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2.3 The indirect object

2.3.1 Characteristics

(i) The indirect object is selected by a transitive verb (in structures in which usually the direct object is lexicalized (1a) as well) or by an intransitive verb (in structures in which the indirect object is either the only internal argument (1b) or one of the two arguments, co-occurring with a prepositional phrase (1c)):

- (1) a. Ion oferă flori **Mariei**
 Ion.NOM offers flowers.ACC Maria.DAT
 ‘Ion offers flowers to Maria’
- b. Exemplul aparține **autorului**
 example.DEF.NOM belongs author.DEF.DAT
 ‘The example belongs to the author’
- c. **Îi** arde de farse
 CL.DAT.3SG (s/he)feels-like of pranks.ACC
 ‘He is up to making pranks’

(ii) The verbs that select an indirect object can be grouped in two classes, i.e. those selecting an obligatory indirect object – *a acorda* ‘give’, *a aparține* ‘belong’, *a se consacra* ‘dedicate oneself’, *a contraveni* ‘conflict with’, *a datora* ‘owe’, *a dăru* ‘give’, *a dăuna* ‘prejudice’, *a dedica*, ‘dedicate’, *a se deda* ‘take to’, *a plăcea* ‘like’, *a premerge* ‘precede’ (2), and those selecting an optional indirect object – *a citi* ‘read’, *a povesti* ‘tell’, *a spune* ‘tell’, *a zâmbi* ‘smile’ (3):

- (2) a. El aparține comunității
 he.NOM belongs community.DEF.DAT
 ‘He belongs to the community’
- b. *El aparține
 he.NOM belongs
- (3) a. El citește (copiilor)
 he.NOM reads children.DEF.DAT
 ‘He is reading to the children’
- b. Ea (le) spune o poveste
 she.NOM CL.DAT.3PL tells a story.ACC
 ‘She tells them a story’

H In old Romanian, a series of verbs that select a prepositional or a direct object, in present-day Romanian could select an indirect object: *a crede* ‘believe’, *a greși* ‘mistake’, *a se atinge* ‘touch’, *a stăpâni* ‘own’:

- (4) a. Să stăpânească **ziii** și **noptii** (Biblie)
 SĂ_{SUBJ} ((s)he)own day.DEF.DAT and night.DEF.DAT
 ‘to be the master of day and night’
- b. Să se atingă **stricatului** (Coresi)
 SĂ_{SUBJ} CL.REFL.ACC ((s)he)touch depraved.DEF.DAT
 ‘to touch the depraved’
- c. Se vrea atinge **de stricați** (Coresi)
 CL.REFL.ACC ((s)he)will touch of the depraved.ACC.PL
 ‘S/he will touch the depraved’

A fixed syntactic structure in which the verb *a crede* ‘believe’ selects a dative is preserved in contemporary Romanian:

- (5) Nu-și crede ochilor și urechilor
 NEG=CL.REFL.DAT.3SG ((s)he)believes eyes.DEF.DAT and ears.DEF.DAT
 ‘He cannot believe his eyes’

(iii) The following verbs do not take an indirect object: some of the agentive verbs with three arguments, like *a învăța* ‘learn’, *a întreba* ‘ask’ (due to the indirect object – secondary object incompatibility), and non-agentive verbs with two arguments, requiring an Experiencer in direct object position (due to the direct object – indirect object incompatibility (6a-b)):

- (6) a. Mă doare capul
 CL.ACC.1SG hurts head.DEF.NOM
 ‘I have a headache’
- b. Mă ustură degetul
 CL.ACC.1SG hurts finger.DEF.NOM
 ‘My finger hurts’

(iv) The indirect object can be realized as a DP (in Romanian, the inflectional dative marker can only be assigned to a DP) or as a dative personal or reflexive pronominal clitic (see III.2.3.2).

(v) The indirect object is selected both by an active or passive finite head verb (7a-b) and by non-finite verb forms – the infinitive (8a), the gerund (8b), the participle (8c), and the supine (8d):

- (7) a. El trimite o carte **părinților**
 he sends a book parents.DEF.DAT
 ‘He sends a book to his parents’
- b. Cartea este trimisă **părinților** de către el
 book.DEF is sent parents.DEF.DAT by him
 ‘The book is sent by him to his parents’
- (8) a. ideea de a telefona **profesorului**
 idea.DEF of A._{INF} telephone.INF teacher.DEF.DAT
 ‘the idea to telephone to the teacher’
- b. L-am văzut dăruind **copiilor** jucării
 CL.ACC.M.3SG=have.1SG seen giving children.DEF.DAT toys
 ‘I saw him giving toys to the children’
- c. Cadoul trimis **copilului** a fost apreciat

- present.DEF sent child.DEF.DAT has been appreciated
 ‘The present sent to the child was appreciated’
- d. El a terminat de povestit **copiilor**
 he has finished DE_{SUP} tell.SUP children.DEF.DAT
 ‘He finished telling stories to the children’

(vi) The indirect object allows for more syntactic variation than the direct object. The dative indirect object structure is either a variant of a direct object structure (9a-b) or of an intransitive prepositional object structure (10a-c):

- (9) a. El succedă **cuiva** / **pe cineva**
 he follows someone.DAT PE someone.ACC
 ‘He comes next after someone’
- b. Tehnica ajută **lucrătorilor** / **lucrătorii**
 technique.DEF helps workers.DEF.DAT workers.DEF.ACC
- (10) a. El **îi** seamănă **fratelui** **lui** / **cu fratele** **lui**
 he CL.DAT.3DG resembles brother.DEF.DAT he.GEN with brother.DEF.ACC he.GEN
 ‘He looks like his brother’
- b. Maria fură **vecinilor** / **de la vecini** mașina
 Maria steals neighbours.DEF.DAT from neighbours.ACC car.DEF.ACC
 ‘Maria steals the car from the neighbours’
- c. Ion dă mâncare **animalelor** / **la animale**
 Ion gives food animals.DEF.DAT to animals.ACC
 ‘Ion feeds the animals’

(vii) Semantically, the indirect object is assigned one of the following thematic roles: Experiencer (11a), Recipient (11b), Beneficiary (11c), and Source (11d).

- (11) a. **Îi** place dansul
 CL.DAT.3SG likes dance.DEF.NOM
 ‘He likes dancing’
- b. El trimite **copilului** o carte
 he.NOM sends child.DEF.DAT a book.ACC
 ‘He is sending a book to the child’
- c. Bunicul cumpără **nepotului** o jucărie
 grandfather.DEF.NOM buys grandson.DEF.DAT a toy
 ‘The grandfather buys a toy for the grandson’
- d. **Îi** cere **mamei** un sfat
 CL.DAT.3SG asks mother.DEF.DAT an advice
 ‘He asks his mother for an advice’

(viii) When the Experiencer is part of the verb’s thematic grid and occupies a different position than that of subject, in most contexts it must be overtly realized. The Experiencer is optional in the context of certain verbs of perception (II.3.3.1):

- (12) (**Îmi**) miroase a fum
 CL.DAT.1SG smells like smoke.ACC

‘It smells like smoke to me’

Rarely, the indirect object has the thematic roles Possessor (13a) and Theme, in symmetric structures (13b):

- (13) a. Cartea **îi** aparține **studentului**
 book.DEF.NOM CL.DAT.3SG belongs student.DEF.DAT
 ‘The book belongs to the student’
- b. Mihai se aseamăna **lui** **George**
 Mihai CL.REFL.ACC.3SG resembles LUI.DAT George
 ‘Mihai resembles George’

Ⓒ Romanian has a number of obsolete structures with a locative dative; the dative occurs in the context of verbs of movement or of stative verbs and does not function as an indirect object, but as an adverbial of place (14):

- (14) Ion rămâne **locului**
 Ion remains place.DEF.DAT
 ‘Ion stays put’

This construction is unique in Romance, and is considered to be a Balkan Sprachbund phenomenon (Brâncuș 1960). In Albanian, this structure is much more frequent. Unlike Romanian and Albanian, in Turkish and in Serbian and Croatian the locative dative occurs only with verbs of motion, not with stative verbs.

(ix) Some of the verbs that select an indirect object can enter possessive structures. Since the indirect object is selected by the head verb, these configurations are ambiguous, i.e. the dative clitic can be interpreted either as an indirect object (the possessive reading is absent) or as a possessive dative (15). In the latter case, the clitic cumulates two thematic roles, i.e. Possessor and Recipient (**III.4.4.2**).

- (15) **Îți** dau cartea
 CL.DAT.2SG (I)give book.DEF
 ‘I give the book to you / I give your book to you’

(x) The indirect object can be doubled by a dative pronominal clitic; doubling is in some cases obligatory, in others, optional (see **III.2.3.4**).

2.3.2 The indirect object realized as pronominal clitic

The indirect object can be realized as a personal pronominal (16a) or reflexive clitic (16b) which may have a reciprocal reading (16c):

- (16) a. **Li** s-au acordat burse
 CL.DAT.3PL CL.PASS.ACC.3PL=(they)have granted scholarships
 ‘Scholarships were granted to them’
- b. **Ion_i își** atribuie reușite nemeritate
 Ion CL.REFL.DAT.3SG credits success.PL undeserved
 ‘Ion credits himself with undeserved successes’
- c. Cei doi prieteni **își** vorbesc

CEL.M.PL two friends CL.REFL.DAT.3PL talk.3PL
 ‘The two friends talk to one another’

Ⓒ In its non-standard variant, Romanian, like Spanish and Portuguese (Reinheimer, Tasmowski 2005: 122), possesses a non-referential dative, which does not occupy the indirect object position, i.e. the ‘dative with neutral value’, which is realized as a 3rd person personal pronominal clitic:

- (17) a. Ce să-**i** faci?
 what SĂ_{SUBJ}=CL.DAT.3SG (you)do
 ‘What can you do about it?’
 b. Zi-**i** așa!
 say.IMP.2SG= CL.DAT.3SG so
 ‘Say it as it is!’

This dative clitic has a pragmatic role, i.e. it places the VP in focus (see VI.1.8.2). Some structures are ambiguous, as they can have a neutral (18b), or referential reading (18a):

- (18) a. Ce să-**i** faci (copilului)? (indirect object)
 what SĂ_{SUBJ}=CL.DAT.3SG (you)do child.DEF.DAT
 ‘What can you do to the child?’
 b. Ce să-**i** faci? (dative with neutral value)
 what SĂ_{SUBJ}=CL.DAT.3SG (you)do
 ‘What can you do about it?’

⒰ Like French (Leclère 1976; Jouitteau, Rezac 2007) and Spanish, colloquial Romanian preserved the Latin “ethical dative”, realized as a non-referential dative clitic which is stylistically and pragmatically marked [+ affected] (19a). It is the only Romanian construction which allows the co-occurrence of two clitic forms sharing the same case, but having different person forms (19b) (see VI.1.4; VI.1.8.1):

- (19) a. Balaurul **mi-l** ia pe erou și îl **înghite**
 ogre.DEF CL.DAT.1SG=CL.ACC.3SG takes PE hero.ACC and CL.ACC.3SG swallows
 ‘The ogre lifts the hero up and swallows him’
 b. **Mi** **ți-l** ia și-l **înghite**
 CL.DAT.1SG CL.DAT.3SG =CL.ACC.3SG takes and= CL.ACC.3SG swallows
 ‘He lifts him and swallows him’

The verbs with two objects allow the co-occurrence two clitic forms, one in the accusative and one in the dative (20). For incompatibilities, see VI.1.4.

- (20) Ea **ți-l** trimite
 she.NOM CL.DAT.2SG=CL.ACC.3SG sends
 ‘She sends it to you’

2.3.3 Case marking vs. prepositional marking with *la* ‘at’

An indirect object whose first component of the nominal phrase is invariable (i.e. cannot receive the specific dative case-marker) will be realized as a PP headed by the preposition *la* ‘to’ (+Acc):

- (21) a. Am dat premii **la doi** copii / dintre copii
 (I)have given prizes to two children.ACC / of children
 ‘I gave prizes to two children / two of the children’

- b. Nu dau informații **la astfel de oameni**
 not (I)give information.PL to such people.PL.ACC
 ‘I do not offer information to such people’

The prepositional phrases occurring in indirect and prepositional object position should be treated as separate syntactic structures. There are two tests which apply only to the indirect object realized as prepositional phrase headed by *la* ‘to’: clitic doubling (22) and the substitution of the PP with a DP whose determiner is placed at the left of the phrase, so that it can carry the inflectional dative marker (23).

- (22) a. **Le_i** dau flori **la două** profesoare_i
 CL.DAT.3PL (I)give flowers to two teachers.ACC
 ‘I give flowers to two teachers’
 b. ***Li** s-a gândit **la doi** elevi
 CL.DAT.3PL CL.REFL.ACC.3SG=has thought to two.ACC students.ACC
- (23) a. Le dau flori **acestor / acelorași / celor două** profesoare
 CL.DAT.3PL (I)give flowers these.DAT the-same.DAT CEL.PL.DAT two teachers.DAT
 ‘I give flowers to these / to the same / to the two teachers’
 b. *Se gândește **acestor / acelorași / celor două** profesoare
 CL.REFL.ACC.3SG ((s)he)thinks these.DAT / the.same.DAT CEL.PL.DAT two teachers

U In spoken Romanian, the indirect object is realized as a PP headed by the preposition *la* even in configurations in which the first component of the phrase has case inflection. Realization through PP alternates with realization through a dative DP:

- (24) a. Le-am dat bomboane **la copii / copiilor**
 CL.DAT.3PL=(I)have given candy.PL.ACC to children.ACC children.DEF.DAT
 ‘I gave the children candy’
 b. Am scris **la toți / tuturor**
 (I)have written to all.ACC all.DAT
 ‘I wrote to all of them’

H In old Romanian, the indirect object could be replaced by a PP headed by the preposition *către* ‘towards’ (25), when selected by verbs of saying (*a spune* ‘tell’, *a zice* ‘say’, *a grăi* ‘say’). The *către* ‘towards’ structure is a regional variant in present-day Romanian.

- (25) A zis domnul **către slujitor** să plece
 has said lord.DEF.NOM towards servant SĂ_{SUBJ} leave.SUBJ.3SG
 ‘The lord said to the servant to leave’

C Romanian is a language with strong case marking. For the indirect object, case marking is doubly distributed, i.e. on the indirect object DP (through the case-marker) and on the verb (by the dative clitic attached to it). Indirect object marking is both inflectional and analytic (Manoliu, Price 2007: 321-3).

2.3.4 Indirect object clitic doubling

Indirect object doubling is realized by a pronominal clitic which is co-referential with the DP or with the relative clause in indirect object position:

- (26) a. Martorul **le** dă informații **poliștilor**
 witness.DEF.NOM CL.DAT.3PL gives information.PL.ACC policemen.DEF.DAT
 ‘The witness gives information to the policemen’

- b. **Președintelui i** s-a acordat încredere
 president.DEF.DAT CL.DAT.3SG CL.REFL.ACC.3SG=has given trust
 ‘The president was given people’s trust’
- c. **I-am** oferit informații **cui a cerut**
 CL.DAT.3SG=(I)have offered information.PL.ACC who.DAT has asked
 ‘I gave information to whoever required it’

Indirect object doubling is either impossible, optional, or obligatory, depending on its position relative to the head, the nature of the head, and the type of constituent in indirect object position (GBLR: 462).

When the indirect object is a DP placed postverbally, doubling is generally optional (27a). Doubling is obligatory when the indirect object is preverbal (27b) (Tasmowski De Ryck 1987: 387-8). In relative and interrogative clauses, doubling of the pronoun *cine* ‘who’ is optional (28a), while the doubling of *care* ‘which’ is obligatory (28b) (Reinheimer, Tasmowski 2005: 197):

- (27) a. **(I)-am** dat cărți **studentului**
 CL.DAT.3SG=(I)have given books.ACC student.DEF.DAT
- b. **Copilului / Unui copil / Lui i-am** dat un cadou
 child.DEF.DAT a.DAT child he.DAT CL.DAT.3SG=(I)have given a present.ACC
- (28) a. **Cui (ii)** oferi florile?
 who.DAT CL.DAT.3SG (you)offer flowers.DEF.ACC
- b. **Știu căruia dintre ei i-ai** dat cărți
 (I)know which.DAT of they.ACC CL.DAT.3SG=(you)have given books.ACC

2.3.4.1 There are contexts in which doubling is not allowed. The postposed indirect object realized as a DP headed by a [+ Abstract] noun (29) or as a DP headed by a [+ Human] noun is not doubled if the head verb is inherently reflexive, when the reflexive pronoun in the accusative is first or second person singular or plural (30a-b):

- (29) El (*i) se dedică **studiului**
 he CL.DAT.3SG CL.REFL.ACC.3SG dedicates study.DEF.DAT
 ‘He dedicates himself to studying’
- (30) a. **Mă** adrez (*le) **oamenilor / Mariei / lor** vs.
 CL.REFL.ACC.1SG (I)address CL.DAT.3PL people.PL.DEF.DAT Maria.DAT they.DAT
 ‘I address the people / Maria / them’
 Tu (i) te adrez **lui**
 you.NOM CL.DAT.3SG CL.REFL.ACC.2SG (you)address he.DAT
 ‘You address him’
- b. Ne (*i) prezentăm **directorului**, vs.
 CL.REFL.ACC.1PL CL.DAT.3SG present.1PL director.DEF.DAT
 ‘We introduce ourselves to the director’
 Ea (i) se prezintă **directorului**
 she.NOM CL.DAT.3SG CL.ACC.3.SG presents director.DEF.DAT
 ‘She introduces herself to the director’

2.3.4.2 There are contexts in which doubling is obligatory. When preposed, the indirect object occurring in subjectless structures (31a, b) or in structures with postverbal subject (32), realized as a DP headed by a

[+Animate] noun, is doubled. In these configurations, doubling is also obligatory when the indirect object is postverbal (33). A stressed personal pronoun is always doubled by a clitic (34):

- (31) a. **Lui / Anei îi** este rău
 him.DAT Ana.DAT CL.DAT.3SG is sickness
 ‘He / Ana is sick’
 b. **Femeii îi** zice Maria
 woman.DEF.DAT CL.DAT.3SG says Maria
 ‘The woman is called Maria’
- (32) **Câinelui îi** este foame
 dog.DEF.DAT CL.DAT.3SG is hunger
 ‘The dog is hungry’
- (33) **Îi** este rău **Anei** (*Este rău **Anei**)
 CL.DAT.3SG is sickness Ana.DAT is sickness Ana.DAT
 ‘Ana is sick’
- (34) **Nouă ne** plac filmele
 us.DAT CL.DAT.1PL (they)like films.NOM
 ‘We like films’

2.3.4.3 There are contexts in which doubling is optional. Doubling of the postverbal indirect object is optional, when it is realized as a DP headed by a [+Animate] noun (35) (with the exception of the contexts under **2.3.4.1**). The doubling of the preverbal indirect object realized as a personal (rarely, reflexive) pronominal clitic is optional; the stressed form occurs for reasons of emphasis (36):

- (35) **(Le)** trimitem bani **părinților**
 CL.DAT.3PL (we)send money.PL.ACC parents.DEF.DAT
 ‘We send money to our parents’
- (36) **Vă** ofer (**vouă**) această onoare
 CL.DAT.2PL (I)offer you.DAT this honour
 ‘I give you this honour’

2.3.5 *The indirect object realized as a relative clause*

The indirect object can be realized as a headless relative clause, usually doubled by a dative clitic occurring in the matrix clause. The indirect object clause is introduced by a relative or indefinite pronoun (37a) and rarely by a relative or indefinite adjective (37b). The connector always displays a dative case form, assigned by the head verb in the matrix clause:

- (37) a. **Îi** acordăm premiul **cui / oricui**
 CL.DAT.3SG (we)give prize.DEF.ACC who.DAT whoever.DAT
îi **place competiția**
 CL.DAT.3SG likes competition.DEF.NOM
 ‘We give the prize to the one that / to whoever likes the competition’
- b. **(Îi)** răspunde **oricărui coleg îl întrebă**
 CL.DAT.3SG answers any.M.SG.DAT colleague.DAT CL.ACC.3SG asks
 ‘He answers to any colleague that ask him’

- H** The free relative clause in indirect object position is an old structure of Romanian:
- (38) Le da bani **căroră căra apă** (Neculce)
 CL.DAT.3PL (he)give.IMPERF money.PL.ACC Which.PL.DAT carry.IMPERF.3PL water.ACC
 ‘He gave money to the ones that carried water’

C Like French and Spanish, Romanian also displays the clausal realization of the indirect object as a headless relative:

- (39) a. Fr. Je réponds à **qui j'ai envie de répondre**
 I answer to who I=have wish to answer
 ‘I answer to whoever I feel like answering’
- b. Sp. Doy máximo de puntos **a quien me ayude con estos ejercicios** (internet)
 (I)give maximum of points to who CL.ACC.1SG helps with these exercises
 ‘I give maximum of points to whoever helps me with these exercises’

U In colloquial and regional Romanian, the relative clause in indirect object position can be introduced by a PP headed by the preposition *la* or, less frequently, by *către* ‘towards’:

- (40) Ea se adresează **la cine o cunoaște**
 she CL.REFL.ACC.3SG addresses to who CL.ACC.3SG knows
 ‘She addresses whoever knows her’

2.3.6 Word order

In the unmarked word order, the indirect object DP is postverbal and is not prosodically isolated (graphically, no punctuation sign is present).

With the exception of the realization by clitics, which have a fixed position, realization as a DP leads to a relatively free word order. The indirect object assigned by a subjectless verb (41a) or by a verb whose subject is postverbal (41b) occurs in anteposition to the verb:

- (41) a. **Băiatului îi** pare rău
 boy.DEF.DAT CL.DAT.3SG seems bad
 ‘The boy feels sorry’
- b. **Mariei îi** place Monet
 Maria.DAT CL.DAT.3SG likes Monet.NOM
 ‘Maria likes Monet’