ON THE SYNTACTIC SPECIALIZATION OF ROMANIAN DEMONSTRATIVES AND THE GRAMMATICALIZATION OF THE ARTICLE CEL

ALEXANDRU NICOLAE

Abstract. The paper discusses the diachronic syntactic specialization of Romanian demonstratives according to the morphophonological weak/strong distinction, and the grammaticalization of the article CEL, specific to Romanian from a Romance perspective. It is shown that the reanalysis of the aphaeretic form of the distal demonstrative as the article CEL, through a grammaticalization process that regularly took place in the emergence of Romance determiners, strongly correlates with the diachronic specialization of Romanian demonstratives and with other syntactic changes taking place across-the-board in the Romanian DP.

Keywords: diachronic specialization, demonstrative, determiner, reanalysis, grammaticalization, Romanian

1. PRELIMINARY REMARKS

1.1. Aim and outline of the paper

The syntax of modern Romanian demonstratives is driven by the weak/strong distinction which associates each type of demonstrative with specific selection features and

1 Romanian Academy, “Iorgu Iordan – Al. Rosetti” Institute of Linguistics, Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Letters, University of Bucharest, nicolae_bibi@yahoo.com.

This paper is supported by the Sectorial Operational Programme Human Resources Development (SOP HRD), financed from the European Social Fund and by the Romanian Government under the contract number SOP HRD/159/1.5/S/136077.

I am grateful to the Gabriela Pană Dindelegan, Alexandra Cornilescu, Camelia Stan, Adina Dragomirescu, Adam Ledgeway, and Ian Roberts for all their comments on my work on the syntax of the Romanian DP, including parts from the present paper, to Emanuela Timotin for setting up the corpus for The Syntax of Old Romanian (in preparation), partly used here, and to Irina Nicula for reading the final version of this text. The remaining errors are all mine.

2 For the glossing of the examples, we have used the symbols and conventions generally accepted in the field, recently used in the 2013 OUP Grammar of Romanian (pp. xxviii–xxxi); of the abbreviations used more rarely or generally employed in the description of Romanian, we draw the reader’s attention to the following ones: AL – freestanding genitival/possessive marker specific to Romanian, AUX – auxiliary, CL – clitic, DEF – definite, DOM – differential object marker, PERF – perfective, PS – simple past, S – strong, W – weak; the symbol = indicates cliticization.

RRL, LX, 1, p. 47–70, București, 2015
particular syntactic derivations (Cornilescu 2005). By contrast, the syntax of old Romanian demonstratives is not driven by the weak/strong division – in other words, old Romanian demonstratives are not syntactically specialized. The first goal of this paper is to investigate the mechanisms by which Romanian demonstratives become specialized, and the factors involved in this diachronic process.

Another quirk of modern Romanian (at least from a Romance perspective) is the existence of the so-called “adjectival / demonstrative article” CEL, a definite determiner with particular distributional and interpretative features. Old Romanian presents a somewhat different picture: the forms out of which CEL grammaticalized have a dual grammar, to some degree common to that of demonstratives, but nonetheless idiosyncratic. The second goal of this paper is to account for the grammaticalization of CEL, and to show that this process is associated with the syntactic specialization of demonstratives and with other diachronic changes in the overall syntax of the Romanian DP.

The paper is structured as follows: on the basis of previous literature, we present a synchronic account of the syntax of demonstratives and of the article CEL in modern Romanian (section 2), and then we turn to the diachronic specialization of demonstratives and the grammaticalization of CEL (section 3); in section 4 we draw the conclusions.

1.2. Period investigated

We follow the generally accepted periodization of the Romanian language (Gheţie 1997: 52–53), and distinguish between old Romanian (1500–1510 3/1521 4 to 1780 5) and modern Romanian (1780 to the present-day). The old Romanian data are extracted from original texts and translations, mostly focusing on the earliest writings.

2. THE SYNTAX OF DEMONSTRATIVES AND OF THE ARTICLE CEL IN MODERN ROMANIAN

In contrast to old Romanian, in modern Romanian there is a strict morphological and distributional specialization of demonstratives, and the determiner CEL has a robust morphology and a constrained and limited distribution. The goal of this section is to present the morphosyntactic features of Romanian demonstratives and of the determiner CEL, against which we set the diachronic analysis that follows (section 3).

---

3 The earliest attested Romanian text, The Hurmuzaki Psalter (PH.1500-10), a religious translation.
4 The earliest attested Romanian original text, a letter sent by Neacșu Lupu from Câmpulung to Johannes Benker of Brașov (DÎ.1521: I).
5 S. Micu and G. Șincăi’s grammar Elementa linguæ daco-romanæ sive valachicæ (1780).
2.1. Demonstratives

From a functional point of view, the demonstrative system of modern Romanian is organized along the bipartite proximity distinction: *acest(a)* (‘this’) vs. *acel(a)* (‘that’), behaving similarly to modern French and standard Italian, but contrasting with other Romance languages (e.g. Portuguese, Spanish, Valencian, and Occitan) (Salvi 2011: 325).

From a morphological point of view, Romanian distinguishes weak and strong demonstratives; strength is achieved (i) by means of the final vocalic augment -a, either simply added to the weak form ((1a) vs. (1b)) or replacing the final segment -ă of the weak form ((1c) vs. (1d)), or (ii) by word internal processes ((2a) vs. (2b)).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEAK DEMONSTRATIVE</th>
<th>STRONG DEMONSTRATIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) a.</td>
<td>b.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acest</td>
<td>acesta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>this.W.M</td>
<td>this.S.M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>această</td>
<td>aceasta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>this.W.F</td>
<td>this.S.F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) a.</td>
<td>b.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acea [aʃˈea]</td>
<td>aceea [aʃˈeja]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that.W.F</td>
<td>that.S.F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.1.1. Distribution

From a distributional point of view, there are stark contrasts between the weak and the strong forms. The weak form is a prenominal determiner which occupies the DP-initial position, selects a non-definite noun / nominal phrase, and precedes all other DP-internal constituents (numerals, modifiers, the head noun, etc.); it may only be preceded by light adverbials or by the universal quantifier *tot* (‘all’):

(3) a. *doar acești trei copii*
    ‘only these three children’

6 Since we are interested mostly in the syntactic behaviour of demonstratives, our presentation in this section makes use of the standard Romanian etymologically complex demonstratives *acest(a)* (‘this’) and *acel(a)* (‘that’), which exhibit both strong and weak forms. In standard Romanian, the etymologically simple demonstratives *ăsta* (‘this’) (ia) and *ăla* (‘that’) (ib) have only strong forms, whose distributional behaviour is similar to that of their strong counterparts *acea* and *acela* (see Nicolae 2013a); they are mostly employed in spoken Romanian (Nicula 2008, 2009). See Niculescu (1968) on the inventory of non-standard demonstratives.

7 In glosses, the weak and the strong form will be distinguished by the symbols W and S, respectively.

8 Agreement has not yet been reached with respect to the origin of the vocalic augment -a; see Dimitrescu (1978 and references therein) for discussion.

9 The weak and strong forms of the demonstrative have been also associated with different DP-internal information-structure functions, which lay beyond the interest of this paper (see, for details, Tasmowski 1990, Manoliu 2000, Cornilescu 2005, Vasilescu 2009a, i.a.).
b. toți aceștia copii frumoși
group.all these.W children beautiful
‘all these beautiful children’

By contrast, the strong form is a postnominal determiner which combines with a
definite noun. The noun is suffixed by the definite article ((4a) vs. (4b)) and obligatorily
precedes the demonstrative (cf. (4c)). Optional multiple definiteness is available in modern
Romanian, especially in the spoken language (4d) (Iordan 1956).

(4) a. fratele acesta
brother.DEF this.S
‘this brother’
b. *frate acesta
brother this.S
c. *acesta frate(le)
this.S brother(,DEF)
d. muncitorul ăla vrednic / vrednicul
worker.DEF that.S diligent diligent.DEF
‘that diligent worker’

Furthermore, the demonstrative is strictly adjacent to the definite noun, the insertion
of other constituents in between the noun and the demonstrative being completely banned
(5); even nominal arguments (5a) and relational (classifying and thematic) adjectives (5c)
become separated from the selecting head. Another particularity of the postnominal
demonstrative construction is that it freely allows the postnominal distribution of cardinal
numerals (5e).

(5) a. fratele acesta al meu
brother.DEF this.S AL my
‘this brother of mine’
b. *fratele meu acesta
brother.DEF my this.S
c. mașina aceasta nemțească
car.DEF this.S German
‘this German car’
d. *mașina nemțească aceasta
car.DEF German this.S

e. copiii aceştia doi
children.DEF these.S two
‘these two children’
f. *copiii doi aceştia
children.DEF two these.S

Another significant difference between weak and strong demonstratives concerns
nominal ellipsis and occurrence as a predicative: only the strong form may head DPs with
elided heads (6a) (vs. (6b)) and appear as postcopular predicatives (7a) (vs. (7b)).
Let us now focus on the syntactic characterization of the weak vs. strong demonstratives as results from the distributional characteristics reviewed above.

2.1.2. Syntactic analysis

The high domain of the Romanian DP consists of (at least) the following functional projections (Cornilescu 2005, 2007, Tănase-Dogaru 2009, Cornilescu and Nicolae 2011a, i.a.)\(^{10}\):

\[
\text{DP} > \text{DemP} > \text{QP} > \ldots
\]

The D\(^0\)-head of the DP projection accommodates *interpretable* definiteness, being thus responsible for definiteness valuation/checking; demonstratives merge in Dem' or in Spec,DemP (cf. Giusti 1993, Brugê 2002)\(^{11}\), depending on their phrasal status (head/phrase), and potentially undergo movement to D\(^0\)/DP; the specifier of QP accommodates cardinal numerals and other quantifiers.

Turning to the particular situation of Romanian demonstratives, the following results can be drawn from the facts reviewed in the previous section:

(i) behaviour under nominal ellipsis (6) and in predicative position (7) shows that the strong demonstrative is phrasal (XP), while the weak demonstrative is a head (X\(^0\)) (Cornilescu 2005);

(ii) different DP-internal operations are associated with each type of demonstrative: while the distribution of the weak demonstrative is similar to its prenominal counterpart from Romance or English and poses no special problems (9), the postnominal distribution of strong demonstrative points to the fact that the definite noun undergoes movement to D; the strict adjacency constraint of the postnominal demonstrative to the nominal head illustrated in (5) further indicates that the type of movement involved is head-movement

\(^{10}\) Intensive research on the left periphery of the Romanian DP (Cornilescu 2007, Cornilescu and Nicolae 2011a) in the split-D framework (Giusti 2005, Laenzlinger 2005 i.a.) has shown that the functional domain of the Romanian DP is more complex: the D-area consists of at least a higher/external deixis D and a lower/internal agreement D. The adoption of a simple, non-split D projection suffices for the purposes of the present analysis.

\(^{11}\) UG actually provides two merger positions for demonstratives (Guardino 2012), a high position like the one in (8) and a lower functional projection in the extended nominal domain. Of these two positions, (old and modern) Romanian makes use only of the high position (see Cornilescu and Nicolae 2015).
across the phrasal demonstrative (Cornilescu 2005); head-movement is chosen over phrasal movement (the general option in the Romanian DP, see Cinque 2004) as a last resort strategy to bypass a locality problem (Cornilescu and Nicolae 2015), namely the impossibility of one specifier to crossover another specifier (a constraint not encountered in old Romanian, see Cornilescu and Nicolae 2011b).

(9)  
\[
\text{acest frate} \\
\text{this.W brother} \\
\text{a.} \ [\text{DemP acest [NP frate ...]}] \\
\text{b.} \ [\text{DP acest [DemP acest [NP frate]]}]
\]

(10)  
\[
\text{fratele acesta} \\
\text{brother.DEF this.s} \\
\text{a.} \ [\text{DemP acesta [NP fratele]}] \\
\text{b.} \ [\text{DP [N+D fratele [DemP acesta [NP fratele]]]}]
\]

Retaining this analysis for the diachronic account that follows, in the next section we briefly turn to the distribution and analysis of the article CEL.

2.2. The article CEL

The article CEL, characterized by Romanian traditional scholarship as a “demonstrative / adjectival article” (GLR 1966, I: 107–108), is an innovation of Romanian among the Romance languages (Niculescu 1965: 19–20, Iliescu 2006, 2009), which does not have Romance counterparts (Reinheimer Rîpeanu 2001: 198, Vasilescu 2009b: 273), at least as far as its distribution with postnominal modifiers is concerned. From an interpretative point of view, in modern Romanian, CEL is devoid of demonstrative meaning, i.e. it no longer encodes proximity distinctions.

2.2.1. Distribution

CEL functions as a (last resort) freestanding definite article and values definiteness when the DP-initial position is occupied by numerals which cannot bear the suffixal definite article (Cornilescu 2004) (11); “quantifying adjectives”, which display a mixed adjectival and quantificational behaviour (Pană Dindelegan 2003, Cornilescu 2009), have the option of valuing definiteness either by CEL-insertion (12a) or by definite article suffixation (12b).

(11)  
\[
\text{a. cei doi frații} \quad \text{vs. a'. doiii frați} \\
\text{CEL two brothers} \\
\text{‘the two brothers’} \\
\text{b. cel de-al doilea frate} \\
\text{CEL second brother} \\
\text{‘the second brother’}
\]

12 For the full distribution of CEL, see Nicolae (2013b); in this paper, we limit ourselves to the contexts which present a direct interest for the diachronic analysis that follows.
(12) a. **cei** *(foarte)* mulții frații
   CEL very many brothers
   ‘the very many brothers’

b. mulții frații ai Mariei
   many.DEF brothers Al. Mary.GEN
   ‘Mary’s many brothers’

While the freestanding definite article usage of **CEL** is not peculiar from a cross-linguistic perspective, its other context of occurrence (*adjectival article*) is highly specific to Romanian (at least from a Romance perspective, see Ledgeway 2012: 113–115). In this second context\(^\dagger\), **CEL** is postnominal and precedes\(^\dagger\) APs headed by qualifying adjectives (13a), PPs (13b), agreeing past participles (13c), agreeing gerund (obsolete) (13d) (Cornilescu 2004).

(13) a. casa **cea** nouă
   house(F).DEF CEL.F new.F
   ‘the new house’

b. casa **cea** din deal
   house(F).DEF CEL.F from hill
   ‘the house on the hill’

c. copiii **cei** pierduți
   child.PL.DEF CEL.PL lost.PL
   ‘the lost children’

d. lebăda **cea** murindă
   swan(F).DEF CEL.F dying.F
   ‘the dying swan’

Although **CEL** is preceded by a definite constituent, its distribution is not as similar to that of strong demonstratives as may seem at first sight. First of all, **CEL** may be preceded by phrasal constituents (compare to the ungrammatical counterparts with postnominal demonstratives in (5b), (5d)):

\(^{\dagger}\) The interpretation of the **CEL**-construction has been subject to much controversy; we refer the reader to the discussion in Cornilescu and Nicolae (2011a; 2012: 1087–1093) for a review of the relevant literature and a unifying proposal of interpretation.

\(^{\dagger}\) The full distribution of **CEL** also includes its occurrence as a formative of the superlative (i) and in the structure of PNs (ii). The grammaticalization of **CEL** as a superlative morpheme (i) took place after its grammaticalization as an adjectival article (Brâescu 2015), and represents a Romance-specific type of grammaticalization (Iordan and Manoliu 1965: 153), widely attested cross-linguistically, namely **DEFINITE > SUPERLATIVE** (Heine and Kuteva 2002: 106) (see also Ledgeway 2012: 114, n. 44 for discussion). The presence of definite determiners in the internal structure of proper names (ii) is also widely attested in Romance and cross-linguistically.

(i) a. **cea mai** tânără fată (ii) **Ivan cel** groaznic
   CEL more new girl Ivan CEL terrible

b. fată **cea mai** tânără ‘Ivan the Terrible’
   girl.DEF CEL more young
   ‘the youngest girl’
Secondly, while postnominal demonstratives directly precede relational adjectives, in the CEL-construction relational adjectives are pied-piped along by the head noun (14b), and cannot be directly preceded by CEL (15a), a distribution permitted with strong demonstratives (see (5c) above). Another difference between postnominal demonstratives and CEL concerns the availability of multiple definiteness, totally excluded in the CEL-construction (15b), but possible in the postnominal demonstrative construction (4d). Also, in contrast to prenominal demonstratives, CEL cannot (directly or indirectly) precede nouns (15c).

(15) a. *maşina cea nemţească
car.DEF CEL German
b. muncitorul CEL vrednic / *vrednicul
worker.DEF that.S diligent diligent.DEF
‘the diligent worker’
b. *cea maşină / *cea roşie maşină
CEL car CEL red car

CEL is also the licenser of definite nominal ellipsis in Romanian. Romanian keeps distinct two very similar processes, nominal ellipsis and substantivization, by means of different licensors (Cornilescu and Nicolae 2012, Nicolae 2013c, Dragomirescu and Nicolae 2015), contrasting to other Romance languages which employ one and the same element, the definite article (see Sleeman 1996). Nominal ellipsis, the discourse-conditioned omission of the nominal head, is headed by the article CEL (16), while substantivization, a lexically-conditioned process which involves the incorporation of a silent but contentful noun, e.g. HUMAN, COLOUR, CATEGORY (Kayne 2005), is licensed by the suffixal definite article (17). Traditional scholarship has also characterized CEL as a “semiindependent pronoun” (Manoliu-Manea 1968) due to the fact that CEL is unable to stand alone under nominal ellipsis, being obligatorily accompanied by at least a remnant (owing to its clitic nature, see Nicolae 2013b: 311); once more, this sets it in contrast to demonstratives (18).

(16) a. márul roşu şi cel verde / *şi verdele
apple.DEF red and CEL green and green.DEF
‘the red apple and the green one’
b. câinele sănătos şi cel bolnav / *şi bolnavul
dog.DEF healthy and CEL sick and sick.DEF
‘the healthy dog and the sick one’

(17) a. verdele [COLOUR]
green.DEF
‘the colour green’ (but not ‘the green apple’
b.  *bolnavul  [HUMAN]
    sick.DEF
    ‘the sick man’ (but not ‘the sick dog’)

(18)  Acela  /  *Cel  a  venit.
      that.S  CEL  AUX.PERF.3SG  come.PPLE
    ‘That one came’

2.2.2. Syntactic analysis

Taking stock of the properties reviewed in previous subsection, we can draw the conclusion that CEL directly merges in the D-position of the higher functional nominal domain, merger in Dem(P) being excluded as CEL does not have demonstrative value. The fact that CEL may be preceded by phrasal constituents (14) and the inability of CEL to stand alone under nominal ellipsis (18) further indicate that CEL is a head, not a phrase. If CEL were phrasal, it would induce the same last resort type of head-movement and block phrasal movement, just as in the case of the as the strong demonstrative, contrary to fact.

Hence, as a freestanding determiner preceding quantifiers, CEL merges in D₀ and types the phrase as definite; in this structure, movement of the noun across CEL is possible (Cornilescu 2004), but rare (Nicolae 2013b: 315):

(19)  cei  doi  oameni
      CEL  two  people
      [DP [D₀  cel  [QP [CardP doi] Q [NumP/NP oameni]]]]

In the adjectival article construction, CEL also merges in the same position, and there is obligatory phrasal movement across CEL to the specifier of the DP:

(20)  fratele  (meu)  cel  mic
      brother.DEF  my  CEL  little
      [DP [NP fratele (meu)] [D cel [FP [AP mic] … tNP

2.3. Summary

In this section, we have reviewed the distributional and syntactic properties of demonstratives and of the article CEL in modern Romanian. The following facts have emerged from the discussion:

(i) the weak proximal and distal demonstratives and the article CEL are heads, while the strong demonstratives are phrasal;
(ii) in the extended nominal projection which assumes at least the projections DP > DemP > QP,

(a) weak demonstratives merge in Dem₀ and undergo head movement to D₀;

15 Under the split-D hypothesis (see fn. 10), the analysis of the adjectival article construction is slightly different (see Cornilescu and Nicolae 2011a); this difference is immaterial for the purposes of the diachronic analysis that follows.
3. THE VIEW FROM DIACHRONY

In the previous section, we have highlighted the fact that the syntax of demonstratives in modern Romanian aligns along the weak/strong distinction and there is virtually no optionality in this respect; in other words, modern Romanian demonstratives exhibit a robust form – syntax correlation. In this section, we show that this correlation was not active in older stages of Romanian: the distribution of demonstratives in old Romanian indicates that the weak/strong distinction does not correlate with the head/phrase distinction. The effect of this lack of specialization has repercussions on the DP-internal movement operations: the adjacency constraint of postnominal demonstratives to a definite noun is not well-established in old Romanian (see, for the initial observation, Cornilescu and Nicolae 2011b: 214).

Similar considerations hold for the article CEL, which also displays a uniform syntax in modern Romanian. The extensive examination of old Romanian texts actually shows that in the earliest stages of old Romanian CEL stood a dual grammar, displaying both demonstrative and article (distributional and interpretative) properties, and hence illustrating Kroch’s (1989) notion of “grammars in competition” (see Roberts 2007: 319–331 for an up-to-date discussion).

After a brief presentation of the origin of the Romanian demonstratives and of the article CEL, we turn to their distributional and interpretative behaviour in old Romanian, and then propose a diachronic scenario that accounts for the changes encountered in the transition to modern Romanian.

3.1. The origin of Romanian demonstratives and of the article CEL

Romanian possesses both etymologically simple demonstratives and etymologically complex demonstratives. The demonstratives ăsta (‘this’) and ăla (‘that’), used only as strong forms mainly in the spoken language, originate from the vulgar Latin demonstratives ĭstus (classical Latin ISTE) and, respectively, illum (classical Latin ILLE) in stressed position. The demonstratives acest(a) (‘this’) and acel(a) (‘that’) are etymologically complex forms, resulting from the combination between Latin eccum (variant of ECCE ‘behold’) and istum and, respectively, illum (see the discussion in Dimitrescu 1978: 275).

Turning to CEL, its origin is the aphaeretic distal demonstrative acel(a) (‘that’) (Dimitrescu 1975: 169). Iordan and Manoliu (1965: 145) correctly remarked that the rise of CEL as a different form of the distal demonstrative took place after the 16th c., a hypothesis verified by the present research.
3.2. Non-specialized demonstratives

In this section, we focus on non-aphaeretic demonstratives (acest(a) ‘this’ and acel(a) ‘that’); in the next section, which specifically deals with CEL, we show that the aphaeretic forms display an ambiguous demonstrative/definite article grammar.

3.2.1. Distribution

The weak forms of demonstratives may appear both prenominally (21) and postnominally (22); the postnominal usage of weak demonstratives has been eliminated. The internal make-up of old Romanian DPs with postnominal weak demonstratives is sometimes very similar to that of modern Romanian postnominal demonstrative DPs with strong demonstratives (22b).

(21) a. 
\[pentru \text{ acel bir (DÎ.1593: X)}\]
for that.\text{W} tax
‘for that tax’

b. 
\[aceast\text{ă sâmântă (PH.1500–10: 19\text{\S})}\]
this.\text{W} seed
‘this seed’

(22) a. 
\[neamul \text{ acel (CP1.1577: 185\text{\S})}\]
nation.\text{DEF} that.\text{W}
‘that nation’

b. 
\[mân\text{căriei acea porcească (CC2.1581: 18)}\]
food.\text{DEF.GEN} that.\text{W} porcine
‘of that porcine food’

By the same token, the strong form may appear both prenominally (23) and postnominally (24). The prenominal usage of the strong form has been also eliminated.

(23) a. 
\[aceasta a mea scrisoare (DÎ.1594: X)\]
this.\text{S} AL my letter
‘this letter of mine’

b. 
\[acestea cărți creștește\text{n\S) (CCat.1560: 2\text{\S})}\]
these.\text{S} books Christian
‘these Christian books’

(24) a. 
\[după feciorul\text{ă acela (CC2.1581: 24)}\]
after boy.\text{DEF} that.\text{S}

b. 
\[în iezerul acela (A.1620: 19\text{\S})\]
in mountain.lake.\text{DEF} that.\text{S}
‘in that mountain lake’

Authors like Dimitrescu (1978: 278) and Stan (2013: 35–36) have also remarked the lack of distributional constraints on the selection of the weak vs strong form.

Furthermore, the strong demonstrative may also precede nouns suffixed by the definite article, an option no longer available:
(25) a. însuși a ce la judecatoriulă dreptă (CC².1581: 33)
himself that.S judge.DEF honest
‘that honest judge himself’
b. aceasta moșia vândut-am (DÎ.1595–96: XIII)
this.S property.DEF sell.PPLE=AUX.PERF.1SG
‘I sold this property’

Another feature of postnominal strong demonstratives is that they may (26) or may not (27) be adjacent to the definite article. The latter distribution indicates phrasal movement across the strong demonstrative, an option no longer available.

(26) in anulu aceasta 1593 (DÎ.1593: CXIII)
in year.DEF this.S 1593
‘in that year 1593’

(27) fiuțul meu aceasta mortă era (CC².1581: 12)
son.DEF my this.S dead was
‘this sone of mine was dead’

3.2.2. Nominal ellipsis

Another disparity between old and modern Romanian demonstratives concerns nominal ellipsis; both strong (28) and weak (29) forms may occur in DPs with elided heads. In the transition to modern Romanian, the selection of the weak form in elliptical DPs has been eliminated.

(28) a. audu și înțelegu lucră ca aceasta (DÎ.1599: XVIII)
hear.PRES.3PL and understand.PRES.3PL thing like this.S
‘they hear and understand a thing like this one’
b. Acela era răul sterpiciuniei (SVI.~1670: 7v)
that.S was wickedness.DEF sterility.DEF.GEN
‘That was the wickedness of sterility’

(29) a. acel e frate mie (CT.1560–1: 74v)
that.W is brother me.DAT
‘That is my brother’
b. Aceste zise marele împărat Alexandru (A.1620: 74v)
these.w say.PS.3SG great.DEF emperor Alexander
‘The great emperor Alexander said these (words)’

3.2.3. Evidence for the commencement of specialization

However, in contrast to the data reviewed above, there is evidence for the fact that the strong/weak distinction tends to become syntactically specialized. To begin with, postnominal weak demonstratives have a low frequency, and they are mostly attested in translations; in general, the distribution of weak vs strong forms in original documents is more stable than in translations (Stan 2013: 35–36).
More importantly, the postnominal weak demonstrative construction (30) differs from the postnominal strong demonstrative construction (31) in that only the latter allows (and actually favours in old Romanian) the multiple expression of definiteness.

(30) a. mâncăriei acea porcească (CC².1581: 18)
   food.DEF.GEN that.W porcine
   ‘to that porcine food’
b. bucintulă acelă ingerescă (CazV.1643: 26°)
   alphorn.DEF that.W angelical
   ‘that angelical alphorn’

(31) a. lumiei aceştii inşăţtoarea (CC².1581: 18)
   world.DEF.GEN this.S.DEF.GEN deceiving.DEF.GEN
   ‘of this deceiving world’
b. locul acesta sfântul (CV.1563–83: 17°)
   place.DEF this.S sacred.DEF
   ‘this sacred place’

A similar behaviour has been observed in the situation the aphaeretic demonstratives (see Vasiliu 2007 for the initial observation): apocopate (i.e. weak) forms of CEL disallow multiple definiteness, while their strong counterparts actually favour it (see the next section for details).

3.2.4. Summary

The old Romanian distribution of demonstratives reviewed above indicates that the weak/strong distinction does not correlate with a clear phrasal status (head/phrase), nor with uniform DP-internal movement options: (i) both weak and strong forms may head elliptical DPs, a fact which shows that weak forms are not uniformly classified as heads; (ii) movement to D is not obligatory for either type of demonstrative, as indicated by the fact that both weak and strong forms may be preceded by other material, but is possible for both weak and strong demonstratives, as shown by the fact that both types of form may occupy the DP-initial position preceding the head-noun; (iii) strong demonstratives may be preceded either by definite nouns or by complex phrasal constituents, this again testifying to the fact that the head/phrase categorization is unclear. Despite this vacillating behaviour, there are certain clear signs of specialization from the earliest (16th c.) texts, namely the availability of multiple definiteness only with strong demonstratives.

3.2.5. Diachronic development

The passage to modern Romanian consolidated the weak/strong distinction by specializing the weak form as a head which obligatorily undergoes movement to D₀, and the strong form as a phrase which occupies the Spec,DemP and no longer moves to the D-position\(^\text{16}\). In other words, a grammar with more options has been reset to a grammar

---

\(^{16}\) The loss of the strong form’s ability to move to D does not imply that strong forms no longer entertain any relation with the D-position; the relation between D and strong demonstratives is mediated by Agree (coindexation in older terminology, see Roberts and Roussou 2003: 133).
with fewer options in which each type of demonstrative is associated with an unambiguous phrasal status and with unambiguous movement options.

3.3. The ambiguous grammar of CEL

3.3.1. Acel > CEL or acela > CEL?

The grammaticalization of CEL is supported by phonological processes of reduction of the distal demonstrative acel(a) (‘that’); as known, morphophonological reduction is a frequent process that takes place in the grammaticalization of determiners (Roberts and Roussou 2003: 132).

The origin of CEL is actually the aphaeretic weak form of the distal demonstrative, (a)cel, not the strong form acela simultaneously affected by the aphaeresis of the initial vowel a- and the apocope of the final vowel -a (cf. also Giurgea 2012: 41–42). The aphaeretic strong form (i.e. cela) as the etymological basis of CEL is ruled out by phonological17 (see Dimitrescu 1978: 276) as well as distributional reasons; in particular, notice that aphaeretic strong forms do not exhibit the so-called “semiindependent” behaviour characteristic to CEL (the presence of a DP-internal constituent to their right) (32a) and may precede definite or non-definite constituents (32b, c), just like the non-aphaeretic demonstratives:

(32) a. ceia-u dzis că nu e acolo (DÎ.1593: CXII)
   those.S=AUX.PERF.3PL say.PPLE that not is there
   ‘those (men) said that it is not there’

b. asculta (...) de [cealea de Pavelu grăitele] (CV.1563–83: 43v)
   listen. IMPERF.3SG of those.S by Pavel spoken.PL.DEF
   ‘he listened to the those (things) spoken by Pavel’

c. pintru celea săbii (DÎ.1599–600: XXV)
   for those.S swords
   ‘for those swords’

Further evidence for the fact that the grammaticalization of CEL proceeds from simultaneously aphaeretic and apocopate forms (henceforth glossed as CEL18) is given by multiple definite constructions. Vasiliu (2007: 75) correctly remarks that in postnominal position the apocopate forms of old Romanian CEL disallow multiple definiteness (33), while non-apocopate forms behave like the old and modern Romanian postnominal strong demonstratives, i.e. multiple definiteness is allowed (34) – actually favoured in this stage of Romanian –, but not always obligatory (35). Vasiliu’s observation is strongly supported by

17 This is obvious when we compare the singular feminine strong form (a)ceea whose augmentation is achieved through a word-internal change with the singular feminine form (a)cea.
18 For convenience, we will gloss the aphaeretic and apocopate forms with CEL, bearing in mind that these forms stand a dual demonstrative/definite article analysis, as will be seen in the next subsection.
the fact this behaviour is systematic in the collection of the earliest attested original Romanian writings (DÎ).

(33) a.  întelepciunea căea veacinici (CazV.1643: II*')
   wisdom.DEF CEL eternal
   ‘the eternal wisdom’

b. frați căei mici (CC2.1581: 34)
   brothers.DEF CEL little
   ‘the little brothers’

c. datoria căea veache (DÎ.1595–96: XII)
   debt.DEF CEL old
   ‘the old debt’

d. cugetul lui căel rău (DÎ.1600: XLIV)
   thought.DEF his CEL mean
   ‘his mean thought’

(34) a. la locul căela strimtu (DÎ.1521: 1)
   at place.DEF CEL narrow.M.DEF
   ‘at that narrow place’

b. iară popa căela greșitul (să
   and priest.DEF CEL.M.SG trespass.DEF.M.SG SUBJ
   se/să facă călugăr) (CPrav.1560–62: 9; Prav.1581: 206')
   SE become.SUBJ monk
   ‘and the/that priest who has trespassed should become a monk’

c. fiulă lui căela mai marel (CC2.1581: 12)
   son.DEF his that.S more old.DEF
   ‘his older son’

(35) feciorulă lui căela mai marel (CC2.1581: 22)
   son.DEF his that.S more old
   ‘his older son’

Hence, the aphaeretic non-apocopate forms are variants of the full demonstrative, and an accurate diachronic analysis of the grammaticalization of CEL should mostly focus on the forms simultaneously affected by aphaeresis and apocope.

3.3.2. Demonstrative distribution and interpretation

Despite the clearly different distribution of the aphaeretic and apocopate forms in contrast to their non-apocopate counterparts with respect to multiple definiteness, there is distributional and interpretative evidence that the aphaeretic weak forms also exhibit demonstrative behaviour in old Romanian.

To begin with, these forms may directly precede non-definite nouns (36) / adjectives plus nouns (37) / nouns plus adjectives (38) (Dimitrescu 1978, Giurgea 2013, Stan 2013), a distribution no longer available for modern Romanian CEL, but available for old and modern Romanian weak demonstratives:

(36) a.  căei oameni ai săi (CC1.1567: 97*)
   CEL men AL his
   ‘his people / those people of his’
b. **au luat cel grâu** (DÎ.1593: IX)
   `they have taken the / that wheat`

   **DOM CEL messenger**
   `the/that messenger`

   **(37) a. ceea bună nădejde** (FT.1571–75: 2v)
   `the/that good hope`

   **b. ceea puţină credinţă** (CC2.1581: 297)
   `the/that little faith`

   **(38) a. toate cele lucrure bure** (MI.~1630: 191r)
   `all the/those good things`

   **b. cel fecior curvariu** (Ev.1642 : 179)
   `the/that fornicating son`

   **c. den celă lucră rău** (CC2.1581: 17)
   `from the/that bad thing`

   **Another demonstrative feature of these forms is represented by the direct combination with relational adjectives (Brăescu and Dragomirescu 2014), a feature no longer available in the modern Romanian CEL-construction:**

   **(39) a. ceea dumnezeiască viaţă** (CC2.1581: 147)
   `that divine life` (`dumnezeiesc < Dumnezeu ‘God’`)

   **b. birăul cel românescu şi cu cel armenescu** (DÎ.1593–97: XCVII)
   `the Romanian mayor with the Armenian one`

   **From an interpretative point of view, the aphaeretic and apocopate distal forms still seem to preserve a spatial meaning (i.e. the meaning of a full distal demonstrative); in the oldest Romanian writings, in the same text, we also find aphaeretic and apocopate proximal forms; hence, a proximity opposition of aphaeretic and apocopate forms is still at play to a certain degree:**

   **(40) a. cele grele pedepse a tale** (FT.1571–75: 3')
   `your hard penalties / those hard penalties of yours`

   **b. ceastă lume** (FT.1571–75: 2v)
   `this world`
To sum up, in contrast to the evidence for a distinction between the aphaeretic forms with apocope and those without apocope presented in the previous subsection, in the present subsection we have discussed certain characteristics that indicate that the aphaeretic apocopate forms also present demonstrative features. We may safely conclude that the forms out of which CEL eventually grammaticalized displayed dual demonstrative/definite article behaviour; in other words, these forms had a double categorization, hence illustrating the phenomenon of grammars in competition.

3.3.3. Nominal ellipsis

A final piece of evidence in favour of the idea that the CEL-forms of old Romanian did not display the same behaviour of the modern Romanian CEL-construction is given by nominal ellipsis. Recall that modern Romanian, in contrast to other Romance languages, distinguishes definite nominal ellipsis from substantivization by using the article CEL for the former process and the suffixal definite article for the latter (see examples (16)–(17) above). By contrast, in the oldest Romanian writings, elliptical DPs are headed by the suffixal definite article (42a); crucially, in the later editions of the same passage, the definite article strategy is replaced by the CEL-strategy (42b) (Stan 2015: 62).

(42) a. nooa (CT.1560–1: 121')
   new.DEF
b. cel nou (BB.1688: 793)
   CEL new
   ‘the new one’

This change took place across-the-board in the passage from the earliest texts of old Romanian to later texts (Dragomirescu and Nicolae 2015; Nicolae 2015).

3.3.4. The grammaticalization of CEL

The grammaticalization of the aphaeretic and apocopate form of the distal demonstrative as definite determiner is intimately related to the diachronic specialization of the Romanian demonstratives.

Recall that the principal phenomenon that took place in the syntax of demonstratives is the specialization of the weak forms as heads which select a non-definite nominal complement, and of the strong forms as phrases which take a definite noun as their complement, which subsequently raise to D via head-movement.

In what follows, we sketch the steps which have led to the reanalysis of CEL as a definite article:
(i) The aphaeretic and apocopate form of the distal demonstrative generally patterns with the weak demonstrative forms. Hence, along with the weak demonstrative, it gradually becomes specialized as a head.

(ii) Since it displays dual demonstrative/article features, two merger positions (i.e. two structures) are available for CEL-forms: \( D^0 \) (with potential movement to \( D^0 \), just like modern Romanian weak demonstratives) (43a) and \( D^0 \) (43b); these two structures co-exist for a period. The same scenario has been also advocated by Giusti (1998) for the emergence of the Romance definite article.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{DP} \\
\downarrow \\
D^0 \\
\text{DemP} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{Dem}^0 \\
\text{cel} \\
\end{array}
\]

(iii) The semantic bleaching of the \([+\text{demonstrative}]\) feature – also supported by the almost complete disappearance by the end of old Romanian of aphaeretic and apocopate proximal demonstratives (\( cest < acest(a) \)), with which the CEL-forms enter the proximity opposition – triggers the complete reanalysis of CEL as \( D^0 \)-head; structure (43a) is no longer possible, the only option for the merger of CEL being (43b).

In sum, the grammaticalization of article CEL is a familiar Move > Merge type of reanalysis (Roberts and Roussou 2003: 136), often encountered in the emergence of Romance determiners. Similarly to the transformation of the Latin distal demonstrative \( ille \) into the Romance definite article (including the Romanian one, see Nicolae 2012), the transformation of the Romanian distal demonstrative into a definite article involved morphophonological reduction (\( acel > cel \)), semantic bleaching (loss of the demonstrative property), and categorial change (demonstrative > article). This has prompted researchers like Iliescu (2006, 2009) to qualify the development of CEL as an example within Romanian of a recurrent Romance typological change: the production of a parallel new form from almost identical material.

3.3.5. CEL in quantificational phrases

One final problem concerns the usage of CEL as a freestanding definite article in phrases that contain morphologically defective quantifiers (see example (11) above). This usage of CEL is related to an old Romanian structure which disappeared in the passage from old to modern Romanian, namely the “low definite article”, first discussed in Cornilescu and Nicolae (2011b). In this structure, the definite article may be suffixed on a noun preceded by a non-definite adjective; in other words, definiteness valuation/checking proceeds across a prenominal intervener:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{tinde (...) cătră noi} \\
\text{(FT.1571–75: 3')} \\
\text{extend.PRES.2SG towards us} \\
\text{holy hand.DEF your} \\
\text{'extend your holy hand towards us with mercy'}
\end{array}
\]
This type of definiteness valuation/checking was reset by the end of old Romanian in favour of a grammar which favours a more local type of valuation: the bearer of definiteness must be hosted by the first noun/adjective in the DP.

The low definite article construction is also available with quantificational phrases in old Romanian; the suffixal definite article checks definiteness across the intervening quantifier:

(45) a. deade Dumnezeu [zeace cuvintele sale] (CCat.1560: 4r)
   give.PS.3SG God ten words.DEF his
   ‘God gave his ten commandments’

b. arătarea [a dooa venirei lui] (CC2.1581: 600)
   showing.DEF second coming.DEF.GEN his
   ‘the showing of his second coming’

However, in contrast to prenominal adjectives, which are $\phi$-complete and have the option to be suffixed by the definite article and hence value definiteness in a local manner, quantifiers (with few exceptions, see (12) above) are $\phi$-incomplete (i.e. morphologically defective) and cannot be suffixed by the definite article. Since non-local definiteness valuation in no longer available, the presence of the suffixal definite article on a post-quantifier constituent is excluded. A novel freestanding exponent of the $D^0$ projection is already available in the old language, namely CEL, and hence it is selected as a last resort option to check/value definiteness in quantificational DPs. Hence, definiteness valuation in DPs of the type in (45) is satisfied by the insertion of CEL (46):

(46) a. cele zece cuvinte ale sale
    CEL ten worlds AL his
    ‘his ten words’

b. cea de-a doua venire a lui
    CEL second coming AL his
    ‘his second coming’

The low definite article in quantificational DPs was already an archaism in old Romanian (in contrast to the low definite article with prenominal adjectives, which was relatively frequent, see Cornilescu and Nicolae 2011b). This construction is rare, and the usage of CEL as a freestanding definite article devoid of (distal) demonstrative meaning is quite frequent; for example, in the following fragment from the popular novel Alexandria (A.1620), it is obvious that the quantificational DP “cei 6 filosofi” (‘the six philosophers’) anaphorically refers back to the indefinite DP “6 filosofi” (‘six philosophers’), and CEL is a definite article not a distal demonstrative:

(47) Și luo Alexandru de la ei 6 filosofi și iei
     and take.PS.3SG Alexander from them six philosophers and leave.PS.3SG

b. cu [cinstită carteă măriii tale] (DL1596: CVI)
   with honoured letter.DEF highness.DEF.GEN your
   ‘with your highness’ honoured letter’
And Alexander took six philosophers from them and left the island. \[\ldots\] And he dressed the six philosophers and \[\ldots\]

The non-ambiguous usage of the aphaeretic and apocopate form as freestanding definite article in very early old Romanian documents further validates the idea that CEL-forms have dual categorization in old Romanian, defended in section 3.3.1 above.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1. The reconfiguration of the syntax of demonstratives and the emergence of CEL

The main phenomenon that took place in the syntax of Romanian demonstratives is the diachronic specialization of the weak and strong forms as heads and phrases, respectively. This conferred non-ambiguous syntactic derivations of each type of form:

(i) the weak form is a head merging in Dem’ that selects a non-definite complement; the short demonstrative values definiteness and moves to D0;

(ii) the strong form is a phrase which merges in Spec,DemP and selects a definite complement; the D-position is targeted by the definite noun; the definite noun may only undergo head-movement to D0, phrasal movement being blocked by locality constraints.

The fact that each type of demonstrative has particular selectional features (weak forms select a non-definite complement / strong forms take a definite complement) is further verified by the fact that in both old and modern Romanian multiple definiteness is available only with strong forms.

The aphaeretic and apocopate distal demonstratives were included in the weak demonstrative paradigm and unambiguously categorized as heads; the subsequent loss of the [+demonstrative] feature triggered their reanalysis as articles. The result of this process is a second definite article of Romanian, CEL, which has particular distributional features, and a particular DP-internal information structure function.

4.2. Factors favouring the emergence of CEL

Due to space limitations, little has been said about the interpretation of the non-quantificational CEL-construction (see footnote (12) above). Except for DPs containing quantifiers and for elliptical DPs, CEL-insertion is mostly optional in modern Romanian (see Nicolae 2013b); however, when CEL insertion takes place, the postnominal modifier acquires a particular pragmatic interpretation, which is generally associated with discourse prominence / saliency, and with the signalling of an identifying property of referent of the CEL-containing DP. The question arises as to what are the factors that have led to the emergence of this construction.

We believe that this construction emerged from the interplay of two other changes in the internal syntax of Romanian DPs. The first phenomenon is the specialization of the
prenominal adjectival position: in old Romanian, AP-movement to the left edge of the DP was virtually unbounded, and any type of adjective could occupy the DP-initial position, as richly documented by Brâescu and Dragomirescu (2014). Very often, AP-displacement to the DP-left periphery is information-structurally driven. This change is part of a larger shift witnessed in the change from Latin to late Latin and Romance, documented by Ledgeway (2012: 210): “Though as a typological diagnostic the position of the adjective with respect to the noun has been claimed on crosslinguistic grounds, as well as on the evidence of Latin and Romance, not to correlate robustly with other word order patterns, there are nonetheless some consistent Latin-internal patterns which incontrovertibly point towards an early shift from an original head-final AN order to the head-initial NA order (…) that continues into Romance”.

The other change has already been briefly discussed in section 3.3.5 above: the strengthening of locality conditions on definiteness valuation in the passage from old to modern Romanian, further complicated by the fact that the Romanian definite article is a suffix with particular conditions of encliticization.

The combined effect of these two changes is the emergence of a novel construction in which CEL functions as an escape hatch allowing a nominal phrase to target the leftmost position of the DP, bypassing thus the intervention effects induced by information-structurally marked modifiers, DP-periphery constituents themselves.

The emergence of a novel construction with a particular DP-internal information structuring function is strategy that compensates for the gradual reduction of “pragmatically-driven word order (…) resulting form the greater accessibility of topic- and focus-fronting positions situated in the left edge of individual phasal projections” (Ledgeway 2012: 281–282) – in other words, discourse configurationality – which has taken places across-the-board in the passage from Latin to Romance, as extensively documented by Ledgeway (2012).

CORPUS


CazV.1643  Varlaam, Cazania, ed. J. Byck, București, Editura Academiei RSR, [s.a.], 1–506.


REFERENCES


Cornilescu, A., A. Nicolae, 2011a, “Nominal peripheries and phase structure in the Romanian DP”, 
Revue roumaine de linguistique, LVI, 1, 35–68.
patterns of definiteness checking”, in: P. Sleeman, H. Perridon (eds), The noun phrase in 
Romance and Germanic. Structure, variation, and change, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, John 
Benjamins, 193–221.
Cornilescu, A., A. Nicolae, 2012, “Nominal ellipsis as definiteness and anaphoricity: the case of 
Romanian”, Lingua, 122, 10, 1070–1111.
Cornilescu, A., A. Nicolae, 2015, “Diachronic variation in the syntax of Romanian demonstratives”, 
in preparation.
Dimitrescu, F., 1975, Introducere în morfosintaxa istorică a limbii române, București, Universitatea 
din București.
fonetică, morfosintaxă, lexică, București, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, 273–278.
Dragomirescu, A., A. Nicolae, 2015, “L’ellipse nominale avec article défini de l’ancien roumain au 
roumain moderne: Le cas du participe passé”, in: É. Buchi, J.-P. Chauveau, J.-M. Pierrel (eds), 
Actes du XXVIe Congrès international de linguistique et de philologie romanes, Strasbourg, 
Société de linguistique romane/ÉliPhi, in press.
Gheție, I., 1997, “Probleme teoretice și metodologice ale cercetării limbii române literare vechi”, 
Academiei Române, 23–53.
of the demonstrative system”, Revue roumaine de linguistique, LVII, 1, 35–65.
Giurgea, I., 2013, Originea articulului possessiv-genitival al și evoluția demonstrativelor în română, 
București, Editura Muzeului Național al Literaturii Române.
pronoun”, University of Venice working papers in linguistics, 8, 2, 53–71.
Giusti, G., 2005, “At the left periphery of the Romanian noun phrase”, in: M. Coene, L. Tasmowski 
(eds), On space and time in language, Cluj-Napoca, Clusium, 23–49.
GLR 1966 – A. Graur, M. Avram, L. Vasiliu (eds), 1966, Gramatica limbii române, 2 volumes, 
București, Editura Academiei.
Guardiano, C., 2012, “Demonstratives, word order and the DP between syntax and semantics: 
crosslinguistics remarks”, Studies in Greek linguistics, 32, 100–115.
Press.
Iliescu, M., 2000, “L’article adjectival roumain: un exemple de recurrence typologique ciclique”, 
Revue roumaine de linguistique, LI, 1, 159–163.
linguistique, 59, 2, 13–23.
Iordan, I., M. Manoliu, 1965, Introducere în lingvistica română, București, Editura Didactică și 
Pedagogică.
Kayne, R. S., 2005, “Silent years, silent hours”, in: Movement and silence, Oxford, Oxford University 
Kroch, A., 1989, “Reflexes of grammar in patterns of language change”, Language variation and 
change, 1, 199–244.
Laenzlinger, C., 2005, “Some notes on DP-internal movement”, GG@G [Generative grammar in 
Geneva], 4, 227–260.
University Press.
P. Dendale, Y. D’Hulst (eds), Traiani Augusti vestigia pressa sequamur. Studia lingvistica 
in honorem Lilianae Tasmowski, Padua, Unipress, 583–600.


