Genitives, while Romanian has a morphological Genitive. We actually expect two strategies under the influence of dominant French: (i) radical omission of the Genitive marking; (ii) overgeneralization of the preposition *de* to Genitive contexts. Both are indeed attested in Parisian Heritage Romanian (8a-b):

	HR/F		Mainland Romanian and balanced bilinguals
(8)	a. asta-i sfârșitul povestea (A, 12) this-is end-the story-the		a'. asta-i sfârșitul povestii this-is end-the story-Gen
	b. pe capul de la un cerb (M, 15) on head-the of from a deer		b'. pe capul unui cerb on head-the a-Gen deer
(9)	French		
	a. ceci est la fin de l'histoire this is the end of the.story		b. sur la tête d'un cerf on the head of.a deer

Case marking with prepositions. Another contrast between French and Romanian concerns case marking with specific prepositions, absent in French but present in Romanian. This property is neutralized in the varieties of Heritage Romanian studied here:

	HR/F		Mainland Romanian and balanced bilinguals
(10)	a. deasupra piatra (I, 13) on-top-of stone		deasupra pietrei on-top-of stone.Gen
	b. în fata patul (A, 12) in front bed-the		în fata patului in front bed.Gen
(11)	French		
	a. au-dessus de la pierre on-top of the stone		b. devant le lit in-front-of the bed

Dative/Accusative distinction in Reflexives. Reflexives do not show Case inflection in French, i.e. there is no difference between Dative and Accusative but an ambiguous *se* form. Standard Romanian does distinguish Dative from Accusative. However, HR speakers studied here neutralize this distinction:

(12)	HR/F		Mainland Romanian and balanced bilinguals
	nu o sa se mai aminteașca de noi not Fut se any-more remember of us		nu o sa-si mai aminteașca de noi not Fut-se.Dat any-more remember of us
(13)	French		
	Ils ne vont plus se souvenir de nous They not will any-more se remember of us		'they will not remember us any more'

Conclusion. This preliminary study of Heritage Romanian with French as a majority language confirms the impact of the dominant grammar on the linguistic properties of Heritage grammars. It shows clear defective properties in the system of case marking in HR/F, which are absent in mainland speakers and balanced bilinguals, suggesting that these properties are not due to internal change in Romanian, but to the influence of dominant French.

Selected references. Cornilescu, A. 2000. On the interpretation of the prepositional accusative in Romanian. *Revue Roumaine de Linguistique* 2: 91-106. Cristea, Teodora. 1977. *Éléments de grammaire contrastive, domaine français-roumain*, București. Editura didactică și pedagogică. Montrul, S. & Bateman, N. 2018. Differential Object Marking in Romanian as a Heritage Language. MS.